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Rubens' Study of the *Borghese Gladiator* and Antiquarianism in the Lincean Academy

Introduction

Augsburg, 26th August 1611. The German philologist Marcus Welser (1558–1614) wrote to Johann Faber in Rome. In a typical scholarly fashion, Welser introduced his letter by saying that he had no time to discuss Galileo's telescope or the 'pietra lucifera' experiment, nor any of the other kinds of inventions and discoveries that usually kept both men occupied in their correspondence.¹ Welser's only purpose here was to ask his friend for "a little portrait of the statue recently found at Anzio."² He did not add any further information and, concluding the letter, greeted Faber cordially.

What statue would have captured Welser's attention so much? Why did he ask for a copy? Even if Welser had provided no further information about the recent discovery, Faber would have known that his correspondent was referring to the so-called *Borghese Gladiator*, an antique marble found at Nettuno, near Anzio, in 1609 (fig. 1).³ The statue emerged during the only archeological excavation promoted by Cardinal Scipione Borghese and had entered his magnificent collection in Rome. In the summer of 1611, when the two Germans were corresponding, the *Gladiator* had just been restored. During the excavation both arms were found broken, so the statue had to be reassembled. This means that when Welser wrote to Faber, he was soliciting an image of the sculpture after restoration, when the marble could be admired in its beauty as a whole.

Shortly after the lucky find at Anzio, the *Gladiator* aroused the interest and enthusiasm of antiquarians, philologists and artists across Europe. Its fame derived partly from the sculptor's signature, found on the tree trunk on which the figure rests, which revealed the identity of its maker and the authenticity of the ancient marble, but also from the perfect anatomy of the body.

Novelties circulated rapidly among the protagonists of the Republic of Letters. Drawings of antiquities, casts and letters were dispatched in order to discuss questions related to iconography, authenticity and authorship. Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) took an active



1 *The Borghese Gladiator*, 100 a. D., marble, h. 199 cm, inv. no. MR 224. Paris

part in these discussions. As will be shown, this skilled artist visually recorded the Borghese marble in many of his compositions; the motif was also copied by his assistants, as it was considered an exemplary model for the study of the figure in motion.

While it has been shown that the exchanges between the members of the Republic of Letters and Rubens benefited the latter's work, the fruitful interaction between the Antwerp painter and some members of the Lincean Academy in Rome has not always enjoyed close scrutiny.⁴ In this article I will shed new light on the antiquarian interests that the associates of this important Roman society pursued – alongside their well-known scientific and naturalistic interests – by relating them to Rubens' work. I will also illustrate the complexities involved in the reception of this Antique model in the artist's workshop and in the study of human anatomy. Furthermore, on the basis of new information, I will raise some relevant questions concerning the dating of some of Rubens' works, the inclusion of the newly discovered antiquity and the use of models in the studio.

Rubens' reputation as an antiquarian and the Republic of Letters

What is the nature of Rubens' relationship with Marcus Welser and Johann Faber, the German scholars who, in the summer of 1611, exchanged drawings of the *Borghese Gladiator*?

Marcus Welser, a prominent governor of Augsburg and commentator on its antiquities, was a friend and correspondent of Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), the great scholar and mentor of Rubens' older brother, Philip (1574–1611).⁵ The relationship and friendship between Welser and Lipsius began around 1590, when Welser entered the European humanist milieu, in which the Leuven professor occupied a central position.⁶ Jan Papy pointed out that their friendship was based on a common interest in antiquarian studies, their search for a position within the Republic of Letters and their sympathy for Neostoicism.⁷ After Lipsius' death in 1606, his favorite pupil Philip was to be the ideal replacement for his mentor in matters concerning antiquarianism.

Indeed, a letter dated 22nd July 1611 bears witness to this new role taken on by Philip. In this letter addressed to Welser, written a month before the Augsburg philologist wrote to Faber about the antique marble found at Anzio, the artist's brother displayed his erudition in antiquarian studies.⁸ Philip was responding to an earlier letter (which has not survived), sent by Welser to him and to the Jesuit Andreas Schottus in Antwerp to obtain their expertise on an image shown on an antique piece – a medal or seal – in his collection. Only the letter sent by Philip to Welser has survived, but in all probability, there have been more exchanges between the two men. This seems very likely since, as mentioned earlier, Welser had been a former friend and correspondent of Philip's mentor, Justus Lipsius. But, more importantly, Philip did not have the presumption to answer the enquiry on his own; on the contrary, he allowed himself to be joined by another expert, his brother Peter Paul. Thus, he began his letter by saying “This task of expert and judge, which I would be afraid to assume by myself, I cannot refuse when you, the ‘duumvir’, want and order it. I will therefore tell you what is my opinion of your seal, and that of my brother, who is curious and a connoisseur of the things of Antiquity.”⁹

With this letter, Peter Paul made his entry into the world of classical scholarship, gaining a reputation as an erudite antiquarian and a prominent position within the Republic of Letters.¹⁰ His role and reputation in these matters would only increase in the following years, partly as a consequence of the sudden death of his brother Philip on the 28th August 1611 (one month after their letter was sent). After this tragic episode in Rubens' private life, it was his duty to carry on the antiquarian studies in memory of his beloved brother.

The correspondence between Welser and the Rubens brothers demonstrates that exchanges of drawings and archeological information took place among these curious minds and indicates that similar discussions between Peter Paul and Welser could have continued until the latter's death in 1614.

Rubens' friendship with the German physician Johann Faber dates back to the early 17th century when the painter was staying in Rome.¹¹ Their first meeting was probably mediated either by the German convert and philologist Kaspar Schoppe (1576–1649), or by the Flemish mathematician Adriaan van Roomen (1561–1615), who was not only Faber's former mentor, but also another friend and correspondent of Lipsius.¹² At the time of the artist's stays in the Eternal City, Faber was a professor of anatomy at La Sapienza University and keeper of the medicinal plants in the Vatican gardens.¹³ He also acted as a patron of the arts, contributing to the flourishing of artistic production and the rise of antiquarianism in Rome.¹⁴ As a result of his prestigious appointment, Faber maintained close and frequent contacts with Pope Paul V Borghese (1552–1621) and his entourage. As such, it would not have been difficult for him to get access to the collection of ancient sculptures that belonged to the Cardinal's nephew Scipione Borghese (1577–1633) and to obtain drawings after those antiquities.¹⁵

After all, Faber had met Scipione Borghese for the first time during the spring of 1608 before the *Gladiator* was found in Anzio. He positively describes this meeting in his letter to Orazio Tabulazio; from Faber's letter, it is possible to deduce that he stood in good terms with the Cardinal.¹⁶ As a patron of the arts and an active member of the German 'natio' (1615–1616 and 1626), which gathered Flemish, Dutch and German communities around the Church of Santa Maria dell'Anima, Faber held many contacts with foreigners and helped them to make their way in Rome.¹⁷

When Rubens was staying in the city, it was thanks to Faber's and Lipsius' networks that the painter was able to visit the wealthy household of Cardinal Bartolomeo Cesi and to draw some antiquities from his collection.¹⁸

Later, in 1611, when Rubens was living in Antwerp, Faber became a member of the Lincean Academy, the renowned scientific society founded in 1603 by Bartolomeo Cesi's nephew, Federico.¹⁹ The following year Marcus Welser also joined the Roman Academy at the proposal of Faber and other German associates.²⁰ With the election of Johann Faber and Marcus Welser, the number of German Linceans increased within the Roman institution.

Once back in his native country in 1608, Rubens continued to maintain his correspondence with Faber, which means that the artist was kept informed about what happened in Rome, such as recent archeological finds or astronomical discoveries.²¹

The Borghese Gladiator and the Lincean Academy

In the summer of 1611, when Welser wrote to Faber, the *Borghese Gladiator* had already been restored. A drawing that was made before the restoration shows the statue fragmented and both arms broken off.²² This drawing, now kept at the Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe in Rome, is currently attributed to an anonymous Italian artist; while this attribution is still uncertain it has been possible to establish the drawing's date as before 1611, before the restoration.²³ Apparently, drawings of antiquities were made before and after restoration in order to document the collections. At that time, the Frenchman Guillaume Berthelot (circa 1580–1648), who was a wood and bronze sculptor and restorer of ancient statues, carried out several important commissions in Rome, including a wooden crucifix for Santa Maria in Vallicella, and probably the restoration of the *Gladiator*.²⁴ Berthelot's activity in Rome is documented from 1610 to 1618, years in which the young Frenchman went from being an apprentice

in Giovanni Languille's woodcarving workshop to becoming known to influential patrons, such as Pope Paul V Borghese.²⁵ As mentioned above, Faber would have easily obtained drawings of the Borghese marble after its restoration in order to satisfy the requests of his German friend.

It is possible that information about the statue reached Rubens in Antwerp shortly after the summer of 1611, yet no study by the artist's hand of the statue has survived.²⁶

The famous antiquity is first recorded on the 11th June 1611, when an 'avviso' reported that: "Near Santa Maria Maggiore the statue of a gladiator is being restored, a rare artefact found in Nettuno, and it is clear from the name of the sculptor that it was made more than 2,000 years ago, and it will then be taken to the garden of Cardinal Borghese."²⁷

From the same excavation that was promoted by Cardinal Scipione Borghese in Nettuno, near Anzio, along with the *Gladiator* another lucky find emerged, the *Amazon on Horseback*.²⁸ Both marbles were restored in June 1611, presumably by Guillaume Berthelot; in 1613 they were transferred to the Cardinal's gallery in the Borgo palace (now Palazzo Torlonia-Giraud), where they formed the group of Achilles and Penthesilea. After the statues had been found, they soon aroused the interest of antiquarians and philologists, who engaged in questions about attribution and interpretation. The decision to exhibit the *Gladiator* with the *Amazon* in Scipione Borghese's gallery has probably to be considered in relation to the interesting interpretation of the marble group given by another of Rubens' contemporaries, Giovanni Demisianos (1576–1619), at the beginning of the 17th century. Demisianos was a Greek humanist from Cephalonia who was admitted to the Lincean Academy in 1612.²⁹ He was, among other members of the Academy, a correspondent of Faber and Welser and a brilliant mind that cultivated a wide range of cultural interests. In the discourse on his admission to the prestigious Academy, Demisianos is described as a distinguished philosopher, theologian and scholar of classical literature.³⁰ As a philologist, he authored a manuscript – preserved in the Borghese archives – *Discorso sopra quattro statue dell'Ill.mo Sigr Cardinale Borghese*, in which he stated that both marbles were found together "among the ruins of the ancient city of Antio" and that the *Amazon* was to be interpreted as Penthesilea fighting the Greeks Lernos and Podarkes, while the warrior was to represent Achilles defeating the Queen of the Amazons.³¹ The same interpretation was repeated by Scipione Francucci in 1613 in his *Galleria dell'Illustris. e Reverendis. Signor Scipione Cardinale Borghese*.³²

In his letter from the 11th June 1611 to Welser, Justus Rycquius (1587–1627), a philologist from Ghent who joined Cesi's Academy in Rome in 1614, gave a lengthy description of the *Gladiator* in the Borghese collection.³³ Rycquius studied in Ghent and in Douai; in 1606 he travelled to Italy and arrived in Rome, where Philip Rubens tried, unsuccessfully, to have him employed at the service of a Cardinal. After a while, Rycquius managed to position himself as a librarian to Count Luigi Sarego, the pontifical governor of Perugia and Umbria.³⁴ In May 1610, he left for Naples in the company of Count Sarego. After the journey he returned the following month to Rome, where he met the Pope's chamberlain, Hieronymus Fuscus. From then on, he sometimes stayed in the Vatican and sometimes in the Quirinal.³⁵ It was during one of his stays in the Eternal City that Rycquius had the opportunity to see the Borghese marble and to provide interesting information about its state during restoration in his letter to Welser.

Rycquius was in Rome when he wrote that the statue that had recently been found in the excavations at Anzio is excellent and had been made with great technique, like the Laocoon mentioned by Pliny and celebrated by Cardinal Jacopo Sadoletto. The Borghese marble represents a fighting soldier or captain – those who were called heroes – who raises a shield in the sky with his left arm, clenched in

his fist, to defend himself from the blow of the adversary. This warrior is missing the right arm, which used to be armed with a sword ('gladiolo') and shows a way of acting as if he were repelling a blow.

Rycquius praised the sculpture for the virile strength it emanates, the fierce facial expression and for the verisimilitude with which the limbs are rendered.³⁶ It is clear from this letter that the Flemish scholar must have seen the statue in Berthelot's workshop – near Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome – while it was being restored.³⁷ In fact, Rycquius tells us that the left arm clasps the inner band of the shield with a fist, raised to the sky, while the right arm, which must have been armed with a dagger, is missing. The hero raises his shield as if he were not afraid of receiving a blow from an opponent on horseback, or from someone coming down a hill (thus from any blow coming from above). Another interesting question concerns the Greek inscription with the sculptor's signature, which the philologist copied and discussed in-depth. In this respect he claimed to have consulted several manuscripts in the Vatican library and to be unsure of the name of the Greek sculptor, as ancient authors mention several variants of the name Agasia.

From the very beginning of his appointment, Rycquius played a crucial role in the relationship between the Roman Academy and Flanders. Rycquius, who had been appointed by Cesi as the Lincean biographer and eulogist, was responsible for writing the funeral elegies of the Academy's members. In this capacity, he wrote the elegy of Marcus Welser, who died in 1614. Peter Paul Rubens and his father-in-law Jan Brant (1559–1639), alderman of Antwerp, are mentioned among Welser's friends in his funeral elegy that had been written by Rycquius in his memory.³⁸ It is almost certain that Rycquius met Peter Paul Rubens in Rome around 1606 and that their relationship continued after the philologist's return to Flanders. A letter from the 28th August 1614 gives evidence of an active correspondence between the two men.³⁹

The Borghese Gladiator in Rubens' workshop

Among the lessons Rubens would learn during his time in Italy (1600–1608), the study of Antiquity would be one of the most important of his entire career. Although he would never again set foot on Italian soil after 1608, Rubens' bond with the beloved country, his friends and colleagues would remain strong, a bond that transcended geographical boundaries.

It is generally assumed that Rubens copied many classical marbles during his second stay in Rome from late 1605 to 1608. Some of these sculptures came from the collection of Scipione Borghese, which at that time was housed in his palace in Piazza Scossacavalli (the so-called Borgo palace) near the Vatican.⁴⁰ Marjon van der Meulen pointed out that, between 1605 and 1608, Rubens had access to the Borghese collection, since the artist was on friendly terms with Scipione, who was appointed Cardinal in 1605.⁴¹ While it is very likely that some of Borghese's sculptures were copied at this time, it is certain that the artist could not have seen the *Gladiator*, which was only found in 1609 after Rubens had returned to Antwerp.

Some clues about Rubens' working method and the strategy he adopted to obtain information about recent finds and excellent works of art produced in Italy are provided by the Roman biographer Giovanni Pietro Bellori (1672). In his life of Peter Paul Rubens, Bellori writes: "In addition to the things that he himself drew and copied in Italy and other places, and in addition to the large number of prints of every sort that he collected, he employed some young artists in Rome and Venice and Lombardy to draw for him everything excellent there is to be found. In composing, then, he used these as motifs and enriched his compositions with them [...]."⁴²



2 Rubens, *The Massacre of the Innocents*, ca. 1611–1612, oil on panel, 142 × 183 cm. The Thomson Collection at the Art Gallery of Ontario, inv. no. 2014/1581. Detail

had become part of the famous Roman collection around 1620, survives.⁴⁴ The drawing was made in those years, when the statue, by then restored, was displayed in the Villa Borghese on the Pincio (also Villa Pinciana) in 1621. It has been suggested that Van Dyck, who did not have a predilection for classical sculpture, made this detailed study at the request of Rubens who was eager to enrich his collection of drawings after the Antique.⁴⁵ There is no record of a study by Van Dyck of the Gladiator, also exhibited from 1621 in one of the main rooms of the Villa.⁴⁶ Probably Rubens would not have waited so long to get a drawing of the statue, but would have done anything to get one immediately after its discovery. After all, and as already mentioned, sketches of the *Borghese Gladiator* circulated soon after its restoration among the artist's friends and correspondents, and although further data is missing, it seems reasonable to suggest that Rubens benefited from his extensive Italian network. As the relationship between Faber and Scipione Borghese was close from 1608 onwards, a more active role played by his German friend in distributing drawings and other information about the Borghese collection cannot be ruled out.

Once in possession of this material, Rubens would have modified the motifs borrowed from Antiquity, explored their multiple possibilities and applied all kinds of variations on the original model in his compositions. Here again, Bellori's account provides interesting clues to Rubens' relationship with classical Antiquity: "[...] and although he had the highest regard for Raphael and the antique, he nevertheless never imitated either one in any part whatever; and if he wished to follow the lineaments of the statues of Apollo, Venus, or the Gladiator, he would distort them to such an extent with his style that he left no form or trace by which to recognize them."⁴⁷ Rubens' study of the Borghese *Gladiator* illustrates how his 'maniera' altered the motifs borrowed from the Antique in such a way that no form could be distinguished.

There is reason to believe that Rubens came into possession of information about the statue shortly after its restoration in the summer of 1611. The *Massacre of the Innocents*, a work in which

We know neither whether Rubens, once back in his hometown, employed apprentices nor whether the habit of having young assistants that travelled to Italy and drew for him began immediately after Rubens had decided not to return to Italy, nor whether he could rely on the work of draftsmen established in Rome, who sometimes worked on his commission.⁴³ Although Rubens was well informed about novelties in Italian art circles, there are still many gaps regarding how this knowledge was passed on to him, sometimes through the intermediary of his collaborators. In some cases, however, we do have some evidence: for example, it is known that between 1622 and 1623, his most talented pupil, Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641), stayed in Rome and visited the Cardinal's collection at the Villa Borghese. A drawing by his hand of the sculptural group, known as *Faustina and the Gladiator*, that

Rubens introduced numerous quotations from Antiquity, including the *Gladiator*, also belongs to the same period (circa 1611–1612, fig. 2).⁴⁸ The famous statue from the Roman collection is echoed in the soldier wearing a helmet and armour, immortalised in the violent act of pulling a mother's hair with his right arm and pushing the head of the crouching woman down with his left. This is a reversed image of the Borghese statue, seen from the side.⁴⁹

Apart from this early reference, the first and most problematic record of the statue in Rubens' work was observed in the *Battle of the Amazons*, preserved in Potsdam, a work executed in collaboration with the studio of Jan Brueghel I and belonging to Rubens' pre-Italian period (circa 1597–1598).⁵⁰ Some authors have glimpsed in the pose of the fallen warrior on the left, under the white horse with the pink mane, a resemblance to the Borghese marble when seen from above, but since it was only found in 1609, it could not have been included in this early Rubens painting.⁵¹ Instead, it is more likely that Rubens saw a fighter in a similar pose elsewhere, with the front of the body leaning forward and the left arm holding a shield. It is known, for example, that in his younger years, Rubens diligently copied figures of naked combatants engraved by Barthel Beham (1502–1540).⁵²

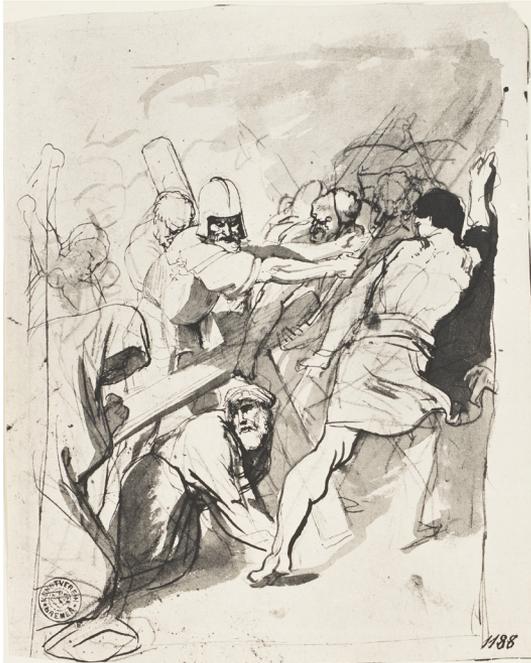
A more explicit reference to the ancient marble can be found in a later *Battle of the Amazons*, the one preserved in Munich and dated circa 1618 to 1619 (fig. 3).⁵³ Here, the pose of the Greek semi-nude warrior in profile, wearing a loincloth and a short sword on the top of the bridge, relates more clearly to the Borghese marble. However, Bert Schepers has pointed out two drawings that may have been used as sources for this figure.⁵⁴ One is an anonymous drawing, retouched by Rubens between 1612 and 1618, *Perseus showing the Head of Medusa to Phineus and his Companions*, which reproduces a section of Polidoro da Caravaggio's façade decoration of the Casino del Bufalo in Rome, around 1526.⁵⁵ The other is a quick sketch or scribble, showing a soldier in a pose very similar to that of the *Gladiator* in the lower right-hand corner of the sheet, which is believed to have been retouched by Rubens around 1609 (fig. 4).⁵⁶ This sketch is particularly relevant in my opinion, since this figure, with his head bent forward, followed by the rest of the body, suggests – unlike Polidoro's more static invention – the



3 Rubens, *Battle of the Amazons*, ca. 1618, oil on panel, 120.3 × 165.3 cm. Munich, Alte Pinakothek, inv. no. 324. Detail



4 Rubens, *Fighting soldiers over a study of a lying child*, ca. 1609, drawing, 22.8 × 30.0 cm. Oslo, Nasjonalgalleriet, inv. no. 5789v



5 Anthony van Dyck, *Christ Carrying the Cross*, circa 1617–1618, pen, brown ink and brown wash over black chalk, 22.5 × 18.4 cm. War loss, reproduction from the Baldin portfolio, Baldin_289



6 Jacob Jordaens, *Warriors Attacking a Ship*, ca. 1620, sketch in black chalk, brush and watercolour, 28.0 × 22.7 cm. Paris, École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts. Inv. no. E.B.A. 1730

same dynamism as the Borghese statue. A similar impulse is hinted at by the figure of the warrior, who occupies a prominent position in the Munich *Battle*. He is forcefully pulling a drape (a blue standard with crescents) with his left arm, trying to make the Amazon in the red tunic fall from her horse.⁵⁷ This group of figures, together with other fighting horsemen and women warriors in distress, occupies a central position in the upper register of the painting. It seems almost hard to believe that the inclusion of the *Gladiator* in this battle scene is a mere coincidence: Rubens would have known that the Greek statue was found at Anzio together with that of the *Amazon on Horseback*. Although these sculptures were “not of equal beauty”, as Giovanni Demisianos recorded in his *Discorso*, in 1613 they formed a marble group which occupied a prominent place in Scipione Borghese’s gallery in Rome.⁵⁸ Rubens’ allusion to these celebrated sculptures in the Munich painting is extremely ingenious and runs parallel to the genuine interest in Graeco-Roman art that the patron and first owner of Rubens’ masterpiece, Cornelis van der Geest (1577–1638), fostered at the time.⁵⁹

Around 1620 and even earlier, this ancient model was copied by Rubens’ assistants: In 1617, the young Van Dyck, who had probably been a pupil of Rubens for some years, executed *Christ Carrying the Cross*, a painting that was part of a cycle of 15 works commissioned by the Brotherhood of the Rosary for St Paul’s Church in Antwerp.⁶⁰ In it, and in two preparatory drawings, the pose of the executioner, seen from behind, lifting with his right arm the rope tightening Christ’s tunic, is inspired by that of the Borghese marble (fig. 5).⁶¹ Unlike the antique model, however, and perhaps for compositional reasons, Van Dyck inverted the position of the arms to allow the right one to extend to the side of the painting, so as not to interfere with the rest of the action. To achieve



7 Jacob Geubels II and Jan Raes, *Alexander the Great Wounded at the Battle of Issus*, ca. 1626–1630, tapestry, 690 × 432 cm. Milan, Collezioni delle Civiche Raccolte d'Arte Applicata del Castello Sforzesco, inv. no. 0041

the desired outcome, it seems that the young painter drew on the available material in the master's studio, but it cannot be ruled out that he, at the same time, made anatomical studies from a live model to correct the muscles of the upper back as a result of the inverted torso twist.⁶² Taking his cue from the *Gladiator*, Van Dyck succeeded in this ambitious early work, both in conveying the violence of the action and in creating, through the numerous diagonals generated by the halberds and the pose of the executioner, a work of forceful dynamism.

Around 1620, Jacob Jordaens (1593–1678), who was probably collaborating as an independent master in Rubens' studio at that time, executed a sketch in brush and watercolor whose composition bears some degree of stylistic affinity to the *Battle of the Amazons* in Munich (fig. 6).⁶³ For instance, the man pulling up with both arms a companion who had fallen from the ship is very similar to the figure seen on the far left of Rubens' painting, pulling the robes of the slain Amazons to throw their bodies into the river Thermodon, the place where, according to the Attic fable, the Amazonian invasion took place.⁶⁴ In the foreground on the right and on a larger scale (in Jordaens' sketch), a warrior, who is holding a sword and shielding himself with his left arm, bears a striking resemblance to the semi-nude man fighting the Amazon on horseback in Rubens' battle scene and, consequently, to the *Borghese Gladiator*. This sketch is a study for the left half of Jordaens' composition which was in turn used for the tapestry *Alexander the Great Wounded at the Battle of Issus*, one of eight pieces in *The History of Alexander the Great*, dated around 1628–1630, probably even earlier in 1626 (fig. 7).⁶⁵ In the design for the tapestry, the Persian soldier who strikes Alexander with his weapon nevertheless assumes a stationary position with his body leaning backwards, which makes this figure in part inspired by the man in Jordaens' sketch (fig. 6), in part modeled on the statuette of Willem van Tetrode (circa



8 After Willem van Tetrode (ca. 1525–1580), *Écorché of a Man Falling Backwards*, plaster cast, h. 51 cm. Paris, École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, inv. no. MU 12044

1525–1580), an ‘écorché’ figure copied several times in Rubens’ workshop for the study of anatomy (fig. 8).⁶⁶ Jordaens depicted the same man in a close-up study on paper together with the heads of two women (fig. 9); this torso is clearly a detailed representation of the warrior in the foreground of Jordaens’ sketch and, at the same time, shows remarkable affinities with a drawing of Rubens of Tetrodes’ ‘écorché’ (fig. 10).⁶⁷ It seems, therefore, that Jordaens studied the master’s anatomical drawings closely, but at the same time wanted to suggest a link with the ancient marble.

Rubens reused the motif of the *Borghese Gladiator* on many occasions; sometimes the statue is viewed from different angles, other times it is used as a preliminary step in inventing new figures.⁶⁸ As such it appears in later paintings, the Munich *Fall of the Damned* of 1621 and The National Gallery *Rape of the Sabines* from the 1630s.⁶⁹ In the London painting in particular, Rubens showed a Roman soldier holding a ‘parma’ and a short sword, whose figure seems to be copied directly from François Perrier’s *Icones et segmenta* from 1638 (figs. 11, 12).⁷⁰ In fact, this figure seems

to originate from the specular image of one of the four prints published by Perrier, which reproduce the *Gladiator* from four different angles. If so, it is possible to establish a new ‘terminus post quem’ for this painting on panel, probably made after 1638, when Rubens was working on and completing large canvases such as *Consequences of War* and *The Martyrdom of St Peter*. However, unlike Perrier’s image, the soldier in the *Rape of the Sabines* is armed. Although in the 17th century shield and sword had never been integrated into the figure of the *Gladiator*, as Katrin Kalveram has argued, small bronzes from Berthelot’s workshop dating from the 1620s feature the man with both weapons, while some early variants attributed to the Florentine sculptor Giovanni Francesco Susini (1585–1653) show the bronze statuette armed only with a sword.⁷¹ This suggests that Rubens was well informed about details of antiquarian interest.

The examples given so far illustrate that the *Gladiator* was often used as a prototype in Rubens’ workshop and adapted to various contexts. However, sometimes, as Bellori claimed, the artist quoted ancient marbles, distorted their shape and made these models not easily discernible to the viewer.⁷² It is therefore rather problematic to establish with certainty in which cases Rubens intentionally quoted the Borghese marble. The situation is also complicated by the workshop’s practice of using ‘écorché’ models adapted to the desired pose or examined from different perspectives to study the figure in motion. Ulrich Heinen observed that the posture of a late 16th century Parisian cast taken from an



9 Jacob Jordaens, *Study of a Man's Torso and Two Female Heads*, ca. 1623–1625, oil on paper, mounted on panel, 41 × 51 cm. Antwerp, Koninklijke Museum voor Schone Kunsten, inv. no. 819. Detail



10 Rubens, *Anatomical Study of a Man moving to the right*, ca. 1606–1608. Red chalk, 27.3 × 19.2 cm, Ms Tzila and Mr Aviel Krugier, inv. no. FJK 112

'écorché' model, which has been linked to Rubens' anatomical studies, surprisingly is almost identical to that of the Borghese statue.⁷³ The pose of the ancient marble can in fact easily be recreated by rotating the cast forward, resting it on the right leg and slightly altering the position of the arm.⁷⁴ It is therefore sometimes difficult to distinguish Rubens' copy of the 'écorché' statuette from his adaptations of the ancient model.⁷⁵ Yet imitating a statue from a prominent Roman collection, rather than an anatomical figure, was intended to dignify the work of an artist and, in certain cases, to accommodate the taste of his patrons. In any case, the possibility that a cast of the sculpture was purchased must also be considered. In 1617, the restorer of the famous marble, Guillaume Berthelot, had returned to his native France.⁷⁶ Within two decades of his return, large-scale bronzes were cast in Paris and are listed in the inventories of the French royal collections.⁷⁷ It is therefore very likely that Berthelot brought with him bronze statuettes and moulds taken from the original he had restored in Rome in 1611.⁷⁸ A bronze replica, one such as those that were cast in Berthelot's workshop, may have been used by Rubens and his assistants to examine the sculpture from different perspectives (fig. 13).⁷⁹ Berthelot and Rubens became acquainted around 1622 when both artists were involved in the decorative program of Maria de' Medici's Luxembourg Palace.⁸⁰ It was precisely in those years that ideas and models began to circulate and, thanks to the mediation of Rubens' friend Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc (1580–1637), a collaboration was established between the Flemish painter and the French sculptor to define the iconography of the statues that were to be representing the virtues of the Queen Mother around the Luxembourg Palace.⁸¹ It is perhaps no coincidence that Rubens introduced the *Gladiator* motif



11 Rubens, *The Rape of the Sabines*, ca. 1635–1640, oil on panel, 169.9 × 236.2 cm. London, The National Gallery, inv. no. NG38. Detail



12 François Perrier, *The Borghese Gladiator*, inv. no. 0000. GRO2015.II

several times within the series of paintings dedicated to Maria de' Medici.⁸² Worthy of mention, for instance, is a drawing on paper – known only through a photograph – whose verso shows, in the form of 'crabbelinghe', scribbles, several figures quickly drawn for the Medici cycle: the one at the lower left is an early study of the king who is lifted up in the *Apotheosis of Henry IV*, for which the painter seems to have been inspired by the statue of the *Gladiator*, seen from below (figs. 14, 15).⁸³ Of course, on this occasion Rubens must have been looking closely at one of the replicas, possibly life-size, that were by then widespread in the gardens of Parisian aristocratic residences around the 1620s.⁸⁴

The master's fondness for this ancient piece may have been prompted by several reasons: first, the statue embodied the epitome of anatomy and motion; second, the presence of the sculptor's signature enhanced its authenticity. The sculpture, showing a man in violent action, with his torso stretched forward and slightly twisted, his left leg extended behind while the right is bent forward, lent itself to the artistic investigation of anatomy, dynamism and expressiveness.⁸⁵ Along with other artists of his time, Rubens showed a great interest in the human figure, the representation of the passions and anatomy.⁸⁶ His knowledge of these subjects is attested not only by his careful study of antique marbles, but also by his sketchbooks. During his lifetime, the Flemish master accumulated a large amount of material – drawings and notes – which he used for didactic purposes. The Anatomy book, for instance,

along with the Theoretical notebook, was part of the material that the master made available exclusively to his pupils in the studio.⁸⁷

The reasons mentioned above resonate in the words penned by Rubens himself and his closest collaborators in his lost Theoretical notebook. Rubens' notes on ancient statuary and the human figure were copied by his assistants inside the studio and luckily survive in four transcripts.⁸⁸ In one of them, the Ms. de Ganay, for instance, the essay on the geometrical elements (the cube, the circle and the triangulum, or pyramid) that constitute the human figure contains a description of the different types of strong bodies, based partly on knowledge of classical statuary and partly on the systems of anthropometric measurement developed by Leonardo da Vinci and Albrecht Dürer in previous centuries.⁸⁹

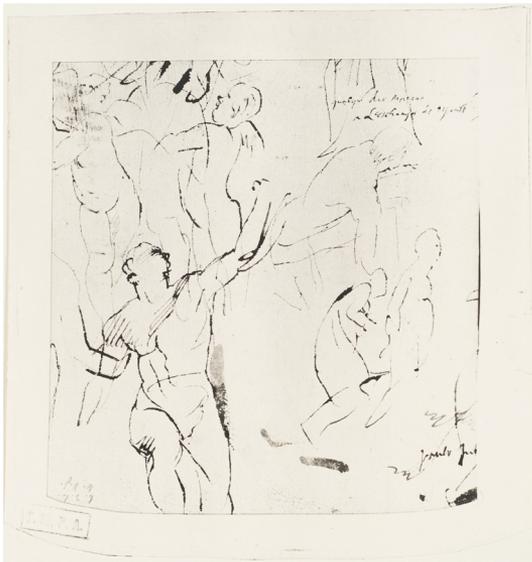
Indeed, Rubens had the opportunity to closely examine Leonardo's manuscripts containing his observations on the theory of proportions and anatomy,⁹⁰ while a well-known and often quoted autograph sheet, with six lines in Latin on the verso on the four types of human proportions, bears witness to Rubens' knowledge of Dürer's popular treatise *Vier Bücher von menschlicher Proportion* (1528).⁹¹ Not only did the young Rubens study the way in which Dürer applied geometry to the representation of the human body, defining the proportional ratios between the various limbs and the volumes of bodies, he also became familiar with Dürer's other major treatise on measurements and proportions, *Underweysung der Messung*. No less than two editions of this book, the German edition published by Dürer himself in 1525 and its Latin translation, *Institutiones geometricae*, by the classical scholar Joachim Camerarius (1500–1574) belonged to the library of Rubens' son Albert, who most likely inherited them from his father.⁹² However, although Rubens was aware of the content of these theoretical studies, in his essay on the human figure he distances himself from his predecessors and reaches entirely original conclusions. The painter argued, for example, that every geometric form, which itself is based on a numerical element, is at the origin of the human figure. In the case of the perfect male and athletic body, it is the cube or perfect square that constitutes the geometric form at the basis of all robust and compact bodies.⁹³ In a similar way to Dürer, Rubens identified three types of virile and strong bodies, all based on the cube, but differentiated from each other by the progressive elongation of the limbs and the decrease in fleshiness.⁹⁴ Unlike the Nuremberg master, Rubens examined these types in relation to the most representative statues handed down to us by the ancients.⁹⁵ Alongside the *Hercules* of Glykon, which Rubens admired and drew many times, and the statue of the *Nile* in the Vatican gardens, both representative of the first and second typology respectively, the *Gladiator* of Villa Borghese, with his extended and elongated limbs, was erected as an undisputed model of the third typology of the strong man.⁹⁶ The anonymous copyist of Ms. de Ganay described the statue in these terms: "The third type of strong bodies is more muscular, with large bones, a longer head, extended arms, legs and shins, a flat and firm belly, the flesh so shrunken on every part of the body that sinews are visible and appear here



13 Anonymous Italian sculptor, *The Borghese Gladiator*, first half 17th century, bronze replica, h. 24.5 cm, inv. no. RH.B.044



14 Rubens, *The Death of Henry IV and the Proclamation of the Regency*, ca. 1622, oil on panel, 48 x 65.6 cm, inv. no. Γ3-514. Detail



15 Rubens, *Study on the Apotheosis of Henry IV and other figures*, ca. 1622, drawing, 17.5 x 17.1 cm. War loss, reproduction from the Baldin portfolio, Baldin_274 verso

unfortunately does not include a drawing of the statue), found in another section of the Ms. de Ganay, entitled *The Stances of a Human Figure or Various Ways of Standing*. Here the Gladiator is mentioned once again, this time as a celebrated example among the ancients of the figure in motion: “The ancients also made statues of none of the aforementioned types, but in full motion, like that of the Gladiator

and there on the body as if it they were strings, but not without elegance, however difficult to achieve in this type of statue, as it requires extreme temperance in everything. The most striking example is that of the Gladiator inflicting and repelling a blow at the same time, at Villa Borghese in Rome, the masterpiece of Agaza Deophani of Ephesus, to be seen and admired from all four sides.”⁹⁷ The statue in the Borghese collection is praised for the vigour expressed by the tense muscles of the gladiator, caught in the act of “inflicting and repelling a blow at the same time.” Van der Meulen rightly observed that the phrase transcribed by the copyist in the Ms. de Ganay, “Gladiator ictum intentans simul ac repellens”, is the same as the one used by Perrier in his *Icones et segmenta* of 1638.⁹⁸ All this seems to indicate the presence of a late addition, perhaps by one of Rubens’ pupils working in the studio and who had easy access to the available material. However, since the copyist takes up a sentence published by the French engraver in 1638 and adds that the statue can be admired from all four sides – another clear reference to Perrier’s publication that reproduced the sculpture seen from four angles – I wonder if this Rubens’ collaborator did not copy original notes by the master, written around that date. In fact, as mentioned earlier, it was around this time that Rubens painted the *Rape of the Sabines*, in which the Roman soldier is modeled on one of Perrier’s four prints. If this is true, it means that this passage from the section on *The Constituting Parts of the Human Figure* was not added by others but rather was copied from Rubens’ late notes.

The situation is different for a second quotation of the *Gladiator* (which

in the Villa Borghese: with a vigorous charge he is at the same time striking and repelling a blow.⁹⁹ As already noted by previous scholars, for this section, which explores the various postures, attitudes and movements of the human figure, again in accordance with classical statuary, the copyist drew on prints from the 'editio princeps' of Leonardo's *Trattato della Pittura*, published in Paris in 1651, and which were in turn based on drawings by Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665).¹⁰⁰ It is perhaps no coincidence that the copyist of the Ms. de Ganay mentioned the *Gladiator*, as Poussin himself had been inspired by the famous marble in inventing one of the figures drawn for the *Trattato*, "on a man who wants to throw something far away with great force".¹⁰¹ The Frenchman's illustrations, marked by a nascent taste for the classicist style and a renewed interest in Greek statuary, echoed in this section of the Ms. de Ganay.

In general, it can be inferred from the notes that Rubens and his close associates shared the common 17th century idea of the Borghese statue as a 'gladiator', although the master adapted, as was his custom, the figure to the most diverse contexts: sometimes the pose was used to represent a soldier or a biblical figure, other times a vice or a doomed soul.¹⁰² Furthermore, it is possible to provide a more precise dating of the notes in the Ms. de Ganay, in which we find some references to the Borghese marble. Since the copyist relied on Poussin's illustrations and quoted in Latin, often with free interpretations of the text, some passages from the *Trattato*, published in 1651, and since he mentioned Rome as the place where one could admire the Medici Venus, transported to Florence in 1677, this means that the Ms. de Ganay was compiled by a Rubens collaborator between 1651 and 1677 and that the section on the stances of the human figure is a late addition to the master's original material.¹⁰³

Conclusion

Immediately after its discovery, the *Borghese Gladiator* aroused great enthusiasm in the humanist milieu of the 17th century: drawings of the statue circulated together with small-scale reproductions, antiquarians and philologists began to discuss its significance. Around 1620, in less than ten years after its restoration, bronze statuettes of the *Gladiator* became widespread and enriched French aristocratic collections; within a few years, replicas in various dimensions spread throughout northern Europe. They were erected in the privy gardens of princely patrons, powerful kings and their wealthy courtiers or were used in artists' studios as an aid to the observation of human anatomy and the study of proportions. Even Rubens, the illustrious court painter in the service of the monarchs, was not indifferent to the novelty. He copied the Borghese marble countless times and adapted it to his various religious and secular compositions. The elegant, harmonious posture of the figure, its elongated proportions with the limbs stretched out in a beautiful diagonal full of contrast had certainly fascinated the artist. The subject was clearly suited to the artistic education of assistants in the studio: its pose, with the body reclining forward in full muscular tension was carefully studied. In the Ms. de Ganay, one of the four manuscript copies based on the lost Theoretical notebook, the *Gladiator* was chosen as an exemplary model for the representation of the human figure in forceful movement. This indicates that whoever compiled the Ms. de Ganay, probably a collaborator of Rubens, was a spokesman for the great legacy left by the master of observing the teachings of the ancients and studying anatomy according to classical statuary. But how did Rubens and his studio know about this lucky find? In Rome, where the statue had been excavated, drawings, casts and information concerning the sculpture began to circulate among members of the Lincean Academy and friends of the artist soon after its restoration in the summer of 1611. By this time, Rubens had settled in Antwerp and would never see the statue in the collection of Scipione Borghese in Rome. The correspondence of the summer

of 1611, when the *Gladiator* was being restored, shows that, at this time, a lively conversation was taking place about the Borghese marble, its meaning, posture, pathos and its maker. Although we cannot establish this with certainty, due consideration must be given to the possibility that Rubens came into possession of information about the *Gladiator* through his correspondents: Johann Faber, Marcus Welser and Justus Rycquius. In addition to early references that would support this hypothesis, the Antwerp master included the statue in the Munich *Battle of the Amazons* of 1618, almost as if he wanted to hint at and pay homage to the antiquities from the Borghese collection that occupied a prominent position in the Cardinal's gallery: the *Gladiator* in combat with the *Amazon on Horseback*. This would attest once again to Rubens' well-known interest in antiquarian matters, an interest shared with the Lincean associates with whom he was in ongoing correspondence before and after his departure from Italy. Rubens was part of this network of scholars where, alongside physics, alchemy and natural history, antiquarian studies were also pursued, thus promoting a collaborative enterprise where communication between colleagues from different disciplines was the fundamental principle.

Notes

- I would like to warmly thank Petra Maclot, Marcia Pointon, Ulrich Heinen, Bert Schepers, Alfonso Paoletta and Erminia Acampora for their continued support and for contributing, with their advice, to the improvement of this article.
- 1 The 'pietra lucifera' experiment is also called 'spongia solis', named after a mineral that was made luminescent by attracting glowing corpuscles like a magnet. It was applied during observations on the physics of light involving some members of the Lincean Academy around 1611.
 - 2 Marcus Welser to Johannes Faber, Roma, Arch. Orfani, filza 419, c. 13: "Se V.S. mi potesse mandare un poco di ritratto della statua trovata ultimamente ad Anzio, ne riceverei molto favore. Il sigr. Tullio forse le ne potrà dar indirizzo." The letter is published by G. Gabrieli, *Il Carteggio Linceo*, Rome 1996, a reprint of the original edition is published in: *Atti della Reale Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei 1938 (XVI). Serie sesta. Memorie della Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, Rome 1938, vol. 7, pp. 172–173, no. 74. It is interesting to point out that Welser had been informed of the recent discovery by Justus Rycquius in his letter dating from the 11th June 1611, see later in this essay, note 37.
 - 3 F. Haskell and N. Penny, *Taste and the Antique. The Lure of Classical Sculpture 1500–1900*, New Haven and London 1981, pp. 221–224, no. 43, fig. 115. The Borghese Gladiator (A.D. 100) is now in the Louvre, MR 224. Marble, h. 199 cm. Inscribed: ΑΓΑΣΙΑΣ ΔΩΣΙΘΕΟΥ ΕΦΕΣΙΟΣ ΕΠΟΙΕΙ (Agasia of Ephesus, son of Dositheus, realized this). Although later commentators have established that the sculpture does not show a gladiator, but a warrior being attacked by someone on horseback, 17th century antiquarians generally agreed that the subject was a gladiator, see Haskell/Penny 1981 (as in note 3), p. 222. In this article I have therefore opted for the term in use in the 1600s. To admire the statue from different angles and for a comparison with the references to it in Rubens' work, see the 3D Reconstruction of the Borghese Gladiator made by the Real Academia de Bellas Artes in San Fernando with a plaster cast from the Mengs Collection, inv. no. V-024; see <https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/glad-iador-borghese-7fbc37d3b48f4cb4bc4cae2c760a4ad5> (18.05.2022).
 - 4 However, it is worth pointing out the pioneering contribution of F. Huemer, *Rubens and the Roman Circle. Studies of the First Decade*, New York and London 1996, who addresses the relationship between Rubens and the Linceans; see also U. Heinen, "Haut und Knochen – Fleisch und Blut. Rubens' Affektmalerei", in: *Rubens passioni: Kultur der Leidenschaften im Barock*, ed. by U. Heinen et al., Göttingen 2001, pp. 70–109; Irene Baldriga, *L'occhio della linca. I primi lincei tra arte, scienza e collezionismo (1603–1630)*, Rome 2002, chs. 4–5; more recently, see B. Uppenkamp and B. van Beneden, "Rubens and Antiquarianism. New Thoughts on the Two Versions of The Massacre of the Innocents", in: *Art and Knowledge in Rome and the Early Modern Republic of Letters. 1500–1750*, ed. by T. Weststeijn, Turnhout 2014, pp. 139–176.
 - 5 On Marcus Welser and his role as mediator in the Republic of Letters, see R. J. W. Evans, "Rantzau and Welser: Aspects of later German humanism", in: *History of European Ideas* 5 (1984), pp. 257–272; M. U. Ferber, *Scio te multos amicos habere. Wissensver-*

- mittlung und Wissenssicherung im Späthumanismus am Beispiel des Epistolariums von Marx Welser d.J. (1558–1614)*, Augsburg 2008.
- 6 J. Papy, "Lipsius and Marcus Welser: The Antiquarian's Life as 'via media'", in: *The World of Justus Lipsius: A Contribution towards his Intellectual Biography. Proceedings of a Colloquium Held under the Auspices of the Belgian Historical Institute in Rome*, ed. by M. Laureys, Rome 1998, pp. 177–178.
 - 7 *Ibid.*, p. 179.
 - 8 Philip Rubens to Marcus Welser, 22nd July 1611, see M. Rooses and C. Ruelens, *Correspondance de Rubens et documents épistolaires concernant sa vie et ses oeuvres*, 6 vols., Antwerp 1887–1909, vol. 1, pp. 38–42, no. CXXIX.
 - 9 *Ibid.*, p. 38: "Quam censendi judicandique operam sponte mea sumere vererer, eam te Pratore volente jubente non possum non suscipere. Dicam itaque, quæ mea, quæ fratris rerum antiquarum nec incuriosi nec imperiti super sigillo tuo conjectura sit."
 - 10 *Ibid.*, pp. 42–43. In his book *Adagia sive Proverbia Græcorum*, Antwerp 1612, Schottus inserted the opinion of the Rubens brothers in a long note about Proverb 75 (Appendix Vatic. P. 272). Rubens' reputation as a connoisseur of antiquities also stemmed from the work he had done for his brother's book on ancient costumes, *Electorum libri II* (Antwerp, 1608).
 - 11 In the summer of 1606, Rubens was treated by Faber for pleurisy. This event was narrated by Faber some twenty years later in his *Animalia Mexicana*, published by Giacomo Mascardi in Rome in 1628; see G. Gabrieli, "Ricordi Romani di P. P. Rubens", in: *Bollettino d'Arte del Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione* 7 (1928), pp. 596–609, Huemer 1996 (as in note 4), p. 8, note 17.
 - 12 Teresa Esposito, *Rubens and Modern Science. Mastering Natural Philosophy in 17th century Europe*, forthcoming. Schoppe, together with the Rubens brothers, was also involved in the publication of an important archaeological work, *Imagines illustrium ex Fulvii Ursinii bibliotheca a Th. Gallæo expressas*. The work saw Faber as the author of the commentary on the antiquities in Fulvio Orsini's collection and Theodoor Galle (1571–1633) as the author of the engravings; it was published in Antwerp by Balthasar Moretus in 1606. On the history of this publication, see Huemer 1996 (as in note 4), p. 9; Baldriga 2002 (as in note 4), pp. 149, 152.
 - 13 The Vatican gardens were in front of the Casino of Pius IV, inside the Belvedere Court.
 - 14 On Faber's role as a patron of the arts, see Baldriga 2002 (as in note 4), pp. 172–180.
 - 15 In 1611, Scipione Borghese had become Cardinal Protector of the German 'natio' as well as patron of the Vatican Library, see M. Faber, *Scipione Borghese als Kardinalprotektor. Studien zur römischen Mikropolitik in der frühen Neuzeit*, Magonza 2005; id., "Il cardinale Scipione Borghese protettore di Germania (1611–1633)", in: *Gli 'angeli custodi' delle monarchie. I cardinali protettori delle nazioni*, ed. by M. Sanfilippo et al., Viterbo 2019, pp. 33–151.
 - 16 Johannes Faber to Orazio Tabulazio, 25th April 1608: "Io ho presentato li miei literi al Sig. Card. Borghese, quali mi ha fatto bona cera, et mi ha detto che uno di questi giorni parlaremo a lungo che vorrebbe anco esso fare un giardinetto non so in che luoco"; see BANL (Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, Roma), Fondo Faber, vol. 419, fol. 659r, quoted in Baldriga 2002 (as in note 4), pp. 197–198.
 - 17 On the Church of Santa Maria dell'Anima, see I. Polverini Fosi, "A proposito di una lacuna storiografica. La nazione tedesca a Roma nei primi secoli dell'età moderna", in: *Roma moderna e contemporanea* 1 (1993), pp. 45–56.
 - 18 M. Van der Meulen, "Rubens and the Antique Sculpture Collections in Rome", in: *Genese bijdragen tot de kunstgeschiedenis* 24 (1976–1978), pp. 152–153. Although no original drawing by Rubens survives, his visit of the Cesi collection is documented by engravings of the celebrated antique statue garden after lost drawings, made by Rubens to illustrate his brother's book, *Electorum libri II* (Antwerp, 1608). Evidence of drawings after some sculptures in the Cesi collection is further given by copies made by Rubens' assistants (from Rubens' 'cantoor') and by notes included in the surviving manuscript copies of Rubens' lost Theoretical notebook.
 - 19 The young Federico Cesi was on friendly terms with Scipione Borghese, who was to be the witness at his second marriage in 1617. Gabrieli 1996 (as in note 2), p. 589–590, note 3.
 - 20 Welser joined Cesi's Academy in the summer of 1612.
 - 21 Rycquius to Faber, 22nd May 1614: "Rubenium Belgarum decus et ævi nostri Apellem ex te et Gravio salutavi; quibus ille nominibus auditis, visus est ad novam lætitiã excitari", cf. Gabrieli 1996 (as in note 2), p. 431, letter no. 324.
 - 22 Rome, Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe, Fondo Corsini 127308, scat. V, grandi formati, album 2, fol. 9. L. De Lachenal first published this drawing with an attribution to Giovanni Angelo Canini (1617–1666), "La collezione di sculture antiche della famiglia Borghese e il palazzo in Campo Marzio", in: *Xenia* IV (1982), p. 65, fig. 36. K. Kalveram subsequently rejected the attribution on the grounds that the drawing was made before the statue was restored in 1611; cf. id., *Die Antikensammlung des kardinals Scipione Borghese*, Worms 1995, p. 111, no. 100.
 - 23 A. Pasquier, *D'après l'antique*, ed. by Laurence Posselle, exh. cat. Musée du Louvre Paris, Paris 2000, p. 280, cat. no. 109.
 - 24 By October 1608, the young Rubens had completed the altarpiece of the *Virgin Adored by Saints*, which would adorn the high altar of the Oratorian church of Santa Maria in Vallicella. A few years later, between 1614 and 1615, Berthelot executed the wooden crucifix, enclosed in a niche, which would have been placed above Rubens' magnificent altarpiece, see C. Barbieri et al., *Santa Maria in Vallicella*, Rome 1995, pp. 33, 52. On Berthelot as restorer of the Borghese marble see F. de La Moureyre, "Guillaume Bertelot (1583–1648). Les années romaines et la restauration du Gladiateur Borghese", in: *Bulletin de la Société de l'His-*

- toire de l'Art Français (2003), pp. 119–134. The restoration of the *Borghese Gladiator* has previously been attributed either to Nicolas Cordier, 'il Franciosino', at that time pontifical sculptor and responsible for the restoration of several ancient marbles in the collection of Scipione Borghese, see S. Pressouyre, *Nicolas Cordier. Recherches sur la sculpture à Rome autour de 1600 (Publications de l'École française de Rome 73)*, Rome 1984, pp. 307–308, doc. no. 224, or Pietro Bernini, whose workshop was located near S. Maria Maggiore, see Kalveram 1995 (as in note 22), pp. 113, 209, no. 94, figs. 108–109.
- 25 On Guillaume Berthelot, see G. Baglione, *Le vite de' pittori, scultori et architetti: Dal Pontificato di Gregorio XIII. del 1572. In fino a' tempi di Papa Urbano Ottavo nel 1642*, Rome 1642, pp. 338–339; A. Bertolotti, *Artisti francesi in Roma nei secoli XV, XVI e XVII. Ricerche e studi negli archivi romani*, Mantua 1886, pp. 162–163, 200.
- 26 N. Büttner, *Allegories and Subjects from Literature (Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard 12)*, 2 vols., London and Turnhout 2018, vol. 1, p. 258, cat. No. 30. Although Rubens' drawing *Three Écorché Nudes in Combat* (Toronto, Art Gallery of Ontario, Thomson Collection) shows an *écorché* that, seen from the back, displays great similarity with the pose of the Borghese marble, the subject cannot have any relation to the antiquity, as for technical and stylistic reasons this drawing could not have been made after 1608, i.e. after Rubens' stay in Italy. In addition, the anatomical model copied by Rubens, probably in plaster, dates from the late 16th century and therefore could never have imitated the pose of a sculpture discovered in subsequent decades.
- 27 BAV (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Città del Vaticano), Urbanat. lat. 1079, fol. 423v, quoted in Kalveram 1995 (as in note 22), p. 111: "Vicino Santa Maria Maggiore si sarcisce la statua d'un gladiatore, cosa rara trovata in Nettuno, et dal nome del scultore si cava, che sia stata fatta di più de 2mila anni et si condurrà poi nel giardino del cardinal Borghese."
- 28 Near Anzio, one hundred years earlier, the celebrated Apollo del Belvedere was found, see A. Coliva, "La storia di una famiglia come avventura collezionistica", in: *I Borghese e l'antico*, ed. by E. Bagnoni, exh. cat. Galleria Borghese Rome, Milan 2011, p. 28. On the finding of the *Amazon* statue, see Kalveram 1995 (as in note 22), cat. 94 and 227; C. Gasparri, "Marmi antichi a Villa Borghese. Tre secoli di storia del collezionismo a Roma", in: Exh. cat. Rome 2011 (as in note 28), p. 78 note 28.
- 29 For a biography on Giovanni Demisianos, see G. Gabrieli, "Un greco di Cefalonia accademico dei primi Lincei: Giovanni Demisianos", in: *Studi Bizantini 2* (1927), pp. 213–314.
- 30 G. Gabrieli, *Contributi alla storia dell'Accademia dei Lincei*, 2 vols., Rome 1989, vol. 1, p. 520.
- 31 The manuscript is kept in the AAV (Archivio Apostolico Vaticano), Fondo Borghese II, p. 468, Discorsi diversi, fols. 43–66. Demisianos wrote on fol. 45v–46r: "Dico dunque, che sebene questi simulacri non sono ne di uno stesso Artefice, ne di pari bellezze, nondimeno siano stati raccolti, et in un luogo collocate, per rappresentarci l'Historia di Penteseila Reina delle Amazoni, di due Cavalieri Greci da lei morti, e finalmente di Achille, che la trionfatrice Penteseila uccide", see Kalveram 1995 (as in note 22), p. 113, note 109 and p. 209.
- 32 Manuscript, AAV, Fondo Borghese IV, p. 102.
- 33 Interestingly, Rycquius wrote to Welser on the same day that the 'avviso' first mentioned the statue in the restorer's workshop near Santa Maria Maggiore. For the letter, see J. Rycquius, *Epistolarum selectarum Centuria altera nova, in qua mixtim quaesita & censurae*, Leuven 1615, letter no. XLII, pp. 132–138. I am particularly grateful to Alfonso Paoletta for discussing with me the content of Rycquius' letter.
- 34 For the life and work of Justus Rycquius I have consulted the writings of R. Van den Berghe, "Justus Rycquius", in: *Messageur des sciences historiques* (1880), pp. 12–32; Gabrieli 1989 (as in note 30), vol. 2, pp. 1133–1175.
- 35 Van den Berghe 1880 (as in note 34), p. 15.
- 36 Rycquius 1615 (as in note 33), pp. 132–133: "[...] Pugnantes illa Militem, aut Ducem repraesentat (sunt qui Heroa esse velint) sublato in caelum clypeo, (cujus fasciam interiorem pugno adhuc stringit) adversarii ictum, ex equo aut colliculo imminenti, excipere non verentem. Si formam spectas, eam vultu ferocitatem atque omni corporis habitu fortitudinem praesefert, ut mori prius velle videatur, quam è statu suo dimoveri. Qui quidem status virilis effectiq; roboris summam signo commendationem addit, & magisterio ultimam poene manum imponit. Corpus totum e candido marmore, Graeca consuetudine omnino nudum, eaque membrorum expressum, ut eo perfectius vedeatur, quo diutius inspicitur. Deest illi dextrorum brachium, quod gladiolo olim aut telo fuisse obarmatum, ipse compositi ad reverberandum habitus ostendit [...]."
- 37 During those years, Guillaume Berthelot was responsible, along with others, for the sculptural bronze decoration in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore at the request of Pope Paul V, see Baglione 1642 (as in note 25), pp. 338–339.
- 38 J. Rycquius, *Pietas in funere Ampliss. Et Cl. V. Marci Velseri R. P. Avgustanae Vindel. Praef. Perp. Ad Cl. V. Ioannem Brantium Senatvi Antverpiensi Ab Actis*, in: *S. Asterii Episcopi Amaseae Homiliae Graece et Latine nunc primum editae Philippo Rubenio interprete*, Antwerp 1615, pp. 275–284 (repr. in Marcus Welser, *Marci Velseri. Opera historica et philologica, sacra et profana*, Nürnberg 1682), December 13, 1614: "Have mi Branti, cum optimo Doctissimoque Viro P. Andrea Schotto, & illo aevi nostri Apelle Petro Paullo Rubenio genero tuo."
- 39 Rooses/Ruelens 1887–1909 (as in note 8), vol. 2, pp. 74–75, no. CXXXIX.
- 40 Van der Meulen 1976–1978 (as in note 18), pp. 149–152; id., *Copies after the Antique (Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard 23)*, London 1994–1995, cat. nos. 7–13; 61; 63; 64; 65–69; 99; 139; 140–141.
- 41 In his letter to Annibale Chieppio of the 2nd December 1606, Rubens mentions Scipione Borghese among his patrons (*The Letters of P. P. Rubens*, ed. by R. S. Magurn, Cambridge, MA 1955, p. 39, no. 14): "Besides, I should do the greatest injustice to all my

- patrons, and they would be very much displeased. In fact, when I showed some hesitation, because of my obligations to Mantua, they offered, in such a case, to intercede for me with my Lord the Duke; they protested that His Most Serene Highness ought to be very much pleased to have one of his servants do him such honor in Rome. Among others, I know that Cardinal Borghese would not fail to speak on my behalf [...].” During his first trip to Rome (1601–1602), Rubens depicted *The Lamentation of Christ* (oil on canvas, 180 × 137 cm, Rome, Galleria Borghese, inv. no. 411), which likely belonged to Scipione’s collection even though he probably did not commission it, see J. Richard Judson, *The Passion of Christ (Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard 6)*, London and Turnhout 2000, pp. 211–214, no. 59, fig. 185.
- 42 Giovan Pietro Bellori. *The Lives of the Modern Painters, Sculptors, and Architects. A New Translation and Critical Edition*, ed. by A. S. Wohl et al., Cambridge 2005, p. 205.
- 43 Unfortunately, little is known about Rubens’ workshop and its members, although the artist, upon returning to his native city, immediately enjoyed a remarkable reputation and could dispose of a considerable fortune, see N. Büttner, “Aristocracy and Noble Business. Some Remarks on Rubens’s Financial Affairs”, in: *Munuscula amicorum. Contributions on Rubens and his Colleagues in Honor of Hans Vlieghe*, ed. by K. van der Stighelen, Turnhout 2005, pp. 67–78. There are two relevant publications on this subject by A. Balis, “Fatto da un mio discepolo. Rubens’s Studio Practices Reviewed”, in: *Rubens and his Workshop. The Flight of Lot and his Family from Sodom*, ed. by Toshiharu Nakamura, Tokyo 1994, pp. 97–127; id., “Rubens and his Studio. Defining the Problem”, in: *Rubens: A Genius at Work. The Works of Peter Paul Rubens. Works in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium Reconsidered*, ed. by J. Vander Auwera et al., exh. cat. Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium Brussels), Tielt 2007, pp. 30–51.
- 44 Anthony van Dyck, *Emperor Hadrian and his wife Sabina as Mars and Venus*, circa 1622–1623, black chalk, 45.8 × 31.4 cm, Hermitage, St Petersburg, inv. no. OR 5498. This drawing bore an earlier attribution to Rubens, later contested by Van der Meulen 1994–1995 (as in note 40), pp. 109–110, cat. no. 99, fig. 175, and by A. Balis, “Van Dyck’s Drawings after the Antique”, in: *Van Dyck 1599–1999. Conjectures and Refutations*, ed. by Hans Vlieghe, Turnhout 2001, 29–42, who convincingly assigned it to Van Dyck’s Roman period.
- 45 A. Larionov, “Anthonie van Dyck”, in: *Rubens, Van Dyck & Jordaens. Flemish painters from the Hermitage*, ed. by Natalja Babina, exh. cat. Hermitage Amsterdam, Amsterdam 2011, cat. no. 93, pp. 216–217.
- 46 Exh. cat. Rome 2011 (as in note 28), p. 169. The statue gave its name to the room that housed it, ‘stanza del Gladiatore’, room VI.
- 47 Wohl et al. 2005 (as in note 42), p. 206.
- 48 At the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, acquired in 2002 by Ken Thomson. On this painting see David Franklin, “Rubens’s The Massacre of the Innocents and Italian art”, in: *Early Rubens*, S. Suda et al., exh. cat. Art Gallery of Toronto, Munich 2019, pp. 54–61 and furth. lit.
- 49 With an identical posture, the figure can be found in the tapestry cartoon *Romulus Killing Remus* (National Museum of Wales, Cardiff), for which Michael Jaffé proposed it was based on a lost sketch by Rubens, cf. id., *Rubens. Catalogo Completo*, Milan 1989, p. 373, no. 1392, repr.). See E. McGrath, *Subjects from History (Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard 13)*, 2 vols., London and Turnhout 1997, vol. 1, pp. 119–120, fig. 83. McGrath excluded the possibility that Rubens could have been involved in this composition, however the pose of Romulus, who is shown violently attacking his brother, is clearly similar to that of the raging soldier in Rubens’ *Massacre of the Innocents*. The same pose is found in the figure on the left in *The Battle of Constantine and Licinius* (1622, Nelson-Atkins Gallery of Art, Kansas City, see Jaffé 1989, no. 687).
- 50 Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg, Potsdam, inv. no. GK I 10021.
- 51 D. Jaffé, *Rubens’s Massacre of the Innocents. The Thomson Collection at the Art Gallery of Ontario*, Toronto 2009, p. 126. Horses with pink manes are an invention that Van Veen regularly applied in his works, see for instance the recently found painting *The Capture of Rome (Roma Capta)*, dated circa 1600–1610. The large canvas is currently part of the art collection of the Phoebus Foundation in Antwerp and has been reproduced in a book published by the same foundation, see entry by L. Kelchtermans, in: *Wij. van zalig tot zot*, ed. by K. Van Cauteren, exh. cat. Kadriorg Art Museum Tallinn, Veurne 2020, pp. 322–323.
- 52 Rubens’ drawing is now in the National Gallery of Art Washington, DC (inv. no. 1984.3.57), see D. Jaffé and E. McGrath, *Rubens. A Master in the Making*, exh. cat. The National Gallery, London 2005, pp. 52–53, no. 6.
- 53 Oil on panel, 120.3 × 165.3 cm, inv. no. 324. There is a vast literature on this painting, so I will only refer to a few recent contributions by B. Schepers, “Battle of the Amazons”, in: *Mythological Subjects. Achilles to the Graces (Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard 11)*, ed. by I. Van Tichelen et al., 2 vols., London and Turnhout 2016, vol. 1, pp. 146–173, cat. no. 8; K. Renger and C. Denk, *Flämische Malerei des Barock in der Alten Pinakothek*, ed. by Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, exh. cat. Alte Pinakothek Munich, Köln 2002, pp. 350–355, no. 324; E. Juntunen, *Peter Paul Rubens’ bildimplizite Kunsttheorie in ausgewählten mythologischen Historien (1611–1618)*, Petersberg 2005, pp. 119–132.
- 54 Schepers 2016 (as in note 53), pp. 158–159, cat. no. 8, figs. 105 and 107.
- 55 Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. RF 704. J. Wood, *Copies and Adaptations from Renaissance and Earlier Artists: Italian Artists. I. Raphael and his School (Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard 26)*, 2 vols., London and Turnhout 2010, vol. 1, pp. 372–375, no. 81; vol. 2, fig. 207. Schepers 2016 (as in note 53), p. 169, note 114, fig. 105.

- 56 Nasjonalgalleriet Oslo, 22.8 × 30.0 cm, inv. no. 5789v. On this sheet, Rubens quickly drew fighting soldiers over a study of a lying child, which has been attributed to Michiel Coxcie, see Schepers 2016 (as in note 53), vol. 1, pp. 168–169, note 102, fig. 107.
- 57 Crescents decorate the military banners in the Potsdam battle, see Schepers 2016 (as in note 53), cat. no. 5a, pp. 113, 119, note 50. Elizabeth McGrath related them to the crescent shields, ‘lunatae peltae’, worn by women warriors in a passage from Virgil’s *Aeneid* (Book XI, pp. 659–663), cf. Exh. cat. London 2005, p. 43. This type of shield is described by Justus Lipsius in connection with the Amazons in his book on the Roman army. He cited several ancient sources, such as Virgil, Marcianus Capella and Isidore and added illustrations of the Amazons’ shields, cf. Lipsius, *De militia romana libri quinque, commentarius ad Polybium*, Antwerp 1614, 1596, lib. III, dial. I, pp. 384–385).
- 58 See note 31: the Greek Lincean Demisianos wrote that the *Gladiator* and the *Amazon* were made by different sculptors and were therefore not of equal beauty.
- 59 The *Battle of the Amazons* in Munich appears in Willem van Haecht’s painting illustrating the collection of the wealthy Antwerp merchant Cornelis van der Geest (1628, Rubenshuis, Antwerp), therefore it is generally assumed that Van der Geest may have been the first owner of Rubens’ painting, although it is unclear whether the merchant commissioned it. See Exh. cat. Munich 2002 (as in note 53), p. 354.
- 60 The exact date of Van Dyck’s training in Rubens’ studio is not known and is still a matter of controversy among scholars. See, for instance, *The Young Van Dyck*, ed. by A. Vergara and Friso Lammertse, exh. cat. Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid, Madrid 2012, pp. 24–25; For a different view on the subject, see S. Alsteens, “A note on the young Van Dyck”, in: *The Burlington Magazine* 156 (2014), pp. 85–90. On Van Dyck’s painting, see C. Baisier, *Antoon van Dyck anders bekeken. Over ‘registers en contrefeytsels, tronies en copyen’ in Antwerpse kerken en kloosters*, Antwerp 1999, pp. 60–67, cat. no. 28a; J. J. Pérez Preciado, in: Exh. cat. Madrid 2012 (as in note 60), pp. 149–151, cat. no. 21.
- 61 Anthony van Dyck, *Christ Carrying the Cross*, circa 1617–1618, pen, brown ink and brown wash over black chalk, 225 × 184 mm, formerly Kunsthalle Bremen, inv. no. 1188; Anthony van Dyck, *Christ Carrying the Cross*, circa 1617–1618, black chalk, pen and brown ink, 210 × 170 mm, Stedelijk Prentenkabinet Antwerp, inv. No. 375. On these drawings, see A.-M. Logan, in: Exh. cat. Madrid 2012 (as in note 60), pp. 138–148, cat. no. 20, figs. 50–51. A preparatory sketch, showing both the figure of the executioner seen from behind and that of Christ, fallen under the weight of the cross, is contained in the Ms. Chatsworth, fols. 11v–12r, one of the partial copies of Rubens’ Theoretical notebook, see M. Jaffé, *Van Dyck’s Antwerp Sketchbook*, 2 vols., London 1966, vol. 2, p. 219, with the Flemish inscription “vant schaeden te observeren”, translated in dialogue with Petra Maclot as “to observe suffering”.
- 62 On Van Dyck’s habit of studying live models, see A. Eaker, “Van Dyck between master and model”, in: *The Art Bulletin* 97 (2015), pp. 173–191.
- 63 Jordaens entered the Antwerp Guild of St Luke as an independent master in 1615, R.-A. d’Hulst, *Jacob Jordaens. Tekeningen en grafiek*, ed. by R.-A. d’Hulst, exh. cat. Museum Plantin-Moretus Antwerp, Antwerp 1978, p. 13. He probably collaborated with Rubens on the *Decius Mus* tapestry cycle, designed in 1616 for the Genoese merchant Franco Cattaneo, see *Jordaens and the Antique*, ed. by J. van der Auwera, exh. cat. Royal Museum of Fine Arts of Belgium Brussels and Fridericianum, Museumslandschaft Hessen Kassel), Brussels 2012, p. 259; R. Baumstark and G. Delmarcel, *The Decius Mus Series (Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard 13)*, 2 vols., Turnhout and London, 2019, vol. 1, pp. 186–191. For the sketch, see Jacob Jordaens, *Warriors Attacking a Ship*, circa 1620, École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, inv. no. E.B.A. 1730.
- 64 This figure is in turn derived from an invention by Raphael, later reproduced by Giulio Romano in a drawing showing fishermen on boats catching a sea monster. This drawing is a study for one of the medallions in the Sala dei Venti in Palazzo Te, Mantua, and is now in the Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. 3560.
- 65 Jordaens’ *Alexander* series was woven in Brussels by Jacob Geubels II and Jan Raes, see K. Brosens, in: Exh. cat. Brussels/Kassel 2012 (as in note 63), pp. 249–253, fig. 117.
- 66 Roger d’Hulst identified the man wounding Alexander in the thigh as the Persian king Darius, see R.-A. d’Hulst, in: Exh. cat. Antwerp 1978 (as in note 63), pp. 64–66, cat. no. 15. This identification was later dismissed by J. Held, “Boekbespreking. Jordaens Drawings”, in: *The Art Bulletin* 60 (1978), p. 727, note 83. The connection between Willem van Tetrode’s statuettes and Rubens’ anatomical drawings has been observed by L. Price Amerson Jr, *The problem of Écorché. A Catalogue Raisonné of Models and Statuettes from the Sixteenth Century and Later Periods*, also: Ph.D. diss. The Pennsylvania State University, 1975, pp. 312–333, no. 37 and U. Heinen, *Rubens zwischen Predigt und Kunst. Der Hochaltar für die Walburgenkirche in Antwerpen*, also: Ph.D. diss. University of Cologne 1994, Weimar 1996, p. 138; id., in: Exh. cat. London 2005 (as in note 52), pp. 102–110; F. Scholten, *Willem van Tetrode: Sculptor (c.1525–1580). Guglielmo Fiammingo. Scultore*, ed. by F. Scholten, exh. cat. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam and The Frick Collection New York, NY, Zwolle 2003, p. 72, fig. 92.
- 67 On Jordaens’ study on paper (*Study of a Man’s Torso and Two Female Heads*, circa 1623–1625, oil on paper, 41 × 51 cm, Koninklijke Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp, inv. No. 819), see Schaudies, in: Exh. cat. Brussels/Kassel 2012 (as in note 63), pp. 260–261. On Rubens’ drawing (*Anatomical Study of a Man Moving to the Right*, circa 1606–1608, red chalk, 27.3 × 19.2 cm, Jan Krugier and Marie-Anne Krugier, Poniatowski Collection, Geneva, inv. no. JK 4351), see M. Jaffé, *Rubens’s Anatomy Book*, London 1987, fig. 60; Heinen 1996 (as in note 66), p. 404, fig. 17; id., in: Exh. cat. London 2005 (as in note 52), p. 106, fig. 40.

- 68 Variations on this ancient model appear in Rubens' *The Council of the Gods* (sketch for the Medici cycle), where the *Borghese Gladiator* is shown on the far right in the fleeing figure seen from behind, see F. Baudouin, "Rubens en de antieke kunst", in: *Hermeneus* 49 (1977), pp. 163f., fig. 15. The pose of the *Gladiator* was adopted by Rubens to depict the executioner stabbing St Lucy in the throat in his oil sketch, *The Martyrdom of Saint Lucy* (Musée Municipal des Beaux-Arts, Quimper). The sketch is the only preliminary study of one of the 39 paintings that originally decorated the ceiling of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp (1616–1620) before the latter was ravaged by fire on 18th July 1718. Again, around the 1620s, the same motif is found in *The Conclusion of Peace in Angers*, where it embodies blind fury, a vice challenged by the Queen Mother, shown entering the Temple of Peace. Late examples are the figure of Hercules in the Louvre drawing *Hercules and Minerva Restraining Mars* of circa 1634–1636 and the oil sketch with the same subject in Antwerp (Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Anwerpen, inv. no. 5097), see Büttner 2018 (as in note 26), pp. 257–263, cat. nos. 30–31, figs. 148, 151, and Mercury in the Madrid *Mercury and Argus* of circa 1636–1638, which is a reverse derivation of the Borghese statue (Svetlana Alpers reported the opinion of Ludwig Burchard in the *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard* 9, *The Decoration of the Torre de la Parada*, Brussels, London and New York 1971, p. 236, figs. 141–142). For other adaptations of the motif see Heinen 1996 (as in note 66), pp. 335–337, note 436.
- 69 Jaffé 2009 (as in note 51), p. 150, note 20. More recently, see D. Jaffé, "Rubens and Dirce, a Source in Plain Sight", in: *The Burlington Magazine* (2021), pp. 152–154. On the London painting, see McGrath 1997 (as in note 49), vol. 1, pp. 184–195, cat. no. 40, figs. 127–131.
- 70 The so-called 'parma' was a type of shield used by the light infantry and cavalry of the Roman army. The same shield is worn by the fallen warrior in the Potsdam *Battle* (circa 1598), although this scene shows Greek soldiers in combat. Rubens must have learned this from Justus Lipsius' book, in which the distinguished philologist writes that the 'parma' was also used by Thracian gladiators. See Lipsius 1614 (as in note 57) book II, ch. 9, pp. 81–82; book III, dial. I, p. 384.
- 71 For technical and structural reasons, it is plausible that the *Gladiator* originally held a shield made of metal or a material other than marble. A small bronze cast with sword appears in the 1623 inventory of the Ludovisi collection. Later in 1638, François Perrier showed in his work *Icones et segmenta nobilium signorum et statuarum quae Romae extant* (Rome, 1638) figs. 26–29, only the hilt of a sword in the *Gladiator's* right hand, while Joachim von Sandrart portrayed the man with a short spear in his *Sculpturae veteris admiranda*, Nuremberg 1680, p. 68. See Kalveram 1995 (as in note 22), p. 114, note 111; P. Seiler, "Aber ist denn das feine Auge ganz untrüglich? Visuelle Nachlässigkeiten und bildkritische Erfahrungen in Lessings Studien zum Borghesischen Fechter", in: *Pegasus. Berliner Beiträge zum Nachleben der Antike* 10 (2008), pp. 172–173, figs. 2–5; 179, fig. 8. The statue appears among the drawings in Cassiano dal Pozzo's 'museo cartaceo' (series *Bassi Relievi Antichi* III, fol. 6v), in Windsor, see C. C. Vermeule, *The Dal Pozzo-Albani drawings of Classical Antiquities in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle* (*Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 56), Philadelphia, PA, 1966, no. 8329, pp. 20–21. Small bronzes and wax models of the *Gladiator* are recorded in the estate inventory of Guillaume Berthelot. These bronzes date from the first half of the 17th century and were probably taken directly from the Antique marble, which Berthelot restored in Rome while in the service of Scipione Borghese, see *Cast in Bronze. French Sculpture from Renaissance to Revolution*, ed. by G. Bresc-Bautier et al., exh. cat. Musée du Louvre Paris, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, and J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA, Paris 2008, no. 43, 62, 172–175. For the small bronze by Giovanni Francesco Susini, see *Die Bronzeplastiken: Statuetten, Reliefs, Geräte und Plaketten. Katalog*, ed. by L. Planiscig, Vienna 1924, vol. 4, pp. 169–170, fig. 276.
- 72 See note 52.
- 73 Bronze cast h. 51 cm, now in the Musée des Arts décoratifs, Paris, see *L'écorché*, ed. by J. P. Mouilleseaux, exh. cat. Musée des beaux-arts de Rouen), Rouen 1977, no. 4; also illustrated in Zofia Ameisenowa, *The Problem of the Écorché and the Three Anatomical Models in the Jagiellonian Library*, Wrocław 1963, fig. 21.
- 74 This cast was probably used by Rubens for the male nude in the Toronto drawing, see note 26.
- 75 Heinen 1996 (as in note 66), p. 331, note 396.
- 76 In the summer of 1618, Guillaume Berthelot was appointed sculptor to Marie de' Medici and the following year was commissioned by the Queen Mother to carry out the sculptural decoration of the Luxembourg Palace. From 1619 to 1630, his workshop was in the inner courtyard of the Palace, see S. Galletti, *Le Palais du Luxembourg de Marie de Médicis 1611–1631*, Paris 2012, pp. 87, 110.
- 77 A replica was originally placed in the garden of Cardinal Richelieu's Palace; after the Cardinal's death in 1642, it was taken to Fontainebleau, see J. Griswold et al., "Casts after the antique by Hubert Le Sueur", in: *French Bronze Sculpture: 16th–18th Century. Materials and Techniques*, ed. by F. Bewer et al., London 2014, p. 61.
- 78 Berthelot's biographer, Giovanni Baglione, writes that after restoring an antique marble from the Borghese collection, the sculptor made one in metal, see Baglione 1642 (as in note 25), p. 339.
- 79 A small 17th century bronze replica belongs to the collection of the Rubenshuis in Antwerp (*The Borghese Gladiator*, 24.6 × 24.6 cm; inv. no. RH.B.044), see Baudouin 1977 (as in note 68), pp. 164, 169, fig. 17; for the asset, see <https://search.rubenshuis.be/Details/collect/6711> (18.05.2022). The statuette, from the collection of Wolfgang Burchard, son of the renowned Rubens expert Ludwig Burchard, was purchased in March 1954 by Frans Baudouin, when he was curator of the Rubenshuis. It was attributed by him to the Italian sculptor Lombardi. I would like to thank Ben van Beneden and Martine Maris for sharing with

- me the information about this piece in the collection. Seventeenth-century bronzes of the *Gladiator* were cast by Guillaume Berthelot (see note 71) and Hubert Le Sueur (circa 1580–1658), see Griswold et al. 2014 (as in note 77), pp. 56–75; other early variants are attributed to the workshop of the Florentine sculptor Antonio Susini (1558–1624) and his nephew Giovanni Francesco (1585–1653), see Planiscig 1924 (as in note 71), vol. 4, pp. 168–170, figs. 223–225; 275–276. A bronze replica occurs in the collector's cabinet depicted by the Antwerp painter Gonzales Coques (with many other artists), *Interior with Figures in a Picture Gallery*, 1667–1672 and 1706 (Mauritshuis, The Hague, inv. no. 238). This painting is reproduced, for instance, in *Room for Art in Seventeenth-Century Antwerp*, ed. by B. van Beneden et al., exh. cat. Rubenshuis Antwerp and Mauritshuis The Hague, Zwolle 2009, pp. 93–98; 136–137, letter G.
- 80 McGrath 1997 (as in note 49), vol. 1, pp. 90–94.
- 81 On the collaboration between Peiresc, Rubens and Berthelot, see Rooses/Ruelens 1887–1909 (as in note 8), vol. 2, pp. 416–417, letter of the 26th May 1622 from Peiresc to Rubens, doc. CCLX. L. Pericolo, *Philippe de Champaigne: 'Philippe, homme sage et vertueux'. Essai sur l'art et l'oeuvre de Philippe de Champaigne 1602–1674*, Tournai and Bruxelles 2002, pp. 54–57.
- 82 See note 68.
- 83 Rubens, *Study on the Apotheosis of Henry IV and Other Figures*, circa 1622, 17.5 × 17.1 cm, formerly Kunsthalle Bremen, inv. no. 658. This drawing is reproduced in *A Catalogue of Works of Art from the Collection of the Kunsthalle Bremen Lost during Evacuation in the Second World War*, Bremen 1997, p. 250, no. 1367. I would like to thank Dr Christine Demele for this interesting reference. See also G. Glück and F. M. Haberditzl, *Die Handzeichnungen von Peter Paul Rubens*, Berlin 1928, p. 49, no. 148; V. Kopecky, *Die Beischriften des Peter Paul Rubens. Überlegungen zu handschriftlichen Vermerken auf Handzeichnungen*, also: Ph.D. diss. University of Hamburg 2008, p. 90, available at: <https://ediss.sub.uni-hamburg.de/handle/ediss/3196>. (18.05.2022). The sketch of the figure of the king, inspired by the Borghese statue seen from below, is shown from the same angle in the oil sketch at the Hermitage in St Petersburg (*The Death of Henry IV and the Proclamation of the Regency*, circa 1622, oil on panel, 48 × 65.6 cm), while it is turned in the opposite way in the Louvre painting (oil on canvas, 3.94 × 7.27 m, inv. no. 1779), see Glück/Haberditzl 1928 (as in note 83), p. 49, no. 148. Frans Baudouin was the first to identify the figure of the *Gladiator* in the Rubens drawing (formerly in Bremen, now in Moscow) in an official communication on the 3rd March 1954, made during the acquisition of the bronze (see note 79): “Vermoedelijk heeft hij [Rubens] hem [the Gladiator] gekend door een van de verkleinde bronzen beeldjes die er reeds omstreeks 1615–1620 van gemaakt werden.” Thanks to Ben van Beneden for giving me access to these documents.
- 84 See note 77.
- 85 See note 36.
- 86 Above all the lost Theoretical notebook – especially the Ms. Chatsworth – attests to how Rubens dealt with the passions. For an in-depth discussion of the treatment of the passions in Rubens' early mythological compositions, see Huemer 1996 (as in note 4), pp. 68–72; A. Georgievska-Shine, “Horror and Pity. Some Thoughts on the Sense of the Tragic in Rubens' ‘Hero and Leander’ and ‘The Fall of Phaeton’”, in: *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* 30 (2003), pp. 217–228; Teresa Esposito, “Black Ethiopians and the origin of materia prima in Rubens's images of Creation”, in: *Oud Holland. Journal for Art of the Low Countries* 133 (2020), pp. 10–32.
- 87 On Rubens' anatomical drawings, see Heinen, in: Exh. cat. London 2005 (as in note 52), pp. 102–110; J. Muller, “Rubens's Anatomy Book”, in: *Rubens Cantoor. Een verzameling tekeningen ontstaan in Rubens'atelier*, ed. by H. Devisscher, exh. cat. Rubenshuis Antwerp, Gent 1993, pp. 78–94; *Rubens Cantoor. The Drawings of Willem Panneels*, ed. by J. Garff and E. de la Fuente Pedersen, exh. cat. Statens Museum for Kunst Copenhagen, Copenhagen 1988; Jaffé 1987 (as in note 67); M. W. Kwakkelstein, *Anatomical Studies (Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard 20)*, forthcoming.
- 88 On Rubens' notebook and the four surviving manuscript copies – Ms. Bordes; Ms. Chatsworth; Ms. Johnson; Ms. de Ganay –, see A. Balis, “Rubens und Inventio. Der Beitrag seines theoretischen Studienbuchs”, in: *Rubens Passioni. Kultur der Leidenschaften im Barock*, ed. by U. Heinen et al., Göttingen 2001, pp. 11–40. For recent discussions of Rubens' notebook, see D. Jaffé with A. Bradley, in: Exh. cat. London 2005 (as in note 52), pp. 21–28; T. Meganck, “Rubens on the Human Figure. Theory, Practice and Metaphysics”, in: Exh. cat. Brussels 2007 (as in note 43), pp. 52–64; Jaffé 2009 (as in note 51), pp. 96–102; D. Jaffé, “Rubens's Lost ‘Pocketbook’. Some New Thoughts”, in: *The Burlington Magazine* 152 (2010), pp. 94–98; B. van Beneden, “Rubens: Maverick Artist. The Master's Theoretical Notebook”, in: *The Rubenianum Quarterly* (2013), pp. 1–4; A. Balis, *The Theoretical Notebook (Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard 25)*, forthcoming.
- 89 The de Ganay manuscript, formerly in the possession of the Marquis Jean-Louis de Ganay, was acquired by the King Baudouin Foundation in January 2012 and donated the following year to the Rubenshuis in Antwerp as a permanent loan. The Latin essay, included in the Ms. de Ganay, fols. 12r–14v, is entitled *De figurae humanae elementis cubo, circulo, et triangulo, vel pyramide spectatim*. This section is also included in a French printed source: P.P. Rubens, *Théorie de la figure humaine, considérée dans ses principes, soit en repos ou en mouvement*, ed. by C.-A. Jombert, Paris 1773, ch. 1, pp. 1–8, which is largely based on the Ms. de Ganay; it is discussed in *Théorie de la figure humaine*, ed. by N. Laneyrie-Dagen, Paris 2003, chs. 1, 2.
- 90 R. de Piles, *Abrégé de la vie des peintres*, Paris ¹1699, p. 168; Paris ²1715, pp. 162–163: “Rubens s'étend ensuite sur le degré auquel Leonard de Vinci possédoit l'Anatomie [...] Il continue par l'Anatomie des Chevaux, & par les Observations que Leonard avoit

- fares sur la Pisionomie, dont Rubens avoit vû pareillement les Deseins; & il finit par la méthode dont ce Peintre mesuroit le corps humain.”
- 91 Sheet with *The Judgment of Solomon* after Raphael and Rubens' notes from Dürer, circa 1600, pen and brown ink on paper, 20.2 × 15.9 cm, Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, inv. no. 3240. See H. Mielke and M. Winner, *Peter Paul Rubens. Kritischer Katalog der Zeichnungen. Originale – Umkreis – Kopien*, Berlin 1977, cat. no. 5, pp. 29–36; Meganck 2007 (as in note 88), p. 56.
- 92 *Catalogus librorum bibliothecae clarissimi viri D. Alberti Rubens*, Brussels 1658, fol. 8, in: *De Bibliotheek van Pieter Pauwel Rubens*, ed. by P. Arents et al., Antwerp 2001, 346; Van der Meulen 1994–1995 (as in note 40), vol. 1, p. 72, note 13.
- 93 Rubens cited Quintilian's *Istitutio oratoria* (book I, chap. 10, 44) as a premise for his observations on the cube, which he considered to be the ideal geometric form for representing sturdy bodies, see after P.P. Rubens, Ms. de Ganay, *Figurarum humanarum elementa sunt cubus, circulus et triangulus ex quo fit pyramis*, fol. 8: “Ex cubo, sive figura ab omni latere quadrata fit omne masculinum, aut virile, et quicquid grave, forte, robustum compactum, et athleticum est. et quicquid forma quadrati detraxeris, amplitudini quoque peribit.” See a similar passage in another manuscript for a comparison: after P.P. Rubens, Ms. Bordes, fol. 202b: “Cubus vel quadratum perfectum praedestinatum elementum est statuarum virorum fortium, heroum, atletarum, apostolorum et quidquid grave, simplex, firmum, robustum exprimi debet praedestinatum elementum cubus est. Solus enim cubus basis est et stare p[otes]t.”
- 94 In the Ms. Bordes, rather than distinguishing three types of strong men, the author says that he found Hercules' strength, as shown by Glykon of Athens, to be threefold (fol. 198a).
- 95 However, Rubens was not the exception to use classical statuary as a canon of reference in his study of proportions. An autograph manuscript by the Florentine sculptor Giovan Francesco Susini (1585–1653), entitled *Disegni e misure e regole d'attitudine del corpo umano* and dated June 1618, in which the artist explores human proportions using ancient models such as the *Hercules* in the Pitti Palace and a statue of *Venus*, belonging to the Medici collection, is preserved in the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence (Fondo Magliabechiano XVII.4). See G. Lombardi, “Giovan Francesco Susini”, in: *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa* 9 (1979), pp. 759–790.
- 96 This classification is absent in the Ms. Bordes, where the only statue mentioned is the *Hercules* of Glykon. Therefore, the *Borghese Gladiator* is not cited in this manuscript copy. For the taxonomy of male types in Rubens' writings, see the recent contribution by A. Aymonino and E. Dodero, “The Smell of Stone. Rubens and the Statues of Rome”, in: *Rubens: Picturing Antiquity*, ed. by A. T. Woollett et al., exh. cat. Getty Villa Museum, Pacific Palisades, CA, Los Angeles, CA, 2021, p. 35.
- 97 After Rubens, Ms. de Ganay, *De figurae humanae elementis cubo, circulo, et triangulo, vel pyramide speciatim*, fols. 12v–14r: “Tertia corporum fortium species, magis arida est ossibus permagnis; capitis longioris brachiis: cruribus, tibiisque longiusculis: ventre plano, et restricto, et carne per totum corpus contracta, ita ut nervi pateant, et quasi funum instar hinc inde per corpus aliquo modo appareant non tamen citra elegantiam quam in hac specie conservare difficile est, quia summam in omnibus temperantiam requirit, qua neglecta facillime deformitati succumbit huius elegantissimum exemplar est Roma in villa Burghesia Gladiator ictum intentans simul ac repellens Agaza Deophani Ephesij opus, quaterno aspectu conspicuum et admirandum.” It is significant that the copyist, instead of Dosithei, used the term Deophani, corresponding to the Greek ‘theophani’: ‘theo’ from ‘theos’, ‘god’, and ‘fani’ from the verb ‘faincin’, ‘to appear’, ‘to manifest’. ‘Deophani’ could have stood for an epithet of Agasia, meaning ‘he who is inspired by the divine presence in carrying out his work’. Jombert 1773 (as in note 89), ch. 1, p. 5, translated this passage using the same epithet: “Cette figure est de Théopane, d’Ephese: elle est trèsbelle à voir de tous les côtés.”
- 98 Van der Meulen 1994–1995 (as in note 40), vol. 1, p. 259, note 9. Perrier 1638 (as in note 80), note 25: “Gladiator ictum intentans simul et repellens quaterno exhibitus aspectu, admirandumque opus Agashiae Dosithei Ephesij in aedibus Burghesianis”. See Seiler 2008 (as in note 71), p. 210, note 29.
- 99 After Rubens, Ms. de Ganay, *De figurae humanae statibus sive modis standi*, fol. 44v: “Exhibitae etiam fuerunt ab antiquis statuae in nulla praedictorum statuum specie sed in pleno motu. Qualis est Gladiatoris in Villa Burghesia, quae impetuoso gressu, ictum intentat simul et repellit”; *ibid.*, fol. 46: “Tum illa quae ibidem est sedentis situ exhibitae, famosissima Laocoontis statua, cum liberis draconis nexibus impliciti. Gladiatoris, in Villa Burghesia.” The essay on the postures of the human figure in classical art was first published and translated by Van der Meulen 1994–1995 (as in note 40), vol. 1, Appendix X, pp. 254–262.
- 100 A.-M. Logan, “Leonardo, Poussin, Rubens and the Ms. de Ganay”, in: *Essays in Northern European Art Presented to Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann on his Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. by M. W. Ainsworth et al., Doornspijk 1983, pp. 142–147; Van Beneden 2013 (as in note 88), p. 4.
- 101 J. Barone, “Poussin as Engineer of the Human Figure. The Illustrations for Leonardo's ‘Trattato’”, in: *Re-reading Leonardo. The Treatise on Painting across Europe 1550–1900*, ed. by C. Farago, Ashgate 2009, pp. 226–227, note 25; *The Fabrication of Leonardo da Vinci's Trattato della pittura. With a Scholarly Edition of the Princeps (1651) and an Annotated English Translation*, ed. by C. Farago et al., Leiden 2018, vol. 2, pp. 786–787, ch. 261: “Dell’huomo che vuol tirar una cosa fuori di sé con grand’impeto”. For the *Gladiator Borghese* as a model for the pose of Poussin's figure (chap. 261), see J. Bell 2018, vol. 1, pp. 353–356.
- 102 See Abraham in *The Sacrifice of Isaac* (The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO, circa 1612–1613); Heinen 1996 (as in note 66), p. 335, note 436.

- 103 After P.P. Rubens, Ms. de Ganay, *De figuræ humanæ statibus sive modis standi*, fol. 46: “Summatim, foeminea forma, et status, et pulchritudinis atque omnium elegantiarum, unicum exemplar est omni perfectione maius, Venus illa qua Aphroditis (vulgo graeca) dicitur, et Roma in Mediceo conspicitur.” See Van der Meulen 1994–1995 (as in note 40), vol. 1, p. 262, note 25. Although no study of the Medici Venus by Rubens is known, the statue is mentioned several times in the Ms. de Ganay, the Ms. Johnson and the Ms. Bordes, in some cases accompanied by drawings in which her physiognomy is compared to that of a horse. A careful comparison of the drawings and the Latin text, contained in the Ms. de Ganay, with the ‘editio princeps’ of Leonardo’s *Trattato* does not seem to support the hypothesis that Rubens had access to manuscript copies of the abridged treatise as early as 1635, as has been suggested by some authors, see M. V. Guffanti in *The Fabrication of Leonardo da Vinci’s Trattato della pittura. With a Scholarly Edition of the Princeps (1651) and an Annotated English Translation*, ed. by C. Farago et al., Leiden 2018, vol. 1, pp. 380–382; M.-C. Heck, “The Reception of Leonardo da Vinci’s *Trattato della Pittura*, or *Traité de la Peinture*, in Seventeenth-Century Northern Europe”, in: Farago (ed.) 2009 (as in note 101), pp. 377–414; J. Barone, “Rubens and Leonardo on Motion. Figures, Inscriptions and Texts”, in: Farago (ed.) 2009 (as in note 101), pp. 441–472.

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