

C.G. BOERNER 2021





## *Northern Mannerism in Haarlem, Amsterdam, and Prague*

“When a Mannerist artist breaks rules, he does so on the basis of knowledge and not of ignorance.” This is how John Shearman encapsulates the essence of our understanding of Mannerism. Applying the term and concept to literature, Ernst Robert Curtius claimed earlier that, through all ages, mannerism and classicism are complementary to each other. Yet Ernst Gombrich also warned not to misunderstand the movement as merely *anticlassical*. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the art of the Italian High Renaissance as a model of artistic perfection was hardly ever questioned. Instead, it was intensely studied together with the newly discovered works from classical antiquity. Equally did classical literature and mythology continue to provide the themes for artists in the generations that followed, with the human figure, clothed and—more often than not—unclothed as the most noble subject of their art.

We had previously presented a selection of prints from the first phase of Dutch Mannerism, one that was dominated by Maarten van Heemskerck and the imagery he had brought back from his trip to Italy in the 1530s. Our current *Kleine Auswahl* brings together works by two artists from the end of the sixteenth century who were instrumental in the formulation of Dutch Mannerism’s later iteration: Hendrick Goltzius and Jan Harmensz. Muller. Whereas Goltzius’s woodcuts are based on his own designs, the models for Muller’s engravings are by two artists who worked for Emperor Rudolf II. in Prague: the Antwerp-born Bartholomeus Spranger and Hans von Aachen. The latter is also represented with an oil sketch that is related to the same painting that served as a model for Muller’s print.

The engravings in this group can therefore show how the printmakers from Haarlem and Amsterdam played an important role in the Europe-wide dissemination of the exquisite art that was created at the Habsburg court in the years around 1600.



The first four prints by HENDRICK GOLTZIUS (1558 Mülbracht – Haarlem 1617 ) belong to a group of oval chiaroscuro woodcuts that show three goddesses and three gods as well as Demogorgon, the primeval creator who antedates all the Greek gods. Traditionally referred to as *The Deities*, all are depicted as full-length figures and in their characteristic habitats.

Created over a period of roughly three years between 1588 and 1590, the graphic vocabulary deployed by Goltzius changes over time. What is noticeable is “a general movement away from the dominant line block with its all-pervasive hatching toward a more balanced and integrated treatment of the blocks.”

This is most accomplished in the figure of Tethys where “the treatment of the light block[s] more nearly like that of the other blocks.” For the Tethys print, Goltzius substituted an earlier version of the light tone block for a different one from which all subsequent editions were printed (a unique impression of the first state has survived in Coburg). Together, the sophistication of the prints and their “gradual abandonment of the graphic conventions of engraving reveal Goltzius’s greater facility with the medium” (all quotes from Bialler 1992–93, p. 116).





***Tethys – Galatea*** ca. 1589–90

chiaroscuro woodcut printed from three blocks in black, ochre, and brown;  
350 x 260 mm (13 3/4 x 10 1/4 inches)

Bartsch 235; Hirschmann and Hollstein 368; Strauss 422; Bialler (1983) 7 color combination iv;  
New Hollstein 296 IIIb

PROVENANCE

Henry F. Sewall, Boston (Lugt 1309)

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, acquired with funds provided by Harvey D. Parker (Lugt 1870;  
with the museum's deaccession stamp Lugt 5156 with the pencil signature of  
Eleanor A. Sayre)

Colnaghi (their stock no. in pencil on verso *C40271*)

LITERATURE

Eckhard Schaar/Holger Broecker, *Invenit et sculpsit: Zeichnungen und Graphik des niederländischen Manierismus*, exhibition Hamburger Kunsthalle, 1992, cat. no. 30

Nancy Bialler, *Chiaroscuro Woodcuts: Hendrick Goltzius and his Time*, exhibition Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam/Museum of Art, Cleveland, 1992–93, pp. 125–129, cat. no. 28 state III b (of III b)

Bernhard Barryte, *Myth, Allegory, and Faith: The Kirk Edward Long Collection of Mannerist Prints*, exhibition Cantor Arts Center, Stanford University, 2016, cat. no. 127.3

A fine impression; in very good condition, trimmed on the borderline all round.





**Nox** ca. 1588–90

chiaroscuro woodcut printed from three blocks in black, tan, and green;  
346 x 260 mm (13 5/8 x 10 1/4 inches)

Bartsch 237; Hirschmann and Hollstein 372; Strauss 420; Bialler (1983) 11 color combination ii;  
New Hollstein 300 b

WATERMARK  
crowned shield

PROVENANCE  
L. Lépingle, Brussels (Lugt 1731 and 1672b)  
oval collector's stamp showing a rampant lion holding a star of David (not in Lugt)

LITERATURE  
Nancy Bialler, *Chiaroscuro Woodcuts: Hendrick Goltzius and his Time*, exhibition Rijksmuseum,  
Amsterdam/Museum of Art, Cleveland, 1992–93, pp. 143–146, cat. no. 32 color combination b

A fine impression; in excellent, untreated condition with strongly-showing relief on the verso;  
with an old retouching of the crack in the darker tone block, trimmed on the borderline all  
round.







**Oceanus** ca. 1589–90

chiaroscuro woodcut printed from three blocks in black, ochre, and brown;  
346 x 262 mm (13 5/8 x 10 5/16 inches)

Bartsch 232; Hirschmann and Hollstein 367; Strauss 421; Bialler (1983) 6 color combination v;  
New Hollstein 296 color combination d

PROVENANCE

Henry F. Sewall, Boston (Lugt 1309)

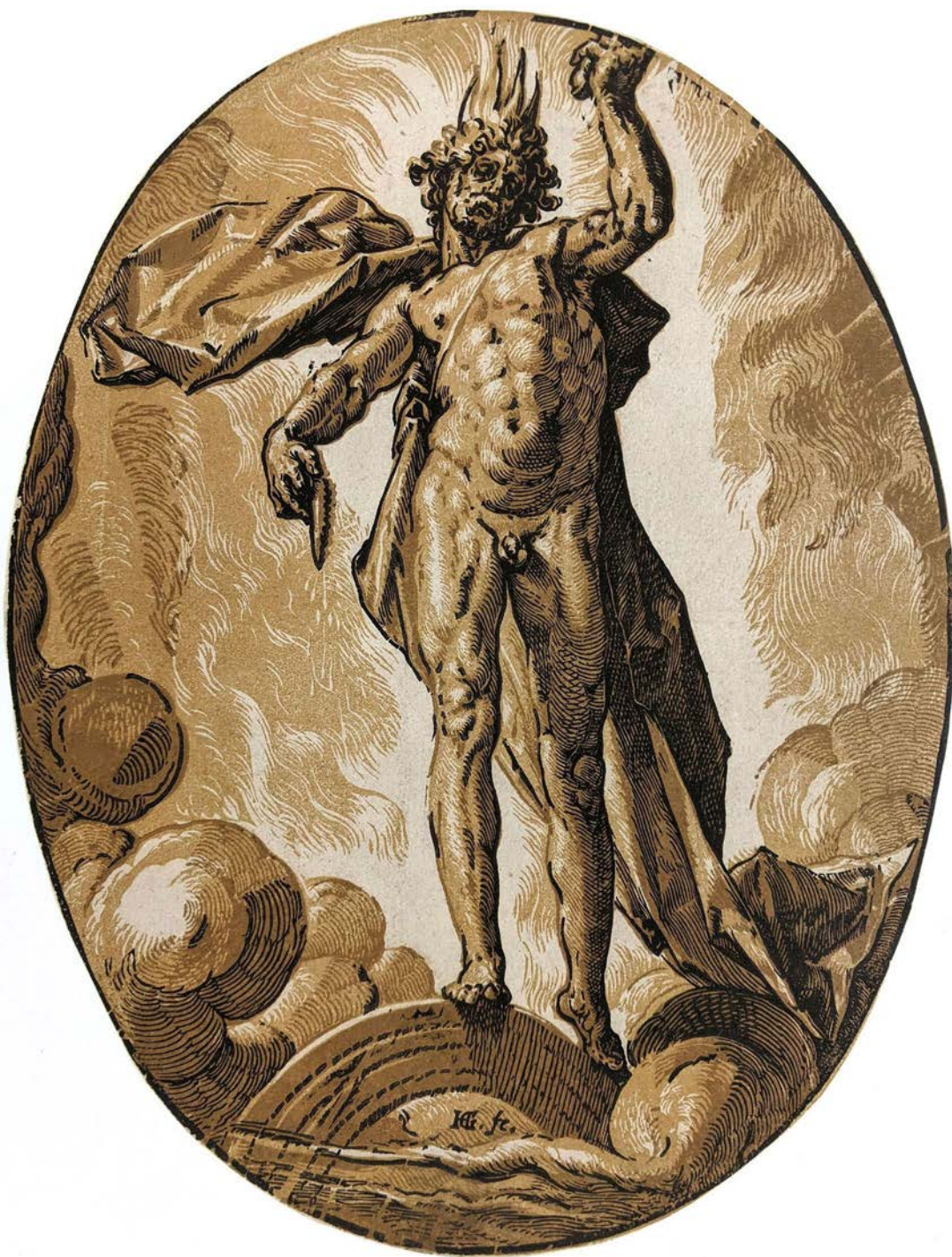
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, acquired with funds provided by Harvey D. Parker (Lugt 1870;  
with the museum's deaccession stamp Lugt 5156 with the pencil signature of Eleanor A. Sayre)  
Colnaghi (their stock no. in pencil on verso C40269)

LITERATURE

Eckhard Schaar/Holger Broecker, *Invenit et sculpsit: Zeichnungen und Graphik des niederländischen  
Manierismus*, exhibition Hamburger Kunsthalle, 1992, cat. no. 29

Nancy Bialler, *Chiaroscuro Woodcuts: Hendrick Goltzius and his Time*, exhibition Rijksmuseum,  
Amsterdam/Museum of Art, Cleveland, 1992–93, pp. 121–124, cat. no. 27 color combination d

A very good impression; the unprinted areas of the paper somewhat dusty, otherwise in good  
condition; trimmed on the borderline all round.





***Dies – Helios – Aether*** ca. 1588–90

chiaroscuro woodcut printed from three blocks in black, ochre, and brown;  
350 x 267 mm (13 13/16 x 10 7/16 inches)

Bartsch 234; Hirschmann and Hollstein 373; Strauss 419; Bialler (1983) 10 color combination iii;  
New Hollstein 299 color combination c

WATERMARK

crowned shield

LITERATURE

Eckhard Schaar/Holger Broeker, *Invenit et sculpsit: Zeichnungen und Graphik des niederländischen Manierismus*, exhibition Hamburger Kunsthalle, 1992, cat. no. 27

Nancy Bialler, *Chiaroscuro Woodcuts: Hendrick Goltzius and his Time*, exhibition Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam/Museum of Art, Cleveland, 1992–93, pp. 138–142, cat. no. 31 color combination c

A very good impression; the unprinted areas of the paper surface somewhat dusty, otherwise in good condition, trimmed on the borderline all round.





H. goltz

Ghedrukt t'Amsterdam by Willem Ianssen in de vergulde Sonnewyfer.



HENDRICK GOLTZIUS

1558 Mülbracht – Haarlem 1617

**Hercules and Cacus** 1588

chiaroscuro woodcut printed from three blocks in black, pale yellow, and olive green;  
412 x 333 mm (16 3/16 x 13 1/16 inches)

Bartsch 231; Hirschmann and Hollstein 373; Strauss 403 third state (of four); Bialler (1983) 4 II  
color combination iv; New Hollstein 304 Ih

WATERMARK

circle with two arcs (similar to Meder, *Dürer-Katalog*, 258)

PROVENANCE

Otto Schäfer, Schweinfurt (his stamp not in Lugt)  
his sale, Galerie Kornfeld, Berne, June 24, 1992, lot 160

LITERATURE

Hans Mielke, *Manierismus in Holland um 1600: Kupferstiche, Holzschnitte und Zeichnungen aus dem Berliner Kupferstichkabinett*, exhibition Kupferstichkabinett Berlin, 1979, cat. no. 5

Eva Korazija, *Eros und Gewalt: Hendrik Goltzius und der niederländische Manierismus*, exhibition Graphische Sammlung der ETH Zürich, 1982, cat. no. 24

Eckhard Schaar/Holger Broeker, *Invenit et sculpsit: Zeichnungen und Graphik des niederländischen Manierismus*, exhibition Hamburger Kunsthalle, 1992, cat. no. 22

Nancy Bialler, *Chiaroscuro Woodcuts: Hendrick Goltzius and his Time*, exhibition Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam/Museum of Art, Cleveland, 1992–93, pp. 103–114, cat. no. 25 second state (of six)  
*Dawn of the Golden Age: Northern Netherlandish Art 1580–1620*, exhibition Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1993–94, cat. no. 12 (Ger Luijten)

Christien Melzer, *Virtuos imitiert: Die Meisterstiche des Hendrick Goltzius*, exhibition Kunsthalle Bremen, 2014–15, cat. no. 10

Bernhard Barryte, *Myth, Allegory, and Faith: The Kirk Edward Long Collection of Mannerist Prints*, exhibition Cantor Arts Center, Stanford University, 2016, cat. no. 128

Susanne Pollack/Samuel Vitali, *Sich kreuzende Parallelen: Agostino Carracci – Hendrick Goltzius*, exhibition Graphische Sammlung der ETH Zürich, 2020–21, cat. no. 57 (Jana Graul)

Bernhard Barryte, *Renaissance Impressions: Sixteenth-Century Master Prints from the Kirk Edward Long Collection*, exhibition American Federation of Arts, New York, 2021, cat. no. 68

A superb impression; with the usual horizontal drying folds, in overall extremely good, untreated condition and preserved with the publisher's address below.

This impression of Goltzius's most ambitious chiaroscuro woodcut still displays the more muted tonality that differs markedly from the brighter colors and intensified contrast of many later impressions; it is also unusual in that it maintains the publisher's address below: *Ghedruckt t'Amsterdam by Willem Janssen in de vergulde Sonnenyser*. In most of the surviving impressions this

has been trimmed off. Nancy Bialler has established that this address precedes a second one which foregoes the abbreviation and starts with “Ghedruckt tot Amsterdam ...”

Willem Janszoon Blaeu was a cartographer who had studied cartography with Tycho Brahe in Alkmar. He started his own publishing house in 1604 and printed many chiaroscuro prints. He famously owned the blocks for Albrecht Dürer’s *Rhinocerus* (1515) and his *Portrait of Ulrich Varnbühler* (1522) for which he had tone blocks prepared to print both woodcuts in chiaroscuro. (Dürer himself never worked in this technique). Blaeu must have been in the possession of all three blocks for Goltzius’s *Hercules and Cacus* print (by then at least fifteen years old) and printed a variety of color combinations. The earlier ones, such as this one, follow the muted tonal range of the earliest surviving impressions more closely. In later printings, both the intensity of the colors and the starkness of the contrasts increase.

The print represents the culmination of Goltzius’s work in a technique with which he had experimented since 1585. “At the height of Mannerism, the visual arts were characterized by a marked emphasis on physicality. Sexuality was more piquantly represented than previously, emotions were more pronounced, and the depiction of strength and aggression was profoundly intensified.” With these two sentences Ger Luijten brilliantly condenses the essence of Dutch Mannerism before singling out Goltzius’s print as “an awesome prototype of masculine indomitability.” Luijten also showed that the figure of Hercules owes much to a 1524 engraving by Caraglio after Rosso Fiorentino depicting *Hercules Fighting Cerberus*. Goltzius himself only went to Italy in 1590, two years after the creation of this woodcut.

It is worth pointing out that the fight between Hercules and Cacus is not part of the *Dodekathlos*, the Twelve Labors the hero had to perform in the service of King Eurystheus. It is related, however, to the canonical tenth labor, Hercules’s theft of the cattle of Geryon. After having driven the herd through Spain and Italy, Hercules settled down for the night along the Tiber near present-day Rome when Cacus, the nefarious son of Vulcan, stole eight of the most beautiful animals and hid them in his cave near the Aventine. Hercules ultimately caught up with him and made sure this became Cacus’s last misdeed. That the encounter took place in Rome explains why the literary tradition of the story is Latin and not Greek, going back to Virgil’s *Aeneid* (8:190ff.) and Ovid’s *Fasti* (1:543–578)





## ANONYMOUS DRAFTSMAN

active ca. 1600

### *Virgin with Child* (after HENDRICK GOLTZIUS)

pen and brown ink on laid paper, diameter 133 mm (5 1/4 inches)

#### WATERMARK

coat of arms of Burgundy and Austria (New Hollstein (*Muller*), vol. 2, p. 293, datable to 1587–1608; cf. also Briquet 2291 and Heawood 481)

#### PROVENANCE

private collection, Germany

This finely executed pen and ink drawing is a partial copy after Hendrick Goltzius's engraving *The Holy Family under the Cherry-Tree* from 1589 (Bartsch 24, Hollstein 18, New Hollstein 32). The paper bears a watermark that can be documented for early impressions of prints by Jan Muller. It is therefore very likely that the drawing was executed by an apprentice engraver in the workshop of either Goltzius in Haarlem or Muller in Amsterdam. In his catalogue raisonné of Goltzius's drawings, Reznicek lists other examples of this type of practice drawing. Unfortunately, it is virtually impossible to attribute them to any specific artist.







IVSSV RHYDOLPHI · II · CÆSARIS AVGVSTI.  
 ADRIANVS DE VRIES HAGIENSIS FACIEBAT PRAGÆ.  
 OPVS ALTIIVDINIS PEDVM OCTO · EX ARE. 1593.  
*In gratiam D. Adriani de Vries, Cognati sui charissimi  
 sculpebat Iohannes Mullerus.*





JAN HARMENSZ. MULLER  
1571 – Amsterdam – 1628

### **Mercury Abducting Psyche** (after ADRIAEN DE VRIES) ca. 1594–95

set of three engravings; each ca. 510 x 265 mm (20 1/4 x 10 1/2 inches)

Bartsch 82–84; Hollstein 56–58; New Hollstein (*Muller*) 82–84 third state (of four)

WATERMARK (on all three sheets)

shield with postal horn (Heawood 2647: documented for Antwerp 1598)

#### LITERATURE

Hans Mielke, *Manierismus in Holland um 1600: Kupferstiche, Holzschnitte und Zeichnungen aus dem Berliner Kupferstichkabinett*, exhibition Kupferstichkabinett Berlin, 1979, cat. no. 22

*Prag um 1600: Kunst und Kultur am Hofe Rudolfs II.*, exhibition Villa Hügel, Essen 1988, cat. no. 84

R.J.W. Evans/Eliška Fučíková/Mungo Campbell, *The Stylish Image: Printmakers to the Court of Rudolf II*, exhibition National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1991, cat. no. 46

Eckhard Schaar/Holger Broecker, *Invenit et sculpsit: Zeichnungen und Graphik des niederländischen Manierismus*, exhibition Hamburger Kunsthalle, 1992, cat. no. 67

*Dawn of the Golden Age: Northern Netherlandish Art 1580–1620*, exhibition Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1993–94, cat. no. 180 (Ger Luijten)

Frits Scholten and other, *Adriaen de Vries 1556–1626*, exhibition Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam/Nationalmuseum, Stockholm/The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 1998–99, cat. no. 58

Fine impressions, before the address of Danckerts.



The prints show the bronze that Adriaen de Vries (1556 The Hague – Prague 1626) made in Rome for Emperor Rudolf II in 1593. The original is now in the Louvre.

While it was not uncommon for prints to depict sculptures, these ones by Muller are among the earliest examples to show a contemporary work. The captions give 1593 as date for the execution of De Vries's bronze. Based on the watermarks found on some impressions, it can be assumed that the prints were made immediately thereafter in 1594 or 1595. They undoubtedly helped to make the work of De Vries more widely known. Intriguingly, they are not dedicated to the Imperial patron but to the sculptor whom Muller calls *cognatus suus charissimus* (his dearest relative).

Displaying the bronze from three sides accentuates the all-round quality of the work. It equally provided artists who used the prints as models for their own practice with multiple views of a male and female body.

On his later prints made after De Vries's *Rape of a Sabine Woman* (Bartsch 77–79) and *Apollo* (Bartsch 81), Muller embeds the figures in a landscape setting. The three prints of *Mercury Abducting Psyche* stand apart by putting the group on a pedestal and isolating it before a neutral background, showing the work as what it is, namely a virtuoso sculpture whose impressive height of eight feet is also explicitly mentioned in the captions.

It is not known if Muller ever went to Prague. Jan Piet Filedt Kok, referencing observations made by E.K.J. Reznicek, writes “that the drapery on the bronze group in the Louvre is simpler and less massive, making it likely that Muller worked from a smaller [most likely wax] model” (Jan Piet Filedt Kok, “Jan Harmensz. Muller as Printmaker – I” in: *Print Quarterly*, vol. 11, 1994, p. 237 note 48). He further suggests that it is “conceivable that the sculptor, a native of The Hague, delivered a model or models for the print to Muller during his visit to the Netherlands in the summer of 1594” (ibid., p. 237). “However, regardless of his ability to reproduce the sculptures, Muller had difficulty in subduing some of his idiosyncrasies. He did not catch Psyche's classical profile, instead he gave her a capricious expression, almost a grimace” (Ger Luijten in cat. Amsterdam, 1993–94, p. 501).







*Quasi ad illud iuvet: Can fra tale non rimetto: per cui offer,*  
*fra: l'altro: salvi: Et l'arresta tuo manto: cinto: malcol:*

*San dalla tua porta: solo, non: t'è: la: arena*  
*Da: capiti: Martyr: Strano, sacra: tua:*

*Omnia: dilata: De: sic: iter: ad: et: tra,*  
*Et: una: Celi: non: patente: Luna:*

*Epith: conat:*



JAN HARMENSZ. MULLER

1571 – Amsterdam – 1628

***The Martyrdom of St. Sebastian*** (after HANS VON AACHEN) ca. 1600

engraving; 526 x 345 mm (20 3/4 x 13 5/18 inches)

Hollstein 41; New Hollstein (*Muller*) 23 third state (of four)

PROVENANCE

Johann Konrad Ammann and Johann Jacob Ammann, Schaffhausen (Lugt 9);  
the latter's sale, second part, J.A.G. Weigel, Leipzig, October 28ff., 1840

[possibly King Friedrich August II of Saxony, Dresden (Lugt 971)]

Dr. Johan Catharinus Justus Bierens de Haan (Lugt 451e)

Boijmans Museum, Rotterdam (Lugt 288a and their duplicate stamp 700a)

Muller's print reproduces—in reverse—Hans von Aachen's altarpiece of 1594 that still survives *in situ* in the Jesuit church of St. Michael in Munich. Von Aachen had worked for the Jesuits' main church Il Gesu in Rome during his stay there in the second half of the 1570s. This contact probably led to the Munich commissions of which only the *Martyrdom of St. Sebastian* and a *Crucifixion* survived the bombing raids during World War II.

The print was executed at some point between 1596 and 1603/04. A terminus ante quem is provided by Karl van Mander's *Schilderboek* which was published in 1604 and where it is mentioned. Von Aachen had already been appointed court painter to Rudolf II in Prague in 1592 but his post did not require him to reside there. He only moved to Prague in 1596, after he had married Regina di Lasso, daughter of the famous composer Orlando di Lasso, in Munich in July of that year. The instigation to commission this print might have come from Von Aachen's Prague colleague Bartholomeus Spranger (1546 Antwerp – Prague 1611) who was already working with Muller (as well as with Goltzius). The print led to a multitude of painted and engraved copies of the composition and was crucial for augmenting Van Aachen's fame all over Europe.







attributed to HANS VON AACHEN  
1552 Cologne – Prague 1615

### ***Study for the Head of St. Sebastian***

oil on paper; 137 x 105 mm (5 3/8 x 4 1/8 inches)

#### PROVENANCE

Jonathan Richardson, sr. (1665–1745), London (his dry stamp Lugt 2184; on verso of mount in pen and ink his shelf marks *B.C.19./ Ze.47 / J.J.19./ Ts.11*)

Sir Francis Ferrand Foljambe (1750–1814), Osberton Hall, Scofton near Worksop, Nottinghamshire;  
thence by descent

This little oil sketch remains somewhat of a puzzle. Mainly based on its technique, it has been located to Urbino (Federico Barocci) as well as Siena (Alessandro Casolani or Vincenzo Rustici). It is not even obvious if the depicted head is male or female. The sole general agreement that can be obtained is for the date of its execution in the time period around 1600.

What is characteristic is the way the head is tilted to the side with the eyes turned upward and the strange manner in which the hair of the figure is depicted, or rather: not depicted. Whereas curls are indicated to the left of the ear, above the forehead, and in the shadow behind the face, most of the area around the ear remains undefined. All of these details show intriguing parallels to the head of St. Sebastian in Hans van Aachen's altarpiece in the Jesuit church of St. Michael in Munich which served as the model for Muller's print described in the previous entry. Our sketch, however, is in the same direction as Von Aachen's painting. The sketch further shows a softness in the execution of the features that positions it closer to the painted version. Further similarities are the prominent and somewhat awkward positioning of the ear, the small, full-lipped mouth, and the long straight nose with a somewhat rounded tip—all features that can also be found in Van Aachen's paintings.

One needs to caution, though, and ask if all or at least some of the described characteristics are owed to a period style or can instead be attributed—in an admittedly “Morellian” way—to the hand of a specific artist. What further complicates this question is the medium of the oil sketch. There seem to be no other examples known that can be firmly attributed to Hans von Aachen, nor do we know much about oil sketches by other painters of the School of Prague.

[illegible]



JAN HARMENSZ. MULLER

1571 – Amsterdam – 1628

***Bellona Leading the Armies of the Emperor against the Turks***

(after BARTHOLOMEUS SPRANGER) 1600

engraving from two plates; overall 703 x 503 mm (27 11/16 x 19 13/16 inches)

Bartsch 75; Hollstein 50; New Hollstein (*Muller*) 75 second state (of three)

WATERMARK (on both sheets)

Strasbourg lily (New Hollstein (*Muller*), vol. 2, p. 313, no. 4; see also Piccard 1253: documented for Mainz 1589)

PROVENANCE

possibly Friedrich August II (the stamp Lugt 971 in the lower right corner is partially rubbed off)

LITERATURE

R.J.W. Evans/Eliška Fučíková/Mungo Campbell, *The Stylish Image: Printmakers to the Court of Rudolf II*, exhibition National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1991, cat. no. 13

Timothy Riggs/Larry Silver, *Graven Images: The Rise of Professional Printmakers in Antwerp and Haarlem, 1540–1640*, exhibition Mary and Leigh Block Gallery, Northwestern University, Evanston (IL)/Ackland Art Museum, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (NC), 1993, cat. no. 78

Sally Metzler, *Bartholomeus Spranger: Splendor and Eroticism in Imperial Prague*, exhibition Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2014–15, cat. no. 212

Both sheets in fine and homogenous impressions before the later publisher's address of Valck and with identical watermarks; a horizontal fold across the upper sheet has been skillfully reinforced, some surface rubbing in the corners, especially in the lower corners; otherwise in unusually good condition for a print of this size.

The print is dedicated to Matthias, the brother of Emperor Rudolf II in whose employ Spranger worked. Matthias was to lead the united Christian troops into the battle against the Turkish army. Bellona, the goddess of war, wears an attribute of Minerva, the breastplate with the head of Medusa. While she blows her brazen trumpet, Mercury can be seen in the lower left of the composition exhorting the soldiers under the Habsburg banner in the foreground.

“The powerfully swelling and tapering lines of the print, which is reminiscent of a *Federkunststück*, form ornamental and geometrical patterns that give the print a remarkably Mannerist sculptural quality” (Jan Piet Filedt Kok, “Jan Harmensz. Muller as Printmaker – I” in: *Print Quarterly*, vol. 11, 1994, p. 250).



B. Spranger pinxit.  
*Chryseides prope ad Phrygiarum Tros*  
*Thuris in trocho L. E. illorum hominum*  
*artum patrem.*  
 L. M. Q. D. D. Janus Muller Sculpsit.

*Quid sibi vult Prometheus? sibi quid Gyllenus? allic*  
*Alarum pedibus par tegit ense laus.*

*Dia quid huc Pallas? dat memora singula Quernam?*  
*& Agida. Quid? celer ad Gorgonis ora volest.* Muller fecit. J. Willemsen  
 . eb. de. 47.



JAN HARMENSZ. MULLER

1571 – Amsterdam – 1628

***Minerva and Hermes Arming Perseus* (after BARTHOLOMEUS SPRANGER) 1604**

engraving; 560 x 398 mm (22 1/8 x 15 5/8 inches)

Bartsch 69; Hollstein 59; New Hollstein (*Muller*) 69 third (final) state

WATERMARK

countermark letter w

LITERATURE

Hans Mielke, *Manierismus in Holland um 1600: Kupferstiche, Holzschnitte und Zeichnungen aus dem Berliner Kupferstichkabinett*, exhibition Kupferstichkabinett Berlin, 1979, cat. no. 19

Eva Korazija, *Eros und Gewalt: Hendrik Goltzius und der niederländische Manierismus*, exhibition Graphische Sammlung der ETH Zürich, 1982, cat. no. 51

*Prag um 1600: Kunst und Kultur am Hofe Rudolfs II.*, exhibition Villa Hügel, Essen 1988, cat. no. 315

R.J.W. Evans/Eliška Fučíková/Mungo Campbell, *The Stylish Image: Printmakers to the Court of Rudolf II*, exhibition National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1991, cat. no. 25

Sally Metzler, *Bartholomeus Spranger: Splendor and Eroticism in Imperial Prague*, exhibition Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2014–15, cat. no. 220

Bernhard Barryte (ed.), *Myth, Allegory, and Faith: The Kirk Edward Long Collection of Mannerist Prints*, exhibition Cantor Arts Center, Stanford University, 2016, cat. no. 139

A very good to fine impression in astonishingly good condition. Mungo Campbell calls this “one of Muller’s finest prints” and echoes the comments already made by Adam von Bartsch: “Cette estampe, connue sous le nom du chef-d’oeuvre de Jean Muller est une des plus remarquables et des plus belles que cet artiste ait gravée. On y admire l’art avec lequel ce graveur a exprimé les différentes forms, en n’y employant presque qu’une seule taille.”

It is indeed a masterful example that shows how the corporeality of the human bodies—seen here from the front, back, and with the crouching figure in profile—can be evoked through a web of swelling and tapering lines that appear to wrap around the figures. There is, however, an intriguing discrepancy that can be noticed between the gravity of the scene—the young hero preparing for what could easily become a fatal mission—and the lightness in the way it is depicted. Hans Mielke describes it as “an opera-like pomp of precious and mannered elegance that is reminiscent of a courtly theater or ballet performance.” The allegory implies that the self-assuredness of youth can only succeed with support and wisdom: the swiftness provided by the winged sandals of Mercury as well as the cunning trick of Minerva’s polished shield that will protect Perseus from Medusa’s gaze and at the same time reflect the gaze’s deadly effect back on the monstrous Gorgon herself.

The print is dedicated to Hendrick Spiegel who is praised as “patron of the sciences and arts.” It is preserved on what appears to be the full sheet and therefore with wide margins all round; the horizontal album fold un-flattened with merely some negligible age-related staining visible on the verso.





