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QUANTITY OVER QUALITY? DUTCH AND FLEMISH PAINTINGS IN A DANISH PRIVATE COLLECTION

Angela Jager

ABSTRACT This paper explores the unusually high availability of Dutch and Flemish old master paintings in Denmark, and investigates this dispersal especially in the low-quality segment. The focus lies on one private collection comprising hundreds of undocumented and unstudied paintings. A selection of these paintings, of which multiple versions are known, is studied further to determine the context of their production and acquisition. Did the collectors prefer quantity over quality, and, if so, why?

Introduction

In a recent article, Michael North urges that 'many castles of the nobility in Denmark … contain or may contain a wealth of Netherlandish paintings, including both high and low art, that need to be researched in the years to come'.[1] North's comment on Danish castles and 'both high and low art' arouses questions as to the status of lower quality paintings in these collections and the reason why the nobility would have collected these types of paintings in the first place. North's article, however, continues with a discussion of the purchases of Gerhard Morell (*c.*1710–1771) for the Royal Danish Kunstkammer thereby focusing on the top price bracket.

These private castle collections, which originated mainly in the 18th century, are often inaccessible and unstudied. What scant information is available suggests a predominance of Flemish and Dutch works by little known painters and copies.[2] Analysis of the written sources on noble collections in early modern Denmark carried out by Jesper Svenningsen in his excellent dissertation suggested an overall taste for Netherlandish baroque.[3] The high density of Netherlandish paintings in Danish castle collections might be explained by Morell's purchases for the Kunstkammer, which popularised certain Dutch and Flemish painters in court circles, as both North and Svenningsen argue.[4] But how can we explain the many low quality paintings in these collections?

This paper stems from research conducted in one of these castles. The research project explores the dominance of Netherlandish lesser quality paintings in Denmark by examining one particular castle collection, the largest part of which originated in the 18th century.[5] The manor house, which was bought in 1739 by an ancestor of the current owners, was rigorously renovated and enlarged. On 29 August 1750, four men were paid for the transfer of an unknown number of paintings from the family's Copenhagen residence to the castle. The walls were further decorated with old master paintings bought at auctions. Following the owner's death, his eldest son acquired the building and its contents (hereafter referred to as the father and the son). The son expanded his father's collection with purchases at auctions: an inventory of the collection drawn up in 1790 includes 429 paintings and specifies whether he had bought the works himself or if they were inherited.[6] This inventory demonstrates that the son purchased 230 paintings over a period of 37 years for a total of 4,800 *rigsdaler*, most of which cost 10 *rigsdaler* or less. To put this into perspective, an unskilled labourer working in Copenhagen in 1789 earned about 1 *rigsdaler* a week in winter and 1.25 *rigsdaler* a week in summer.[7]

This 18th-century collection of hundreds of paintings contains different genres, painting sizes, supports and styles. While some German, French, Danish and Italian painters are represented, the vast majority of the works are painted by Flemish and Dutch masters. The research comprises the *c.*450 old master paintings in the main building,[8] many of which have not previously been documented or studied. The frames are mainly of a uniform type, suggesting that the collectors had considered how their painting collection would be presented. Most frames carry nameplates with highly doubtful attributions to well-known painters. The most recent inventory of the entire collection was drawn up in the 1960s but



Fig. 1 Victor Wolfvoet (II) or circle, *The Horrors of War*, after 1636, oil on copper (attached to panel at a later date), 55.9 × 49.5 cm, private collection, Denmark. (Photo: Frida Gregersen.)



Fig. 2 Victor Wolfvoet (II) or circle, *The Benefits of Peace*, after 1636, oil on copper (attached to panel at a later date), 57 × 50.7 cm, private collection, Denmark. (Photo: Frida Gregersen.)

clearly without any research into attribution: often the painter's name on the uniform frame was simply adopted. This project will publish the entire collection as individual records in the open-access image database of the RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History, including object data, new attributions and provenance information.[9]

This paper focuses on a selection of paintings of which multiple versions are known. It will determine when, where and how were they produced, when they entered the collection and the conditions of their purchases. The results will be used to assess if the collectors preferred quantity over quality, and, if so, why.

The paintings

Flemish paintings: the dominance of Rubens' designs

The first case to be considered are two paintings entitled *The Horrors of War* and *The Benefits of Peace*. Both are painted on copper supports of similar size and have complementing iconography (Figs 1 and 2). On *The Horrors of War*, Minerva, goddess of wisdom, expels Mars, the god of war. Mars symbolises the destructive power of war: he has several dead bodies beneath him and is dragging off a mother and child. As the goddess of wisdom and patron of the arts, Minerva defends the virtues and arts that can only flourish during peace. This is depicted in *The Benefits of Peace*: Peace is being crowned by Victory, while she points her caduceus at a winged and tailed figure at the right who, with her encouragement, sets light to a pile of weapons and armour. Peace is surrounded by the virtues of Abundance (cornucopia), Harmony (bundle of arrows) and Justice (pair of scales). The fruits of peace are spilling from the cornucopia and are gathered by four putti.

The Horrors of War relates to three sketches by Rubens showing the motif of Minerva driving away Mars, while he is dragging off a mother and child.[10] The sketches are generally considered to be studies for the *The Consequences of War* (1637–1638) in the Palazzo Pitti in Florence.[11] The gouache in the Musée du Louvre is the last of these three studies (Fig. 3).[12] The copper painting in the Danish collection comprises most details of the Louvre gouache, but in a reduced vertical format composition, excluding Hercules and his club joining the fight at the left and the burning city at the right. Presumably the visual source was either the Louvre gouache or another unpreserved sketch.

The preparatory sketches are not followed exactly in any surviving painting by Rubens, but two paintings attributed to Victor Wolfvoet (II) (1612–1652) adopt the full design (Fig. 4).[13] Nils Büttner convincingly suggests by the strangely empty landscape and the awkward articulation of space that Wolfvoet must have had a design by Rubens from which to work, but no final painted version.[14] Rubens kept most of his sketches in his studio, but following his death and the auction of his estate in 1642, many came into the possession of Antwerp artists and dealers who reproduced these designs for the art market.[15] Wolfvoet was one of those painters: he owned 20 oil sketches by Rubens and produced painted up copies after them.[16]

The Horrors of War in the Danish collection differs from the two paintings attributed to Wolfvoet because it shows a



Fig. 3 Peter Paul Rubens, *Hercules and Minerva Expelling Mars*, *c.*1634–1636, body colour, oil and brown ink over black chalk on light brown paper, 370 × 535 mm, Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. 20.183. (Photo © RMN-Grand Palais, Musée du Louvre/Thierry Ollivier.)



Fig. 4 Victor Wolfvoet (attributed to), *Hercules and Minerva Expelling Mars*, after 1636, oil on canvas, 67 × 89 cm, The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv. no. GE 8531. (Photo: Leonard Kheifets © The State Hermitage Museum.)

reduced composition as opposed to its model, and has a pendant painting. This pendant, *The Benefits of Peace*, does not relate to known paintings or oil sketches by Rubens but its motif of Peace surrounded by three virtues and being crowned by Victory features on a painting signed by Wolfvoet.[17] This painting has a horizontal format composition with more showing on each side: Mercury is sitting crossed-legged at the left, playing the lute, and two bound prisoners, stripped from their armour, are on the right. There are three detailed preparatory drawings and five paintings of this composition, recently attributed to Wolfvoet by Gregory Martin and Bert Schepers.[18]

No other versions of the two Danish vertical format compositions are known. However, the decorations of an Antwerp cabinet attributed to Wolfvoet and/or his studio include the depiction of a further reduced motif in which Peace, accompanied by Abundance, Harmony and Justice, is crowned by Victory, but three putti instead of four are gathering the fruits of peace, and one putto, instead of two, is climbing the tree (Fig. 5).[19] Many of the other compositions that decorate this cabinet derive from models by Rubens.[20]

For the provenance of the Danish coppers, I would like to propose that they originally decorated the sides or doors of the same cabinet. Besides their thematic relation, both are painted on vertical format copper supports of similar size and display a reduced composition compared to other known examples. There are several versions of *The Horrors of War* and *The Benefits of Peace*, but the Danish collection is the only example known to date where these two compositions function as pendants. Wolfvoet is regularly recorded as a painter in the accounts of the art dealer Matthijs Musson (1598–1678).[21] Musson commissioned the artist to paint larger copper plates with motifs after Rubens and other Flemish painters in order to decorate cabinet doors.[22] These cabinets were exported overseas, to the Iberian Peninsula in particular.[23]

As previously mentioned, Wolfvoet is known to have owned and reproduced designs by Rubens. However, the inventory of his estate does not include examples featuring Peace and War: the closest in iconography are 'a sketch after Rubens of Mars and Venus on panel' and 'Abundance, copy after Rubens on canvas'.[24] A document from Musson in 1651 mentions the sale of 'a copper plate of the Peace after Victor [Wolfvoet]', thereby indicating Wolfvoet as the originator of *The Benefits of Peace*.[25] Wolfvoet's depiction quotes heavily from Rubens, among others from the oil sketch *Abundance* that Wolfvoet owned.[26] Wolfvoet received several commissions from Musson for paintings featuring Peace and Peace crowned by Virtue, but none with war iconography; however, once, having given Wolfvoet a commission for *Peace*, Musson also commissioned 'Just den Schilder' to paint *Mars Troubles Peace*.[27]

It is likely that Musson provided painters on his payroll with the examples.[28] The fact that Wolfvoet painted the same design a number of times does not therefore necessarily prove his authorship of the Danish painting or other paintings attributed to him: they may have been painted by another painter working for the art dealer.[29] Even after Musson's death, the same designs spread to other workshops and continued to be produced. The name 'Beschey' on the reverse of the frames is of relevance here: Balthasar Beschey (1708–1776) reproduced Rubens' designs until his death in 1776.[30] These two subjects are also recorded as having been painted by him: a London auction in 1824 includes paintings of '*The Horrors of War* by Bischey after Rubens; *The Blessings of Peace*, ditto',[31] presumably copies after Rubens' Florence and London paintings.[32] The origin of this attribution to Beschey is unclear and of a more recent date: the paintings appeared at Otto Thott's auction in 1787 as anonymous.[33] The son bought them for 54 *rigsdaler*, listing them in the 1790 inventory as 'Rubens School'.

A third work in the collection relates to a sketch by Rubens: the panel painting *The Raising of Lazarus* (Fig. 6).



Fig. 5 Detail of an Antwerp cabinet, *c.*1650, Rijkmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. BK-NM-11906-1, attributed to the workshop or circle of Victor Wolfvoet (II): *Peace, Accompanied by Abundance, Harmony and Justice, is Crowned by Victory*.

The deceased Lazarus is rising from his rocky grave at the left, supported by Peter, while Martha kneels in front of Lazarus and loosens the bandages around his hands; Mary sits behind her, looking up at Christ at the right with tears in her eyes. The painting is a copy of Rubens' preparatory oil sketch of *The Raising of Lazarus* in the Louvre, rather than of the much larger final painting from 1617–1620 (compare Figs 7 and 8).[34] This can be deduced from the inclusion of an extra figure behind Jesus and from several other details such as the colour of Mary's undergarment and the raised knee of Martha.

It is possible that the work was produced during Rubens' lifetime: the panel support was made in Antwerp between 1626 and 1658, as indicated by the marks of the Antwerp panel makers guild and the panel maker Guilliam Aertssen on the reverse.[35] As previously stated, most of Rubens' oil sketches remained studio property until his death. However, it seems unlikely that this painting was produced in his workshop because of the quality of the painting and the master's habit of finishing and/or retouching his pupil's work.[36] The lack of painterly quality also excludes the name on its frame, Theodoor van Thulden (1606–1669), and its attribution to Jacob Jordaens (1593–1678) at the time of its purchase for 50 *rigsdaler* by the son. As with many copies, the author of this particular painting will remain unidentified.

This painting is presumably one of multiple copies. A gallery interior by Hans Jordaens (III) (*c.*1595–1643) and Cornelis de Bauilleur (1607–1671) shows a larger painted version of the oil sketch being studied by two men.[37] De Baellieur had ties to the previously mentioned Musson and Wolfvoet – Musson was married to his sister and Wolfvoet was godfather to one of his children[38] – and might have seen Rubens' oil sketch of *The Raising of Lazarus* or one of the copies. This copy may have been commissioned by Musson, just as the *The Horrors of War* and *The Benefits of Peace*. The discussion of this selection of Flemish paintings in the Danish collection suggests the importance of Rubens' designs in Flemish art production until well into the 18th



Fig. 6 Unknown Flemish artist after Peter Paul Rubens, *The Raising of Lazarus*, after 1626, oil on panel, 63 × 48.5 cm, private collection, Denmark. (Photo: Frida Gregersen.)



Fig. 7 Peter Paul Rubens, *The Raising of Lazarus*, 1617–1620, oil on canvas (originally arched at the top), 261 × 194 cm, Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin, inv. no. 783 (destroyed in May 1945).



Fig. 8 Peter Paul Rubens, *The Raising of Lazarus*, oil on panel, 36.6 × 28.3 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. R.F. 188. (Photo © RMN-Grand Palais, Musée du Louvre/Jean-Gilles Berizzi.)

century. Rubens' preparatory oil sketches were owned by artists and dealers, and reproduced in many forms for the art market – from smaller easel paintings to copper plates adorning the cabinets. The oil sketches were manageable in size and less elaborately finished than Rubens' paintings, making them easier to copy. The paintings were not made or sold as copies of Rubens' work but in the 18th century they were recognised as such (or 'Rubens School'), giving collectors a chance to own an accessible and affordable example of the master's work.

Dutch paintings: original designs for mass production

At first sight, the 1960s inventory indicates a similar situation for several Dutch paintings in this collection: it includes six paintings simply attributed to the 'Rembrandt School'.[39] Five of these are very similar in execution and can be linked to the workshop of history painter Jacob de Wet (I) (1610–1675), who trained many pupils in his large workshop in Haarlem.[40] De Wet's works reflect familiarity with Rembrandt, but are not copies or imitations of his works,[41] however, these five Danish paintings are too weak in execution to be by De Wet himself. The following discussion of three of these argues that they were painted by one his many pupils and assistants who produced speedy, inexpensive paintings after De Wet's designs for the art market.[42]



Fig. 9 Workshop of Jacob de Wet, *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, oil on panel, *c.*50 × 93 cm (top panel missing due to woodworm activity), private collection, Denmark. (Photo: Frida Gregersen.)



Fig. 10 Jacob de Wet, *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, signed 'J.d.Wet', oil on canvas, 44.5 × 54.4 cm, sale Vienna, Dorotheum, 16 March 1976, lot 157.



Fig. 11 Jacob de Wet, *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, signed 'JW', after 1644, oil on canvas, 105.7 × 85 cm, sale Amsterdam, Sotheby's, 30 November 2010, lot. 45.

Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery, for example, is a simplified composition of two prototypes by De Wet (Fig. 9). In the biblical account of Christ and the woman taken in adultery (John 8:2–11), a group of scribes and Pharisees bring a woman to Jesus, accuse her of committing adultery, and ask whether she should be stoned. Jesus replies 'He who that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her'. Eventually he tells the woman to leave. The three main characters (the kneeling adulteress, Christ standing and the seated Pharisee) are adopted almost directly from De Wet's prototype (Fig. 10), which shows the woman's hands clasped together begging for forgiveness, a pose well known from Rembrandt's *Judas Returning the Thirty Silver Pieces* (1629).[43] In the Danish painting, the woman's hands are in her lap instead, as portrayed in another painting of this subject by De Wet (Fig. 11). This second prototype reminds us of Rembrandt's depiction from 1644 in the National Gallery in



Fig. 12 Workshop of Jacob de Wet, *Solomon Blessing David as his Successor on the Instigation of Bathsheba*, oil on panel, 50.6 × 73.6 cm, private collection, Denmark. (Photo: Frida Gregersen.)



Fig. 13 Workshop of Jacob de Wet, *The Queen of Sheba Visiting Solomon*, oil on panel, 55 × 72 cm, collection E. Stibbe (in 1983), Wageningen.

London, with the vast and dark temple filled with people, the central scene taking place at ground level on the stairs, and a second scene with a priest cast in shadow on a higher level in the background.[44]

The Danish painting is one of nine known 'repetitions' executed in different sizes.[45] In all of these, the proportions of the characters remain intact, demonstrating that the scene was repeated to scale and possibly indicating the use of a reproduction method such as a grid. The paintings were painted by different hands. The dates of 1650 and 1657 on the cap of the Pharisee on two of these repetitions suggest that the design was produced by De Wet's workshop over the course of several years.[46] The composition was presumably specifically designed by De Wet for the reproduction by pupils.

David Blesses Solomon as his Successor on the Instigation of Bathsheba (Fig. 12) is also one of three repetitions, identical



Fig. 14 Workshop of Jacob de Wet, *The Feeding of the Five Thousand*, oil on panel, 72.9 × 138.3 cm (top plank missing due to woodworm activity), private collection, Denmark. (Photo: Frida Gregersen.)

in composition but executed in different sizes done to scale. The arrangement of this scene closely parallels repetitions of the completely different subject, *The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon*, in the figures as well as the background (Fig. 13). The first scene shows Bathsheba kneeling before David, asking him to proclaim their son Solomon king. In the second scene, the Queen of Sheba arrives at King Solomon's throne to test his wisdom, bearing spices and precious stones. As different as these subjects are, both are depicted by a central group with a female protagonist in the same pose, a servant carrying her train in the exact same position and the three figures following behind. The outlines of the group to the right are comparable, even though the figures by the throne of Solomon are elevated in relation to the man seated at the table and the chambermaid by the bed of King David.

The comparison suggests that De Wet's pictorial arrangements and 'dense' figural groups were intended to be adaptable to a number of different subjects. The design allowed for the contours of the figural group to be drawn and the background painted before the subject had been defined. The composition in any number of paintings could be reproduced simply and quickly in advance, speeding up the painting process while retaining maximum iconographic flexibility, allowing De Wet to meet the demand with a limited number of standardised compositions. The painting of *Solomon Blessing David as his Successor on the Instigation of Bathsheba* was studied with infrared reflectography (IRR) in an attempt to confirm the hypothesis. Although no underdrawing was detectable in the figures, IRR did reveal a predetermined design: the figures were reserved in the background and painted directly on the ground.[47]

The suggestion of adaptable designs can be further clarified with *The Feeding of the Five Thousand* (Fig. 14) in relation to two paintings by a pupil registered with De Wet. This story (John 6:1–14) describes how Jesus fed a multitude with only five barley loaves and two small fish. The



Fig. 15 Jacob de Wet, *The Feeding of the Five Thousand*, signed 'J. de Wet', oil on panel, 66.5 × 50.5 cm, The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv. no. GE-3364. (Photo: Alexander Koksharov © The State Hermitage Museum.)



Fig. 16 Adriaen Gael, *Pharaoh's Army Engulfed in the Red Sea*, signed, oil on panel, 54 × 73 cm, collection Friedrich Glück (in 1929), Budapest.

design – in particular Christ's pose and the steep mountain – is based on De Wet's work in the collection of the Hermitage in St Petersburg (Fig. 15). The Danish version is one of four known unsigned paintings that feature a (nearly) identical arrangement, executed in different sizes and repeated to scale. On this painting, the background colours are thinly applied so that the ground beneath is visible between the brushwork. The figures and the contours are applied directly on the ground, suggesting that the painter had a pre-existing model from which to work. IRR confirmed that there was no underdrawing in black chalk, paint or lead pencil. As no alterations were detected either, it may be assumed that the painter executed his underdrawing and/or grid using a material not detectable by IRR such as red chalk.[48]

Christ is central to this biblical narrative: the characters around him have a supporting role with the exception of the boy who kneels in front of him holding a loaf of bread in his hand. This made the composition of *The Feeding of the Five Thousand* easy to adapt to different stories because its meaning could simply be shifted by changing the attributes. This is evident in two paintings by Adriaen Gael (II) (1618–1665) who, in 1640, was registered as a pupil of De Wet (Figs 16 and 17). Gael continued working in De Wet's workshop until 1660 and was allowed to sign his works in De Wet's manner with his own name.[49] These paintings depict *Pharaoh's Army Engulfed in the Red Sea* (Exodus 14:26) but are very similar to *The Feeding of the Five Thousand*: Moses is in the same position and pose as Christ, but holds a staff instead of the loaf of bread. The same overall design could therefore be reused with minimal adjustments. Narrative-specific elements, such as the Red Sea and drowning Pharaoh, are easily accommodated to the side of the mountain. The motif of the woman with a baby, on the other hand, is painted on both *The Feeding of the Five Thousand* and *Pharaoh's Army Engulfed in the Red Sea*.

These unsigned paintings with biblical subjects in simplified compositions on supports of different sizes were produced for the art market. Connections with De Wet's work are evident in the compositions, figure types and pictorial elements, but it cannot be ascertained whether all originated from his workshop. Amsterdam art dealers specialised in the sale of inexpensive history painting also had production capacity.[50] De Wet's style appears to have been rather popular in Amsterdam and was used as the main example for many (mediocre) history painters throughout



Fig. 17 Adriaen Gael, *Pharaoh's Army Engulfed in the Red Sea*, oil on panel, 57 × 72 cm, sale London, Phillips, 10 December 1991, lot 22.

the 17th century.[51] One art dealer, Hendrick Meijeringh (1639–1687), is recorded as having kept paintings by De Wet in his attic as examples for his own employees.[52]

Fascinatingly, the five paintings in the Danish collection linked to De Wet's production appear in the 1790 inventory as by one 'De Bie'. This name occurs in at least seven catalogues of art sales in 18th-century Denmark; the lots describe subjects typical of De Wet.[53] The paintings were part of the father's collection, but the prices in these auction catalogues demonstrate that paintings attributed to De Bie were relatively inexpensive (4 *rigsdaler* on average). There are several painters known by this name, but to my knowledge the only one who qualifies with his oeuvre is the Amsterdam painter and dealer Cornelis de Bie (1622–1664), whose probate inventory contains 165 paintings of which 41 were by his own hand, mainly biblical paintings and landscapes.[54] The few paintings known today to be by him do not follow De Wet's compositions. Future research should determine the identity of this 'De Bie' and if he played any role in the production of these De Wet style paintings found in 18th-century Danish auctions.

Conclusions

This 18th-century castle collection consists almost exclusively of 17th-century paintings, the vast majority of which were painted by minor Flemish and Dutch masters. A selection of these paintings with multiple versions was studied in order to understand the conditions of their production and purchase. This analysis suggested two different approaches, one being the reproduction of designs by well-known painters. *The Horrors of War* and *The Raising of Lazarus* were both painted versions based on sketches by Rubens. *The Benefits of Peace* was probably an invention by Victor Wolfvoet, but quotes heavily from Rubens' work. The same designs were used for easel paintings on panel or copper supports, or as decorations on cabinet doors, often commissioned by dealers such as Matthijs Musson, who traded the products on the national and international market. An alternative approach was revealed by the study of the three Dutch paintings in the Danish collection. Pupils and assistants in the large workshop of Jacob de Wet repeated the same compositions time and again, on supports of different sizes. These compositions do not adopt designs by recognised artists – instead they were presumably specifically designed by De Wet to be produced

by his assistants. They were simplified versions of his own designs and were adaptable to a number of different subjects to speed up the production process. Both approaches can be labelled as mass production.

The Flemish paintings after Rubens' designs were accepted in the 18th century as by Rubens' immediate environment or at least considered close enough to list them in 1790 as 'Jordaens' and 'Rubens School'. They were purchased at auctions in Denmark for reasonable prices. Presumably, their popularity lies in the fact that collectors could own an accessible and affordable example of Rubens' work. The Dutch paintings discussed in this paper were only (falsely) considered to be by the 'Rembrandt School' in recent times – in the 18th century they were attributed to one 'De Bie'. The Danish paintings could all be linked in composition to the production of Jacob de Wet and his workshop. This 'De Bie' might be identified with the Amsterdam painter and dealer Cornelis de Bie, but his role in the production of these paintings is unclear.

As to whether collectors preferred quantity over quality, the collection of 450 paintings consists largely of copies and mass-produced paintings of 17th-century Netherlandish origin. This paper investigated six of these paintings in order to fully understand why this particular family bought so many of these works in a relatively short period of time. Future research should explore the relevance of the supply of paintings, this family's economic situation, decoration fashions and knowledge on the art history in Denmark. For now, these purchases seem connected to the ready availability of these works on the Danish art market. Flemish and especially Dutch old master paintings were easy to find and relatively inexpensive. The purchase of large numbers of paintings at auctions was a quick and easy solution to cover the empty walls of the new castle.

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Notes

1. M. North, 'Collecting Dutch and Flemish paintings in 18th-century Denmark', in R. van Leeuwen and J. Roding (eds), *Gerson Digital: Denmark* (*Dutch and Flemish Art in European Perspective 1500–1900, Part II*), The Hague (RKD) 2015, § 7. See http://gersondenmark.rkdmonographs.nl/7.-collecting-dutch-and-flemish-paintings-in-18th-century-denmark-2013-michael-north (accessed 6 April 2019).
2. H. Gerson, annotated by R. van Leeuwen, 'Dispersal and after-effect of Dutch painting of the 17th century: Denmark. A translated, illustrated and annotated chapter from Horst Gerson's *Ausbreitung und Nachwirkung der holländischen Malerei des 17. Jahrhunderts* (1942/1983)', in Van Leeuwen and Roding 2015 (cited in note 1), § 3.14.
3. J. Svenningsen, *Samlingssteder. Udenlandsk kunst i danske samlermiljøer 1690–1840*, PhD dissertation, Aarhus, Aarhus University, 2015.
4. North 2015 (cited in note 1); Svenningsen 2015 (cited in note 3), pp. 77–78.
5. The owners of the collection wish to remain anonymous therefore information on its location and history is not disclosed.
6. 'Anno 1790. Fortegnelse.' The current owners of the collection provided a 20th-century transcription of this 1790 inventory. The transcription is incomplete and contains errors. The inventory is numbered and lists 429 paintings; the numbers 168–194 and 343 are not included in the transcription. With many thanks to Jesper Svenningsen, who kindly assisted me in attempting to locate the original inventory in the castle archives but unfortunately without success.
7. L. Seltow, 'Wealth distribution in Denmark in 1789', *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 27(2), 1979, pp. 121–138; p. 137, n. 23.
8. This research excludes the portrait gallery with approximately 150 portraits of relatives and relations. The portraits were commissioned by this family and do not shed light on the purchase of old masters in 18th-century Denmark. Moreover, they were not included in the 1790 inventory, indicating that they were not considered part of the painting collection.
9. RKD*explore*, The Hague (RKD): https://rkd.nl/en/explore/images.
10. Peter Paul Rubens, *Minerva Fighting Mars*, *c.*1634–1636, oil on panel, 40.5 × 27.5 cm, Museum Boymans-Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, inv. no. 2299; *Hercules and Minerva Fighting Mars*, *c.*1634–1636, oil on panel, 35.5 × 53 cm, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen, Antwerp, inv. no. 5097; *Hercules and Minerva Expelling Mars*, *c.*1634–1636, paper, 370 × 539 mm, Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. 20.183.
11. Peter Paul Rubens, *The Consequences of War: Venus Tries to Prevent Mars from Going to War*, 1637–1638, oil on canvas, 206 × 342 cm, Florence, Palazzo Pitti, inv. no. 1912.86. Links in form and content also exist with Rubens' *The Blessings of Peace*, 1629–1630, oil on canvas, 203.5 × 298 cm, London, National Gallery, inv. no. NG46. This painting, however, precedes the sketches: see N. Büttner, *Rubens: Allegories and Subjects from Literature. Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard XII*, vol. 1, London, Harvey Miller, 2018, pp. 263–282, no. 32.
12. Büttner 2018 (cited in note 11), pp. 260–263, no. 31; p. 263. Like the Danish painting, the drawing in Rotterdam contains only the central group of Minerva and Mars. Held suggests that the Rotterdam drawing is a fragment of a larger study: J.S. Held, *The Oil Sketches of Peter Paul Rubens: A Critical Catalogue*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1980, cat. no. 253. This is disputed by Büttner 2018 (*op. cit.* p. 256).
13. Victor Wolfvoet (attributed to), *Hercules and Minerva Expelling Mars*, oil on canvas, 67 × 89 cm, The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv. no. GE 8531; *Hercules and Minerva Expelling Mars*, support and dimensions unknown, private collection, Seville. For the attribution and illustrations, see M. Diaz Padron, 'Tres nuevos cobres de Victor Wolfvoet con la Paz y la Guerra bajo las Consigna de Rubens', *Archivio Español de Arte* 85(337), 2012, pp. 88–94, fig. 3-4.
14. Büttner 2018 (cited in note 11), p. 263.
15. M.E. Wieseman, 'Pursuing and possessing passion: two hundred years of collecting Rubens' oil sketches', in P.C. Sutton and M.E. Wieseman, *Drawn by the Brush: Oil Sketches by Peter Paul Rubens*, Greenwich, Bruce Museum of Arts and Science/

Berkeley, University of California/Cincinnati, Cincinnati Art Museum, 2004/2005, pp. 46–47.

16. For example, Wolfvoet owned Rubens' *bozzetti* for the Eucharist series: *Abraham and Melchizedeck*, 1625–1627, oil on panel, 15.5 × 15.5 cm, Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge, inv. no. 231; *Israelites Collecting Manna in the Desert*, 1625–1627, oil on panel, 15.5 × 13 cm, Musée Bonnat, Bayonne, inv. no. 456 (P). Painted up copies of the *bozzetti* signed with Wolfvoet's monogram are held in the collection of Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed (formerly Mauritshuis): *Abraham and Melchizedeck*, signed lower right 'V.W.', oil on copper, 37.5 × 27.5 cm and *Israelites Collecting Manna in the Desert*, oil on copper, 37.5 × 27.5 cm. See Q. Buvelot, *Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis: A Summary Catalogue*, The Hague, Mauritshuis, 2014, pp. 338, 340, nos. 267, 268. The Danish castle collection which is the subject of this article owns two unsigned and slightly smaller copies of these, here attributed to Victor Wolfvoet: *Abraham and Melchizedeck*, oil on copper, 30.5 × 23.5 cm and *Israelites Collecting Manna in the Desert*, oil on copper, 30 × 23.2 cm.
17. M. Diaz Padron, 'Dos cobres de Victor Wolfvoet en el Museo de San Carlos de Méjico', *Boletín del Seminario de Estudios de Arte y Archeologia* 65, 1999, pp. 323–327.
18. G. Martin and B. Schepers, 'Two Antwerp cabinets decorated by Victor Wolfvoet II', *The Burlington Magazine* 158, 2016, pp. 793–802. The etched copy by Remoldus Eynhoudts (1613–1680) follows the entire composition (in reverse) and contains a rejected attribution to Rubens: etching, 296 × 416 mm, Teylers Museum, Haarlem, inv. no. KG 17671. A large canvas in Barcelona, previously falsely attributed to Jacob Jordaens, clearly derives from the central motif of the paintings by Wolfvoet: *Allegory of Peace*, 1600–1699, oil on canvas, 220 × 300 cm, Biblioteca Museu Victor Balaguer, Barcelona, inv. no. 1074. See D. Castillo, 'Rubens o Jordaens al Museu Víctor Balaguer de Vilanova I la Geltrú?', *El Punt Avui*, 16 June 2011, p. 10. Available at: http://www.elpuntavui.cat/cultura/article/19-cultura/423970-rubens-o-jordaens.html (accessed 6 April 2019).
19. Martin and Schepers 2016 (cited in note 18), pp. 795–796.
20. Ibid., pp. 796–798. Rubens' compositions were often used to decorate cabinets: see R. Fabri, *De 17e-eeuwse Antwerpse kunstkast. Kunsthistorische aspecten*, Brussels, Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, 1993, pp. 55–74.
21. E. Duverger, *Nieuwe gegevens betreffende de kunsthandel van Matthijs Musson en Maria Fourmenois te Antwerpen tussen 1633–1681*, Ghent, 1969, p. 78; J. Denucé, *Na Peter Pauwel Rubens. Documenten uit den kunsthandel te Antwerpen in de XVIIe eeuw van Matthijs Musson*, Antwerp, 1949, pp. 70, 92, 101, 112–114.
22. Duverger 1969 (cited in note 21), pp. 75–76; Denucé 1949 (cited in note 21), pp. LXVIII–LXIX, 101, 112; Fabri 1993 (cited in note 20), pp. 104–105.
23. Fabri 1993 (cited in note 20), pp. 161–170. For the overseas paintings trade see also S. van Ginhoven, *Connecting Art Markets: Guilliam Forchondt's Dealership in Antwerp (c. 1632–78) and the Overseas Paintings Trade*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2017. See also S. van Ginhoven, 'Flemish dealers and a thriving transatlantic art trade during the 17th century', in this volume, pp. 15–25.
24. The inventory of Wolfvoet's possessions is published in E. Duverger, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen uit de zeventiende eeuw*, vol. 6, Brussels, Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, 1984–2004, pp. 343–361, and includes 'eenen schetse na rubens van mars ende venus op panneel in lyste' and 'een abondantie copye na Rubens op doeck in lyste'.
25. Denucé 1949 (cited in note 21), p. 92: 'een ditto [acht stuyvers plaat] den Peys naar Victor'.
26. Peter Paul Rubens, *Abundance*, *c.*1630, oil on panel, 63.7 × 45.8 cm, National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, P.1978-0004; Duverger 1984–2004 (cited in note 24), pp. 343–361.
27. The Peace scenes were described as *Peys* (*Peace*) and *Peijs wort gecront van de deucht* (*Peace Crowned by Virtue*): Duverger 1969 (cited in note 21), pp. 75–76; Denucé 1949 (cited in note 21), pp. 101, 112. The Mars scene was described as *Maers daer hij komt de vrede truberen* (*Mars Troubles Peace*): Duverger 1969, *op. cit.* pp. 50, 78. Just den Schilder might be Joos (Justus) Daneels (*c.*1618–1663?), who was registered as a pupil in 1618–1619 and as master in 1627–1628. Musson mentions him several times in his books, once as 'coesyn' (cousin): *op cit.* pp. 54, n. 273, 95–96, 160–161, 168, 188. Five canvases signed and dated 1648–1649 in the Kapel van Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van Zeven Weeën in Zele follow designs by Rubens and Van Dyck.
28. See also Fabri 1993 (cited in note 20), pp. 17–18, 56.
29. After Wolfvoet's death, Musson commissioned other painters with the same subjects. Besides the already mentioned copy by name (note 25), see for example a delivery in 1671 of several large coppers, including *Den peys met abondansie* (*Peace with Abundance*): Duverger 1969 (cited in note 21), p. 134. Musson purchased some of Wolfvoet's sketches and paintings after his death: *op cit.* p. 81.
30. The sale catalogue of Beschey's estate (1776) contains many paintings by Beschey after examples by Rubens and others: *Catalogue van extra schoone schilderyen, zoo door Italiaensche, Fransche als Nederduytsche beroemste meesters, als ook eenige teekeningen ende printen, naergelaeten by wylen d'Heer Balthazar Beschey*, Antwerp, Caudron, 1 July 1776.
31. Sale, London George Stanley (London), 2 March 1824 (Lugt no. 10605a), lot 69 (*The Horrors of War*, by Bischey, after Rubens) and lot 70 (*The Blessings of Peace* ditto).
32. Büttner concludes that the 1824 *Horrors of War* by Beschey is a copy after Rubens' final painting after tracing it back to a painting in Paris in 2016: Büttner 2018 (cited in note 11), pp. 265–266, no. 32 (copy 14). The sale of Beschey's estate includes a *Venus Stops Mars*: see note 30, no. 42.
33. Sale Otto Thott, Copenhagen, 24 April 1787, lot 63: '2de allegoriske Malerier, hvoraf det ene forestiller Krigens Ulyksalighed, det andet Fredens Lyksalighed. Minerva holder Krigsguden Mars, som staaer blant myrdede Mennesker, og slæber et Fruentimmer ved Haarene tilbage. Det andet et roligt siddende Fruentimmer holder, ved Hielp af et andet, Overflödigheds-Horn under Armen, og bliver af Victoria kronet.'
34. For a recent analysis of the several depictions of *The Raising of Lazarus* by Rubens see K. Bulckens, *Rubens: The Ministry of Christ. Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard V (2)*, London, Harvey Miller, 2017, pp. 146–160, nos. 32–35.
35. Many thanks to Jørgen Wadum for identifying the panel makers' mark as Aertsen's second punch, in use in the period 1626–1658. For the Antwerp marks, see J. Wadum, 'The Antwerp brand on paintings on panels', in E. Hermens (ed.), *Looking through Paintings: The Study of Painting Techniques and Materials in Support of Art Historical Research*, London, Archetype Publications, 1998, pp. 179–198.
36. N. Büttner, 'Die Firma Rubens', Bettina Baumgärtel (ed.), *Himmlisch, Herrlich, Höfisch: Peter Paul Rubens, Johan Wilhelm von der Pfalz and Anne Maria Luisa de' Medici*, exh. cat., Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, 2008, pp. 62–73.
37. Bulckens 2017 (cited in note 34), p. 152, no. 34a (copy 2), ill. 163.
38. J. Denucé, 'VI. Familie Musson - de Wael', *Antwerpsch Archievenblad* 2(4), 1927, pp. 282–294; Duverger 1984–2004 (cited in note 24), vol. 10, 1999, p. 401, no. 3353.

39. *The Beheading of John the Baptist*; *Abraham and the Visit of the Three Angels*; *Christ and the Woman taken in Adultery*; *Solomon Blesses David as his Successor on the Instigation of Bathsheba* (wrongly identified as Abraham and Isaac); *Pharaoh's Army Engulfed in the Red Sea*; *The Feeding of the Five Thousand*; *The Meeting of David and Abigail*; *Self-portrait*.
40. A. Jager, 'The workshop of Jacob de Wet (1610–1675) and his mass production of history painting', *Oud Holland* 131(2), 2018, pp. 67–108, 94–98.
41. E.J. Sluijter, *Rembrandt's Rivals: History Painting in Amsterdam 1630–1650*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2015, pp. 245–246.
42. Jager 2018 (cited in note 40).
43. Jacob de Wet was very familiar with Rembrandt's Judas, which is further demonstrated by his own depictions of *Judas Returning the Thirty Silver Pieces* in 1636 and 1642; see Jager 2018 (cited in note 40), p. 87.
44. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, signed 'Rembrandt f 1644', oil on panel, 83.8 × 64.5 cm, National Gallery, London, inv. no. NG45.
45. Jager 2018 (cited in note 40), pp. 86–94.
46. Workshop of Jacob de Wet, *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, dated '1650', oil on panel, 59.5 × 80 cm, Museum Narodowe w Warszawie, Warsaw, inv. no. M.Ob.1657 MNW; Workshop of Jacob de Wet, *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, dated '1657', oil on panel, 50 × 95 cm, sale Munich, 3 June 1908, lot 60.
47. The IRR was carried out on location by Jørgen Wadum and the author with an Artist PRO camera mounted with a CCD progressive scan image sensor (1360 × 1036 pixels) and a Schneider Kreuznach Xenoplan 23 mm F/1.4 CCTV lens in near Infrared 2 with a long wave pass filter 1000 nm. The images were captured with Artist software (release 1.2) and assembled with Adobe Photoshop CS6 with photo merge function (reposition parameter).
48. Ibid.
49. Jager 2018 (cited in note 40), pp. 96–97.
50. A. Jager, '"Everywhere illustrious history paintings that are a dime a dozen": the mass market for history painting in seventeenth-century Amsterdam', *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 7(1), 2015, DOI: 10.5092/jhna.2015.7.1.2.
51. Sluijter 2015 (cited in note 41), p. 331.
52. A. Jager, 'Barend Jansz. Slordt (ca. 1625–na 1690), "galey-schilder" uit Schermerhorn', *Oud Holland* 127, 2014, pp. 223–233.
53. Sale, S.T. Herr Conferentz-Raad og Justitiarius Horn, Copenhagen, 27 April 1778, lot 39 (Et Stykke som forestiller Israels Börns Overgang over det föde Hav, paa samme sees Pharao med sin Hær, som drukner i samme), lot 78 (Et historisk Stykke), lot 93 (Et historisk Stykke); Sale, Otto Thott, Copenhagen, 24 April 1787, lot 750 (2de historiske Stykker, det ene med Rebekka ved Brönden, &c.), lot 751 (3de dito [historiske] bibelske Stykker, af dito [de Bie]), lot 752 (De 3 Mænd i den gloende Ovn, af dito [de Bie]); Sale, Johan Mathias Möller, Copenhagen, 9 February 1789, lot 177 (Et historisk Stykke); Sale, Jean Francois Fistaine, Copenhagen, 3 February 1790: lot 29 (2de Stykker, Salomons förste Dom og Dronning Ester); Sale, Johannes and Wilhelm Colsmann, Copenhagen, 8 June 1792, lot 41 (G. de Bie - Et Landskab ved Strandbreden, endeel Fiskere med Fisk); Sale, Anna Hensel, collection formed by Johannes Colsmann, Copenhagen, 12 October 1795, lot 108 (J.D. Bie - Moses slaaer paa Klippen for at faae Vand til Israels Børn); Sale, Nicolai Steemann, Copenhagen, 20 April 1796, lot 79 (Et Landskab med endeel Kreaturer der vogtes af en Hyrde og toe Hyrdinder).
54. A. Jager, *'Galey-schilders' en 'dosijnwerck'. De productie, distributie en consumptie van goedkope historiestukken in zeventiende-eeuws Amsterdam*, PhD dissertation, Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam, 2016.

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