

MUSÉES ROYAUX

de

PEINTURE ET DE SCULPTURE

Dossier concernant un tableau de
Peubens, offert en vente par
MM. Mackay Cunningham
1, C^{ie} à Edimbourg

no 1701

1701 M. M. Mackay Cunningham et C^{ie} tabl. de Peubens.

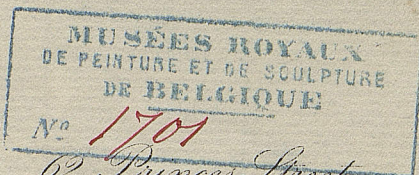
NUMÉRO
D'ORDRE.

DATE
DE LA PIÈCE.

ANALYSE.

MACKAY CUNNINGHAM & CO

BY APPOINTMENT



62, Princes Street.

1701
Edinburgh 29 May 1877

Sir

We enclose a description of
a very fine "Rubens" which
would be placed & hanging
in the Musée de Peintures
we would wish this one
added to their collection.

We are

Yr obedt Servts
Mackay Cunningham & Co

Conservator
Musée de Peintures
Brussels

DESCRIPTION OF RUBENS' "HOLY FAMILY."

NOW IN VIEW PARK, EDINBURGH.

BY

J. C. ROBINSON, Esq., F.S.A.,

MEMBER OF ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS, FLORENCE, ETC.

HOLY FAMILY. Composition of five figures: the Virgin seated holds the Infant Saviour on her lap; the infant St John standing at her knee on the left, presents a goldfinch led by a string, which the Saviour holds betwixt the forefinger and thumb of his left hand; St Elizabeth, represented as an aged matron, stands or kneels behind St John; and in the background, Joseph, leaning forward, with his left hand resting against the trunk of a tree, contemplates the group. The scene passes within a garden; an arcade of trellised foliage, through which the sky is seen, forming the background. The figures are three-quarter size, *i.e.*, seen down to the knees.

This picture has been engraved by Bolswert, the beautiful print being one of his most popular works. The composition is described in Smith's "Catalogue raisonné," under the No. 950 (vol. ii. p. 281), evidently from the print only, the whereabouts of the picture itself being at the period of the publication of the work apparently unknown; at a later period, however, the present picture came into the possession of the Messrs Smith, and it was acquired from them by Lord Northwick. A replica exists in the public Museum at Cologne, having been purchased at the sale of the Collection of M. Weyer of Cologne, in 1862. This last-named picture, which for many years had enjoyed great local celebrity, had previously to the sale been sold by M. Weyer, but was returned again to him; and its purchase afterwards by the City of Cologne, at the sale, was much debated by connoisseurs from all parts of Europe; and it was then and has since been unanimously pronounced, a copy or school repetition. Although precisely the same in composition and in general scheme of light and shade and colour, the two pictures are very dissimilar in aspect. The Cologne picture being comparatively pale and chalky in colour, and in every part betraying the careful yet somewhat feeble handiwork of a scholar. It is completely eclipsed by the vivid and luminous colouring and brilliant execution of the present example, which has, moreover, the advantage of being in the most perfect state of conservation, which is not the case with the Cologne picture. No other repetitions are known to exist.

On canvas. Height 4 ft. 1 in., width 3 ft. 8 in.