

The Decorations for the *Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi in Antwerp* (1635)¹

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When Antwerp invited the new Spanish governor of the Netherlands, Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand, for a solemn entry into the city in November 1634, it was of course Rubens who was asked to design the decorations. The painter was assisted in working out the iconographic program by two of his close friends: the humanist Jan Casper Gevaerts (Gevartius) and the city councilor (and former mayor) Nicolas Rockox.

In the Netherlands, Joyous Entries were in principle reserved for reigning princes. Gradually, historical circumstances induced the cities to deviate from this rule, so that governors or representatives of the central authorities could also be received with pomp and circumstance. Antwerp also expected a great deal from Ferdinand. As a result of the war between Spain and the rebellious northern provinces, the

latter had blockaded the mouth of the Scheldt, so that the city's economic activities were sharply hindered. Because diplomatic negotiations had not achieved the desired effect, Antwerp looked to a vigorous administration for a solution to the problem. Ferdinand, who had just defeated the Protestant troops at Nördlingen, seemed tailor-made for the job.

Given the woeful state of its treasury, the city government had at first thought of holding a modest procession, but they forgot to take Rubens' creative genius into account. In addition to the two triumphal arches and four 'theaters' that were originally planned, the artist designed a monumental portico with twelve stone statues of the Habsburg emperors. The mint masters also erected an arch designed by Rubens and Gevaerts, as did the renowned merchant family Fugger, who contributed to the financing of the exemplar erected before St. Michael's Abbey.

For the large-scale execution of these decorations, Rubens was surrounded not only by architects and carpenters but also by sculptors and painters. Because time was pressing, it sufficed for him to provide fairly large *modelli* executed in oil for the most prominent sides of the structures; he also painted sketches for a number of sculptures and paintings that were to serve as decoration for the arches.² It comes as no surprise that among those responsible for executing the designs, we find the names of experienced artists like Theodoor Van Thulden, Jacob Jordaens and Cornelis de Vos.

After being postponed several times, among other things due to an imminent French offensive that brought Ferdinand other cares, the Joyous Entry finally took place on April 17, 1635.

¹ This introduction is based on Martin, *CRLB* 1972, xvi.

² Rubens did not make *bozzetti* beforehand, as he had done for some of his earlier series (see cats 76, 78, 83, 84).

89 Front of the Triumphal Arch of Philip

Anonymous, after Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640)

Oil on panel, 103 × 72 cm

Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, inv. 823

PROV. : Brussels, sale, collection Étienne Le Roy, 27–28 April 1903, no. 80.

BIBL. : Martin, CRLB 1972, XVI, sub. no. 5a; Held 1980, I, no. 148; Vandamme 1988, p. 371.

90 Reverse of the Triumphal Arch of Philip

Anonymous, after Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640)

Oil on panel, 104.5 × 74 cm

Antwerp, Rubenshuis, inv. RH.S.008

PROV. : Confiscated by the French in Antwerp's City Hall in 1794; restored in 1815 and housed in the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp; transferred to the Rubenshuis in 1942.

EXH. : München 1976.

BIBL. : Martin, CRLB 1972, XVI, sub no. 13a; Held 1980, I, no. 149.



cat. 89



cat. 90

- 91 Reverse of the Triumphal Arch of Philip in J.C. Gevartius,
*Pompa Introitus Honori Serenissimi Principis Ferdinandi Avstriaci
Hispaniarvm Infantis...*, Antwerp, 1641
Theodoor van Thulden (1606-1669)

Engraving, 410 × 580 mm
Antwerp, Stadsbibliotheek,
inv. K7617 (2nd state)
BIBL.: Martin, CRLB 1972, XVI, no. 13.



cat. 91

The so-called 'Arch of Philip, *the widest and most splendid of them all*,¹ was erected in Huidevettersstraat at the beginning of the Meir. It was the fourth such decoration Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand encountered on his way through the city after the 'stage of welcome', and the arches of the Portuguese Nation and the Carmelites.² Construction was entrusted to the cabinet-maker Gaspar Vervoordt, while Jacob Jordaens and Cornelis de Vos were responsible for the painting. Although Rubens' preparatory sketches for these colleagues have since been lost, the exhibited copies give a fair idea of their original appearance (cats 89, 90).

According to Martin, the dimensions of the latter correspond more or less to those of the originals. Apparently, Rubens used panels of the same standard format for the sketches of all the triumphal arches that had been entrusted to him.³ This format permitted him to depict the decorations in detail, so that the artists responsible for their execution could reproduce them on a monumental scale with sufficient ease.

The curving lines of the Baroque crown of the Arch of Philip must have come across as highly innovative. The arch was dedicated to Spanish King Philip IV and paid tribute to the judicious marriage politics of the Habsburgs: on the front was a representation of the marriage of Maximilian of Austria and Mary of Burgundy (uppermost tympanum), as well as the male and 'Spanish' descendants of the emperor (from Philip I to Philip IV in the lower registers). The copy of the reverse is incomplete, but the engraving by Theodoor van Thulden made for the commemorative album of the Joyous Entry shows that the marriage of Philip the Fair and Juana of Castile, as well as that of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella the Catholic, were both depicted there, along with the portraits of the governors of the Spanish Netherlands, from Archduke Ernest to the cardinal-infante himself (cat. 91). The whole assembly stood under the protection of the marriage gods (Jupiter, Juno, Hymen, on the front) and was surrounded by symbols of fertility and the steadfastness of the Austrian monarchy (ridge on the reverse), as well as allegorical representations of the Wealth of the East and West Indies (cornice on the reverse). Comparison of Van Thulden's print with the painted panels also reveals certain small changes – perhaps made after the erection of the triumphal arches⁴ – such as the replacement of some of the decorations or the addition of pedestals to the figures above the cornice.

The panel depicting the front of the arch is also attributed to Theodoor van Thulden in the catalogue of the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten in Antwerp (1988). However, the hesitant yet all too hasty manner of execution compels us to reject this attribution. In terms of style, the panel also differs from that of the reverse, which is worked out in brownish tints. According to Martin, the copies are by two different artists active in Rubens' studio.

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1 Gevartius 1641, cited by Martin, CRLB 1972, XVI, p. 66.

2 These triumphal arches were erected at the initiative of the Portuguese and the Carmelites, who did not commission Rubens for the design.

3 Martin, CRLB 1972, XVI p. 29. The format used, approximately 105 × 75 cm, corresponds to the 26 *stuyversmaet* (see Bruyn 1979, p. 107).

4 Martin, CRLB 1972, XVI, p. 73.

92 Portrait of Emperor Maximilian I 1459 -1519
Cornelis de Vos (1585–1651), retouched by Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640)

Oil on canvas, 228 × 147 cm
Vienna, Gemäldegalerie der Akademie
der bildenden Künste, inv. 775
PROV. : See Martin, CRLB 1972, XVI,
no. 7; collection of Count Anton Franz
de Paula Lamberg-Sprinzenstein
(1740-1822), who left the work to
the Academy.
EXH. : See Martin, CRLB 1972, XVI,
no. 7; Wien 1977^[1], no. 50; Brussels
2002, no. 17.
BIBL. : Martin, CRLB 1972, XVI, no. 7;
Jaffé 1989, no. 1124; Van der Stighelen^[1]
1990, no. 82; Trnek/Halbgebauer/
Koch 2000, no. 19.



cat. 92

93 Portrait of Charles v 1500-1558
Cornelis de Vos (1585–1651), retouched by Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640)

Oil on canvas, 228.5 × 146.5 cm
Vienna, Gemäldegalerie der Akademie
der bildenden Künste, inv. 771
PROV. : See cat. 92
EXH. : See Martin, CRLB 1972, XVI,
no. 8; Wien 1977^[1], no. 51; Brussels
2002, no. 18.
BIBL. : Martin, CRLB 1972, XVI, no. 8;
Jaffé 1989, no. 1125; Van der Stighelen^[1]
1990, no. 83; Trnek/Halbgebauer/
Koch 2000, no. 20.



cat. 93

Originally, this larger than life portrait of Maximilian I and his grandson Charles V decorated the uppermost register of the left and right uprights of the front of the Arch of Philip (see cat. 89), so that they were placed directly opposite one another. These imperial likenesses emitted an aura of power and conquest: both protagonists are wearing armor and are seated on a throne decorated with various insignia of power (the closed crown or laurel wreath, the ermine mantle or cape, the chain of the Order of the Golden Fleece, the scepter, globe and sword, as well as the eagle that appears between the legs of Charles V with Jupiter's lightning in its beak). Their majestic appearance is given extra emphasis by the worm's-eye-view perspective in which they are rendered, a fact that can be explained by the great height at which the portraits were originally placed.

According to Martin, the portrait of Maximilian was probably based on earlier portraits by Dürer, as well as the engraving by Domenicos Custos, published in 1600. The likeness of Charles V goes back to Titian's portrait of the emperor with a sword; Rubens probably copied the portrait during his first trip to Spain in 1603-1604 and kept a version for his own collection.¹ Along with the *modello* of the triumphal arch, Rubens must also have made specific portraits that he himself had painted available to the artists responsible for executing the final product.

Van der Stighelen attributes both paintings to Cornelis de Vos. However, Rubens retouched the hair and face of Maximilian and added highlights to the armor of both emperors.² He also appears to have corrected the position of Maximilian's right leg (by placing it somewhat closer to the center) and accentuated some of the imperial fingers with the help of a dark line.

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- 1 See Muller 1989, p. 106. The position of the emperor and the eagle motif between his legs is inspired by an engraving by Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert after Maarten van Heemskerck, *The Subjection of the Princes to Charles V* (Martin, loc. cit.)
- 2 The documents confirm that Rubens retouched some of the delivered paintings, specifically the portraits on the triumphal arches. See Génard 1870, VII, p. 29, and 1876, p. 225.

94 Portrait of Archduke Albert, 1559-1621
Cornelis de Vos (1585–1651), retouched by Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640)

Oil on canvas, 138 × 105.5 cm
Inscription at the lower right: *ALBERTVS
ARCHID. AVSTR. / BELG. ET BVRG. PRINC.*
Brussels, RMFAB, inv. 167
PROV. : See Martin, CRLB 1972, XVI,
no. 17, probably acquired from the art
dealer Hérís between 1838 and 1842.¹
EXH. : See Martin, CRLB 1972, XVI,
no. 17; Genève 1974, no. 215;
Punkaharju 1991, p. 52-53; Münster/
Osnabrück 1998-1999, no. 394;
Atlanta 1999-2000, no. 1; Tokyo-
Nagasaki-Osaka 2006-2007, no. 6.
BIBL. : Martin, CRLB 1972, XVI, no. 17;
Pauwels 1984, p. 256; Roberts-Jones-
Popelier 1985-1988, p. 242-243; Jaffé
1989, no. 1130; Van der Stighelen
1990¹¹, no. 90.



cat. 94

95 Portrait of Archduchess Isabella Clara Eugenia, 1566-1633
Anonymous, retouched by Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640)?

Oil on canvas, 138 × 105.5 cm

Inscription at the lower right: ISABEL.
CLARA. EVG. HISP. INF. BELG. ET BVRG. PRIN.

Brussels, RMFAB, inv. 168

PROV. : See cat. 94.

EXH. : See Martin, CRLB 1972, XVI,
no. 18; Genève 1974, no. 216; Münster-
Osnabrück 1998-1999, no. 395;
Atlanta 1999-2000, no. 2; Tokyo-
Nagasaki-Osaka 2006-2007, no. 7.

BIBL. : Martin, CRLB 1972, XVI, no. 18;
Pauwels 1984, p. 256; Roberts-Jones-
Popelier 1985-1988, p. 242-243; Jaffé
1989, no. 1131; Van der Stighelen 1990^[1],
no. 91.



cat. 95



FIG. 1: GASPAR DE CRAYER,
Portrait of Archduke Albert,
Althorp House

These portraits of Albert and Isabella originally decorated the space above the central arch on the reverse of the Arch of Philip (see cats 90, 91). The decision to reduce the portraits to half-lengths was probably taken after the city decorations were dismantled.²

The clothing and pose of the sitters are inspired by earlier portraits of the archdukes (known only through copies) which Rubens probably painted around 1616 (figs 1–2), while Albert's profile is probably based on a prototype used by the master for the triptych of the St. Ildefonso altarpiece (see the essay by svS, fig.1).³

According to Van der Stighelen, the portrait of Albert was painted by Cornelis de Vos: the silken gloss of his hair clearly bears the artist's stamp. Careful visual analysis has brought far-reaching changes to light which were probably executed by Rubens himself: the figure's torso was turned more to the right (the right arm was higher and the buttons of his jacket have been moved);⁴ his millstone collar and left sleeve have become fuller. In order to enliven his facial expression, Rubens retouched his eye with pink, red and blue-gray, and applied graphic accents or highlights to his eyelid, nose, ear, forehead and cheek. Finally, the fingers of his left hand, as well as his right wrist, thumb and index finger have been accentuated with brick-red lines.

The portrait of Isabella, executed rapidly with opaque, thickly applied paint, is more difficult to attribute. Brick-red highlights on the fingers of her right hand and several touches of color, meant to bring out her eyelids, could also be by Rubens.

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FIG. 2: GASPAR DE CRAYER,
Portrait of the Infanta Isabella,
Norfolk, The Chrysler Museum



- 1 See the essay by M. Van Kalck in this catalogue.
- 2 Their original format must have been around 210 × 105,5 cm. Research into the supports has confirmed that the portraits were cut down.
- 3 In connection with this prototype, see Vlieghe, *CRLB* 1987, XIX/2, p. 41.
- 4 It has been remarked that Rubens also painted over the gilt belt copied from the model in fig. 1.

96 Portrait of Archduke Ernest 1553–1595

Cornelis de Vos (1585–1651)

Oil on canvas, 154 × 119 cm
Brussels, RMFAB, inv. 1321
PROV.: See Martin, CRLB 1972, XVI,
no. 19; collection of General Bertrand,
Baron de Sivray;¹ Frédéric Noterman,
Paris; acquired in 1855.
BIBL.: Martin, CRLB 1972, XVI, no. 19;
Pauwels 1984, p. 256; Jaffé 1989,
no. 1132; Van der Stighelen 1990¹¹,
no. 93.



cat. 96

Ernest was not only the brother of Archduke Albert, but also his predecessor as governor of the Southern Netherlands, a function he fulfilled from 1594 to 1595, the year of his death. It should therefore come as no surprise that this portrait decorated the same side of the triumphal arch as the portraits of the archdukes, to the right of the central arch (cat. 91). Like the paintings just mentioned, this portrait – originally full length – was reduced to three-quarter length after the city decorations were dismantled.² Rubens probably made one or more portraits of Archduke Ernest by Otto van Veen, who had been court painter for Ernest, available for the execution of the face. However, Martin has pointed out that the sitter's pose recalls Titian's portrait of the Duke of Urbino, Francesco Maria della Rovere (Florence, Uffizi). According to Van der Stighelen, the style of De Vos is more readily visible in this portrait than in the portrait of Archduke Albert: the searching gaze and care with which the hair is depicted are typical. The rather dry manner of execution is probably to be explained by the fact that the painting was meant to be seen from a great distance. In contrast to the portraits of the archdukes, this work does not seem to have been retouched by Rubens.

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¹ ARMFAB, FM, dossiers 474 and 501.

² The canvas was reduced in height, and also slightly in breadth. The original format must have measured around 240 × 130 cm.