

ABBREVIATIONS

LITERATURE:

Burchard, 1950 – L. Burchard, *Catalogue of a Loan Exhibition of Works by Peter Paul Rubens, Kt.*, Wildenstein & Co., London, 4 October – 11 November 1950.

Catalogue Marbury Hall, 1814 – *A Catalogue of Paintings, Statues, Busts, &c. at Marbury Hall, the seat of John Smith Barry, Esq., in the county of Chester*, London, 1814.

Cavallo, 1967 – A.S. Cavallo, *Tapestries of Europe and of Colonial Peru in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, Boston, 1967.

Cocke, 1971 – R. Cocke, *The Literary Sources of the "History of Achilles" by P.P. Rubens*, *The Burlington Magazine*, CXIII, 1971, pp. 608, 609.

Collot, 1852 – J.-P. Collot, *Notice sur une collection de sept esquisses de Rubens, représentant La Vie d'Achille*, Paris, [1852].

Crick-Kuntziger, 1934 – Marthe Crick-Kuntziger, *La Tenture d'Achille d'après Rubens et les tapissiers Jean et François Raes*, *Bulletin des Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire*, III^{ème} Série, VI, 1934, pp. 2-12, 70, 71.

Crick-Kuntziger, 1939 – Marthe Crick-Kuntziger, *Les Tapisseries de François Raes*, *Bulletin des Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire*, III^{ème} Série, XI, 1939, pp. 142-144.

Denucé, Konstkamers – J. Denucé, *De Antwerpsche "Konstkamers". Inventarissen van Kunstverzamelingen te Antwerpen in de 16^e en 17^e Eeuwen*, Antwerp, 1932.

Denucé, 1936 – J. Denucé, *Antwerpsche tapijtkunst en handel*, Antwerp, 1936.

d'Hulst, 1968 – R.-A. d'Hulst, *Olieverfschetsen van Rubens uit Nederlands en Belgisch openbaar bezit*, s.l., 1968.

Donnet, 1898 – F. Donnet, *Documents pour servir à l'histoire des ateliers de*

tapisseries de Bruxelles, Audenaerde, Anvers, etc. jusqu'à la fin du XVII^e siècle, Brussels, 1898 (Reprint from *Annales de la Société d'Archéologie de Bruxelles*, x, xi and xii, 1896-98).

Duverger, 1970 – E. Duverger, *Le Marchand anversois Louis Malo*, in Jarmila Blažkova and E. Duverger, *Les Tapisseries d'Octavio Piccolomini et le marchand anversois Louis Malo (Mémoires et Recueils de Documents édités par le Centre Interuniversitaire d'Etude de l'Histoire de la Tapisserie Flamande, II)*, St-Amandsberg (Ghent), 1970, pp. 67-104.

Duverger, 1971 – E. Duverger, *Tapijten naar Rubens en Jordaens in het bezit van het Antwerps handelsvennootschap Fourment-van Hecke*, *Artes Textiles, Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van de tapijt-, borduur- en textielkunst*, VII, 1971, pp. 119-173.

Ferrero Viale, 1956 – Mercedes Viale Ferrero, *Tapisseries Rubéniennes et Jordaenesques à Turin*, *Artes Textiles, Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van de tapijt-, borduur- en textielkunst*, III, 1956, pp. 67-74.

Göbel, 1923 – H. Göbel, *Wandteppiche, I, Die Niederlande, I*, Leipzig, 1923.

Goeler von Ravensburg, 1882 – F. Goeler von Ravensburg, *Rubens und die Antike. Seine Beziehungen zum classischen Alterthum und seine Darstellungen aus der classischen Mythologie und Geschichte. Eine Kunstgeschichtliche Untersuchung...*, Jena, 1882.

Goris-Held – J.-A. Goris and J.S. Held, *Rubens in America*, Antwerp, 1947.

Hannema, 1933 – [D. Hannema], *Museum Boymans te Rotterdam, Jaarverslag 1933*, Rotterdam, 1933.

Haverkamp Begemann, 1953 – [E. Haverkamp Begemann, *Catalogus*] *Olieverfschetsen van Rubens*, Museum Boymans, Rotterdam, 1953-54.

Hunter, 1913 – G.L. Hunter, *Achilles Tapestries Designed by Rubens*, *The International Studio*, LI, 202, December, 1913, pp. 138-140.

K.d.K. – P.P. Rubens, *Des Meisters Gemälde*, ed. by R. Oldenbourg, *Klassiker der Kunst*, v, 4th ed., Stuttgart-Berlin, [1921].

- Lafond, 1902* – P. Lafond, *Cartons de Rubens pour la suite de tapisseries de l'Histoire d'Achille, Réunion des Sociétés des Beaux-Arts des Départements*, xxvi, 1902, pp. 232-238.
- Lafond, 1909-10* – P. Lafond, *Histoire d'Achille par Rubens, Les Arts Anciens de Flandre*, iv, 1909-10, pp. 125-129.
- Marillier* – G. Marillier, *Subject Catalogue of Tapestries* [Ms., Victoria and Albert Museum, London], n.d.
- Prado, Cat. 1933* – Museo del Prado, *Catálogo*, Madrid, 1933.
- Prado, Cat. 1963* – Museo del Prado, *Catálogo de las pinturas*, Madrid, 1963.
- Rooses* – M. Rooses, *L'Œuvre de P.P. Rubens, histoire et description de ses tableaux et dessins*, i-v, Antwerp, 1886-1892.
- Rotterdam, Cat. 1962* – Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, *Catalogus schilderijen tot 1800*, Rotterdam, 1962.
- Seilern* – [A. Seilern], *Flemish Paintings and Drawings at 56, Princes Gate, London*, London, 1955.
- Sentenach y Cabañas* – N. Sentenach y Cabañas, *La Pintura en Madrid desde sus origenes hasta el siglo XIX*, Madrid, [1907].
- Silberman, 1962* – Susan J. Silberman, *Rubens' "History of Achilles"* [M.A. Thesis, Columbia University, New York], New York, 1962.
- Smith, Catalogue Raisonné* – J. Smith, *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch, Flemish, and French Painters*, i-ix, London, 1829-1842.
- Stechow, 1965* – W. Stechow, *A Modello by Jordaens, Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, xvi, 1956, pp. 67-79, and *Allen Memorial Art Museum Bulletin*, xxiii, 1965, pp. 4-16.
- Van Hasselt* – A. Van Hasselt, *Histoire de P.-P. Rubens suivie du catalogue général et raisonné de ses tableaux, esquisses, dessins et vignettes*, Brussels, 1840.

Van Puyvelde, Skizzen – L. Van Puyvelde, *Skizzen des Peter Paul Rubens*, Frankfurt am Main, 1939.

V.S. – C.G. Voorhelm Schneevoogt, *Catalogue des estampes gravées d'après P.P. Rubens*, Haarlem, 1873.

Wauters, 1878 – A. Wauters, *Les Tapisseries bruxelloises. Essai historique sur les tapisseries et les tapissiers de haute et de basse-lice de Bruxelles*, Brussels, 1878.

EXHIBITIONS:

Amsterdam, 1933 – *Rubenstentoonstelling*, Gallery J. Goudstikker, Amsterdam, 1933.

Braunschweig, 1956 – *Ölskizzen von Peter Paul Rubens aus den holländischen Museen in Amsterdam und Rotterdam*, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig, 1956

Brussels, 1937 – *Esquisses de Rubens*, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels, 1937.

Dublin, 1872 – *Exhibition of Arts, Industries & Manufactures, and Loan Museum of Works of Art*, Dublin, 1872.

Helsinki, 1952-53 – *P.P. Rubens, esquisses, dessins, gravures*, Ateneum, Helsinki, 1952-53.

London, 1879 – *Winter Exhibition*, Royal Academy, London, 1879-80.

London, 1899-1900 – *Winter Exhibition*, New Gallery, London, 1899-1900.

London, 1909-10 – *National Loan Exhibition*, Grafton Galleries, London, 1909-10.

London, 1912 – *Rubens Exhibition*, Dowdeswell Galleries, London, 1912.

London, 1950 – *A Loan Exhibition of Paintings by Peter Paul Rubens, Kt.*, Wildenstein & Co., London, 1950.

Manchester, 1857 – Art Treasures of the United Kingdom, Manchester, 1857.

Paris, 1936 – Rubens et son temps, Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris, 1936.

Rotterdam, 1953-54 – Olieverfschetsen van Rubens, Museum Boymans, Rotterdam, 1953-54.

CATALOGUE RAISONNE

1. **ACHILLES DIPPED INTO THE RIVER STYX. TAPESTRY**

Approximately 400 : 320 cm.

For panels of this subject belonging to sets of two or more, see pp. 81–90, Fig. 1. The following panel does not belong to a known set: whereabouts unknown; woven by **Jan Frans van den Hecke** (inscribed I.F.V.H.); 381 : 322 cm.; borders of vases with flowers, festoons of flowers and fruit, peacocks and other birds; prov.: sale, London (Christie's), 28 June 1923, lot 118, purchased by L. Harris; lit.: *Marillier*; *Crick-Kuntziger*, 1934, p. 71; *Cavallo*, 1967, p. 127. (2), (3), (4)

Thetis, as a nymph herself immortal, knew that her son was vulnerable since he was the child of a mortal father, Peleus, king of the Myrmidons. She therefore attempted to make him immortal, according to some by treating him with fire, according to others by immersing him in the Styx, the river of the underworld. In the latter case she made him invulnerable except in the heel by which she held him, or according to other legends, except for the soles of his feet.

Rubens has represented Thetis standing on the rocky border of the river, in the gloom of the underworld, “penchée sur le Styx où elle trampe galamment le petit héros qu'elle tient par le talon”.¹ One of the three Fates (probably Lachesis, who assigns to man his doom), holding a distaff, assists Thetis by dispelling the darkness with a torch. In the background Charon conveys the dead across the Styx. Fiery flames emerge from behind the hills in the distance. A castle, probably of Hades, enveloped by clouds, stands on the hills.

Rubens has framed the scene at the sides by simulated sculptured terms of Hades and Persephone, who ruled over the souls of the dead. The god of the underworld is identified by the pitchfork with which he used to drive the shades into the lower world, his wife Persephone by the half-moon in her hair. In front of the bottom plinth the watchdog of the underworld, Cerberus, is depicted with one head sleeping, one watching, and the third one barking. In front of the cornice at the top is a cartouche between two bat wings and garlands of thistles, pomegranates, and other fruit.

In Homer's *Iliad*, Achilles, though half-divine, is fully mortal, but some later poets made him invulnerable except for his heel. The first to mention the immersion in the Styx and the partial success of the treatment was Statius. Two separate references in his *Achilleid* complement each other: first, when questioning Chiron about the well-being of her son, Thetis tells him about her nightmarish visions: “Is it not with reason that my sleep is troubled ...

often – ah, horror ! – seem to take my son down to the void of Tartarus, and dip him a second time in the springs of Styx”.² Later, urging Achilles to disguise himself in woman’s clothes for his own safety, Thetis includes among her arguments: “ ... if for thy sake I endured the earth and an inglorious mate, if at the birth I fortified thee with the stern waters of the Styx – ay, would I had wholly ! – take these safe robes awhile, they will in no wise harm thy valour”.³

Since Rubens seems to have derived details from the *Achilleid* for *Achilles Discovered among the Daughters of Lycomedes* (see below), he may have had these passages in mind when painting the present subject. Yet, other authors also had mentioned or described the scene and the resulting partial vulnerability of Achilles, particularly Fulgentius.⁴ As *Silberman*, 1962 suggested, these may well have been known to Rubens. Furthermore, Boccaccio and later mythographers start the life of Achilles with a short description of the scene, which probably was known to Rubens as well.⁵

Rubens’s depiction of the underworld in the background of this scene is directly based on Virgil’s *Aeneid*. Behind Thetis is the road that “leads to the waters of Tartarean Acheron”,⁶ in the distance is Charon who “unaided poles the boat”⁷ and who “in his murky craft convoys the dead”.⁸ “Hither rushed all the throng, streaming to the banks; mothers and men and bodies of high-souled heroes, their life now done, boys and unwedded girls...; thick as the leaves of the forest that at autumn’s first frost dropping fall... They stood, pleading to be the first ferried across, and stretched out hands in yearning for the farther shore. But the surly boatman takes now these, now those, while others he thrusts apart, back from the brink”.⁹

No similar representation of the subject in art is known on which Rubens might have based his interpretation. A drawing catalogued under the name of Baccio Bandinelli in the Cabinet of M. Paignon Dijonval¹⁰ included eight figures according to the author, Bénard (who in the entry attributed the drawing to Giulio Romano), and therefore probably differed considerably from Rubens’s work. Apparently his work had no marked following, since later representations differ basically. Gerard de Lairesse’s painting of the same subject in Potsdam¹¹ is entirely different (the river Styx is represented by means of a personification), and so are two tapestries of the subject, woven in the first half of the eighteenth century in Brussels, one by Jodocus de Vos, where the event takes place in a summer landscape, with eight figures (ca. 1725),¹² the other by the Van der Borcht family (ca. 1740).¹³

- ¹ Thoré-Bürger, *Trésors d'Art en Angleterre*, Paris, 1857, p. 197.
- ² "... non merito trepidus sopor...?... saepe ipsa—nefas!—sub inania natum / Tartara et ad Stygios iterum fero mergere fontes./..." (Statius, *Achilleid*, I, 129, 133, 134; transl. J.H. Mozley [Loeb Classical Library]).
- ³ "... si terras humilemque experta maritum / te propter, si progenitum Stygos amne severo / armavi,—totumque utinam!—, cape tuta parumper / tegmina nil nocitura animo..." (Statius, *op. cit.*, I, 268-271).
- ⁴ "Denique Achillem natum velut hominem perfectum mater in aquas intiguit Stigias, id est: durum contra omnes labores munit; solum ei talum non tigit" (Fulgentius, *Mythologiae*, 3, 7).
- ⁵ "Achilles a matre tinctus in Stygem Paludem toto corpore invulnerabilis fuit, excepta parte qua tentus est manu matris" (Servius Grammaticus, in *P. Virgilii Opera, cum Servii... Commentariis...*, *Aeneid*, VI, 57 ff.).
- ⁶ Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI, 295; this and later quotations from Virgil, transl. H.R. Fairclough (Loeb Classical Library).
- ⁷ "ipse ratem conto subigit" (Virgil, *op. cit.*, VI, 302).
- ⁸ "ferruginea subvectat corpora cumba" (Virgil, *op. cit.*, VI, 303).
- ⁹ "Huc omnis turba ad ripas effusa ruebat, / matres atque viri, defunctaque corpora vita / magnanimum heroum, pueri innuptaeque puellae / ...; quam multa in silvis autumnus frigore primo / lapsa cadunt folia... / Stabant orantes primi transmittere cursum / tendebantque manus ripae ulterioris amore. / Navita sed tristis nunc hos accipit illos, / astra alios longe submotos arcet harena." (Virgil, *op. cit.*, VI, 305-316).
- ¹⁰ *Cabinet de M. Paignon Dijonval*, Paris 1810, No. 31.
- ¹¹ G. Eckardt, *Die Gemälde in der Bildergalerie von Sanssouci*, Potsdam, 1965, No. 60.
- ¹² Göbel, 1923, pl. 353.
- ¹³ *Les Arts*, XVI, 190, 1920, p. 17 (repr.); see also above, pp. 76, 77, n. 19. For further later examples, see A. Pigler, *Barockthemen*, II, Budapest, 1956, p. 261.

1a. ACHILLES DIPPED INTO THE RIVER STYX: OIL SKETCH (Fig. 2)

Oil on panel; 43 : 36.5 cm. — *Verso*: the brands (Fig. 90) of Antwerp (two hands partly visible) and of the panel maker Michiel Vriendt (MV). Probably slightly trimmed at the top.

Rotterdam, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen. Inv. No. 1760.

PROVENANCE: Daniel Fourment, Antwerp, until June 1643; ? Jean-Henry Gobelius, Brussels, until July 1681; Joan Baptista Anthoine, Antwerp, until March 1691; Richard Mead, by 1724, until 1754; Fulk Greville, until 1794; John Smith-Barry, Marbury Hall, Northwich, Cheshire, by 1814; A.H. Smith-Barry; Lord Barrymore, sale, London (Sotheby's), 21 June 1933, lot 28 (repr.); Goudstikker, Amsterdam; presented by D.G. van Beuningen to the Museum, 1933.

COPIES: (1) Painting, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 46 : 40 cm.; prov.: Rome, Palazzo Barberini, 1798; J.-P. Collot, sale, Paris (Drouot), 29 March 1855, lot 20, No. 1 (as

Rubens); lit.: *Collot*, 1852, pp. 5–11 (as *Rubens*); C. Blanc, *Le trésor de la curiosité*, II, Paris, 1857, p. 508; *Rooses*, III, pp. 42, 43, No. 557^{bis}; (2) **Painting**, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 45 : 36 cm.; prov.: Dresden, Max Ritter, 1922; Berlin, Richard von Kühlmann; Theodor Bauer, sale, Berlin, 12 May 1929, lot 85; lit.: *Van Puyvelde, Skizzen*, p. 94 (as *minderwertige skizzenhafte Kopie*); (3) **Painting**, whereabouts unknown; canvas, 45 : 36.5 cm.; prov.: Paris, Eugène Rodrigues, by 1924, sale, Paris (Drouot), 28–29 November 1928, lot 205, pl. XXXIII; Paris, art market, 1958; lit.: *Van Puyvelde*, 1939, p. 94 (wrong measurements, as “Karton”); (4) **Etching by Franz Ertinger**, 1679 (Fig. 8; *V.S.*, p. 217, No. 15, 1); (5) **Etching by Bernard Baron**, 1724 (Fig. 9); *V.S.*, p. 218, under No. 16).

EXHIBITED: *Manchester*, 1857, No. 558 (provisional catalogue, No. 568); *Dublin*, 1872, No. 132; *London*, 1879, No. 159; *London*, 1899–1900, No. 111; *London*, 1909–10, No. 18; *London*, 1912, No. 1; Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 1933; *Amsterdam*, 1933, No. 18 (repr.); *Paris*, 1936, No. 74; *Brussels*, 1937, No. 85; *London*, 1950, No. 12; *Helsinki*, 1952–53, No. 15; *Rotterdam*, 1953–54, No. 61; *Braunschweig*, 1956, No. 1 (repr.).

LITERATURE: *Catalogue Marbury Hall*, 1814, [p. 3], No. 57; *Smith, Catalogue Raisonné*, II, pp. 250, 251, No. 849 (from the etchings by Ertinger and Baron); *Van Hasselt*, p. 290, No. 641; *Hannema*, 1933, p. 3, repr.; *Pantheon*, XI, 1933, p. 199; *Van Puyvelde, Skizzen*, pp. 40, 41, 94, 95, fig. 67; *Burchard*, 1950, pp. 13–15, No. 12; *Haverkamp Begemann*, 1953, p. 78, No. 61; *Rotterdam, Cat.* 1962, No. 1760; M. Jaffé, in *Encyclopedia of World Art*, XII, 1966, New York a.o., fig. 335; *d'Hulst*, 1968, pp. 100, 101, No. 20, fig. 34; *Cocke*, 1971, fig. 51.

Entirely executed by Rubens. A pentimento indicates that the right leg of Achilles originally was bent less sharply, and was stretched out farther.¹

Painted on two horizontal boards joined just above the centre, the joint leaving hardly any trace on the surface of the painting. A narrow blank margin borders the scene on all sides except at the top. Its absence here probably indicates that the panel was slightly trimmed at the top.

¹ First noted by C. Müller Hofstede, in *Cat. Exh. Braunschweig*, 1956, under No. 1.

1b. **ACHILLES DIPPED INTO THE RIVER STYX: MODELLO** (Figs. 3–7)

Oil on panel; 109 : 89.5 cm.

Sarasota, Florida, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art. No. 221.

PROVENANCE: ? Daniel Fourment, Antwerp, until June 1643; ? Peter Fourment, Antwerp, until 28 April 1653; ? Gerard van der Strecken, Jan van Leefdael, Hendrick Lenaerts, Brussels; ? Kings of Spain; Dukes of Infantado, Madrid (inventory Pastrana c. 1753-1800, as *La noche cuando immortalizaron a Aquiles*), until 27 November 1841; Duke of Pastrana, Madrid; Duchess of Pastrana, Madrid; Comunidad de las Religiosas del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús, Madrid, c. 1887; Emile Pacully, sale, Paris (Georges Petit), 4 May 1903, lot 28 (pl. xxvi); John E. Stillwell, sale, New York (Anderson Galleries), 1-3 December 1927, lot 224 (repr.), purchased by Kleinberger Galleries for William R. Hearst, New York, William R. Hearst; returned to Kleinberger, 1929, in payment for another painting; purchased from Kleinberger by Ringling, 5 February, 1930.

COPY: Painting with variations, without terms, Lund, Sweden, I.G. Bruszt; canvas, 43 : 37 cm.

EXHIBITED: *Art tells the Story*, The Denver Art Museum, Denver, 1953 (not numbered).

LITERATURE: *Rooses*, III, p. 40 (as *Van Thulden, retouched by Rubens*); v, p. 334; E. Müntz, P. Leprieur, a.o., *Collection Pacully*, Paris [n. d., in or before 1902], p. 14, 15, pl. 27; *Lafond*, 1902, pp. 236, 237, pl. 26 (as *Rubens*); M. Rooses, *De verzameling Pacully te Parijs, Onze Kunst*, II^I, 1903, pp. 122, 123, repr. (as *Rubens* [the figures of Thetis and Achilles] and *Erasmus Quellinus* [the rest]); *Sentenach y Cabañas*, p. 79; *Lafond*, 1909-10, pp. 125-129, repr. (as *Rubens*); M. Rooses, in *Rubens-Bulletijn*, v, 1910, p. 301; W. R. Valentiner, *Gemälde des Rubens in Amerika, Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, XLVII, 1911-12, pp. 265, 271, No. 27; W. R. Valentiner, *The Art of the Low Countries, Studies*, Garden City-New York, 1914, pp. 190, 236, No. 27; *K.d.K.*, p. 464 (as a modello [Vorlage] for a tapestry made in Rubens's studio); *Van Puyvelde, Skizzen*, p. 94 (as *Werkstattreplik*); W. R. Valentiner, *Rubens' Paintings in America, The Art Quarterly*, IX, 1946, p. 164, No. 114 (as *studio of Rubens*); *Goris-Held*, p. 53, No. A. 78 (as a school replica of the sketch, c. 1630-32); W. E. Suida, *A Catalogue of Paintings in the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota*, 1949, pp. 195, 196, No. 221, repr.; *Burchard*, 1950, p. 16, under No. 13; *Haverkamp Begemann*, 1953, p. 78, under No. 61; *Seilern*, pp. 58, 59; J. A. Gaya Nuño, *Pintura Europea perdida por España, de Van Eyck a Tiepolo*, Madrid, 1964, No. 106, pl. 46; *d'Hulst*, 1968, p. 101, under No. 20.

The modello differs from the oil sketch (No. 1a; Fig. 2) in numerous details, e.g.: the number of small figures in the distance has been reduced; the costume of the fate holding the torch (probably Lachesis) has been simplified, and removed from the left breast; the left contour of the right term has been changed. Furthermore, the figures of Lachesis and Thetis have been somewhat enlarged, resulting in a clarification of the relationship between the main

figures and the background; the distribution of light in the sky and on the water has been changed.

The visible surface of this modello seems largely the work of Rubens himself. *Pentimenti* in various areas indicate that the first stage of the modello resembled the oil sketch more closely than the final version. Thus the silhouette of the term at the right and the drapery of Lachesis first were virtually identical with the corresponding sections of the oil sketch, the same applies to the capital resting on the fruit basket above the left term, and the borderline of her costume over her shoulder. Some details, like the bats in the sky have been redefined. If these corrections were made by Rubens in a design transferred by an assistant (Van Thulden ?) from the oil sketch, as seems likely, most of the surface may be considered Rubens's work. The background figures, the mountains, much of the term at the left probably is uncorrected assistant's work. Clearly recognizable is Rubens's hand also in details like the fire in the sky at the left and the light emanating from the torch, and the heads of the dogs.

Painted on four vertical boards (cradled). The joint of the two central boards and numerous cracks on either side of this joint have caused damages and losses down the centre of the painting, *e.g.* in the neck, shoulders and arm of Thetis and the baby Achilles. Thus the pearl necklace of Thetis has disappeared almost entirely.

1c. **ACHILLES DIPPED INTO THE RIVER STYX: CARTOON**

? Body colour on paper; approximately 400 : 320 cm.

Whereabouts unknown; presumably lost.

PROVENANCE: Daniel Fourment, Antwerp, until June 1643; Peter Fourment, Antwerp, until 28 April 1653; ? Gerard van der Streken, Jan van Leefdael, Hendrick Lenaerts, Brussels, at least until 1660; presumably lost at sea between 1671 and 1675, during transport to Spain.

2. **ACHILLES INSTRUCTED BY CHIRON: TAPESTRY**

Approximately 400 : 350 cm.

For panels of this subject belonging to sets of two or more, see pp. 81-90, Figs. 10-12. The following panel does not belong to a known set: whereabouts unknown; weaver(s) unknown; prov.: London, Lady Miller; lit.: *Marillier; Cavallo*, 1967, p. 127. (2)

Peleus had entrusted the education of his son Achilles to the centaur Chiron. In contrast to other centaurs, Chiron, son of Cronos and the sea nymph Philyra, was a wise and gentle creature, "the most righteous one of the centaurs", the protector and instructor of children, and the teacher of many of the most celebrated heroes of Greece. Aesculapius himself was instructed by him in the arts of healing and hunting, and even Apollo was said to have been taught by Chiron, and so was Jason. Achilles was instructed by Chiron in the art of healing¹, to perform on the lyre² and, of course, to ride and hunt.³ According to tradition Hesiod wrote a book of the "Precepts of Chiron" for the instruction of Achilles.⁴

Rubens has represented the centaur Chiron giving Achilles a riding lesson. Achilles holds a crop in his left and turns his head towards his rider. At one side are two hunting dogs and a lyre hanging from a tree (rather than a cithara because in classical antiquity the former was considered the most suitable instrument for musical training). In the distance Mount Pelion, where Chiron and the other centaurs lived.

Rubens framed the scene at the sides by simulated sculptured terms of Aesculapius and one of the musical muses, probably either Terpsichore or Erato⁵. Aesculapius, with a snake wound around a stick, alludes to the art of medicine, the muse with a lyre or a cithara⁶ to music.⁷ In front of the plinth at the bottom are a dead bird, a hare or a rabbit, a hunting trumpet, bow and arrows, and a bird catcher's net, referring to the art of hunting. The plants in the right bottom corner may be medicinal herbs. At the top is a cartouche between garlands of flowers.

This depiction of the scene has so much in common with the description (or pseudo-description) made by Philostratus of a painting of this subject in his *Εἰκόνες* (*Images*) that there can be little doubt that Rubens based his design mainly on that text⁸: "... for Chiron is teaching Achilles to ride horseback and to use him exactly as a horse, and he measures his gait to what the boy can endure, and turning around he smiles at the boy when he laughs aloud with enjoyment, and all but says to him, 'Lo, my hoofs paw the ground for you without the use of spur; lo, I even urge you on; the horse is a spirited animal and gives no ground for laughter. For although you have been taught by me thus gently the art of horsemanship, divine boy, ... some day ... you shall take many cities and slay many men, you merely running and they trying to escape you.' Such is Chiron's prophecy for the boy ...".⁹

Earlier in the same "description" Philostratus wrote about the fawn and the hare as the spoils of the boy, and their contrast to the cities and ranks of men Achilles would conquer later; he wrote that Chiron nourished him on milk and honey. "Already the boy has a frowning brow and an air of spirited haughtiness, but these are made gentle by a guileless look and by gracious cheeks that send forth a tender smile. The cloak he wears is probably his mother's gift; for it is beautiful and its colour is sea-purple with red glints shading into a dark blue".¹⁰ Philostratus also mentions the fatherly kindness of Chiron, the gentle expression in his eyes, and the lyre "through whose music he (Chiron) has become cultured".

In his interpretation of Chiron's instruction of Achilles, Rubens stressed the gentle aspect of the centaur, as Philostratus did. In Statius's *Achilleid*, when asked to recount his days with Chiron, Achilles brags about his exploits as a pupil of the man-beast, emphasizing the speed of his riding, the fierceness of his fights, the wildness of the animals hunted, adding that Chiron did not allow him to hunt the easy animals and the safe ones. The tale contrasts sharply with Philostratus's description.

When painting Chiron and Achilles, Rubens undoubtedly also had in mind a Roman copy of a lost Hellenistic bronze, the best known marble version being "the Borghese centaur", in the Louvre. In this sculpture the bearded centaur also turns around and looks at the cupid he is giving a ride. Rubens knew the sculpture well, because he had made at least six drawings after it, five of which are known from copies among the drawings of the "Rubens cantoor" in the print room in Copenhagen (Nos. III, 13-17),¹¹ while a sixth drawing is in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow as a work of Rubens.¹² The similarities between Chiron and the sculptured centaur as copied by Rubens is not limited to the motif of riding and turning around, but is also found in the voluminosity of the man-beast and in the position of the upper parts of the rear and front leg closest to the viewer. The motif was also adopted in *Nessus and Deianira* from Rubens's studio, in Hanover,¹³ and in related versions.

The instruction and education Achilles received from Chiron was represented quite frequently in the seventeenth century and later. Usually the instruction in arrow-shooting was the preferred theme, rather than riding centaur-back. Giuseppe Maria Crespi painted the instruction in arrow-shooting (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum), and so did Donato Creti (Bologna, Palazzo Comunale), and Jean-Baptiste Regnault in 1783 in the painting he submitted

for his reception to the Académie.¹⁴ Delacroix made a drawing of the same subject in 1862 although he had seen and admired six years previously a tapestry of the series after Rubens's designs.¹⁵

¹ Mentioned by Homer, *Iliad*, xi, 631, and with much detail by Statius, *Achilleid*, ii, 159–163.

² Ovid, *Fasti*, v, 385, 386; see also Statius, *op. cit.*, i, 187, 188.

³ Statius, *op. cit.*, ii, 94–167.

⁴ Χείρωνος 'Υποθήκαι; cf. on Chiron and his educational talents the instructive article by W.R. Dawson, *Chiron the Centaur, Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, iv, 1949, pp. 267–275.

⁵ As Silberman, 1962 proposed.

⁶ As proposed by Collot, 1852, p. 16.

⁷ The term with the string instrument is less likely to be interpreted as Euterpe, as Collot, 1852 (*loc. cit.*) thought, or as Calliope, proposed by Lafond, 1909–10, p. 127, or as Apollo, an interpretation found on Baron's etching (Fig. 18) and accepted by Smith and Crick-Kuntziger.

⁸ Silberman, 1962, p. 17, and independently M.R. Scherer, *The Legends of Troy in Art and Literature*, New York-London, 1963, p. 41, pointed out this proximity.

⁹ "... διδάσκει ὁ Χείρων τον Ἀχιλλέα ἱππάζεσθαι καὶ κεκρῆσθαι αὐτῷ ὅσα ἵππῳ, καὶ συμμετρεῖται μὲν τὸν δρόμον εἰς τὸ ἀνεκτὸν τῷ παιδί, καγχάζοντι δὲ αὐτῷ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἡδεσθαι προσμειδιᾷ μεταστρεφόμενος καὶ μόνον οὐχὶ λέγει "ἰδοὺ σοι κροαίνω ἀπληκτος, ἰδοὺ καὶ ἐπικελεύομαι σοι · ὁ ἵππος ὀξύς ἄρα καὶ ἀφαιρεῖ γέλωτα. λαγαρώς γάρ μοι ἱππασθεῖς, θεῖε παῖ, καὶ τοιῶδ' ἵππῳ πρόπων ὀχῆσθαι ποτὲ καὶ ἐπὶ Σάνθου καὶ Βαλίου καὶ πολλὰς μὲν πόλεις αἰρήσεις, πολλοὺς δὲ ἀνδρας ἀποκτενεῖς, θέων ὅσα, καὶ συνεκφεύγοντας". ταῦτα ὁ Χείρων μαντεύεται τῷ παιδί ..." (Philostratus, *Imagines*, ii, 2, 5; transl. A. Fairbanks [Loeb Classical Library]).

¹⁰ "... ἐπισκύνιον τε καὶ θυμοειδὲς φρύαγμά ἐστι μὲν ἤδη τῷ παιδί, πρᾶννει δὲ αὐτὸ ἀκάκῳ βλέμματι καὶ παρειαῖ μάλα ἴλεω καὶ προσβαλλούσῃ τι ἀπαλοῦ γέλωτος. ἡ χλαμὺς δέ, ἣν ἀμπέχεται, παρὰ τῆς μητρὸς οἶμαι · καλὴ γάρ καὶ ἀλιπόρφυρος καὶ πυραυγῆς ἐξαιλάττουσα τοῦ κυανῆ εἶναι; ..." (Philostratus, *op. cit.*, ii, 2, 2; transl. A. Fairbanks).

¹¹ The classical centaur mentioned as source for Chiron by E. Kieser, *Antikes im Werke des Rubens, Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, N. F., x, 1933, p. 130; Rooses had noted it, according to Kieser; the Copenhagen drawings are mentioned by G. Falck, *En Rubenselevs Tegninger, Kunstmuseets Aarskrift*, iv, 1918, p. 73, by Kieser and by V.H. Miesel, *Rubens' Study Drawings after Ancient Sculpture, Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1963, p. 324, with reproductions of two of them, figs. 18 and 19.

¹² Y. Kuznetsov, *Drawings by Rubens from the Museums in the USSR* [in Russian], Moscow, 1965, No. 7, pl. 1; the connection between the Moscow drawing and Rubens's Chiron has been noted by W. Stechow, *Rubens and the Classical Tradition*, Cambridge, Mass., 1968, p. 28, repr.

¹³ See Y. Kuznetsov, *loc. cit.*

¹⁴ Now in the Louvre, Paris; already Collot, 1852 (p. 18) mentioned it in comparison with Rubens.

¹⁵ The drawing in the Louvre, Paris, reproduced by H. Voss, M. von Boehn, W. Bruhn, *Homers Ilias... mit einer Einleitung "Homer in der Kunst"...*, Berlin, [1939], p. 104. For further references to other representations of the subject in the seventeenth century, see A. Pigler, *Barockthemen*, ii, Budapest, 1956, p. 262.