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## ANCIENT PORTRAITS FROM MUSEAL COLLECTIONS

**Abstract:** The patrimony of the National History Museum of Transylvania in Cluj-Napoca includes a series of portraits depicting illustrious figures of Greco-Roman Antiquity, inspired by artworks signed by Raphael and Rubens: *Raccolta delle teste dei filosofi, dei poeti, colle nove Muse ed Apollo e di altri uomini illustri dipinti da Raffaello nella Scuola d'Atene e nel Parnaso in Vaticano* and, respectively, *Ex marmore antiquo - Twelve Famous Greek and Roman Men*.

**Keywords:** engraving, patrimony, portrait, ancient, Greco-Roman Antiquity.

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In the collections of engravings from the National History Museum of Transylvania in Cluj-Napoca, there is an outstanding series of portraits depicting illustrious figures of Greco-Roman Antiquity, inspired by works signed by Raphael and Rubens. After centuries of silence on those ancient oeuvres, the Renaissance brought (back) into public attention works of art, writings, cultural and moral values, and exceptional achievements of the ancient period, not only by reconsidering their intrinsic value, but by upholding those classical models as worthy of emulation. The climate of the Renaissance was conducive to the promotion of the values evinced by the culture and art of classical Greco-Roman Antiquity. Thus, ancient works became the source of inspiration for Renaissance artists, who frantically imitated, promoted and adapted them to their contemporary world. Ancient influences permeated all artistic and cultural fields, Antiquity being reinterpreted in the most ingenious of ways. This renewed interest in Antiquity gave rise to a multitude of cultural orientations and the rediscovery of Greek classics had a substantial impact on Renaissance thinking. In this context, Raphael painted *The School of Athens* and *Parnassus*. Obviously, this artistic trend faded away in time, the Renaissance being gradually replaced by new aesthetic currents of the Baroque and the Rococo, but at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, neoclassicism brought back into attention the ancient period and the Renaissance, and Raphael became one of the favourite artists in the 19th century. Engraving, one of the most important artistic branches in the 19th century, fully reflected this renewed interest in ancient civilization, in the period of the Renaissance and in Raphael. Various series of engravings enhanced interest in these artistic fields, contributing to their popularity.

The patrimony of the museum in Cluj includes two series, consisting of nine engravings, from the 19th century. The sources of these engravings are paintings by

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Raphael and, respectively, by Rubens, *Raccolta delle teste dei filosofi, dei poeti, colle nove Muse ed Apollo e di altri uomini illustri dipinti da Raffaello nella Scuola d'Atene e nel Parnaso in Vaticano* and, respectively, *Ex marmore antiquo - Twelve Famous Greek and Roman Men*. While in the collection drawn by Rubens, the images accurately reproduce a series of antique busts, in the series inspired by Raphael the engravings resume only the heads of the figures in his paintings, namely *The School of Athens* and *Parnassus*. The differences between the two series can be explained by the different inspiration source, painting vs. sculpture, and the specific means of expression of each artist. Sculpture translates into engraving primarily a sense of volume, of a three-dimensional relief, as well as a certain roughness of the shapes, suggestive of the stone in which the busts were carved, but in painting it is expressiveness, lyricism, fluidity and mellow contours that prevail. The source of the engravings explains the visibly different appearance of the heads: those in the drawings of Rubens from the series that reproduces the collection of antique busts were created after the classical, severe ancient canon, reminiscent of the original inspiration of those ancient Roman portraits, those *imago mortis*, mortuary masks impregnated with sobriety, dignity and prestance. They are realistic portraits that fall strictly within these limits, following predetermined rules, without any deviations from the rules. On the other hand, the heads inspired by the paintings of Raphael emerge delicately from the white sheet: their contours are fluid, the drawing outlines are smooth, undulous, and the overall impression evokes a lyrical, sentimental tone.

The first engravings are part of a series of drawings entitled *Raccolta delle teste dei filosofi, dei poeti, colle nove Muse ed Apollo e di altri uomini illustri dipinti da Raffaello nella Scuola d'Atene e nel Parnaso in Vaticano*, a series that reproduces the effigies in *Parnassus* and *The School of Athens* – artworks signed by Raphael,<sup>2</sup> engraved after the drawings of Luigi Agricola<sup>3</sup> by various artists, such as Giuseppe Bortignoni<sup>4</sup> and Antonio Regona<sup>5</sup>. The copper etchings were published in Rome in around 1810 by the editor Agapito Franzetti.<sup>6</sup> The full series reproduces the portraits of famous characters, among which we find muses, poets, writers, philosophers and some of the most prominent men of Greco-Roman Antiquity. The main sources of inspiration of this series are two of the masterpieces of the Renaissance, *The School of Athens* or *Philosophy*, and *Parnassus* or *Poetry*. *The School of Athens* or *Philosophy* is generally perceived as an allegory of human

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<sup>2</sup> Raffaello Sanzio, 1483-1520.

<sup>3</sup> Luigi Agricola, Luigi Bauer or Luigi Pauer (c. 1750-1821), a painter, engraver and draughtsman active in Rome, see Georg Kaspar Nagler, *Allgemeines Künstler-Lexikon*, vol. 1, p. 138, Ed. W. Engelmann, 1872; <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/luigi-agricola/29.04.2015>.

<sup>4</sup> Giuseppe Bortignoni (1778-1860), a painter and engraver who was active in Rome, see Joseph Heller, Andreas Andresen, Joseph Edward Wessely, *Handbuch für Kupferstichsammler*, vol. 1, p. 162, Ed. T.O. Weigel, 1870; *19th Century European Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture*, Ed. Sotheby's, 1992, p. 130.

<sup>5</sup> Antonio Regona (1760-1853), an engraver from Bassano.

<sup>6</sup> Agapito Franzetti, an Italian publisher who was active in Rome at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, see Vittoria Gosen, *Incidere per i Remondini*, Ed. Tassotti, Bassano Del Grappa, 1999, pp. 108-111.

knowledge, with Plato and Aristotle as the central figures, surrounded by a host of philosophers from the past or the present, in an exceptional architectural setting, illustrating the historical continuity of Platonic thinking.<sup>7</sup> Considered a masterpiece of the genre, Raphael's work depicts an idealized *Schools of Athens*. It is an imaginary recreation of the effervescent artistic atmosphere of ancient Athens, populated with the most prominent ancient figures, among whom are inserted some Renaissance luminaries. Artistic license goes beyond time barriers and places the great creators of Antiquity and those of the Renaissance side by side, in a space in which Apollo among the Muses and various ancient and modern poets "illustrates the concord, the harmony between the classical world and Christian spirituality." Called an ideal academy, a vision of knowledge, this image brought together the portraits of the most important characters in literature, philosophy and science, a fact reinforced by Giorgio Vasari, who suggested in his writings that all the great Greek philosophers and ancient scholars could be found in this image. The appearance of this series of engravings was due to the great popularity of Raphael's paintings at that time. The 19th century marked a climax in the public's appreciation of his art. Raphael became the ideal of all Academies, as well as a source of inspiration for many important artists, such as Poussin, Annibale Caracci, and Ingres. The epitome of Renaissance art, Raphael's works enjoyed great popularity especially during the neoclassical period, from the mid-18th century until early 19th century, this period coinciding with a revival of interest in classical Greco-Roman Antiquity, as well as in the classicism of the Renaissance. This widespread interest in Raphael, reflected in engravings, continued throughout the 19th century, when his works were reproduced on a massive scale.

The engravings from the series *Raccolta delle teste dei filosofi, dei poeti, colle nove Muse ed Apollo e di altri uomini illustri dipinti da Raffaello nella Scuola d'Atene e nel Parnaso in Vaticano* resumed the portraits in the original work, the drawings depicting, in varied postures, *Epiteto Filosofo, Epicuro Filosofo, Socrate Filosofo Greco, Zenone Filosofo, Platone Filosofo, Aristotele Filosofo, Pittagora, P. Ovidio Nasone, Publio Virgilio Marone, Raffaele Dal Cole, M. Valerio Marziale, Pindaro Poeta Greco, Polimnia, Dante Alighieri, Giovanni Boccaccio, Gianfrancesco Penni, Marcantonio Raimondi, Melpomene*, etc. The patrimony of the museum in Cluj includes three of these: *Pitagora, Platone Filosofo, Aristotele Filosofo*, depicting key characters of *The School of Athens* by Raphael.

1. **Pythagoras**, engraving by Giuseppe Bortignoni after a drawing by Luigi Agricola, detail from *The School of Athens* by Raphael (**Fig. 1**).<sup>8</sup> Under the effigy, the inscription: *Raff. dipinse, Luigi Agricola delin., Gius. Bortignoni inc./ PITTAGORA/ Creduto nativo di Samo. Fiori circa 500. anni avanti/ l'Era Cristiana; fu il primo ad assumere il titolo/ di Filosofo; e visse intorno a 90. anni.* Pythagoras (569/570 – c. 475/495 BC) is one of the characters situated in the foreground of the original work,

<sup>7</sup> "Raphael." *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online.* Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2015. Web. 06.05.2015<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/491442/Raphael>>.

<sup>8</sup> MNIT Collections, inv. no. F 8500. Dimensions 25.5 x 38 cm.

on the left, in the centre of a group that conveys the harmony of Mathematics, balanced by the presence of another group, gathered around Euclid and situated on the opposite side, in the foreground on the right, describing the perfection of Geometry. Pythagoras is captured in profile view, while he is writing thoughtfully, deeply engrossed in his work. The realism of his features, his vibrant gaze, his strong, clenched jaw or the thoroughness with which his face wrinkles are depicted contribute to a note of seriousness, slightly offset by the vague decorativeness displayed in the description of the hair and the beard. His garments firmly define the line of his neck, which quickly fades away, vanishing discreetly into the white background.

2. **Plato**, engraving by Antonio Regona after a drawing by Luigi Agricola, detail from *The School of Athens* by Raphael (**Fig. 2**).<sup>9</sup> Under the effigy, the inscription: *Raff. dipinse, Luigi Agricola delin., Ant. Regona inc./ PLATONE FILOSOFO/ Di patria Ateniese detto per la sua eccellenza il DIVINO./ Fu capo della Setta degli Accademici. Nacque 423./anni avanti l'Era volgare, e mori di anni 81.* In the original painting, Plato (427-347 BC), one of the two central characters of the painting, is identified by the copy of his work *Timaeus* that he holds in his hand, but his physiognomy is actually a portrait of Leonardo da Vinci. We recognize the traits of Leonardo from his later (self-)portraits, with his long tresses and bushy beard. The straight nose, the focused gaze, the prominent cheekbones and the fleshy mouth outline a sketchy portrait, framed simply by the scarf knotted around the neck.

3. **Aristotle**, engraving by Giuseppe Bortignoni after a drawing by Luigi Agricola, detail from *The School of Athens* by Raphael (**Fig. 3**).<sup>10</sup> Under the effigy, the inscription: *Raff. dipinse, Luigi Agricola delin., Gius. Bortignoni inc./ ARISTOTELE FILOSOFO/ Nato in Stagira l'anno 348. prima dell' Era/ Christiana, morto in Calcide nell' Isola d' Eubéa di anni 73.* Aristotle (384-322 BC), the other central character of the painting, is identified in the original work after a writing of his, a copy of the *Ethics* that he holds in his hands. His physiognomy seems, however, to belong either to Giuliano da Sangallo or to Antonio da Sangallo the Younger. With a swarthy complexion, a bushy beard and cropped curled hair, a straight nose and a strong line neck, he gazes with interest at Plato, his conversation partner in the painting.

The second series of engravings is part of the cycle of twelve prints entitled *Twelve Famous Greek and Roman Men*, which appeared at Antwerp in 1638, after the drawings of Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640),<sup>11</sup> featuring unidentified antique busts, possibly from the antique collection of Rubens. The prints represent the portraits of *HIPPOCRATES HERACLIDÆ F. COVS., DEMOSTHENES DEMOSTHENIS F. ATHENIENSIS ORATOR., DEMOCRITVS GELASINVS ABDERITES, SOCRATES SOPHRONISCI FILIVS. ATHENIESIS, SOPHOCLES SOPHILI. F. ATHENIENSIS., PLATO ARISTONIS F. ATHENIENSIS, LVCIVS ANNÆVS SENECA., M. TVLLIVS CICERO., P. CORNELIVS SCIPIO AFRICANVS.,*

<sup>9</sup> MNIT Collections, inv. no. F 8501. Dimensions 25.5 x 38 cm.

<sup>10</sup> MNIT Collections, inv. no. F 8502. Dimensions 25.5 x 38 cm.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Paul Rubens, 1577-1640.

*IMP. NERO CÆSAR AVGVSTVS., C. CÆSAR DICT. PERPETVO, M. BRVTVS IMP.* The engravers who signed the prints are Paulus Pontius,<sup>12</sup> Lucas Vorsterman I,<sup>13</sup> Hans Witdoeck,<sup>14</sup> Boëtius Adamsz Bolswert.<sup>15</sup> The series is dated 1638 but was probably in the works for a long time, given that one of the engravers, Boëtius Adamsz Bolswert died in 1633. Six of the preparatory drawings executed by Rubens have been preserved, to this day, in various collections (Morgan Library New York, Fondation Custodia Paris, the Collections of the Metropolitan Museum in New York, etc.). These engravings were considered as highly influential in spreading the concept of classical antique busts in the north of Europe, throughout the 17th and the 18th centuries.<sup>16</sup>

In the patrimony of the museum in Cluj there are six of the twelve prints of the series, *PLATO ARISTONIS F. ATHENIENSIS, LVCIVS ANNÆVS SENECA., M. BRVTVS IMP., SOCRATES SOPHRONISCI FILIVS. ATHENIESIS, SOPHOCLES SOPHILI. F. ATHENIENSIS., IMP. NERO CÆSAR AVGVSTVS.* All the engravings mention their sources, *Ex marmore antiquo*, the authors, the year and the privilege granted *Cum priuilegiis Regis Christianissimi./ Principum Belgarum et Ord. Batauiæ.*

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<sup>12</sup> Paulus Pontius, Paul de Pont, 1596/1603-1658, a Flemish engraver born at Antwerp, a disciple of Lucas Vorsterman, a close collaborator of Peter Paul Rubens. He replaced Lucas Vorsterman in the post of chief engraver in Rubens's studio. He was the author of a series of reproductions after the works of Peter Paul Rubens and Van Dyck, see George Stanley, *Bryan's Dictionary of painters and engravers, biographical and critical*, London, 1849, pp. 589-590; <http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/gallery/vandyck/biographies/pauluspontius.html>. 27/07/2015.

<sup>13</sup> Lucas Vorsterman, 1595-1675, a Flemish engraver, born in Antwerp. He first studied painting under the guidance of Peter Paul Rubens, but on the advice of the latter, he dedicated himself fully to engraving, a field in which he had a remarkable activity, being considered as one of the most talented engravers of his age. He worked closely with Rubens, signing a series of reproductions after his works and after the works of Van Dyck, see G. Stanley, *Op.cit.*, pp. 884-885; <http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/gallery/vandyck/biographies/lucasvorsterman.html>. 27/07/2015.

<sup>14</sup> Hans (Jan) Witdoeck, Witdoek, Witdouck, c. 1600/1604/1615-1642, a Flemish engraver born at Antwerp, see G. Stanley, *Op.cit.*, pp. 916-917; Alfred Michiels, *Histoire de la peinture Flamande*, vol. 8, Paris, Librairie Internationale, 1869, p. 382.

<sup>15</sup> Boëtius Adamsz Bolswert, c. 1580-c. 1633, a Flemish engraver, a native of Bolsward, Friesland, who was active in Haarlem, Amsterdam, Antwerp, and Brussels. He was a disciple of Abraham Bloemaert, see [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=1456554&partId=1&searchText=Bolswert+coup+de+lance&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1456554&partId=1&searchText=Bolswert+coup+de+lance&page=1). 27/07/2015.

<sup>16</sup> George Szabo, *Seventeenth Century Dutch and Flemish Drawings from the Robert Lehman Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1979, p.75; W. Stechow, *Rubens and the Classical Traditions*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1968, pp. 29-30; M. Rooses, *L'oeuvre de P. P. Rubens; histoire et description de ses tableaux et dessins* V, Antwerp, 1886-1892, no. 1218; M. van Meulen, *Petrus Paulus Antiquarius, Collector and Copyist of Antique Gems*, 1975, pp. 17, 83; Royal Museum of Fine Arts, *P. P. Rubens, Paintings - Oilsketches - Drawings*, exhibition catalogue, Antwerp, 1977, no. 158; Fogg Art Museum, Pierpont Morgan Library, *Drawings and Oil Sketches by Rubens from American Collections*, exhibition catalogue, Cambridge and New York, 1956, no. 13; <http://bathartandarchitecture.blogspot.ro/2015/04/paul-rubens-twelve-famous-greek-and.html/8.05.2015>.

1. **Plato**, engraving by Lucas Vorstermann, after a drawing by Pieter Paul Rubens (**Fig.4**).<sup>17</sup> Under the effigy, the inscription: *PLATO ARISTONIS F. ATHENIENSIS/ Ex marmore antique*. On the sides: *P.P. Rubens delin./ L. Vorstermann sculp* and, respectively, *Cum priuilegiis Regis Christianissimi./ Principum Belgarum et Ord. Batauiæ*. It appears, however, that the name of Plato is used erroneously. In reality, the statue depicts Epicurus. A drawing signed by Rubens is preserved at the Morgan Library, New York, and another preparatory drawing by Vorsterman is located at the Fondation Custodia, Paris.<sup>18</sup> The image shows a three-quarter bust depicting a realistic portrait of a man whose age is betrayed by the wrinkles on his forehead, at the corner of his eyes and at the base of his nose, a man whose determination can be inferred from the attitude conveyed by the sculptor, through the aquiline profile, the resolute gaze, the clenched mouth, and the strained veins on his temples. The decorative rendition of the hair and the beard, with compact curls, slightly undercuts the seriousness of the portrait.

2. **Lucius Annaeus Seneca**, engraving by Lucas Vorstermann, after a drawing by Pieter Paul Rubens, dated 1638 (**Fig. 5**).<sup>19</sup> Under the effigy, the inscription: *LVCIVS ANNÆVS SENECA./ Ex marmore antiquo*. On the sides: *P.P. Rubens delin./ L. Vorstermans sculp. Ao. 1638* and, respectively, *Cum priuilegiis Regis Christianissimi./ Principum Belgarum et Ord. Batauiæ*.<sup>20</sup> A mellow portrait that depicts a gentle face, sketched through fine, undulating lines. The bright eyes, the face that is past his prime, the wrinkled neck, the cropped beard, and the strands of hair falling in disarray on the forehead almost touching the bushy eyebrows compose a lyrical image, a poetic portrait.

3. **Marcus Iunius Brutus**, engraving by Lucas Vorstermann, after a drawing by Pieter Paul Rubens, dated 1638 (**Fig. 6**).<sup>21</sup> Under the effigy, the inscription: *M. BRVTVS IMP./ Ex marmore antiquo*. On the sides: *P.P. Rubens delin./ L. Vorstermans sculpsit Ao. 1638* and, respectively, *Cum priuilegiis Regis Christianissimi./ Principum Belgarum et Ord. Batauiæ*. The face of a young man, with an oversized forehead, disproportionately high in relation to the rest of the head, with the line of the eyes sunken too deep, with clean-shaven cheeks and short hair, which, together with the tight lips and the blank gaze, outline a portrait that leaves a rather bizarre impression on the viewer.

4. **Socrates**, engraving by Paulus Pontius, after a drawing by Pieter Paul Rubens, dated 1638 (**Fig. 7**).<sup>22</sup> Under the effigy, the inscription: *“SOCRATES SOPHRONISCI FILIVS. ATHENIESIS./ Ex marmore antiquo*. On the sides: *P.P. Rubens delin./ P. Pontius sculpsit Ao. 1638* and, respectively, *Cum priuilegiis Regis Christianissimi. /*

<sup>17</sup> MNIT Collections, inv. no. F 8503. Dimensions 29 x 19 cm.

<sup>18</sup> Morgan Library, New York, inv. no. III, 161, respectively, Fondation Custodia, Paris, inv. no. 5949. See F. Stampfle, *Netherlandish Drawings of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries and Flemish Drawings of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries in the Pierpont Morgan Library*, New York-Princeton, 1991, pp. 156-157, cat. no. 324.

<sup>19</sup> MNIT Collections, inv. no. F 8504. Dimensions 29 x 19 cm.

<sup>20</sup> M. Vickers, “Rubens’ Bust of ‘Seneca’?,” in *The Burlington Magazine* 119, 1977, pp. 643-644.

<sup>21</sup> MNIT Collections, inv. no. F 8505. Dimensions 29 x 19 cm.

<sup>22</sup> MNIT Collections, inv. no. F 8506. Dimensions 29 x 19 cm.

*Principum Belgarum et Ord. Batauiæ*. A classical philosopher figure, with a long beard and the forehead exposed because of the frontal baldness, with unruly hair in disarray and piercing eyes, the whole figure exuding an enigmatic, cryptic expression. He has sometimes been identified as Thucydides.

**5. Sophocles Sophili. F. Atheniensis**, engraving by Paulus Pontius, after a drawing by Pieter Paul Rubens, dated 1638 (**Fig. 8**).<sup>23</sup> Under the effigy, the inscription: *SOPHOCLES SOPHILI F. ATHENIESIS./ Ex marmore antiquo*. On the sides: *P.P. Rubens delin./ P. Pontius sculpsit Ao. 1638* and, respectively, *Cum priuilegiis Regis Christianissimi. / Principum Belgarum et Ord. Batauiæ*. With the hair arranged neatly under the *taenie*, the curly beard and the neatly trimmed moustache, Sophocles has a quizzical expression, accentuated by the wrinkles on his forehead, his sideways gaze and his raised eyebrows.

**6. Imp. Nero Cæsar Augustus**, engraving by Paul Pontius, after a drawing by Pieter Paul Rubens, dated 1638 (**Fig. 9**).<sup>24</sup> Under the effigy, the inscription: *IMP. NERO CÆSAR AVGVSTVS./ Ex marmore antiquo*. On the sides: *P.P. Rubens delineavit/ P. Pontius sculpsit Ao. 1638* and, respectively, *Cum priuilegiis Regis Christianissimi./ Principum Belgarum et Ord. Batauiæ*. The handsome face of a young man with a relentless gaze and the conviction of his personal superiority displayed openly by his pursed mouth and his vaguely contemptuous smile. The short beard, the curly hair, the determined chin, the straight nose with flaring nostrils and the piercing gaze reinforce the impression of arrogance. A drawing signed by Rubens is preserved at the Fogg Art Museum in Cambridge, Massachusetts, U. S., and a retouched print by Rubens is kept at the Cabinet des Estampes, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.<sup>25</sup>

Both series can be considered illustrations of the ideal of human grandeur, of the conceptions that loomed large against the spiritual horizons of the Renaissance, as part of the artistic trend that promoted the return of art to classicism. Greco-Roman Antiquity fascinated the Renaissance. The rediscovery of classical civilization and the revival of the ideas of Antiquity promoted the anthropocentric vision, according to which man was the focus of scientific and artistic exploration. Up until the Renaissance, art had been used for the exaltation of faith, but in this period art was placed in the service of humanity, as a celebration of man. The ideal of *Homo universalis renescentista* comprised all the possible human qualities, starting from the desire for affirmation and renown. To illustrate this concept, artists searched for famous models from classical antiquity: philosophers, men of letters, rulers, or military leaders. In this context, the portraits of such characters were in high demand, which explains the paintings of Raphael, such as *The School of Athens*, but also later reminiscences, such as the collection of antique busts by Rubens. On the other hand, engraving had an important mission, aimed at the popularization of major art, but also

<sup>23</sup> MNIT Collections, inv. no. F 8507. Dimensions 29 x 19 cm.

<sup>24</sup> MNIT Collections, inv. no. F 8508. Dimensions 29 x 19 cm.

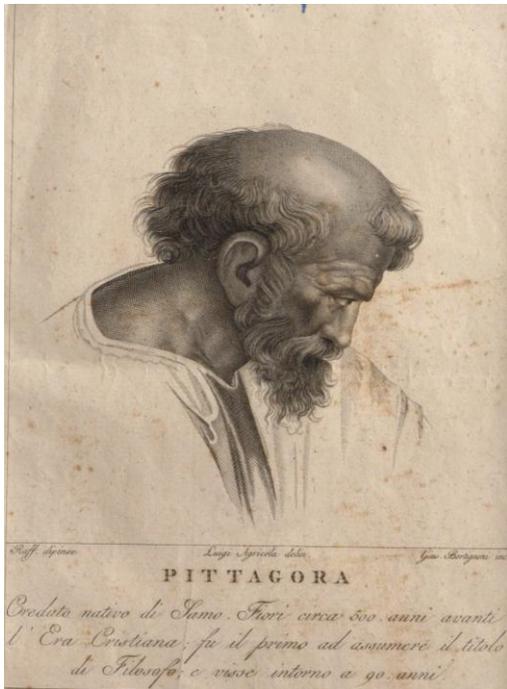
<sup>25</sup> Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge Massachusetts, inv. no. 1932.360; Cabinet des Estampes, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, inv. no. C 10.517, see <http://bathartandarchitecture.blogspot.ro/2015/04/paul-rubens-twelve-famous-greek-and.html/8.05.2015>.

at its study. It facilitated access to the great works of art for those who did not have the necessary financial means to purchase them or when the location of these artworks precluded their direct observation. Copying ancient artworks played an important role in the absorption of the classical models, a basic practice in the artistic education of that time. We know that Rubens studied after the works of other artists, zealously drawing the masterpieces of Greco-Roman art, his vast number of drawings after ancient works representing a genuine inventory of the famous ancient works that could be found in Rome in the first decade of the 17th century. P. P. Rubens's other major pole of interest was the body of works belonging to the masters of the Italian Renaissance, especially Raphael, but also Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Giulio Romano, whom Rubens studied and copied in Rome, thus completing his study of the ancient classics.<sup>26</sup> These drawings, along with the entire set of his drawings, were preserved very carefully by Rubens throughout his life and were included in his will, which stipulated that they could only be sold if none of his heirs manifested any artistic propensities.<sup>27</sup> As for the series of heads drawn after the work of Raphael, it should be noted that this artist was highly appreciated in the 19th century, Raphael enjoying the reputation of the greatest painter of all time. His work was considered an important milestone in the history of art. While completed at different times, the two series have in common not only the subject but also the motivation, both exalting peak historical moments and spiritual ideals human brilliantly encapsulated by the illustrious characters they portray.

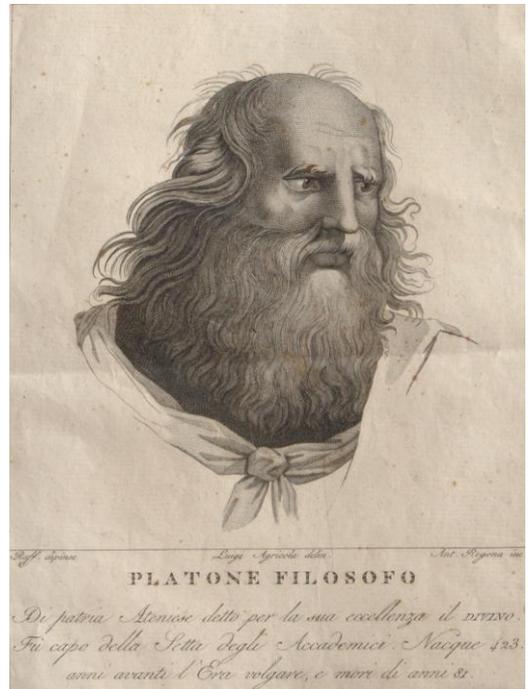
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<sup>26</sup> Anne-Marie Logan, Michiel C. Plomp, *Peter Paul Rubens The Drawings*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2004, 2005, pp. 3-7.

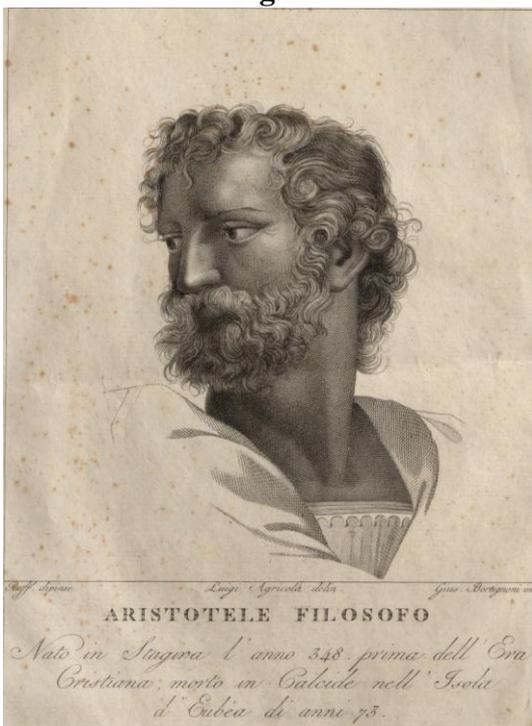
<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*.



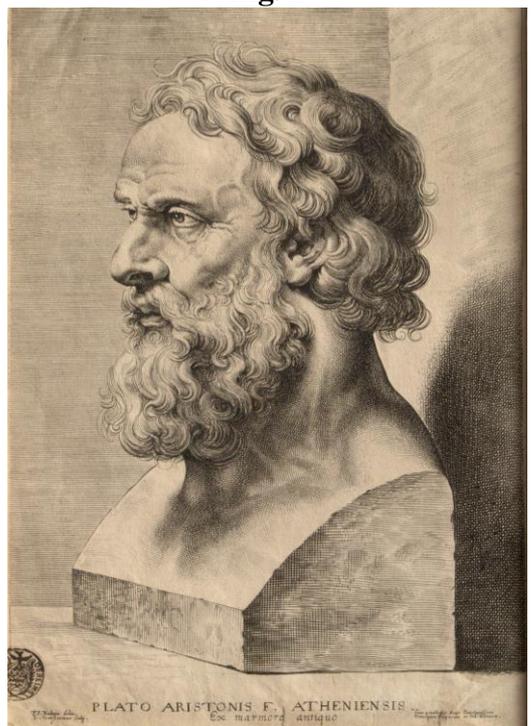
**Fig. 1**



**Fig. 2**



**Fig. 3**



**Fig. 4**



Fig. 5

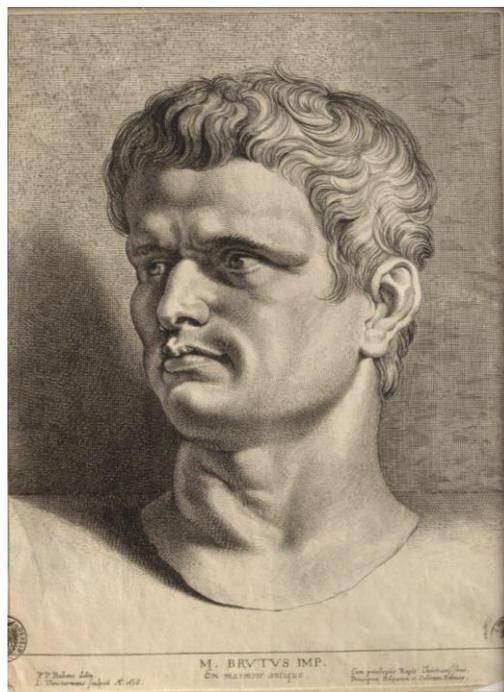


Fig. 6

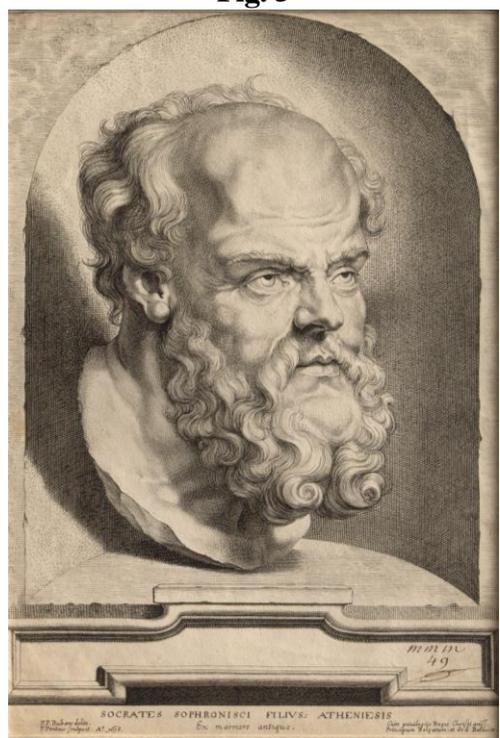


Fig. 7

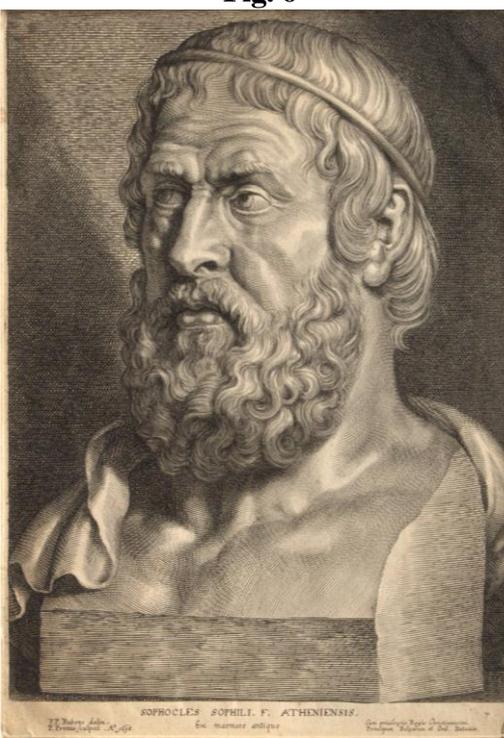
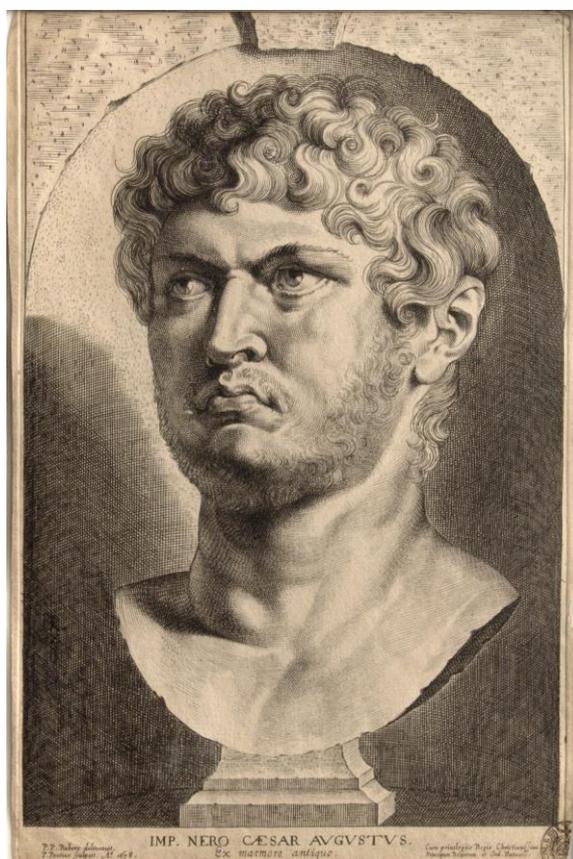


Fig. 8



**Fig. 9**