

Bartholomeus Spranger

Splendor and Eroticism in Imperial Prague



Bartholomeus Spranger



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Bartholomeus Spranger
Splendor and Eroticism in Imperial Prague

THE COMPLETE WORKS

Sally Metzler



The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

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Page 6: Detail of *Self-Portrait*, 1585–86 (cat. 45)
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DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

In today's connected world, it often seems as though all has been staged, all has been seen. This exhibition demonstrates that there remain artists who, though unfamiliar to the general public, nevertheless dazzle the eye and challenge the mind. With this exhibition and its accompanying catalogue, the Metropolitan Museum brings to light a new artistic experience: the mastery of Bartholomeus Spranger.

The Flemish artist Bartholomeus Spranger (1546–1611) was revered in his day in Antwerp, Rome, and Prague but subsequently largely forgotten. He now receives his due in what is the first exhibition devoted to his work. This volume is the only fully illustrated monograph featuring all his paintings, drawings, etchings, and engravings.

Bartholomeus Spranger: Splendor and Eroticism in Imperial Prague presents an artist who redefined Mannerism, a style of grace and elegance that had been popularized by Italian artists like Parmigianino, Rosso Fiorentino, and Pontormo. The peripatetic Spranger defies classification as “Northern” or “Southern”—he became one of the first truly international artists. His engaging Mannerist style was embraced by artists throughout Europe, as can be seen in the many engravings after his designs.

The idea for this exhibition came from George R. Goldner, Drue Heinz Chairman of the Department of Drawings and Prints, whose eye for excellence has resulted in many outstanding exhibitions at the Museum. Dr. Goldner worked closely with Dr. Sally Metzler, the exhibition's guest curator and author of this monograph. Her efforts on behalf of the Museum have shaped this exhibition, in particular her discoveries of new works and of those thought to be lost. I also thank my Viennese colleagues Dr. Sabine Haag, director of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, and Dr. Klaus-Albrecht Schröder, director of the Albertina. They have graciously lent a number of important Spranger works, without which this exhibition would not have been possible.

Endowment support from three longtime Met trustees—Placido Arango, David T. Schiff, and Mrs. Henry J. Heinz II—helped make both the exhibition and the publication possible. For this, and for everything they have done for the Museum, I am enormously thankful.

Thomas P. Campbell

DIRECTOR, THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

Karel van Mander, the legendary biographer of Netherlandish artists, bestowed the highest praise on the drawings of his friend and compatriot Bartholomeus Spranger. He wrote that in the field of drawings no one was Spranger's equal. Four centuries later Spranger now has a new biography, and this author warmly dedicates it to another figure unparalleled in the realm of drawings—George R. Goldner. A preeminent connoisseur of Western European drawings, he has served with distinction for over twenty years as the Drue Heinz Chairman of the Department of Drawings and Prints at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. I thank him for his wisdom and diplomatic acumen throughout this project.

The talent and diligence of many helped bring this book and exhibition to life. They share in the accolades for the project and receive my warmest, most enthusiastic praise and gratitude. Foremost, my husband, George Dunea, MD, sustained me through long days, late nights, and early mornings of everything Spranger. His intelligence and patience were immeasurable in guiding me through a journey that took me to the tiny hilltop village of Sant'Oreste, to the snow-buried city of Zagreb, and to a remote baronial estate in the Swedish forest.

I recognize and thank Thomas P. Campbell, Director of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, for his superb leadership and vision, particularly in the early stages of our planning.

Nancy Grubb, the editor of this monograph, provided an astute reading, kept my whimsical grammar in check, and persisted in her demand for excellence. I am grateful to the Metropolitan Museum's Editorial Department under the stewardship of Mark Polizzotti, Publisher and Editor in Chief, and his colleagues Gwen Roginsky, Peter Antony, and Michael Sittenfeld. I also appreciate the hard work of Philomena Mariani, Sally VanDevanter, Jane S. Tai, Josephine Rodriguez-Massop, and Elizabeth Zechella, all of whom played essential roles in bringing this book to completion. I thank Steven Schoenfelder for his creativity in conceiving the beautiful design of this book. The labyrinth of loans was assiduously navigated by Senior Associate Registrar Nina S. Maruca; her good nature in dealing with every issue was a welcome relief. It was always a pleasure to meet with Jennifer Russell, Associate Director for Exhibitions, from whose vast experience I benefited. In Jennifer's department, Martha Deese provided additional expert editing and, along with Linda Sylling, sage advice. And in the Counsel's Office, Lee White Galvis and Amy

Lamberti, alongside Maria Fillas in the Director's Office, managed the complicated protocol for bringing international loans into the United States. And, of course, an abundance of gratitude goes to all the lenders, public and private.

In the Department of Drawings and Prints, Senior Collections Manager Mary Zuber has been a delightful and highly skilled colleague, to whom I owe many thanks. Her calm demeanor and elegant smile were always appreciated. Curators Nadine M. Orenstein and Stijn Alsteens offered excellent guidance throughout the planning. I benefited from discussions with curators Freyda Spira, Samantha Rippner, Femke Speelberg, and Carmen Bambach as well as generous assistance from Elizabeth Zanis, Kit Basquin, and David del Gaizo. Rebekah Burgess, Collections Management Coordinator, made every visit to the museum a treat, and her willingness to pitch in was impressive.

In the Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, Luke Syson, Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Chairman, and Wolfram Koeppe, Marina Kellen French Curator, together with J. Kenneth Moore, Frederick P. Rose Curator in Charge of the Department of Musical Instruments, collegially agreed to loan key works that would expand the exhibition's thesis and make our mini-Kunstkammer come alive. My research was assisted by Dita Amory, Acting Associate Curator in Charge and Administrator of the Robert Lehman Collection, and by the staff of the Thomas J. Watson Library, whose unlimited help and efficiency were valued. My thanks also go to Head of Design Susan Sellers and Graphic Designer Norie Morimoto; to Senior Press Officer Mary Flanagan; to Conservator George Bisacca, who warmly advised and interceded on my behalf and the exhibition's; and to Michael Gallagher, Sherman Fairchild Conservator in Charge of the Department of Paintings Conservation, who is to be commended for his amazing transformative restoration of Spranger's work on copper from the Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Oldenburg.

Overseas and farther afield, numerous individuals stepped up to help in this project. A few went the extra mile: at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, curator Sylvia Ferino-Pagden, conservator Elke Oberthaler, and my dear friend arms and armor curator Stefan Krause; Christof Metzger, formerly of the Kunsthistorisches Museum and now at the Albertina, was fundamental to our success. My heartfelt thanks to Marcela Vondráčková, Blanka Kubíková, and Olga Kotková in Prague's Národní Galerie. Thank you to

many other curators abroad, especially Eszter Fábry and Szilvia Bodnár in Budapest, Alice Klaassen and Director Rainer Stamm in Oldenburg, Susanne Wagini in Munich, Stephan Kemperdick in Berlin, and Cosmin Ungureanu and Dana Crisan in Bucharest. I am also grateful to Paul Sweet, ornithologist at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, and to Andrew Robison and Margaret Morgan Grasselli, much-respected colleagues from the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Outside the curatorial arena, I appreciate Einar Perman, MD, who made a seemingly impossible introduction to a collector in Sweden; Marlies Dornig in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek; archivist Peter Eckyerman; and in Florence, restorers Louis Pierelli and Gabriella Tonini. The scholarship and guidance of my *Doktorvater* at Princeton University, Professor Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, continue to inspire me, and I treasure his ongoing support in our shared love for Rudolfine art.

Daniel Kershaw demonstrated with this installation that he is indeed among the most gifted of exhibition designers. Emperor Rudolf II would take delight in the recreated mini-Kunstkammer and would surely feel at home in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. I think Spranger, too, looking back at us through his two self-portraits, would concede his ambitions fulfilled and, along with me, would want to thank everyone who joined forces to make this exhibition and monograph possible.

Sally Metzler

GUEST CURATOR, DEPARTMENT OF DRAWINGS AND PRINTS,
THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

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Stanford University
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Washington, National Gallery of Art



Spranger's Travels, 1546-1611

I N T R O D U C T I O N

The art of Bartholomeus Spranger spans the ages, from the time when gods and goddesses came down from Olympus to mingle with women and men, when devout saints suffered immersion in boiling oil yet emerged refreshed, and when the armies of Christendom and the armies of the Ottoman Empire were locked in fierce battle. To depict these epochal moments, Spranger created his own aesthetic, with elegant figures cloaked at times in ecclesiastical splendor, at times in imperial eroticism.

I first encountered the works of Bartholomeus Spranger on a wintry day in Munich's Alte Pinakothek. Three of his paintings captured my attention, and one in particular: *The Lamentation of Christ*. The copper surface glistened with luminous hues of pink and blue; fine threads of gold lined the edges of expertly rendered drapery. But more striking than any other aspect of this small, precious work was the rarified dignity of Christ's pose, a conflation of calm and agitation, a Mannerist imposition of form that compelled me to delve into this beguiling aesthetic. Equally engaging, yet in contradiction to this pious fantasy, was Spranger's penchant for erotic mystery. His dark, bawdy *Hercules, Dejanira, and the Centaur Nessus*, a painting in the Vienna Kunsthistorisches Museum full of fleshy forms entwined in a sensuous yet tragic tryst, drew me into a lifelong study of his art and life. It was then—over two decades ago—that I realized this extraordinary artist had been so neglected by art history that no monograph of his work existed in English, just studies in German that either were not illustrated or focused on only one aspect of his oeuvre.

Bartholomeus Spranger: Splendor and Eroticism in Imperial Prague is both a monograph and an exhibition catalogue. It contains four fully illustrated catalogues—of his paintings, drawings, etchings, and related engravings—that capture his stylistic genesis and the complexity of his prolific oeuvre. It examines Spranger's life and art against the backdrop of European culture, politics, and intellectual history, tracing his artistic journey from Antwerp to Prague, with sojourns along the way in France, Italy, and Austria. I integrate his biography and his art with the milieu that shaped his meteoric rise to fame, painting a picture of the era in which he lived and worked.

Unraveling the content and the aesthetic of Spranger's art, as well as resolving the connoisseurship issues of his oeuvre, has proven both arduous and exhilarating. The art of Spranger and that of the Rudolfiner court have been addressed through various discourses and interpretations, but no existing methodology seemed adequate to explain why his art

looks the way it does. Much of it has been labeled as Mannerist, but therein lies the danger: after nearly a century of debate among scholars about the concept of Mannerism, no one definition exists. Hence my reluctance to encapsulate Spranger's aesthetic simply as Mannerist. The Renaissance Mannerist—be he a painter or sculptor, architect or draftsman, musician or poet—sought new artistic solutions and a deeper meaning in the expressive force of his art. Some scholars have attributed these Mannerist attitudes to the political unrest, uncertainty, and oppression of the times. Others have located the origins of Mannerism in the conflict among Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims during a time of Ottoman encroachment on Habsburg territory. Without rejecting these suppositions, one must acknowledge another dynamic factor fomenting the new style of Mannerism: the burgeoning, effervescent scholarship carried forth under the aegis of Emperor Rudolf II. Embracing Hermeticism, the occult, and alchemic philosophy, these intellectual and spiritual pursuits shaped the new aesthetic of Prague Mannerism as championed by Spranger.

It has become fashionable to describe, often incorrectly, an engaging artwork or performance as “alchemy.” But that term is genuinely appropriate to the career and art of Spranger, whose creative activity flourished at a time when the pursuit of alchemy was embraced and encouraged throughout Central Europe. It was the mystical aspect of this arcane science and philosophy that rulers, aristocrats, and scholars found seductive. They endeavored to understand and explain the mysterious unseen world through such philosophical constructs. An imaginary world of physically impossible forms came to life through the art of Spranger. Muses, river gods, Minerva—whether naked, scantily clad, or adorned in sumptuous costumes—confront the viewer on canvas, copper, panel, and paper. His altarpiece of Saint Sebastian in the church of Saint Thomas in Prague shows a sleek, muscled body pierced with arrows, seemingly transcending any physical anguish. His drawing in the Kupferstichkabinett in Basel depicts a deliciously voluptuous Venus embraced from behind by Mercury, his arms stretching irrationally far around her ample breasts.

Spranger's females depicted with unrealistically long arms, torsos twisting in the opposite directions of hips, may appear far-fetched and discordant to our modern eye. His esoteric allegories seem impenetrably cryptic. But his art was not produced for our pleasure; it was—to manipulate a term describing Mannerist music—*art reservata*. Spranger created works reserved for the privileged few, for initiates immersed in an erudite, arcane

world unknown today.¹ His foremost patron, Rudolf II, ruled much of modern-day Europe, spoke several languages with ease, and accumulated priceless masterpieces outside his private chambers. He was the standard-bearer for the fine arts during the years around 1600 and imported cadres of talent, from astronomers to gemologists, musicians to sculptors.

Spranger lived from 1546 to 1611, through times of stability and uncertainty, misfortune and prosperity. And like the composers of Mannerist music, who created scores of complex, if not incomprehensible, melodies, Spranger favored an artistic language of veiled allegory and paradox not intended to be readily understood. But now we are the privileged guests at this special concert of *art reservata*—a program of Mannerist melodies and anatomical fantasies that brings to light the achievements of an artist who, like the Prague alchemists, transformed simple materials—pigments and ink—into erotic gold.

Notes

1. Maria Rika Maniates discusses *musica reservata* in Maniates 1971.

Life

Bartholomeo Spranger

ANTWERP PRODIGY

No one would have expected young Bartholomeus Spranger to become so famous. Born in Antwerp to a humble merchant family, he rose to the position of court painter to the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II. He was lauded throughout Europe for his allegorical tableaux featuring mythical heroes entangled in compromising positions with scantily clad females, and his designs were engraved by esteemed printmakers and disseminated throughout the world. Recognized as the premier artist in Prague at the turn of the seventeenth century, he became leader of the so-called School of Prague, transforming Italian Mannerism into a new Central European Mannerist style featuring virtuoso compositions of erudite and erotic themes. His Flemish successors Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony van Dyck inherited and distilled his mastery of the figure, ushering in the golden age of Northern Baroque art.

What gave rise to an artist who so enraptured Rudolf II, the greatest collector of his time? When Spranger entered the world on March 21, 1546, Antwerp had reached its apogee of commercial and cultural success. As part of the Duchy of Brabant, it was under the jurisdiction of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, who had united the Seventeen Provinces of the Low Countries—today's

Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. When Charles abdicated in 1556, the ten-year-old Spranger witnessed the transfer of his city to the harsh Spanish Habsburg rule of Philip II. Uneasy with the region's Calvinist sympathies and antiroyalty hostilities, Philip sent an army to silence dissent and installed Alessandro Farnese, Duke of Parma, to maintain control over the Southern Netherlands.

In the late 1540s and the early 1550s, Antwerp had benefited from a surge in wealth and population; it was one of the few cities in Europe at that time with over one hundred thousand inhabitants. Industry thrived, lending the city new prestige and economic power. Portuguese spice traders dropped anchor in Antwerp, and wealthy German merchants attracted commerce from near and far. The city developed into a center for trading cheap wool and linen, as well as for banking, diamond cutting, printing, and publishing. It also became the center of the international tapestry market, and a special building, the Pand, was erected in 1550–54 for the booming business.

Antwerp at midcentury presented a rich visual and artistic environment for the young Spranger. Wandering the streets, he would have been surrounded by magnificent buildings—notably, the Antwerp cathedral and its soaring tower and Renaissance ornament, unique at the

time in the Southern Netherlands. He would also have passed the Gothic churches of Saint James and Saint Andrew, both completed in the early 1500s, and could have watched the construction of the Stadhuis (1560–64), or town hall, a masterpiece of late Renaissance architecture designed by Cornelis Floris II, brother of painter Frans Floris.

Spranger did not stem from a family of artists. His father, Joachim, was a merchant, not a painter. There was no tradition of artistic activity in the Spranger household, but growing up in a city that had become the largest exporter of art in the world, Bartholomeus was surrounded by artists and tapestry workers who were creating and selling their work. The Pand featured art of all kinds—books, tapestry, sculpture, paintings, and more. Dealers, who were often also artists, rented stalls there to sell their wares, increasing the participants' prominence as well as their income. Strolling with his father through the Pand, Bartholomeus could have seen diverse landscape paintings, still lifes, and religious art, and he may well have been attracted to a profession of such prestige and prosperity.¹

Many illustrious and innovative artists had lived in Antwerp the generation before Spranger, and their work could not have failed to impress the young artist. Two prominent traditions arose—namely, Antwerp Mannerism and Netherlandish Classicism (or Romanism)—each making a particular imprint on Spranger. The Antwerp Mannerist style, aptly described as “flickering and febrile,” celebrated Gothic elongation and ornamentation, vivid colors, and stylized S-curve figures.² This can be contrasted with the Netherlandish Romanists, whose figures are strongly sculptural, inspired by the artists of Renaissance Rome. Among the most renowned painters in these traditions who proved relevant for Spranger were Quentin Metsys and his son Jan, Jan Gossart, and Bernard van Orley, who had filtered the Italian Renaissance through their own Netherlandish traditions. Many others followed, in particular Pieter Coecke van Aelst, who continued the tradition of van Orley. Gossart, having

witnessed the grandeur of Rome while employed by Philip of Burgundy, transported Italy to the North. He embraced the nude for his allegorical paintings, opening the door for subsequent painters of erotic allegories—Spranger not the least.³

During Spranger's childhood, the cosmopolitan Netherlandish artist Jan van Scorel loomed large in Antwerp. Like Gossart, van Scorel spent time in Rome, where he worked for Pope Adrian VI as director of the collection at the Belvedere gallery, formerly overseen by none other than Raphael. After the pope's death, van Scorel returned to his native Antwerp, importing his knowledge of the Italian Renaissance. Closer in time to Spranger was Frans Floris, who spent six years in Italy during the 1540s and returned to Antwerp with a deep respect for the Italian Mannerists. His pupil Frans Francken I was contemporaneous with Spranger, but unlike Spranger, he remained in Antwerp, generating a dynasty of painters that included his famous son Frans Francken II. At the opposite end of their Netherlandish Classicism fused with Italian Mannerism stood Pieter Bruegel the Elder, following the path of Hieronymus Bosch but favoring a more restrained surrealism. Born twenty-one years before Spranger and master of the artists' Guild of Saint Luke by 1551, Bruegel was already an established figure during Spranger's youth. Among Bruegel's followers was Jan Mandyn, Spranger's first teacher.

Apprenticeship

As a child, Spranger sketched voraciously, drawing on whatever piece of paper or other surface came within reach. He was the third boy in a family of five children, named after his maternal grandfather, Bartholomeus Roelandts. His only sister, Anna (his mother's namesake), married and had children but died sometime before 1611. His brothers Mattheus and Quirin also lived until adulthood and had families, although Mattheus (like Anna) predeceased Bartholomeus. The other brother, Joris, appears not to have survived adulthood. Spranger's

biographer, Karel van Mander I, describes Spranger's father, Joachim, as a pious man of noble lineage and well traveled.⁴ According to the Antwerp archives, he was also a landlord who owned several properties in Antwerp, for which he collected rents. Initially a carpenter, he later became a merchant and traded in construction materials.⁵ He spent several years in Rome, where his merchant brother also lived, and became acquainted with some of the many Netherlandish painters working there. In particular, he was a friend of Michiel Coxie I, an accomplished painter and draftsman from Mechelen. Surely this time among Rome's treasures helped prepare Joachim to appreciate his son's artistic inclinations. So when Joachim discovered his ledger books covered with his son's drawings, he resolved to channel the boy's energies. He consulted with his friend Jan Mandyn, a landscape painter originally from Haarlem, whom he ran into soon after the ledger book incident. They agreed the best solution was for Spranger to enter Mandyn's studio as an apprentice.

Mandyn, who painted primarily in the manner of Bosch, would have been about fifty-seven years old when he took on Spranger, who was only eleven.⁶ His other pupils included Hans van der Elburcht and Gillis Mostaert. Mandyn's recently discovered painting *The Carrying of the Cross to Calvary* (ca. 1530; Museum Mayer van den Bergh, Antwerp) borrows forms from Bosch's late fifteenth-century panel *Christ Carrying the Cross* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna). Yet unlike Bosch, who rejected the aesthetic values of the earlier Netherlandish masters, Mandyn combined nightmarish imagery with a monumentality and refinement in the tradition of Lucas van Leyden, Gerard David, and Jan Gossart. His *Temptation of Saint Anthony* (fig. 1) embodies this fusion. Bizarre figures surround the praying saint, who steadfastly resists the enticements of a bird-woman with an enormous beak. Mandyn's tutelage of Spranger lasted only eighteen months but unquestionably had an impact. Spranger would later imitate and pay homage to his teacher with a small painting depicting a Witches'

Sabbath, completed in Rome and bought by a collector who became one of his most important patrons (see cat. 1).

After Mandyn's death, Spranger returned home to his parents.⁷ His father promptly arranged another apprenticeship through his friend Gillis Mostaert, a former Mandyn pupil. Mostaert's twin brother, Frans, also a landscape painter, was looking for help in his studio. Whatever Spranger might have learned from his new master was cut short by Frans's death shortly after Spranger's arrival.⁸ Gillis again arranged the next apprenticeship for Spranger, this time with Cornelis van Dalem, a nobleman and landscape painter of significant talent. Born in Antwerp in about 1530, van Dalem was apprenticed to the painter Jan Adriaensens, and by 1556 he was a free master of the local painters' guild. A man of means, cultivated in poetry and history, van Dalem painted only as a hobby, producing few paintings—primarily precise, somber, yet polished landscapes. These were highly coveted, and later even Rubens acquired one depicting primitive men, to which he added Saint Hubert hunting.⁹

A comprehensive assessment of van Dalem's work is difficult, as he left behind only a few paintings and drawings. His *Landscape with Farmhouse* (1564; Alte Pinakothek, Munich) illustrates his acumen, particularly an ability to convey atmosphere, and often an eerie one at that. The figures populating his scenes were usually painted by other artists—a not uncommon practice in Netherlandish painting that would continue into the Baroque era. Artists Gillis Mostaert, Joachim Beuckelaer, and Jan van Wechelen contributed figures to van Dalem's landscapes.¹⁰ Van Wechelen, one of the principal artists to work with van Dalem, was among the most gifted, and his dignified figures are well suited to van Dalem's atmospheric landscapes. They collaborated on *Landscape with Nomads* (ca. 1569; Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe), featuring van Dalem's trees and rocks sharply silhouetted against the sky and his characteristic subtle palette of browns with undertones of soft violet.¹¹ Such tendencies are also evident in his *Landscape with Adam and Eve* (fig. 2), in which van Dalem rendered nature not as seen



Fig. 1. Jan Mandyn (Netherlandish, Haarlem, ca. 1500–1559/60 Antwerp). *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, ca. 1530/59. Oil on panel, 24 ¼ × 32 ⅞ in. (61.5 × 83.5 cm). Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem (os I-543). IN EXHIBITION

with the naked eye but rather as the landscape of God, imbued with poetry.

As a rich nobleman painting only when the fancy struck him, van Dalem made no particular demands on Spranger to learn the techniques of making art.¹² In fact, he seemed most concerned his apprentice keep the studio in order and the paintbrushes clean. Spranger often spent his days in the studio reading his master's extensive collection of history and poetry books, so he did receive a classical education, even though he may not have been well instructed in the rudiments of painting. This *laissez-faire* approach to teaching wore on the ambitious

Spranger, and after four years with van Dalem, he became frustrated by his lack of progress. For advice he turned to his friend Jakob Wickraum, a German artist living in Antwerp, who encouraged Spranger to head south with him, through France and continuing down to Milan.¹³

The time was right for Spranger to depart for more than just professional reasons. Increasing rumors about van Dalem's heretical leanings—that he attended Protestant services and never set foot in a Catholic church—forced him to leave Catholic Antwerp for good in 1565. Political unrest and professional ambition presented the



Fig. 2. Cornelis van Dalem (Netherlandish, Antwerp, ca. 1530–1573 Breda). *Landscape with Adam and Eve*, ca. 1564. Oil on panel, 29¾ × 37⅞ in. (75.6 × 96.2 cm). Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University, Palo Alto, California; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Prentis Cobb Hale (1959.72). IN EXHIBITION

ideal time for Spranger to set out on his own as well. Wickraum encouraged him to refine his skills as much as possible before they departed. Reaching for charcoal and white chalk, Spranger copied prints by Parmigianino and Frans Floris¹⁴—quite prescient in light of his future style. One way or another, Spranger would pay lifelong homage to the artistic traditions of both North and South. He spent his remaining five months in Antwerp assiduously preparing for a journey that would change his life forever.

PARISIAN PASSAGE

Eager to chart his own path to success, the nineteen-year-old Spranger left Antwerp in March 1565. Accompanied by Wickraum, he headed south to Italy by way of Fontainebleau and Paris. In Paris, he is said to have studied with a miniaturist and portrait painter called “Marcus,” noted by van Mander as a painter to the “Queen Mother” and traditionally identified as Marc Duval (d. 1581). The Queen Mother at that point would have been Catherine de Médicis, but Marc Duval is not

recorded as a painter in her retinue, nor is he documented in Paris at this time. Alexandra Zvereva has painstakingly compiled evidence contrary to van Mander's statement, noting that the artists then working for Catherine were Gentian Bourdonnoys, René Thibergeau, and Nicolas Rebours; Rebours was the only one in Paris when Spranger was there.¹⁵ But, as Zvereva acknowledges, it does seem unlikely that Spranger would have forgotten the name of his very first master abroad or that van Mander would have so confused the name that he wrote Marcus for Nicolas. Perhaps the misunderstanding on van Mander's part is that Marc Duval was employed by Catherine de Médicis. Ascertaining the exact identity of the painter named "Marcus" is impossible at this point, but certain aspects of Duval's career are known, and they fit well into Spranger's chronology. Duval spent time in Rome as an illuminator and miniaturist, associating with Giulio Clovio, who would become a key figure in Spranger's life. And he could also be the "Marco Francese" who painted frescoes in Rome at the Palazzo Ricci-Sacchetti in 1553.¹⁶

Once again, as in his earlier apprenticeships, Spranger found Marcus a less than ideal fit. Though accomplished, he was limited in his usefulness to Spranger, as he painted almost exclusively portraits and miniatures. Eager to paint figures and compositions of his own, Spranger responded to this limitation in a most impetuous way, drawing figures directly on the white walls of his master's regal home—an act reminiscent of his youthful scribbling all over his father's ledger books. The relationship between Spranger and Marcus unraveled quickly. Recognizing that his pupil required a master who could offer him the opportunity to paint full-scale compositions with figures, Marcus suggested that Spranger leave, politely explaining that his home was too small for the two of them.¹⁷

So Spranger left and began his next adventure in Paris, with an "unnamed Master" who encouraged him to paint histories and religious subjects.¹⁸ Spranger retorted that he had no experience of this sort, but his master left

him alone in the studio with a large blank canvas, instructing him to study the master's compositions for inspiration and then paint a religious theme. Spranger painted a Resurrection that so impressed his master he invited other Netherlandish artists to admire it. Filled with pride, the young Spranger determined to move on, but injury and sudden illness derailed his plans. After bloodletting in both arms caused an infection, Spranger lay gravely ill in bed. His father was on the brink of sending a carriage to bring him back to Antwerp, but Spranger would hear nothing of such defeat and headed to Lyon. Weak as he may have been, after three days there he decided better opportunities awaited him in Italy and swiftly departed for Milan.

During Spranger's brief time in France he likely visited Fontainebleau, the royal palace outside Paris. Executed for François I (r. 1515–47), the sumptuous decorative scheme featuring stucco and fresco reflected the genius of Francesco Primaticcio, Rosso Fiorentino, and Nicolò dell'Abate. Before Fontainebleau, Spranger's only exposure to Italian Mannerism would have been second-hand, through copying prints by Parmigianino when he was still in Antwerp. France thus provided an artistic awakening for the young man, as well as a new confidence.

ITALIAN SOJOURN

Like many other Flemings around this time, Spranger traveled south, crossing the Alps in search of new opportunities. Rome, boasting ancient art and architecture coupled with current ecclesiastical patronage, was irresistible to many artists. Some came for a few years, others made Italy their home. Jan Soens, born in s'Hertogenbosch, came to Rome in the late 1570s and became court painter for Duke Ottavio Farnese in Parma, remaining there until his death. Denys Calvaert adopted Rome as his home, significantly influencing the local art scene and garnering commissions at the Vatican Palace. Countless other *fiamminghi* (Flemings) found fortune in Italy, but

the giant among them, and key for Spranger, was Giambologna, the exponent of Italian Mannerist sculpture and court artist of the Medici.

Spranger began his Italian sojourn in Milan. Contrary to his youthful expectations, he spent much time there poor and unemployed, as the commissions he had naively anticipated failed to materialize. Misfortune in a country where he could barely speak the language ministered a heavy dose of humility and some harsh life lessons. Arriving in Milan in the fall of 1565, he stayed at an inn where an Antwerp compatriot swindled him out of his doublet, winter coat, and money. His fortunes



Fig. 3. The cupola dome in Santa Maria della Steccata, Parma

improved slightly when a Milanese nobleman offered him work and lodging, but the project entailed painting with tempera and fresco, techniques unfamiliar to Spranger, so he turned it down. A young painter from Mechelen, a town halfway between Spranger's native Antwerp and Brussels, came to his rescue. The identity of this painter is unknown. He could be Anthonis van Santvoort, who was born in Mechelen in 1552 and died in Rome in 1600; another possible candidate is Lodewijk

Toeput, born in Mechelen in about 1550, who also lived in Italy and acquired the Italianized name Lodovico Pozzoserrato. The most likely is Joachim Spranger's friend Michiel Coxie I, also from Mechelen, who lived in Rome and was among the first Northern artists to use the fresco technique. Whoever this painter might have been, he taught Spranger to paint frescoes with tempera while the two of them were living at the nobleman's home.¹⁹

After eight unproductive months in Milan, Spranger decided to try his luck in Parma, then ruled by Ottavio Farnese (r. 1547–86). The duke's wife, Margaret of Austria, was a regent of the Netherlands from 1559 to

1567 and, along with her husband, fostered a passion for Flemish art.²⁰ With its ambitious civic art program, and imbued with the courtly style of Italian (or, more specifically, Emilian) Mannerism, Parma was an ideal environment for the young Spranger. He found myriad cultural and artistic treasures there, in particular Parmigianino's creations for the church of San Giovanni Evangelista and his lyrical frescoes of Diana and Actaeon at the Rocca Sanvitale in Fontanellato, just outside Parma.

The cupola of the Parma cathedral, a triumph of illusionary painting by Correggio, also made an impact on Spranger, as would become evident decades later in his work in Vienna and Prague. He also stud-

ied paintings by his contemporaries Bertoia and Girolamo Mirola at the Palazzo del Giardino, decorated in the early 1560s. The memory of Mirola's grand and voluptuous figures would become increasingly important for Spranger during his subsequent work in Rome. Both Bertoia and Mirola were influenced by Parmigianino, and their amalgamation of an ethereal quality with the curvilinear monumentality of the figures in the Palazzo del Giardino left an imprint on Spranger.

Spranger's misfortunes in Milan became a distant memory in Parma, where he was transformed from the

apprentice of a mediocre landscape artist to an adept figure painter in the Italian style. He met the painter Bernardino Gatti from Cremona, a pupil of Correggio's overseeing from 1560 to 1572 the decoration of the cupola honoring the Assumption of the Virgin in the church of Santa Maria della Steccata (fig. 3). Gatti hired Spranger to help him with the cupola. After his earlier struggles, Spranger relished the opportunity to work at such an illustrious church, unrivaled in the region for its beauty, size, and harmonious design.²¹ Embellished with frescoes, paintings, and statues by numerous illustrious artists, it represented the Parmesan Renaissance par excellence. At the Steccata, Spranger would have encountered Parmigianino's paintings of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (fig. 4) and may have met Girolamo Mazzola Bedoli, who decorated the north and south arms of

the Steccata in 1553–67. Closely aligned with Parmigianino, Bedoli created art that combines the sensibilities of Correggio and Parmigianino.²² Spranger's hand in the decoration of the Steccata dome is impossible to ascertain, but this prestigious commission played an important role in his artistic training and mastery of Italian Mannerism.

Even though Gatti was initially Spranger's good luck charm, this association ultimately proved his undoing. Spranger's contract authorized him to spend at least two years in Parma, but a violent altercation with Gatti's son cut his stay short and nearly cost him his life. Perched high in the cupola, the two young painters fought with fists and daggers for nearly an hour. The season was summer. Spranger, exhausted from fighting and voraciously thirsty, committed the nearly fatal error of drinking



Fig. 4. Parmigianino (Italian, Parma 1503–1540 Casalmaggiore). *The Wise and Foolish Virgins and Eve*, 1531–39. Fresco. Santa Maria della Steccata, Parma

deeply from the nearest bucket, which turned out to hold paint beneath a deceptive layer of water. The toxic mixture took swift effect, and for more than three weeks he lay in bed, only narrowly escaping death.²³

Spranger recovered, but he never went back to Gatti's home or to his work at the Steccata. Yet his good luck returned. He managed to get hired during that same summer of 1566 to work on three triumphal arches honoring the entry into the city of Maria of Portugal. Maria had recently married Ottavio's son, Alessandro Farnese, and an ambitious plan for the beautification of Parma anticipated her arrival.²⁴ Gatti received the commission to decorate the facade of the Palazzo dell'Auditore Civile (now the Palazzo Fainardi) on May 26, 1566, leaving little time to finish the project before Maria's entry on June 24. Because he was already busy on the Steccata and other commissions, Gatti solicited help from Mirola and Bertoia, and he likely recommended Spranger to them. Spranger's precise contribution to the triumphal entry is unknown, but the plan for the arches entailed figures heralding the history of the great city of Parma. Despite the young man's tempestuous spirit, Gatti no doubt recognized the magnitude of his talent.

The Eternal City

His services no longer needed in Parma, Spranger left for Rome early in the fall of 1566. Just as Parma had been an improvement over Milan, so Rome would reward him with even greater good fortune. More experienced and better connected than when he first set foot in Milan, he was ready to conquer this city teeming with opportunity for artists. Having no immediate plans, he initially attached himself for six weeks to a painter who remains unknown except for van Mander's dismissal of him as "mediocre."²⁵ Thereafter, he stayed for a few days at the Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne, the residence of Archbishop Massimi designed by Baldassare Peruzzi and filled with replicas of Roman statues. When his stay at the palace came to an end, Spranger met up with Michel du

Joncquoy, a painter from Tournai, the city that had given rise to the masters Robert Campin and Rogier van der Weyden. Little is known today about Spranger's friend Joncquoy, except that he came from a family of painters—grandfather Jean, father Pierre, and brother Gilles. Michel was an apprentice by 1548 and arrived in Rome in the mid-1560s. He no doubt made this move to further his career, like so many other Northern artists seeking fortune in Italy at that time, but he also left for safety's sake, as Tournai fell under religious oppression and the strife of iconoclasm.²⁶ How Joncquoy and Spranger met remains a mystery, but as compatriots and outsiders in a conclave of Italian artists, they likely became acquainted either through another Flemish artist or possibly through Spranger's elusive Parisian master, Marcus, who was working at the Palazzo Ricci-Sacchetti in Rome.



Fig. 5. Giulio Clovio (Croatian, Grizane 1498–1578 Rome). *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1565–70. Tempera on parchment pasted on copper panel, Diam. 4½ in. (11.5 cm). Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence (4213). IN EXHIBITION

Spranger spent the fall of 1566 working in Rome without official patronage or any large-scale public projects. But this would soon change, his fortune again

turning thanks to friendship and chance. In early 1567 Joncquoy received a commission to decorate the church of San Lorenzo in Sant'Oreste, a small hill town on Mount Soracte, about an hour and a half from Rome. Feeling inadequately prepared to invent the designs for San Lorenzo, Joncquoy persuaded Spranger to assist him. About this same time one of Spranger's paintings, a small scene of witches on brooms (see cat. 1), caught the eye of the miniaturist Giulio Clovio (fig. 5), an intimate of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese (Ottavio's brother) and a member of the cardinal's household since 1537. Spranger probably met Clovio through Marcus, who had worked with him in Rome. Clovio showed the cardinal the little scene of sorcery, and it so delighted him that he asked Clovio to summon Spranger for a meeting. The opportunity to meet Farnese was tempting, but Spranger dutifully informed Clovio that this honor must be postponed, as he had already promised to assist his friend Joncquoy at Sant'Oreste. The cardinal responded to Clovio that Mount Soracte was under his jurisdiction and that, in fact, his own architect, Jacopo da Vignola, had recently renovated parts of the church of San Lorenzo.

Undeterred by the lure of the cardinal, Spranger rode off to Sant'Oreste. Upon arrival he assisted Joncquoy with the church's main altar and vaults, painting a Last Supper, a God the Father, and the Four Evangelists (see cat. 2). Their contract of May 1567 stipulated they should also render Saint Lawrence (patron saint of the church), Saint Stephen, the Crucifixion, and the Deposition. In Milan, only a few years earlier, Spranger had refused a commission for a fresco, feeling too inexperienced, but by now he clearly had mastered the technique. The two artists spent four months at Sant'Oreste. Most of their work was whitewashed over in the eighteenth century, and even though sections of the frescoes have recently been restored, they remain greatly deteriorated.²⁷ Most vivid today is Spranger and Joncquoy's *God the Father*, a conservative yet forceful image of a capably rendered figure, modulated with deep reds and ochers. Spranger's characteristic élan is not yet evident, but this



Fig. 6. Titian (Tiziano Vecellio) (Pieve di Cadore, ca. 1485/90 [?]-1576 Venice). *Cardinal Alessandro Farnese*, ca. 1546. Oil on canvas, 37 ³/₄ × 16 ⁷/₈ in. (96 × 43 cm). Museo di Capodimonte, Naples (Q 133)

was a collaborative effort by both Joncquoy and Spranger. A small *Deposition* (cat. 15), painted without doubt during Spranger's early Rome period, communicates his style at that time and could represent an initial conception for the Sant'Oreste fresco.

Finished with his work for Sant'Oreste, Spranger returned to Rome and called on Clovio to arrange for his audience with the cardinal (fig. 6). Entering the cardinal's service would be the epitome of patronage, a privilege desired by many artists. Spranger painted a small oil *Saint Jerome in the Wilderness* (cat. 3), which Clovio presented to the cardinal sometime before June 19, 1568.²⁸ The meeting went well; Farnese was charmed by Spranger and invited him to live at the Palazzo della Cancelleria. Among the most privileged and wealthy

individuals of the sixteenth century, Alessandro Farnese did not allow his ecclesiastical office to interfere with his enjoyment of worldly pleasures, especially art. Highly cultured, he adorned his palace with antique sculpture and paintings by Italian masters including Titian, Francesco Salviati, and Giorgio Vasari; according to legend, it was at one of the cardinal's dinner parties that Vasari came up with the idea of writing his *Lives of the Artists*.²⁹ Living in these grand surroundings, Spranger now had easy access to Farnese's collection, allowing him to enhance his artistic education and refine his own skills. While at the Cancelleria, Spranger studied Vasari's fresco cycle in the Sala dei Cento Giorni, an allegory melded with Farnese history. Nude and barely draped figures languish in niches, watching the main scenes of action flanked by Solomonic columns. In the first *salone* of the Cancelleria was Vasari's large allegory of Justice. Having absorbed its unusual iconography, Spranger would later recast this theme into his own compelling allegories that lauded his most important patron, Rudolf II.

Under the tutelage of Farnese, new commissions came Spranger's way, though as a young Northerner in Italy, he was most often asked to paint landscapes incorporating religious allegories—a familiar genre from his days with Cornelis van Dalem. Two landscape paintings of similar dimensions and now both in the Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe illustrate Spranger's activity around this time (cats. 4, 5). One landscape, signed and dated 1569, features a mother nursing a child and a peasant bearing a large tray of bread on his back. The companion piece, unsigned, displays a nearly identical figure carrying bread. Spranger imbued both works with religious symbolism and a gravity that might initially escape the modern viewer. The lush countryside pays homage to his mentor van Dalem. Spranger even repeated specific details from van Dalem's works, such as the lattice gate and the mountain goats perched in the cliffs (fig. 31).³⁰ Though still tapping his Northern roots, Spranger shows new skill in unifying landscape and figures, the active and the contemplative, the secular and the spiritual.

Villa Caprarola

Spranger's association with Clovio could not have come at a better time. The cardinal was engaging major artists to decorate his villa in Caprarola, about thirty-five miles northwest of Rome, and Clovio wrote to the cardinal on September 21, 1569, affectionately recommending Spranger for his "virtù" and "modestia."³¹ Jacopo da Vignola, Farnese's favored architect for over twenty years, designed the immense pentagonal palace, with its exterior double staircases embracing the facade of the impressive multistory structure (fig. 7). Decoration of the villa had begun in 1561, with the commission awarded to Taddeo Zuccaro, though he may have been the cardinal's second choice after Girolamo Muziano refused his offer.³² He created the entire decorative program, providing the drawings and cartoons, but had an extensive group of assistants, including his brother Federico, carry out much of the actual painting.³³ Vasari recorded that Taddeo was not required to reside at Caprarola more than a few months of the year; he was busy on other projects and could ill afford to be away from Rome on a permanent basis.³⁴ As a result, leadership of the artistic program at



Fig. 7. Aerial view of Villa Caprarola



Fig. 8. Taddeo Zuccaro (Sant'Angelo in Vado 1529–1566 Rome). *Ceiling of the Hall of the Farnesina Magnificence*, ca. 1565. Palazzo Farnese, Caprarola

Caprarola was fragile and fragmented. When Taddeo died in 1566, Federico took over, but after an argument with Farnese he was dismissed in 1569, and Bertioia assumed the post.

Spranger joined the Caprarola project at this juncture. Working again with Bertioia, whom he knew from his days in Parma, he took part in a flurry of activity with other artists at the villa, bedecking every wall and ceiling. The interior of Caprarola—overflowing with frescoes of grotesques, allegories, and landscapes—is one of the most important surviving decorative ensembles of a sixteenth-century Roman villa (fig. 8). The iconographic program celebrates Farnese wisdom and patronage of the arts, as

well as affirming the family's power and territorial claims. Several frescoes allude to the struggle between the Farnese and the pope over the Duchy of Parma. Familiar with Parma and its history, Spranger would have understood the significance of the lunette frescoes—for example, the symbols of war and victory, including the unicorn, a device of the first Duke of Parma and Piacenza. Most of the decoration for Villa Caprarola was carried out during the reign of Pope Pius V, who was known for his austere personality and rigid orthodoxy. It comes as no surprise that the iconographic program incorporates veiled references to the triumph of the Catholic Church and the repudiation of the Reformation.

Working alongside other artists, Italian and Flemish, Spranger would have made new contacts at Caprarola—including Roberto and Cornelio Fiammingo—and had a chance to observe his colleagues' methods. His own contribution to Caprarola is undocumented, though he was incontestably there, working under Bertoia's tutelage. He was following a design program established by Cardinal Farnese with the Zuccari and Bertoia, making it difficult to identify Spranger's exact hand. On projects involving Northern and Italian artists, the Italians would usually execute the figures, and the Northerners the landscape background and other decorative elements. Somewhat unfairly, Northerners were believed to lack the skills needed to paint figures, yet undeniably more often than not the Northern artists were trained better in painting landscapes than figures.³⁵

Past scholarship has posited that Spranger participated in decorating the Hercules Room, in which allegorical landscapes celebrate both the Farnese and the Church.³⁶ In her careful study of the villa, Diane De Grazia reveals documents pinpointing the relatively brief period of Spranger's stay: the payment records show that he was paid thirteen scudi for two months' work, September 28 through November 12, 1569.³⁷ He arrived at Caprarola when the decoration of the Hercules Room was well under way—the stuccowork and grotesques were complete, and the scaffolding was in place, waiting for the figures to be completed.³⁸ One particular landscape, *Hercules Captures Cerberus*, has been linked to Spranger based on stylistic affinities with his two landscapes from 1569 (cats. 4, 5). But this is contested, as the Hercules composition appears much more Italianate than those early Netherlandish-inspired landscapes.³⁹

Spranger's contribution to the villa's Camera dei Sogni (Room of Dreams) has been overlooked, but there is evidence of his early style in two adjacent rooms decorated during the documented period of his sojourn. As a Northern painter, he was no doubt assigned to paint landscapes, but by this time his reputation was on the rise and he likely aspired to greater challenges. The Camera

dei Sogni incorporates a medallion of figures in which the central figure displays what would become characteristic Spranger features: a squat body and a puffy face with tiny, widely spaced eyes and small yet fleshy lips. In an early painting by Spranger, *The Flight into Egypt* (cat. 7), Joseph has a face similar to the one in Camera dei Sogni, reinforcing the likelihood of Spranger's contribution. A preparatory drawing by Taddeo Zuccaro for the Camera dei Sogni medallion (1562; Musée du Louvre, Paris) strengthens the argument that Spranger took Zuccaro's design and painted his own version for the ceiling.⁴⁰ There are distinct differences between the figures in the drawing and the final fresco: the clarity and sophistication of Zuccaro's drawing clearly identify its creator as a master, whereas the fresco suggests a less-accomplished artist.

Spranger shifted his activity to a room adjacent to the Camera dei Sogni—the private quarters of the cardinal. Enlivened by painted landscape friezes and a cedar ceiling beautifully carved with the cardinal's coat of arms, it was among the few private rooms in the villa. As a favorite of the cardinal, Spranger was likely commissioned to decorate this sanctuary. Friezes in the room bear affinity to Spranger's early landscapes and to his signed *Flight into Egypt*. The latter fuses Spranger's past and present artistic predilections of the late 1560s. Its extensive landscape refers to his Antwerp training, the pagan ruins allude to his time in Rome, and the softly modulated figures as well as the bright palette show his attention to Clovio.

Bertoia's highly regarded drawings (see fig. 9, for example) also had an impact on Spranger, who would have seen some of them at Caprarola, where Bertoia was responsible for executing preliminary studies for the decorative project. Spranger later adopted traits from Bertoia's graphic style in his own drawings, such as a series of single hatches in different directions to suggest depth or shadows. This method of penning multiple parallel lines is frequently seen in Spranger's drawings.

Though Spranger worked at Caprarola only briefly, his experience there had lasting effects. He got a close-up



Fig. 9. Bertonia (Jacopo Zanguidi) (Italian, Parma 1544–1573/74 Parma). *God the Father with Four Angels*, 1569–71. Pen and brown ink, brush and brown wash, over traces of black chalk, 6 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (15.5 × 21.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Harry G. Sperling Fund, 1991 (1991.52)

view of sophisticated frescoes by esteemed Italian painters and participated in an erudite iconographic program, putting all this to good use later when serving Rudolf II. A ceiling fresco of Mercury and Minerva, or Hermathena, by Federico Zuccaro (fig. 41) surely served as inspiration for Spranger decades later when he painted a ceiling fresco of the same pair at the White Tower in Prague Castle (cat. 58).

In the Pope's Service

Living in the picturesque village of Caprarola, surrounded by other talented artists, and participating in such a prominent project must have appealed to the young, ambitious Spranger. But after less than two

months there, he was ordered by the cardinal to return to Rome and enter into the service of Pope Pius V. Eager to evaluate Spranger's capabilities, Pius asked him to paint a Last Judgment for the pope's tomb in the monastery of Santa Croce in his hometown of Bosco Marengo, using as model Fra Angelico's triptych of the theme, which the pope owned (fig. 33). Pius had hired the architect Ignazio Danti to oversee construction of the church and monastery beginning in 1566. Other important artists also had works there, including Hans Memling and Vasari; the latter produced an entire cycle of paintings for the church in 1569—including a Last Judgment and Saint Peter Martyr—which remain there today.⁴¹

Spranger spent almost fourteen months working on this commission, and considering the abundance of figures in the composition, it comes as no surprise that it took so long (cat. 9). While working on *The Last Judgment*, Spranger might also have participated in illuminating a choral book for the pope.⁴² Possibly motivated by

jealousy, Vasari complained to the pope that Spranger's work for Bosco Marengo showed he was lazy and wasted time. Alarmed by the criticism and determined to keep the pope's favor, Spranger quickly produced new works for his patron, including a painting on copper of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane (now unlocated) and a drawing of Saint Dominic, founder of the pope's order (cat. 89). Stylistically, the figure is quietly Mannerist, without the attenuated form that would characterize Spranger's Prague style. Pius was a Dominican, so a composition featuring the founder of his order would have had personal appeal, and Spranger no doubt produced this sophisticated yet unassuming work to honor the pope.

Impressed by Spranger's initial efforts, Pius asked him to paint an entire Passion series but to execute pen-and-ink sketches for his approval first. Pius's plan for the eventual home of Spranger's Passion series is unknown, but it was likely intended for Santa Croce at his monastery. The choice of the Passion as a theme offers insight into the temperament of Pius, an austere defender of the faith with fanatical leanings, a man who forbade medical treatment to suffering soldiers if they were remiss in their religious practices.⁴³ Under Pius, art was about pious devotion, not aesthetic innovation. Before making his pen-and-ink sketches for the pope, Spranger had primarily drawn with charcoal and black chalk, but he rose to the challenge and finished the last scene, *The Resurrection*, right before the pope's death in 1572. Three in this series of twelve drawings have been identified: *The Mocking of Christ*, *Christ Crowned with Thorns*, and *Christ in Limbo* (cats. 91–93), along with the related *Martyrdom of Saint Lawrence* (cat. 94). *The Mocking of Christ*, now in the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München, makes extensive use of black chalk, particularly in the underdrawing. Spranger used pen and ink, as instructed by the pope, but left several passages solely in black chalk. The Munich drawing provides insight into Spranger's early graphic style, exhibiting unfinished contour lines in the figures, a device he would often use in future work. The scene takes place in a classical setting,

with a group of figures congregating around the central drama, and the other works follow this format.

Spranger and the "Croatian Michelangelo"

During his years in Italy, Spranger admired the Italian Mannerists, especially Parmigianino.⁴⁴ However, comparing Spranger's and Parmigianino's drawings from the 1570s shows that the pronounced elongation and ethereality in Parmigianino's figures were slowly dissipating from Spranger's works. His figures became more short-waisted, with a swelling physicality and volume. Clearly, another artist had sparked a change: Giulio Clovio. A native of Croatia, Clovio was one of the most accomplished miniaturists of the sixteenth century and a renowned imitator and copyist of Michelangelo.⁴⁵ His artistic legacy, including his influence on Spranger, has been overlooked in part because of the traditional derision for Mannerism and the neglect of the genre of miniatures.⁴⁶ Yet Clovio was celebrated in his day. Vasari called him "the new and small Michelangelo," proclaiming "There has never been, nor perhaps will there ever be for many centuries, a more rare or more excellent miniaturist, or we would rather say painter of little things, than Don Giulio Clovio, in that he has surpassed by a great measure all others who have ever been engaged in that kind of painting."⁴⁷ El Greco named Clovio among his most influential teachers and included his portrait along with those of Michelangelo, Titian, and Raphael in his painting *Christ Driving the Money Changers from the Temple* (ca. 1570; Minneapolis Institute of Arts).⁴⁸

Clovio lived a long, eventful life. He fought for the Hungarian King Louis II in the 1526 Battle of Mohács, site of a decisive victory by the Ottoman Empire; witnessed the atrocities of the Sack of Rome the following year, where he suffered a broken leg; and joined a religious order in Mantua as well as studied art there for three years under Giulio Romano. Clovio's masterful imitations of Michelangelo were well known in his day, but he also found inspiration elsewhere. The influence of



Fig. 10. Giulio Clovio (Croatian, Grižane 1498–1578 Rome). *The Lamentation*, ca. 1550. Gouache heightened with gold on vellum, 8½ × 5¼ in. (21.6 × 14.5 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington; Patrons' Permanent Fund (2006.111.1). IN EXHIBITION

many artists associated with the Roman Mannerist tradition—including Parmigianino, Bertoia, and Perino del Vaga—is evident in the undulating contours of Clovio's figures and in his use of ornament, especially in the decorative margins of his miniatures.

Spranger fell under the spell of Clovio and worked with him even after he entered papal service in 1570. They collaborated on *The Conversion of Saint Paul* (cat. 11), which is signed: *DON JULIO CLOVIO INVE / BARTOL SPRANGHERS / PINXIT* (Don Giulio Clovio invented and Bartholomeus Spranger painted). A letter from Clovio written on October 10, 1573, to Pietro Ceuli,

agent for the Duke of Parma, specifically indicates that Spranger “colored” the work.⁴⁹ Even though the painting is indebted to a preparatory drawing by Clovio in the British Museum (fig. 34), the painting has an expanded background landscape that betrays Spranger's Northern training.⁵⁰

Spranger again turned to Clovio when he limned a delicate yet radiant landscape in which Saint George slays a dragon (cat. 13). Clovio's original design is unknown, but an engraving after it by Cornelis Cort, dated 1577, records Clovio's intent (fig. 35). Spranger's composition is nearly identical to the engraving—the main variances are the posture of the princess and the extended horizontal landscape. Spranger's *Saint George and the Dragon*, along with his earlier religious narratives, is still a landscape with figures, rather than figures in a landscape, though the role of the figures has been expanded compared to his early landscapes in Karlsruhe (cats. 4, 5). Emphasizing the landscape of a religious subject is a Netherlandish tradition, but as Spranger's time in Rome and his association with Clovio progressed, his figures began to exert a stronger presence. *Saint George and the Dragon* represents a second stage in this evolution, after the Karlsruhe landscapes and *The Flight into Egypt* in Brussels (cat. 7). Aesthetically, these Roman landscapes reside in neither the North nor the South but bridge both.

Spranger studied Clovio's impressive collection of Michelangelo drawings, and his Passion drawings for the pope reveal a debt to Clovio's Michelangelesque figural style. The relationship of Clovio's art to Michelangelo is central to understanding Spranger's development in Italy. Clovio was lauded as a consummate miniaturist, but his art went far beyond the earlier medieval tradition of the miniature: his mastery subsumed the monumental forms of Michelangelo into consummate miniatures. Spranger inherited this “monumental-in-miniature” figural style from Clovio, and he also relied heavily on Clovio's facial types. An exquisite illumination by Clovio of the Lamentation (fig. 10) makes evident Spranger's

debt to his cool grace and tempered Mannerism. *The Farnese Book of Hours* (Morgan Library and Museum, New York), Clovio's masterpiece of illumination, depicts many faces reminiscent of those later adopted by Spranger. Clovio illuminated the text in Rome, finishing in 1546 (coincidentally, the year of Spranger's birth). His figures typically feature oval faces, full cheeks, "widely spaced cow-eyes, and heavily dimpled mouths,"⁵¹ a morphology Spranger would imitate. While in Rome, Spranger held tight to Clovio's artistic tenets, but his diminutive, doll-like figures from this Italian phase would become increasingly physical in subsequent years.

At this point Spranger was still exploring and experimenting with several of the artistic influences bombarding him in Italy. He embraced Parmigianino's and Bertioia's Mannerism, Raphael's grace, and Michelangelo's muscularity, while also assiduously distilling the art of his Croatian mentor. Clovio had an impact on Spranger's choice of genre as well. According to van Mander, Spranger produced impressive miniatures while in Rome, specifically a *History of the Disputation of the Host*.⁵² Though these works are unknown today, a grisaille miniature, *The Rest on the Flight into Egypt* (cat. 96), was later engraved by Aegidius Sadeler II (cat. 166), and a precious jewel of a miniature by Spranger is now hidden away in the Palazzo Pitti: *The Holy Family with Saint John the Baptist on the Flight into Egypt* (cat. 6). An inventory as far back as 1589 mentions such a work, attributed to "Bartolomeo Spranger the Fleming." This work shows Spranger at his most refined and precise during his Italian period, fusing varied artistic influences and impulses.

Roman Twilight

After Pius V died on May 1, 1572, Spranger found himself at loose ends. A new pope, Gregory XIII, would usher in his own cadre of artists. Clovio was now in his seventies, and Cardinal Farnese had shifted his primary interest from Caprarola to building the Gesù, the most important church of the Counter-Reformation. Spranger

drifted, working only when he needed money. No longer residing in ecclesiastical splendor, he fell into the company of a Netherlandish merchant, an old friend inclined toward a wild, dissolute lifestyle. But this was only temporary. Cleverly, Spranger embarked on independent public projects, mainly altar paintings for the many churches being built and remodeled in Rome. He first applied his efforts in the church of San Luigi dei Francesi, today known for its masterpieces by Caravaggio. Though Spranger's work for the church is no longer extant, an engraving by Crispijn de Passe the Elder (cat. 161) preserves his altarpiece glorifying Saints Anthony, John the Baptist, and Elizabeth of Hungary. The exact location of Spranger's altar is not known, but it could have been made for the chapel of John the Baptist (later rededicated to Saint Denis), which makes sense, given Saint John's centrality in Spranger's work. The engraving, though lacking color and nuances such as light effects, does convey Spranger's figural and narrative approach at this post-papal juncture. The overall composition and iconography are conservative, and the figure of Saint John relies on a constrained yet muscular Zuccaresque *maniera*, with gesture playing both a formal and a narrative role.

Spranger's next commission was *The Martyrdom of Saint John the Evangelist* (cat. 14), an altarpiece showing Saint John being boiled in oil. Painted for the church of the small monastery of San Giovanni a Porta Latina, just outside the Aurelian Walls of Rome, it was later transferred to the sacristy of San Giovanni a Laterano, where it hangs today. The first official mention of the church of San Giovanni a Porta Latina dates back to the last quarter of the eighth century, when Adrian I restored the basilica.⁵³ It was restored again in 1566 by Cardinal Alessandro Crivelli, and the work continued under Cardinal Gian Girolamo Albani, who in 1570 initiated a project of new interior altarpieces—one of which must have been Spranger's *Martyrdom of Saint John the Evangelist*. Albani had known Pius since 1550, and it was no doubt the pope who brought Spranger to his attention. Past literature as early as 1716 attributed Spranger's painting to

Federico Zuccaro, which is understandable as the Zuccari were stars among artists in Rome at that time, and their influence on Spranger persisted after his encounter with them at Caprarola.⁵⁴ However, in light of van Mander's reference to having seen Spranger working on the painting in 1574, there is little doubt that it is by his hand.⁵⁵

The Martyrdom of Saint John the Evangelist is Spranger's only large-scale painting from his days in Rome known to be extant, and it exemplifies his post-papal style and capabilities. He demonstrates his skill in arranging a multifigure scene, in which the style of figures has shifted ever so slightly from that of Clovio. The stoker tending the cauldron is rendered as a palpable physical form, though with a head oddly too small for his body, adhering to typical Mannerist proportions. The facial features of Saint John—squat face, doe eyes, puffy cheeks—still strongly resemble those in previous works by Spranger and Clovio. In this composition and in the engraving after his San Luigi dei Francesi altarpiece, he has not abandoned the grace and mannered composure of his earlier works, or the monumental in miniature, but his figures subtly diverge from their former mode.

Garnering ever more public commissions, Spranger painted an altarpiece honoring the birth of the Virgin. The painting is lost, but an engraving currently attributed to the Monogrammist MGF preserves the composition (cat. 164). The church where the altarpiece was located, identified by van Mander only as a "little church near the Trevi fountain," is likely Santa Maria in Trivio, one of the oldest churches in Rome, erected by the Byzantine general Belisarius in the sixth century.⁵⁶ Beginning in 1571, the church was almost entirely rebuilt for the 1575 Jubilee year by the architect Giacomo del Duca, and since these dates coincide with Spranger's period of independence in Rome, he presumably conceived the altar painting at this time. The doctrinaire leanings of Pius V and his veneration of the Virgin Mary determined its subject. Pius attributed the papal victory over the Turks at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571 to the Virgin's

intercession, and he subsequently instigated a robust worship devoted to her.

In a configuration similar to that of his San Luigi dei Francesi altarpiece, Spranger composed *The Birth of the Virgin* in two tiers, filling the lively scene with various characters tending to the baby in a setting both warmly domestic and solemnly religious. God the Father, surrounded by a bevy of putti, hovers above. As the composition is known only through the engraving, assessing the stylistic nuances is problematic, but it does provide another glimpse of Spranger's activity in Rome, little of which survives today. This work confirms that Spranger studied the city's monuments, for his composition was inspired by Sebastiano del Piombo's altarpiece of the same subject for the Chigi Chapel in Santa Maria del Popolo.⁵⁷

While in Rome, Spranger surely also came into contact with Northern artists such as Hans Speckaert of Brussels, ten years senior to Spranger and living in Rome.⁵⁸ He could have influenced Spranger's early style, but Spranger did not need, nor is he likely to have sought out, Northern mentors at this time. Through Cardinal Farnese, Clovio, and the pontiff himself, he was aligned artistically and financially with Italy. Spranger had left his native Antwerp to broaden his horizons and to pursue training and commissions from the Italians, and that is reflected in his career during this period.

Friendship, however, was an entirely different affair. Spranger indeed cultivated friends from the North, among them Karel van Mander, who greatly helped enhance his subsequent reputation. Though a gifted painter, van Mander is far better known for the artists' biographies in his *Schilder-boeck*.⁵⁹ His chapter on Spranger is less an objective biography than a panegyric to the Antwerp student transformed into the Prague court master. Van Mander devoted more pages to him than to almost any other artist in his book, no doubt because of his admiration for Spranger but also because he knew him personally. Van Mander came to Rome by 1573 and probably met Spranger through their mutual

friend the sculptor Hans Mont. The three Northerners documented their friendship at Nero's Domus Aurea, where they inscribed their names on the walls. The three got together again shortly thereafter in Vienna.⁶⁰ Mont, born in Ghent in about 1545, was a pivotal figure in Spranger's career. He worked for the illustrious Flemish sculptor and architect Giambologna (born Jean Bologne, in Douai), who became another Northern friend equally important for Spranger. Giambologna was, in fact, Spranger's next Fortuna, because he recommended him to the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II. This endorsement, like those from Clovio and Farnese, launched Spranger into a new galaxy of success and fame.

VIENNESE INTERLUDE

After a decade in Italy, in 1575 Spranger left Rome for Vienna. He had arrived in Italy a naive, inexperienced foreign artist, and now he was headed east, trading sun for snow and a pope for an emperor. A year earlier, when Maximilian II sought a sculptor and a painter to help transform Vienna into a Renaissance city, he turned for advice to one of his favorite artists, Giambologna. A patron and keen admirer of Giambologna, the emperor had tried for years, in vain, to lure him away from the Medici court in Florence. Unavailable to work for Maximilian himself, Giambologna suggested two Flemish artists: Spranger as painter, Mont as sculptor. If the emperor could not have Giambologna, at least he would have artists vetted by him.

Giambologna could have recommended any number of talented artists at that time, so why Spranger and Mont? To begin with, Giambologna was their compatriot, having been born in Flanders. But that personal connection was not enough, since it would have reflected poorly on Giambologna to send mediocre artists to the imperial court. Maximilian had specifically requested a painter and a sculptor with diverse skills, especially in the decoration of buildings. Giambologna knew Spranger because they both lived in the Belvedere in the papal palace, and



Fig. 11. Attributed to Hans Mont (Flemish, Ghent, active 1571–84 Prague). *Mars and Venus*, ca. 1575. Bronze, H. 21 in. (53.5 cm). J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles (85.SB.75). IN EXHIBITION

Giambologna was well aware that Spranger could decorate buildings, as witnessed by his landscapes at Caprarola. He also would have known that Spranger's output included frescoes, altar paintings in oil, and drawings, with subjects both sacred and secular. Mont was one of Giambologna's students, and they had worked together on the Oceanus Fountain (1571–76) in the Boboli Gardens in Florence. Mont remains an elusive figure (fig. 11).

A few of his signed drawings are extant, and they reveal a nod toward Spranger, but his artistic career is so little documented that Spranger's impact on his development, or vice versa, must be assessed with caution.⁶¹ Spranger was initially unsure about making the move to Vienna, but once Mont decided to go, Spranger packed his bags, with forty kronentalers from the emperor for travel money.⁶²

Maximilian II as Ruler and Patron

Spranger's new patron was a world apart from his former circle of ecclesiastical benefactors. When Maximilian II (fig. 12) became Holy Roman Emperor in 1564, he inherited from his father, Ferdinand I, a complex and costly empire heavily in debt. Plagued by bureaucratic inefficiency, the government required a massive staff for its various responsibilities, ranging from the mint to the military. The imperial coffers had been emptied by wars with the Ottoman Empire, and Maximilian found himself unable to pay salaries as high as those offered by some of the other courts. This meant that his hopes to attract his favorites in the arts were often dashed. He longed to bring the composer Giovanni Palestrina to Vienna as his chapel choirmaster, for example, but simply could not afford him.⁶³

Maximilian frequently battled confessional strife in his empire, while also keeping watch against further encroachment by the Turks. Dismissed by some as a lackluster ruler or even a political failure, Maximilian has not received his due, especially in light of the relative peace he maintained throughout his reign.⁶⁴ Though Catholic by upbringing, he found intellectual and spiritual interest in the ideas of Martin Luther. Even before assuming imperial power, Maximilian enlisted the moderate priest Johann Sebastian Pfauser to undertake a serious study of the Bible with him, confounding his father and his uncle, Charles V, who had no patience for Maximilian's curiosity.⁶⁵ Pfauser was known for his liberal outlook, his refusal to venerate the saints, and rumors of his marriage.

He became so controversial at the Vienna court that Ferdinand ordered him to leave. Maximilian convinced his father to transfer Pfauser to his own household, where he remained and received a pension for years. Maximilian's more moderate approach to confessional issues was prescient; he recognized that political survival would require him to engage both sides. Though Maximilian managed to assuage both camps—particularly the pope and his dogmatic cousin Philip II in Spain—his genuine receptiveness to Lutheranism became manifest on his deathbed, when he refused the last sacraments of the Church.

Once he became emperor, even amid the political intrigue, skyrocketing debt, and religious strife, Maximilian found pleasure and intellectual stimulation in artistic and scholarly pursuits. An enthusiastic supporter of the



Fig. 12. Martino Rota (Italian, Šibenik, Croatia, ca. 1520–1583 Vienna). *Emperor Maximilian II*, 1574. Engraving, 8¼ × 6⅞ in. (20.9 × 15.5 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington; Rosenwald Collection (1943.3.7540). IN EXHIBITION

court library, he hired the first official librarian, Hugo Blotius, to catalogue the enormous holdings. The emperor even acceded to Blotius's suggestion of opening the rich collection of manuscripts to outside scholars. Maximilian cultivated relations with several other learned men as well, bringing luster to the court and the city. The study of natural sciences gained prominence at court through the efforts of the famous botanist Carolus Clusius, who in 1576 planted the first horse chestnut tree in Vienna, before known only in the Ottoman Empire. The diplomat, antiquarian, and writer Rogier Ghislain de Busbecq introduced tulips and lilacs into the court's gardens. Mining and the veneration of precious stones also played a role at court: Maximilian employed Leonard Thurneysser, whose book *Magna alchemia* (1583) had sections on Bohemian and Hungarian mining. Gemology and mining were deemed related to alchemy in that precious stones were seen as symbols of the mysterious world of celestial and natural forces. Mining also yielded the precious stones that would be incorporated into exquisite works of decorative arts, particularly at the court of Maximilian's son, Rudolf II. By 1566 Maximilian was also assiduously collecting antique statuary for several of his projects, including Neugebäude Palace and the Augarten park.

Collecting existing artwork was not Maximilian's only form of art patronage; he also cultivated painters, sculptors, goldsmiths, medalists, and architects to create new works. Spranger and Mont would join an eclectic ensemble already employed at the Viennese court—principally Giuseppe Arcimboldo, Wenzel Jamnitzer I, Alexander Colin, and Martino Rota. Arcimboldo, having previously worked as a portrait painter for Maximilian's father, was the dominant figure. The paintings of composite heads for which he is most famous were painted specifically for the emperor, and Maximilian's embrace of these eccentric creations suggests that he was a more innovative and risk-taking patron than posterity has acknowledged.⁶⁶ Arcimboldo's composite heads have political undertones as well.⁶⁷ The theme of the Four

Seasons, a favorite at Maximilian's court, was part of Arcimboldo's decorative program for the lavish wedding festival held in 1571 for Maximilian's brother Archduke Charles and Maria of Bavaria.⁶⁸ During one of the tournament processions in honor of the wedding, Maximilian appeared as the personification of Winter—being the first season of the year, winter also represented the primary authority.⁶⁹ Court artists would continue to glorify the Habsburgs as allegorical rulers of heaven and earth throughout the reign of Rudolf II.

Wenzel Jamnitzer I, the court goldsmith, also favored the theme of the Four Seasons and the Four Elements. He enjoyed a distinguished career, employed first by Charles V, next by Ferdinand I, and then under contract to Maximilian by 1556. A polymath, Jamnitzer published *Perspectiva corporum regularis* (1568; Perspective of regular solids), based partly on the work of Plato and Euclid. The figures and ornament in his decorative metalwork, more sculptural masterpieces than craft, displayed Mannerist tendencies, and he made his pieces even more precious by integrating gems and minerals. From 1571 to 1578 he worked on a magnificent fountain, predominantly silver, over nine feet tall. Its iconographic program combined allegories of the Four Elements and the Four Seasons in one resplendent structure resembling an imperial crown, a shape that left no question as to the political reference.⁷⁰

Another preeminent sculptor in Maximilian's court was Alexander Colin, who like Jamnitzer had begun his career earlier, starting with Ferdinand I in 1562. Working mainly in Innsbruck, Colin created fountains for Maximilian and eventually his tomb sculpture in Prague's Saint Vitus Cathedral.⁷¹ Less known than Colin but of significant talent is Matthias Monmacher from Cologne, who also sculpted for Maximilian beginning in 1560, long before Spranger and Mont joined the Vienna entourage.

Engravers expanded the reach of the Vienna court. Principal among them was the Dalmatian artist Martino Rota, tapped to be Maximilian's royal engraver. Arriving

in Vienna in about 1568, he was firmly established before Spranger's arrival. There may have been an earlier connection between the two artists: Rota worked first in Italy and was associated with Cornelis Cort, the engraver of Spranger's early designs as well as those by Giulio Clovio. Once in Vienna, Rota focused on the royal house of Habsburg, engraving and painting precise portraits of Ferdinand I, Maximilian II (see fig. 12), Rudolf II, and others, which are steeped in Habsburg formality and artistic tradition.

To the Hofburg

Spranger and Mont arrived in Vienna on a snowy November day in 1575.⁷² Even though beginning a new career in a foreign land was nothing new to the twenty-nine-year-old Spranger, and even though he was more experienced than when he had embarked on his Italian sojourn, he must have had qualms about this new appointment. But working at Maximilian's court would have appealed to Spranger for several reasons. In particular, it offered him the prospect of painting secular subjects—the allegorical and mythological themes that would later become his trademark. At Caprarola he had painted secular works (primarily landscapes), but those were based on designs by other artists. A new range of potential subjects undoubtedly represented a welcome challenge.

Vienna was a different world than Rome, and as the seat of the emperor's court, it had particular prestige, attracting a variety of dignitaries. Having recovered from the Ottoman siege of 1529, Vienna was now a cosmopolitan city with several tall buildings, including the architectural gem of Saint Stephen's Cathedral and the emperor's palace, the Hofburg. Today, the Hofburg strikes the visitor with its Baroque splendor, but when Spranger and Mont arrived, it would have been a more modest complex. When Ferdinand I established that the imperial residence would be permanently in Vienna, he began to modernize the Hofburg in order to provide suitable domiciles for his sons, Crown Prince Maximilian II and

Archduke Ferdinand II. Maximilian continued the expansion; his largest undertaking, the Neu Gebau (now known as the Amalienburg), was constructed for his own son, Archduke Ernest.⁷³ Spranger would later participate in the interior decoration of the Amalienburg, but this would be under the aegis of Rudolf.

Impatient as they were to meet their imperial patron, Spranger and Mont would have to wait, for Maximilian was traveling. In the meantime, eager to make a favorable impression, Spranger began to draw and paint, creating in these early months a *Christ Nailed to the Cross* and *The Resurrection of Christ*. The former has never been located, but a painting now in Prague (cat. 18) has been linked to a Resurrection that van Mander mentioned Spranger had painted for the Imperial Hospital in Vienna.⁷⁴ Ferdinand I had commissioned the Imperial Hospital to be built next to the Hofburg, and the theme of the Resurrection would theoretically have offered comfort for the hospital's unfortunate inhabitants. Spranger's highly evocative composition—a male nude rising toward the heavens, holding the banner of the Resurrection in one hand while extending the other—follows standard iconography, but the swirl of energy around the figure of Christ is exceptional.

Neugebäude—A Pleasure Palace in the Making

When Maximilian asked Giambologna to recommend artists capable of decorating buildings, he must have had in mind the Neugebäude, a palace with extensive gardens and tennis courts just outside Vienna (figs. 13, 14). It was located near the Kaiserebersdorf Palace, built by Maximilian I and used by Maximilian II as a hunting lodge, which housed the first imperial menagerie of exotic animals. When construction of the palace began in 1568, it had no proper name, so it was referred to simply as the “new building” (Neugebäude).⁷⁵ It was sometimes also called the Fasanengarten, owing to the many pheasants populating the area.

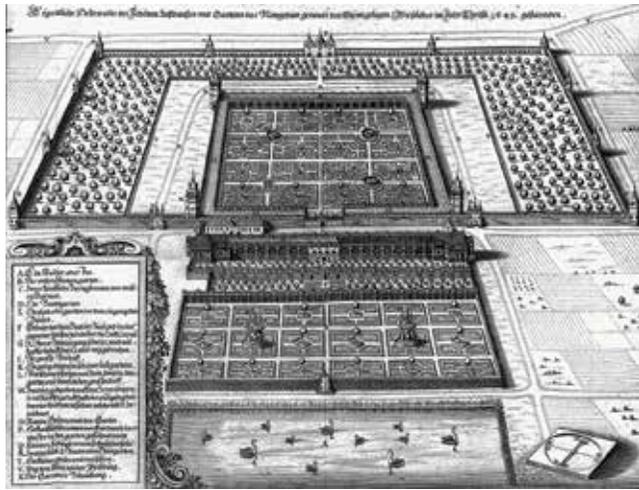


Fig. 13. Matthäus Merian the Elder (Swiss, Basel 1593–1650 Bad Schwalbach). *Neugebäude*, 1649, from *Topographia Provinciarum Austriacarum, Austriae, Styriae, Carinthiae, Carniolae, Tyrolis etc.*, by Martin Zeiller (Frankfurt, 1679)

The Neugebäude was Maximilian's favorite project. He played a major role in its creation, overseeing many details and carefully planning the gardens, consulting Italian and Spanish models that he admired, such as the Villa d'Este in Tivoli, and studying drawings sent by Ippolito d'Este. The castle was built on the site where Sultan Süleyman I had established camp while holding Vienna under siege in 1529, and the symbolic importance of the location cannot be overestimated. Though now lacking in recognition and reputation, the complex of buildings at the Neugebäude was a highly ambitious and progressive project for the region and the period. The likely architect, antiquarian Jacopo Strada, had started working for Ferdinand I by 1558 and was permanently appointed architect to the imperial court two years



Fig. 14. Lucas van Valckenborch (Leuven or Mechelen 1535–1597 Frankfurt am Main). *The Emperor Walking in the Woods near Neugebäude Palace*, 1590–93. Oil on panel, 8¼ × 14¼ in. (21 × 36 cm). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (9863)

later.⁷⁶ The castle has been described as a fusion of fantastical building designs from around Europe, such as Mantua's Palazzo del Te, Munich's Antiquarium, and even Fontainebleau.⁷⁷

When it came time to decorate the Neugebäude, Maximilian insisted on the best artisans, sculptors, and painters. Desiring an abundance of marble fountains, he enlisted the sculptor Alexander Colin to design seven of them—the first in 1570 and the remaining six completed between 1570 and 1583. Colin carved the fountains in Innsbruck and went to Vienna to oversee their installation, beginning in 1574; therefore, Spranger and Mont would have seen at least a few of Colin's works. The fountains were later stolen, but the designs are known through drawings and bear no small resemblance to the style of Giambologna.⁷⁸ The Venetian artist Giulio Licinio headed the list of painters engaged to decorate the Neugebäude. Born in 1527, he was the most senior of the group, working first in Augsburg, where he met Ferdinand I, who called him to Vienna in 1563 to assume the post of royal portrait painter.⁷⁹ Maximilian thus inherited Licinio but admired his work so much that in 1573 he awarded him a lifelong annual pension of one hundred florins.⁸⁰ Licinio's decoration has been destroyed, so envisioning his artistry requires some speculation, but he practiced the Tuscan style of Francesco Salviati and Vasari while also incorporating the Northern sensibility prevalent in court aesthetics of the era.

Spranger's work on the dome of Santa Maria della Steccata in Parma and his experience in Caprarola had well prepared him for embellishing the Neugebäude. The emperor entrusted Spranger and Mont with a number of projects—chiefly, a ceiling painting in the west tower, the vaulting in a room over the grotto, lifesize figures in fresco and stucco, and a few small scenes and reliefs.⁸¹ *The Gathering of the Gods*, a drawing for Spranger's ceiling design (cat. 97), is the sole surviving trace of his activity at the Neugebäude, hinting at his ability to create complex large-scale architectural decoration. The success of the *di sotto in su* design is a tribute

to Spranger's training in Parma and Caprarola, not to mention the many ceiling designs he would have had the opportunity to study in Rome. Yet his relative lack of experience reveals itself in a few passages of the drawing, and various corrections make clear that some of the foreshortening proved challenging. *The Gathering of the Gods* dates from 1576, Spranger's first full year in Vienna, and it exemplifies the transition from the style of his Roman period to a newfound aesthetic best described as a South-North fusion of Mannerism. Spranger was at a stylistic crossroads: having not yet forsaken Italy or fully embraced the North, he was hesitating between two worlds.

Transitions of Power

After several months of ill health, Maximilian II died on October 12, 1576—less than a year after Spranger's arrival in Vienna. His passing resulted in long construction delays at the Neugebäude, as did the relocation of the imperial court to Prague by Maximilian's eldest son and successor, the twenty-four-year-old Rudolf II. For Spranger, this transfer of power also meant the uncertainty, yet again, of not knowing who would be his next patron. There was no assurance at this point that Rudolf II would summon him to his new court in Prague, or if Spranger would need to find a new livelihood. According to van Mander, Spranger and Mont received word after Maximilian's death that “the painter and the sculptor who were brought from Rome” were to wait in Vienna until Rudolf arrived.⁸²

For six months Spranger languished in limbo awaiting Rudolf's arrival. He busied himself by painting and drawing mythological and religious themes. One was *Adam and Eve with the Serpent*, presently known only through an engraving by Hendrick Goltzius (cat. 170). In this conservative composition, the couple stand at a decorous distance apart, not embracing as they would in Spranger's future depictions of the first couple (see cat. 62, for example). Also known only from a print by Goltzius is *The Holy Family before a Column*, a traditional design

touched by Mannerist reserve and shunning progressive iconography and form (cat. 172). Given that he was hoping to please the new emperor and garner his patronage, it is understandable that Spranger remained prudently uncontroversial. Another work made before his official appointment with Rudolf and likely while he was still residing in Vienna is the painting *Mercury Carries Psyche to Mount Olympus* (cat. 19), featuring a retinue of gods and goddesses welcoming Psyche.⁸³ The theme suggests a political allegory, symbolizing Rudolf's induction into the imperial pantheon of power. Even though these bodies have a greater physical presence than Spranger's diminutive, Clovio-influenced forms of the past, a vestige of the monumental in miniature remains evident in the compact torsos and smooth limbs of Mercury and Psyche.

In addition, Spranger painted, on copper, an allegory of the city of Rome, which van Mander notes was his first painting given to Rudolf; unfortunately, it is not known today.⁸⁴ He also painted a work that, according to van Mander, was notably pleasing in its colors.⁸⁵ This painting is *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine with Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist* (cat. 23). Van Mander's description of it matches the painting with only slight divergences—most notably, he misidentified the subject—and it certainly boasts a vibrant palette. As in *The Resurrection of Christ* (cat. 18), the figures evoke both a monumental-in-miniature mode and a subdued Mannerism. Italian influences prevail, yet the figures are on the cusp of Spranger's breaking from his compact representations of the past. The naturalism of his religious compositions from Italy, particularly his inclusion of delicately rendered landscapes, as in his *Holy Family with Saint John the Baptist on the Flight into Egypt* (cat. 6), has now been dismissed in favor of a more artificial courtly setting.⁸⁶ There are strong affinities between *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* and *Mercury Carries Psyche to Mount Olympus*. The central figures in each painting, namely the Virgin Mary and Psyche, are similar in multiple ways: the tilt of their heads, the long narrow noses,

even the blond hairstyles. Saint Catherine and one of the goddesses on the right in *Mercury Carries Psyche to Mount Olympus* also share comparable countenances.

Rudolf's impending arrival in Vienna demanded a magnificent triumphal arch for his ceremonial entry, and Spranger was delighted to participate in this ephemeral project, collaborating with Mont, van Mander, and Matthias Monmacher.⁸⁷ Erecting triumphal arches for the Habsburgs—important works of political propaganda—was hardly a novelty. Maximilian II had made two triumphal entries into Vienna, the first in 1552 (instead of an arch that time, there was a live elephant); the second, in 1563, featured a traditional Renaissance victory arch, likely inspiring Rudolf's own elaborate arch.⁸⁸ No visual records of the arch survive, but van Mander gives a detailed description. Mont designed the architecture of the arch, which was erected in the old Bauernmarkt and stood higher than any house in the vicinity. An array of over-lifesize statues embellished it, and figures of Maximilian and Rudolf flanked the entrance, joined by statues of Neptune, Justice, and Wisdom. Pegasus, over twice the size of a conventional horse, reigned at the peak. Spranger constructed the allegorical figures first as straw skeletons, then covered them with clay and painted them in faux bronze. Constant rain and a tight schedule tested the patience and skill of the artists.

After Rudolf's ceremonial entry on July 17, 1577, everyone wondered how this new Habsburg would reshape the political and cultural scene. Before leaving Vienna for Linz, he requested that Mont join his entourage and Spranger stay behind in Vienna. Spranger painted a few works for local noblemen while waiting around to learn when and if he would be called to Prague. Ambitious and impatient as ever, he was on the verge of taking leave of Vienna when Lord Wolfgang Rumpf, chamberlain to Rudolf, intervened and instructed him to remain in Vienna for an impending summons to Prague. When Spranger was finally beckoned to the new court city, he initially refused to go, citing nonpayment of work he had done for Maximilian.

Rudolf ordered the settlement of Spranger's account and put an end to any uncertainty about his position.⁸⁹ He now looked forward to yet another adventure in a new land, where he would rise to unforeseen fame.

BOHEMIAN APOGEE

Arriving in Prague in the autumn of 1580, Spranger found a vibrant city of nearly fifty thousand inhabitants.⁹⁰ The Hradčany and Malá Strana neighborhoods around Prague Castle (fig. 15) pulsed with activity from the court. Late sixteenth-century Prague, before the catastrophes of the Thirty Years' War, sparkled with enchanting buildings, radiating an atmosphere of grandeur and mystery.



Fig. 15. Prague Castle

Several illustrious rulers had encouraged art and culture in the city, beginning with Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV (r. 1355–78), whose determination to restore splendor to Bohemia had achieved spectacular results. His boldly ambitious plans called for a bridge, a cathedral, and a castle worthy of an emperor. In 1357 construction began on the Prague Bridge, renamed the Charles Bridge in the nineteenth century and today adorned with Baroque saints in stone. He built the imposing Saint Vitus Cathedral, a masterpiece of High Gothic architecture high above the banks of the Vltava, and rebuilt Prague Castle.⁹¹

After Charles, the cultural blossoming of Prague lay dormant until awakened by King Vladislav II (r. 1471–

1516). He commissioned the inventive and whimsical Vladislav Hall for Prague Castle, blending Gothic, Bohemian, and classical Italian principles to create the largest secular hall in Northern Europe.⁹² Half a century later, the city was further embellished by Ferdinand I (r. 1558–64), who erected the Italian Renaissance–inspired Villa Belvedere for his queen, Anne of Hungary. Ferdinand also established a game reserve outside Prague that would later be the site of the Star Villa, built in the shape of a six-pointed star, with gardens featuring trees planted in the same shape.⁹³ A visitor to Prague in 1591 reported that Rudolf II kept a menagerie at the Star Villa, populated by camels, lions, and leopards.⁹⁴ Ferdinand's son Maximilian II favored Vienna over Prague, but once Rudolf II became Holy Roman Emperor, he moved the court back to Prague—in part to protect it from the increasing Turkish threat. Prague appealed to Rudolf because it occupied a more central and more easily defended position in the Holy Roman Empire and because he preferred his living quarters to be at Prague Castle.

Rudolf II as Ruler and Patron

Commentaries on Rudolf's personality range from descriptions of him as polite and erudite to thoroughly mad (fig. 16).⁹⁵ Known for his interminable delays in making important decisions, he kept a fiancée in limbo for fifteen years: his cousin Isabella Clara Eugenia of Spain, daughter of Philip II and his third wife, Elizabeth of Valois. At the end of those fifteen years, Rudolf declared he had no intention of marrying anyone. A lifetime bachelor, he kept a stable of mistresses (and possibly male consorts as well). His one true love was rumored to be the daughter of the court antiquarian Jacopo Strada. This liaison, and others more casual, yielded several illegitimate children, but none rose to the imperial throne.⁹⁶

Highly educated and more interested in art than his father, Rudolf is lauded as one of the most important imperial collectors of all time, though his ancestors had



Fig. 16. Hans von Aachen (German, Cologne 1552–1616 Prague). *Rudolf II*, ca. 1606–8. Oil on canvas, 24¼ × 19⅞ in. (61.5 × 48.7 cm). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (GG_6438)

already amassed significant collections of their own. His great-great-grandfather Maximilian I (r. 1508–19) had established a cultural connection with the art of the Netherlands through his marriage to Mary of Burgundy, whose family ruled the region, and these ties would bear fruit for years to come. His grandfather Ferdinand I gathered coins, antiquities, and paintings into what was considered one of the first true *Kunstkammern*.⁹⁷ Rudolf's own appreciation of the arts had been sparked at the Spanish Habsburg court, where he and his brother Matthias spent eight years as children under the tutelage of their uncle, Philip II. (Let it not be overlooked that his mother was a Spanish Habsburg.) Despite the severity of the religious fervor and ceremonial formality there, Rudolf was influenced by his uncle's refined taste for Titian, Bosch, and other masters.

Rudolf's collection surpassed those of his predecessors in magnitude, breadth, and quality. Tales abound concerning how far Rudolf would go in order to possess a coveted work of art. For fifteen years, he pursued Correggio's *Loves of Jupiter* series—four paintings commissioned by the Duke of Mantua in the 1530s.⁹⁸ Even today the paintings impress with their eroticism and atmospheric effects. When he had his eye on Albrecht Dürer's *Feast of the Rose Garlands* (1506; Národní Galerie, Prague), Rudolf let nothing get in his way, including the fact that the altar painting was in the church of San Bartolomeo di Rialto in Venice. In 1606 his agents persuaded the church to part with Dürer's painting, and as consolation a copy was made for the church.⁹⁹ Rudolf had a taste, even a lust, for art. He supported and inspired a particular type of contemporary art, a rather florid Mannerism, yet he also collected works by great masters from the past, such as Dürer and Titian. Whatever his motivations, this art had a strong appeal for him, and Rudolf derived pleasure from retreating inward, observing, studying, and admiring it—usually in his beloved *Kunstkammer*.

This remarkable gallery displaying art, objets d'art, and natural objects represented the world in miniature, from a Renaissance painting to a unicorn's horn. Located in Prague Castle, the *Kunstkammer* proper comprised a series of four rooms accessible to Rudolf by a staircase from his private chambers.¹⁰⁰ It was large, stretching nearly one hundred meters long and five and a half wide. Chests of drawers were filled with drawings, medals, and gems—hidden from immediate view—and larger objects like sculptures and globes stood on tables. Rudolf placed Giambologna's bronze of Hercules and Antaeus on a long green table in the largest room. Cases held stuffed birds, paintings hung on walls. It was a kaleidoscope of treasures and, for those privileged to visit, a dazzling delight for the senses.

Rudolf's *Kunstkammer* was a place for enjoyment and contemplation, but it also served him well in diplomacy and in propagating his rule. Seen individually, many of the paintings, drawings, and sculpture collected

by the emperor were potent weapons of military and moral propaganda. Gathered together in the *Kunst-kammer*, the effect was even more powerful. The purpose and meaning of the *Kunst-kammer* has inspired much scholarly debate: some regard the *Kunst-kammer* as a political apparatus for flaunting the court's magnificence, others as a private refuge or a way to promulgate scientific knowledge. But one meaning is generally accepted: the *Kunst-kammer* embodied a microcosm of the greater universe,¹⁰¹ and creating this microcosm empowered Rudolf.

The Prague Entourage

Far more interested in the esoteric mysteries of life than active politics, Rudolf had a thirst for discovery, encouraging both scholarship and sham. In Rudolf's world, every field of knowledge was open for exploration, and he gathered at his Prague court a panoply of learned individuals.¹⁰² In the discipline of natural science, at a time when the lines were blurred between astronomy and astrology, Rudolf cultivated such legendary figures as Tycho Brahe and Johannes Kepler, as well as a few charlatans. His patronage of music enlivened the halls and chapels with works by Filippo del Monte and Jacob Regnart. An Englishwoman, Elizabeth Jane Weston, penned Neo-Latin odes to Rudolf. He patronized alchemists, assembling an international team including the notorious John Dee and Edward Kelley of England, the Italian heretic Giordano Bruno, the Polish Michael Sendivogius, and the Czech Bavor Rodovský, to name a few.

Spranger came to Prague as one of the first painters in Rudolf's entourage. Distinguished artists had already been engaged by the emperor, and many more would join the court throughout Spranger's tenure there, but he provided the initial spark of the Prague School. Indeed, he lit more than a spark—his work provided inspiration that would fuel other artists for decades. Hans Mont was already at court when Spranger arrived. Arcimboldo, who had entertained Maximilian II with his whimsical

and erudite composite portraits, continued in service with Rudolf until returning to his native city of Milan in 1587. The emperor's voracious desires brought many other painters, sculptors, engravers, glassmakers, jewelers, and experts in *pietre dure* to Prague as well. Creating allegories, histories, portraits, and landscapes, these artists brought fresh perspectives to be absorbed by Spranger, and his bold artistic expression would ignite their work in turn.

Rudolf summoned Hans Hoffmann of Nuremberg to the castle in 1585. A gifted artist in his own right, Hoffmann also made copies of works by Dürer. Hoffmann's appointment to the court reflected the emperor's enthusiasm for Dürer and exposed Spranger to his style. In tune with Hoffmann's Düreresque reverence for nature were



Fig. 17. Joris Hoefnagel (Netherlandish, Antwerp 1542–1601 Vienna). *Insects and the Head of a Wind God*, ca. 1590–1600. Pen and brown ink, colored washes, gold paint on vellum, $4\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{13}{16}$ in. (12 × 17.3 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Gift of Mrs. Darwin Morse, 1963 (63.200.4)

Joris Hoefnagel and Roelandt Savery. Born in Antwerp and four years senior to Spranger, Hoefnagel did not enter imperial service to Rudolf until 1590. He crafted meticulous, taxonomic renderings of flora and fauna for his patron, often enhancing them with esoteric and arcane symbols (fig. 17). Savery concentrated on floral still lifes and lush landscapes celebrating the Bohemian countryside, obsessively recording nature and imbuing the painting with a mystical aura (fig. 18). Pieter Stevens also



Fig. 18. Roelandt Savery (Flemish, Kortrijk 1576–1639 Utrecht). *Mountain Landscape with Travelers*, 1608. Oil on copper, 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 19 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (35 × 49 cm). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (GG_1083)

entered the group of landscape painters in Prague, his works blending observation with patriotic reverence for the environment. Unlike Savery, who came to paint in Prague only on occasion, Stevens was a fixture at the Prague court, appointed by Rudolf in 1594. He celebrated the pastoral life, his pictures overflowing with red-cheeked peasants and leafy trees. This aesthetic expanded into another medium when the Castrucci workshop, led by brothers Cosimo and Giovanni, created *pietre dure* landscapes fashioned from masterfully carved gems and precious stones. In addition, the imperial engravers Johannes Sadeler I and his nephew Aegidius Sadeler II used the landscapes of Savery and Stevens as designs for many of their engravings.

Hans von Aachen, a German who had worked in Venice before making his mark in Prague, achieved the greatest fame next to Spranger. He became court artist for Rudolf in 1592 but remained in Augsburg until moving to Prague in 1595. Six years junior to Spranger and arriving at court more than a decade later, he differentiated himself from Spranger by his portraits, such as

Laughing Couple (fig. 19), displaying a rustic yet avidly human quality. Von Aachen's *Rape of Proserpina* (1589; Muzeul National Brukenthal, Sibiu, Romania) reflects an Italianate approach and a Venetian temperament that stimulated Spranger's own choice of color. *Venus and Adonis* (cat. 88), painted by Spranger in about 1610, is lushly sensual and enlivened by the velvety reds and browns that were characteristic of von Aachen's palette.

Among other court painters of allegories and histories, the standouts were Joseph Heintz the Elder (fig. 20), Dirk de



Fig. 19. Hans von Aachen (German, Cologne 1552–1616 Prague). *Laughing Couple*, ca. 1596. Oil on canvas, 24 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 20 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (63 × 51.3 cm). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (GG_1134)



Fig. 20. Joseph Heintz the Elder (Swiss, Basel 1564–1609 Prague). *Satyrs and Nymphs*, ca. 1599. Pen and black ink, brush and black washes, red chalk, heightened with white body color, black chalk underdrawing, 9¼ × 12⅞ in. (23.5 × 32 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Purchase, 2006 Benefit Fund, 2007 (2007.174)

Fig. 21. Dirk de Quade van Ravesteyn (Netherlandish, active ca. 1576–1612). *Sleeping Venus*, 1608. Oil on panel, 31½ × 59¾ in. (80 × 152 cm). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (GG_1104)



Quade van Ravesteyn (fig. 21), and Matthäus Gundelach. All born in the 1560s, twenty years or so after Spranger, they represent the second generation of court painters. Never attaining the same level of fame and excellence as Spranger and von Aachen, they nevertheless contributed to the lively atmosphere of artistic exchange with a bevy of nudes, mythological and political allegories, and religious works.

Though in a different medium, work by the court sculptor Adriaen de Vries mirrors the aesthetic of Spranger. De Vries hailed from The Hague and, like Spranger, had worked in Italy.¹⁰³ De Vries first spent time in Prague in 1589–94 “on loan” to Rudolf from Charles Emmanuel I, Duke of Savoy, and returned to Prague after 1602. His Mannerist bronze sculptures are masterpieces of arrested grace and physical prowess, epitomized by his *Neptune*, commissioned for the courtyard of Frederiksborg Castle in Denmark, where he worked for King Christian IV after his time in Prague. De Vries’s religious work, exemplified by *Christ at the Column* (fig. 22),



Fig. 22. Adriaen de Vries (Netherlandish, The Hague, ca. 1545–1626 Prague). *Christ at the Column*, 1604. Bronze, H. 48 in. (122 cm). Muzeum Narodowe, Warsaw (193008)

parallels Spranger's in capturing both physical and spiritual grace. This similarity has sparked debate as to who influenced whom.¹⁰⁴

For Spranger, life in the Bohemian capital was an undeniable improvement over Vienna. He was delighted when Rudolf appointed him *Hofkünstler* (court artist) on December 8, 1581, at fifteen guldens per month, a salary that would increase regularly and substantially over the years.¹⁰⁵ Now that he was professionally satisfied, it was time to find the perfect wife. A fourteen-year-old girl named Christina Müller caught his eye, and the feeling seems to have been mutual. She was the daughter of Nikolaus Müller, a prominent court goldsmith and jeweler, who was not only wealthy but also learned, judging from the Greek and Latin volumes Spranger inherited from him.¹⁰⁶ Spranger asked the emperor to intercede on his behalf, so Rudolf and his chamberlain, Lord Rumpf, summoned Müller to discuss a marriage proposal. Müller consented but, given his daughter's youth, encouraged the couple to wait two years before marrying. Impatient as ever, Spranger persuaded Müller to give permission after just ten months. Judging from the extant portraits of Christina, she was pretty and blond, with her hair pulled tightly in a bun to reveal a strong, curved forehead and delicate features (fig. 23).



Fig. 23. Detail of Christina Spranger from *Epitaph of Nikolaus Müller (Resurrected Christ Triumphant over Death)*, ca. 1587–89. See cat. 52

Patron and wife secured, Spranger purchased his first residence, one of several he would own over the decades: a multistory structure still extant along the brick steps ascending toward Prague Castle (fig. 24).¹⁰⁷ According to court documents, on December 5, 1585, he purchased the house situated between those of his father-

in-law and the silk embroiderer Elias Pfeffer, making a down payment of nearly half its value at the time, amounting to about 150 guildens.¹⁰⁸ He embellished the facade of his marital home with grisaille figures painted to resemble bronze statues. Only ghostly remnants of them survive, but according to van Mander's detailed description, a lifesize Mercury in the center was accompanied by Fame and a female figure of Rome standing on a sphere carried by an eagle. Surrounding them were children painting, drawing, and sculpting; below them, eight-foot-tall figures of Hercules and Justice.

Under his new patron—a libertine, alchemy-loving bachelor—Spranger's art would lose the delicacy and piety of his late Roman and Viennese phase. The most prominent themes in art made at the Prague court would



Fig. 24. Spranger's house, with remnants of his painting on the facade, Prague

be the Ottoman threat to the empire, the promulgation of Habsburg rule, and an esoteric eroticism derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Spranger focused initially on erotic mythologies, creating a series that would announce the stylistic and iconographic manifesto of the Prague School. *Neptune and Coenis*, known through his drawing (cat. 101) and an engraving dated 1580 by Johannes Sadeler I (cat. 173), characterizes his initial artistic experiments in Mannerist coupling. This erotic encounter,

showing the struggle between intertwined male and female, the fusing of balance with imbalance, displays a dynamic yet restrained attenuation of form. He also painted *Angelica and Medoro*, uniting linearity with subdued curvaceousness in his figures (cat. 25).

To Augsburg and Back

Spranger barely had time to settle into his new life in Prague before Rudolf made plans to attend the Augsburg Diet in 1582 and summoned Spranger to meet him there. The journey from Prague likely took Spranger and Christina through Nuremberg, where his fleeting encounter with Dürer's work would later resonate in Spranger's paintings of the Bohemian saints Wenceslas, Vitus, Sigismund, and Adalbert (cats. 31, 32), thus contributing to the so-called Dürer Renaissance in Prague.¹⁰⁹ Rudolf entered Augsburg on June 27, 1582, with high hopes that the parliament would yield greater military and financial support to defend the Holy Roman Empire against the Turks. He remained in Augsburg for a good part of the year, in part to escape the plague raging in Prague.

What would Rudolf's entourage have witnessed in Augsburg? In 1537 an outbreak of Reformation-related iconoclasm, known as a *Bildersturm*, had mostly spared the Renaissance facade decorations on the town's patrician houses but took its toll on the local

Renaissance altarpieces. Nonetheless, the legacy of Dürer lingered, continued by Hans Holbein the Younger, Hans Burgkmair, and Christoph Amberger. Exploring the streets of Augsburg in 1582, Spranger would have encountered the cathedral and its magnificent portal sculpture and stained glass from the twelfth century, as well as the abbey of Saint Ulrich and Saint Afra, the Arsenal, the Perlachturm, and the town hall.¹¹⁰ The Venetian artist Giulio Licinio, who later worked for Maximilian II, had painted the east facade of the

Rehlingerhaus, the residence of the wealthy Philippine Welser, in 1559–61. His paintings, destroyed in World War II but now reconstructed, incorporated dignified, mannered figures of gods and goddesses—principal among them Minerva and Mars—amid Roman-style grotesques.

The patronage of the Fugger family, considered the “German Medici” of banking and art, gave Augsburg an Italian Renaissance flavor filtered through Northern tendencies. Hans Fugger had remodeled the family townhouse in Italian fashion in the 1560s, creating one of the earliest Italianate structures in Germany. The decoration of the Fugger house is noteworthy, as this is precisely where Rudolf and his entourage stayed in Augsburg. Fugger had hired Friedrich Sustris and Alexander Paduano to embellish the structure in 1569–73. Sustris, though a Netherlander, inclined toward the Italians and thus was key in transmitting Italian Mannerism to Augsburg.¹¹¹ He and Paduano decorated the library, banqueting hall, chapel, and the *Badstuben*, which served as a *studiolo* fashioned after that of the Florentine Medici. The two artists’ Mannerist fantasies in fresco, stucco, and terracotta introduced a Central Italian sentiment, reminiscent of work by the Zuccari and Bertoia in Caprarola.¹¹² These paintings and designs by Sustris and Paduano, in situ by the early 1570s, and the *Badstuben*, presaging Rudolf’s *Kunstammer*, would likely have offered potent inspiration for Spranger.

While in Augsburg, Spranger painted *Saint Luke Painting the Virgin*, dating it September 24, 1582, two days after the conclusion of the Diet (cat. 29). A mere seven by not quite five inches, the work’s diminutive size (and hence its portability) strengthens the argument that he painted it while still in Augsburg. In late September, Rudolf gathered his entourage and continued to Vienna, where they would spend the winter. Rudolf engaged Spranger to work on the decoration for his residence in the Amalienburg (at that time still called the *Neu Gebau*). By summer 1583, Rudolf departed for Prague, as the danger of the plague there was subsiding and the

Ottoman threat to Vienna was intensifying, but Spranger remained at Amalienburg. His work there no longer survives, but correspondence from the emperor and payment documents indicate that Spranger resided in Vienna until at least December 1583.¹¹³

Allegories of Love and Power

After returning home to Prague in early 1584, Spranger entered a phase of dizzying success. During this period of relative peace and prosperity, Rudolf kept an engaged eye on his artists, especially Spranger. The Duke von Ozezna, a diplomat in Prague, observed that “Rudolf knew no greater pleasure than to visit with painters and sculptors,” and the emperor insisted that Spranger work in Prague Castle so he could watch him paint and draw.¹¹⁴ Spranger’s friend Hans Ulrich Krafft visited the castle in 1584. He described how Spranger led him through a series of rooms, unlocking doors as they went, until they entered Rudolf’s private chambers and, finally, the studio where Spranger worked. Waiting inside was not Rudolf but his large white mastiff. There Krafft recalled seeing many “medium size, realistic paintings” by Spranger. Once the tour was over, Spranger invited Krafft to his chambers for a meal, and as they sat down at the table, he warned Krafft that Rudolf would likely summon him back to the studio to correct something in a painting he found displeasing.¹¹⁵ Van Mander also reported that “Spranger merely applied himself to satisfying and pleasing his Emperor by working in his chamber, where His majesty was often present.”¹¹⁶

Sometime between the second half of 1583 and the end of 1585, Spranger began one of his most ambitious projects, a collaboration with the master printmaker Hendrick Goltzius from Haarlem. Spranger prepared the drawing *The Wedding of Cupid and Psyche* (cat. 108), a design inspired by Italian antecedents, particularly Raphael’s frescoes at the Villa Farnesina, and engraved by Goltzius in 1587 (cat. 178). The composition required three plates to make the print, and it was filled to capacity

with the pantheon of gods and goddesses, in every pose imaginable. Embarking on this ambitious project, Spranger could never have predicted their print would catapult both himself and Goltzius to international recognition. Thereafter, Goltzius, his followers, and other talented engravers would spend decades engraving Spranger's designs, disseminating his style throughout Europe.

Familiar with Spranger's work on the ceiling of Vienna's Neugebäude tower, in the 1590s Rudolf engaged him to decorate the ceiling in the White Tower (Bílá Věž), one of the tallest structures piercing the Prague skyline. Spranger took as his subject the heroic couple Mercury and Minerva (cat. 58), and such pairings increasingly became his topos. Spranger's gift for depicting paired gods and goddesses only whetted Rudolf's appetite for more. The emperor also commissioned him to paint a series of paintings on canvas depicting Ovid's tales of love and transformation. Not since Titian's Loves of the Gods series, painted between 1554 and 1562 for Philip II of Spain, had such an extensive cycle based on Ovid been produced.¹¹⁷ Rudolf would have been familiar with Titian's masterpieces from his youthful days in Spain, so it comes as no surprise that Spranger's paintings share affinities with them, such as entwined figures and erudite symbolism intended to please the emperor. These allegories of couples in complicated, seemingly impossible positions constituted the majority of work Spranger completed for Rudolf. The travails of love were a pervasive topic in art at the Prague court—typically expressed as a struggle between male and female gods, with the male confronting rejection. Themes of metamorphosis and transformation were central, as in Spranger's drawing of the goddess Diana transforming the voyeur Actaeon into a stag (cat. 128) and his painting of Jupiter disguised as a satyr seducing the nymph Antiope (cat. 64). Paying homage to Ovid, Spranger also celebrated the adventures of Glaucus and Scylla, Hercules and Dejanira, and Odysseus and Circe (cats. 26, 28, 47) in paintings of unrequited love and the union of opposites that

Kaufmann described as exemplifying *concordia discors* (discordant harmony).¹¹⁸

Alchemy and Christianity

These erotic mythologies may have catered to Rudolf's lasciviousness, but there is also an underlying predilection for the esoteric. Engagement with the occult, especially alchemy and cabalism, pervaded Rudolfinian art. Without doubt, Rudolf engaged in occult pursuits; as discussed above, he welcomed and supported numerous alchemists, including Tadeáš Hájek, who had also served Rudolf's father. Another physician, the Polish nobleman Michael Sendivogius, convinced Rudolf to attempt an alchemic transmutation and received a royal appointment.¹¹⁹ The goal of transmutation, the philosopher's stone, was often compared to a precious stone, especially a ruby, emerald, diamond, or pearl. The process of transmutation demands that the matter of the stone pass from blackness through a rainbow of colors, arriving finally at whiteness. The colors of precious stones represent the various chemical stages of transmutation, and the red of the ruby and the white of the pearl are particularly crucial to transmutation. Belief in the magical powers of precious stones gave rise to prodigious production of objects fashioned from the wonders of nature and the four elements. These decorative arts reached an apogee of refinement and beauty under the Austrian Habsburgs. Giovanni Miseroni, a Milanese artist who established a successful workshop of gem cutters, created numerous prized works using rare and precious materials. A bowl made of agate (fig. 25) almost magically transforms into the torso of a triton, with ripples of black intertwined with flesh-colored striations.

One of Rudolf's trusted confessors, Johann Pistorius, published *Artis cabalisticæ* (1587), a compendium that included Leone Ebreo's *Dialoghi d'amore*, a Neoplatonic exposition of sensual spirituality.¹²⁰ The occult scholar Heinrich Khunrath received a privilege, or copyright, from Rudolf in 1598 for his treatise on alchemy, *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae*. The German physician



Fig. 25. Giovanni Miseroni (Italian, Milan 1551/52–1616 Milan) and Jan Vermeyen (Netherlandish, Brussels, before 1559–1606 Prague). *Agate Bowl with a Triton*, ca. 1600. Agate and gold with enameling, 6¾ × 5½ × 7⅞ in. (17.1 × 14 × 18 cm). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (KK_1987)

Michael Maier, one of the most prolific authors on alchemy and Hermeticism, took up residence in Prague and was awarded the titles of Personal Physician to the Emperor, Count Palatine, and Knight Exemptus by Rudolf. The Jewish mystic and cabalist Rabbi Judah Loew, also a resident of Prague, reportedly met with Rudolf and engaged him in a long and secretive conversation.¹²¹

Rudolf was indeed the master cultural alchemist of Central Europe, but why did alchemy hold such appeal for him? An enigmatic man suffering from mood swings and depression, he may well have been seeking equilibrium and an escape from his private and public demons. One ultimate goal of alchemy is the transmutation of base metals into gold, achieved through attainment of the philosopher's stone. This is alchemy *practica*, but there is another branch, alchemy *theoretica*, that was handed down from the legendary author Hermes Trismegistus.

Espousing alchemic principles of a spiritual nature, it sought the wealth of wisdom rather than gold.

Many alchemic emblem books and treatises used images of gods and goddesses to illustrate occult philosophy. Mercury and Venus, for example, symbolized the elements mercury and sulfur, respectively—key ingredients in alchemic experimentation and philosophical discourse. Other alchemic concepts were particularly appealing to Rudolf's court artists: male and female opposites, the androgyne, the relationship between the visible and the invisible. Physical intercourse between male and female, sometimes referred to as the “chemical wedding,” served as an allegory for transmutation, thus holding deeper meaning in court art than mere titillation for the emperor. Such a union was an allegory for the creation of the philosopher's stone, as affirmed by Paracelsus:

“When the seed of the man embraces the seed of the woman, this is the first sign and key of the whole work and Art.”¹²² Ebreo's *Dialoghi d'amore* proposed that sexual union perfected spiritual love: “Carnal love . . . far from dissolving perfect love, rather confirms . . . it through the bodily activities of love,”¹²³ thus casting a new light on Rudolfine art. Spranger's small painting *Vulcan and Maia* (cat. 44) depicts Vulcan emphatically urging a nubile nude Maia to enter his bed. On the surface, this intimate scene appears to be no more than aesthetic titillation (the diminutive size indicating its private function). Evans, in fact, characterizes such works as being preoccupied with “suggestive, even indecent subjects” and being “highly erotic, mythological canvases, depicting primarily amorous adventures of couples.”¹²⁴ But in cabalistic terms, as explained by Ebreo: “The union of copulation . . . makes possible a closer and more binding union, which comprises the actual conversion of each lover into the other.”¹²⁵

The alchemists luxuriated in ambiguity, and Spranger similarly favored intentionally obscure allegories in his mythological works. For example, in Spranger's magnificent painting *Glaucus and Scylla* (cat. 26), the male and female pair represent the mystery of attraction

and rejection, with a love potion at the crux of the story. The lovely young Scylla is approached by the aging Glaucus. She is repelled by his advances, so he asks the sorceress Circe to concoct a magic potion, but his plan backfires. Circe herself falls in love with Glaucus and turns Scylla into a sixteen-headed monster.

A basic tenet of alchemic transformation—*solve et coagula*—instructs the alchemist to “fix the volatile and dissolve the fixed.” This concept can be applied to Spranger’s drawing *Neptune and Coenis* (cat. 101), which embodies the union of opposites: as Neptune caresses the breast of Coenis, their union is sanctified by Cupid, who strews flowers directly above them, representing the saline mediator in the alchemic process. Neptune, representing the fixed principle, anchors or *fixes* Coenis, the volatile principle, against his body. As Neptune enters Coenis from behind, her body covers his and thus the two appear to become one. In a clever composition in which one form makes sense only in relation to another, Neptune’s unseen phallus is alluded to by Coenis’s outstretched thigh, representing a union of the visible and the invisible. One of Spranger’s most splendid allegories painted for Rudolf, *Hermaphroditus and the Nymph Salmacis*, illustrates an alchemic union (cat. 27). As told by Ovid, the nymph Salmacis falls in love with Hermaphroditus, but he does not return her affections. She appeals to the gods, and the couple are united in the waters of a spring. According to Ovid, their two bodies merged into one, with one face and one body; Spranger captured the tension of the very moment before unification.

Conflation of gender is unmistakable in Spranger’s painting *Hercules and Omphale* (cat. 43). Hercules, symbol of male strength, wears pink and engages in women’s work, spinning. Omphale wears his lion skin and has appropriated his club. The theme of Hercules and Omphale evidently captured Rudolf’s fancy, for Spranger portrayed the couple in a number of designs realized as a painting, drawings (cats. 116, 148), and engravings (cats. 195, 215, 218). The rather subversive theme of women’s power in love, which surfaces

repeatedly in Spranger’s work, is also inherent in his design for Johannes Sadeler I’s engraving *Phyllis and Aristotle* (cat. 198), a bawdy, slightly sadomasochistic picture tinged with cynicism.

Before joining the Habsburg court, Spranger had espoused Mannerism, distilling an array of artistic sources beginning with Northern landscape training in Antwerp and ultimately fusing the influence of Clovio and that of the Italian Mannerists—most notably, Parmigianino, Correggio, and the Zuccari. But as he became a fixed figure in the Prague entourage, he attained a new level of Mannerist expression. The subjects, designs, palette, and arcane iconography of his mature Prague oeuvre cannot be confused with his Italian or even his Vienna enterprise. What was the catalyst for this artistic transformation? Rudolf certainly played a role. Though he vigorously collected the great Renaissance masters—among them, Titian, Correggio, and Dürer—just as he sought fresh knowledge in other disciplines and new horizons in science, Rudolf sought a novel approach to art.

The art of the alchemist, the transmutation of base metals into noble ones, parallels the art of the Mannerist, for he too transmutes the mundane human body into a noble one. The tension, the distortion, and even the mystifying aspects of Spranger’s Mannerist art are congruent with fundamental tenets of alchemy. Paracelsus explains that nature produces the imperfect and leaves man to perfect it.¹²⁶ This method of perfecting, he maintained, is alchemy. The quest of alchemy, to attain truth and perfection, is reflected in Spranger’s Mannerist art, for he improved upon nature by depicting forms outside the norms of anatomical rendering. Couples engage in physically impossible poses, torsos are elongated with uncountable ribs, feet display only two toes, yet these eccentricities and the rejection of natural anatomy remarkably coalesce into figures of captivating sensuality and beauty.

Seduced by Spranger’s nudes and erotic trysts, it is easy to overlook his religious masterpieces—equally refined compositions substituting ethereality for



Fig. 26. Hans von Aachen (German, Cologne 1552–1616 Prague). *The Resurrection of Christ*, ca. 1598. Pen and brown ink with gray and red wash, $7\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{5}{8}$ in. (18.2 × 19.5 cm). Moravská Galerie, Brno, Czech Republic (9702)

sensuality. Spranger appropriated his own Mannerist figures engaged in erotic fantasy for religious narratives that would appeal to a different side of his patron. Rudolf appeared to teeter between confessional camps: he signed the famous Letter of Majesty in 1609, which granted religious freedom for Protestants, but he also clung tightly to laws protecting Catholic interests.¹²⁷ Spranger's art entered the arena of Counter-Reformation politics when Rudolf sent one of his most elaborate religious works to Bavaria, presenting *The Adoration of the Magi* (cat. 54) to the prince-bishop of Bamberg as a reward for his Counter-Reformation efforts. Spranger studded his altarpiece with sumptuous costumes in iridescent, acidic colors. His Mannerist figures, with their elegant postures and gestures combined with traditional iconography, made an appropriate gift for a cleric and Counter-Reformation enthusiast.

Spranger applied this same artistic approach to various female saints destined for altarpieces, focusing on

their facial expressions and their comportment to evoke a spiritual aura. Reserved Mannerist poses rather than nude sensuality characterize these beautiful yet untouchable female martyrs, such as Saint Barbara and Saint Catherine (cats. 33, 34). The predominance of female over male saints suggests that they may have served more than a religious purpose, perhaps appealing to Rudolf as forbidden female forms. A more muscular Mannerism infuses Spranger's *Saint Sebastian* altarpiece (cat. 78), which Rudolf commissioned for the church of Saint Thomas in Prague. The painting features a sculptural treatment of Saint Sebastian's bronze-colored body that recalls the work of Adriaen de Vries.

On one rare occasion Rudolf gathered his premier court artists to collaborate on a Mannerist gem of religious art. In 1598 Hans Vredeman de Vries, Hans von Aachen, Joseph Heintz the Elder, and

Spranger worked together on a magnificent triptych, each contributing a section. Destined for either the All Saints Chapel in Prague Castle or the more public Saint Vitus Cathedral, this altarpiece represents a summation of Rudolfine aesthetics, amalgamating the styles of his principal artists. As much as their styles differ, they tempered their individual characteristics to create an aesthetically coherent statement of religious piety. Von Aachen painted the central panel, *The Resurrection of Christ*; now lost, it was most likely a victim of the *Bildersturm* of 1619, but his preparatory drawing survives in the Moravská Galerie in Brno, Czech Republic (fig. 26). Spranger painted *The Three Marys at the Tomb* for one of the wings, and Heintz painted *The Road to Emmaus* for the opposite wing (cat. 72). They complement one another in color and composition, each employing three figures standing together in the lower foreground, in front of a landscape. When the altarpiece was closed, *The Annunciation* by Vredeman de Vries would be visible, his rather unusual interpretation showing grandiose architecture nearly swallowing tiny figures of the Virgin and Angel Gabriel (fig. 27).

Paintings for the Dead, Portraits of the Living

In 1588 Spranger sat down at a long table with Rudolf and his retinue for a momentous ceremony: the emperor hung around Spranger's neck a gold chain so long that it wrapped around him three times. Now Spranger could call himself Lord Bartholomeus Spranger van den Schilde. He had become a full citizen of Prague and, accordingly, donated a painting of Justice surrounded by children to the town hall.¹²⁸ Spranger's fame and the permission that Rudolf granted him to work outside the court attracted commissions to paint several epitaphs memorializing friends and family members: his father-in-law, Nikolaus Müller; Michael Peterle; and Simon and Eva Hanniwaldt.

Two paintings for epitaphs from 1587–89 mark the deaths of Spranger's father-in-law and of Spranger's friend the publisher Michael Peterle and anticipate the future salvation of their respective families (cats. 52, 53). The similarities between the two are as interesting as the differences. In both, Spranger placed Christ front and center, trampling Vice. Below, the families of the deceased are portrayed in black mourning attire, stoic and dignified. Spranger rendered the heavenly figures in an idealized Mannerist style that starkly contrasts with the realistic portraits of the families below. The Müller epitaph exudes a courtly refinement and reserve absent from the Peterle, which is more austere and militant. Striking differences in presentation and iconography between these compositions signal the opposing religious allegiances of



Fig. 27. Hans Vredeman de Vries (Netherlandish, Leeuwarden 1527–1606 [?] Antwerp [?]). *The Annunciation*, 1589. Oil on panel, 87 × 55½ in. (221 × 140 cm). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (GG_6436)

the deceased. Peterle was a Protestant and Müller a Catholic (it was not uncommon for Catholic art to adopt this theological formula).¹²⁹ Though a nuance, it is an important one: the Müller epitaph is the Resurrection of Christ, whereas the Peterle epitaph presents Christ Triumphant over Sin and Death.

One of Spranger's most compelling religious works, *The Baptism of Christ* (cat. 80), was commissioned by two brothers from Silesia as part of an extensive Mannerist program for the church of the Holy Trinity, in the small Silesian village of Żórawina, a few miles outside Wrocław. The benefactors of the newly refurbished church, Adam and Andreas Hanniwaldt (one Lutheran, one a converted Catholic), were trusted advisers to Rudolf.¹³⁰ Andreas took charge of remodeling the Holy Trinity church beginning in 1600, and the result was a major statement of Mannerist aesthetics, presaging the Baroque. Today, on arrival at the church one is struck immediately by the tranquillity of the surroundings. The unassuming red brick exterior pierced by late Renaissance and Mannerist arches gives little warning of the richness that once graced the interior. Signed and dated 1603, *The Baptism of Christ* represents Spranger's style during the last decade of his life, at the pinnacle of his artistry. The previous minor disconnect between the celestial figures and the mourners in his Peterle and Müller epitaphs has been addressed here by segregating the mourners into a separate predella panel (fig. 47). An exquisite composition testifies to Spranger's mature embrace of high Mannerism, evident in the inventive orchestration of color and attenuated forms.

Spranger practiced a different style for his portraits than for his allegories, focusing more on resemblance to the sitter and exercising his irrepressible virtuosity by meticulously rendering the costumes and fabrics. Unlike the Italian painter Bronzino, who portrayed his subjects with Mannerist affectation and accoutrements, Spranger relied on a more Northern tradition of verism. A portrait commission from the Lobkowitz family exemplifies his measured, skillful approach (cat. 77). Inventories record

other portraits by Spranger, but his avoidance of his characteristic Mannerist sensuality and allegorical tropes makes it difficult to identify his unsigned portraits, and likely there are several unknown to this day. Spranger's two nearly identical self-portraits also illustrate his capacious talent (cats. 45, 46). Citing in particular the furrowed brows, Diez characterizes these portraits as depicting a self-assured, temperamental man, with a trace of melancholy.¹³¹

Propaganda for War and for Art

The relative peace and prosperity of the 1570s and 1580s slowly eroded as threats to the Holy Roman Empire loomed from the east. The Turkish War began to ignite as early as 1592 and lasted until 1606. Uneasy, Rudolf turned to his artists for a new purpose, and the art of love was replaced by the art of war, filled with bellicose symbols and political propaganda. Hans von Aachen devoted a series to the war, detailing specific battles (fig. 28).¹³² In contrast, Spranger's pieces played a more allegorical tune, transcending any specific time or place but compelling nonetheless. He began his war rhetoric with *Allegory of the Reign of Rudolf II*, dated 1592 (cat. 61). In this laudatory work, hope for future victories that would assure safety from Turkish incursions is conveyed by the presence of gods and goddesses. Another painting, *Allegory of the Triumph of the Habsburg Empire over the Turks* (cat. 81), captures the apprehensive mood of these precarious times. Spranger's Ovidian heroines, once concerned with nothing more serious than erotic trysts, are now replaced by muscular yet sensuous females vanquishing, even emasculating, the Turkish enemy. Spranger's *Triumph of the Habsburg Empire over the Turks* is hardly subtle in its message, but his masterful, sculptural Mannerism is saturated with evocative colors and atmospheric light, yielding a work whose beauty surpasses its political purposes.

Spranger turned to the goddess Bellona to declare the empire's military and spiritual superiority (and, it was hoped, its ultimate victory) over the Turks. Collaborating



Fig. 28. Hans von Aachen (German, Cologne 1552–1616 Prague). *Allegory of the Battle at Braşov*, 1603–4. Oil on parchment laid down on canvas, 13³/₈ × 16¹/₂ in. (34 × 42 cm). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (GG_1989)

with Jan Harmensz. Muller, he created not a painting but an engraving, which could be disseminated far more broadly: *Bellona Leading the Armies of the Emperor against the Turks* (cat. 212). The voluptuous, bombastic Bellona is sounding her dragon-mouthed horn to rally the imperial troops. Cannons in the distance fire on the beleaguered Ottoman forces, and imperial soldiers aim sleek artillery at Turks, who bear only scimitars or bows and arrows. The print is dedicated to Rudolf's brother Archduke Matthias, whose leadership in the Turkish War redeemed his reputation after a disastrous deployment in the Netherlands. Muller engraved another Spranger design related to war, *Minerva and Mercury Arming Perseus* (cat. 220); even in this more nuanced military subject, the references to the brave leader heading for battle are inescapably Rudolfinic.

On the artistic front, the emperor enhanced the prestige of painters, stipulating in 1595 that painting

was an autonomous art rather than a craft and that Pallas Athena would now symbolize the painters' guild on their impresa.¹³³ The coveted status of court artists usually excused them from guild obligations, as was the case for Spranger. He created works that championed the aspirations and the moral duties of the court artist—indeed, these are signature works for which he is known and admired today. At this stage in his career, Spranger devoted his energies not only to serving the emperor but also to his own personal aspirations. His design of 1592, engraved by Muller in 1628, presents a young artist kneeling before Minerva (cat. 194). The inscription—a personal message to his nephew Gommer Spranger—enjoins aspiring artists to work hard and follow an honorable path, avoiding sloth, envy, and ignorance. Spranger's drawing *The Triumph of Wisdom over Ignorance and Envy* epitomizes propaganda for the artist (cat. 155).¹³⁴ In theme and composition, the drawing is related to other

works by Spranger, such as his painting *Minerva Vanquishing Ignorance* (cat. 67) and a similar print after Spranger by Aegidius Sadeler II, *The Triumph of Wisdom*, dedicated to Minerva (cat. 202). But this drawing is lavishly signed and inscribed with the place and date of execution, “Prague 1604.” Minerva, symbol of the arts, defeats Ignorance and Envy—thus proclaiming art to be an intellectual pursuit. By its virtuosity and propagandistic message, Spranger claims the superiority of the arts while flaunting his ability to create perfect forms with casual élan.

Life Transitions

Christina, Spranger’s beloved wife for twenty years, died in about 1600, leaving him sorrowful and lonely. An evocative *Vanitas* captures his mood and his reflections on past and future (cat. 71). The painting centers on a nude youth representing Thanatos reclining across the canvas and holding a plaque bearing the ominous Latin motto: *HODIE MIHI. CRAS TIBI* (“Today me. Tomorrow you”). The dark tonality and bold nudity of the boy contribute an unsettling tone. The striking tension in the composition is characteristic of Spranger’s mature oeuvre, marked by sophistication and elegance. The masterful panel meditates on the transience of life: a child warns of the swift passage of earthly existence, and the message is reinforced by the presence of the skull, the hourglass through which the sands of time swiftly pass, and the Latin motto. The child’s radiant skin, highlighted lips, and delicate curls contribute to the message of ephemeral pleasure and youth. By incorporating the motto “today me, tomorrow you,” Spranger created a memento of the passing of his wife and children as well as a reflection on his own mortality.

An engraving by Aegidius Sadeler II, *Portrait of Bartholomeus Spranger with an Allegory on the Death of His Wife, Christina Müller*, poignantly commemorates Spranger’s loss (cat. 217). Sadeler created a pastiche of Spranger’s life, both private and professional, incorpor-

ating various motifs found in the artist’s compositions as well as a double portrait of Spranger and his wife. Latin inscriptions attest to Spranger’s sorrow and urge him to forge ahead, to create beauty in the face of adversity.

Despite his personal losses, Spranger had reached a stage of professional satisfaction in life. It had been thirty-six years since he had set foot on Antwerp soil, and now came the time to return—no longer apprentice, but master court artist. Rewarding his years of loyalty and excellent work, Rudolf gave him one thousand guildens for the long journey. In 1602 Spranger set off for what would be his last trip home. It was a splendid homecoming, filled with honors and convivial celebrations. His first port of call was Amsterdam, where the councillors poured him wine from exclusive pitchers reserved for dignitaries. Van Mander recalls that when Spranger arrived in his city of Haarlem, he was feted by fellow artists, and Spranger reciprocated by hosting them in return. The Old Chamber of Rhetoricians, a drama group composed of members from the Guild of Saint Luke, devoted a special dinner and play to Spranger.¹³⁵ He met with other artists and most likely supplied engravers with more of his designs. He reunited with van Mander, of course, sharing stories of his life and art. At the close of their time together in Haarlem, van Mander voiced the shared sentiment about Spranger’s visit: “his company was pleasant to us and his departure painful.”¹³⁶ For the last leg of his journey, Spranger went home to his native city of Antwerp, where he was rightfully lauded as a hero. He traveled back to Prague via Cologne and, looking forward and back, he was surely filled with satisfaction with his past successes yet eager for more. At fifty-six years of age, and showing no signs of slowing down, he would go on to create many compelling works. Antwerp may have held fond memories, but Prague was now Spranger’s home and future.

In the meantime, Rudolf was becoming increasingly paranoid and dismissed his most trusted advisers. He was surrounded by rumors of his ineptitude and madness, fomented by his brother Matthias, who usurped Rudolf’s

control of Hungary, Austria, and Moravia, leaving him only Bohemia. By 1606 Matthias had been appointed head of the House of Habsburg and Rudolf had been moved from Prague Castle to virtual imprisonment in the Villa Belvedere, once a symbol of love built by his great-grandfather Ferdinand I.

Rudolf's gloomy situation cast shadows on Spranger as well. A shift in mood and style commences, with a turn from Spranger's bright palette to darker, more Venetian tones; his lithe females became more sculptural and fleshy, heading toward the Baroque. *The Suicide of Sophonisba* brings a feeling of unease and foreboding, underscored by the ominous theme and intensely tenebrous palette (cat. 82). In 1607 Spranger signed and dated *The Toilette of Venus and Vulcan*, infusing it with tempestuous sexuality and an undercurrent of warning that portends his patron's decline (cat. 85). The composition initially appears innocuous, but in the corner Vulcan raises his hand, as if pointing to dark times ahead.

In the early part of January 1611, Spranger wrote his last will and testament, and he died on September 27 of that year.¹³⁷ Composed in Czech, his will shows how far he had come in terms of geography and personal achievement. A variety of individuals received recognition and tokens of his generosity. He bequeathed over a thousand thalers to beneficiaries outside his immediate family; the remaining fortune and his house adjacent to Prague Castle were given to his brother Quirin.¹³⁸

Spranger had traveled far from his native Flanders, encountered obstacles and advantages in Italy, and reached the apogee of fame painting exquisite and erudite allegories at the court of Rudolf II. Whether the allegory focused on the struggle for love or peace or wisdom, knowledge and the arts ultimately conquered all. Spranger's most famous allegorical painting, *Minerva Vanquishing Ignorance*, conveys precisely this message. The center figure represents Wisdom. She tramples Ignorance, personified by a male body with donkey ears, and is surrounded by the nine Muses, with Bellona and Clio in the foreground. In the name of art, Spranger has captured

the philosopher's stone for Rudolf, conquering evil and bringing peace and bounty to the empire.

In the year after Spranger's death, Rudolf's political and physical command further deteriorated. He died that year. On June 13, 1612, Matthias became the new Holy Roman Emperor, and a golden age of Prague came to an end. The city and the treasures of Rudolf's Kunstkammer would soon be irrevocably altered.

EPILOGUE

In the chaos at the end of the Thirty Years' War, in 1648 the army of Sweden's Queen Christina swept through Prague and looted the city. Many of the objects in the imperial collection had already been moved to Vienna, but what remained behind suffered damage and dispersal. What was pillaged in Prague went mainly to Stockholm. When Christina abdicated in 1654 and converted to Catholicism, she made Rome her new home and took parts of the collection with her. The provenance of many objects from Rudolf's collection is thus complicated and frequently impossible to trace. Surviving inventories provide some information, but descriptions are often minimal: "A Venus by Spranger," or the even more meager "painting by Spranger." Measurements or other details are usually nonexistent.¹³⁹

Spranger was buried in Saint Matthew's Chapel at the church of Saint John the Baptist in Prague's Malá Strana district.¹⁴⁰ His grave no longer exists. For many years, Spranger's work was either forgotten or derided as Mannerist excess. But now, after centuries of political upheaval in his adopted homeland, Bartholomeus Spranger enjoys a resurgence. This monograph and exhibition serve as his epitaph.

Notes

ANTWERP PRODIGY

1. For discussion of the painter's Pand, and the Antwerp art market in general, see De Marchi and Van Miegroet 2006, esp. pp. 86–90. Antwerp was also renowned as a center for the production of altarpieces, which enhanced its status as a commercial and artistic center. For an overview of Antwerp altarpieces from this period, see Nieuwdoorp 1993.
2. Osten and Vey 1969, p. 194. Max J. Friedländer (1915) first coined the term “Antwerp Mannerism” for a style of painting practiced there in the first three decades of the sixteenth century.
3. Much-overdue attention was granted to Gossart in the comprehensive exhibition *Man, Myth, and Sensual Pleasures: Jan Gossart's Renaissance*. See Ainsworth 2010.
4. Biographical information throughout this essay is based on Karel van Mander's *Schilder-boeck* of 1603–4 (English translation by Hessel Miedema; henceforth cited as Mander 1994). Van Mander, an artist, writer, and theorist, was a friend of Spranger's and even worked alongside him in Vienna. Though van Mander's accuracy is sometimes questioned, there are many factors in his favor. He knew Spranger. He was also an artist, and being an able practitioner in the field about which he was writing made him one of the best historians.
5. Antwerp Schepenregisters (Aldermen Archives), years 1544–46, SR#213 f247v; SR#217 f271v, SR#222 f178v.
6. This is noted both in Mander 1994, p. 333, and in the register of the Guild of Saint Luke, Antwerp. See Rombouts and Lerijs 1872, p. 240.
7. Mandyn's death date is uncertain—likely in 1559 or early 1560.
8. Frans Mostaert died in 1560, so Spranger was with him some time after Mandyn's death, at the earliest in February 1560. See Stighelen 1990–91, p. 295 n. 19.
9. See Grossmann 1954, p. 46 n. 17. The painting is now lost.
10. See Brochhagen 1963; Sterling 1959.
11. For *Landscape with Nomads*, see Lauts 1970. For additional material on van Dalem, see Grossmann 1955.
12. Mander 1994, pp. 333–34.
13. There is no biographical information concerning Jakob Wickraum. I have checked various spellings, and he appears to be undocumented. Van Mander mentions him as a student of Boxberger—also a name not listed in the Liggeren (the artist guild's register) or other archival sources. He is likely the Northern Mannerist artist Hans Bocksberger the

Elder (ca. 1510–before 1559), of no small talent, who was working in Bavaria and Salzburg after having traveled in Italy. Wickraum could have studied with Bocksberger and then returned to Antwerp.

14. Mander 1994, p. 334.

PARISIAN PASSAGE

15. Zvereva 2011, pp. 113–14, 402, 407. Zvereva's research is excellent, and it is difficult to contradict her conclusion that “Marcus” is not Marc Duval, who also went by the soubriquets Bertin and Le Sourd (il Sordo). Bradley (1891, p. 368) describes Marco du Val as a pupil of Giulio Clovio's who later became court painter to Charles IX. To add further confusion, no documented works are known by Rebour. He was a pupil of Jean Clouet's, so if Spranger studied with Rebour, he would likely have been exposed to the refined method of courtly French Renaissance portraiture.
 16. Jong (1992) mentions that other scholars, namely E. Hewett and L. Salerno, suggest Marco Francese could be Marc Duval; see *ibid.*, n. 65, for further references.
 17. Mander 1994, p. 334.
 18. *Ibid.* He describes this artist as “respectable, but poor in art.”
- ### ITALIAN SOJOURN
19. Mander 1994, p. 338.
 20. De Grazia 1991, p. 19.
 21. For a complete history of Santa Maria della Steccata, including archival documentation, see Testi 1922. Although it is a highly detailed study, there is no mention of Spranger. The brevity of his time there and the fact that he only assisted most likely account for his absence.
 22. Briganti et al. 1986, p. 65.
 23. Mander 1994, p. 338.
 24. Bertini 1999, p. 76.
 25. Mander 1994, p. 338.
 26. Also known by the name Gioncoy, Michel du Joncquoy left Rome by 1575, when he went back to Tournai. In 1584 he was in Antwerp, where he became a citizen and stayed until 1594, thereafter returning again to Tournai. Joncquoy's only signed and dated painting known today is a Crucifixion in the Rouen cathedral, dated 1588. For an illustration and discussion of the painting, see Rouen 1981, pp. 135–37. For brief biographical information, see Wilenski 1960, vol. 1, pp. 155, 179, 196, 582.
 27. I have visited the church in this small hill town (unknown even to many Italians) in the environs of Rome and can confirm that the frescoes are in very

poor condition. According to my conversations with the parish priest in 2006 and further confirmed by Sapori (2002), San Lorenzo was enlarged around 1743, and the wall behind the high altar was knocked down at that point; this is when the Last Supper would have been destroyed. For more on these frescoes, see Meijer 2011.

28. Payment records attest that Clovio was paid twenty-five ducats for the gift of Spranger's *Saint Jerome in the Wilderness* to Cardinal Farnese. See Pérez de Tudela 2000, p. 298. The author thanks the Clovio scholar Elena Calvillo for pointing out this important source on Farnese, Clovio, and Spranger.
29. Hall 2005, p. 207.
30. That Spranger's paintings in Karlsruhe relied heavily on van Dalem is also evident from van Dalem's drawing *Landscape with the Temptation of Saint Anthony* in the Städel Museum, Frankfurt (763).
31. “Io non ho havuto l.ra di V.S. Ill.ma di 21 se non hoggi et subito ho datto ordine ad ubedirla et Bartolomeo istesso sarà il portator della risposta il quale viene voluntieri a servir V.S. Ill.ma all quale io lo raccomando et per l'affettione che io gli porto et perché merita per le sue virtù, et per la sua modestia.” (I received only today the letter sent by your Most Illustrious Excellency on the 21st and immediately gave orders for a reply that will be delivered by Bartolomeo himself, who is very happy to be of service to your Most Illustrious Excellency and whom I recommend to you because of my affection for him that is well deserved due to his virtue and his humbleness.) Pérez de Tudela 2000, p. 298 n. 63.
32. Robertson 1992, p. 88.
33. *Ibid.* For collaboration in general between the brothers Zuccaro, see Brooks 2007.
34. Vasari mentions the arrangements between Cardinal Farnese and Taddeo in his *Lives*, originally published in 1568. See Vasari 1981, vol. 7, pp. 87–88.
35. Leesberg 1993–94, p. 18.
36. Partridge 1972.
37. For Spranger and his activity at the Villa Caprarola, see De Grazia 1991, pp. 26, 79. Earlier studies include Baumgart 1944; Bücken 1990; Meijer 1988.
38. Partridge 1971, p. 472.
39. Partridge (1971, p. 475) perceives Spranger's hand in the fresco *Hercules Captures Cerberus*. But Oberhuber (1964, pp. 174–75) dismisses as unlikely that Spranger had any hand in the Hercules Room, though he does concede that he might possibly have painted the fresco *Hercules Battles the Centaurs*. To my mind, the visual evidence is inadequate to allow any fresco at the villa to be assigned solely to Spranger.
40. Gere (1969, p. 195, no. 194) also notes the differences between Zuccaro's drawing and the fresco at

Caprarola, but he does not link the fresco to Spranger as painter. He points out that in the fresco, the right-hand doorway is shifted slightly to the right, the bed is less abruptly foreshortened, and the couple making love at upper center, seen very faintly in the drawing, have been eliminated.

41. See Rubin 1995, p. 18.

42. The choral book is now housed in the Museo Civico in Alessandria, Italy. Known today as the *Chorale Pius V*, it incorporates numerous miniatures by Clovio as well as by unknown artists. The historiated initials and miniature designs make secure attribution to Spranger difficult, and an early history of the Bosco Marengo complex (Giovanni della Valle, *Istoria del Convento di Santa Croce, e tutti i santi*, 1783, Biblioteca Comunale di Bosco Marengo) does not mention his participation in the project. For further discussion and sources, see Leni 1983 and Leni and Spantigati 1985.

43. W. Maxwell 1883, vol. 1, p. 330.

44. Oberhuber (1970) emphasizes Parmigianino's influence on Spranger, even remarking that the Emilian painter remained a constant force throughout Spranger's oeuvre.

45. See Perrig 1991, which, although highly disputed as a study of the authentication of Michelangelo's drawings, offers a stringent analysis of Clovio's copies after Michelangelo.

46. A recent exhibition in Zagreb on Clovio has brought this master of illumination to more prominence; see Poklečki Stošić et al. 2012. For Clovio's association with the Farnese, see Robertson 1992, pp. 29–35. For general studies on Clovio, see Calvillo 2000; and Giononi-Visani and Gamulin 1993, which provides an excellent assessment of Clovio. For over a century, Clovio research relied on nineteenth-century studies, including Kukuljević Sakcinski 1852 and Bradley 1891.

47. Vasari 1912, vol. 9, p. 245.

48. El Greco arrived in Rome in November 1570, a time when Spranger was also in residence, and both artists worked at Caprarola. However, a letter from Cardinal Farnese's majordomo indicates that El Greco's activity at Caprarola was probably not until 1572, when Spranger was in papal service and no longer working on the Farnese project. See Partridge 1971 and 1972. For the letter mentioning El Greco in service at Caprarola, see Partridge 1971, p. 480 n. 61.

49. Clovio to the Duke of Parma, October 10, 1573: "Ho fatto consegnare a Signor Ceuli agente di Farnese le due testine, che io le donai, et la conversione di San Paolo colorita da Bartholomeo. . . . come io desidererei per il servizio di V.E." (I delivered to Mr. Ceuli, the agent of Farnese, two heads that I gave [him] myself, and the conversion of Saint Paul colored

by Bartholomew. . . . as I would like to serve his excellency.) See Pérez de Tudela 2000, p. 300 n. 71.

50. For a discussion of the differences between Clovio's original and Spranger's interpretation, see Oberhuber 1964.

51. Perrig 1991, p. 7.

52. Mander 1994, p. 353. The miniature mentioned by van Mander is unknown, and unfortunately he provides no particulars regarding subject or location for any other miniatures by Spranger.

53. For the early Christian history of San Giovanni a Porta Latina, see Krautheimer 1936.

54. Crescimbeni (1716, p. 87) identifies the altarpiece as by Zuccaro: "Ma il quadro dell'Altare, alto pali otto, e mezzo, e largo sei, rappresenta S. Giovanni nel Vaso d'olio bollente; ed è nobilissima opera del famoso Federigo Zuccheri fatta fare dal Cardinale Girolamo Albani." (But the picture of the high altar, eight and a half high and six wide, represents St. John in the pot of boiling oil; and it is noble work made by the famous Federico Zuccaro for Cardinal Girolamo Albani.) Nibby (1838, p. 270) also mentions the altarpiece as by Federico Zuccaro. Angeli (1909, p. 190) mentions Zuccaro as the artist as well: "Altar maggiore . . . il quadro a olio, rappresentante il santo titolare, fu eseguito nel 1570 da Federico Zuccari." (The high altar is a painting in oil representing the titular saint painted in 1570 by Federico Zuccaro.) This date of 1570 does not align with van Mander's comment that Spranger painted the altarpiece after the pope died, which was in 1572.

55. Mander 1994, p. 342.

56. Ibid.

57. The commission for the Chigi Chapel altarpiece was originally given to Raphael and was to depict the Assumption of the Virgin. However, the project was halted by the Sack of Rome in 1527, and when the Chigi family resumed the commission, they chose Sebastiano del Piombo and a new subject for their altar.

58. Speckaert's influence has been noted by Leesberg 1993–94, p. 17, and Šíroká 1995.

59. An excellent overview of van Mander as painter can be found in Leesberg 1993–94.

60. Dacos 1967 and Dacos 1969, p. 141.

VIENNESE INTERLUDE

61. Drawings firmly attributed to Mont include: *Five Striding Figures*, collection of J. Q. van Regteren Altena (reproduced in Schultze 1988, vol. 1, cat. no. 232); *A Sacrifice*, Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest (K58.202, reproduced *ibid.*, vol. 1, cat. no. 233); *Mythological Pair*, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi, Florence (2410. F). Fučíková (1979, p. 490)

attributes to Mont a sheet in the Amsterdam Rijksprentenkabinet, *Jupiter and Io*, formerly attributed to the Goltzius School. However, this attribution is doubtful; the drawing diverges technically and stylistically from the aforementioned sheets signed by Mont.

62. For Mont, see Larsson 1967, with further biography.

63. Sutter-Fichtner 2001, pp. 83, 85.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 1: "By virtually all standards, including his own, Emperor Maximilian II (1527–1576) was a failure."

65. Ferdinand I expressed his dismay about his son's receptiveness to Luther's teachings in an addendum to his will: "Und hauptsächlich habe ich auf Euch, Maximilian, mehr Sorg' als auf euer ander keinen, den ich hab' allerlei gesehen und gemerkt, das mir einen Argwohn bringt, als wolltest Du, Maximilian, von unsrer Religion fallen und zu der neuen Sekte übergehen. Gott wolle, dass das nicht sei und dass ich dir darin Unrecht tue." (For the most part, Maximilian, I have worried about you more than the others, and have seen and noticed, bringing me to the suspicion, Maximilian, that you are falling from our religion [Catholicism] and moving to new sects. God does not will this and I am not wrong on this.) See Feuchtmüller and Winkler 1974, p. 363.

66. Other scholars have dated the composite heads earlier, while Arcimboldo was still in Milan, but careful analysis by Kaufmann (2005) has demonstrated otherwise.

67. In 1571 Giovanni Battista Fonteo, working closely at times with Arcimboldo, published poems describing the heads as allegories of Habsburg domination of the world. Kaufmann has expanded on the meanings of Fonteo's poems. See his most recent, comprehensive study on the artist (2010) and that of Ferino-Pagden (2007).

68. See Lindell 1990.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 264.

70. For a thorough description of the fountain, see Schürer 1986.

71. Colin has been surprisingly overlooked in art-historical scholarship. The most comprehensive work to date is Dressler 1973.

72. Van Mander (1994, p. 345) documents this important event; it is confirmed by the Rechnungsbuch of court adviser David Hag, who recorded paying fifty florins to each of them on arrival. See Lietzmann 1987, p. 152 and nn. 338, 339. For the Hag document, see Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Handschriftensammlung (Vienna National Archive), Hs. B. 520.

73. At the time of Maximilian II, the Amalienburg was called the Neu Gebau and, understandably, is

sometimes confused with his suburban pleasure palace, the Neugebäude.

74. Mander 1994, p. 345.

75. The primary source for the Neugebäude remains Lietzmann 1987.

76. According to Jansen (1998), evidence for Strada's participation is based on just one passage in one letter. Hans Jakob Fugger sent Strada a letter in 1568 congratulating him for designing a "palazzo di piacere bei Maximilian II," and though Fugger incorrectly assumed that this "pleasure palace for Maximilian" was located in Vienna proper, this does not rule out that he was referring to the Neugebäude. Louthan (1997, pp. 43–46) makes a strong case for Strada as the architect; see also Schürer 1986, p. 58.

77. Louthan 1997, p. 43.

78. Dressler 1973, pp. 79–81, no. 9.

79. For Licinio, see Kaufmann 1988, p. 218.

80. Lietzmann 1987, p. 149.

81. According to Sandrart (1925, p. 140), the west tower was situated across from the new Fasanengarten (pheasant garden). Spranger painted the ceiling in the grand room over the grotto. See also Lietzmann 1987, p. 153.

82. Mander 1994, p. 346.

83. *Ibid.* This painting has traditionally been assumed to have been sold in Munich at the Galerie Gurlitt. The current location of the painting is unknown.

84. According to Hessel Miedema, Henri Hymans linked this description with a composition engraved by Jacob Matham after Spranger, but it depicts the vestal virgin Tuccia, so his supposition is unlikely. Also, Miedema notes that such a work is not mentioned in the 1621 Prague inventory or in the one made at the time of Rudolf's death. See Miedema's commentary on Hymans in Mander 1994–98, vol. 5, p. 102 n. 171.

85. Mander 1994, p. 346.

86. Fučíková (in Kräfner 2009, p. 57) points out that the composition of *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine with Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist* takes the shape of a Saint Andrew's cross. She dates it to Spranger's Italian period, as Kaufmann (2006) had, but he has subsequently dated it to Spranger's early days in Vienna.

87. During this time, van Mander was busy in Krems working on fresco decorations for a cemetery, but Spranger implored him to come help with this important and time-sensitive project.

88. See Altfahrt 1980, pp. 291–92. The design concept was overseen by Paul Fabritius, a physician, humanist, and astronomer who played a role in subsequent projects by the court artists. Kaufmann

(1989–90) details the involvement of Fabritius at the royal court, focusing in particular on the triumphal entry of Rudolf, and publishes several related documents.

89. Commentary in Mander 1994–98, vol. 5, p. 102. See also Kreytzi 1894, no. 11642.

BOHEMIAN APOGEE

90. See Miller 2008.

91. Begun by French architect Mathias von Arras, the cathedral later came under the aegis of Peter Parler, known for his delicate and ornamental style.

92. The architects were Hans Spiess and Benedikt Ried.

93. The Star Villa (Letohrádek Hvězda) summer palace was completed in one year, in 1556, constructed in the Renaissance style by Italian builders of the royal court.

94. Moryson 1971, p. 15.

95. Gertrude von Schwarzenfeld (1961, pp. 56–61) was one of the first to deal with Rudolf from the more personal side, discussing his fiancée, "melancholia," chimeric personality, and predilections for the occult. A decade later, R. J. W. Evans (1973) wrote a masterful and detailed account of Rudolf's reign, the Prague court, and those surrounding Rudolf.

96. Katharina Strada bore Rudolf six children; the eldest, Julius, suffered from what is believed to be schizophrenia. See Schwarzenfeld 1961, p. 61.

97. After the death of Ferdinand II in 1597, his son was apparently not interested in inheriting such a responsibility, so Rudolf II bought the collection. For a brief history of Rudolf's ancestors as collectors, see Kaufmann 1994.

98. *Jupiter and Io* and *The Abduction of Ganymede* are in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; *Danae* is in the Galleria Borghese, Rome; and *Leda* is in the Gemäldegalerie, Berlin.

99. For discussion of Dürer's painting, see Kotková 2002.

100. No visual records of the Kunstkammer are known to exist, but inventory lists and occasional reports from visitors have allowed scholars to piece together the basic framework. One of the best summaries of inventories, literature, and descriptions is by Beket Bukovinská in Fučíková et al. 1997, pp. 199–208.

101. See Kaufmann 1993, pp. 174–94. Kaufmann writes: "significant disagreements persist about the nature of the Kunstkammer" (p. 175). Pomian (1990, p. 48) considers the Kunstkammer to be more a product of the personal taste of the ruler than a tool for diplomacy or for artistic and scientific study. In contrast to the notion of a random arrangement, Bubenik

(2000, pp. 60–63) focuses on Rudolf's Kunstkammer as a repository of systemized knowledge and a forum for the study of science. Literature on the meaning and purpose of the Kunstkammer abounds, and a thorough study is beyond the scope of this monograph. Other key scholars entering the debate include Fučíková 1985.

102. The standard opus on the intellectual world of Rudolf II is Evans 1973.

103. A comprehensive exhibition devoted to de Vries in 2000 yielded an insightful catalogue of his work, including his drawings. See Kommer 2000.

104. Kaufmann (2000) notes that for years the standard interpretation—as posited earlier by Oberhuber in his 1958 dissertation—was that the Rudolfiner court painters responded to the sculpture and aesthetic of de Vries. But Kaufmann cogently argues against a one-way influence, suggesting that there was more reciprocity. In some cases, de Vries may have been learning from and emulating Spranger and von Aachen—for example, in the similar physiognomies of the female faces in their work from 1600 to 1610.

105. In 1582 Spranger received a raise to twenty guldens monthly; in 1591 he received an increase of five guldens, and by imperial decree on October 10, 1605, Spranger reached forty-five guldens monthly in addition to one hundred guldens a year for living expenses. In addition to his monthly salary, he received individual payments for various tasks and outside commissions. For his initial appointment in 1581, see the published document in Diez 1909, p. 144, no. 5.

106. Müller is mentioned in court archives as working for Maximilian II in Prague. See Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 13. No works by him have been documented to date. Spranger mentions Müller's book collection in his own last will and testament (Diez 1909, p. 148). Spranger's mother-in-law came from the Netherlands (Mander 1994, p. 349).

107. See Hojda 1988, esp. nn. 17, 18, which outlines property he owned: first, Zámecká 21, described as a two-story house with rooms in the attic, at that time "newly built"; also number 196 on Zámecká 19; later, a two-story house, number 210 on Nerudova 12, subsequently purchased from Spranger by a court employee, Andreas Flechtner.

108. The house was listed in the currency "Meissner Schock," reserved at that time for homes and estates. But the currency for payment was guldens (as his salary was). Using a complicated system of conversion, the Meissner Schock comes to around 2.1 per gulden. For the court document, see Diez 1909, p. 145, no. 14.

109. On Spranger and his relationship to Dürer, see Kaufmann 1985c; also, Fučíková (1972b) who argues that Spranger's paintings of Saints Wenceslas and

Vitus (cat. 31) and Saints Sigismund and Adalbert (cat. 32) were influenced by Dürer's similar paintings of saints, proposing the connection of Spranger's works with the so-called Dürer Renaissance. Kaufmann notes that Spranger's works are related to Dürer's prints after these saints.

110. The Arsenal and the Perlachturm, as well as the town hall, were subsequently remodeled under the aegis of Elias Holl I in an early Baroque style.

111. For Sustris in Augsburg, see S. Maxwell 2011.

112. The *Badstuben* decoration was overseen by Sustris, who was assisted by Antonio Pozano and stucco master Carlo di Cesari del Palagio.

113. See Diez 1909, p. 97 and documents 7–12, concerning payments to Spranger through December 1583, reproduced on pp. 144–45.

114. See Kommer 2000, p. 428, document 11.

115. See Krafft 1861, pp. 388–89; Schwarzenfeld 1961, p. 49.

116. Mander 1994, p. 350.

117. Near the end of the sixteenth century, Annibale Carracci would use the theme in his frescoes for the west wing of the Palazzo Farnese, with both Titian's and Spranger's designs as inspiration.

118. Kaufmann (1985b and 1988, p. 250) describes them as illustrating the poetic devices of chiasmus and anaphora, tintured with humor.

119. Sendivogius (or Sędziwój) was among the more colorful figures in Prague, living there intermittently as early as 1590 and falling in and out of favor with Rudolf, who imprisoned him on more than one occasion. See Evans 1973, pp. 211–12.

120. For an English translation, see Ebreo 1937.

121. Evans 1973, p. 241.

122. By capitalizing “Art,” Paracelsus was specifically referring to the art of alchemy. See Paracelsus 1967, vol. 1, p. 86.

123. Ebreo 1937, p. 55.

124. Evans 1973, p. 167.

125. Ebreo 1937, p. 54.

126. Paracelsus 1967, vol. 2, p. 148. The works of Paracelsus, translated into Czech, were widely read at Rudolf's court. See Evans 1973, p. 200, for Paracelsus among the Prague literati.

127. This is particularly apparent in Rudolf's administration of publishing; the Imperial Aulic Council (the Reichshofrat) often denied the imperial privilege to works leaning toward Protestantism. For an overview of the council, see Ehrenpreis 2006 and Thomas 2009.

128. The painting is unknown today, mentioned only by van Mander (1994, p. 350).

129. The Peterle epitaph, with its suggestion of Protestant doctrine, has led to speculation that Spranger was a Protestant, but this cannot be supported; see Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.46. Held (1982, pp. 138–48) discusses the theme in pictures by Rubens. He must not have been aware of the Spranger epitaph, for he considers Rubens's iconography to be pioneering.

130. For an entertaining study of Silesians at the Prague court, see Oszczanowski 2004.

131. Diez 1909, p. 135. Dixon (2013, pp. 115–16) posits Spranger's self-portrait as an example of the dominance of black bile, exuding a melancholic humor.

132. Von Aachen's seven works depicting particular battles are on parchment mounted on canvas and

housed in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, and the Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest. See Fusenig 2010, cat. nos. 94–100.

133. See Müller 1993, p. 180, for comments on Rudolf's text.

134. Pigler (1954) discusses Ignorance and Envy as the adversaries of art.

135. For more on the history of the Old Chamber of Rhetoricians, see De Paepe 2010, esp. pp. 42–47.

136. Mander 1994, p. 354.

137. Spranger's entire will is published in Diez 1909. By the time Spranger composed his will in 1611, none of his children and only one of his siblings remained alive.

138. The largest amount Spranger left to someone not in his family was three hundred thalers to Christine Miller, wife of the bookbinder Johann Salmut. See Spranger's will in Diez 1909, p. 149.

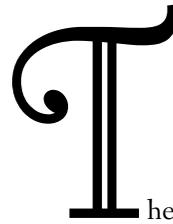
EPILOGUE

139. Inventories of Rudolf's collection began in 1607. Published sources often include only parts of the collection, but Zimmermann 1905 and Bauer and Haupt 1976 present the most comprehensive inventories, even attempting to match some of the listed items with objects known today.

140. These structures are no longer extant but were originally in the small village outside Prague called Oboř (Ovenec). As the city enlarged, Oboř became part of the Malá Strana. A deer park once graced the area around the cemetery grounds.

Spranger as Painter





The paintings of Spranger initially followed a stylistic evolution consistent with the artistic practice of his day. As he matured, however, his paintings moved beyond the prevailing trends to become increasingly mysterious, erotic, and alluring—particularly once he began to paint for Rudolf II. Spranger’s compositions, iconography, and even palette were intended for an elite, sophisticated audience who would be receptive to a new and esoteric aesthetic. His Mannerism was not that of the Italians, noted for lissome women and agile men. Nor was it that of the Netherlandish Mannerists—the Haarlem and Utrecht painters noted for a more muscular interpretation of human physicality. Spranger’s aesthetic was an original, and distinctive, combination of North and South.

Spranger painted predominantly on panel or canvas, but he used oil on copper for some of his early religious works—nearly twenty extant paintings on copper by him are known. These show his original hand most vividly, because copper is more stable than panel and canvas, which absorb pigments and other media over the years. Spranger had originally learned to paint on panel, which would have been the common practice in Antwerp, from his masters Jan Mandyn, Frans Mostaert, and Cornelis van Dalem. Netherlandish artists began using canvas as a support in the 1560s—this was considered painting in the “Italian manner”—and by the turn of the century, when canvas had become the vogue, any “modern” artist was exploring its artistic possibilities. As canvas became more available, the transition to it from panel was an enormous advance for painters in the Netherlands. The portability of works on canvas gave them a clear advantage over paintings on heavy panels, though wood supports were by no means abandoned. Spranger used marble as a ground only once, in his homage to Hendrick Goltzius (cat. 60), unlike Hans von Aachen and other Rudolfine artists, who painted on such luxurious supports more often.

Spranger’s considerable influence in the years around 1600, made apparent by the multitudinous copies after his designs and by the pervasive imitation of his style, has led to speculation that Spranger trained students. Fučíková mentions a painter with a style reminiscent of Spranger’s who used the monogram *TR* to sign his work.¹ Ivo Kořán identifies him as Thomas Rusweid (Ruhrweyd), who worked in Prague after 1600, and asserts that he was likely a student of Spranger’s.² Van Mander, however, maintained that Spranger had neither assistants nor even a studio

where he trained pupils. Inventories and court payment records make no mention of any Spranger students, whose presence is unlikely to have gone unnoticed, given he worked inside Prague Castle for more than seventeen years. As a private court artist to the emperor, Spranger had no financial need to take on students. Again according to van Mander, he worked “only when he felt like it,” so that paintings by him were difficult to obtain.³ Müller has commented that van Mander’s high praise of Spranger presented him as the new Apelles, a genius with innate talent that could not be taught.⁴ One final consideration concerning students is Spranger’s will. He extended his generosity to many acquaintances, including family members, the priest of Saint Nicholas church, his servants, a goldsmith, and bookbinders, but no students or assistants are mentioned. Followers Spranger indeed had, but official students probably not.

Many of Spranger’s earliest known paintings are landscapes composed under the tutelage of his masters in Antwerp, incorporating small figures ancillary to the composition. The leap he made from these tiny figures to full-scale voluptuous bodies is striking. The nude became Spranger’s muse, despite van Mander’s admonition that “excellence in painting does not lie solely in making nudes.”⁵ Spranger initially followed van Mander’s advice, composing works such as *Saint Jerome in the Wilderness* and *The Flight into Egypt* (cats. 3, 7) in which the landscape still dominates, as in the paintings by his earlier master van Dalem, but the figures also play a major role. The landscape is unmistakably Netherlandish, with its lush, feathery trees and measured palette of blues and greens. But in most of Spranger’s works, especially those composed in Prague, he rejected van Mander’s cautionary advice against the nude. His preference was for erotic mythological subjects, ideally featuring a male-female couple, physically entwined and in various states of undress. The flesh tones of the male figure are often darker than his partner’s, and the contrast is all the more striking when the lovers envelop each another. The male usually plays a lesser role, providing a backdrop for the seductive female. In *Fall from Paradise* (cats. 62, 63), Eve’s body nearly eclipses that of Adam—only his face, one leg, and one arm are fully visible. The male is thematically and visually dominated by the female, making the power of women visible.

Group scenes and single figures are the exceptions in Spranger’s oeuvre. Landscapes, once the banquet of his Antwerp youth and training, become morsels relegated to corners. Spranger did not abandon landscape in the paintings he made in Prague, but it slips into the shadows. Trees with muscular, expressive trunks and leafy overhanging branches now provided shade and a backdrop for the figures that are the main subjects. His landscapes are often blue and green atmospheric fanta-

sies, populated with nearly ghostlike figures that add mystery and humanity to the verdant expanse. These faint background figures are so tiny they are almost imperceptible. Attention to detail is suppressed in favor of overall composition and harmony. Distance is conveyed by following Joachim Patinir's traditional use of brown bands for the foreground, then transitioning to green and blue for the background and sky. Such treatment is visible in Spranger's early works, such as *Saint Barbara* (cat. 22), and it recurs in such later works as *The Baptism of Christ* and *Allegory of the Triumph of the Habsburg Empire over the Turks* (cats. 80, 81). In his paintings of Adam and Eve, he also added animals to the distant landscape, even a camel and an elephant. On occasion the menagerie moves forward, appearing front and center in *Odysseus and Circe* (cat. 47). Spranger devoted meticulous attention to depicting animals, carefully limning every spot on the cheetah in *Bacchus and Venus* (cat. 70) and giving it a sympathetic, almost human face.

In his "Grondt," the didactic poem beginning his famous biographies of artists, van Mander outlined the preferred formula for historical and mythological compositions, offering instruction to Dutch and Flemish painters.⁶ In the ideal composition, he explained, the primary subject should be at the center and the large foreground figures in the corners, serving as framing devices, or repoussoirs. Figures in the central foreground should be seated or reclining, to allow the viewer to see beyond them to the background. The figures should be arranged in groups, giving the composition a coherent organization. Artificial means of cropping the painting, such as relying on the device of the frame, must be avoided. Spranger indeed followed van Mander's precepts, at least initially, as in his early painting *The Martyrdom of Saint John the Evangelist* (cat. 14).

Spranger conceived and repeated a few specific types of strikingly similar female physiognomies. In fact, he repeated them so often that a chronology of his works cannot be determined by relying solely on facial morphology. Who were the shapely females populating Spranger's art? He may have looked to the females in his family for artistic inspiration. The only extant portraits of female family members are of his wife and mother-in-law: a group portrait in the epitaph for his father-in-law (cat. 52) and an engraving by Aegidius Sadeler II (cat. 217). The images of his wife, Christina, bear a strong resemblance to one another, although she appears older in the epitaph. Her most distinctive characteristics are blond hair, an oval face, thin arched eyebrows, a high forehead, and Cupid's-bow lips. Almost without exception, the female characters in Spranger's paintings are blond. Two types of females predominate, with variations. One might be called the "Christina type," featuring a rather narrow oval face, aquiline nose, blond to strawberry-blond hair, a high forehead,

and heavy-lidded eyes. This type recurs in Spranger's early and late oeuvre, with the narrow-faced Saint Barbara, Dejanira, and later Amphitrite. All present nearly the same expression and downward tilt of the head. A variant on this type is a female profile, which again is repeated nearly exactly in different paintings: for example, in *Glaucus and Scylla* (cat. 26), *Saint Elizabeth* (cat. 40), *Venus and Mercury* (cat. 41), and *The Blindfolding of Cupid* (cat. 69). These profiles feature a narrow oval face, and if they turned toward the viewer, they would closely resemble the Christina type.

There is also a quite different model, with a fuller face, that Spranger seems to have favored, especially when depicting two females together, as in *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine with Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist* (cat. 23). Here both females are bright blond, but Mary has a full, nearly moon-shaped face, in contrast to the profile of a thinner Saint Catherine. Angelica bears this chubbier face in Spranger's early painting *Angelica and Medoro* (cat. 25). In later paintings, another quite different female emerges: hair is darker, face fuller, eyes slant downward, lips are puffier. Far from Spranger's earlier Christina model, this type is more otherworldly. Prime examples surface in *Saint Catherine* (cat. 37) and Ceres in *Ceres and Bacchus Flee Venus* (cat. 56).

Spranger devoted a fair amount of attention to the hairstyle of his women. The face is usually framed by blond curls, with the hair gathered up in buns or braids, and often pearls are woven throughout. When the hair is styled in tight, controlled curls and braids, usually parted in the middle, it generally reflects the rectitude of the character. Tresses escape the compacted hairstyle to communicate passion or struggle, visible in the goddess in *Allegory of the Triumph of the Habsburg Empire over the Turks* and in Venus's seductive hairstyle in the late painting *Venus in the Smithy of Vulcan* (cat. 86).

Did Spranger ever turn to his own visage for inspiration in depicting his gods and saints? He never overtly inserted his own countenance into a scene, but on occasion he can be detected as a source, certain traits identifiable from his two self-portraits (cats. 45, 46). And, as with his females, a few male types emerge, beginning early on with a chiefly strawberry-blond, curly-haired youth, nearly identical in *The Conversion of Saint Paul* and the Christ in his *Resurrection of Christ* (cats. 11, 18). Also very similar to these is the Christ in *The Lamentation of Christ* (cat. 16). Visages with facial hair such as a goatee or a beard also recur. This early Spranger male is recast in a second phase, a shade heavier and older, with a more hirsute face and a fuller head of hair. He can be seen in the characters Mars (*Venus and Mars Warned by Mercury*, cat. 42), Odysseus (*Odysseus and Circe*), and Saint John (*Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine*). In his middle period Spranger may well have served

as a model for his male characters. These men are cast with a good amount of dark hair and beards, such as Christ in the Nikolaus Müller and Michael Peterle epitaphs (cats. 52, 53). Quite different is the third type, a satyrlike older man with abundant curls amassed in points or soft horns and a forcefully pointed nose. These are prominent in his Vulcan in the late painting *Venus in the Smithy of Vulcan*, the Magus on the right in his altarpiece *The Adoration of the Magi* (cat. 54), and even Glaucus in *Glaucus and Scylla*

Throughout his paintings, Spranger repeated faces, repurposed jewelry, inserted fictive animals and landscape fantasies. None of these devices were novel. But in his Ovidian myths and religious and political allegories, he signaled a new direction in the expressive and interpretive power of the nude. For decades he reigned as premier painter at the Prague court, surviving the tumult and turmoil of a place where a chimerical leader could pick and choose at whim those to satisfy his lust and his intellect.

Notes

1. Fučíková 1979, p. 504.
2. Kořán (in Kotková 1999, p. 96) shows two examples in the Národní Galerie, Prague, of paintings attributed to Ruhrweyd.
3. Mander 1994, p. 350.
4. Müller 1993, pp. 211–12.
5. Leesberg 1993–94, p. 15.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

CATALOGUE OF PAINTINGS

This annotated catalogue of Spranger's paintings, the first published in English, is based on records from the artist's time and updated to the present. The first written discussion of Spranger's paintings was in 1604 by Karel van Mander, followed much later by cursory biographical dictionaries, filled with misattributions, by authors such as Alfred von Wurzbach and Georg K. Nagler. Ernst Diez in 1909 offered the first systematic and extensive discussion of Spranger's paintings in his article "Der Hofmaler Bartholomäus Spranger." His work was the springboard for the unpublished dissertation by Konrad Oberhuber, "Die stilistische Entwicklung im Werk Bartholomäus Sprangers" (1958), which encompassed not only paintings but also drawings and engravings. Nearly thirty years later, another German dissertation revisited only Spranger's paintings: Michael Henning's *Die Tafelbilder Bartholomäus Sprangers (1546–1611): Höfische Malerei zwischen "Manierismus" und "Barock."* In his landmark work *The School of Prague: Painting at the Court of Rudolf II* (1988), Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann included a catalogue of Spranger's paintings among those by the other Rudolfine artists.

The following catalogue comprises individual paintings, altarpieces, and frescoes by Spranger. Works lost, destroyed, or no longer in situ but

known from archival evidence are included to give as comprehensive an overview of Spranger as a painter as possible. Copies of his paintings, either as paintings or drawings, are noted at the end of the entry. Paintings judged not to be original works by Spranger but previously considered as such in the literature are addressed in the Appendix.

I
Witches' Sabbath, 1567
Oil on panel, dimensions unknown
Location unknown

Van Mander mentions that Spranger painted a *Witches' Sabbath* during his first years in Rome.¹ The painting was such a success that Giulio Clovio purchased it, bringing Spranger into his coterie of artists working for Cardinal Alessandro Farnese. Speculation abounds concerning this supernatural scene of such pivotal importance to Spranger's career. It was mentioned only in passing by van Mander, but two obscure references provide clues to its appearance. One is this archival photograph, which could be of Spranger's original or just of a copy after Spranger.² The photograph comes from the photo library in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna; the negative was sold to it in 1984 (along with about a

thousand others) by the now defunct Galerie L. T. Neumann in Vienna. The other clue is a book on magic from the early 1900s, which attributes an engraving of a *Witches' Sabbath* to Spranger, yet the engraving bears no signature and the author provides no source for the attribution.³

Witches were not part of Spranger's standard repertoire, but apparently this work was so successful that he painted it twice. According to van Mander, Spranger made the original painting for a banker named Joan Spindolo, but he decided not to buy it (for reasons untold), and the painting went to Clovio. Spindolo later regretted his decision, and Spranger agreed to produce a similar painting for him.⁴

NOTES

1. Mander 1994, p. 341. 2. A copy of *Witches' Sabbath* is recorded in an entry in an inventory of Giovanni Carlo Doria of Genoa, from about 1632, which reads "A Stregaria, copy after Spranger." See Farina 2002, pp. 205–19. Two identical prints in the Wellcome Trust Collection, London (ICV no. 26266 and no. L0019610), depicting witches on brooms are attributed to Spranger, although there is no inscription on either work. 3. This attribution is in Grillot de Givry 1931, plate of engraving, p. 78, fig. 47. Grillot de Givry notes that the engraving comes from the 1710 edition of Abbé Bordelon's *L'histoire des imaginations extravagantes de Monsieur Oufle* (Amsterdam), an imaginative text describing witchcraft in detail, but no mention of Spranger is made in Bordelon's book. The author thanks William Schupbach, librarian of the Iconographic Collections of the Wellcome



Library, for this reference. In the editions I have found that include the engraving, it bears the inscription “Crespy sculp.” Complicating the question even more, the engraving is similar to one firmly attributed to a Polish engraver, Jana Ziamki (1575–ca. 1628), who worked primarily in France. Ziamki’s engraving is mentioned by Grillot de

Givry (1931, pp. 76–77) as having been published in Pierre de Lancre’s book *Tableau de l’inconstance des mauvais anges et démons* (Paris, 1613). However, I have not been able to locate the edition in which Ziamki’s engraving appears. Perhaps Ziamki saw Spranger’s original composition? Both of these compositions, the so-called Spranger/Crespy and the

Ziamki, feature a Goat-Devil on a throne, in addition to other motifs. The missing link in this chain is how Grillot de Givry arrived at the Spranger attribution in the first place. 4. Mander 1994, p. 341.

PROVENANCE: Unknown.

LITERATURE: None.



2

*God the Father, The Four Evangelists,
and an Angel*, 1568

Fresco a secco

Church of San Lorenzo, Sant'Oreste, Italy

For years these frescoes by Spranger and his friend Michel du Joncqoy remained hidden by subsequent building renovations (the first major one in 1745), but a restoration in 2008–9 revived some of the original designs, making available partial views that provide evidence of Spranger's work and of van Mander's story that Spranger worked with Joncqoy in Sant'Oreste.¹ Though van Mander mentions only the subjects of the Four Evangelists and a Last Supper, Spranger's contract stipulated that he and Joncqoy also paint a Deposition, Crucifixion, Saint Lawrence, and Saint Stephen.² It remains a mystery if the two artists left their contract unfulfilled or if all the frescoes were made but did not survive.

The paucity of surviving paint, coupled with the extensive restoration,

makes thorough evaluation impossible. Nevertheless, the imprint of Spranger's creativity remains. The overall impression is that of a fluid albeit conservative rendering of the religious themes. Meijer draws a comparison to Bernardino Gatti's designs, especially the Christ

figure for the cupola in Parma's Santa Maria della Steccata, familiar to Spranger from his work there in 1566.³

NOTES

1. Mander 1994, p. 341. 2. Meijer 2011, p. 45.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

LITERATURE: Del Frate 2010; Meijer 2011.





3

Saint Jerome in the Wilderness,
before June 1568
Oil on panel, 15³/₈ × 20⁷/₈ in. (39 × 53 cm)
Museo di Capodimonte, Naples (Q676)

Hazy atmospheric effects suffuse the rocky cliffs and distant mountains in this characteristically Northern landscape executed early in Spranger's career. He was working in Sant'Oreste around this time, and according to van Mander, he was also busy painting small landscapes.¹ Giulio Clovio, in a letter of 1568, refers to giving a *Saint Jerome* to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese.² Meijer was among the first to suggest that the painting seen here was the work mentioned by Clovio.³ Spranger carefully rendered the ascetic

Saint Jerome praying in the wilderness, an appropriate subject for an ecclesiastic patron. A diminutive yet muscular figure in the abundant landscape, Jerome recalls the monumental-in-miniature figures of Clovio's *Farnese Book of Hours* (Morgan Library and Museum, New York).

NOTES

1. Mander 1994, p. 341. 2. Pérez de Tudela 2000, p. 298. 3. Meijer in Capodimonte 1995, p. 192.

PROVENANCE: Giulio Clovio to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese (1520–1589), ca. 1568; first mentioned at the Palazzo Farnese, Rome, in 1644–1760; Palazzo di Capodimonte; Palazzo degli Studi; Real Museo Borbonico; Museo di Capodimonte, from 1957.

LITERATURE: Jestaz 1994, p. 147, no. 3635; Pérez de Tudela 2000, p. 298.

4

Caritas, 1569
Oil on poplar, 18 × 26³/₈ in. (45.8 × 67 cm)
Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe (2446)

Signed and dated lower left: 1569 / BAR-
TOLOMEO SPRANGHERS

5

Landscape with Mountains and Religious Hermit (Pius V?), ca. 1569–70
Oil on poplar, 18³/₈ × 27⁵/₈ in.
(46.5 × 70 cm)
Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe (2449)

Caritas is the earliest-known signed and dated painting by Spranger. It shares nearly identical dimensions with the unsigned *Landscape with Mountains and Religious Hermit*, and they are likely



4



5

pendants representing the active and the contemplative life. Both paintings depict quotidian moments related to fishing, praying, and preparing the daily bread.

Spranger painted figures, fauna, and flora throughout *Caritas*. Most prominent is a figural group tucked into the left corner, which seems almost out of place: a woman suckles a child, in a striking reference to the Madonna and Child or the Madonna of Humility. Two children play with a dog directly beside them, so this is not a traditional depiction of the Holy Family. The boy tempts the dog with a morsel of food, while the other child tries to hold it back. Tiny animals roam the cliffs; at upper right is a waterfall from which animals drink. On the bank of an inlet, a figure fishes by hand. In the far middle distance, antique ruins are perched on the hillside. Almost at the center of the painting, framed between the two cliffs, a nude man bathes. His central position is significant and may refer to baptism or the cleansing of sin. To his left, two more bathers and a swan are barely visible. In the center foreground are chained two odd-looking animals. A man passes through the lattice gate on the right carrying a large basket of thistles highlighted with blue and orange. Near the figures bathing on the left is a torch and a grotto extending to a cave, where fire can be seen. A swag of blue drapery—uncommon in an outdoor scene—hangs above a figure carrying a stool, who also is draped in blue.

In *Landscape with Mountains and Religious Hermit* a small figure is engrossed in a book in the right foreground. His humble abode, carved from a cave, is at left, just over a makeshift bridge. Though a tiny figure, his profile

of pointed nose, white beard, and red cap resembles that of Pius V, and contemporary portraits of the pontiff attest to these affinities (figs. 29, 30). The chronology of the work, painted between 1569 and 1570, also coincides with Spranger's ascendance to papal patronage. A crucifix and candlesticks sit on a table covered with a white tablecloth. A tiny altar is visible, with a painting of the Crucifixion and a kneeler for the worshiper. The owner seems to have



Fig. 29. Detail of Pope Pius V (?) from *Landscape with Mountains and Religious Hermit*

just left the table, where the bread and a wine pitcher are fairly obvious references to the Eucharist. A peacock—unusual in a Northern landscape—is barely visible at left, between the ladder and the table and chair. Peacocks are sometimes symbols of resurrection. A swan as well as a peacock appears in both paintings. Like peacocks, swans refer to resurrection or to cleansing, as

they are born brown and then turn white. Spranger also included a lattice gate in each painting, as well as figures carrying long trays of round bread.

The execution of the landscapes recalls work by Joachim Patinir and by Spranger's mentor Cornelis van Dalem—especially the foreground mass of rocky cliffs meandering along the lakeshore and opening into the misty distance. Spranger has built his perspective chiefly by layering figures

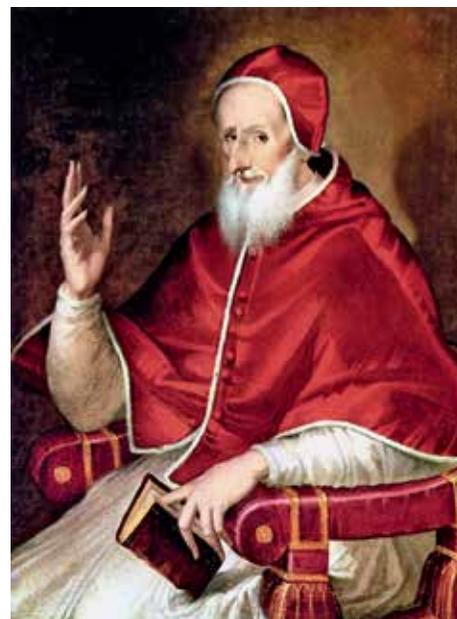


Fig. 30. El Greco (Domenikos Theotokopoulos) (Greek, Iráklion [Candia] 1540/41–1614 Toledo). *Pope Pius V*, ca. 1600. Oil on canvas. Private collection, Paris

and objects front to back and rendering the distance more loosely, with less detail. The rich and sometimes minuscule details reflect the influence of Giulio Clovio's miniatures and of van Dalem's paintings and drawings. For example, the lattice gate appears in two of van Dalem's paintings—one at Stanford (fig. 2) and the other in Rotterdam (fig. 31)—as well as in a



Fig. 31. Cornelis van Dalem (Netherlandish, Antwerp, ca. 1530–1573 Breda). *Landscape with the Dawn of Civilization*, 1560–70. Oil on panel, $34\frac{3}{8} \times 65$ in. (88 × 165 cm). Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (3363)

drawing in the Städel Museum, Frankfurt (763).

PROVENANCE (CATS. 4 AND 5): Verso of each panel has a red wax collector's mark, unknown aristocrat, Rome, seventeenth century; Doria family, Naples; (Nijstad auction house, The Hague, sold before 1958); [Galerie Saint Lukas, The Hague, 1959].

LITERATURE (CATS. 4 AND 5): Oberhuber 1958, p. 20, nos. G8, G9; Oberhuber 1964, p. 173; Lauts 1966, vol. 2, pp. 252, 283; Meijer 1988, pp. 36–42.

6

The Holy Family with Saint John the Baptist on the Flight into Egypt, 1569–70

Oil on copper, $7\frac{3}{8} \times 4\frac{7}{8}$ in. (18.5 × 12.5 cm)
Galleria Palatina, Palazzo Pitti, Florence
(1890 n. 7917)

IN EXHIBITION

This tiny painting on copper is infused with the spirit of Giulio Clovio and Raphael—especially the pose of the young Jesus, who leans toward his mother in a manner recalling that of the Christ Child in Raphael's *Madonna of the Goldfinch* (fig. 32). Spranger adroitly established depth in this small format by painting a large column behind the central figures. Numerous small details, such as a crucifixion in the far distance to the right, emphasize the private and contemplative function of this precious work. Though the children's faces are similar to those in *Caritas* (cat. 4), the figures have slightly more developed forms. Spranger has also given the ox a sympathetic, almost humanlike face, a feature of the artist's depiction of animals that would continue throughout his career.



Fig. 32. Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio or Santi) (Italian, Urbino 1483–1520 Rome). *Madonna of the Goldfinch*, ca. 1505. Oil on panel, $42\frac{1}{8} \times 30\frac{3}{8}$ in. (107 × 77 cm). Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence



As noted by van Mander, Spranger painted many small works that were sold as fast as he painted them,¹ and he would repeatedly return to the subject of the Holy Family, often for engravings. But this one may have been made for a different clientele: in 1589 it was listed in the inventory of Marie de' Medici.² Thus, it may never have left Italy,

making only the short journey from Rome to Florence as a diplomatic gift to the Medici from Pope Pius V or Cardinal Farnese. Giambologna, who worked for the Florentine court at that time, might have played a role in the exchange.

NOTES

1. Mander 1994, p. 342. 2. The small copper painting was originally kept in the collection with a cover of crystal and a silver chain for protection. See Florence 1980, p. 294, cat. no. 591.

PROVENANCE: Medici, 1589; Tribuna of the Uffizi, 1953; Galleria Palatina, Palazzo Pitti, from 1976.

LITERATURE: Florence 1980, p. 294, cat. no. 591; Caneva and Solinas 2005, p. 86.



7

The Flight into Egypt, 1569–71

Oil on copper, 7³/₈ × 9¹/₄ in. (18.9 × 23.5 cm)
Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique,
Brussels (12198)

IN EXHIBITION

Signed lower right: BAR. SPRANGERS / FE:

As told in Matthew 2:13, Joseph is warned by an angel that his newborn son is in danger, so the Holy Family seeks refuge in Egypt. Here, the Holy Family travels not through the arid

desert of Egypt but in a verdant Northern landscape. Spranger's landscape, inspired by Joachim Patinir in both its composition and its hues, and the soft, painterly forms of the figures show that he too had crossed a border, aesthetically, from the Netherlands into Italy. Even though they are shown still en route, the travelers' safe passage seems assured by the angels accompanying them. Spranger balanced the composition perfectly. On the left, the figures of the Holy Family, donkey, and two

book-reading angels; on the right, a toppled statue of Zeus (alluding to the end of the pagan gods) and a duo of music-making angels. Singing putti above unify the two groups into a loosely pyramidal form.¹

The delicacy and the lush landscape date this work to Spranger's time with Cardinal Farnese. Despite affinities between the face of Joseph and that of Saint John the Evangelist in the San Giovanni a Porta Latina altarpiece (cat. 14), the figures in this painting are

more diminutive, indicating Spranger composed it a few years earlier, between 1569 and 1571.

NOTES

1. Underdrawing is apparently present on the copper support, possibly indicating a limb, but photographs documenting it have not been made available.

PROVENANCE: Pedro y Babot (1783–1853), Spain; [Galerie Crimont, Antwerp]; Salas collection, Spain; [KD Art, Antwerp]; (Christie's, London, 2006); Dr. Marc Martens, Bierbeek; acquired from Dr. Martens by the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, 2007.

LITERATURE: Kaufmann 2006; Bücken 2007.

8

Christ Surrounded by Angels with Symbols of the Passion, 1570

Oil on copper, 11½ × 8½ in.
(29.2 × 21.6 cm)

Sphinx Fine Art, London

This work has suffered from restoration: in particular, the face of Christ looks like a mask, with almost no detail or modeling; his body is similarly eroded, appearing very flat. In contrast, the drapery, especially of the angels, still can be seen as beautifully conceived. The richly vibrant palette and chatoyant silk are reminiscent of Giulio Clovio's masterful illuminations; the languid, attenuated bodies suggest inspiration from Parmigianino. Most compelling as a source for the central configuration of Christ supported by the angel is a design by Federico Zuccaro, known from an engraving.¹ This fusion of ideas indicates that Spranger was still in the incipient stage of his career: he had yet to establish his own style.



Several elements recur in other of Spranger's early compositions; compare, for example, the angel on the far right to the central angels in *The Last Judgment* (cat. 9). The angels viewed from the back share an affinity with those in *The Flight into Egypt* in Brussels (cat. 7), and the figure of Christ resembles that in the small *Deposition* painting (cat. 15). Spranger reused the

composition of Christ supported by an angel several years later for a design engraved by Hendrick Goltzius (cat. 171). Though the body of Christ here is much less muscular than the one in the print, the overall configurations, especially the expansive wings of the angels, are closely related.

The tone of pious devotion and the subject would have been dear to



9

Spranger's ecclesiastical patrons Cardinal Alessandro Farnese and Pope Pius V, which places this work in the middle of his years in Rome.

NOTES

1. The engraving, published by Johannes Stadius after Federico Zuccaro, is in the British Museum (1871,0429.358).

PROVENANCE: (Sold, Sotheby's, New York, May 25, 2000, no. 20); (sold, Dorotheum, Vienna, September 13, 2007, no. 465).

LITERATURE: Strachan and Bolton 2009, pp. 246–49, no. 88.

9

The Last Judgment, ca. 1571
Oil on copper, 45 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 58 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.
(116 × 148 cm)
Galleria Sabauda, Turin (6)

Pope Pius V commissioned this work for his tomb in the monastery of Santa Croce in his hometown of Bosco Marengo. Though traditionally referred to as a copy after a Fra Angelico triptych that belonged to the pope (fig. 33), Spranger's work is a free interpretation rather than a direct copy. It can be securely dated to 1570–72, the period when Spranger served the pope, and most likely 1571.

Spranger transformed Fra Angelico's tripartite division into one unified composition. He also dispensed with the earlier artist's use of gold leaf and lapis lazuli, preferring a simpler palette. Angelico, in Renaissance tradition, depicted his figures elected for Paradise bedecked with prominent golden halos. Spranger eliminated the halos, heightening the naturalism. The general composition and placement of figures are similar, but with a few important divergences. In Spranger's painting, Christ sits alone, in a mandorla of heavenly light, whereas Angelico positioned a flock of cherubim around the enthroned Christ. The simplicity of Spranger's rendering of Christ as Grand Inquisitor imbues the work with a stark power. Angelico depicted just one angel below the mandorla, seemingly holding up Christ and his entire retinue with only a slender cross; Spranger supplied a trinity of angels on a cloud below the mandorla.

Antal criticizes the work as representing a generation of art in the service

of the Church, and given that Pius was an enthusiastic supporter of the Counter-Reformation, such sentiment does indeed abound in it. Nonetheless, Spranger implanted Angelico's original composition with his own aesthetic values.

PROVENANCE: Monastery of Santa Croce, Bosco Marengo.

LITERATURE: Diez 1909, p. 103; Oberhuber 1958, no. G47; Antal 1980, pp. 199–200; Ieni and Spantigati 1985, pp. 262–63; Henning 1987, no. A3; Meijer 2010, p. 229.

10

Christ at the Column, ca. 1572
Oil on copper, 8 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 6 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (22.5 × 17 cm)
Private collection

The attenuated, Michelangesque forms date this work to the middle of Spranger's Roman period. The subject, the Flagellation, links the painting to Pope Pius V, who commissioned an entire series on the Passion from Spranger. Although the pope died before the project could be completed, he would have seen Spranger's sketches for it. Spranger no doubt continued

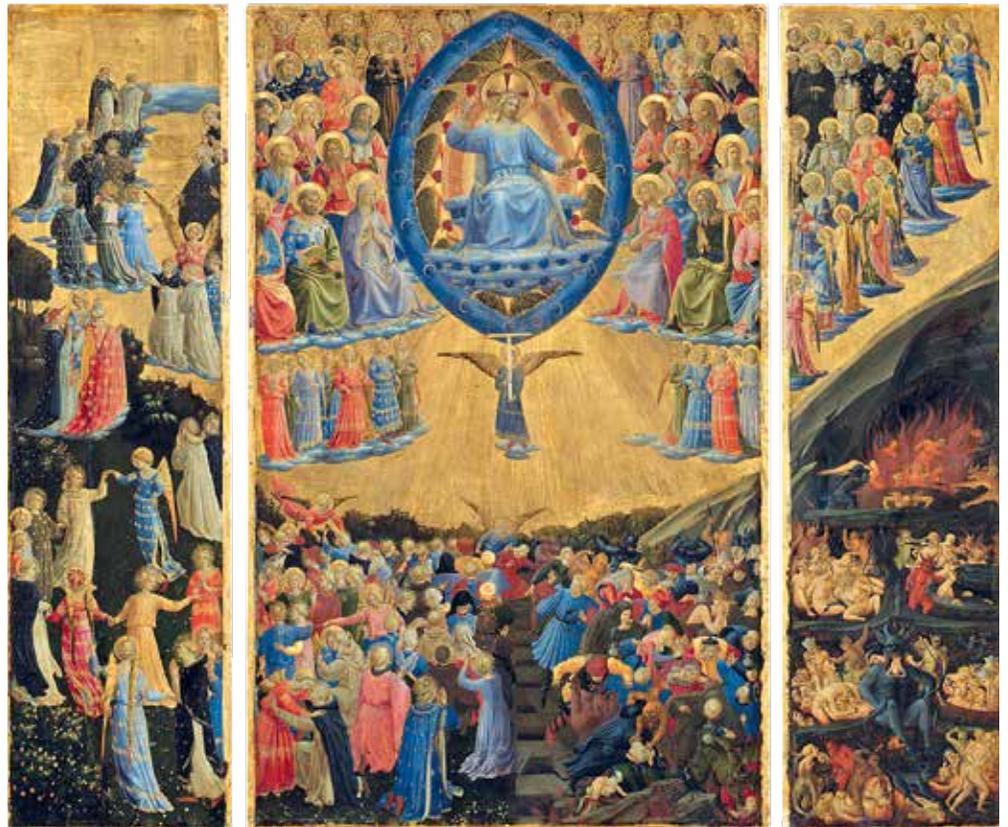


Fig. 33. Fra Angelico (Guido di Pietro) (Italian, Vicchio di Mugello, ca. 1395–1455 Rome). *The Last Judgment*, ca. 1450. Oil on poplar, center: 40 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 25 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (103 × 65 cm), each wing: 40 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 11 in. (103 × 28 cm). Staatliche Museen zu Berlin



10

with the series, confident that it would find a new patron in Rome.

The morphology of Christ's foot and that of the kneeling flagellator presage Spranger's distinctive rendering of what appears to be a two-toed foot. Further, the sole of the raised foot of the flagellator standing with his back to the viewer would also become a common characteristic of Spranger's figures. According

to Fučíková, an infrared reflectogram shows remnants of an underdrawing that had been traced onto the copper plate, revealing an aspect of Spranger's artistic practice.¹ Parts of the painting's surface have eroded, resulting in a softness not completely characteristic of Spranger.

NOTES

1. Fučíková 2006, p. 416.

PROVENANCE: Private collection, France; (sold, auction Galerie Koller, Zürich, April 2006, no. 3022); [Adam Williams Fine Art, New York, September 2007]; thereafter private collection.

LITERATURE: Fučíková 2006; Koller 2006, pp. 22–23.

II

The Conversion of Saint Paul,

ca. 1572–before October 1573

Oil on copper, 15³/₄ × 21⁵/₈ in. (40 × 55 cm)

Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana,
Pinacoteca—Milano (942)

IN EXHIBITION

Signed lower right: *DON JULIO CLOVIO INVE / BARTOL SPRANGHERS / PINXIT* (Giulio Clovio invented and Bartholomeus Spranger painted)

Spranger collaborated with Giulio Clovio to create this graceful yet dynamic painting on copper, based on a design by Clovio. A letter from Clovio to Duke Ottavio Farnese's agent, Pietro Ceuli, explains that Spranger was responsible for the coloring, or painting, as the signature "Spranghers pinxit" affirms.¹ His letter, written on October 10, 1573, provides a firm terminus ante quem for the painting. Clovio sent the painting to the duke, along with two miniature portrait heads. The work reached its present location most likely through close ties between the Farnese and Borromeo families. In 1579 Ersilia Farnese, daughter of Ottavio, married Renato Borromeo, first cousin of the future Saint Charles Borromeo, who became archbishop of Milan in 1565. The Ambrosiana was founded by Cardinal Federico Borromeo, another cousin of Charles Borromeo.

Clovio depicted the Conversion of Saint Paul on at least two other occasions—the first, an illumination for



Cardinal Domenico Grimani's *Epistle of Saint Paul* (1537–38), and his last, a drawing now in the British Museum (fig. 34). Elements from both depictions appear in Spranger's copper painting, but Clovio's drawing comes closer in overall conception and is also nearer in date. The Ambrosiana painting follows Clovio's drawing almost exactly, except for slight omissions and variations: the beautifully atmospheric blue sky, the green landscape, and a faint village and ruins that replace two horses and soldiers at upper left. Spranger's painting also alters God the Father overhead, adding angels to accompany him rushing zealously toward this miraculous event. The same central foreground characters appear in both the drawing and the painting, and the faces and figures in the latter reflect Clovio's strong influence on Spranger.

NOTES

1. Pérez de Tudela 2000, p. 300 n. 71.



Fig. 34. Giulio Clovio (Croatian, Grizane 1498–1578 Rome). *The Conversion of Saint Paul*, ca. 1550–70. Pen and brown ink, with brown wash, heightened with white (partly oxidized), over black chalk, on light brown prepared paper, 1 1/8 x 1 7/8 in. (28.1 x 43.5 cm). The British Museum, London (1946,0713.322)

PROVENANCE: Giulio Clovio to Duke Ottavio Farnese (1524–1586), Parma, 1573; Archbishop Charles Borromeo (1538–1584).

LITERATURE: Ambrosiana 1907, p. 52, no. 17; Oberhuber 1958, no. G14; Henning 1987, no. A5; Devisscher 1995, cat. no. 195; Pérez de Tudela 2000, p. 300 n. 71.



I 2

Christ as Salvator Mundi, 1572–74

Tempera on panel, 12¾ × 10 in.
(32.5 × 25.5 cm)

Musée Ingres, Montauban, France
(MI.83.5.2)

This work was attributed to Spranger by Oberhuber, despite the fact that the Mannerism usually associated with the artist during his Italian phase and later is present only in small touches, such as the stylized swirl

of fabric at the neck of Christ's pink robe and the contrived curls on the nape of his neck. Otherwise the composition is calm and centered, evoking a Renaissance classicism. The landscape to the right, representing the world that Christ dominates, has a Northern atmosphere tinged with Patiniresque blues and greens. Spranger has masterfully painted the landscape's reflection in the glass globe.

The softness and delicacy of the surface combined with the shimmering

palette make a persuasive connection to Spranger in the early stages of his career in Italy, when he was still partly rooted in the Netherlands but stepping toward the ecclesiastic splendor of Rome. The use of tempera is unusual for Spranger, however, and the face does not reflect his typical morphology. The composition shows an allegiance with earlier renditions of the theme by Dürer (1505; The Metropolitan Museum of Art), Joos van Cleve (ca. 1512; Musée du Louvre, Paris), and others. Despite maintaining a clear continuity with iconographic tradition, Spranger essayed a slightly new interpretation, showing his Christ calmly resting both hands on the world, diverging from the past formula in which Christ holds up his right hand in blessing.

PROVENANCE: Madame Veuve Pendaries, Villebrumier, before 1983; Musée Ingres, from 1988.

LITERATURE: Oberhuber in Schultze 1988, vol. 2, p. 105, cat. no. 574; Vigiuer 1993, no. 178; Kaufmann 2006, p. 404.

COPIES: Painting, Musée Calvet, Avignon (999.2.7).

I 3

Saint George and the Dragon, 1572–77

Oil on oak, 10½ × 15⅝ in. (26.7 × 39.5 cm)
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest (1339)

IN EXHIBITION

The composition and style of this luminous landscape featuring Saint George assert Spranger's allegiance to Giulio Clovio, who painted a very similar composition that is known through an engraving by Cornelis Cort (fig. 35). Vasari's biography of Clovio mentions that Cardinal Farnese sent a painting by Clovio of Saint George killing the dragon to Maximilian II, so Spranger might have seen the original



painting in Rome or Vienna.¹ However, the style of Spranger's *Saint George and the Dragon*—a North-South fusion, with hazy atmosphere and diminutive figures—aligns the work more closely to his Rome period, when van Mander mentioned he was busy painting small landscapes. Objections to the attribution to Spranger, such as those by Henning, have been based on the differences between this landscape and Spranger's other early ones, such as the two in Karlsruhe (cats. 4, 5). However, this can be countered by the fact that it was based on Clovio's painting, which would have limited Spranger's autonomy in composing it.

The near-exact concurrence between the central figures in Spranger's painting and the print after Clovio irrefutably links them, but Spranger's

painting does not replicate Clovio's design. Spranger has placed the three figures closer together, and his princess prayerfully observes the confrontation rather than fleeing in terror. The arched ruins on the left appear fairly similar in both versions, but the landscape on the right varies. Spranger's work extends Clovio's compressed vertical to a horizontal format, allowing him room for a wider view of the lush Netherlandish landscape and for the skulls added in the lower right corner.

NOTES

1. For Clovio's painting, see Vasari 1912, vol. 9, p. 252, and Kukuljević Sakcinski 1852, p. 56.

PROVENANCE: [Bourgeois Brothers, Cologne, 1894].

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1964, p. 173; Pigler 1967, p. 662, no. 1336; Gerszi 1974, no. 18; Henning 1987, p. 194, no. C3; Devisscher 1995, p. 345, cat. no. 197.



Fig. 35. Cornelis Cort (Netherlandish, Hoorn, ca. 1533–1578 Rome), after Giulio Clovio (Croatian, Grižane 1498–1578 Rome). *Saint George and the Dragon*, 1577. Engraving, 11 3/4 × 8 3/4 in. (30 × 22.4 cm). The British Museum, London (1874,0808.1586)



I 4

The Martyrdom of Saint John the Evangelist, 1574

Oil on canvas, 59½ × 47¼ in.

(150 × 120 cm)

San Giovanni a Laterano, Rome

Van Mander mentions that Spranger had a desire to paint “large things” after Pius V died,¹ and *The Martyrdom of Saint John the Evangelist* is indeed one such work painted after 1572. Even though van Mander saw him painting the altarpiece, the painting is listed in early Italian guidebooks as by Federico Zuccaro.² Cardinal Gian Girolamo Albani commissioned Spranger’s work for the small church of San Giovanni a Porta Latina as part of the remodeling campaign of Roman churches in the third quarter of the sixteenth century; it was later transferred to the sacristy of Rome’s largest church, San Giovanni a Laterano.

Highlighted by warm, golden light, Saint John raises his hands in prayer, remaining stoic despite the boiling oil. The Roman emperor Domitian sits in command in the background at upper left, dispensing orders to his henchmen. Domitian had been a notorious persecutor of Christians, even banishing relatives known to have sympathies for the new religion, and during the Counter-Reformation he was invoked as a symbol of the Protestant threat. The renovation of San Giovanni a Porta Latina coincided with a time of intense Counter-Reformation sentiment, so the theme was appropriate.

An obelisk and a Doric column loom in the distance, signifying the old Roman order. A tasseled blue swag above the emperor adds theatricality. On the right, soldiers and citizens witness the barbarous and sacred event. The repoussoir

figures at the front engage the viewer, and one such figure, painted from the back, highlights Spranger’s acuity in anatomy. Marco Pino used the same subject in about August 1568 for an altar painting in the Chapel of Saint John the Evangelist in Rome’s church of SS. Apostoli. Pino’s painting no longer survives, but judging from a drawing that likely preserves his design, it may have influenced Spranger’s conception.³

NOTES

1. Mander 1994, p. 342. 2. Ibid. Crescimbeni 1716, p. 87; Nibby 1838, p. 270. 3. For an illustration and a discussion of the drawing, see Wolk-Simon 1991, p. 37.

PROVENANCE: San Giovanni a Porta Latina, Rome.

LITERATURE: Crescimbeni 1716, p. 87; Nibby 1838, p. 270; Diez 1909, p. 108; Oberhuber 1958, no. G43; Fagiolo and Madonna 1984, p. 389, cat. no. IX.9; Henning 1987, no. A4; Devisscher 1995, p. 48, cat. no. 48.

I 5

The Deposition, ca. 1575

Oil on panel, 5 × 4 in. (12.7 × 10.2 cm)

Private collection, New York

Spranger intensified the emotion of this grief-wrought moment by compressing the figures into a compact space at the foot of the cross. Though



the cross is central to the sacred event, he included only a fraction of its physical structure but cleverly acknowledged its existence by a large shadow cast on Christ, Joseph of Arimathea, and the wife of Cleophas—one of the three Marys present at Christ’s crucifixion (John 19:25). The shadow also delivers an appropriately gloomy aura. Spranger expertly conveyed the limpness of the dead body, in contrast to the active figures of Mary Magdalen, the Virgin Mary, and Saint John. This small work may be a first version of *The Lamentation of Christ* in Munich (cat. 16). The resemblance to Spranger’s *Dead Christ Supported by Angels*, engraved by Hendrick Goltzius (cat. 171), is quite striking; he no doubt developed that design from this painting.

PROVENANCE: Private collection, London, 2010.

LITERATURE: None.

16

The Lamentation of Christ, ca. 1576

Oil on copper, 5⁷/₈ × 4³/₄ in. (15 × 12.1 cm)
Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen,
Munich (2370)

IN EXHIBITION

Inscribed verso: *Fredrico Barroco, disciple de Baptiste de Venise, et il a etudie e Raphale et Corregge / naquit a ___ 1528 / a [...] en histoires, cherchant / des sujets Religieuz a dem? / mourat on 1612.* (Federico Barocci, disciple of Battista Franco and a student of Raphael and Correggio, born in 1528, [...] on histories seeking religious subjects, [...] died in 1612.)

The name of the Italian artist Federico Barocci is etched into the verso of this exquisite small oil on copper, an erroneous attribution made understandable by the Italianate flair of



the composition. The tightly compacted space and figures enhance the drama of the subject. Spranger foreshortened the body of Christ so masterfully that his legs appear to emerge from the picture plane. The small size makes clear that this was conceived as a work for private devotion, which is confirmed by minute details that can only be seen up close, such as the landscape in the upper right corner, presenting Golgotha. That tiny scene of the Crucifixion also reflects Giulio Clovio’s influence. Other details that might go unnoticed at first glance are the golden edge on Mary’s robe and the halo of rays radiating from Christ’s head. He displays his wounds with subdued emotion, but the closeness of his wounded limbs to the viewer

stimulates pathos, despite the Mannerist emphasis of form over content.

The elaborate frame, original to the painting, indicates an aristocratic patron—possibly Maximilian II or Cardinal Farnese. The work shares affinities with others from Spranger’s Italian years, yet it goes one step beyond them in its refined affectation and in the torsion of the central body. The stubby hands with short, pointed fingers relate to earlier works, and the figure of Mary is similar to the Virgin in *The Holy Family with Saint John the Baptist on the Flight into Egypt* (cat. 6). Another small painting, *The Deposition* (cat. 15), also resembles this one: in all three works, Mary wears an elaborately folded white head covering, rosy gown, and marine

blue robe. Christ's radiant halo and the angels are similar to those in *The Deposition*, which could have served as a first version of the more formal and polished *Lamentation of Christ*.

PROVENANCE: Electoral Gallery, Residenz, Munich, eighteenth century.

LITERATURE: Reber 1913, p. 193; Oberhuber 1958, no. G15; Henning 1987, no. A27; Brown and Wheelock 1988, pp. 121–23, cat. no. 28.

17

Christ as Man of Sorrows, ca. 1576
Oil on copper, 8 × 6½ in. (22.4 × 17.7 cm)
Private collection, San Diego; currently on loan to the San Diego Museum of Art

Signed lower center: *BAR.US SPRANGERS FECIT*

This small oil on copper was assumed lost for nearly a hundred years, until surfacing at a Berlin auction in 2012. Having suffered wear and paint loss, it offers an incomplete glimpse of Spranger in his early Vienna phase. Christ sits on a block painted to suggest marble. In the distance, a crowd has gathered as the cross is erected. The Virgin emphatically gestures to the instruments of her son's suffering, pointing to a whip and branches of birch, used in the Flagellation. Saint John the Evangelist, a handsome young man wearing green, places a comforting arm around her. On the right a despondent Mary Magdalen lowers her head in quiet repose, having already prepared the jar of oil to anoint Christ's wounds.

The work seems typical of Spranger's style and subject matter from his days in Italy, but examination of the copper plate on which it is painted suggests a slightly later time frame. The verso of the copper had served as a plate

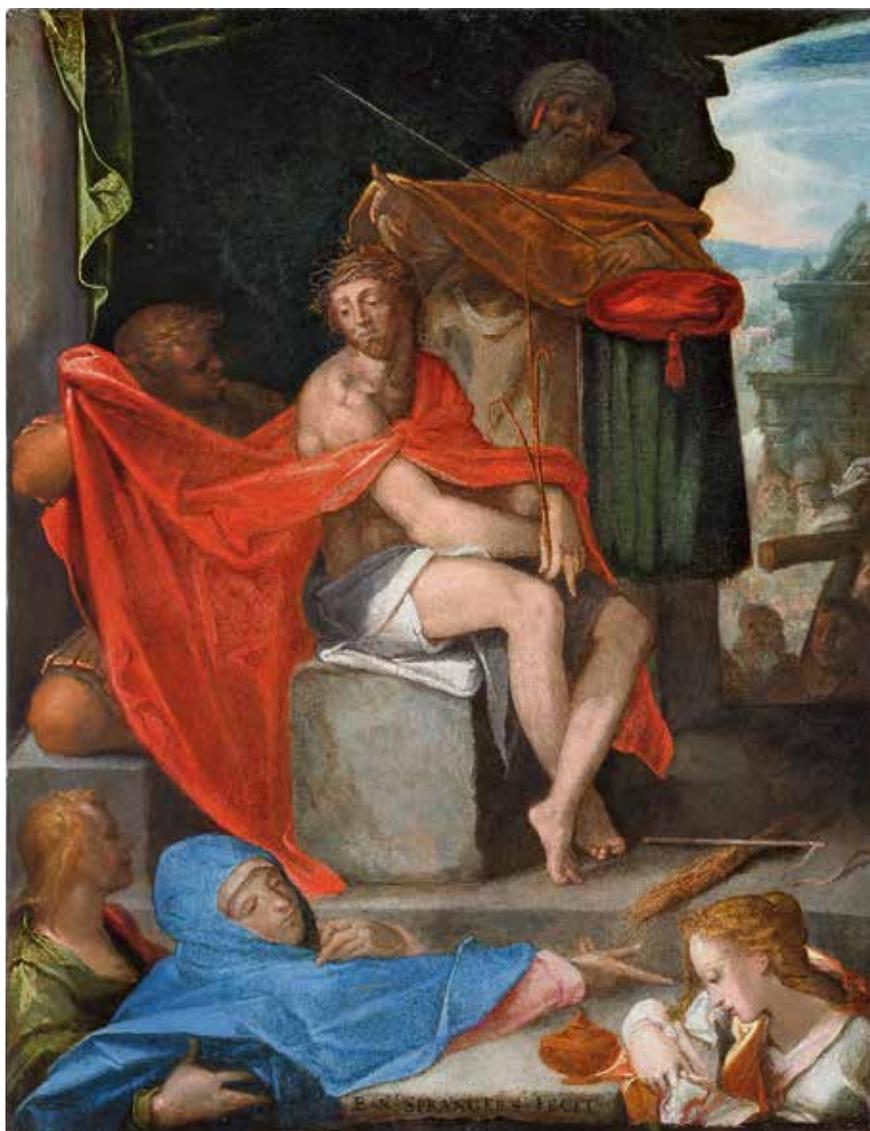
for the engraver Augustin Hirschvogel, who lived in Vienna and worked at court until his death in 1553.¹ Since Spranger recycled the copper plate for his painting, it seems likely that he made the work in Vienna. But, given how Italianate Spranger's painting is, it is possible that Hirschvogel's plate could have traveled back to Italy in the two decades after his death, allowing Spranger to utilize it there for *Christ as Man of Sorrows*.

NOTES

1. Balboa Art Conservation Center Report 2013, conducted by Elizabeth Court, Chief Conservator of Painting; Janet Ruggles, Director and Chief Conservator of Paper; and Conservation Technician Erick Gude.

PROVENANCE: Friedrich von Amerling estate (sold, Dorotheum, Vienna, May 3, 1916, no. 71); [Galerie Bassenge, Berlin, 2012].

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, no. G68; Henning 1987, no. A59; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.82.





18

The Resurrection of Christ, 1576

Oil on panel, 44³/₈ × 33¹/₂ in.

(112.5 × 85 cm)

Royal Canonry of Premonstratensians

at Strahov, Prague (O-542)

IN EXHIBITION

Heavenly gold envelops Christ as he ascends above the somnolent guards. The red seal still intact on the tomb indicates the miraculous nature of his arising, and there is an aspect of

ethereality in his figure suggested by his legs, which appear solid yet weightless. Visible to the far right is an extensive village, juxtaposing everyday life with this paranormal scene.

This painting has long been considered to be the epitaph for the Imperial Hospital in Vienna mentioned by van Mander, which would make it among the first works Spranger painted for Maximilian II.¹ Van Mander explicitly refers to the work as an epitaph, but the absence of donors in this painting seems

atypical of such memorializing works. Fučíková argues that this painting was instead made for the *Kunstammer*,² and indeed it may not be the one mentioned by van Mander. However, if it was a royal commission, the absence of donors would be understandable, and in fact, van Mander does not state that Maximilian ordered the work for the hospital, rather that the Imperial Hospital was its present location.

As Spranger painted this near the beginning of 1576, the work evokes Giulio Clovio, bringing to mind his *Resurrection* in the *Towneley Lectionary* (fig. 36). Spranger would also have no doubt been inspired by Hendrick van den Broeck's *Resurrection* fresco in the Sistine Chapel, completed about 1572, when Spranger was in Rome.³ Though he has not replicated that composition, there are certain affinities.

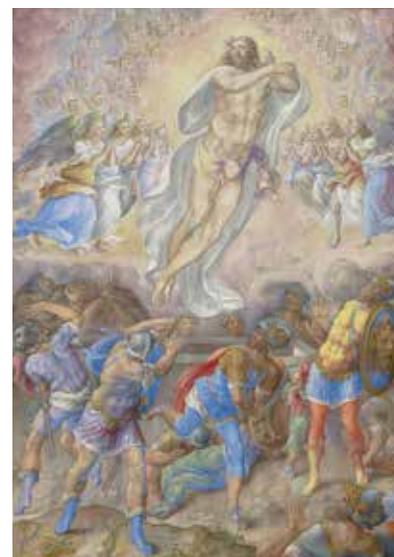


Fig. 36. Giulio Clovio (Croatian, Grizane 1498–1578 Rome). *The Resurrection*, from *Gospel Lectionary* (*Towneley Lectionary*), Rome, ca. 1550–60 (and possibly later). Illuminated manuscript on vellum; in Latin. The New York Public Library, Manuscripts and Archives Division



Spranger masterfully fused the two modes of the monumental and the miniature, drawing on his Roman altar painted a couple of years before, *The Martyrdom of Saint John the Evangelist* (cat. 14)—particularly the central figure of the muscular yet diminutive Saint John.

Spranger had already tackled the theme of the Resurrection earlier in his career, when his master in Lyon challenged him to paint a religious subject to demonstrate his skills. The present work is not that French-period *Resurrection*, but it might offer clues to the earlier composition.

NOTES

1. Mander 1994, p. 345. 2. Fučíková in Daniel 2003, p. 97, and in Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 404, cat. no. I.75. 3. Hendrick van den Broeck's fresco of the Resurrection is on the wall at the entrance to the Sistine Chapel; for an image, see http://mv.vatican.va/3_EN/pages/CSN/CSN_Ingresso.html.

PROVENANCE: Maximilian II (1527–1576); possibly Imperial Hospital, Vienna; Royal Canonry of Premonstratensians at Strahov, 1836; Národní Galerie, Prague, 1950; Royal Canonry of Premonstratensians at Strahov, from 1992.

LITERATURE: Strahov Library Manuscript, no. DU I.11, 1836; Diez 1909, p. 115; Backmund 1949; Oberhuber 1958, no. G25; Henning 1987, no. A7; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.1; Schultze 1988, vol. 1, p. 274, cat. no. 152; Fučíková et al. 1997, cat. no. I.75; Daniel 2003, p. 97.

I 9

Mercury Carries Psyche to Mount Olympus, ca. 1576–77

Oil on canvas, 36³/₈ × 52 in. (93 × 132 cm)

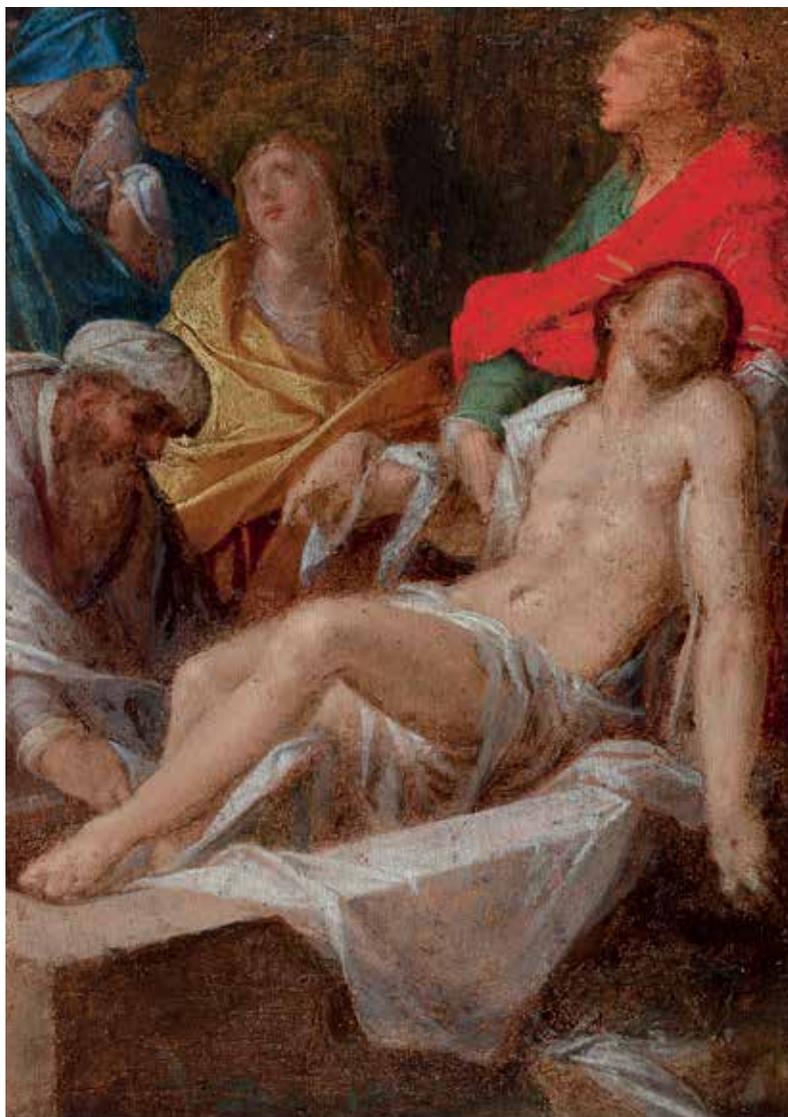
Location unknown

Spranger depicted the dynamic moment from the myth of Cupid and Psyche as Mercury transports her to heaven to meet her bridegroom: “Then he [Jupiter] ordered Psyche to be brought by Mercury and introduced into heaven. Handing her a cup of ambrosia, he said ‘Take this, Psyche, and be immortal. Never shall Cupid leave the tie that binds you, but this

marriage shall be perpetual for you both.”¹ For over half a century, this painting has been considered lost or destroyed, but the recent discovery of a secret collection of art held by Cornelius Gurlitt in Munich may reveal its existence.² The painting marks an important milestone in Spranger’s career. According to van Mander, he painted a work on this theme during the hiatus between the death of Maximilian in 1576 and the arrival of Rudolf in Vienna six months later.³ Spranger gave the painting to Rudolf, and the subject matches that of entry number 879 in the 1621 *Kunstammer* inventory.

The Northern landscape at lower right is easily overlooked among the crowd of figures, but it signifies Spranger’s aesthetic loyalties at this juncture. The facial expressions are similar to those in other works from about this time. For example, the female goddess seen in profile on the far right bears a striking resemblance to Saint Catherine’s profile in his painting *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine with Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist* (cat. 23). The figure of Psyche, in particular, displays a stiffness and absence of inner modeling characteristic of earlier work by Spranger, not as confident or exuberant as in his later years. A delicacy combined with the monumental in miniature also connects the painting to Spranger’s pre-Prague career. A review of the painting when it appeared at auction provides the only clues concerning its palette, describing the “unleashed corporeality heightened through the yellow of the fluttering material.”⁴

Mercury and Psyche appear again in two related drawings. A red chalk drawing in Hamburg depicts the couple in a slightly modified pose (cat. 100).



Another drawing of the same subject, with variations but of similar dimensions, is in the Szépművészeti Múzeum in Budapest (58.420). Its style of draftsmanship more closely resembles work by van Mander and Jan Harmensz. Muller, so that sheet might be a copy after an original preparatory drawing by Spranger for this painting.

NOTES

1. Apuleius 1990, p. 115 (5–9). 2. Cornelius Gurlitt died during the preparation of this manuscript, in

May 2014. He bequeathed his collection to the Kunstmuseum Bern, so it may take several more years to determine if this painting was indeed in his collection. 3. Mander 1994, p. 342. 4. Gurlitt 1962, no. 61.

PROVENANCE: *Kunstammer* of Rudolf II (1621 inventory, no. 879); (International Kunst und Auktionshaus, Berlin, May 9, 1933, no. 231); [Wolfgang Gurlitt Galerie, Munich, 1965, no. 61].

LITERATURE: Diez 1909, p. 125; Oberhuber 1958, no. G18; Gurlitt 1962, no. 61; Henning 1987, no. A8; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.3.

20

The Entombment, 1577–80

Oil on panel, 6⁵/₁₆ × 4⁷/₁₆ in. (16 × 11.3 cm)

Národní Galerie v Praze, Prague
(Schwarzenberg Palace) (DO-10564)

Despite extensive restoration and the resulting poor condition, *The Entombment* typifies Spranger's work from his late Vienna period. A Northern gravitas separates it from the grace and fluid buoyancy of his works made in Rome. In the upper left corner, the weeping Virgin Mary wears blue. Saint John the Evangelist, in his traditional red robe, stands above Christ and looks into the distance, seemingly contemplating the future fate of humankind. Mary Magdalen wears yellow, the color of a prostitute. At the left, Joseph of Arimathea wraps a cloth under the body in preparation for depositing it into the tomb. A faint halo of rays emanates from Christ.

Spranger expertly crafted the composition in terms of figural placement, in particular the dominating position of the body of Christ, whose outstretched body creates a gentle diagonal. The small format suggests this was not an official commission—indeed, Spranger may have painted *The Entombment* in the period between his service to Maximilian and to Rudolf, and the subject might relate to the death of Maximilian.

PROVENANCE: National Fund for Renovation, Prague, 1949.

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, no. G24; Henning 1987, no. A6; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 403, cat. no. 1.73; Kotková 1999, no. 66 (with further literature); Daniel 2003, pp. 95–96.



21

The Presentation in the Temple,
1578–80

Oil on panel, 30⁷/₈ × 21¹/₄ in. (78.5 × 54 cm)

Martin von Wagner Museum, Universität
Würzburg (F 1407)

Spranger's painting illustrates a scene from Luke (2:22–39), when Mary and Joseph take the Baby Jesus to the Temple to be blessed. The event became an early Christian feast day, known as Candlemas, when the mother

of a newborn child would be purified in a ritual that included an offering of two turtledoves and a candlelight procession. The painting shows Simeon the priest holding the Christ Child while Joseph looks on, holding a candle. A kneeling woman presents two turtledoves in a basket as sacrifice. The prophetess Anna stands before the platform.

Dacos attributes *The Presentation in the Temple* to Joos van Winghe, and Henning also rejects the attribution to Spranger, favoring the more general “Italian Mannerist” label. He bases his objections on the fact that the painting shares little with Spranger’s works from 1580–81 or later, the date suggested by previous scholars.¹ Nonetheless, the painting exhibits many affinities with other works securely attributed to Spranger. Oberhuber proposes that Spranger may have painted it for the private chapel of a Prague merchant.² The facial features and the physical volume of the figures, as well as the drapery style, point to a date early in Spranger’s career, before his official Prague appointment. Indeed, the static posture of the figures and the disjointed composition make the doubts of Dacos and Henning somewhat understandable. However, the pose of the Christ Child and his visage call to mind the Child in the Brussels *Flight into Egypt* (cat. 7), and other figures in *The Presentation in the Temple* relate to those in Spranger’s early *Christ as Man of Sorrows* (cat. 17). At the time of Henning’s analysis, Spranger’s known oeuvre from his early days in Italy was still slim, which made it difficult to identify works. But an expanded body of works from that period has now made it easier to assess them accurately.



Though it features striking Mannerist colors, the painting has darkened over time; when it entered the collection in 1969, the restorer noted the presence of heavy overpainting.³

NOTES

1. Kaufmann (1988, no. 20.13) notes Oertel’s attribution to Spranger. 2. According to my correspondence with the collection curator, Dr. Tilman Kossatz, Oberhuber published *The Presentation in the Temple* as a new acquisition in the *Kalender der Bayerischen Versicherungskammer* (January–February 1964) and dated it to Spranger’s Prague years, 1580–88. 3. Correspondence with Dr. Tilman Kossatz.

PROVENANCE: Heinrich Z. Schulz, Koblenz-Pfaffendorf, 1958; Martin von Wagner Museum, Universität Würzburg, from 1969.

LITERATURE: Ragaller 1969, p. 51; Hoffmann and Koppe 1986, pp. 181–82; Henning 1987,

no. C34; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.13; Dacos 1990, pp. 39–40, 46.

COPIES: Drawing, private collection, Belgium.

22

Saint Barbara, ca. 1579

Oil on panel, 12½ × 10½ in.

(31.7 × 26.6 cm)

Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest (352)

Inscribed verso (by a later hand): *F. Fluris und P[B]artolom. Spranger.*

This painting and others nearly brought financial ruin to the Hungarian aristocrat-scholar Jankovich Miklós (1772–1846), who indulged his enormous appetite for collecting until

his family was on the brink of bankruptcy. Today, the Miklós collection is a major component of the Szépművészeti Múzeum. In his handwritten Latin inventory, Miklós mistakenly identifies the subject of the painting as Saint Catherine, but the tower in the right background unmistakably alludes to Saint Barbara.¹ The tower in fact appears twice, the saint being shown imprisoned in the tower, and the tower itself being viewed from her window.

Saint Barbara is from Spranger's Vienna period. The Italian Mannerism that characterizes the saint is strikingly juxtaposed with the more Northern landscape—a combination that makes a compelling case for Spranger at the crossroads of the Alps. As one of his few half-length figures, it is somewhat atypical, yet certain elements of the composition perfectly reflect his approach to religious subjects, such as the stiff drapery and the narrative scene through the window at right, which adds drama and deep perspective. The palette of velvety reds, greens, and golds is also typical, as are the pearls woven through the young woman's hair. The sculptural saint appears a trifle cold and artificial, suggesting her remoteness from quotidian life. Most typical for Spranger is Barbara's crown, a prototype of those that would appear in several later compositions (cats. 30, 33, 34). In stylistic approach, *Saint Barbara* can be compared to *Angelica and Medoro* (cat. 25), another relatively early work.

NOTES

1. Inventory by Jankovich Miklós, n.d., curatorial files, Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest.

PROVENANCE: Jankovich Miklós (inventory no. 39, as Saint Catherine), before 1836; Magyar Nemzeti Galéria, Budapest, 1877; Szépművészeti Múzeum, from 1906.

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, no. G3; Pigler

1967, no. 352; Henning 1987, no. A15; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.12; Jávör 2002, p. 73, cat. no. 18 (with extensive literature).

23

The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine with Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist, ca. 1579

Oil on fruitwood, 32½ × 26⅛ in.

(82.5 × 66.4 cm)

Private collection, London

IN EXHIBITION

Previously published as a work from Spranger's Italian period, *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* is in fact one of the works he painted during the hiatus between the death of Maximilian and his official appointment with Rudolf. Connections with his Italianate style are not unfounded, for the Joseph figure recalls the one in his *Holy Family with Saint John the Baptist on the Flight into Egypt*, a miniature work from his Italian years (cat. 6). Also harking back to Italy





in terms of Spranger's style is the Christ Child, whose face strongly resembles the Child in *The Flight into Egypt* in Brussels (cat. 7). Despite these Italian antecedents, the figures have a solidity and a courtly austerity distinct from his Italian approach. Rich green drapery heightens the visual drama, and the charming putto softens the pervasive rigor. The vibrant color and increased volume of drapery mark the evolution of Spranger's style as well. The aloofness of the Madonna, her overall coolness of emotion and gesture, also indicates that Spranger has transitioned from ecclesiastic to imperial aesthetics.

PROVENANCE: Benjamin and Mary Siddons Measy Foundation; (Sotheby Parke Bernet, New York, June 12, 1975, no. 104); [Richard Feigen, New York]; [Noortman & Brod, New York, 1981]; [Colnaghi, London and New York, 1982].

LITERATURE: Henning 1987, no. C35; Kaufmann 2006; Kräfner 2009, p. 56.

24

The Competition between Apollo and Pan, 1579–83

Oil on panel, 15⁵/₈ × 52¹/₄ in.
(39.9 × 132.5 cm)

Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg (1100); on long-term loan from the

Alte Pinakothek, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich

IN EXHIBITION

Inscribed verso: *Anno 1760 / No. 811 / In Nymphenburg. Carl van Mander. Ein urtheil des Königs Midas / in gegenwart einiger wasser götter und Nymphen, von den 9 Musen, über den wett=streit des Apollo mit dem Pan, welcher über beyden in der Music den Vorzug habe - 2171, 1980 und 2806* (In Nymphenburg. Carl van Mander. A judgment of King Midas in the competition between Apollo and Pan, who is the best in music, in the presence of a few water gods and nymphs, the nine Muses)

The musical theme, elongated shape, and placement of particular marks in the wood indicate this painting likely served as a lid for a virginal or some other keyboard instrument. Spranger has filled the panel with so many interesting figures and details that the central theme is nearly obscured, a typical Mannerist trope of intentional ambiguity. Pan reclines languidly on his animal skins while Apollo entertains Midas and the other guests. Gods, goddesses, and the Muses gather to witness their musical competition. The judge, King Midas (easily identified by his golden crown), is about to declare Pan the

victor, gesturing toward him even as Apollo continues to play. But Midas will suffer the wrath of Apollo, who makes donkey ears sprout from his head to punish such a foolish lapse in taste and judgment.

Spranger cleverly places two trees to bracket the group and create a sense of depth in an otherwise flat, horizontal perspective. Gestures and glances direct the eye back and forth to the left or the right, adding dynamism to the work. Water pours from the jug of a river god at left, who is accompanied by a bare-breasted female demurely looking away from the competition. Spranger counterbalances the horizontality of the scene by placing a satyr in the tree above Midas, attracting the eye upward. The landscape is deftly composed, and the tree trunks and feathery leaves are typical of Spranger.

Diez rejects the panel as by Spranger, suggesting a possible attribution to Joachim Anthonisz Wtewael. A seal from 1760 on the back of the painting identifies it as by van Mander. Although Kaufmann dates it to the mid-1580s, linking it to Spranger's *Vulcan and Maia* (cat. 44), this painting should be dated a few years earlier, as the forms are slightly more subtle

and less physical than those in *Vulcan and Maia*. The standing female nude on the right brings to mind two other females from Spranger's earlier Prague works: Angelica in *Angelica and Medoro* and Scylla from *Glauco and Scylla* (cats. 25, 26). Thus, this work was created before the mid-1580s, at the beginning of Spranger's years in Prague, likely during his period of independence before being officially invited to court.

PROVENANCE: Nymphenburg Palace, Munich, 1760; Kurfürstlichen Galerie, Munich (Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich, 1799 inventory, no. 811); Galerie Schleissheim, Munich (Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, 1822 inventory, no. 2171); Alte Pinakothek, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, December 1, 1920; loan to Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, 1920.

LITERATURE: Diez 1909, p. 134; Oberhuber 1958, no. G20; Henning 1987, no. A26; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.38; Hess and Hirschfelder 2010, pp. 272, 439 (with extensive literature).

25

Angelica and Medoro, ca. 1581
Oil on canvas, 42½ × 31½ in. (108 × 80 cm)
Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen,
Munich (10000)

IN EXHIBITION

Derided by Rensselaer W. Lee as “grotesque and grossly unpoetical,” Spranger's painting depicts a subject from Ludovico Ariosto's epic *Orlando Furioso* (1532), a source rarely used by painters at that time.¹ Such a choice demonstrates Spranger's inventiveness and Rudolf's penchant for the esoteric. Lee's critique serves as reminder that Spranger's work was made for the pleasure of a specific patron—and hence did not need universal appeal.

Having rejected the heroic knight Orlando, Angelica fell in love with Medoro, a Saracen soldier wounded in battle. Medoro's armor refers to his profession as warrior; the helmet, familiar from other Spranger compositions, must have been a prop in the studio. Angelica had nursed his wounds with the juice of the herb dittany, and as a sign of his love, he is carving their initials in a tree (the dripping red ink alludes to his wounds). Spranger focuses

on the couple's amorous fervor, signaled by Angelica's slung leg over Medoro as well as by the gesture of recording their initials. On the left is a waterfall, barely visible, that gently bathes Angelica's right foot. The gloomy atmosphere foreshadows darker times ahead: Angelica's love for Medoro would drive Orlando to insanity, and his wrath would, in turn, bring tragedy to Angelica.

This large canvas formed part of a series of mythological paintings for





Rudolf that decorated Prague Castle. The figures are flat, the thinness of the paint surface contributing to this effect; shadows are present, but they are subtle, not yet the strong contrasts found in Spranger's works of the late 1590s and 1600s. The figures completely fill the canvas and are brought very close to the picture plane. Some stylistic awkwardness can be detected, which reinforces an earlier date for *Angelica and Medoro*: Angelica's breasts are rather lopsided, and her right arm is abnormally long, even for a Mannerist heroine. The blue ribbon draped across her chest does not lie quite right, and the hands of both figures appear unnaturally large. The work stems from about the same time as *Glaucus and Scylla* (cat. 26), but the figures are flatter, the execution more Zuccaresque, the coloring more Italian Mannerist, and the drapery stylized and flamboyant.

NOTES

1. Lee 1977, p. 37. For Ariosto, see *Orlando Furioso*, Book 19 (1532).

PROVENANCE: [Kunsthandslung Sandor, Munich, 1935].

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, no. G17; Lee 1977, p. 25; Dempsey 1979, p. 324; Steingraber 1986, p. 508; Henning 1987, no. A9; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.5; Nancy 2013, p. 272, cat. no. 90.

26

Glaucus and Scylla, ca. 1581–82
Oil on canvas, 43³/₈ × 31⁷/₈ in. (110 × 81 cm)
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
(GG_2615)

Once Spranger was officially installed at the Prague imperial court in 1581, he created a magnificent series of works for Rudolf paying homage to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Their content, composition, and size unite

them. Predominantly focused on couples' struggles of love and desire, these works harbor recondite symbolism entwined with tales of transformation and alchemic metaphors. Here, an ominously dark sky and sea foretell the perils of unrequited love and jealousy. The myth recounts that the old fisherman Glaucus fell in love with the beautiful maiden Scylla, whose voluptuous appeal Spranger made palpable. Attempting to seduce her, Glaucus transforms himself into a sea god; his upswept tail is a witty double entendre of male lust. Repulsed by his advances and by his tail, Scylla rejects him. Unrelenting, Glaucus implores the enchantress Circe to convince Scylla to return his advances. But his plan backfires. Circe becomes jealous of Scylla and turns her into a dangerous monster, dreaded by all sailors.¹

A drawing copying Spranger's painting bears the inscription "Glaucus & Cilla anno 1586," providing a terminus ante quem for this work and affirming that it is one of the artist's earlier Prague allegories. Kaufmann notes that Glaucus's torsion, musculature, and beard closely resemble those of Joseph in the engraving by Johannes Sadeler I of Spranger's *Holy Family with Musical Angels and Infant Saint John the Baptist*, dated 1581 (cat. 174).² Glaucus is also nearly a quote of the river god's facial morphology in *The Competition between Apollo and Pan* (cat. 24), and the serpentine contrapposto of Scylla is indebted to a Muse in the right foreground of that work. Based on comparative evidence and overall stylistic chronology, this painting can be confidently placed in the early 1580s. Spranger shows improved skill at arranging his composition. Scylla's pearly flesh tones and iridescent drapery emerge effectively from

the darker background of sea green. The shape of Glaucus's tail is echoed in the distant cliffs behind him, representing the deadly straits of Scylla and Charybdis.

The story of Glaucus and Scylla, derived from Ovid, is rarely represented in art, especially at this time. Other themes depicted by Spranger, such as Angelica and Medoro and Hercules and Omphale, are also unusual—interestingly, all emphasize the power of women and associated dangers, a *bête noire* for the troubled bachelor Rudolf. *Glaucus and Scylla* ignited Spranger's loves of the gods series destined for the Kunstkammer, which also includes *Hermaphroditus and the Nymph Salmacis* (cat. 27). Kaufmann remarks that the divergent flesh tones, gestures, and poses in these two works are complementary, expressing humor and an "epigrammatic" quality. He notes that this contrasted with the more "epic" poeise of Italian Renaissance painting in ways consistent with the combination of seriousness and wit frequently found in RudolFINE art.

NOTES

1. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 13.898–968 and 14.1–74.
2. As mentioned by Kaufmann (1988, no. 20.9), the engraving is dedicated to Wolfgang Rumpf, with whom Spranger associated around 1580, so the date of this painting may be close to that.
3. For an illustration, see Haberditzl 1913, p. 98 (as Goltzius).

PROVENANCE: Kunstkammer of Rudolf II.

LITERATURE: Mechel 1783, p. 273, no. 38; Diez 1909, p. 119; Haberditzl 1913, p. 98; Oberhuber 1958, nos. G53, Z123; Vienna 1965, no. 363; Henning 1987, no. A12; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.9; Schultze 1988, vol. 2, p. 107, cat. no. 576.

COPIES: Drawings, Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig, Rensi Collection (vol. 3, p. 99); Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (C7142); Arnold Skutezky, Rajhrad, Czech Republic.³



27

Hermaphroditus and the Nymph

Salmacis, ca. 1581–82

Oil on canvas, 43³/₈ × 31⁷/₈ in. (110 × 81 cm)

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

(GG_2614)

This tale of unrequited love and transformation between the nymph Salmacis and the handsome

young god Hermaphroditus pulsates with sexual tension.¹ Spranger's dark palette intensifies the voyeuristic and erotic undertones. Salmacis disrobes for Hermaphroditus, and for the viewer, slightly shielding her face. Pulling on her sandal strap, she seems rife with desire as she watches the unknowing Hermaphroditus. Her serpentine bun

suggests her role as seductress and sinner, akin to Eve, who was often depicted with serpentine curls alluding to the snake who tempted her. Konečný notes that Spranger closely followed the classical sculpture *Boy with Thorn* in Rome for Hermaphroditus. The painting's alchemic leanings have already been noted in the "Life" essay in this volume (see page 51).

NOTES

1. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 4.317–88.

PROVENANCE: Kunstkammer of Rudolf II.

LITERATURE: Mechel 1783, p. 273, no. 39; Vienna 1965, no. 361; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.8; Schultze 1988, vol. 2, pp. 106–7, cat. no. 575; Konečný 1989–90; Ferino-Pagden et al. 1991, p. 115, pl. 355.

COPIES: Drawings, auction catalogue for the Pieter de Boer collection, Galerie Sabrina Förster, Düsseldorf, 1993, no. 6; auction catalogue, Reiss & Sohn, Königstein im Taunus, Germany, October 29, 2010, no. 251.

28

Hercules, Dejanira, and the Centaur

Nessus, ca. 1581–84

Oil on canvas, 44¹/₈ × 32³/₈ in. (112 × 82 cm)

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

(GG_2613)

Spranger has studied his painting with all the sex and drama of a Hollywood melodrama. The subject, from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, centers on rape, jealousy, and tragedy.¹ Hercules embraces his wife, Dejanira, after killing the centaur Nessus, who had attempted to rape her while carrying her across a swollen river. But marital bliss is elusive, as witnessed by the rather malevolent putto hanging in the tree making the cornuto gesture, which alludes to cuckoldry. Despite her rescue, Dejanira suspects that Hercules has betrayed her, and attempting to regain his love, she

will later give him Nessus's blood-soaked shirt in the deluded belief that it holds a love potion. She is gravely mistaken, having been tricked by the vengeful Nessus. The centaur's toxic blood staining the shirt would prove a fatally painful gift.

The composition is striking in its eroticism and Mannerist conceits of splayed limbs, intertwined bodies, and elision of spatial depth. The corpse of Nessus is starkly foreshortened, his torso dramatically pressed into the lower left corner. An engraving by Giovanni Jacopo Caraglio after Perino del Vaga's *Vulcan and Ceres* has been noted as a possible source for this evocative presentation,² but as Spranger's solution shows greater invention and artifice, Caraglio's design must be seen as starting point rather than model. The muddy brown background evokes the riverbank of the tumultuous scene and enhances the vivid, sculptural flesh and fabrics.

An inventory from about 1610–19 records ten paintings by Spranger, describing them as “10 poetische mittelstuckh” (ten poetic, or mythological, medium-size pieces).³ Indeed, this disturbingly erotic painting agrees with that description. These paintings, which were set into the walls of Rudolf's *Kunst-kammer*, had similar dimensions and complementary compositions, which makes a strong case for identifying the inventory entry as a reference to Spranger's loves of the gods series. Dejanira's face and body closely resemble those of her counterpart in *Glaucus and Scylla* (cat. 26); the contrast of darker-skinned male and white female is also similar. The red velvet cloth is comparable to the one in *Hermaphroditus and the Nymph Salmacis* (cat. 27), which suggests that it might have been a



studio prop. Spranger later devoted his pen to the theme as well, in the drawing *Hercules, Dejanira, and Nessus* (cat. 124), but in that case, he focused on the centaur's brazen act of violence and the ensuing commotion.

NOTES

1. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 9.103–33. 2. Kaufmann (1988, no. 20.6) credits Antal (1966, p. 74) with first mentioning this connection with Caraglio's *Vulcan and Ceres*. For the engraving, see Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest (6750). 3. For the

inventory, see Vienna Inventory, ca. 1610–19, document 19446, no. 70, in Köhler 1907, p. vii.

PROVENANCE: *Kunst-kammer* of Rudolf II.

LITERATURE: Diez 1909, p. 121; Oberhuber 1958, nos. G54, Z85; Vienna 1965, no. 364; Antal 1966, p. 74; Wegner 1973, p. 29, no. 117, with pl.; Henning 1987, no. A10; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.6; Schultze 1988, vol. 1, cat. no. 154; Ferino-Pagden et al. 1991, p. 115, pl. 355; Chambéry 1995, p. 64.

COPIES: Drawing, Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München (1042).



29

Saint Luke Painting the Virgin, 1582
Oil on copper, 7¼ × 4⅝ in. (18.3 × 12 cm)
Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen,
Munich (14357)

IN EXHIBITION

Signed and dated on back of easel: *Barttolomeus Spranger den / 24. September Fecitt. / 1582.*

The signature on this grisaille on copper indicates the exact date of execution, suggesting that Spranger

finished it in one day. Such a precise signature is unusual for him, so the date must have been significant. *Saint Luke Painting the Virgin* was completed while Spranger was accompanying the emperor at the Augsburg Diet. Measuring just over 7 by 4 inches, this work was easily portable and could have been painted while Spranger was in Augsburg or even on the road to Vienna.

The Virgin Mary appears to Luke as a vision, rather than a physical reality as in the painting by Rogier van der Weyden of the same subject (1483; Alte Pinakothek, Munich). The diminutive figures relate precisely to Spranger's aesthetic in the early 1580s, as does their compression to fit the

small format. Raphael Sadeler I engraved Spranger's design, which indicates that it functioned as a preparatory work (cat. 175), though this purpose is refuted by Fučíková. The two angels to the left in the painting are difficult to see, but they resemble angels in other prints after Spranger. Traditionally, a drawing or sketch would function as a preliminary design for a painting, whereas in this case Spranger's grisaille served the print, making it an early example in Northern art of an oil sketch executed as a preparatory

design for a print.¹ An der Heiden, in fact, suggests it was likely the first oil sketch in the North to serve as a preparatory work for a print.² The practice became more common in the seventeenth century, particularly in the workshops of Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony van Dyck, but it was rare in the earlier generation of painters and engravers.

NOTES

1. Heiden 1998, p. 280. 2. Ibid. He also mentions (p. 278) the famous painting, attributed to an artist of the Raphael School, in the Accademia di San Luca (formerly the church of Santi Luca e Martina), Rome, which would have been known by Spranger and may have served as initial inspiration.

PROVENANCE: [Kunsthandel Xaver Scheidwimmer, Munich]; [Munich dealer, 1974].

LITERATURE: Heiden 1976; Steingraber 1986, pp. 507–8; Henning 1987, no. A17; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.18; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 404, cat. no. I.74; Heiden 1998, pp. 278–80.

30

Saint Ursula, ca. 1584
Oil on panel, 63 × 49¼ in. (160 × 125 cm)
Lithuanian Art Museum, Vilnius (T-3995)

This large panel painting went to Vilnius, Lithuania, in the first decade of the twentieth century as part of the collection of the noble family of Tiškevičius (Tyszkiewicz). The owner of *Saint Ursula*, Josef Tyszkiewicz, visited his uncle in Rome about 1904, where he purchased furniture and artwork for his palace in Lentvaris. He moved on to Milan, where he maintained an antique shop from 1904 to 1906. When he returned to Vilnius in 1907 (then in Czarist Russia), he took many old master works in addition to *Saint Ursula*, which he placed in his Lentvaris Palace.



The composition and iconography of this large panel painting are fairly traditional. Spranger depicted Saint Ursula again in a painting now in the Strahov Monastery collection (cat. 39). Both figures are portrayed in a similar vein, with cape outstretched to shelter the faithful, and both have female martyrs

under their protection, but this Saint Ursula is depicted frontally and more as an icon. Spranger composed the *Saint Ursula* seen here by fusing Renaissance pyramidal symmetry with Mannerist poses and subtle diagonals. Standing in the center, Saint Ursula commands much of the picture surface, vertically

and horizontally. Already wearing a crown, she is about to be further honored by a garland of flowers held by putti; the putto on the left holds her palm of martyrdom. The curator of the Vilnius collection, Dalia Tarandaitė, has suggested that the male figure on the left wearing the papal tiara is a portrait of Pius V.



Stylistically, Saint Ursula represents Spranger's late Vienna and early Prague style. The drapery remains somewhat stiff. Ursula's facial features in particular relate to Spranger's other females of this era, featuring heavy-lidded eyes and rounded faces; see, for example, Dejanira in *Hercules, Dejanira, and the Centaur Nessus* (cat. 28) and the various women in *The Competition between Apollo and Pan* (cat. 24). A related drawing (formerly Nebhay auction house) shows the painting as part of an aedicule altarpiece, encircled by an elaborate frame (cat. 105). The drawing introduces the design of this painting nearly exactly. A much smaller but very similar version of this work, not by Spranger, is in the Blanton Museum in Austin, Texas.

PROVENANCE: Rome, then Milan, 1800s; Josef Tyszkiewicz (1865–1936); Lentvaris Palace, Vilnius, 1907; Society of Friends of Science, Vilnius, 1914; Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, 1940; Museum of Lithuania (later the Lithuanian Art Museum), from 1941.

LITERATURE: Henning 1987, no. A18; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.26; Tarandaitė 2003, p. 82 (with earlier literature).

31

Saint Wenceslas and Saint Vitus,

ca. 1584–86

Oil on oak, 50 × 28³/₈ in. (127 × 72 cm)

Národní Galerie v Praze, Prague (O-11160);

on deposit from the Zámecká Galerie,
Duchcov, Czech Republic

32

Saint Sigismund and Saint Adalbert,

ca. 1584–86

Oil on oak, 50 × 28³/₈ in. (127 × 72 cm)

Národní Galerie v Praze, Prague (O-11159);

on deposit from the Zámecká Galerie,
Duchcov, Czech Republic

These paintings of Bohemian patron saints have suffered an identity crisis. Early inventories attributed them successively to Hans von Aachen, “Anonymous early German school,” and “Italian master of the 16th century.”¹ In 1972 Fučíková changed the attribution to Spranger and also linked the work to Dürer’s Apostle paintings now in the Alte Pinakothek in Munich. Kaufmann additionally points out the influence of Dürer’s print of the patron saints of Austria. These references to Dürer are not surprising, given that Spranger’s patron Rudolf was a connoisseur and an avid collector of Dürer who would stop at nothing to acquire his works. Rudolf’s enthusiasm for the German master was, in fact, responsible for the flowering of a so-called Dürer Renaissance. Spranger, too, was infused with Dürer’s spirit and is known to have purchased books by him, making notations in their margins.²

The paintings represent a detour for Spranger in both subject matter and style. His sensuous Mannerism is nowhere to be found, replaced by sincerity and directness. Yet Spranger’s hand can clearly be recognized in the dignity of representation, parallel to his earlier painting *Christ as Salvator Mundi* (cat. 12), and in the stylistic nuances he was now developing, such as the expertly modeled drapery, costume flourishes, elegant contrapposto (in this case, of Saint Vitus), and engaging expressions. Spranger repeated Saint Wenceslas’s visage nearly exactly for Saint Sigismund, and such repetition is not atypical for the artist. He spared no detail in rendering Saint Adalbert’s cope with the saint embroidered on it, his miter bedecked with jewels, even his glove. Attributes are minimal in both paintings, which are more iconic than didactic. As a result, Saint Adalbert has





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been misidentified as Saint Procopius, but Kotková maintains he is Adalbert, citing his crozier encrusted with statuettes, including one of Saint Paul.

Questions remain regarding the original function of these two works; Fučíková remarks that they were destined for Rudolf's *Kunstammer*, thus serving a merely aesthetic purpose.³ Yet the tall vertical shape of the panels,

coupled with the iconography of four patron saints of Bohemia, seems to indicate more a religious intent — perhaps originally they were altar wings for a Bohemian church.

NOTES

1. Šafařík and Preiss (1967, p. 10, cat. no. 1) describe these works as in the manner of Hans von Aachen, but these saints have little in common with his current known oeuvre; the solidly classical forms, in particular, show no resemblance to von Aachen.

2. Schauerte 2006. 3. Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 35, cat. no. I.82.

PROVENANCE (CATS. 31 AND 32): Count Albrecht von Waldstein (1583–1634); Waldstein picture gallery, Dosky country estate; Duchcov Castle, 1919; Národní Galerie, from 1945.

LITERATURE (CATS. 31 AND 32): Fučíková 1972b; Neumann 1985, pp. 50–51; Henning 1987, nos. A16 (Wenceslas and Vitus), C5 (Sigismund and Adalbert); Kaufmann 1988, nos. 20.20–21; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 35, cat. no. I.82; Kotková 1999, pp. 104–5, nos. 69, 70 (with further literature); Stolarová and Vlnas 2010, pp. 42–43, cat. no. I.5.

33

Saint Barbara, ca. 1584–86

Oil on limewood, 34 × 25¾ in.

(86.5 × 65.5 cm)

Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe (2587)

IN EXHIBITION

34

Saint Catherine, ca. 1584–86

Oil on limewood, 34½ × 25⅝ in.

(86.7 × 65 cm)

Gemäldegalerie SMB, Property of the Kaiser Friedrich-Museums-Verein, Berlin (KFMV 255)

These regal saints likely once graced a convent or aristocratic family chapel. *Saint Catherine* and *Saint Barbara* are companion pieces. Both wear similar crowns, their hair and palm fronds are nearly identical, and their tongues are visible through softly parted lips. Spranger has also connected them through his use of rose-colored fabric for each. They are related to grisaille images of two other female saints, Agatha and Margaret (cats. 35, 36), which were originally painted on the back of these wings of an altarpiece. At some point the panels were split in half longitudinally to

separate them into individual panels. They are equally thin, and the versos show very similar wood grain.

The conservative subject and composition distract from immediate recognition of the beauty of *Saint Barbara*, which must be viewed in person to be fully appreciated. In fact, the traditional nature of the design and the absence of Spranger's usual erotic Mannerism may account for an earlier attribution to Pieter de Witte (Pietro Candido).¹ The saint's face is delicately modulated, with soft, rosy cheeks, and her feminine physique is firmly rounded. Golden bands embellished with pearls adorn her white gown, and threads of gold line her cuff. She holds a book on which faint writing is visible, but with no clear indication of its content. A large tower on the right, her traditional attribute, both makes her identity clear and balances the composition. Saint Catherine's rich royal blue robe contrasts with Barbara's predominantly white attire. The impasto is thick and the craquelure familiar from other of Spranger's paintings, as is the dark brown background almost obscuring the wheel of Catherine's martyrdom. Layers of glazing have caused some paint shrinkage, thus the cracking, especially in the brown areas. The painting displays considerable retouching.

NOTES

1. Neumeister 1968, no. 1595.

PROVENANCE (CAT. 33): (Carl Maurer, Munich, October 23, 1913, no. 31a); Luitpold Grein, Wessling; (Neumeister/Weinmuller, Munich, March 20–22, 1968, no. 119 [unsold]); Luitpold Grein; Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, from 1969.

PROVENANCE (CAT. 34): (Carl Maurer, Munich, October 23, 1913, no. 30); from Joseph Wilpert, Munich, to Gemäldegalerie SMB, Property of the Kaiser Friedrich-Museums-Verein, Berlin, 1968.



34

LITERATURE (CAT. 33): Lauts 1973, no. 2587; Henning 1987, no. A22; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.30.

LITERATURE (CAT. 34): Henning 1987, no. A21; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.31; Gerszi 1990, p. 34.

35

Saint Agatha, ca. 1584–86
Oil on limewood, $36\frac{7}{8} \times 28\frac{7}{8}$ in.
(93×73.5 cm)
Státní Zámek, Rožmberk (2100)

36

Saint Margaret (?), ca. 1584–86
Oil on limewood, $37\frac{1}{4} \times 23\frac{3}{8}$ in.
(94.5×59.5 cm)
Státní Zámek, Rožmberk (2101)

Saint Agatha and *Saint Margaret* were the outer panels of altarpiece wings depicting Saints Barbara and Catherine (cats. 33, 34) and would have been seen when those wings were closed. Functioning as outside covers for more elaborate inside panels, they are understandably simpler. In the tradition of Northern altarpieces, the outer wings are painted in grisaille, to resemble stone. Yet with Spranger's characteristic cleverness in applying new solutions to old traditions, he punctuated the palette with touches of gold on his saints, prominently in their crowns but also subtly on the trim of their gowns, book, and belts. All four saints share comparable facial features and wear similar crowns. The rather discreetly bared breast insinuates the identity of one of these saints as Agatha, whose breasts were severed as part of her martyrdom. The identity of the other saint is elusive, as she holds merely a palm frond and a cross. The attributes of Saint Margaret are often a cross and a dragon—she defended herself against the dragon by holding out the cross—and the curls of a dragon tail may be visible at far right in this panel.



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Reinforcing this tentative identification is the tradition of depicting Saint Margaret as Saint Catherine's companion in pictures of the Virgin.

PROVENANCE (CATS. 35 AND 36): General Karel Bonaventura Buquoy (1571–1621); Buquoy family, Rožmberk Castle until 1945; thereafter Státní Zámek, Rožmberk.

LITERATURE (CAT. 35): Henning 1987, no. A19; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.32; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 405, cat. no. I.80.

LITERATURE (CAT. 36): Henning 1987, no. A19; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.33; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 405, cat. no. I.81.



36

37

Saint Catherine, ca. 1584–87
Oil on panel, 59¾ × 36¼ in. (152 × 92 cm)
Prague Castle Picture Gallery (J-208)

38

Saint Monica, ca. 1584–87
Oil on panel, 59¼ × 36⅜ in.
(150.5 × 92.5 cm)
Prague Castle Picture Gallery (J-70)

39

Saint Ursula, ca. 1584–87
Oil on panel, 56⅞ × 31⅜ in.
(144.5 × 79.5 cm)
Royal Canonry of Premonstratensians
at Strahov, Prague (O-541)

40

Saint Elizabeth, ca. 1584–87
Oil on panel, 60⅞ × 36¼ in. (154 × 92 cm)
Royal Canonry of Premonstratensians
at Strahov, Prague (O-540)

These four female saints are a detour from the more erotic subjects Spranger created for his bachelor patron. Sharing similar dimensions, themes, and compositions, these paintings once graced the Benedictine Convent of Saint George, tucked within the Prague Castle complex. The convent, the first in Bohemia, has a long and illustrious history. It was established in the tenth century by Prince Boleslav II and his sister Mlada, and Emperor Charles IV gave its abbess the privilege of crowning the queen of Bohemia, which continued until the convent was abolished in 1782. It was a wealthy community of monastic women, and by commissioning artists such as Spranger, they showed their affluence and their connections to the royal court.



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Understandably, they selected female heroines for spiritual inspiration.

The paintings demonstrate that Spranger was as masterful at interpreting religious themes as he was at conceiving allegories. The heroic *Saint Catherine*, the most accomplished of the four, embodies a classical monumentality, enlivened with a Mannerist line.

Comparison to Spranger's earlier *Saint Catherine* (cat. 34), in which clarity and directness prevail, shows a now-emboldened artist, embracing a more intellectual and slightly esoteric aesthetic approach, tinged with a muscular Mannerism. Her facial features and expression would reappear later in his oeuvre, particularly in *Portrait of a*



38

God and The Suicide of Sophonisba (cats. 79, 82).

Kaufmann, concurring with Oberhuber, dates *Saint Catherine* about 1582, based on the resemblance of the drapery to the folds in Spranger's *Saint Luke Painting the Virgin* (cat. 29). The drapery configuration and style also call to mind Spranger's earlier *Saint Ursula*



39

in Vilnius (cat. 30). Yet the more penetrating presence of *Saint Catherine*, marked by a shift in the facial morphology and conveying a deeper psychological state, affirms his maturing style. Although *Saint Catherine* appears in good condition overall, the landscape at right is dark and abraded. Below the landscape is a barely visible vanquished



40

figure, head nearly upside down, which likely refers to Catherine's persecutor, the Roman emperor Maxentius. The elaborate frame is original to the painting.

Saint Elizabeth recurs in a nearly identical design engraved by Jacques de Gheyn II (cat. 188). As a venerated Benedictine saint, Elizabeth was an

appropriate choice for the cloister. An abraded surface and restoration have erased detail, especially in the passages of flesh—losses that are also apparent, to a lesser degree, in *Saint Ursula*. Yet Elizabeth's thick, sculptural drapery matches that of Saint Catherine's gown, as does her overall form. The most conservative and pious of these



depictions is *Saint Monica*, whose subject bows her head in solemn reflection. *Saint Monica* and *Saint Catherine* have the same dimensions, and the two works were likely hung together. Their similar approach unifies them with the other female saints of the Benedictine series. The panel of *Saint Ursula* distinguishes itself from the others in this

series as her capacious gown protects a group of followers. She, like *Saint Elizabeth*, serves as an ideal subject for a convent, representing a virgin martyr of the highest rank.

PROVENANCE (CATS. 37–40): Benedictine Convent of Saint George, Prague; Saint Anna Chapel, Saint George Basilica, Prague, 1836.

LITERATURE (CAT. 37): Nowak 1836; Oberhuber 1958, no. G34; Neumann 1967, p. 271; Neumann 1984, p. 104, no. 42; Henning 1987, no. A13; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.17; Fučíková et al. 1997, pp. 404–5, cat. no. I.78.

LITERATURE (CAT. 38): Oberhuber 1958, no. G35; Henning 1987, no. C23; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.16.

LITERATURE (CAT. 39): Diez 1909, p. 142; Oberhuber 1958, no. G29; Henning 1987, no. A14; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.14; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 405, no. I.79.

LITERATURE (CAT. 40): Diez 1909, p. 142; Oberhuber 1958, no. G28; Henning 1987, no. C24; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.15.

4 I

Venus and Mercury, ca. 1585

Oil on canvas (sides cut down),

43³/₈ × 28³/₈ in. (110 × 72 cm)

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

(GG_1100)

A sculptural nude dominates this painting, which is infused with recondite symbolism and subdued Mannerism. Executed to decorate either the halls of Prague Castle or Rudolf's *Kunstkammer*, it is likely one of the ten mythological paintings by Spranger mentioned in early inventories (see cat. 28). Typifying Rudolfine art before 1595, the painting's palette, though vivid, is less luminous than in Spranger's previous work, and the skin tones now feature an enamel-smooth touch. Venus, who is awarding a crown of laurels to Mercury, god of eloquence, is flanked by two putti embodying different aspects of love. The putto who climbs a tree next to Mercury and looks upward represents love that is nurtured and growing. Conversely, a gloomy, downward-glancing putto next to Venus has doused the torch of love with his pitcher, symbolizing the waning of

sensual, passionate love. Why does Mercury receive laurels from Venus? Diez suggests that she awards him for a fruitful affair. Oberhuber and Kaufmann disagree, maintaining instead that Spranger looked to Vincenzo Cartari's emblem book *Imagini delli dei de gl'antichi* (1556; Images of the gods of the ancients), in which Venus rewards Mercury as god of eloquence because "Lovers need pleasing words between them. . . . These often bring into being and maintain love between people." But this concept goes back even earlier, to Plutarch, who writes that the ancients placed statues of Mercury and Venus together, to indicate that the pleasures of matrimony include sweet conversation.¹ Love requires nurturing with eloquence, otherwise Amor Lethaeus (forgetful love) extinguishes the flames of passion. In light of Rudolf's long engagement, the theme of keeping love alive was highly relevant.

NOTES

1. Cartari 1556, p. 279 (my translation). Plutarch 1871, p. 487.

PROVENANCE: Kunstkammer of Rudolf II.

LITERATURE: Mechel 1783, p. 274, no. 43; Engerth 1886, no. 1698; Diez 1909, p. 118; Oberhuber 1958, no. G62; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.42; Schultze 1988, vol. 2, cat. no. 580; Boorsch and Marciari 2006, pp. 111–13.

42

Venus and Mars Warned by Mercury,
ca. 1585

Oil on canvas, 42½ × 31½ in. (108 × 80 cm)
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
(GG_1097)

In *Venus and Mars Warned by Mercury*, the illicit lovers have been caught nearly in flagrante delicto by the



abrupt arrival of Mercury at upper left. Venus has barely had time to cover herself with a small swag of drapery, and the overly Mannerist contrapposto of her position emphasizes their interruption, and her distress. Mars's shield and sword rest on the floor, and Cupid sleeps clutching his bow, carrying the message that love here is neither watchful nor vigilant. Kaufmann notes the humor prevalent in Mercury's gesture,

Venus's expression, and the sleeping Cupid. Stylistically and compositionally, this painting was clearly conceived as a companion piece to Spranger's *Venus and Mercury* (cat. 41).

PROVENANCE: Kunstkammer of Rudolf II; Vienna Schatzkammer, 1747, no. 116.

LITERATURE: Mechel 1783, p. 274, no. 41; Engerth 1886, no. 1700; Oberhuber 1958, no. G61; Henning 1987, no. A28; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.38; Mai 2000, cat. no. 48; Seoul 2007, p. 62.



43

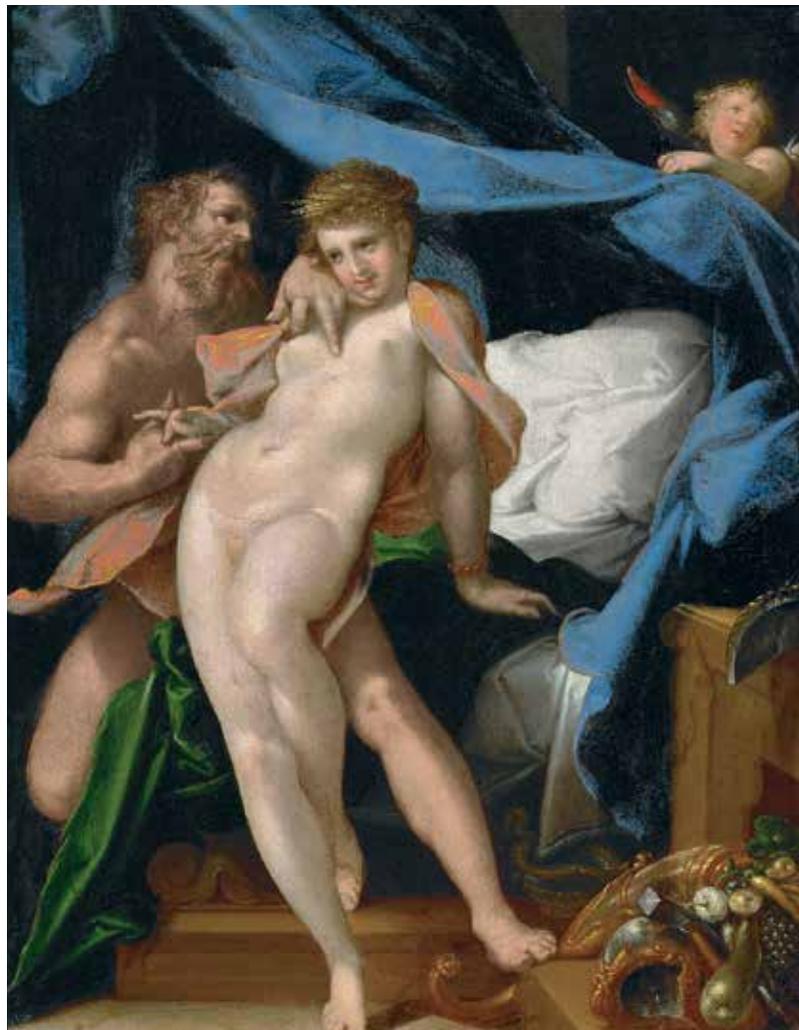
43

Hercules and Omphale, ca. 1585
Oil on copper, 9½ × 7½ in. (24 × 19 cm)
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
(GG_1126)

IN EXHIBITION

Signed on Hercules's chair: *BAR SPRANGERS ANT.FESIT*

Furtive looks, lush fabrics, and provocative nudity enliven this bedroom scene. As recounted in Ovid and several other ancient texts, Hercules was condemned to pay for his



44

vengeful killing of Iphitus by serving Omphale, Queen of Lydia.' Spranger fills his composition with clever symbols and heightens the transgressive sensuality of the scene by painting Omphale from the back, thus allowing the frontal view of her nubile body only to Hercules. He hints at his lascivious intentions by inserting his foot between her legs. Omphale and Hercules have reversed roles. Even though the muscular Hercules exudes masculine power, he wears pink silk and engages in the female activity of spinning; his distaff is

strategically placed in a suggestive position, making it simultaneously phallic and feminine. Omphale adopts the attributes of her captive lover, taking full command of Hercules's club and rather casually hoisting that symbol of male virility over her shoulder.

Spranger was engaged with this theme for several decades, composing other versions of this story of reversed gender roles. A preparatory drawing related to the composition is in the Uffizi (cat. 116). There is a companion piece to this painting, also on copper,

illustrating the amorous Vulcan with Maia (cat. 44). Both paintings share similar dimensions and compositions. Their diminutive size, their erotic content, and the uncommon themes earmark these as private pieces for Rudolf's enjoyment, and entries in the ca. 1610–19 and 1621 inventories of the *Kunst-kammer* affirm that a painting of Hercules and Omphale was in Rudolf's possession.² These works reach an apogee of elegance and refined execution, conflating Spranger's earlier miniature-influenced aesthetics with vivid colors and more physical presence of the forms. The Mannerist line harmonizes the figures within their surroundings in the bedchamber.

The subject presents the idea, popular in Rudolfine art, of the dangerous power of women. This fear of Rudolf's was manifest in his lifelong struggles in his relationships with women and particularly in his aversion to marriage.

NOTES

1. The tale of Hercules and Omphale is told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 9.320–21, and mentioned in his book of poems, *Fasti: On the Roman Calendar*, Book 2, February 15 (published A.D. 8). 2. See Vienna Inventory, ca. 1610–19 (in Köhler 1907, p. ix, no. 15), which describes a painting on copper with Hercules spinning. The 1621 inventory mentions a painting of Hercules and Omphale (no. 1052), but it is not this particular version, as the entry states that Omphale is lying down.

PROVENANCE: *Kunst-kammer* of Rudolf II (ca. 1610–19 inventory, no. 15, and 1621 inventory, no. 1052); Vienna *Schatzkammer*, 1773, no. 6; Paris, 1809; *Kunsthistorisches Museum*, from 1815.

LITERATURE: Mechel 1783, p. 271, no. 30; Engerth 1886, pp. 226–27, no. 1696; Diez 1909, pp. 117–18; Oberhuber 1958, no. G.55; Henning 1987, no. A24; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.37; Schultze 1988, vol. 1, p. 277, cat. no. 155; Schianchi and Ferino-Pagden 2003, p. 389, cat. no. 3.4.2.

COPIES: Drawing, Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (11628).

44

Vulcan and Maia, ca. 1585

Oil on copper, 9¹/₁₆ × 7¹/₁₆ in. (23 × 18 cm)
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
 (GG_1128)

Even the putto is turning away in embarrassment as he lifts the curtain to reveal this intimate moment. A chamber pot visible under the bed alludes to an overnight stay, as do the rumpled sheets. The earth goddess Maia's cornucopia overflows with abundance—male abundance, with an egg-plant alluding to an erect phallus, crossed by Vulcan's hammer. This intersection also alludes to Vulcan as the “crossed” or betrayed lover, as does the snippet of a blade visible on the table at far right. In addition to offering titillation and aesthetic delight, this painting addresses the power of love.

Based on its size, composition, and theme, *Vulcan and Maia* is the companion piece to Spranger's small oil-on-copper *Hercules and Omphale* (cat. 43). Together they constitute an erotic diptych crafted in compositional harmony, with a male-female-male-female repetition. When seen together, with *Vulcan and Maia* on the right side, the swags above loosely form one curtain, and green velvet and pink silk appear in both.

A drawing in the *Národní Galerie* in Prague, inscribed “Vienna 1593,” copies the Vulcan and Maia composition, with slight modifications. Kaufmann mentions possible sources of inspiration for the figure of Maia, especially Baccio Bandinelli's design of the suicide of Cleopatra, known in an engraving by Agostino Veneziano (1519–30; British Museum, London), but it appears to be only loosely related. Kaufmann also notes that humor penetrates Spranger's

ribald scene, citing Maia's coy expression in particular.

PROVENANCE: *Kunst-kammer* of Rudolf II; Vienna *Schatzkammer*, 1773, no. 8; Paris, 1809; *Kunsthistorisches Museum*, from 1815.

LITERATURE: Mechel 1783, p. 271, no. 29; Engerth 1886, no. 1694; Diez 1909, p. 118; Oberhuber 1958, p. 87, no. G.56; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.36; Schultze 1988, vol. 2, cat. no. 583.

COPIES: Drawing, *Národní Galerie*, Prague (K-1133).

45

Self-Portrait, 1585–86

Oil on canvas, 24⁵/₈ × 17⁵/₈ in.
 (62.5 × 45 cm)

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
 (GG_1137)

IN EXHIBITION

Inscribed in ground, lower left: *IPSE F*

46

Self-Portrait, 1586

Oil on canvas, 26³/₄ × 17³/₈ in. (68 × 44 cm)
Liechtenstein, The Princely Collections,
 Vienna (GE 946)

IN EXHIBITION

In the first of two nearly identical self-portraits, Spranger painted himself wearing a brown cap and the smock of an artist at work (cat. 45). The simplicity of his costume and of the overall composition allows the viewer to focus on his face, his character, and his skills as painter, made vivid in the masterful execution of the folds of his ruffled collar. Strettiová mentions that Spranger's lively eyes reflect his thirst for knowledge. Judging by his face in this portrait, he has yet to reach full middle age but is on the cusp, about forty years old. Spranger did not date the portrait, so other clues must be mined. He does



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not wear the gold chain given to him in 1588 by Rudolf, who stipulated that Spranger wear it at all times, thus the portrait predates 1588.

When the antiquarian Jakob König, a collector of artists' self-portraits, visited Rudolf at Prague Castle, he was so enchanted by Spranger's painting that Rudolf gave it to him. Whether Spranger had a say in the gift is unknown, but before it was sent to König he painted a second version (cat. 46), which preserves the original dimensions and

appearance of the self-portrait. Once in König's collection, the first version was cut down and inscriptions were added to it. At one time, the upper right of the canvas showed the inscription "BART. SPRANGER"; such identifying designations are found on other portraits in König's collection.

These two versions are strikingly similar, but subtle differences indicate that the Liechtenstein painting is not a copy but a second version. In it, the head is tilted slightly more downward.

To paint both portraits, Spranger was obviously looking at himself in the mirror, but in the first version, he appears a bit stiffer, his chin cocked upward. The ruffed collar is looser and the eyes are more pensive and piercing in the second version, which makes it a more natural likeness.

PROVENANCE (CAT. 45): Kunstammer of Rudolf II; Jakob König, Venice, 1603, no. 12; Leopold Wilhelm, Prague, 1659, no. NI.653; Vienna Stallburg, Gemäldegalerie, Kunsthistorisches Museum, by 1733.

PROVENANCE (CAT. 46): Liechtenstein Collection, before 1931.

LITERATURE (CAT. 45): Mechel 1783, p. 267, no. 9; Engerth 1886, no. 1704; Diez 1909, p. 134; Strettiová 1957, pp. 3–4; Oberhuber 1958, no. G67; Henning 1987, no. A65; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.24; Schultze 1988, vol. 2, cat. no. 581; Martin 1995, p. 53; Fučíková et al. 1997, cat. no. I.83; Dixon 2013, pp. 115–16.

LITERATURE (CAT. 46): Bergner and Chytil 1912, cat. no. 47; Oberhuber 1958, no. G93; Baumstark 1979, p. 44; Henning 1987, no. A66; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.25; Schultze 1988, vol. 1, cat. no. 153; Kräftner 2009, cat. no. 6.

47

Odysseus and Circe, ca. 1586–87

Oil on canvas, 42½ × 28⅜ in. (108 × 72 cm)

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

(GG_1095)

48

Odysseus Takes Leave of Circe,

ca. 1586–87

Oil on canvas, 43⅜ × 28⅞ in.

(110.2 × 73.5 cm)

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

(GG_1099)

Odysseus and Circe, a tale of sorcery and transformation—with overtones of alchemy and Neoplatonism—clearly appealed to Rudolf, as Spranger





47

Painted two separate versions, both equally engaging and erotic. Homer and Ovid each tell the story of Circe, a sorceress who wreaks havoc on Odysseus's crew by turning them into pigs.¹ Having been warned by Mercury, Odysseus

avoids the effects of her potion but then spends a year as her lover in her luxurious palace.

In *Odysseus and Circe*, Spranger only hints at Circe's destructive power, focusing instead on her powers of

seduction, made obvious by her pearly skin and bare breasts. Several animals, both tame and agitated, represent her victims: a bristled boar, lion, fox, stallion, and ox. The lifelike renditions of the animals, particularly the fox, may be thanks to the menagerie Rudolf kept on the castle grounds. Allegorical hypertext abounds: the red fox alludes to Circe's cunning seduction, the stallion introduces the passion of Odysseus.² Entrusted with transformative, magical powers, Odysseus overcomes the deceit and saves his men, thus becoming an appealing allegorical reference to the emperor as protector of his people. For physiognomy, Spranger has drawn from the faces of his past oeuvre, such as those in *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine with Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist* (cat. 23). Though these paintings of Odysseus share an overall sentiment with Spranger's mythological paintings made during his earlier years in Prague, he has made a leap in the depiction of physical volume, sophistication of composition, and costume ornamentation.³ The radiant pastel hues stand out all the more against the dark background.

In *Odysseus Takes Leave of Circe*, Circe is seen from the back, depicted with an almost male muscularity, in a style closer to classical sculpture than to Spranger's exuberant Prague Mannerism. Kaufmann notes that Circe's pose is related to the female figure in the antique relief sculpture known as *The Bed of Polykleitos*, further connecting her to antiquity.⁴ Rudolf actually owned a version of this Roman copy after the Hellenistic original, which Spranger would no doubt have seen and possibly even studied. There is an even more personal connection: it has been suggested that Odysseus bears the

likeness of a young Rudolf, his helmet paralleling a crown.⁵ Another source for Spranger was clearly Giorgio Ghisi's print after his brother's *Venus and Adonis* (fig. 37), though Spranger's painting is even more explicit, as Odysseus holds Circe's leg over his thigh. Her foot rests on a book, with two other large tomes visible to the left, all of which she might have consulted in concocting her magic potions. Another reference to sorcery is the gold female statue on the left, with a small crescent alluding to Diana or to Hecate, goddesses of the moon. Circe's pose and figural morphology are related to *The Competition between Apollo and Pan* (cat. 24), but the increased physicality of the forms and the esoteric subject matter place the work several years later in Spranger's oeuvre.



Fig. 37. Giorgio Ghisi (Italian, Mantua, ca. 1520–1582 Mantua), after Teodoro Ghisi (Italian, 1536–1601). *Venus and Adonis*, ca. 1556–57. Engraving, 12 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 8 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (32 × 22.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1953 (53.522.28)



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NOTES

1. Homer, *The Odyssey*, Book 10; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book 14. 2. Dittrich 2000, pp. 83–86. 3. Oberhuber (1958, no. G58) notes that the style of drapery folds points to a different date than the earliest group of mythological paintings.

4. A Roman relief of *The Bed of Polykleitos* is in the Palazzo Maffei, Rome. For a reproduction and discussion of the popularity of this relief, see Barkan 1999, fig. 4.13, pp. 248–52. 5. Michalski 2006, p. 200 n. 4.

PROVENANCE (CATS. 47 AND 48): *Kunstkammer* of Rudolf II.

LITERATURE (CAT. 47): Mechel 1783, p. 274, no. 40; Engerth 1886, no. 1701; Diez 1909, pp. 120–22; Oberhuber 1958, no. G58; Henning 1987, no. A23; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.23; Ditt- rich 2000, pp. 83–86; Mai and Wettengl 2002, cat. no. 93; Baldassari and Mojana 2004, p. 50; Michal- ski 2006, p. 200; Nancy 2013, p. 273, cat. no. 91.

LITERATURE (CAT. 48): Mechel 1783, p. 274, no. 41; Engerth 1886, no. 1700; Diez 1909, pp. 120–22; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z118; Dejean 1980, cat. no. 87; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.49.

COPIES (CAT. 48): Drawing, Musée Fabre, Mont- pellier (870.I.280).

49

Jael and Sisera, 1586–90

Oil on panel, 27⁵/₈ × 20⁷/₈ in. (70 × 53 cm)
Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen
(KM 3089)

Most depictions of *Jael and Sisera*, another tale celebrating the power of women, focus on the violence of their encounter, which culminated in *Jael's* driving a nail into *Sisera's* skull. The verse from *Judges* (5:26–27) describing her heroism is filled with gruesome details: “her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workmen’s hammer . . . she smote *Sisera*; she smote off his head, when she had pierced and stricken through his temples.” But with his customary originality, *Spranger* has tempered the violence with Mannerist grace as form trumps content.

A painting listed as entry number 851 in the 1621 Prague inventory matches the subject matter of this panel. It was likely part of the plunder looted from Prague in 1648, and the work can be traced to the Royal Danish *Kunstkammer* as early as 1737. The panel is now in poor condition, with such significant abrasion, retouching,



and revarnishing that a conservation report in 1934 even suggested it might be “after” rather than by *Spranger*.¹ The right side of the painting has darkened so significantly that the nail used to murder *Sisera* is barely discernible. The area around *Jael's* hairline has been retouched, looking more feathery than the tight hairstyles more typical in works by *Spranger*. The area under her

right eye has also been inpainted to such a degree that it looks as if she has a black eye. Another problem area is her left hand, which is nearly devoid of inner modeling and definition, as is the left-side drapery. There are, however, pentimenti around the hammer, traces of *Spranger's* creative process.

Kaufmann and Oberhuber consider this painting one of *Spranger's* later

works. Indeed, the greenish iridescent skin and sculptural forms are characteristic of his later paintings, which were influenced by Hans von Aachen and Adriaen de Vries. But caution must be used in assigning too late a date to the work. Jael's oval face—especially her long, narrow nose, low forehead, and thin upper lip—also points to earlier works. Her hairstyle appears in several of Goltzius's engravings after Spranger, such as *The Holy Family before a Column* (cat. 172), in which the Madonna has an expression and tilt of the head that resemble Jael's. But this facial type actually goes even further back, to Spranger's days in Parma: the face of Parmigianino's Eve in *Santa Maria della Steccata* (fig. 4) bears a striking similarity.

NOTES

1. Conservation files, 1934, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen.

PROVENANCE: Kunstkammer of Rudolf II (1621 inventory, no. 851); Royal Danish Kunstkammer, 1737; Fredensborg Castle, Copenhagen, 1827–1910; Ministry of Finance, 1955; Statens Museum for Kunst, from 1987.

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, no. G10; Henning 1987, no. A63; Heiberg 1988, p. 336, cat. no. 1087; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.89; Ohrt 1996, cat. no. 33.

50

The Holy Family with Infant Saint John the Baptist, ca. 1587–88

Oil on canvas, 25 × 20½ in. (63.5 × 51 cm)
Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum,
Braunschweig (57)

IN EXHIBITION

This painting is documented as early as 1776 in the royal collection of Duke Anton Ulrich of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, but it may stem from an even earlier, Rudolfiner lineage. Duke



Heinrich Julius (1564–1613), an ancestor of Duke Anton Ulrich, served in Prague as director of the Geheimer Rat, one of the highest-ranking courts reporting to Rudolf. An intimate of Rudolf's, he shared the emperor's interest in art and later engaged German artists practicing in the Rudolfiner style at his court in the principality of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel. According to Jochen

Luckhardt and Silke Gatenbröcker, director and curator at the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, respectively, Duke Heinrich Julius may have taken Spranger's painting (along with those by other of Rudolf's artists) to Wolfenbüttel during Spranger's lifetime.¹

The Holy Family with Infant Saint John the Baptist is one of Spranger's few known half-length compositions, a

departure from his more usual full-length narratives. In format, it shares affinities with *Jael and Sisera* (cat. 49). Spranger cleverly compresses the figures of the Holy Family, setting them against a deep, dark space that makes their pearly white, enamel-smooth skin all the more striking. The Parmigianesque Madonna is a female type that Spranger repeated in other compositions, such as *Bacchus and Venus* (cat. 70). Here he has created an amusing double entendre with his depiction of the infant Saint John the Baptist, whose face is juxtaposed with the large bowl of fruit in a way that foreshadows the presentation of his decapitated head to Salome. Similarly, Christ's ultimate sacrifice is cleverly referenced by the Child's grabbing a bunch of grapes, symbolizing wine and his blood shed for humanity. Stylistically, the painting represents Spranger's oeuvre at a time when he was still establishing himself at the Prague court.

NOTES

1. Correspondence with curator, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, 2013.

PROVENANCE: Probably Duke Heinrich Julius (1564–1613); Duke Anton Ulrich of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel (1633–1714); ducal picture gallery at Salzhallen Castle, 1694–1716 (first inventory of collection, conducted by Christian Nicolas Eberlein, 1776, p. 203).

LITERATURE: Diez 1909, p. 133; Oberhuber 1958, no. G2; Henning 1987, no. A33; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.45; Braunschweig 1998, p. 114, cat. no. 43.

51

God the Father with the Holy Ghost and Angels, ca. 1587–89

Oil on panel, 23⁵/₈ × 17⁷/₈ in. (60 × 45.5 cm)
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
(GG_1980)



Curiously, the attribution of this work to Spranger has been debated in past literature, though it is undeniably an authentic painting by him from the late 1580s.¹ An antecedent, his *Birth of the Virgin* (now known only through an engraving, cat. 164), includes a similar composition of God the Father with the orb and surrounded by clouds and putti. Spranger has

strewn luminous colors across the surface and softened the transition between the forms' outlines and the surrounding atmosphere. God the Father is encircled by firm yet pliable silk drapery. Spranger applied gray streaks in the deity's hair to give him an aura of eternity and wisdom. The putti hover among billowy clouds. Their expressions, especially the one below

God the Father, recall those in other of Spranger's works. The hands of God the Father, the gold borders on his robe, and the execution of his beard all reinforce Spranger's authorship.

As pointed out by Oberhuber, the panel was likely part of an altarpiece or, most likely, an epitaph, similar to the lost pinnacle showing God the Father that had been part of the *Epitaph of Michael Peterle* (cat. 53). Compositionally, God the Father's raised hand of blessing and his downward glance also underscore the function of this oval panel to crown an epitaph or altar. Oberhuber relates the facial types, drapery, placement of highlights, and conception of a deity to Spranger's *Saint Luke Painting the Virgin* (cat. 29). Perhaps this beautiful pinnacle even graced the magnificent epitaph Spranger composed for his father-in-law, Nikolaus Müller (cat. 52).

NOTES

1. Henning (1987, no. C33) rejects the work from his catalogue of Spranger's paintings, objecting to the facial type of God the Father and to the style of the clouds.

PROVENANCE: Kunstkammer of Rudolf II.

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, no. G49; Henning 1987, no. C33; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.19.

52

Epitaph of Nikolaus Müller (Resurrected Christ Triumphant over Death), ca. 1587–89

Oil on canvas, 95 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 63 in. (243 × 160 cm)
Národní Galerie v Praze, Prague (DO-1574)

This striking work memorializes Spranger's father-in-law, the court goldsmith Nikolaus Müller. Lauded by van Mander for its coloring and composition, the painting was originally placed at Müller's grave in the Saint



Matthias cemetery chapel of the church of Saint John in Prague, accompanied by a sculpture of two putti by Adriaen de Vries and a painting of God the Father placed above in the epitaph frame.¹ According to Olga Kotková, curator at

the Národní Galerie, Müller died in 1586 or 1588, so the painting must date to about 1587–89.

In the lower tier the Müller family, whose demeanor combines refinement with humility, are witnesses to the

Resurrection. Spranger's wife, Christina, stands at far right; beside her stands her mother, the widow Müller, looking out at us. Her heavy lids suggest weeping for her husband, who is on the left, also gazing at us. On the far left is Müller's son, who became a goldsmith in Silesia and thus may have been involved in Spranger's commission from the Hanniwaldt brothers in Żórawina (see cat. 80). The little girl at the front wearing a flower wreath could be Spranger and Christina's daughter. They married in about 1580, and the girl appears to be about six years old. Another touch of personalization may be the visage of Christ, which bears a slight resemblance to Spranger's self-portraits (cats. 45, 46).

The composition makes a clear division between the sacred and the secular. The Müller family is rendered realistically, in contrast to the Mannerist forms of the Triumphant Christ and putti. On the right, two soldiers sleep in the distance; only their arms and helmets are visible. Christ rests his left foot on a glass sphere enclosing a skull and crushes a snake coiled underfoot—symbols of death and vice, respectively. The wounds to his feet are faintly visible—especially the red on his left foot. Above left, a putto prays for Müller's soul, thus connecting the two realms of the picture. Though the painting was at one time in a cemetery chapel, exposed to harsh elements, its condition is excellent, except for abrasions on the figure of Müller's wife.

NOTES

1. Mander 1994, p. 350.

PROVENANCE: Cemetery chapel of Saint Matthias near church of Saint John (destroyed 1784); unknown collection, Prague; property of building contractor and alderman Josef Čermák, Prague, after 1864; decorated Josef Čermák's family grave,

Olšany cemetery, 1864–1936; Ludwig Köppel, Prague, 1936.

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, pp. 138–40, no. G26; Henning 1987, no. A34; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.47; Schultze 1988, pp. 279–80; Kotková 1999, no. 67; Oszczanowski 2001, p. 183; Stolarová and Vlnas 2010, pp. 30–31, cat. no. I.1.

COPIES: Painting (without the donors), Městské Muzeum, Frýdlandt (A6). Drawing (with slight variation), Kunstsammlungen zu Weimar.

53

Epitaph of Michael Peterle (Christ Triumphant over Sin and Death), 1588
Oil on panel, 59 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 47 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (150 × 120 cm)
Tyn Church, Archbishop's House, Prague

Signed in the clouds under the angel at right: B / SPRANGHERS / ANTus / F

This painting was originally part of an epitaph for Saint Stephen's church in Prague. Earlier photographs show a small pinnacle painting of God the Father, but the whereabouts of that work are unknown (fig. 38).¹ Spranger painted this Triumphant Christ in honor of his friend and neighbor Michael Peterle, who also lived on the street along the castle steps, today known as Thunovská, and died on September 12, 1588. When Peterle first arrived in Prague, from Annaberg in Saxony, he worked as a painter and became a member of the guild by 1565. He opened his own printing and publishing business in 1570 and produced illuminations of coats of arms for Charles V, Ferdinand I, and Maximilian II. In addition, he produced a Latin grammar, *Poppysmus Grammaticus* (1587), and a *Vita Christi* (1583), “the complete Evangelical History of Jesus, God's Son, and Mary, our Redeemer and Savior.” Single-leaf woodcuts featuring illustrations became his forte, and



Fig. 38. Earlier photo showing pinnacle painting

the Strahov Library in Prague, among others, preserves many produced under his name.²

The composition nearly mirrors Spranger's epitaph for Nikolaus Müller (cat. 52), but here it is the Peterle family mourning their patriarch. The three women at the bottom of the painting are his successive wives—the one praying to the immediate right is the most recent. The young girl behind her wears a garland of flowers, a tradition for children attending funeral services.³ (The young girl in the Müller epitaph also wears a wreath, but hers is more lavish.) Although this design is similar to that of the Müller epitaph, it is more modest, even rustic. The portraits, which lack Spranger's finesse, were probably painted by a local artist.

Before the painting was restored in 1856, there was a notation on the back indicating that Peterle commissioned it shortly before his death. Thus Spranger



would have begun painting it in the spring of 1588, at the earliest. The rather stocky build of Christ is very similar to that of the male figure in Spranger's *Angelica and Medoro*, painted several years earlier (cat. 25).

NOTES

1. Diez 1909, p. 112. 2. For more on the work of Peterle, see Kneidl 1995. 3. Conversations with Marcela Vondráčková, curator at the Národní Galerie, Prague.

PROVENANCE: Church of Saint Stephen cemetery; Parish House, church of Saint Stephen.

LITERATURE: Honsatko 1835, p. 49f.; Diez 1909, p. 112; Niederstein 1937, p. 404; Oberhuber 1958, no. G36; Henning 1987, no. A32 (with additional earlier literature); Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.46.

54

The Adoration of the Magi, ca. 1590

Oil on panel, 78³/₄ × 56⁵/₈ in.

(199.8 × 143.7 cm)

National Gallery, London (6392)

Signed lower left: *B. / SPRANGERS. ANT. US / S.C.M. / TIS A CUBI. LO PICTOR / F.* (In full: *B Sprangers Antverpus Sancti Caesareae Maiestatis a cubiculo pictor fecit*)

Long before entering the National Gallery, this altarpiece stood in a castle in Bamberg, having arrived there as a gift from Rudolf II. Clearly so large and elaborate a present, painted by Rudolf's premier court artist no less, signals the importance of the recipient. Kaufmann suggests that Rudolf gave it to Prince-Bishop Neidhardt von Thün- gen (r. 1591–98), but his predecessor—Prince-Bishop Ernst von Mengersdorf (r. 1583–91)—is just as likely a candidate. Rudolf corresponded with them both. They were strong proponents of the Counter-Reformation, and he was pleased with their anti-Protestant efforts in Bavaria. The bishops also provided

financial support for the empire's fight against the Turks, fulfilling Rudolf's requests at the 1582 and 1594 Diets. Bishop von Mengersdorf attended the Augsburg Diet of 1582, where he likely conversed with Rudolf.¹

Mengersdorf was intensely religious and critical of what he perceived as a decline in morals. Between 1583 and 1587, he remodeled Geyersworth Castle, the bishop's residence in Bamberg. Even though Bishop von Neidhardt was equally if not more favored by Rudolf for his Counter-Reformation efforts, the renovation begun by Mengersdorf makes a stronger case for him as recipient of Spranger's altarpiece, which would have been placed in the castle's remodeled chapel. In 1763 part of the palace collapsed, sinking into the Regnitz River. Fortunately, the altarpiece survived and found a new home in the chapel of Seehof Castle in Bamberg, which had been built under the aegis of Bishop Marquant Sebastian von Stauffenberg in the late seventeenth century.² It has been suggested that, after the painting was relocated there, its top corners were cut down to fit into a frame by the stucco artist Antonio Bossi, who came to Seehof to construct the frame for the new painting.³

The face of the right Magus, standing proudly in profile, is more individualized than the other more generic faces and bears a likeness to Spranger (note the curly dark blond hair). This Sprangeresque Magus could also be the prince-bishop, but no images recording his visage have been located. Browns commingled with background earth colors temper the acidic iridescent colors in the foreground. Affectations in pose, an artificial palette, and elaborate costumes lend a Mannerist sentiment. The left Magus wears a luxurious orange-yellow

robe lined with pearls of varying sizes, painstakingly painted by Spranger. Amid the rich nobility emerge charmingly humble touches: the dog on the right bends down and shows its tongue, an ox in the middle has a very human face, a recurring characteristic of Spranger's animals.

Curiously, the altar was attributed to Hans Rottenhammer I at the time of its discovery in Seehof, but the surface was dirty and Spranger's signature not discernible. The canvas was restored about 1970, including retouching some darker areas of the principal figures and ironing, which slightly flattened the figures. The position of the star has also been altered, as photographs taken before cleaning show it in a different position, on the edge.⁴

NOTES

1. Weiss (2000, esp. pp. 23 ff.) gives a highly detailed account of the history of the Bamberg bishopric, allowing for my analysis of the provenance of Spranger's work. 2. The architects of Seehof Castle were Antonio Petrini, Georg Dientzenhofer, and Johann Christien. See *ibid.*, p. 592. 3. For Seehof Castle history, see Heim 1970, p. 3, with further earlier literature. 4. Restoration photographs, curatorial records, National Gallery, London.

PROVENANCE: Prince-bishops of Geyersworth Castle, Bamberg, late 1580s–90s; Seehof Castle, Bamberg, 1763; Baron Friedrich von Zandt (d. 1842), Seehof; wife, Lady Elizabeth Dyer, Baroness von Zandt (1780–1864); Seehof Castle inherited by Walter von Zandt (1823–1913); Von Hessbach family, 1969; [Heim Gallery, London, 1970]; National Gallery, from 1970.

LITERATURE: Heim 1970, no. 1; Smith 1985, p. 104; Henning 1987, no. A48; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.51; Thomas 1994, p. 35.



55

Venus, Ceres, and Bacchus, 1590

Oil on canvas, 63³/₈ × 45³/₄ in.

(161 × 116 cm)

Landesmuseum Joanneum, Alte

Galerie, Graz (68)

Signed lower right: *B. SPRANGERS*

Ant.us F.

56

Ceres and Bacchus Flee Venus, 1590

Oil on canvas, 63³/₈ × 39³/₈ in.

(161 × 100 cm)

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

(GG_2435)

Inscribed lower right (by a later hand):

B. SPRANGER

These two paintings pay homage to the epigram by the Roman playwright Terence from his comedy *Eunuchus* (161 B.C.): “Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus” (Without Ceres and Bacchus, Venus freezes). In other words, without food and wine, there is no love. Terence’s plays were published in Europe by the fifteenth century, and his witticisms provided a treasure trove for artists. Jan Harmensz. Muller engraved Spranger’s *Ceres and Bacchus Flee Venus*, with slight changes (cat. 191), and subsequent artists copied Spranger’s image of the clever literary epigram.

The paintings share similar dimensions, and the large format signals their decorative role at Prague Castle. Compositionally and thematically, they were conceived as a pair, and both were dated 1590, though the dates are no longer visible.¹ The first work brings all three gods together in a triumvirate of pleasure. Here Venus beckons the viewer to admire her sleek and sexy back while exposing her breasts only to Ceres, in the center, and Bacchus, who





strides into the scene from the right. Ceres wears similar drapery in both versions, as does Bacchus, reinforcing the visual link between the two canvases. In the next painting, Ceres and Bacchus abandon Venus, striding off together in companionable harmony. Bacchus even carries away the grapes he seemed to be offering Venus in the previous scene, while Venus and Cupid shiver in the background, trying to keep warm by a fire.

Spranger's aesthetic has reached an apogee of stylistic and intellectual refinement in these paintings. A deft chiaroscuro models the figures, their pearly skin standing out starkly against the nocturnal backgrounds. Spranger's palette, highlighted with red, is becoming darker, richer, and more Venetian. In *Ceres and Bacchus Flee Venus*, he conveys the sense of movement so masterfully that the two young gods appear to be walking out of the picture.

An emblem book from 1579 illustrating the same epigram highlights, in contrast, Spranger's inventive mind yet again (fig. 39). The emblem features Venus and Cupid front and center, with Ceres and Bacchus in retreat in the distance; by reversing the composition, Spranger



Fig. 39. *Sine Cerere et Baccho Friget Venus*, from *Mikrocosmos. Parvus Mundus*, with engravings by Gerard de Jode (Flemish, Nijmegen 1509/17–1591 Antwerp) and verses by Laurentius Haechtanus (Antwerp: de Jode, 1579)



heightened its impact. After completing his Ovid-based series on the loves of the gods in the 1580s, Spranger began a series dedicated to Venus, which included these works as well as *Mars, Venus, and Cupid* in Graz and *Bacchus and Venus* in Hanover (cats. 68, 70).

NOTES

1. According to Mechel (1783, p. 266, no. 3), both paintings bore the date of 1590; Diez (1909, p. 118) concurs.

PROVENANCE (CAT. 55): Kunstkammer of Rudolf II (1621 inventory, no. 910); Emperor Franz Joseph I (1830–1916), 1872.

PROVENANCE (CAT. 56): Kunstkammer of Rudolf II (1621 inventory, no. 981).

LITERATURE (CAT. 55): Mechel 1783, no. 3; Diez 1909, p. 118; Henning 1987, no. A36; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.49.

LITERATURE (CAT. 56): Mechel 1783, p. 266; Oberhuber 1958, no. G66; Henning 1987, no. A35; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.48; Schultze 1988, vol. 2, cat. no. 156; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 407, cat. no. 1.90 (with additional earlier literature); Schianchi and Ferino-Pagden 2003, pp. 390–91, cat. no. 3.4.4; Tokyo-Kobe 2004, p. 184, cat. no. 3.

COPIES (CAT. 56): Drawing, Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig, Rensi Collection (vol. 28, top drawing on p. 33).

57

Venus and Adonis, ca. 1590
Oil on panel, 53¼ × 42⅞ in. (135 × 109 cm)
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (N. 2224)

IN EXHIBITION

The slight incongruence between the figures and the landscape in this painting is completely understandable because Spranger directly quoted the landscape from Leonhard Beck's *Saint George and the Dragon* of 1513 (fig. 40); in fact, the two paintings even share dimensions. Oberhuber makes the whimsical yet plausible suggestion that Spranger actually added the angel to

Beck's painting. But the origin of the design goes back further and affirms again Rudolf's predilection for all things Dürer, as Beck's landscape was inspired by Dürer's landscape in his engraving of Saint Eustache. Hirakawa posits that Beck's painting reflects the "pictorialization of Durer's drawings." The fact that Spranger quoted an earlier work complicates the dating of *Venus and Adonis*, but the corporeality of the figures and the drapery style indicate the painting stems from the early 1590s. The topos of entwined lovers, arms encircling one another's neck up to the crown of the head, is repeated by Spranger in *Jupiter and Antiopé* (cat. 64) and in another version of *Venus and Adonis* in Vienna (cat. 65). In contrast to those paintings, the comparatively diminutive figures in this work are subordinate to the elaborate landscape.

In the lower left corner, Cupid points an arrow toward his mother, Venus, an allusion to his having accidentally scratched her, causing her to fall hopelessly in love with the handsome Adonis. Ovid writes that while they languished in the shade of a lush forest, Venus told Adonis the story of Hippomenes and Atalanta.¹ The bare-breasted young woman on the right, reaching for three apples picked by the satyr in the tree, must be a reference to their story. A shepherd is faintly visible in the background, playing his lute to lull his flock of goats and sheep. Two doves on the painting's right edge, next to Venus and Adonis, are clearly

mating. Idyllic and inviting as the scene may be, unease looms. Underneath the bountiful apple tree emerge two destroyed tree trunks, an allusion to the danger awaiting the ill-fated lovers. Spranger quietly reminds the viewer of the tragic repercussions of all-consuming love: Adonis will soon be killed by a wild boar.

NOTES

1. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 10.503–59.

PROVENANCE: Probably Kunstkammer of Rudolf II; [sale, Henry Scipio Reitlinger (1882–1950), London]; (Sotheby's, London, December 9, 1953, no. 13); W. Sabin; [Arcade Gallery, London, 1954]; Rijksmuseum, from 1955.

LITERATURE: Amsterdam 1955, p. 85, cat. no. 108; Oberhuber 1958, no. G1; Fučíková 1972a; Henning 1987, no. A30; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.43; Hirakawa 2009, pp. 114, 133.

COPIES: Drawing, Staatliches Museum Schwerin (1212 HZ).



Fig. 40. Leonhard Beck (German, ca. 1480–1542). *Saint George and the Dragon*, 1513. Oil on panel, 53¼ × 45⅞ in. (136.7 × 116.2 cm). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (GG_5669)



58

Mercury and Minerva, ca. 1590–93
Fresco, Diam. 9 ft. $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (275 cm)
White Tower, Prague Castle

Mercury and Minerva hover over the earthly spectators in Spranger's fresco for the White Tower (Bílá Věž) at Prague Castle. The austere white of the ceiling vault provides a stage for the colorful design of the god and goddess, who float in a circle of heavenly blue. Spranger unified with perfection the earthly and the ethereal. His experience painting frescoes at

Parma and Caprarola, though over a decade earlier, proved useful preparation for the ceiling, which demonstrates his mastery of the pure Italian fresco technique, or *giornata*. Thematically, his depiction is unmistakably similar to Federico Zuccaro's depiction at Caprarola of Hermathena, the conflation of Hermes (Mercury) and Athena (Minerva) (fig. 41). Spranger translated the pair into his own striking vision for Rudolf.

Fučíková discovered a letter from Rudolf to his architect Ulrico Aostalli



Fig. 41. Federico Zuccaro (Italian, Sant'Angelo in Vado 1540/42–1609 Ancona). *Hermathena*, ca. 1566–69. Fresco. Villa Caprarola, Italy

that holds clues for dating the fresco: in 1585 the emperor ordered Aostalli to erect a new prison as soon as possible and to remove the current prison from the White Tower, as Rudolf wanted the tower for his own personal use. Thus, as she correctly notes, Spranger's fresco would have to date a few years after 1585, at the earliest.¹ Further, Muchka posits a date in the 1590s, connecting Spranger's ceiling fresco with illusionary frescoes by Paul Vredeman de Vries in Prague Castle.² Based on archival and stylistic evidence, Spranger's masterful fresco most likely dates between 1590 and 1593. Related drawings and engravings share a circular format and design, which raises the possibility that Spranger created a series of gods and goddesses for ceilings throughout the castle (cats. 107, 134, 205–7).

NOTES

1. Fučíková 1989–90, p. 42. Neumann (1970, p. 146) originally dated the fresco ca. 1585, based on reports by both van Mander and Hans Ullrich Krafft, a visitor to Prague Castle, who mentioned that Spranger was working on projects in the castle in 1584. 2. Muchka 1988, pp. 89–90. The fresco remains a popular attraction today, and a postage stamp for the Czech Republic was even devoted to the image.

LITERATURE: Bergerová and Berger 1970; Neumann 1970, p. 146; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.41; Muchka 1988, esp. pp. 89–90; Fučíková 1989–90, p. 42.

59

Noli Me Tangere, 1591

Oil on canvas, 50⁵/₈ × 38³/₈ in.

(128.5 × 97.3 cm)

Muzeul National de Arta al Romaniei,
Bucharest (8053/87)

IN EXHIBITION

Signed on the shovel: S.F. 1591



Noli Me Tangere refers to Christ's emphatic warning to Mary Magdalene—"Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended"—after he has risen from the tomb. This poignant post-Resurrection encounter is told in John 20:14–17. Visible at lower left is a sliver of the tomb, on which the Magdalene rests her jar of anointing oil. Spranger has captured here a moment of mystical piety, sacrificing Mannerist flair for a more classical gravitas. In the painting, Christ (whose face slightly resembles

Spranger's self-portraits; see cats. 45, 46) indicates his remove from earthly existence through gesture and expression. He communicates with the Magdalene by his glance while she emphatically acknowledges him with a penetrating and admiring expression. Though in the guise of a gardener, Christ appears dignified in bright red fabric, and Mary Magdalene, with her customary jar of ointment, wears a rich yellow frock that highlights her dignified comportment. The luminous

Venetian palette and chromatic richness of their garments lend them the appearance of a divine apparition.¹

Earliest records indicate that the painting was in Rudolf's *Kunstkammer*; when the Swedes sacked Prague in 1648, it was looted for the collection of Queen Christina. After abdicating the throne and converting to Catholicism, Christina moved to Rome, taking the painting with her. Thereafter, an Italian cardinal, French aristocrats, and the Romanian King Charles I each owned this work for a time. After so many years of travel and transfer, the painting darkened and the signature was obscured, leading to misattribution. Italian artists, such as Federico Barocci and Lavinia Fontana, were named as the work's creator.² However, after a cleaning in 1956, the signature "S.F." (*Spranger fecit*) and the date 1591 emerged. Related prints by Aegidius Sadeler II and Johannes Sadeler I reinforce the attribution (cats. 208, 209). A copy of the painting in the *Pinacoteca Civica di Forlì*, dated 1602, provides further affirmation of the dating.

NOTES

1. Paukner in Nancy 2013, cat. no. 94. 2. Bachelin 1898, pp. 59–60, no. 43 (as Barocci); Busuioceanu 1939, pp. 88–89, no. 39 (as Fontana).

PROVENANCE: *Kunstkammer* of Rudolf II (1621 inventory, no. 991); Queen Christina (1626–1689), Sweden, 1648; Cardinal Decio Azzolino (d. 1698), Rome; Prince Livio Odescalchi (1652–1713), later Prince Balthasar Odescalchi, Rome; duc d'Orléans, France, 1721; Louis-Philippe, duc d'Orléans, first half of 1800s; (Galerie Pereire, Paris, 1868, no. 87); Felix Bamberg (1820–1893), Messina, before 1879; King Charles I (1839–1914), Sinaia, Romania, 1879.

LITERATURE: Bachelin 1898, no. 43; Busuioceanu 1939, pp. 88–89, no. 39; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.52; Hiratsuka 1995, p. 182, cat. no. 30; Matache 1998, p. 106, no. 46; Nancy 2013, p. 280, cat. no. 94.

COPIES: Paintings, Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown (63.33); *Pinacoteca Civica di Forlì*; Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne (866).



60

Apollo and the Muses, ca. 1591–93
Oil on marble, 14 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 19 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.

(37 × 49 cm)

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
(GG_1119)

Signed lower right: *BAR.SPRANGERS F.*

This small oil on marble is Spranger's paeon to the master engraver Hendrick Goltzius, who left Haarlem for Rome in 1590 and thereafter ceased making engravings after Spranger's designs. His departure may have been the impetus for Spranger's tribute, in which he subjugates his own style in a near-replication of Goltzius's print from that year (fig. 42).¹ Spranger no doubt selected this particular design—the only Goltzius print he ever used as such direct inspiration—because its subject



Fig. 42. Hendrick Goltzius (Netherlandish, Mühlbracht 1558–1617 Haarlem). *The Judgment of Midas*, 1590. Engraving, 16 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 26 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (42.3 × 67.2 cm). The British Museum, London (1857,0613.457)

matter appealed to him. Spranger had previously composed a lively horizontal painting, *The Competition between Apollo and Pan*, in which the Muses also make an appearance (cat. 24).

Scholars have doubted the attribution of *Apollo and the Muses* to

Spranger, partly because his direct quotation of Goltzius makes it difficult to recognize his own hand and partly because the marble support is so atypical of Spranger.² But few other Rudolfine artists would have been capable of producing such an exquisitely rendered painting. The surface pattern of the marble is cleverly incorporated into the design, particularly in passages of the sky, evoking dissolving clouds and sunlight. Citing similar handling of paint and a match in palettes, Kaufmann posits that this work was composed about the same time as *Allegory of the Reign of Rudolf II* (cat. 61); if so, *Apollo and the Muses* was created in the early 1590s.

Typically innovative, Spranger painted only three-quarters of Goltzius's design. Curiously, he cut off part of the figures on the right to show only an arm and a leg, and he entirely edited out the scene of the Judgment of Midas and the figures of Tmolus, King Midas, and Pan. The placement of the signature makes it unlikely that the marble was cut down at some point. The landscape has also been streamlined— notably, Spranger has suppressed the detailed trees and branches incorporated by Goltzius for a less rustic and more refined setting.

NOTES

1. For discussion of Goltzius's print, see Korazija 1982, p. 64, cat. no. 26. 2. Kaufmann (1988, no. 20.53) discusses the opinions of others, including Fučíková.

PROVENANCE: Probably Kunstammer of Rudolf II (ca. 1610–19 inventory, no. 11; erroneously recorded as on copper).

LITERATURE: Mechel 1783, p. 269, no. 17; Engerth 1886, p. 226, no. 695; Oberhuber 1958, no. G52; Henning 1987, no. A39; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.53; Schultze 1988, vol. 2, p. 117, cat. no. 585.

61

Allegory of the Reign of Rudolf II, 1592

Oil on copper, 9⁵/₈ × 7³/₈ in.
(24.5 × 18.7 cm)

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
(GG_1125)

IN EXHIBITION

Signed and dated lower left:
B.S. 1592

Inscribed in plaque, lower center:
RVDOLPHO. II. CAES AUG / DIVA. PO-

TENS.CHARITESQVE / TVVM DIADE-
MATE CINCTVM / IAM CAPVT ESSE
VELINT (To Rudolf II, Caesar Augustus,
divine, powerful, and benevolent, they now
crown your head with a diadem)

Fama blows two trumpets, sounding the glory of Rudolf as the gods gather to celebrate his reign in this allegory signed and dated 1592. For Spranger to date a painting was an exception, but in 1592 the Ottoman troops invaded the Castle of Bihać in Croatia, lighting the match that sparked



the Turkish War, which would start the next year. Spranger's work should be viewed specifically as allegorical propaganda in support of conquest by the Holy Roman Empire, and more generally as a panegyric to the beneficence of Rudolf's rule. The goddess of war, Bellona, a frequent player in Spranger's repertoire, holds center stage, brandishing a small statue of Nike (Victory) in her right hand. Her pairing with Nike, as well as the events of 1592 and the fact that this was painted as a tribute to Rudolf, makes the identity of Bellona certain. She is in the company of Cupid on the far left, teasing Venus, who sits entwined with Bacchus; behind them are Hungaria and a helmeted god bearing the Medusa shield, which signifies Minerva. On the right, Ceres and a personification of the River Sava (accompanied by a bear) complete the foreground group. The actual Sava River, represented on the right, historically formed the boundary between Croatia and Bosnia.

This small oil on copper served as a talisman for Rudolf, offering protection to him from threats and looming trouble with the Turks. The coupling of Venus and Bacchus, who have abandoned care for the pleasures of wine, alludes to the comforts that Rudolf's peaceable reign has bestowed. Fleischer affirms the painting's emphasis on peace, quoting Ovid's statements that Bacchus "enjoys neither wars nor weapons" and that Venus "shuns Mars, the god of War." In addition, Ceres not only represents abundance but is also a lawgiver, providing the stability needed for peace.

Stylistically, the composition shows a pronounced return to Spranger's earlier aesthetic, with shorter, squatter figures recalling works from his pre-Prague oeuvre. No doubt the con-



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straints of the small size also factored into his presentation, and the theme of stability and the endurance of Rudolf's rule directed Spranger's return to artistic traditions of the past.

PROVENANCE: Kunstkammer of Rudolf II (1621 inventory, no. 1053).

LITERATURE: Mechel 1783, p. 270, no. 25; Engerth 1886, no. 1703; Chytil 1904, pp. 25–26; Diez 1909, p. 115; Henning 1987, no. A40; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.54; Schultze 1988, vol. 2, cat. no. 584; Fleischer 1997, p. 255; Komanecky 1999, p. 291; Tokyo-Kobe 2004, p. 185.

COPIES: Drawing, Národní Galerie, Prague (K-25682).

62

Fall from Paradise, ca. 1593–95
Oil on panel, 49⁵/₈ × 31¹/₈ in. (126 × 79 cm)
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
(GG_2417)

63

Fall from Paradise, ca. 1594
Oil and distemper on panel, 54¹/₄ × 32 in.
(137.7 × 81.3 cm)
Latvian National Museum of Art, The Art
Museum Riga Bourse (643)

Spranger celebrated the sensuality of Adam and Eve's encounter rather than the religious dimension of this biblical theme. Even the notion of Paradise is subsumed into the erotic rather than the idyllic. Such erotic overtones to the story are not entirely novel, as is evident from Hans Baldung's treatment of the theme, both in a print from 1511 and in a painting from 1531.¹ Spranger redefines the couple's union as one of mutual desire, relinquishing the traditional characterization of Eve as temptress of reluctant Adam.

Stylistically, the first couple are portrayed as Mannerist paragons, their attenuated limbs joined in a physically impossible pose: in order for Adam to clasp Eve's right hand behind her hips, his own right arm is unrealistically elongated. He wraps his left arm tightly across her chest, directly below her breasts, emphasizing both her sexual appeal and her fecundity. As in many of Spranger's works, the figures are pushed close to the picture plane, consuming most of the space. Only a narrow slice of landscape is visible at right, where a camel is notable among the fauna. Eve dominates the composition. Unlike the meticulous buns and tightly wound braids of most of Spranger's other



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females, her long hair sweeps around her serpentine form, dangling between her legs in a clever sexual reference. The twisting of her hair and of their bodies is mirrored by the serpent slithering along the tree limb and by the curving branches.

This work was painted slightly earlier than Spranger's *Venus and Adonis*, which is also in the Kunsthistorisches Museum (cat. 65). The voluptuous physique of Eve is characteristic of Spranger's works before 1600.

A second version of this composition, slightly larger, is in Riga, Latvia. It was owned at one time by a Latvian artist — Martin Albert Kruminš, a self-taught painter of landscapes — who purchased it in what was then the city of Petrograd. He was eventually arrested and killed during Stalin's reign of terror. The Riga painting shows more sharply outlined forms and a brighter palette, which suggests that Spranger painted it second.

NOTES

1. Hans Baldung (called Hans Baldung Grien) (German, Schwäbisch Gmünd [?] 1484/85–1545 Strasbourg), *Adam and Eve*, chiaroscuro woodcut, 1511, and oil on panel, 1531, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid.

PROVENANCE (CAT. 62): Kunstkammer of Rudolf II (ca. 1610–19 inventory, no. 22; 1619 inventory, no. 39).

PROVENANCE (CAT. 63): Martin Albert Kruminš, Petrograd, 1937.

LITERATURE (CAT. 62): Diez 1909, p. 122; Oberhuber 1958, no. G50; Henning 1987, no. A41; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.56; Baldassari and Mojana 2004, p. 50.

LITERATURE (CAT. 63): Kuznetsov 1967, no. 21; Henning 1987, no. A42; Nikulin 1987, no. 214; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.57.

COPIES: Painting, Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Vienna (1218).

64

Jupiter and Antiope, ca. 1595–97

Oil on canvas, 47¼ × 35 in. (120 × 89 cm)

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
(GG_5752)

IN EXHIBITION

In most depictions of this story from Ovid, the nymph Antiope sleeps while Jupiter, disguised as a satyr, voyeuristically plans his seduction.¹ But here Spranger has made them both active

participants, entwined in an embrace, with no separation between them save for the eagle symbolizing Jupiter. He wraps his arm between her breasts, she titillates his thigh. The work is replete with eroticism and sensuality.

Jupiter is rendered with painterly sophistication, his legs expertly delineated with delicate yet almost tactile fur. The muted variations of color, dramatic lighting, and marblelike flesh have been noted as reflecting the influence of Hans von Aachen, who arrived at the



Prague court in 1596.² The coloration may indeed reflect the influence of von Aachen, but the voluptuous figural morphology also points to Spranger's works from this time or shortly thereafter. He repeats his device of placing the couple in the center and dividing the composition into two sections, the left half dark and the right embellished with a colorful landscape. Spranger brilliantly uses gesture for both emotional and compositional effect. Antiope's downward-pointing finger plumbs the center of the canvas. Graceful yet purposeful, it leads the eye down to the eagle. The attention thus directed to him might be an allusion to Antiope's complicity in the seduction, suggesting she knows full well that her partner is none other than the all-powerful Jupiter.

NOTES

1. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 6.110. 2. Kaufmann agrees with Oberhuber's conclusion, as does the former Kunsthistorisches Museum curator Karl Schütz, that Spranger painted this the year of von Aachen's arrival in Prague.

PROVENANCE: Probably Kunstammer of Rudolf II; Schloss Ambras, no. 1392, 1806–17; Kunsthistorisches Museum, from 1817.

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, no. G57; Henning 1987, no. A46; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.62; Schultze 1988, vol. 2, cat. no. 588; Baldassari and Mojana 2004, p. 50; Seoul 2007, p. 66.

65

Venus and Adonis, ca. 1595–97

Oil on canvas, 64¼ × 41⅛ in.

(163 × 104.3 cm)

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

(GG_2526)

Spranger's voluptuous Venus embraced by Adonis delights with cool sensuality. A diaphanous veil slipped around Venus's hips emphasizes her nudity, her raised arm highlights her



inviting breasts. Spranger painted the myth of Venus and Adonis at least three times, arriving at very different results. In the Amsterdam version (cat. 57), a detailed landscape surrounds the couple, underscoring the hunting element in the story. In the Duchcov version (cat. 88), the couple stretches out on a bed in a scene of erotic intimacy. This work occupies the middle of the emotional and erotic spectrum. A view outdoors alludes to Adonis's hunting activities, while the heavy curtain provides privacy in this makeshift bedchamber. The moment depicted is idyllic, with no foreshadowing of the tragedy to come. Venus steps from her bath, her right foot still immersed in water, ready to receive her lover. Her son Cupid caresses two doves, and a dog lounges at her feet. As told by Ovid, when Venus is seduced by the beautiful Adonis: "Ev'n Heav'n itself with all its sweets unsought, / Adonis far a sweeter Heav'n is thought. / On him she hangs and fond with ev'ry art, / And never, never knows from him to part."¹

This painting from about 1595–97 belongs to the second stylistic phase of Spranger's series on the loves of the gods, blossoming from his preceding series of amorous couples, represented most cogently by *Glaucus and Scylla* (cat. 26). Potent tenebristic effects, coupled with the palpable volume of the figures, foreshadow early Baroque style. The coupling of Venus and Adonis echoes, with slight modifications, that of Jupiter and Juno in Spranger's drawings now in Braunschweig and Evanston (cats. 121, 122), another example of his repeating or revising figural concepts.

NOTES

1. Ovid 1826, 10.856–900.

PROVENANCE: Kunstammer of Rudolf II.

LITERATURE: Mechel 1783, p. 266, no. 6;

Diez 1909, p. 121; Oberhuber 1958, p. 167, nos. G60, Z80; Schnackenburg 1970, p. 150; Hand et al. 1986, p. 281; Henning 1987, no. A45; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.63; Schultze 1988, vol. 2, p. 117, cat. no. 587.

COPIES: Drawing, Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe (2676).

66

Allegory of Justice and Prudence,

1595–1601

Oil on canvas, 51⁵/₈ × 41⁵/₈ in.

(131 × 106 cm)

Musée du Louvre, Paris (R.F. 3955)

In a tour de force of Mannerist pose and tenebrist lighting, a voluptuous female brandishes a sword and holds high the scales of justice. Her pearly skin emerges from the dark background drapery, the lustrous neon orange of her corset the only bright hue. Sweeping diagonals created by gestures and limbs provide drama and dynamism. Spranger has depicted two of the four cardinal Virtues here—Justice the more prominent, with the bare-breasted Prudence in the background, holding the mirror and snake that are her traditional attributes. The somber mood of this political allegory, painted between 1595 and 1601, reflects the turbulent and uncertain times in Rudolfiner Prague, when these Virtues would have held particular portent. Unlike Spranger's other political allegories, this one has not been linked to a specific occasion; most likely it was intended to pay general tribute to Rudolf as a strong leader who would govern the empire with reason, balance, and good sense.

The almost masculine physique of Justice marks a departure for Spranger, though a similar form recurs as the Victory figure in his *Allegory of the Triumph of the Habsburg Empire over*

the Turks, painted about 1604–10 (cat. 81). The contours and pose of Justice also bring to mind the figure of Minerva in Spranger's drawing *Minerva Crowning Mercury* (cat. 132).¹ As noted by van Mander, Spranger had depicted Justice previously—on the triumphal arch for Rudolf II, on Spranger's house, and for the town hall.² Interestingly, these were all works serving a public function. Here, in a more personal demonstration, Spranger has formulated a female symbol of Justice instilled with power, lauding his patron and paying tribute to his rule.

NOTES

1. Nancy 2013, p. 278. 2. Mander 1994, pp. 346, 350.

PROVENANCE: Jadwiga Vuyk Rosenblatt (1886–1950); Musée du Louvre, from 1936.

LITERATURE: Henning 1987, no. A50; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.67; Foucart 2009, p. 69, no. R.F. 3955; Nancy 2013, p. 278, cat. no. 93.

67

Minerva Vanquishing Ignorance,

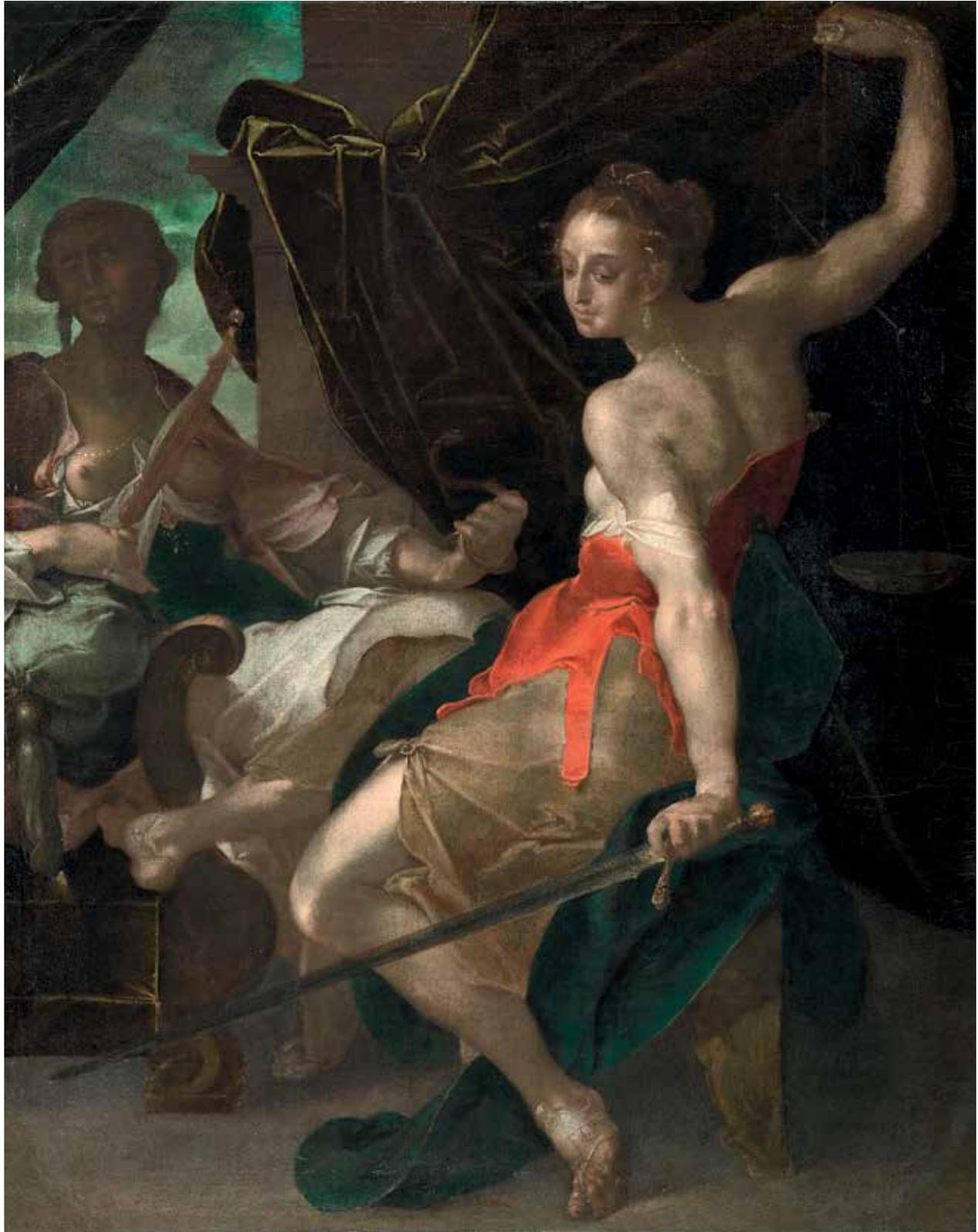
ca. 1596–1600

Oil on canvas, 64¹/₄ × 46¹/₈ in.

(163 × 117 cm)

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (GG_1133)

Triumphant Minerva takes center stage, placing her foot firmly on the neck of Ignorance—a nude male with donkey ears—whom she has also tethered with a rope she pulls taut. In the right foreground is Clio, the Muse of history, who records this golden age of Rudolfiner rule. Opposite Clio, the helmeted goddess of war, Bellona, faces alertly outward, ready to defend the empire. Directly behind her, though difficult to discern, is Mercury, minus his caduceus but wearing a winged hat





67

and holding a scroll.¹ Next is Urania, the Muse of astronomy, who holds up an astrolabe, a reference to Rudolf's success in attracting famous astronomers such as Johannes Kepler and Tycho Brahe to his court. To the right of Ignorance are personifications of painting, sculpture, and architecture. Other Muses gather round, but without attributes they are difficult to identify securely.

A variety of earlier works could have served as inspiration for Spranger's masterful painting. Raphael's *Triumph of Galatea* at the Villa Farnesina among the most compelling.² Generally, Minerva's pose calls to mind that of Saint Michael and of the resurrected Christ trampling sin and vice. Specifically, Minerva parallels Spranger's Christ in the *Epitaph of Nikolaus Müller* (cat. 52), which was clearly a template for this work.

Considered the signature exemplar of Rudolfine aesthetics, and of Spranger's career, this captivating painting has inspired so many interpretations, from astrological to political, that exploring every one would require a separate monograph. Diez considered it an apotheosis of the Muse of astrology. Gerszi saw Minerva as symbolizing "psychomachia," referring to the triumph of the soul over the flesh and relating it to the allegorical figure of Hermathena (recall Mercury's presence near Minerva).³ Kaufmann concurs with the connection to Hermathena but positions Minerva as a personification of political triumph, related to Spranger's *Allegory of the Triumph of the Habsburg Empire over the Turks* (cat. 81). Karl Schütz, a former curator at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, and others link Minerva's bare breasts with "Sapientia lactans," the virgin goddess of wisdom who

provides the nourishment of knowledge.⁴ Jürgen Müller devotes an essay to the iconography, identifying Minerva as the star goddess Astraea (personifying justice, she left Earth until the golden age returned). Further, he points out a ram's head adorning the pedestal on which Minerva stands. The ram, a symbol of Capricorn and of Augustus, ushered in Rome's Pax Augusta, a golden age of peace and prosperity.

Dating *Minerva Vanquishing Ignorance* has also been a challenge for art historians, who have placed it variously within the period 1591–1600. Oberhuber dates it the earliest, about 1591, citing the influence on its palette of Hans von Aachen and on its forms by Adriaen de Vries. Yet in light of what is known today about Spranger's oeuvre, a later date is certainly more accurate in terms of style.

Deciphering the exact meaning of the allegory could yield a more precise date, but caution is advised, as Spranger likely never intended his painting to elicit a single interpretation. Concurrent with the prevailing alchemic philosophy espoused at court, arcane knowledge and nuance were celebrated. Such works were for a select and sophisticated audience, not for the uninitiated. Prima facie, a battle has been fought and won in this painting. Minerva, lance still in hand, receives a laurel crown, harking back to a practice from antiquity of similarly crowning emperors. A palm of martyrdom is bestowed on her, but in this respect she is a pagan martyr, who combated ignorance to offer protection for those faithful to the arts and to Rudolf's kingdom. Rudolf had signed a Letter of Majesty on April 27, 1595, declaring painting an art, not craft, and Minerva could be viewed as a metaphor for the victory of the artists.

But other battles were being fought by Rudolf, involving Turkish threats to security, familial feuds, romantic and financial struggles. It would be through the gold of Wisdom, the ultimate goal of the philosopher's stone that Rudolf so intently sought, that peace would prevail in all realms and the golden age would return. As 1600 approached, the dawn of a new century, Spranger composed a work of artistic and political propaganda par excellence, announcing victory and envisioning a bright future.

NOTES

1. Müller (1994) points out Mercury's presence. Aegidius Sadeler II's print *The Triumph of Wisdom* (cat. 202), closely related to Spranger's painting, definitely shows the figure of Mercury. 2. Raphael's *Triumph of Galatea* (ca. 1514; Villa Farnesina, Rome) and Romanino's altar painting of the resurrected Christ in Capriolo, which Spranger could have seen during his time in Italy, might have served as inspiration; see Fabiański 1993, p. 461, who cites Romanino as the main source for Spranger's Müller epitaph. 3. Diez 1909, p. 116; Gerszi 1972, p. 760. 4. Konečný 1982; Schütz in Schianchi and Ferino-Pagden 2003, p. 390, cat. no. 3.4.3.

PROVENANCE: Kunstkammer of Rudolf II; Schatzkammer, Vienna, 1748.

LITERATURE: Mechel 1783, p. 265, no. 2; Engerth 1886, no. 1702; Diez 1909, p. 116; Oberhuber 1958, pp. 151, 235, no. G65; Henning 1987, pp. 95–99, no. A37; Hofmann 1987, p. 307, cat. no. VII.1; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.50; Schultze 1988, vol. 1, p. 280, cat. no. 159; Mai and Vlieghe 1992, pp. 266–68; Müller 1994; Fučíková et al. 1997, cat. no. I.84; Schianchi and Ferino-Pagden 2003, p. 390, cat. no. 3.4.3.



68

Mars, Venus, and Cupid, ca. 1597

Oil on canvas, 64¼ × 41¾ in.

(163 × 106 cm)

Universalmuseum Joanneum, Graz (67)

Venus, the goddess of love, has disarmed Mars, the god of war, not once but twice. His armor resting on the ground, he is not only unclothed and unarmed but also disarmed by her beauty and wiles. A sarcastic grimace on his shield acknowledges his seduction, and Cupid has even appropriated his helmet for a stool. Venus's thigh slung over Mars highlights their physical intimacy, and her disheveled hair alludes to a lover's tryst.

The large size of the canvas and its subject suggest it was originally destined for Prague Castle or for an aristocratic palace. Venus dominates Mars compositionally, thus supporting Becker's view that the overriding theme here is the triumph of love over war. This would be consonant with Rudolf's retiring personality and his aversion to battle. Spranger's painting also exemplifies the recurrent theme of harmony through discord (*discordia concors*). The pairing of opposites, male/female and love/war, also speaks of alchemic philosophy, in which male and female powers coalesce. Here, the couple will come together through conjunction, abetted by Cupid (the saline mediator). His rainbow-colored wings might allude to the stages of alchemic transformation, the end goal of which is attaining the philosopher's stone—here a philosophical metaphor for perfection of physical and spiritual love.

PROVENANCE: Emperor Franz Joseph I (1830–1916) to the Universalmuseum Joanneum, 1872.

LITERATURE: Mechel 1783, p. 266, no. 5; Oberhuber 1958, no. G5; Hofmann 1987, p. 157, cat. no. 33; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.58; Becker 2005, p. 108.

69

The Blindfolding of Cupid, 1597

Oil on canvas, mounted on panel,
35 1/8 × 27 1/4 in. (89.1 × 69.1 cm)
Germanisches Nationalmuseum,
Nuremberg (1167)

IN EXHIBITION

Signed and dated upper right: B. /
SPRANGHER. / FECIT 1597

Spranger's luscious painting embodies Shakespeare's verse from *The Merchant of Venice*: "But love is blind and lovers cannot see / The pretty follies that themselves commit; / For if they could, Cupid himself would blush." Shakespeare's play is traditionally thought to have been written about 1596–97, so Spranger may indeed have known the English epigram. An earlier play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595–96), also refers to the blindness of love: "Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind; / And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind." Shakespeare aside, Renaissance philosophy delved deeply into the beguiling and self-contradictory aspects of love, and Spranger was an ardent participant in the discourse.

Here, Venus and Mercury, sometimes identified as the parents of Cupid, struggle to blindfold him. His resistance is no doubt an allegory of the battle between sacred and profane love. The cool demeanor of pale Venus might also refer to the more intellectual aspect of love, contrasted to the sensuality represented by the swarthier Mercury, who stares boldly out at the viewer,



with his cape swirling. According to Mannerist precepts, Spranger placed the scene close to the picture plane, layering the figures, resulting in an irrational depiction of space and depth. The interconnection of the three characters is emphasized by the convergence of their hand gestures into a circle. Venus's tight, stylized curls are familiar from other of Spranger's works from the late 1590s.

PROVENANCE: Probably Kunstammer of Rudolf II; Archduke Albrecht (1559–1621), 1615 (faint Bohemian lion seal on verso); private collection, Silesia, before 1928; [Paul Glaser, Berlin, May 19, 1928].

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, no. G21; Henning 1987, pp. 121–24, no. A47; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.64; Tacke 1995, pp. 237–38, no. 116 (with earlier literature); Schoon and Paarlberg 2000, pp. 300–301, cat. no. 72; Hess and Hirschfelder 2010, pp. 272–73, 450.

Bacchus and Venus, 1597–1600

Oil on canvas, 67 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 44 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.

(172 × 114 cm)

Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum
Hannover (PAM956); on loan from the
Republic of Germany

Bacchus and Venus first served Rudolf's pleasure in Prague, then later it caught the eye of Adolf Hitler and was earmarked for the Führer Museum in his hometown of Linz. The museum was intended as part of a grandiose complex designed by Albert Speer to comprise a theater, opera house, and hotel. It was never built, and the collection came dangerously close to being blown up by the Nazis, its destruction blocked by Hitler's orders.

When the painting entered the Hanover museum, it was misattributed to Hendrick Goltzius and erroneously titled *Adam and Eve*.¹ In 1970 Schnackenburg correctly identified the painting as by Spranger, dating it 1597 and citing similarities between it and several of his other works. Notably, Cupid's face resembles that in *The Blindfolding of Cupid* (cat. 69), and an engraving after Spranger repeats this face as well (cat. 182).

Seductive and erudite, this painting was calculated to appeal to Rudolf. Spranger turned to the theme of Venus and Bacchus on more than one occasion, but unlike those others, Ceres plays no role here. Pseudo-Lucian wrote in his *Amores* (A.D. 300), "Aphrodite is more delightful when accompanied by Dionysus and the gifts of each are sweeter if blended together," but this coupling of love and wine is not all pleasure.² Spranger likens the disarming effects of wine to the power of love. Venus stands in full frontal nudity, the

epitome of female beauty. Bacchus is already grasping her left breast and playing with her nipple. His loincloth barely covers his lustful bulge. Wine spills from Venus's cup, an allusion to its aphrodisiac powers. The handle of the vessel appears to be fashioned as a serpent, indicating the sinful effects of its contents, as does the captivating gold vessel below emblazoned with a bacchic orgy scene.

A young companion of Bacchus embraces a gazelle while feeding it grapes and gazing up at the couple. A cheetah enters the scene on the left, representing Bacchus's traditional companion, the leopard.³ (Spranger might have seen exotic animals in Rudolf's menagerie at the Star Villa and in drawings by Joris Hoefnagel.) The animals are traditional symbols of lust, and their presence indicates a complicated moralizing allegory. The cheetah represents male power and is particularly inclined to hunt the gazelle. The gazelle, representing the feminine side of love, may allude to the Song of Solomon (2:7), which cautions the woman to wait until the right time for love, following the example of the gazelle and the doe, who know instinctively when to mate. Only at the right moment, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine" (1:2). It has been suggested that Spranger's rather unusual inclusion of a gazelle and a cheetah, as well as the emphasis on wine, are references to these biblical notions.⁴ Warnings about the appropriate time for love are relevant to the patron, in light of Rudolf's prolonged and ultimately broken engagement. In 1598 all hope officially ceased for a marriage between Rudolf and his fiancée, the Infanta Clara Eugenia, beloved daughter of

Philip II: she was betrothed on November 15 to Rudolf's youngest brother, Archduke Albert.

The modulation of the flesh tones is superb: Venus is cooler, whiter, with blue overtones, contrasting with the darker Bacchus, who appears full of life. Gray tones indicate soft shadows on both bodies. Spranger masterfully built up the perspective in layers. The sumptuous, almost sculptural red drapery, one great slash of color, is expertly fashioned. Spranger took great pains capturing the essence of the cheetah, making the soft fur almost palpable, and close examination reveals his laborious application of the black spots one by one. The painting exemplifies the refinement and the aristocratic Mannerism he achieved in the latter half of the 1590s.

NOTES

1. Curatorial files, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum Hannover, n.d. 2. Pseudo-Lucian 1967, verse 12. 3. Dülberg (1990, p. 88) bases her identification of animals on the expertise of the Hanover zoo director. See also Dittrich 2000, pp. 80ff. 4. Dittrich (2000, p. 82 n. 7) connects the pretty, graceful gazelle with the Song of Solomon as well as with the antique association between love and the gazelle.

PROVENANCE: [Gebhardt, Munich]; [Galerie Maria Almas-Dietrich, Munich, 1938]; German Reich, Sonderauftrag Linz (special commission gathering paintings for the Führer Museum); Federal Republic of Germany, 1966.

LITERATURE: Schnackenburg 1970; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.59; Schultze 1988, vol. 1, p. 278, cat. no. 157; Dülberg 1990, pp. 88–89, no. 110 (with earlier literature).

RELATED DRAWING: Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento (1973.10).



71

Vanitas, 1597–1602

Oil on canvas, 26¾ × 37⅝ in.

(68.1 × 95.8 cm)

Wawel Castle (Zámek Królewski na Wawelu), Kraków (935)

IN EXHIBITION

Signed lower right: *B. SPRANGERS. ANT. VS F.*; inscribed *HODIE MIHI. CRAS TIBI*

An arrestingly seductive nude youth stretches out across the canvas, placing his hand on a frame enclosing an unsettling Latin inscription, which translates as “today me, tomorrow you.” Pointing his finger, he leaves no doubt that this warning about the vanity of life is meant for the viewer. The skull and the hourglass underscore the message that life is fleeting, and the dramatic chiaroscuro intensifies the effect of foreboding. He represents the youthful god of death, Thanatos, known for his beauty and appeal, who through the years took on the appearance of Cupid. The Latin motto *hodie mihi, cras tibi* is usually seen as an epitaph on graves, and indeed the fragrance of death pervades Spranger’s painting. The dark background refers to the unknown, the abyss of death, while also alluding to Thanatos’s role as the son of night and darkness. Kazimierz Kuczman, a former curator of the collection, noted that the motif of putto and skull derives from a 1458 Venetian medal by Giovanni Boldù and gained considerable popularity in Netherlandish art.¹ The putto blowing bubbles, referring to transience, is also seen in an engraving by Goltzius (1594; Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-10.227)—a design compellingly similar to Spranger’s.

The youthful flesh seems to emerge from the dark background into the



viewer’s space. Familiar from other of Spranger’s paintings is the touch of pink on the youth’s nose. The flesh is modeled perfectly and highly detailed, so as to emphasize the moment of living as contrasted with impending death. A tenebristic bravura gives a sculptural quality to the figure. Delicate, pearly white brushstrokes bring out the three-dimensionality of the ringlets. The high quality of execution and the dark tonality point to a date in the late 1590s or early 1600s, but the symbolism alludes to Spranger’s later years as a widower and a father bereft of children. The disquieting aura of death might also represent the impending dark times for Rudolf, suffering from increasing illness and looming political disaster.

NOTES

1. Kuczman in Wawel 2005, p. 76.

PROVENANCE: Międzyżyński-Dzieduszycki Museum, Lvov, 1933.

LITERATURE: Białostocki and Walicki 1955, p. 491, no. 152; Oberhuber 1958, no. G11;

Warsaw 1963, cat. no. 59; Szablowski 1975, p. 395; Henning 1987, no. A56; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.71; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 407, cat. no. I.93; Wawel 2005, pp. 76–77.

72

The Three Marys at the Tomb, 1598

Oil on panel, 87 × 27⅝ in. (221 × 70 cm)

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (GG_6436)

Signed on the inside of the left wing:

B. SPRANGERS F.

Signed and dated on the outside of the wings, on the plinth of the column at left:

1598 HANS VREDEMAN FEC: AET. 72 (denoting his age when the work was made)

Rudolf’s premier court painters—Spranger, Hans von Aachen, Joseph Heintz the Elder, and Hans Vredeman de Vries—collaborated on this exquisite altarpiece in the last years of the sixteenth century. Fusing high Mannerism with religious mysticism,

the altarpiece graced the All Saints Chapel in Prague Castle—or possibly Saint Vitus Cathedral, according to Fučíková and Šroněk, who base their argument on an engraving depicting a ceremony in 1619.¹ This evidence is inconclusive, however. The engraving shows the figures in Spranger’s wing on clouds, with groups of angels clustered overhead, whereas in this painting the figures unquestionably stand on solid ground. In addition, the elegant curvature of the altarpiece’s contours is not visible in the engraving of Saint Vitus. The idea that the altarpiece was originally placed in Saint Vitus cannot be altogether rejected. However, the altarpiece might simply have been transferred from the Prague Castle chapel to Saint Vitus in 1619 or even earlier, after the death of Rudolf in 1612.

The Three Marys at the Tomb is one of the two wings of the altarpiece that survived when iconoclasts ransacked the cathedral in 1619. Originally, the central panel, by Hans von Aachen, celebrated the Resurrection; his design is known only from a drawing in the Moravská Galerie in Brno, Czech Republic (fig. 26). When the triptych is open (fig. 43), the left wing is Spranger’s *Three Marys at the Tomb*, the right wing



Fig. 43. Altarpiece with wings open



SPRANGER

HEINTZ

is *Christ on the Road to Emmaus* by Heintz. When closed, the outer wings illustrate a magnificent *Annunciation* by Hans Vredeman de Vries (fig. 27).

Spranger’s *Three Marys at the Tomb* shows the Virgin Mary walking into the center, visually and thematically

connecting to the Resurrection of her son. Visible at upper right are two crosses: the good thief hangs on one, and the empty middle cross signifies Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection. Rays emanate from the upper left, highlighting the crucifixion scene and beaming on

Mary, who wears a deep crimson robe. She gestures emphatically, her skillfully foreshortened right hand reaching into the viewer's space. The Magdalen, on the left, wears a vibrant orange robe and is the most elegantly dressed and bejeweled of the Marys, signifying her greater worldliness. Tenebrist effects are strong, with a sharp contrast between the dark scene in the foreground and the lighter sunrise sky. Clouds are breaking, symbolically announcing that the time of darkness has ceased. The overall dark tonality also reflects Spranger's aesthetic approach at the turn of the century, when his palette was infused with Venetian-inspired deep reds and golds that he derived from von Aachen. Oberhuber notes that Spranger's palette was also influenced by Heintz. Both wings are compositionally harmonious, yet subtle stylistic nuances emerge, such as the slightly fuller faces and fleshier, more sensuous figures in Spranger's panel.

Hans Vredeman de Vries signed and dated the outer wings 1598, and Aegidius Sadeler II's engraving nearly replicating Spranger's design is dated 1600 (cat. 216), thus Spranger's wing was conceived either in 1598 or shortly thereafter. The year 1598 was indeed auspicious, witnessing the recapture of Raab (today Győr) from the Ottomans by Rudolf's imperial forces. This altarpiece celebrated the victory, with the Resurrection alluding to the resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire and, by extension, of Christendom.²

NOTES

1. Fučíková in Fusenig 2010, p. 193; Šroněk and Horníčková 2010, pp. 10–11. For an illustration of the engraving depicting the ceremony inside the church and the altarpiece, see Bohatcová 1966, p. 29. 2. That same year brought the death of Rudolf's uncle, King Philip II of Spain, ending a rule of over four decades. Perhaps this unusual collaboration and the choice of a religious rather than

a mythological theme was also a nod to Rudolf's early childhood memories of his time in Spain, and thus a personal tribute to his uncle.

PROVENANCE: Prague Castle (All Saints Chapel or Saint Vitus Cathedral); Laxenburg Castle, Vienna, 1920; Kunsthistorisches Museum, from 1921.

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, no. G51; Henning 1987, no. A49; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.65; Fusenig 2010, p. 193; Šroněk and Horníčková 2010, pp. 10–11.

COPIES: Paintings, Muzeul National de Arta al Romaniei, Bucharest (2.078); Kroměříž Castle, Kroměříž, Czech Republic (see Appendix). Drawing, Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf (4827).

73

Cupid Fleeing Psyche, ca. 1599

Oil on copper, 24³/₄ × 18⁵/₈ in.

(63 × 47.5 cm)

Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Oldenburg (15.579)

Inscribed verso with a Tischbein inventory notation: *B. Spranger 84*

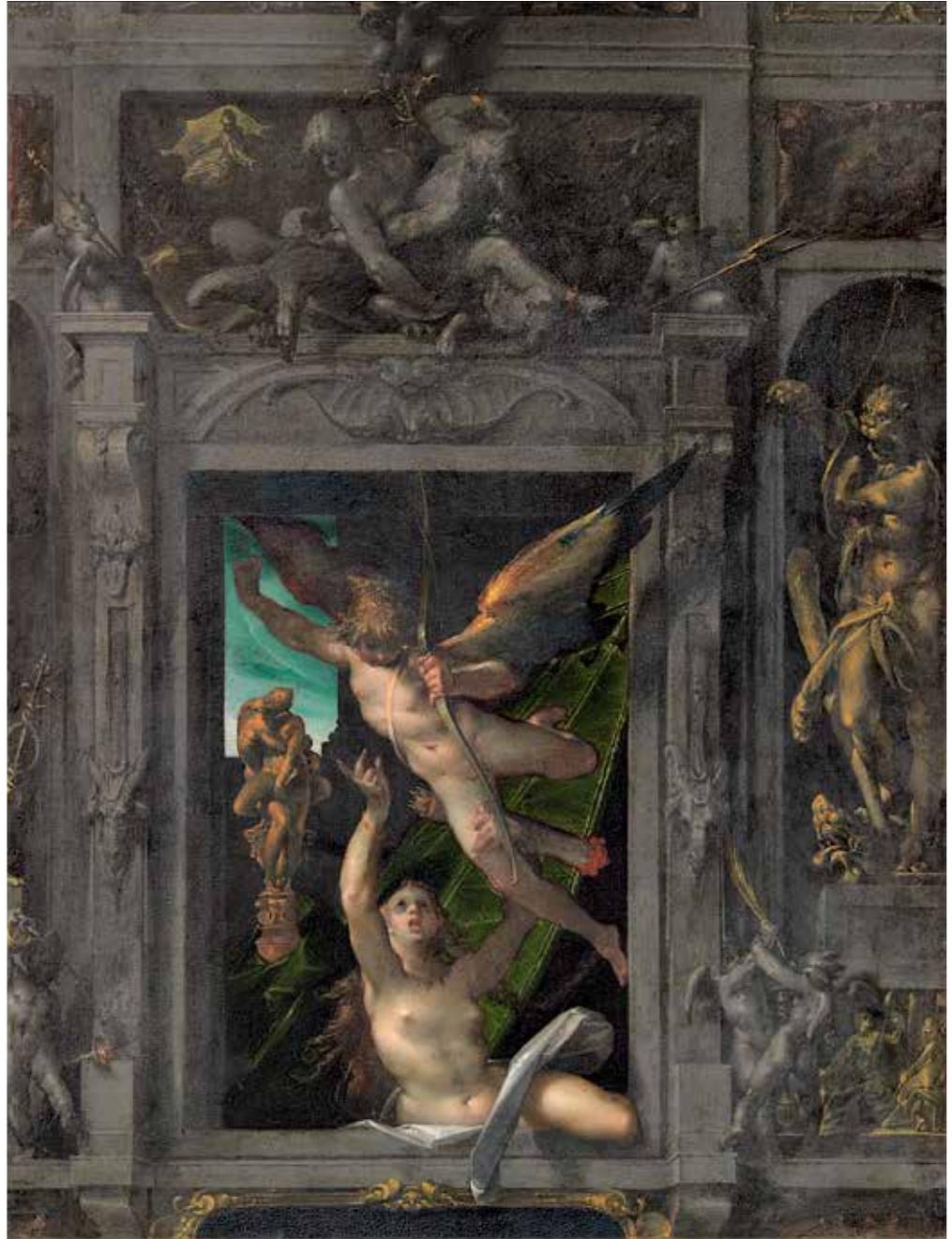
This rare trompe l'oeil by Spranger has a provenance almost as interesting as the subject and composition. The German painter Wilhelm Tischbein (1751–1829), close companion of Goethe, owned the painting at one time. The two young men spent time together in Italy in 1786–88, and Goethe mentions Tischbein often in his delightful memoir, *Italienische Reise* (1816; *Italian Journey*). Tischbein worked for the Grand Duke of Oldenburg in Eutin as inspector general of his gallery, and after falling into financial hard times, he sold his collection to the grand duke. Tischbein's mark of ownership can still be seen on the verso of the copper support, where he inscribed the artist's name and an inventory number.

The central theme of the painting is the power of love—lost and regained. As

Apuleius told the story in *The Golden Ass* (2nd century A.D.), Psyche did not initially know the identity of her tender lover, Cupid, because he visited her only at night and kept her blindfolded.¹ Unable to control her curiosity despite his admonitions of secrecy, she slipped into his room while he slept; a drop of hot oil from her lamp awakened him. Horrified at her betrayal, he flees as Psyche desperately tries to stop him—the intensely emotional moment captured by Spranger. The golden sculpture of entwined lovers in the background on the left recalls the young couple's earlier lovemaking and anticipates their later reunion and marriage on Mount Olympus. Kaufmann has noted a nod to Adriaen de Vries in the sculpture, but it seems not to depict a specific known work by him, though it is related to his bronze now in the Louvre.² Perhaps even more aligned with the style and composition of golden, entwined lovers is Hans Mont's work, particularly his *Mars and Venus* in the Getty Museum (fig. 11). The dynamic pose of the airborne Cupid brings to mind Spranger's master drawing from 1599 (cat. 147) and has thus been used to date this painting. But just as with the grisaille on the right, of Hercules and Omphale, which reappears in a Spranger engraving (cat. 195), it is not known whether the painting or the drawing provided the initial spark. Nevertheless, the aesthetic form of the bodies, sophisticated composition, and pervasive chiaroscuro position the Oldenburg work in the late 1590s.

In dazzling trompe l'oeil, Spranger renders Psyche's thigh and part of her drapery as if spilling over the ledge, out into the viewer's space, and there are other examples of visual trickery throughout. Brilliant green, blue, gold,

and flesh tones starkly contrast with the muted grays of the background grisaille. Assorted allegorical figures, the victims of love's powerful emotions, converge in an ornate architectural frame that, according to Kaufmann, represents the facade of the House of Love. Jupiter and Neptune are chained back to back at the top center, identified by their attributes, respectively, of eagle and trident. Once the most powerful gods of sky and sea, in the House of Love they are mere prisoners, depleted of their strength. On the right side, Hercules appears twice, once alone and once overcome by the seductive Omphale. On the left, only a portion of Mercury's caduceus is visible, along with a hint of Amor Lethaeus, who holds a torch, a reference to forgetful love — Ovid's suggested cure for a broken heart.³ The composition appears truncated at left, but careful scientific examination by Michael Gallagher at The Metropolitan Museum of Art was unable to determine whether the copper had been cut. There could originally have been another painting next to this one, finishing the composition, but such a work has not been found. Or Spranger could have cleverly faked this apparent cropping; a comparably odd device can be seen in his *Toilette of Venus and Vulcan* painting from 1607 (cat. 85). Another alternative is that the painting was indeed cut down at one time, either in order to fit into a frame or to remove a damaged area, but for now, the left edge remains a mystery. In light of Rudolf's struggles with love, this copper devoted to covert passion is a fitting theme in Spranger's oeuvre.



NOTES

1. Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, Book 5. 2. Adriaen de Vries, *Mercury and Psyche*, 1593, Musée du Louvre, Paris (M-R 3270). 3. On Ovid and forgetful love, see Weinrich 2004, pp. 16–18.

PROVENANCE: Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein (1751–1829), Oldenburg, before 1804; Grand Duke Peter Friedrich Ludwig von Oldenburg (1755–1829), Grand Duke's Gallery, in 1804; Landesmuseum, Oldenburg, from 1918/19.

LITERATURE: Bode 1888, p. 69; Diez 1909, pp. 123–24; Nuremberg 1952, p. 83, cat. no. K5; Amsterdam 1955, cat. no. 109; Oberhuber 1958, no. G22; Keiser 1967, p. 51; Henning 1987, no. A53; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.69.



74

Neptune and Amphitrite, late 1590s
Oil on panel, 11 3/8 × 9 1/8 in. (28.9 × 23.2 cm)
Private collection, New York
IN EXHIBITION

Inscribed verso: *Bartholomeus Spranger fecit hoc opus / In mei memoriam. / Jo: Leonardus de Claris.* (Bartholomeus Spranger composed this work. In my memory. Jo [Johannes (?)] : Leonardus de Claris.)

Cool grays and silvers simulate a smooth marble surface, a support favored in court circles. A recent

restoration that removed extensive overpainting revealed motifs matching an engraving by Jacob Matham, *The Triumph of Venus over Neptune* (cat. 200), which captures, in reverse, part of this painting's design. A preparatory drawing (cat. 146) bridges these two compositions, representing the likely initial conception for *Neptune and Amphitrite*. Matham's print is from about 1610–14, but the painting stems from the late 1590s, reflecting Spranger's style at that time.

The precise identity of Neptune's female partner in this sea landscape is difficult to determine. Is she Amphitrite (Neptune's wife) or Venus? The composition was clearly inspired by Giuseppe Salviati's emblem design of Neptune and Amphitrite for the 1571 edition of Vincenzo Cartari's *Imagini delli dei de gl'antichi* (Images of the gods of the ancients) (fig. 44), particularly the middle sea horse, which stretches its neck uncomfortably to gaze at the couple. But the presence of Cupid, who stands coyly behind the female, and the inscription on Matham's print suggest that she is indeed Venus. The inscription on the back of this painting offers scant clues, other than that Spranger likely composed it for a friend; the identity of "Jo: Leonardus de Claris" has yet to be determined.

This erotic sea fantasy is among the few multiframe compositions by



Fig. 44. Giuseppe Salviati (Giuseppe Porta) (Italian, Castelnuovo di Garfagnana, ca. 1520–ca. 1575 Venice). Emblem of Neptune and Amphitrite from *Imagini delli dei de gl'antichi* (Venice, 1571) by Vincenzo Cartari (Italian, ca. 1531–after 1569)



Spranger, joining *The Competition between Apollo and Pan* and *Allegory of the Reign of Rudolf II* (cats. 24, 61). The contrast of the dark male skin with the white female skin is typical of Spranger. The bodies in this painting are diminutive and streamlined, yet conversely possess a muscularity and voluptuousness, akin to the *Venus and Adonis* in Amsterdam (cat. 57). Though the figures are small, Spranger did not

compose them in his early monumental-in-miniature mode; rather, he expressed form in more sculptural terms, and the volume of the bodies is perceptible.

NOTES

1. Several articles consider not Spranger's painting but the conundrum of Amphitrite versus Venus. See, for example, Bass 2011.

PROVENANCE: Kunstkammer of Rudolf II (mentioned in inventory of March 30, 1623, as no. 39); Count Ignaz Maria Attems (1652–1732), Graz,

early 1700s; Rowlands Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts, ca. 1958.

LITERATURE: Hempel and Andorfer 1956, p. 98; Oberhuber 1958, no. G7; Henning 1987, no. B2; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.44.

75

Diana, late 1590s–early 1600s

Oil on canvas, 27¼ × 20½ in. (69.2 × 52 cm)
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest (73.12)

IN EXHIBITION

Spranger paid tribute to the goddess of the hunt and virginity in this provocative image, likely intended for the personal delight of Rudolf II. Transparent fabric highlights her ample, firm bosom, the nipples ever so slightly erect. Her hunting dog presses its snout against her, gazing up almost lasciviously, mouth open. Diana emerges from the dark, mysterious background in luminescent splendor, bathed in dramatic light. Her full lips, slightly parted, heighten her erotic appeal. She wears a moon diadem, signifying her status as a moon goddess in addition to her duties as huntress.

Based on the palette, luminosity, and sculpturesque voluptuousness, the work can be dated in the late 1590s to early 1600s. Spranger would depict Diana again later in the decade, on a much grander scale but with a very similar visage and dog (cat. 87). The highly erotic aura suggests that this was a work painted for the emperor's private enjoyment. Spranger completed only a few half-length compositions, including *Portrait of a God* in Prague's Národní Galerie (cat. 79).

A possible preliminary sketch for *Diana* is in the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München (cat. 114).

PROVENANCE: State Trade Commission, Budapest, 1973, no. 229.

LITERATURE: Henning 1987, no. A55; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.72; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 407, cat. no. I.92; Philipp et al. 2008, p. 157; Assmann 2012, p. 188, cat. no. 6.1.14; Nancy 2013, p. 276, cat. no. 92.

76

Venus and Cupid, late 1590s–
early 1600s

Oil on canvas, 3 1/2 × 23 5/8 in. (80 × 60 cm)
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Troyes (882-6-3)

When the distinguished judge Alfred Chalmel donated this painting to the museum in 1882, he was unaware that it was by Spranger. It entered the collection attributed to an anonymous artist of the School of Fontainebleau, but Spranger's hand was soon recognized in the supple limbs, refined gestures, and sensual Mannerism. Close affinities with other works



Fig. 45. Jan Saenredam (Netherlandish, Zaandam 1565–1607 Assendelft), after Hendrick Goltzius (Netherlandish, Mühlbracht 1558–1617 Haarlem). *Venus and Cupid*, 1575–1607. Engraving, 8 1/4 × 5 5/8 in. (20.8 × 14.1 cm). Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (RP-P-OB-10.570)



from Spranger's Prague period also leave no doubt as to his authorship. Stylistic similarities link *Venus and Cupid* to the *Allegory of Justice and Prudence* (cat. 66) and place it in the late 1590s to early 1600s. This Cupid's face is also very similar to that of the Cupid in the *Venus and Adonis* in Vienna (cat. 65). Goltzius designed an engraving proximate to Spranger's painting (fig. 45), with only a few minor differences, but both composi-

tions are undated, so it is unknown which came first.

Unraveling the meaning of Spranger's painting is not as straightforward as the attribution. Venus points outside, through the window, where Apollo can be seen in the distance, dashing off to the heavens in his chariot. Having witnessed her tryst with Mars, the sun god had alerted her husband, Vulcan, who in turn fashioned a bronze net to catch

the lovers in the act. Furious at Apollo for meddling, Venus took revenge by making him fall in love with the princess Leucothoë, with tragic results. Here Venus enjoins Cupid to shoot his potent arrows toward Apollo, thus striking him lovesick. Another interpretation rejects the notion of revenge, maintaining that the upward gesture of Venus refers to divine love.¹ Though plausible, more likely Spranger's work followed Ovid.² Unmistakably, Venus points toward Apollo while conversing with Cupid, thus emphasizing her displeasure with the swift spy.

NOTES

1. Foucart 1965, p. 219. 2. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 4.190–92; unpublished paper by Pamela Gordon cited by Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.68.

PROVENANCE: Alfred Chalmel (1811–1882) to the Musée des Beaux-Arts, 1882.

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, no. G46; Foucart 1965, p. 219; Henning 1987, no. A54; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.68; Troyes 1990, pp. 110–12.

77

Portrait of Zdeněk Vojtěch Popel von Lobkowitz, ca. 1599–1605

Oil on canvas, 23 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 17 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (60 × 45 cm)
Národní Galerie v Praze, Prague (VO-383);
on loan from Střední Česká Galerie, Nela-
hozeves, Czech Republic

Because he devoted most of his time to allegories, there are few extant portraits by Spranger. This one portrays Prince von Lobkowitz (1568–1628), a leading member of the Prague aristocracy and of Rudolf's cabinet. A staunch supporter of the Counter-Reformation, von Lobkowitz opposed Rudolf's Letter of Majesty in 1609 granting religious freedom to Protestants, but he maintained his power in the government. He was appointed high chancellor of the

Prague court in 1599, and Spranger's portrait was likely painted soon thereafter. His appearance in this portrait seems to place the prince in his early to mid-thirties, which—given his birth date of 1568—reinforces the conclusion that the painting dates to about that time.¹

Lobkowitz wears a black jacket that sharply contrasts with the rigid, translucent ruff. His ceremonial demeanor and the choice of black for his jacket align him with the Spanish faction at court. His penetrating stare and the finely

painted face, beard, and costume flaunt Spranger's skill in recording character and physiognomy. This is not the usual Mannerism expected from Spranger but rather “purest mannerism”—an expression aptly applied by Nikolaus Pevsner to the Spanish Mannerist architecture of the Escorial: “forbidding from outside and frigid and intricate in its interior.”² The formal, somewhat stiff manner calls to mind Spranger's portraits of family members in his epitaph for his father-in-law (cat. 52). The



paucity of secure portraits known by Spranger makes an attribution here somewhat tenuous. However, a letter dated December 20, 1586, indicates that Spranger painted a portrait for Lobkowitz's mother-in-law.³ That portrait cannot be identified now, but the letter does confirm that Spranger worked for this aristocratic family. Decades earlier, while in Italy, he had been praised for his adeptness in portraiture. According to van Mander, he drew from memory a portrait of the Duchess of Aremberg, achieving a "good likeness" for which he was handsomely paid.⁴

NOTES

1. Kaufmann (1988, no. 20.70) concurs with this date. 2. Pevsner 1946, p. 135. 3. Lobkowitz Archives, Roudnice Castle, Roudnice nad Labem, Czech Republic. 4. Mander 1994, pp. 342–43.

PROVENANCE: Lobkowitz collection, Roudnice nad Labem (inventory of Raudnitz Castle, no. 385); Schlossgalerie Nelahozeves.

LITERATURE: Matějka 1910, p. 137, pl. XI; Bergner and Chytil 1912; Strettiová 1957, pl. 2; Oberhuber 1958, no. G40; Neumann 1984, p. 105, no. 46; Henning 1987, no. A67; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.70.

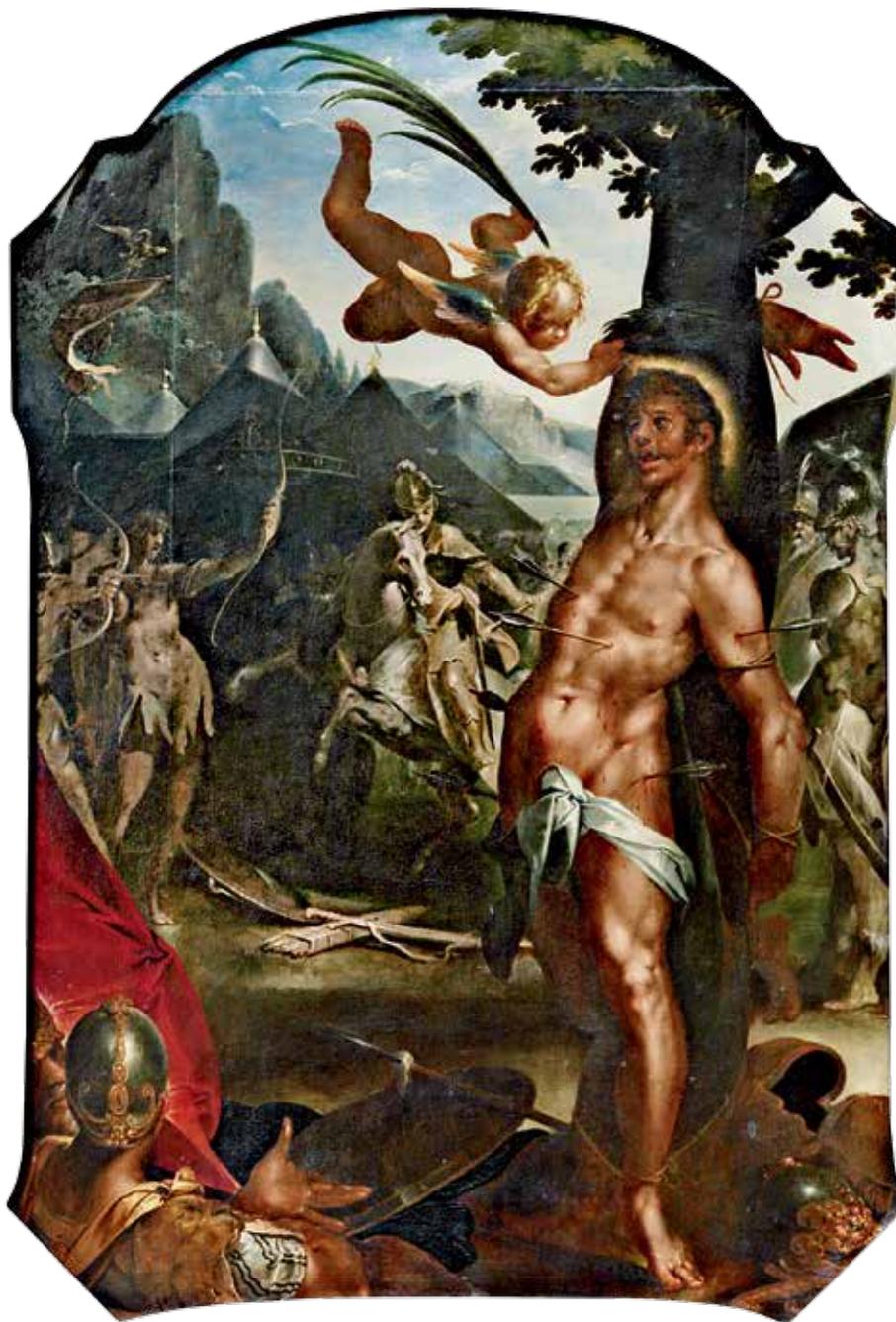
78

Saint Sebastian, ca. 1601

Oil on panel, 61 ³/₈ × 46 ¹/₂ in. (156 × 118 cm)
Church of Saint Thomas, Prague

Tautly strung against a tree, Saint Sebastian gazes up at an angel swooping down to crown him with laurels. Elegance and affect override the earthly suffering of Sebastian, and his agony is left to the viewer's imagination. Here the pain of martyrdom is suffered not on a physical but a spiritual level.

The Augustinian church of Saint Thomas, which dates back to the thirteenth century, was destroyed twice before becoming a royal church in



1526.¹ In about 1592 Rudolf assigned his architect Ullrico Aostalli to assist the Augustinians in making improvements to the church, which was an easy walk from Prague Castle. This royal connection likely influenced the commission of Spranger's painting. Spranger's altarpiece, in an ornate gilded reliquary frame, stands in the sanctuary to the left

of the main altar. It is coated with years of incense smoke, and dark browns now dominate the palette. At lower left, two repoussoir figures viewed from the back recall those in Spranger's *Martyrdom of Saint John the Evangelist* (cat. 14), painted three decades earlier. But aligning the altarpiece with Spranger's mature aesthetic are Sebastian's

amplified, shining muscles, which call to mind the sculpture of Adriaen de Vries. Curiously, Saint Sebastian sports a moustache—similar to the vanquished pasha in Spranger’s *Allegory of the Triumph of the Habsburg Empire over the Turks* (cat. 81).

According to van Mander, this panel is the second version of the painting, as Rudolf gave the original to the Duke of Bavaria three or four years after it was

installed in the church.³ Unfortunately, the location of the first version is unknown. According to van Mander’s narrative, the first version of Saint Sebastian stems from the late 1590s and was copied by Spranger a few years later. As van Mander speaks of the works and their circumstances in detail, both paintings may date before 1602, the year Spranger visited the Netherlands and met with van Mander.



Spranger’s painting bears an unmistakable likeness to Hans von Aachen’s 1594 altarpiece of Saint Sebastian for Saint Michael’s church in Munich.

NOTES

1. Once during the Hussite Wars (1420–37) and again by fire in 1503. 2. Mander 1994, p. 350.

LITERATURE: Neumann 1953; Oberhuber 1958, no. A37; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.75.

79

Portrait of a God, ca. 1601

Oil on canvas, 19⁵/₈ × 15 in. (50 × 38 cm)
Private collection, Prague; on deposit in the
Národní Galerie v Praze, Prague (O-9859)

The identity and even the gender of this figure are elusive. And the sparseness of compositional details makes attribution to Spranger only speculative. Some previous scholars, including Henning, have rejected this work as not by Spranger, yet many elements typify his hand. The dark palette, with light emanating from the upper left, repeats the tenebrism of *The Suicide of Sophonisba* (cat. 82) and other of Spranger’s late works. Overall, the rendering is delicate, especially apparent in the tight curls framing the scalp. The compositional device of the backward glance enhances the somber yet slightly mysterious mood.

The canvas has been relined, which flattened the surface paint and erased the nuances of the artist’s touch.

PROVENANCE: Rudolf Ryšavý (1876–1949), Prague; private collection, Prague.

LITERATURE: Prague 1938, p. 65; Oberhuber 1958, no. G33; Henning 1987, no. C22; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.74; Kotková 1999, p. 106, no. 71.



or to his circle, and although no longer attached to Spranger's painting, it also resides in the Muzeum Narodowe.¹

The brothers Adam and Andreas Hanniwaldt commissioned the epitaph for their parents, Simon and Eva — seventy and fifty-six years old, respectively — who are portrayed kneeling in the predella panel originally positioned below *The Baptism of Christ* (fig. 47). Much simpler in composition and style, the predella was not painted by Spranger; the artist is unknown but was most likely a local Silesian painter. Interestingly, the background landscape in the predella incorporates the ancient Roman ruins of Septizonium, after an etching by Hieronymus Cock.² The altar bears an extensive inscription and prayer for the couple, who are portrayed as the blessed who await resurrection after their death.

Composed in the last decade of Spranger's life, shortly after his 1602 visit to the Netherlands, *The Baptism of Christ* is high Mannerism. The artist's finesse is particularly evident in Saint John's camel-skin robe and his sharply modeled back muscles. The angel wears a neon orange robe, comple-

80

The Baptism of Christ, 1603
Oil on panel, 40¼ × 34⅞ in. (102 × 88 cm)
Muzeum Narodowe we Wrocławiu,
Wrocław (VIII-2252)

IN EXHIBITION

Signed and dated verso (originally signed recto, but the signature was removed in a cleaning and transcribed on the verso):

B. Sprangers [!] f 1603

Spranger's painting originally adorned an elaborate epitaph altar in the church of the Holy Trinity in

Rothsürben (now Żórawina, Poland), just outside Wrocław (fig. 46). An ornate frame of white and gold originally surrounded the painting, carved in a whimsical Mannerist style with Renaissance columns as well as sculptures of the resurrected Christ, Faith, Hope, Love, and Endurance. The frame has been attributed to Gerard Heinrich, a sculptor active in Silesia,

Fig. 46 Archival photo of *The Baptism of Christ* in situ





Fig. 47. Anonymous Silesian artist. *Portrait of Simon and Eva Hanniwaldt*, predella for Spranger's *Baptism of Christ*, ca. 1603. Oil on panel. Muzeum Narodowe we Wrocławiu, Wrocław (VIII-2252)

mented by colorful touches of pink on his nose and cheeks. These delicate strokes of pink also appear on Saint John and Christ and are typical of Spranger, as are Christ's tight ringlets, which can also be seen on the young Thanatos in *Vanitas* (cat. 71). As Saint John anoints Christ, his arm is extended to an extreme degree, making the baptism (a disputed sacrament) the focal point of the painting. The elongated arm parallels the diagonal of the emerald green hills; the dove, symbol of the Holy Spirit, completes the diagonal, sanctifying the gesture of baptism. The figures of Christ and Saint John are highly sculptural, potentially influenced by Adriaen de Vries.

NOTES

1. See Degen 1965, p. 260. 2. Hollstein 1949-, vol. 4, no. 34.

PROVENANCE: Church of the Holy Trinity, Rothsürben (now Żórawina, Poland), 1603.

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, no. G74; Warsaw 1963, cat. no. 58; Degen 1965, p. 260; Henning 1987, pp. 147–50, 189, no. A57; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.76; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 408, cat. no. I.94; Kapustka et al. 2001, p. 41, cat. no. II.1; Steinborn 2006, p. 337, no. 58.

8 I

Allegory of the Triumph of the Habsburg Empire over the Turks, ca. 1604–10
Oil on panel, 65 × 41 1/8 in.
(165.1 × 104.5 cm)
Private collection, Prague; on loan to the Prague Castle Picture Gallery

In 1593 the long-simmering hostilities between the Ottoman and the Holy Roman Empires exploded into what became known as the Long War, which continued until 1606. In his allegory of the conflict, Spranger relies on his familiar topos of a female allegorical figure trampling Vice, represented here as a Turk. In this painting the defeated figure refers to Telli Hassan Pasha, who invaded Croatia in 1592, and to the ensuing battle at the Castle of Bihać, where his forces killed at least two thousand people and took eight hundred children as Ottoman slaves. Hassan's military triumphs came to an end in 1598, when the imperial forces recaptured Raab (present-day Győr) and the defeated pasha fell into the river and died. Depicted here as a moustachioed middle-aged man, he still clutches a scimitar, symbol of the Ottoman Empire.

The figure of Victory is in full command, stretching one foot on the vanquished enemy's knee and one on a stone block. She holds a crown of laurels (signifying victory for the emperor) and a palm frond. Fama swoops in, completing this composition filled with dramatic diagonals.

Her red, black, and gold flags are Habsburg symbols, as is the large eagle on the left, which demonstrates domination over the world by its position above a sphere or globe. At the bottom right, a putto displays a tablet, which appears to be blank, awaiting an inscription. In the far distance is a ghostlike man on horseback being led by another, very faint figure. The man on horseback points toward the distance, leading the eye to the winding river landscape, dotted with smoke signifying ongoing skirmishes.

The dark tonality of the painting has been noted as a possible reflection of Rudolf's pessimism at the end of his reign, at a time when his brother Matthias was maneuvering him out of power. Yet the intensity of the palette is striking. The vibrant blue and shimmering pink are similar to those in the *Venus and Cupid* in Troyes (cat. 76). The iconography and indeed the style of the painting indicate that Spranger composed it during the last decade of his life. Oberhuber and Kaufmann concur on a date of 1610, also noting affinities with Spranger's *Saint Jerome and the Lion* (known through Lucas Kilian's print, cat. 227), which is dated 1610.⁴ But the thematic relevance to previous events could place this work slightly earlier. Spranger's Victory and the defeated pasha reflect the gradually



81

increasing sculptural plasticity of his figures. These forms can be aligned with those in the *Allegory of Justice and Prudence* (cat. 66). The figures also present a parallel with the bronze sculptures of Adriaen de Vries, who created a relief *Allegory of the Turkish Wars* (1604–5; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), which Daniel Fröschl praised in his inventory of 1607–11.² Hans van Aachen also created a series of allegories celebrating Habsburg might over Ottoman menace (fig. 28). His drawings and paintings, many on marble and in small format, are thematically more specific concerning these battles, whereas Spranger's large composition is generalized, relying on fewer details for impact.

NOTES

1. Oberhuber 1958, no. G45; Kaufmann 1978a.
2. Bauer and Haupt 1976, p. 104, no. 1982.

PROVENANCE: Kunstkammer of Rudolf II; Stockholm (plunder of Swedish troops), by 1648; Nils Rapp, Stockholm, 1929; Harry Wahlin, Stockholm, 1937; (Christie's, London, July 17, 1981, no. 46); private collection, Münster; [Galerie Koller, Lucerne, March 23, 2007, no. 3018].

LITERATURE: Granberg 1929, p. 177; Oberhuber 1958, no. G45; Kaufmann 1978a, pp. 71, 74, 75; Henning 1987, no. A62; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.86; Schultze 1988, vol. 1, p. 283, cat. no. 163; Fučíková et al. 1997, cat. no. 1.95; Galen 2001.

82

The Suicide of Sophonisba, 1605

Oil on canvas, 49³/₈ × 38¹/₄ in.

(125.5 × 97 cm)

Národní Galerie v Praze, Prague (O-1593)

This starkly erotic painting shows Sophonisba, queen of Carthage, in her final moments. She holds the cup of poison proffered by her husband, King Masinissa, who urges her to drink in order to avert capture and humiliation

by the Romans. Masinissa, more in love with power and glory than with his wife, crouches above her on the left, while her lady-in-waiting agonizes over her impending death on the right. Spranger shows the young queen in the prime of her beauty, enhanced by full red lips and long blond hair. She wears pearls and a gold medalion with a blue stone incised with an “M,” referring to her husband. Stark spotlights pierce the dark, brooding scene. Spranger’s full artistic talents rise to the fore in this work, making *The Suicide of Sophonisba* among his masterpieces of historical drama.

Ancient historians (principally Polybius and Livy) recount Sophonisba’s story, but Spranger may have been inspired by the Renaissance poet Gian Giorgio Trissino’s tribute, published in Rome in 1524. Sophonisba was not a common legend for artists of his milieu, another example of Spranger’s originality. The complicated narrative would also have satisfied the predilection for arcane and obscure subjects at Rudolf’s court.

Stylistically, a shift has occurred in this mature work. Formerly, Spranger’s pearly, enamel-smooth females inhabited defined environments, often landscapes of some mystical yet cohesive space. An even, bright light bathed his figures. Now, human flesh emerges out of cryptic and darkly foreboding backgrounds. A more threatening sensuality surfaces, chronicling the shift from the halcyon couplings of Venus and Mercury to the

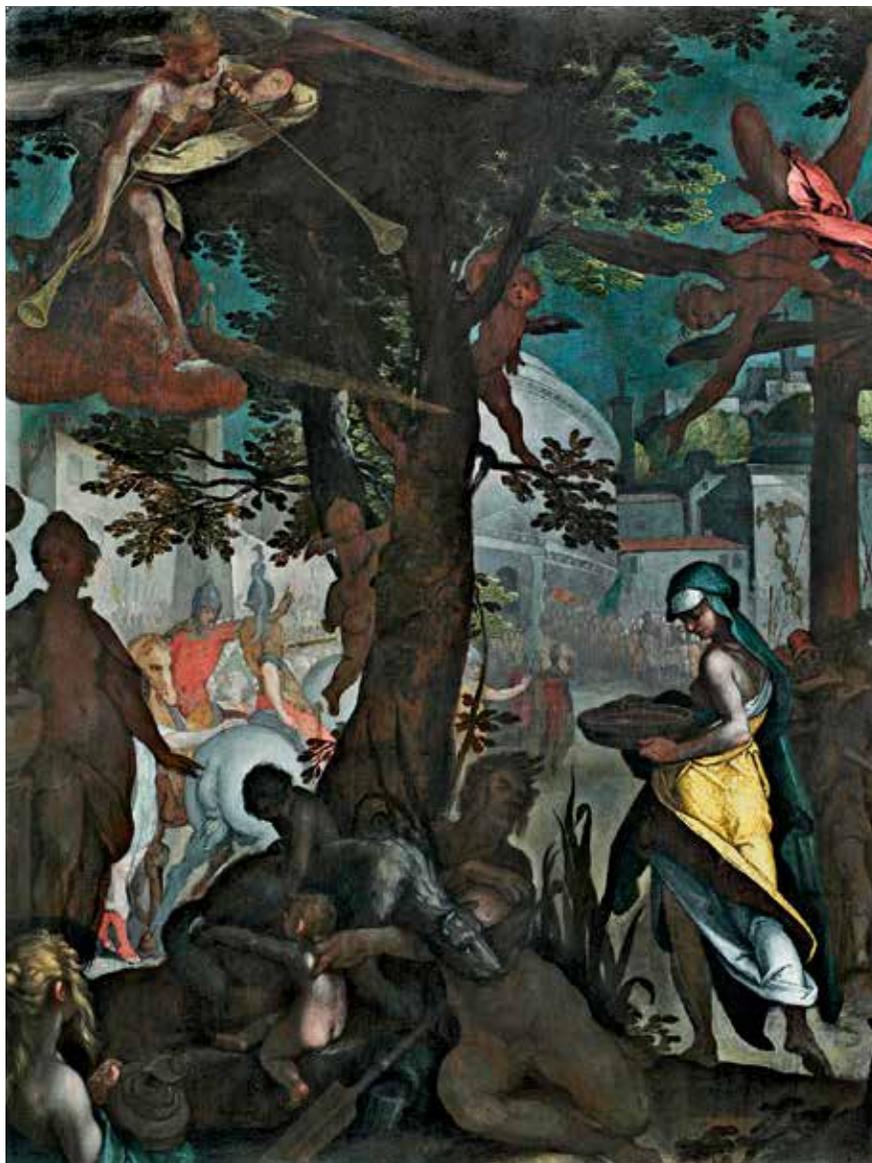


tragic ends of Sophonisba and her swarthy traitor husband, Masinissa. Spranger repeated this type of half-length, bare-breasted female in other later works, such as the figure of Prudence in the *Allegory of Justice and Prudence* (cat. 66). The tilt of Sophonisba’s head brings to mind that of Venus in *The Toilette of Venus and Vulcan* from

1607 (cat. 85), but Sophonisba’s more voluptuous figure and darker, ochre palette point to an earlier date.

PROVENANCE: Dr. Otto Reichl, Prague, 1938.

LITERATURE: Prague 1938, p. 65, cat. no. 8a; Oberhuber 1958, no. G32; Neumann 1985, p. 52; Henning 1987, pp. 137–39, 188, no. A51; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.66; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 40, cat. no. I.97; Kotková 1999, p. 103.



83

Vestal Virgin Tuccia, after 1605
Oil on panel, 24 × 18³/₈ in. (61 × 46.5 cm)
Private collection, New York

IN EXHIBITION

Symbols of imperial Rome abound in this historical allegory. The river god Tiber, Romulus and Remus, and Roman soldiers convene to witness the miracle of Tuccia, a vestal virgin

accused of impurity. As narrated by Pliny in his *Natural History* (28.12), she redeemed her reputation by carrying water in a sieve without allowing a single drop to fall—a feat believed to be possible only by a true virgin. Petrarch also honors Tuccia as an exemplar of Chastity, the second Triumph after Love. The chaste heroine, representing virtue in the Renaissance, was a fitting subject for domestic art, reminding brides of decorum.¹ But for Rudolf,

celebrated not for his chastity but for his lasciviousness, this heroine embodies more imperial ideals, surrounded by symbols of the Roman Empire. An engraving by Matham after Spranger's design validates such associations (cat. 224).

This work was for many years unknown, the design recognized only through Matham's print of 1608. That date serves as a point of departure for Spranger's painting, reinforced by the affinities between the pose of Tuccia and the Victory in *Allegory of the Triumph of the Habsburg Empire over the Turks* (cat. 81).

NOTES

1. For Tuccia in the Italian Renaissance and her role in birth trays and other domestic art, see Bayer 2008, esp. p. 314.

PROVENANCE: (Im Kinsky, Vienna, April 21–22, 2009, no. 0058).

LITERATURE: None.

84

Allegory on the Fate of Hans Mont,
1607

Oil on copper, 20⁵/₈ × 17¹/₈ in.
(52.5 × 43.5 cm)

Prague Castle Picture Gallery (O-259)

Signed and dated: B. SPRANGERS
MD.CVII [1607]

Inscribed on socle: *Ad pictum archetypo
ioh de Mont Gandavensis inter primos aevi
huis et augusti caes statuarios descripsit B.
Sprangers MD.CVII.*

Translation: B. Spranger made this painting in 1607 from an archetype by Hans Mont from Ghent, one of the first sculptors of the emperor and of this age.

Inscribed on column: *Iniqua Fata Decus hoc
/ Orbi et Belgio / Ereptum Itis / Fides Aequa
/ Quae Etiam / Nocte sua am / Involutum /
Patriae et Luci / Restituis.*

Translation: O unjust Fates, you snatch away this renowned man from the world and Belgium. O just Faith, you return him, already in his own night [death], to the light and to the country!

This moody, melancholic allegory honors Spranger's longtime friend Hans Mont, mourning his passage. Amid a fantasy architectural landscape loom an obelisk and the Column of Constantine, alluding to Constantinople, Mont's putative final home.¹ Many years had passed since Mont had walked the halls of Prague Castle: in 1580, during an evening tennis match, his left eye had been gravely injured by an errant ball—a tragedy for a sculptor. It put an end to his position at the royal court, and Mont left for Ulm, where he painted murals and worked on a clock until being dismissed because of his lackluster performance. Thereafter, he purportedly left for Constantinople and was never heard from again. The inscription and date on this painting indicate that Mont had died by 1607.

Spranger's work displays an appealing palette of soft blues and greens, pierced with touches of orange and brown. The personal nature of the allegory, the abraded surface, and Spranger's penchant for the obscurely esoteric prevent any definitive understanding of the scene. A crowd of heavily draped figures, Fates and Virtues, convene to honor the sculptor Mont. The sphinx on the left provides a reference to his art, signaling eternity and wisdom.² The familiar figure of Fame hovers above to bestow honor and glory. The main foreground figure stands in an exaggerated Mannerist pose and gestures below to a figure holding scissors, clearly a Fate ready to cut the thread of Mont's life. The four women on the left are of

various ages, thus an allusion to stages in life. An old woman peers out into the distance, away from the primary action, alluding to the passage of time and those decades passed since Mont and Spranger were last together in Prague. The two male profiles at lower right, more clearly delineated than the other faces, might be portraits of Mont and Spranger. This late painting, evocative and captivating, laments a friendship lost and a promising career cut short by

cruel fate, and in turn pays tribute to Spranger's mastery.

NOTES

1. Michalski 1988. 2. Cohen (2008, p. 248) discusses the Renaissance symbolism of the female sphinx.

PROVENANCE: Prague Castle, 1685.

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, no. G31; Burian 1959; Neumann 1967, pp. 246–48; Henning 1987, no. A60; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.81; Michalski 1988; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 408, cat. no. I.96.





85

The Toilette of Venus and Vulcan, 1607
Oil on panel, 20½ × 24¾ in. (52 × 62 cm)
Baron C. Gripenstedt, Bysta, Sweden (1114)

Signed and dated lower right:
B. SPRANGERS F. 1607

The condition of *The Toilette of Venus and Vulcan* has deteriorated, but the painting is nonetheless a trompe l'oeil tour de force of late Mannerism, ranking among Spranger's more cryptic and complex paintings. The large hand in the lower left corner is particularly mysterious. In the past Spranger had cropped figures and objects, but such a dramatically close detail of an isolated body part is unusual in his oeuvre. Some scholars have postulated that the painting was

cut down and that more of the figure connected to the hand was originally present.¹ However, as Fučíková points out, Spranger's signature currently appears in the conventional location at lower right, and if the painting had originally been much larger, the signature would now be oddly positioned.² But Spranger has tricked the viewer before, as manifest in his spectacular trompe l'oeil *Cupid Fleeing Psyche* (cat. 73). This raised hand is clearly a warning, likely signaling the humiliation Vulcan will suffer from being cuckolded by Venus. She can be seen in the background, being cosseted by her Graces, her desirability emphasized by her long hair and bare breasts. The figure visible through a window at upper left, a male satyr or faun holding up a basket of doves, underscores

Venus's identity as goddess of love. In addition to the warning of unfaithfulness, by showing Venus holding a mirror Spranger also offers an admonition about the dangers of vanity and possibly against paying excessive attention to pretty females.

NOTES

1. Henning (1987, p. 190, no. A61) maintains the painting has been cut down on every side and is a fragment of a larger composition. 2. Fučíková in Schultze 1988, vol. 1, p. 282, cat. no. 161.

PROVENANCE: Kunstammer of Rudolf II; probably Queen Christina (1626–1689), Sweden (1648 inventory, no. 472); Hildebrandt family; Anckarsvärd family; Baron J. Gripenstedt, Bysta, through marriage to Anckarsvärd daughter.

LITERATURE: Granberg 1897, p. 20; Granberg 1911, p. 65, no. 302; Henning 1987, no. A61; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.84; Schultze 1988, vol. 1, p. 282, cat. no. 161.

Venus in the Smithy of Vulcan,

ca. 1607–9

Oil on canvas, 54½ × 37¼ in.

(138.5 × 94.5 cm)

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

(GG_2001)

IN EXHIBITION

According to Homer's *Iliad*, Vulcan endured a difficult childhood, banished from Olympus by his own mother, Hera, who was offended by his ugliness and clubfoot.¹ Life improved for him on Earth, where he became the god of fire, admired for his skill in fashioning weapons for the heroes Achilles and Aeneas, such as the helmet and cuirass seen on the right. Despite his ugliness, Vulcan claimed Venus as his wife, but she betrayed him with a multitude of adulterous affairs. Here Venus interrupts Vulcan at his work. While he sits on his bench and files a lance, she stands in command above, pressing him to her breast. Her seductive beauty leaves him no chance of resisting.

Spranger has crafted another masterpiece devoted to the loves of the gods. He constructed the composition with precision and acuity, subtly dividing the canvas into sections and layering forms atop one another. Venus occupies the center of the canvas, her figure of generous, serpentine curves joined with Vulcan in a pyramidal construction that is almost Raphaelesque. Attributes of each of the protagonists appear in opposite corners: Vulcan shown at his forge on the upper left, Venus's son Cupid at lower right. Spranger's evocative manipulation of the silver-copper radiance of the bodies against the dark background heightens the sense of intrigue and impending betrayal.



According to Kaufmann, Vulcan's proportions and undulating musculature are similar to those of Spranger's Saint Jerome, known only through Lucas Kilian's engraving from 1610 (cat. 227). The voluptuous figures combined with Baroque classicism suggest the influence of Spranger's contemporary Annibale Carracci, whose work Spranger would have seen in the Kunstkammer. The impressive monumentality of the human forms certainly dances on the border of

the Baroque period. The brighter tonality, solidity of the forms, and balanced composition exemplify the maturity and confidence of Spranger's painting during the last decade of his life.

NOTES

1. Homer, *Iliad*, 18.381–409.

PROVENANCE: Kunstkammer of Rudolf II.

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, no. G63; Henning 1987, no. A64; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.88; Schultze 1988, vol. 1, p. 283, cat. no. 164; Komanecky 1999, cat. no. 57; Tokyo-Kobe 2004, p. 185, cat. no. 5.



87

Recumbent Diana after the Hunt, 1609
Oil on canvas, 50³/₄ × 78¹/₂ in.
(129 × 199.5 cm)
Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest (351)

Diana stretches out beside a river, reclining on an ermine cape that protects her from the cold ground. Two attendants stand behind her, and a bejeweled servant kneels before her, a deer atop his back—the bounty of her recent hunt. Diana’s alluring visage and kissable lips, and her dog, its sleek head inclined in a nearly identical manner, appeared in Spranger’s earlier half-length painting of *Diana*, also in the

Szépművészeti Múzeum (cat. 75). Stylistically, this figure of Diana is a departure for Spranger, especially the fleshy body presaging Rubenesque abundance. This helps explain the previous misattributions of the painting to Joos van Winghe and Frans Floris; scholars have also noted the influence of Paris Bordone and Palma Vecchio.¹ These Venetian references could have been intended to tempt and satisfy Rudolf, who had a penchant for Titian and other Northern Italian masters. Kaufmann dates this work about 1595, but the fleshy figure of Diana indicates a later year. Henning catalogues the work as problematic, proposing it to be

by Dirk de Quade van Ravesteyn, understandably relating Spranger’s *Diana* to van Ravesteyn’s two versions of *Sleeping Venus* (fig. 21).² However, those nudes and, indeed his female figures in general, are daintier, slighter forms.

NOTES

1. Schoon and Paarlberg 2000, p. 302, cat. no. 73.
2. The other version is in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon (135).

PROVENANCE: Prince Esterházy, Vienna, 1811; Szépművészeti Múzeum, from 1871.

LITERATURE: Pigler 1967, p. 774, no. 351; Henning 1987, no. B1; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.60; Schoon and Paarlberg 2000, p. 302, cat. no. 73.

Venus and Adonis, ca. 1610

Oil on canvas, 46½ × 68¾ in.

(118 × 175 cm)

Státní Zámek Duchcov, Zámecká Galerie,
Waldstein collection, Duchcov, Czech
Republic (1079)

This large painting radiates eroticism. Deeply saturated browns and reds intensify an intimate yet somewhat disconcerting atmosphere, foreshadowing the tragic fate of Adonis. The red drapery may be Spranger's allusion to the blood Adonis will shed, attacked by wild boars, as well as a clever reference to the red anemones that bloomed where Adonis's blood fell. On this deep level, Adonis is a reference to the resurrection of nature and, particularly, to the seasons.

On the left, Cupid, wearing a quiver case, pulls back drapery of pink and

gray shot silk to reveal the lovers Venus and Adonis. She presses against his loins, he tweaks her nipple. Their languid pose and the position of their limbs indicate postcoital repose. Venus's long braid, delineated with delicacy, spirals over her pubic region, recalling Eve in the two versions of *Fall from Paradise* (cats. 62, 63). A long pearl necklace crosses between her breasts, enlivening the composition with diagonals. Typical Spranger traits are the touches of red on the ear, nose, and lips of Adonis, as well as on Venus's cheek. Adonis's foot pulls down on the white sheet, adding to the erotic frisson. A breakthrough in composition, tonality, and figural stylization is evident. The bodies are indeed serpentine and attenuated, but Venus and Adonis now embrace a Baroque sensibility and musculature, heightened by potent chiaroscuro and tenebrism. This leap in pictorial approach has been

noted to reflect the influence of Annibale Carracci.¹

Before a restoration in 1969, the painting was so dark that a key motif of lightning to the right was not visible. Ovid's tale of Venus and Adonis equates the curved tusks of a boar to that of lightning, thus referencing the violent death of Adonis.² The design above the tassel at upper left appears atypical of Spranger and may have been added later; restorations may account for the flattened surface overall. Fučíková argues that the work has a humanist theme, in which Adonis has a cosmic significance related to the seasons.³ Kaufmann refutes this, championing the erotic tone as Spranger's primary intent. Without question, Spranger concentrated on the couple's amorous bond rather than the ultimately tragic fate of Adonis.



NOTES

1. Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.90.
2. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 10.530–59.3.
3. Fučíková 1972a.

PROVENANCE: Kunstkammer of Rudolf II; Johann Josef Waldstein (1684–1731).

LITERATURE:

- Fučíková 1972a; Henning 1987, no. C4; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.90; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 408, cat. no. I.98.



Spranger as Draftsman

In 1547, one year after the birth of Spranger, Benedetto Varchi lectured at the Accademia del Disegno in Florence and declared that the practice of drawing, or *disegno*, was the root of the three arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture.¹ This was not an entirely new concept. Already Lorenzo Ghiberti had stated that if an artist aspired to be an excellent painter and sculptor, he must know how to draw: “The more accomplished he will be in drawing, the more perfect will be the sculptor, and likewise the painter.”² Even the Venetians, who proudly proclaimed *colore* superior to *disegno*, admitted the importance of drawing. In his *Dialogo della pittura* (Venice, 1557), Ludovico Dolce wrote, “It is not enough for a painter to be a good inventor if he is not at the same time a good draughtsman.”³

Spranger paid heed to the Italians and sedulously mastered the art of drawing in pen and ink on paper, becoming a consummate draftsman well deserving of van Mander’s praise: “Concerning his drawings: one does not know his equal, so outstandingly subtly does he handle the pen; and in this I follow the judgement of those who are better acquainted than most with working with the pen, in particular Goltzius who told me that he knew of no one equal to him.”⁴ This is all the more remarkable because Spranger was foremost a painter: it was for his painting skills, after all, that Rudolf II had bestowed upon him the prestigious title *Hofkünstler* (court artist). But his graphic legacy indicates that Spranger often turned to paper and pen to express his artistic intent. Drawing was integral to his art and determined the overall aesthetic quality of his final expression, whether fulfilled by a painting, drawing, or engraving. Spranger’s drawings often center on the human form transformed in some way—a satyr with hooved feet, Ignorance sporting the ears of a donkey. He often turned to the human body as muse—a surprising focus for an artist originally trained in the North to paint landscapes. But as he journeyed south, taking the well-traveled road to Italy, Spranger’s landscape training became only a distant memory.

Van Mander asserts that Spranger never sketched monuments or masterpieces in Rome. He did include a Roman-inspired statue of Jupiter in his early painting *The Flight into Egypt* (cat. 7), as well as ruins in his painting *The Holy Family with Saint John the Baptist on the Flight into Egypt* (cat. 6), but these generalized depictions do not provide conclusive evidence that he copied Roman ruins on site. Perhaps he had neither desire nor need to make sketches. It was said that his memory

was so sharp he had only to meet the Duchess of Aremburg once to paint a fascinating likeness of her from memory, without a single preliminary sketch. Whether or not Spranger sketched monuments, he lived in Rome and surely was inspired by the grandeur of its ruins. When Pius V assumed the papal office in 1566, he dispersed the antique statuary collection in the Vatican, citing the unsuitability of such non-Christian objects.⁵ The pope's antipathy to the pagan past may have cooled Spranger's interest in the antique—hence van Mander's famous anecdote that Spranger's bags were empty when he departed Rome for Vienna, as he carried no sketches.⁶ Traveling light may also have been the result of leaving behind his drawings or giving them to other artists—in particular, his friend Michel du Joncquoy, with whom he worked in the mid-1560s. Joncquoy left Rome about the same time as Spranger and may have been among the artists supplying engravers with Spranger's early designs. An altarpiece by Joncquoy in the Rouen cathedral features a design by Spranger of the Holy Family, clearly indicating their artistic interchange.⁷

Spranger signed his drawings only on the rare occasion when they were highly finished and would show him in the best possible light. The paucity of signed and dated drawings also indicates that the function of drawings had undergone a distinct change. The practice of drawing and the theories of proportion were being evaluated according to new rubrics, especially focused on metaphysical values. In the early sixteenth century, Pomponius Gauricus's theoretical treatise on proportion, *De sculptura* (1504), had continued Filarete's metaphysical interpretation of proportion from the previous century. Centering on the human head as the starting point, Gauricus divided the face into three equal parts—forehead, nose, and chin—and assigned each a deeper meaning, labeling them from top to bottom as the seats of wisdom, beauty, and virtue.⁸ This approach stepped slightly to the background in 1528 when Albrecht Dürer's *Vier Bücher von menschlicher Proportion* (Four books on human proportion) was published posthumously. Dürer's theory of proportions reverted to an empirical, geometry-based outlook based partly on Vitruvius and on Leon Battista Alberti, focusing on observation and on proportions established according to fixed rules. In his dedication of his book to Willibald Pirckheimer, Dürer asserts that it should serve as a practical guide for artists, in contrast to metaphysical musings. Yet in contrast to Dürer's, Spranger's figures, with their sinuous contours and elongated limbs, pay only scant attention to the Vitruvian Man or to the principles of symmetry and harmony promulgated by Raphael and other Renaissance classicists. Spranger's proportions acknowledge these calm classicists, but only as a point of departure; mathematical formulas no longer determine his proportions.

The painter and theorist Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo expanded the philosophical analysis of human proportion in his *Trattato dell'arte della pittura* (1584) and *Idea del tempio della pittura* (1590); the latter is an Italo-centric treatise influenced by the Neoplatonic philosophy of Marcilio Ficino. Lomazzo based his system on a hermetic network of correspondences, and he reassessed the Renaissance devotion to an empirical and mathematical system of proportion, maintaining instead that no single model of ideal beauty existed.⁹ Nature is anathema in Lomazzo's conception of beauty, and he declared that one must turn away from nature or the model and be guided instead by what he termed "the idea."

The theoretical explication of proportion culminated in the metaphysical philosophy of Federico Zuccaro, who in part based his theories on Lomazzo's. Because Zuccaro was the leader of the decorative program at Caprarola, his aesthetic edicts are no doubt relevant for Spranger. Though he remained in Caprarola only a short time, Zuccaro's subsequent artistic inventions show that he engaged in metaphysical discourse interpreting the human form.¹⁰ He decreed that the artist should approach beauty by "personal taste rather than empirical investigation," with nature or the human figure serving as an initial model, but *disegno* dictating the manner in which to express it.¹¹ He assigned a dual meaning to *disegno*: *disegno interno* and *disegno esterno*. *Interno*, or inward, referred to concepts drawn in the mind of the artist; *esterno*, or outward, referred to the manifestation of the *interno*. Zuccaro awarded such high importance to *disegno* that, even though he described it in terms of the artist's profession, he also noted that *disegno interno* could be applied to any human task.¹² His theories of *disegno* had an impact on Spranger, whose graphic activity—in particular, his rapidly executed sketches—reflect this concept of *disegno* as a product more of mystical powers than of concrete skills.¹³ Spranger and his peers regarded drawing as a noble, even spiritual activity; patrons and collectors valued the outcomes for their spontaneity and *sprezzatura*.

ANATOMY OF A SPRANGER DRAWING

Spranger executed most of his drawings in pen and ink. He generally embellished them with wash and with white heightening on paper rubbed with black chalk. Though preferring black, gray, or brown wash, he occasionally enlivened the faces with touches of red and pink, the drapery and landscape with green and blue. A group of drawings in red chalk, consisting primarily of study sheets of muscular forms, has been falsely attributed to Spranger (see Appendix).¹⁴ In fact, he rarely used the medium, because composing a design in red chalk for an engraver would

not have supplied as precise a design as pen and ink. His red chalk drawing *An Orad Removing a Thorn from the Foot of a Satyr*, signed and dated 1590 (cat. 125), is related to a print (cat. 192); in this instance, Spranger may have used red chalk to suggest the softness and furriness of the figures.

Spranger drew mainly secular allegories and couples. His women, unless saints, are generally almost nude, their drapery revealing more than concealing. They are often adorned with bands and ribbons wrapped around their sensual, fleshy frames, and their faces reveal expressions ranging from seductiveness to aloofness, piety, or coyness. To convey such emotions with only pen and ink evinces Spranger's remarkable skill. He developed what one might call the "Spranger stare": a three-quarter capture of the face, head cocked downward ever so slightly, finished off with a seductive, penetrating gaze. This expression, his most captivating, is evident in drawings such as *Mars Embracing Venus* in London (cat. 117) and *Hercules and Omphale (Mars and Venus?)* in Berlin (cat. 118). Throughout his sheets, he would typically draw the female nose using one of three shapes: a horizontal half-moon, a slanted *L*, or a *V* (or a softer *U*). Another typical expression in his drawings of females is a look into the distance, tinged with aloofness and disconnected from the viewer, as in *The Triumph of Wisdom over Ignorance and Envy* (cat. 155), in which the principal females look inward or outward, emphasized with a hollow, often triangular eye. In drawings as in paintings, Spranger paid considerable attention to the hairstyles of his maidens, again introducing specific modes. Elaborately twisted buns and braids are used for his earlier and more classical figures, such as the Virgin's ornate coif in *The Holy Family* (cat. 103) and that of Psyche, who is being carried heavenward by Mercury (cat. 100).

DRAWINGS FOR PAINTINGS

Spranger's drawings provided inspiration for both paintings and prints, as with his masterful *Minerva with the Muses and Pegasus* (cat. 104). In spite of the pentimenti showing that Spranger was still working out his ideas, this drawing reflects technical achievement and considerable polish. It relates to Spranger's painting *The Competition between Apollo and Pan* (cat. 24), sharing similar figural types and a horizontal format. In fact, some of the figures are repeated: the woman in profile on the far left and the river god, though he is reversed in the painting. The delicate and graceful female figures congregating in a lush landscape in the drawing epitomize Spranger's Mannerist style from the early 1580s. Not yet fully independent from his Italian period, the figures retain the doll-like stature seen in his earlier works.

Some of Spranger's sketches survive in tandem with their resultant paintings, illuminating his creative path. This is most vivid in his drawing *Adam and Eve* (cat. 137), which captures the original sparks of his concept of the first couple, later realized in two nearly identical paintings (cats. 62, 63). The initial design has become, in the paintings, a complete composition featuring the couple set in an environment both of paradise and of impending doom—a contrast highlighted by his use of dark and light. In other cases, one figure from a drawing might factor into a larger, more finished composition, as in the drawing *Cupid and Psyche* (cat. 119) and the painting *Cupid Fleeing Psyche* (cat. 73). Spranger drew a more finished concept for *Diana and Actaeon* (cat. 128), conveying the drama of voyeurism and discovery, but pentimenti communicate a still inchoate design.

DRAWINGS FOR ENGRAVINGS

Spranger drew for a variety of different reasons, and his sheets were by no means merely ancillary to his paintings. Many of his drawings served as seeds for printmakers, who in turn helped promulgate his style. Such engraver drawings are rare; the few that survived their transfer to engravings often suffer from indentations and revisions by the engraver. Some outstanding examples do remain, however. Spranger's earliest datable drawing is *Saint Dominic Reading* (cat. 89); Cornelis Cort's engraving of it is inscribed 1573 (cat. 160). Spranger's most famous design for an engraving is the one for *The Wedding of Cupid and Psyche* (cat. 108); other examples are *The Rest on the Flight into Egypt* (cat. 96); *The Holy Family* (cat. 103); the *Venus and Cupid* drawings in Paris and New York (cats. 107, 133); *Juno, Jupiter, and Mercury* (cat. 134); and *Saint Martin and the Beggar* (cat. 138).

Spranger's graphic output from his Italian sojourn is difficult to analyze fully because so few drawings and even fewer signed sheets from that period have survived. Of these, *Saint Dominic Reading* displays a smooth flow of line and, though rendered with Mannerist form, does not display the predilection for attenuated figures evident in Spranger's Prague drawings. Its generous background landscape fuses Italian and Netherlandish styles, graceful and elegant yet without Spranger's later emphatic Mannerist expression and artifice.

Spranger's drawing *The Wedding of Cupid and Psyche* was engraved by Hendrick Goltzius in 1587 (cat. 178) and widely copied for decades; Abraham Bloemaert subtly translated it for a painting of his own design, *The Wedding of Peleus and Thetis* (ca. 1590–91; Alte Pinakothek, Munich). Friedrich Sustris, who earlier had inspired Spranger with his works for the Fugger family in Augsburg, turned to

Spranger's *Wedding* for his lunettes depicting the gods on Mount Olympus (ca. 1587; Grottenhof, Munich Residence). The dating of these frescoes is so close to Goltzius's engraving that one cannot be certain exactly where the inspiration began.

DESIGNS FOR DECORATIVE PROJECTS

Executing decorative projects in buildings presents its own particular set of challenges, the surfaces often being uneven, hard to reach, and requiring a mastery of illusionistic perspective. Spranger's ceiling painting *The Gathering of the Gods* for the Neugebäude in Vienna began with a drawing in pen and ink with colored washes (cat. 97). That project and his later design for the White Tower in Prague (cat. 58) demonstrate his legerdemain at *di sotto in su* compositions. The poses and execution of the drawing *Venus and Cupid* now in Paris (cat. 107) suggest it was prepared for an architectural project—probably a cycle of interior decoration in Prague Castle. The sheet originates from the mid-1580s and resembles the drawings *Neptune and Coenis* and *Minerva with the Muses and Pegasus* (cats. 101, 104). In these drawings the female figures composed with scant inner modeling share a similar body type, and their gestures are also comparable, especially those of Venus and Coenis.

INDEPENDENT SKETCHES AND FINISHED DRAWINGS

Many of Spranger's drawings were never realized in a painting, an engraving, or an architectural project, signaling the important role drawing played for him as *disegno*. Some of his drawings are conceptual, others more practical, geared toward resolving a composition. Spranger made sketches that exhibit cursory ideas elucidating his creative process, that refine figural form, or that merely constitute an artistic exercise.

The Judgment of Paris (cat. 98) offers a precise view of Spranger's working method as a draftsman. He rarely used both the recto and verso of a sheet, but here the figure of Mercury dominates the verso. This plus the artist's full use of the recto—Spranger even drew over some of the figures—make clear that this sheet served him as a micro sketchbook. He executed much of the composition with broad, painterly brushstrokes of wash, rather than fine lines of pen and ink, and this technique distinguishes the sheet from his other drawings. Toward the late 1590s, with his confidence in full force, Spranger drew figures imbued with nervous energy, appearing physically more powerful than in the previous decade. The characters in *Allegory of Time* (cat. 143), dated 1597, nearly bounce off the sheet, their vigor conveyed by energetic poses and emphatic strokes.

A few of Spranger's independent drawings were signed and dated, a gesture that indicates his pride in them. At the height of his fame and his career with Rudolf II, Spranger composed two drawings dated 1599, *Cupid and the Hercules and Omphale* in Prague (cats. 147, 148). In them he reveals his refined technique and ability to communicate volumes with a soft touch, achieving a mastery of atmospheric effects that is all the more admirable for having been created with only pen, ink, wash, and heightening. In *Cupid*, Spranger presents a figure convincingly suspended in space. Contrary to his customary practice, he signed this sheet with a flourish, the script highly stylized and rhythmic. With this sheet Spranger justified van Mander's praise of him as a draftsman with no equal in pen and ink. *Hercules and Omphale* represents his fully developed style, with a mature command of graphic technique and of his artistic materials. The theme is one that Spranger would repeat over a decade: five other known versions of Hercules and Omphale exist in various compositions, including a painting (cat. 43), a drawing (cat. 116), and three engravings (cats. 195, 215, 218). Except for pentimenti visible in the lower body of Hercules, the drawing is highly finished, with the figures extensively modeled, and it conveys Spranger's new confidence in representing the three-dimensionality of the human form.

As Spranger matured, especially into his last decade of 1601–11, the deliberate execution disappears and his drawings become both more relaxed and more refined, as typified by *Allegory of Painting*, a signed drawing dated 1603 of a female nude (cat. 152), and by *The Triumph of Wisdom over Ignorance and Envy* (cat. 155). *Achior* (cat. 150), also from this period, demonstrates Spranger's late graphic style, dominated by a sharp, firm line. Achior's brooding countenance, with deeply inset eyes, recalls the faces in the *Mars and Venus* in Frankfurt and the *Cupid* in Nuremberg (cats. 140, 147). Bound and pulled in opposing directions, his limbs convey an unmistakable tension both compositionally and conceptually, the strokes competing with one another to define the contours, as in the area around the left knee. In other instances, the contour lines stop short of one another—the disjointed lines force the viewer to close the gap.

For his signed and dated *Triumph of Wisdom over Ignorance and Envy*, of 1604, Spranger created the essence of form, a conceptualization of a physical body, far removed from tangible reality. The signature detailing both date and place indicates the autonomy of the drawing, likely destined for a *Stammbuch* or an independent gift. Past critics have linked the compactness of the figures and their doughy quality to Spranger's earlier works from the 1590s.¹⁵ Their forms may indeed not be as powerful and sinuous as those of *Achior*, but the style of draftsmanship represents

a new direction. The abstraction of the figures, conveyed in loose and spontaneous strokes, is highly sophisticated. Washes and heightening play increasingly important roles in intensifying the painterly qualities of the composition.

The last known signed and dated drawing by Spranger is *Fama*, of 1605 (cat. 156), composed in the *Stammbuch* of Benedikt Ammon.¹⁶ An engaging and imposing figure, Fama gingerly balances on a spherical mass. Spranger carefully labored over the composition, skillfully positioning the figure on the page and eschewing unattractive voids—the boundaries between Fama and the atmosphere seem to dissolve. More than twenty years previously, in his early days of service to Rudolf, Spranger had painted a similar figure on the facade of his house in Prague (fig. 24), perhaps hoping that his Fama would portend enormous success.

Although he had no official students, Spranger did have a large following and influenced several talented draftsmen. Of these, Franz Aspruck came closest to reflecting and not merely imitating Spranger's style and technique, as shown in Aspruck's signed and dated *Venus and Cupid* drawing (1598; Hamburger Kunsthalle).¹⁷ It is impossible to cite all the other artists influenced by Spranger's drawings, but among the standouts are a group of Breslau artists: Jakob Walter, David Heidenreich, Adam Wolski, and Hans Georg Herring.¹⁸

Throughout his career Spranger altered his graphic method of rendering the human form, but the major aspects remained largely constant. His figures are characteristically muscular, yet soft and sensual—an opposition and ambiguity representing the spirit of the Prague School. With few exceptions, such as *Allegory of Painting*, his figures are in movement or a state of flux, and Spranger was masterful in capturing their arrested motion. He approached drawing not as a purely conceptual process but as a means of achieving a proper line, setting the contours and concepts of his figures. Spranger's powerful pen strokes and assertive lines prevail through all media, and the flow and interchangeability between these media are the crux of Spranger's achievements, characterizing his aesthetic credo.

Notes

1. “Il disegno è l’origine, la fonte e la madre di amendue loro”; see Barocchi 1960, vol. 1, p. 45.
2. Ghiberti 1947, p. 5.
3. Tolnay 1943, p. 5.
4. Mander 1994, pp. 353–54.
5. Hall 2005, p. 247.
6. Mander 1994, p. 342.
7. An illustration of the painting can be found in Rouen 1981, p. 127.
8. Bolten 1985, p. 168.
9. Instead, he proposed that “manners” based on his own model of seven Italian governor-artists be used in depicting the human figure, because every work must be approached with respect to an implicit mode of anatomy or form. He described these manners as contemplative, significant, visible, fanciful, natural, pertaining to handicraft, spiritual, and phenomenal. Each form denotes a particular type of object or design—for example, fanciful forms concern the pagan gods and goddesses as well as fantasy creatures from the imagination, including nymphs, fauns, and satyrs.
10. Zuccaro 1607, p. 153.
11. Bolten 1985, p. 178.
12. See Kemp 1974, pp. 231–32. Zuccaro’s concept of *disegno interno* and *esterno* is not thoroughly original: he must have used as a starting point Vasari’s earlier theory that drawing was an expression of the concept formed in the artist’s mind. However, for Vasari, forming this concept in the mind necessitated the study of nature and the interplay of both intellect and observation. See the interpretation of Vasari in Tolnay 1943, p. 6: “Drawing originates in the intellect in the form of a *concetto*, that is, an inner image inspired by a contemplation of nature.”
13. This is antithetical to Vasari’s earlier approach to and valuation of sketches. Vasari classified the artist’s *schizzi* as preparatory work, while *disegno* was a nobler, finished product derived from the *schizzi*. Further, even though Vasari raised the drawing to a monumental work of art, he valued only the finished and polished drawing. See Vasari 1981, vol. 1, p. 174.
14. See Appendix and Metzler 1997, nos. G13, 40, and 42, for further discussion. The attribution to Spranger of a sheet with figure studies in red chalk in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, has unfortunately led to the inaccurate attribution of other red chalk studies to Spranger.
15. For example, Gerszi in Schultze 1988, vol. 1, p. 391, cat. no. 264.
16. For a discussion of the development of the *Stammbuch*, see Amelung 1979.
17. Aspruck is an almost-forgotten figure in the history of art. Born in Brussels in about 1570 (a generation after Spranger), he spent much of his life in Augsburg. See Haemmerle 1925.
18. See Tylicki 2001 for an introduction to RudolFINE followers in Breslau. *Hercules*, a drawing by David Heidenreich in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (1996.450), displays many characteristics of Spranger’s graphic method and formal qualities.

CATALOGUE OF DRAWINGS

This catalogue presents all of Spranger's original drawings, in public and private collections, known at the time this publication went to press. Excluded are drawings listed in the Appendix and those designated here as copies of original drawings. To distinguish an authentic drawing from a copy demanded strict criteria and rigorous method. Signed and dated sheets were scrutinized, and those in which the signature matched the design in ink and in handwriting provided the standard for judging the unsigned sheets. Further criteria for authentication included the graphic features repeated in Spranger's most representative drawings, such as fluidity of line, open contours, and half-moon or triangular eyes, as discussed in the essay "Spranger as Draftsman." Subject matter, function, and provenance also played a role. Because Spranger's name has been used as a catchall for many anonymous drawings with even a remote resemblance to Northern Mannerism, assembling an accurate corpus of his drawings more often required eliminating falsely attributed sheets than discovering new works.

Any collector's marks, watermarks, and stamps (including those ascribed by Lugt and Briquet) known from the author's own examination or museum records are noted. In addition, relevant later notations on the drawings, recto

and verso, are presented in the "Marks" section.

Albrecht Niederstein, in 1931, compiled the first attempt at a catalogue of Spranger's drawings, and in 1958 Konrad Oberhuber expanded Niederstein's corpus. What follows is the first illustrated catalogue of drawings in the English language, and it is a revision of my 1997 doctoral dissertation on Spranger's drawings.

89

Saint Dominic Reading, ca. 1571–72
Pen and brown wash with white heightening, 12 × 7³/₈ in. (30.5 × 18.5 cm)
Art Institute of Chicago; Gift of Mrs. Henry C. Woods and Print and Drawing Purchase Fund (1979.119)

IN EXHIBITION

Luxuriant branches hang over Saint Dominic, nature embracing him as a symbol of God's presence. The tree directly behind the saint, with its bifurcated trunk, alludes to a cross and thus to Dominic's devotion to Christ. A tiny village, complete with church tower, can be glimpsed in the right background. This drawing honors Pope Pius V, a devout Dominican and Spranger's patron in Rome from 1570 to the pope's death in 1572. The subject of Saint Dominic reading would have appealed to Pius in terms of

inspiring religious sincerity and devotion.

The saint's form, grounded and three-dimensional in every sense, is also ethereal—an effect achieved in part by Spranger's coupling of thin, wiry strokes with nuanced shading and wash. Even the tree branches appear to be quivering in a soft breeze, catching Dominic's heavy robe. Cornelis Cort engraved this design in 1573 (cat. 160), so the latest that Spranger could have composed it would be that same year, and more likely between 1570 and 1572. Spranger was under the spell of his Italian colleagues when he made this drawing, but the deft delineation and generous background landscape reveal his training in Antwerp. He is caught between two styles, two modes of artistic expression.

PROVENANCE: (Sotheby's Mak van Waay, Amsterdam, November 1978, no. 149, as Jan Phillip van Boeckhorst); [Richard J. Collins, New York]; Art Institute of Chicago, from 1979.

LITERATURE: Kaufmann 1982a, pp. 138–40, cat. no. 48.

90

Paul and Barnabas in Lystra,
ca. 1571–72
Oil on paper on cardboard, 13 × 17³/₈ in.
(33 × 44 cm)
Rafael Valls, London

Inscribed verso (by a later hand): *Bartolomio Spranger*.



89

The sketchy nature of this composition prevents immediate recognition of Spranger's hand. However, the inscription on the verso coupled with the attenuated torsos and compositional ambiguities identify this biblical scene as an example of Spranger's Italian style. Its uncommon aspects are the technique and the subject. No other oil sketch on paper by Spranger is known (though one exists on copper; see cat. 29), and this theme was rarely depicted by his contemporaries.

The story of Paul and Barnabas is related in Acts 14:8–20. Having healed a lame man, the two disciples become overnight sensations in Lystra. They are

hailed as gods, and the pagan crowd enthusiastically begins to offer sacrifices to them. The materials and the cursory sketchiness make the design difficult to read, but the sacrifice is visible on the right, where two men struggle with a bull. The intensity of their effort is embodied by one male's digging in his heels and arching his back as his companion pulls in the opposite direction, grasping the bull's horns. A kneeling female figure leans toward the fire, holding something in her hand. The large

figure crouching at lower left and grabbing Paul's hand may be the lame man healed. Otherwise, the protagonists are not easily discernible. In the bottom center a very Sprangeresque face emerges next to an urn. The lances of the background crowd and a distant townscape are visible at left.

The composition has been cut down, and the surface reveals many additions and repairs. The technique and the style recall the chiaroscuro prints Spranger was instructed to copy before he left Antwerp for Italy.

PROVENANCE: Dr. Walter Boll (1900–1985, director of Regensburg Museum of Art), Stuttgart and Regensburg; (Nagel, Stuttgart, June 8, 2011, sale 666, no. 584).

LITERATURE: Gurlitt 1962, no. 62.



90



91

The Mocking of Christ, 1572

Pen and brown ink with brown wash and extensive white heightening over black chalk, 11 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 17 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (29.5 × 44.2 cm)

Recto heavily washed in brown; verso reveals blue tint of paper

Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München (2795)

IN EXHIBITION

In the last years of his life, Pius V asked Spranger to paint a series of twelve scenes related to the Passion and required him to sketch the compositions first in pen and ink for the pope's review. This drawing is one of these preliminary works, three of which have been identified (see also cats. 92, 93).

Van Mander wrote that Spranger drew only in chalk before 1570.¹ Because he was unaccustomed to working in pen and ink, he first planned the designs in his preferred media, later presenting these more finished compositions to the pope. At first glance, pen and ink seem to dominate this sheet, but an extensive black chalk underdrawing and some other black chalk passages without the articulation of pen and ink remain. Typical for Spranger at the time, he left contours of the figures open, applying washes primarily on their edges and around drapery folds, and he articulated the background with thick strokes, producing a carefully constructed perspective and sense of distance.

Copious white heightening, some applied in stripes, provides strong contrasts of light and dark, suggesting a chiaroscuro woodcut. The long legs and attenuated torsos have an Italianate flair that shows Spranger still under the spell of Parmigianino and the Zuccari. He nearly repeated the figure kneeling on the right of Christ in the center figure sitting on a ledge. The central figure of the three robed men at right shares a similar likeness and tilt of the head.

NOTES

1. Mander 1994, p. 342.

MARKS: Inscribed lower left, in blue ink: 60; and in brown ink: *Pelegriano Tibaldi*; lower center, in brown ink: 163; lower right, in black (Lugt 2094);



lower right: Lugt 2723 (Staatliche Graphische Sammlung).

PROVENANCE: Peter Lely (1618–1680) (Lugt 2094); Elector Carl Theodor (1724–1799); thereafter Staatliche Graphische Sammlung.

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1970, esp. pp. 214–15; Wegner 1973, p. 28; Schultze 1988, p. 308, cat. no. 640; Bevers 1989, p. 82, cat. no. 66; Devisscher 1995, p. 347, cat. no. 199.

92

Christ Crowned with Thorns, 1572
Pen and brown ink with brown wash and white heightening over black chalk on blue paper, 1 1/8 × 1 7/8 in. (28.8 × 44.4 cm)
Albertina, Vienna (2010)

IN EXHIBITION

Christ sits in the center, holding the palm of martyrdom. Mocked and whipped by three soldiers, he turns away, stoic in his suffering. Anonymous figures congregate in the praetorium of Herod. Some look on, others chat among themselves, oblivious of this historic moment in Christianity.

Originally catalogued by Bartsch as by Pellegrino Tibaldi, this sheet was identified by Oberhuber as by Spranger, belonging to the group of twelve pen-and-ink sketches of the Passion he executed for Pope Pius V in 1572. As in his other sheets for that series (cats. 91, 93), which feature similar architecture, black chalk underdrawing and extensive pentimenti are visible. The generous

white heightening intensifies the chiaroscuro effect that Spranger had learned from his study of Parmigianino's prints in Antwerp, an influence also reflected in the long, sinewy figures in Spranger's Passion series. Using a technique reminiscent of Nicolò dell'Abate's drawings, Spranger applied white heightening in some passages purely to delineate form, rather than its traditional use only for modeling.

PROVENANCE: Pius V (1504–1572), 1572; Prince Charles de Ligne (1759–1792), Brussels; (his sale, Aloys Blumauer, Vienna, November 4, 1794, no. 1); Duke Albert von Sachsen-Teschen (1738–1822, founder of Albertina Museum); Albertina, from 1794.

LITERATURE: Bartsch 1794, p. 87, no. 1 (as

Tibaldi); Stix and Spitzmüller 1941, no. 135; Oberhuber 1970, pp. 217ff.; Schultze 1988, vol. 2, pp. 170–71, cat. no. 640; Devisscher 1995, p. 347, cat. no. 198; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 444, cat. no. I.268.

93

Christ in Limbo, 1572

Pen and brown ink and wash over black chalk, with extensive white heightening and orange-red highlights on the heightening, on gray-blue paper, 10 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 16 in. (27.6 × 40.7 cm)
Hessisches Landesmuseum Darmstadt (AE 1475)

Inscribed lower right, in brown ink
(by a later hand): *Salviati*

The threat of hell looms on the right as souls await rescue or doom, their fate in the hands of Christ. Adam and Eve, along with Moses, stand on the left, representing the redeemed. Vestiges of Spranger's apprenticeship with Jan Mandyn emerge in fantastical beings

such as the flying figure with pendulous breasts and the callfike character perched on a ledge. A void in the composition marks the abyss.

This drawing, previously attributed to Francesco Salviati, was first recognized as the work of Spranger by David McTavish, who noted affinities with the artist's other drawings of the Passion made for Pius V.¹ As in the other drawings in that series (cats. 91, 92), an extensive black chalk underdrawing is evident. Many areas of the drawing typify Spranger's early Italian period, especially the faces of the crowd on the right. The Christ figure displays what would become a distinctive, even peculiar, anatomical feature in which the toes appear to be separately attached to the foot, rather than a cohesive whole. Christ's drapery has been defined with passages of parallel lines—another one of Spranger's graphic characteristics. The trio on the left stand in Parmigianesque splendor, graceful and attenuated. Affinities with Spranger's painting *Christ at the*

Column, created about the same time (cat. 10), are evident; both display similarly tall, elongated figures with high-waisted and long-legged physiques. Striations of white heightening on the bodies are in keeping with Spranger's technique as well.

Some areas of the drawing were executed in haste, especially the cursory background and landscape sections. These areas strongly contrast with the figures, which are drawn with purpose and precision, almost as if Spranger had clear ideas about the figures but was still experimenting with the rest. Confident spontaneity intersperses with areas of heavy correction, such as Christ's right leg. As the forms in this adroitly constructed composition are more monumental and elongated than in Spranger's other drawings for the pope, *Christ in Limbo* may be one of the latest in the Passion series.

NOTES

1. From an unpublished paper by and correspondence with David McTavish, professor emeritus at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. His paper, "Bartolomeus Spranger's Descent into Limbo," was delivered at the Universities Art Association of Canada annual conference, Kingston, November 8, 2003. The author thanks Prof. McTavish for sharing his thoughts on Salviati and his attribution to Spranger.

MARKS: Lower left, in brown ink: 401, *Slg. Crozat* (Lugt 2952); *L* set in triangle (Lagoy).

PROVENANCE: Pierre Crozat (1665–1740), Paris; Marquis de Lagoy (1764–1829), France; Emmerich Joseph von Dalberg (1773–1833), until 1812; Grand Duke Louis I of Hesse (1753–1830), 1812–21; bequeathed to the state of Hesse-Darmstadt, 1821; thereafter Hessisches Landesmuseum.

LITERATURE: Saporì 2002, pp. 253–54.





94

The Martyrdom of Saint Lawrence,
ca. 1572

Black chalk with white heightening,
11 1/8 × 18 1/2 in. (28.3 × 47 cm)
Nationalmuseum, Stockholm
(NMH 798/1863)

Catalogued in the Nationalmuseum as by Pieter Cornelisz. van Rijck, and formerly Parmigianino,¹ this drawing was, in fact, made by Spranger during his Roman sojourn. The dimensions are similar to those of his Passion series drawings for the pope (cats. 91–93), as is the medium, which signals a likely connection to Spranger’s fruitful years of activity under papal tutelage. The saint is bound to a blazing gridiron in the center of a dynamic crowd of Romans and soldiers, two on horseback. On the left, Emperor Valerian sits high on a throne, calling for Saint Lawrence’s execution. A woman suckles a child at right, part of a group of figures that

recall those in Spranger’s early landscape paintings in Karlsruhe, one of which is dated 1569 (cats. 4, 5). The drawing fuses Spranger’s initial Netherlandish instruction with his Italian training under the influence of miniaturist Giulio Clovio. The name Parmigianino (in various spellings) is written on the mat of the drawing—an understandable misattribution that attests to the Italian influence on Spranger during his early adult years, embodied by the compact Mannerist figures dominating this scene.

Spranger infused his strokes with a palpable energy, and the pentimenti visible on the sheet indicate its preparatory nature. His characteristically expert handling of white heightening, applied in numerous parallel strokes, both suggests three-dimensionality and establishes the final form of the figures—a technique repeated throughout his drawings, even later ones such as *Minerva with the Muses and Pegasus* (cat. 104).

NOTES

1. Tessin 1749, book 6, no. 5. The other attributions are in the museum’s card catalogue and on the drawing’s mat, studied by the author on site.

PROVENANCE: Pierre Crozat (1665–1740), Paris; (his sale, 1741); Count Carl Gustaf Tessin (1695–1770), Stockholm, 1741 (manuscript inventory, book 6, no. 5, as Parmigianino); Swedish royal family, Stockholm, 1750s; Nationalmuseum, from 1863.

LITERATURE: Tessin 1749, book 6, no. 5.

95

Classical Battle Scene, ca. 1572–74
Verso: *Peter and John Heal a Cripple at the Gate of the Temple*

Pen and brown ink with brown wash, heightened with white, over red chalk on blue paper; partially visible framing lines in pen and brown ink on left and bottom edges, 9 5/8 × 13 3/8 in. (24.5 × 33.9 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Purchase, Louis V. Bell Fund and funds from various donors, 2001 (2001.1.107a, b)

IN EXHIBITION

Both sides of this drawing display the name of Cavaliere d'Arpino (Giuseppe Cesari), linking this sheet to his magnificent fresco *Battle Against the Inhabitants of Veii and Fidenae*.¹ Completed with the assistance of his workshop, that multigure battle scene has figures resembling those in this *Classical Battle Scene* attributed to Spranger. However, none of the figures in the drawing or fresco match, and as Arpino's work is dated about 1598–1601, Spranger would not have witnessed the work in Rome. The design and theme of this drawing relate most closely in Spranger's oeuvre to his painting *The Conversion of Saint Paul*, composed with Giulio Clovio (cat. 11).

The verso depicts the miracle of Saints Peter and John healing a cripple. Based on the subject and on the attenuated Italianate figures, this composition stems from Spranger's time in Rome, and this design resembles most closely the figures in his small oil on copper *Christ at the Column* (cat. 10). The graphic techniques of both recto and verso do not concur exactly with those of other securely accepted drawings by Spranger, thus the attribution of this sheet to his hand is probable but still somewhat tenuous.

NOTES

1. The frescoes are now part of the collection of Rome's Musei Capitolini, in the Conservators' Apartments of the Palazzo dei Conservatori.

MARKS: Lower right, collector's mark of E. Calando (Lugt 837). Inscribed lower right, in pen and brown ink: *gioseffo cesari detto / Gioseffo Cesare detto Cavaliere d'arpin*; in graphite: *Tourner*. Verso: inscribed upper right, in graphite: *Arpino / 274*; inscribed lower right, in pen and brown ink: *Bourignon*; in graphite: *P020093; 274*.

PROVENANCE: Emile Calando, Paris, 1850–1900; (Sotheby's, New York, January 26, 2000, no. 29); [Katrin Bellinger Kunsthandel, Munich].

LITERATURE: Sotheby's 2000, no. 29, ill.



95 RECTO



95 VERSO

The Rest on the Flight into Egypt,
ca. 1575

Black chalk with white heightening
and pen and black ink; upper right, a
few red spots; laid down on board,
4½ × 3½ in. (11.5 × 8.9 cm)
Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli
Uffizi, Florence (14715 F)

IN EXHIBITION

This miniature grisaille captures Spranger's penchant for making charming, idyllic religious scenes. Composing the work in Rome, he harmonized his Northern landscape training with the monumental-in-miniature mode favored by his mentor Giulio Clovio. Voluminous drapery envelops the Holy Family, their bodies underneath barely perceptible. Joseph crouches in the upper left corner, ready to pluck a piece of fruit from the hand of the Christ Child, whose outstretched arms form a diagonal, the left hand gesturing to a shallow fruit basket. In the distance, a cherub sits on a tree stump, watching over the donkey grazing after the long journey.

Aegidius Sadeler II engraved this design, enlivening it with an elaborate border by Joris Hoefnagel (cat. 166). On the upper right of this drawing, leaves drawn in ink seem to indicate that Spranger (or the engraver) wanted to emphasize the original faint forms delineated in chalk. Spranger's figures are comparable to those in a drawing attributed to Lodewijk Toeput (Lodovico Pozzoserrato), a contemporary of Spranger's who also traveled in Italy.¹ The overall composition was inspired by Federico Barocci's Holy Family design, known through a painting (1570; Pinacoteca Vaticana, Vatican) and print. Cornelis Cort engraved Barocci's *Holy*



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Family in 1575, and so a date of about that time for Spranger's drawing is plausible.

Though small in size, Spranger's composition achieves full artistic impact, and the figures convey a solid physical presence. It is among the few miniatures known to have been composed by Spranger, a predilection he likely abandoned once Rudolf employed the Hoefnagel family and Jacopo Ligozzi as miniaturists.

NOTES

1. The drawing was sold at auction: Christie's, London, November 29, 1977, no. 120.

PROVENANCE: Fondo Mediceo Lorenese, Florence, ca. 1880; thereafter Uffizi.

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1969; Kloek 1975, no. 186; Strech 1996, vol. 1, p. 12, vol. 2, p. 41 n. 52A; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 446, cat. no. I.274; Kloek and Meijer 2008, pp. 54–55, no. 29.

The Gathering of the Gods, 1576

Pen and black ink with brown, green, yellow,
and pink washes, and white heightening on
gray-green paper, Diam. 14⅝ in. (37.3 cm)
Albertina, Vienna (15119)

IN EXHIBITION

After ten years in Italy, Spranger spent just a short time in Vienna under the tutelage of Maximilian II. This drawing preserves some of his earliest surviving work from this engagement. Masterfully composed within the confines of a circle, seven gods and goddesses relax among a swirl of clouds. The circle in the center and the *di sotto in su* orientation strongly suggest a ceiling design, and indeed this sheet records Spranger's design for a fresco (no longer extant) in the west tower of the Neugebäude,



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Maximilian's pleasure palace outside Vienna. It is one of his few known designs for a fresco decoration—among them, the *Mercury and Minerva* fresco in the White Tower of Prague Castle (cat. 58). A tiny hole at the center of the circle indicates that Spranger used an instrument such as a compass to help mark the shape. The yellow watercolor emanating from the inner circle represents sunlight pouring through an oculis into the tower.

The gods hover in the clouds. Sets of strokes form the contours, often composed of double lines correcting imperfections. Benesch first recognized the sheet in 1928 as Spranger's composition for the Neugebäude and identified the circle of gods (starting at lower right and

moving clockwise) as Jupiter, Juno, Apollo, Venus, Cupid, Mercury, and Mars (or Minerva). Spranger adroitly foreshortened the figure of Jupiter, his middle section nearly disappearing, but some areas of foreshortening display extensive pentimenti, recording the artist's struggles. Touches of color and wash amplify the plasticity of the figures. Spranger applied white heightening to Juno's fingertips, intensifying the effect of the tips thrusting forward. The heightening is also applied in a lightning-bolt pattern on Juno's drapery, a treatment that became a trademark for Spranger. Mercury's toes peek out from the clouds in a whimsical touch.

The presence of Jupiter and Juno is undeniable, for they sit together as

husband and wife. Apollo is also securely identified by his attribute of a lyre, symbolizing his patronage of music, and by his bow and arrows suggested on the left side. But the strange form to the right of Venus merits a closer look. Difficult to read, it resembles a cornucopia. Spranger may have originally intended the female figure to be Ceres, later changing his mind in favor of Venus and adding Cupid between his mother and Mercury. The possibility that Cupid was an afterthought is made even more likely by how crowded his placement is between the two adult gods, compared to the spatial relationships of the other groupings. The sleepy, rather ungainly figure near Jupiter and Juno could well be Mars (their son) or Minerva. In favor of Mars, the heavy, muscular back appears a trifle too masculine for a female, and the shield does not display the Medusa head common in most representations of Minerva. Yet given the constant threat from the Ottoman Empire, Minerva would have been an appropriate inclusion, representing as she does prudence and wisdom in war. Thus, this aesthetically engaging design announces the artistic and political program of Maximilian II.

The drawing displays regular features of Spranger's draftsmanship: hollow, triangular eyes, noses often the same shape as the eyes, feet reduced to two toes (see Mercury's, for example). The structure and flow of line are similar to Spranger's drawing *Venus and Cupid on a Dolphin* (cat. 99). Correggio's cupola design for San Giovanni Evangelista in Parma clearly inspired Spranger's Neugebäude composition. The postures of the figures and their arrangement on the clouds are very similar in both compositions.



98 RECTO



98 VERSO

PROVENANCE: Duke Albert von Sachsen-Teschen (1738–1822, founder of Albertina Museum); Albertina, from 1796.

LITERATURE: Benesch 1928, p. 30, no. 278; Niederstein 1931, no. 1; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z55; Neumann 1970; Feuchtmüller and Winkler 1974, p. 273, cat. no. 658; Lietzmann 1987, p. 153; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.2; Schultze 1988, vol. 2, p. 171, cat. no. 641; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 445, cat. no. I.270.

COPIES: Drawing, École des Beaux-Arts, Paris (1671).

98

The Judgment of Paris, ca. 1576–80

Recto and verso: Brush and pen and dark gray ink with wash and white heightening on blue-green paper, $6\frac{3}{8} \times 11$ in.

(16 × 27.9 cm)

Národní Galerie v Praze, Prague (K-1132)

Spranger sketched characters from the mythological story of the Judgment of Paris on both the recto and the

verso of this sheet, even repeating one female figure to make certain he achieved the proper form. In spite of this tenacity, no known painting or engraving utilizes these figures. They come closest in spirit to his painting *The Competition between Apollo and Pan* (cat. 24), but Spranger may have used this sheet merely as an exercise in *disegno*. Extensive pentimenti reveal his efforts to formulate ideas for a composition incorporating the Judgment of Paris, but the sheet also includes forms independent of the subject, as if he aimed to use the paper economically.

A prevailing Mannerism as well as the Italianate style relates to Spranger's early post-Rome activity. According to Fučíková, this drawing could be preparatory for his work at Neugebäude Palace.¹ Oberhuber connects this drawing with a painting of the Judgment of Paris in the Schlossgalerie in Český Krumlov, Czech Republic. However, that painting is by Jacob de Backer, not by Spranger.²

On the recto, at left, Minerva has Spranger's characteristic abbreviated foot, and quick flicks of the brush indicate eyes, mouth, and nose—all graphic traits of Spranger. The putto near the female on the far right is extremely sketchy, as are the background figures. A faint profile of a dog is visible in front of Minerva's shield. For the most part, the composition is rendered in brush and wash, with some pen and ink. Above Minerva is a small figure in pen and dark gray ink that is unrelated to the central scene; that figure stretches out its right arm, and to its right is a faint trace of the same outstretched arm. On the verso, the central figures are very abstract and freely handled, their limbs no more than stubs. As Fučíková points out, the figures

sketched in thick brushstrokes of wash resemble the draftsmanship of Hans Mont, who was Spranger's friend and colleague in Vienna.³

NOTES

1. Fučíková 1987, no. 16. 2. See Mai and Vlieghe 1992, p. 259, cat. no. 1.1. 3. Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 445, cat. no. I.269; Volrábová 2008, no. 51.

PROVENANCE: Vojtěch Lanna (1836–1909), Prague; donated to the Národní Galerie, 1888.

LITERATURE: Bergner and Chytil 1912, cat. no. 261/5; Rudolfinum 1912, no. 1167/3; Kramář 1934, no. 5; Rouček 1943–44; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z47; Kotalík 1976, cat. no. 5; Kesnerová and Lippold 1977, cat. no. 21; Geissler et al. 1979, p. 57, cat. no. B9; Blažiček 1981, cat. no. 16; Fučíková 1987, no. 16; Schultze 1988, vol. 1, p. 387, cat. no. 257; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 445, cat. no. I.269; Volrábová 2008, no. 51.

99

Venus and Cupid on a Dolphin,

ca. 1577

Pen and black ink with brown wash, white heightening, and some black chalk on brown paper rubbed with black chalk, 7³/₈ × 7⁷/₈ in. (18.7 × 20.1 cm)

Albertina, Vienna (7994)

IN EXHIBITION

Once settled in Vienna, Spranger slowly began to break away from the religious themes clearly dominating his earlier activity for the ecclesiastics. This drawing of Venus and Cupid exemplifies his new outlook. Here, Venus rests on a dolphin, gingerly positioning her toes on its fins. Cupid sits between her legs, gesturing with his right hand. Drapery encircles Venus, complementing the circular contours of the dolphin and its upswept tail. Venus and Cupid would become staples for Spranger, and the romance of the sea and its inhabitants held special allure for him.



The compact figure of Venus, pliable yet firm, has garnered the sobriquet *Teigstil*, or “doughy style.” Extensive pentimenti are visible: Cupid’s entire left wing, as well as the area above Venus’s left knee, is covered with white heightening. The black chalk underdrawing and the pentimenti suggest that Spranger conceived the sheet originally as a sketch, then refined it later. Quickly penned tapering strokes indicate his newfound confidence. He skillfully differentiated textures, utilizing delicate strokes for the hair of Venus and Cupid’s wispy wings, while employing thicker lines for the dolphin’s heavy skin. Parallel lines indicate the dolphin’s mouth, and this technique is also visible in the area behind its left fin, underneath Venus’s thighs.

Spranger used inner contour lines so economically that washes and heightening play a major role in depth and modeling, as in the banner. He deftly used dark wash on Venus’s left shoulder to indicate the shadow cast upon her by Cupid. Her compact body relates to Spranger’s figures for the Neugebäude, and this sheet could be a sketch for his decoration there or perhaps for ideas explored during his work on Rudolf’s triumphal entry. Strong affinities with *Neptune and Coenis*, an engraving from 1580 by Johannes Sadeler I after Spranger (cat. 173), reinforce dating the drawing to Spranger’s Vienna period; both show nearly identical dolphins, as well as other similarities.

NOTES

1. Niederstein (1931, p. 3) uses the term *teigig* to describe forms in Spranger's drawings. He also applied the term to Goltzius's engravings after Spranger.

PROVENANCE: Duke Albert von Sachsen-Teschen (1738–1822, founder of Albertina Museum); Albertina, from 1796.

LITERATURE: Benesch 1928, p. 30, no. 279; Niederstein 1931, no. 2; Oberhuber 1958, p. 97, no. Z63; Oberhuber 1970, pp. 213, 222 n. 2; Fučíková 1978, under cat. no. 20; Koschatzky 1981, pp. 255–56; Schultze 1988, vol. 2, p. 174, cat. no. 642.

100

Mercury Leading Psyche to Heaven,
ca. 1577–80

Red chalk with wash and white heightening,
7 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 5 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (18.1 × 14.2 cm)
Hamburger Kunsthalle (22540)

Though this attribution is controversial, this drawing unquestionably belongs in Spranger's oeuvre; his authorship was noted back in 1850,



when the sheet entered the Kunsthalle as part of the Harzen collection.¹ He rarely employed red chalk, as seen here, but he often applied heavily striated white heightening, a technique visible in other autograph works, such as *Hercules, Dejanira, and Nessus* and *The Penitent Saint Magdalen* (cats. 124, 136). The heightening emphasizes the body contours, which are softer than usual in Spranger's work.

The male figure and face are standard for Spranger, whereas the female is more atypically classical, though not completely alien to his oeuvre. Psyche's heavy, rather voluptuous figure is akin to Scylla in Spranger's painting *Glauco and Scylla* (cat. 26), which suggests that this drawing is from about 1577–80. Van Mander recounts that one of the first three paintings Spranger devised for Rudolf depicted Mercury bringing Psyche to the gods.² A painting last documented in the Gurlitt collection depicts a similar couple, albeit in a slightly altered pose, and incorporates a group of gods and goddesses awaiting Psyche's arrival (cat. 19). This drawing likely served as an initial seed for that design.

The painting, among the first works Spranger made for Rudolf, has been discussed as heralding the dawn of Rudolf's reign as emperor. Another interesting approach to the general theme has been proposed by Scholten, who notes the popularity of the subject at the Rudolfiner court and interprets it through an analysis of Adriaen de Vries's bronze sculpture. Scholten considers Mercury and Psyche personifications related to Horace's *Ars Poetica*, representing *Ars* (acquired skill) and *Ingenium* (inborn talent). Together they form "the basis of true art," elevating skill to immortality.³

NOTES

1. See Stefes 2011, pp. 528–29, cat. no. 1001; Oberhuber and Niederstein concur on Spranger's authorship. Oberhuber (1958, no. Z27) mentions a letter by Niederstein, May 6, 1936, also attributing the drawing to Spranger. 2. Mander 1994, p. 346. 3. Scholten 1998, p. 109, cat. no. 3.

PROVENANCE: Georg Ernst Harzen (1790–1863), Hamburg; bequeathed by Harzen to the Hamburger Kunsthalle, 1850.

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, no. Z27; Gurlitt 1962, cat. no. 61; Stubbe 1967, no. 56; Stefes 2011, pp. 528–29, cat. no. 1001.

101

Neptune and Coenis, ca. 1578

Pen and brown ink with light brown wash and white heightening on light brown paper, 9⁵/₈ × 6³/₄ in. (24.5 × 17.3 cm)
Museum Plantin-Moretus/Prentenkabinet, Antwerp—UNESCO World Heritage

IN EXHIBITION

Inscribed lower right, in brown ink (by a later hand): *Bartolomeo Spranger / mana propria* ([his] own hand)

Neptune ravishes Coenis from behind, grabbing her breast and leg. She emphatically rejects him, thrusting out her arm in an appeal for help. According to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Coenis pleaded to the gods to be turned into a man so she could escape the old sea god's assault.¹ In this myth of transformation, her wish was granted, freeing her from the attack. Spranger depicted the drama at the height of uncertainty, focusing on his lust, her fear, and their struggle.

An engraving by Johannes Sadeler I dated 1580 (cat. 173) illustrates only the central couple, omitting the background. Past literature has referred to the subject as Neptune and Amphitrite, but the Latin



verse inscribed on the Sadeler engraving clearly refers to Neptune and Coenis. Spranger expanded his initial configuration of the couple for a painting (now lost) that is listed as no. 1214 in the Prague inventory of 1621. Spranger arrived in Prague during the fall of 1580 and did not receive an official appointment until 1581, so he

probably conceived the work in Vienna and painted it once he arrived in Prague.

Awkward passages, such as the anatomically askew positioning of Neptune's legs and torso, signify that Spranger had yet to achieve full technical acumen. The rigid contours and the relative flatness of Coenis's form, as

well as the sparse inner modeling, affiliate the work with his drawings from 1577–85, including *Venus and Cupid on a Dolphin* (cat. 99). The softening of form and the doughy quality of Coenis's torso represent a turning point from Spranger's early Vienna style represented in *The Gathering of the Gods* (cat. 97). The design demonstrates his keen sense of composition. The line of Coenis's extended right arm is continued by her bent left leg, and her right leg intersects these two limbs. Cupid flies in the opposite direction, creating tension and contrast to Coenis's movements. Kaufmann makes an astute, entertaining analysis of the entwined couple, mentioning Spranger's visual pun on the dolphin's tail between the legs of Neptune. He notes that such motifs mixing the obscene with humor are frequent in Rudolfiner art.

The popularity of this design is evident from the number of copies known today in drawings, prints, and sculpture. Most prominent among these are a drawing in Braunfels, Germany, and two bronze sculptures of the central pair (fig. 65 and private collection, Germany).²

NOTES

1. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 12.189–207. 2. See Larsson 1982, pp. 218, 220, fig. 9.

PROVENANCE: [Samuel Hartveld, Antwerp]; Museum Plantin-Moretus, from 1933.

LITERATURE: Delen 1938, vol. 1, p. 43, no. 116, vol. 2, pl. 27; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z5; Kaufmann 1988, p. 250, no. 20.4; Nave 1988, pp. 79–81, cat. no. 8; Hautekeete 1992, pp. 92–93; Mai and Vlieghe 1992, pp. 505–6, cat. no. 119.

COPIES: Drawing, formerly Deiker Collection, Braunfels, Germany. Sculptures, The Metropolitan Museum of Art and private collection, Germany.



102

Christ as Man of Sorrows, ca. 1579–80
Pen and black ink with gray wash and white heightening over black chalk on coarse light brown paper, 11⁵/₈ × 7¹/₂ in. (29.4 × 19.1 cm)
Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (13626)

IN EXHIBITION

Inscribed lower left, in graphite (difficult to read, by a later hand?): *B S [. . .] ger^t*

Piety suffuses this elegiac image of Christ as Man of Sorrows. A finished quality suggests it might have



been a presentation drawing, yet the area of the right shoulder does display pentimenti in pen over a black chalk underdrawing. The figure stands in a typical Mannerist pose, with the head turned one way and the body the other, following Leonardesque convention. The technique closely relates to Spranger's drawing *Minerva with the Muses and Pegasus* (cat. 104) and to his design for Hendrick Goltzius's print *The Wedding of Cupid and Psyche* (cats. 108,

178). In all these drawings, Spranger employed razor-thin contour lines and kept white heightening and inner modeling to a minimum. Fluid, softer strokes rather than staccato lines dominate, a characteristic of Spranger's drawings before he reached full creative stature. He brilliantly conveyed the muscles in Christ's arms by varying line thickness and by adding heightening and wash.

The figure is muscular but has yet to

develop the intensely sculptural form achieved in Spranger's drawings from the 1590s on. The drawing dates from his Vienna period, and the subject matter would certainly have appealed more to Maximilian than to his rather dissolute son Rudolf, who was inclined toward erotic mythologies.

NOTES

1. Examining the drawing very closely, Holm Bevers, head of the Berlin Kupferstichkabinett, and I determined that the signature is not visible, yet past catalogues have indicated its presence.

PROVENANCE: Karl Ferdinand Friedrich von Nagler (1770–1845); Kupferstichkabinett, from 1835.

LITERATURE: Bock and Rosenberg 1931, vol. 1, p. 48.

103

The Holy Family, ca. 1580

Pen and brown ink with brown and gray washes, white heightening, and red chalk, 10³/₈ × 7⁷/₈ in. (26.3 × 20 cm)

Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin (1982.710)

IN EXHIBITION

Depicted in profile, Mary holds the Christ Child on her lap while Joseph, lost in worry, looks past them. Spranger carefully delineated the age difference between man and wife: Joseph's face carries the folds of age, Mary's the smooth finish of youth. The figure closest to the picture plane, she appears stoic and strong, yet feminine. Drapery above enthrones her, and the braid circling her head serves as a crown. On her right, the base of a column both marks her as pillar of the Church and foretells Christ's flagellation. She holds a pear as offering to the Christ Child. Nestled in his mother's lap, the Child reaches up to touch her

cheek, or possibly her ear—a gesture that Clifton suggests could be an allusion to Christ’s Incarnation, in which the Holy Spirit was said to have entered through the Virgin’s ear. The direct display of Christ’s genitals and Mary’s gesture toward them emphasizes Christ’s role as the new Adam, and thus a man complete.¹

The style blends Spranger’s early Mannerism with a pronounced classicism. Italianate influences prevail, evident in the steady flow of line and the calm, measured mode of expression. The Virgin’s swelling breasts are emphasized through the diaphanous fabric of her precisely rendered bodice, harking back to Girolamo Mazzola Bedoli and especially vivid in his *Virgin and Child with Saint Bruno* (1533; Alte Pinakothek, Munich). As Bedoli was a contemporary of Parmigianino, it comes as little surprise that his composition wielded such influence on Spranger. The awkward construction of Joseph’s hand, with its spindly fingers elongated to near contortion, indicates an artist still perfecting his technique. Broad passages of white heightening on the figure of Joseph suggest the appearance of a chiaroscuro woodcut, recalling Spranger’s early practice of copying Parmigianino.

This sheet served as the preparatory design for Hendrick Goltzius’s engraving *The Holy Family* (cat. 177). Visible pentimenti above Joseph’s head imply the drawing served as a working model for both draftsman and engraver. Outlines of the figures have been indented for transfer, and the dimensions of the drawing and print nearly concur. The undated print is from about 1585, and Spranger’s preparatory drawing stems from somewhat earlier, about 1580. The addition on the right side of the sheet, about one centimeter wide, is by a

later hand. The drawing likely suffered damage in the transfer process and perhaps received this repair when prepared for sale. Before the Austin drawing was known, a red chalk copy of *The Holy Family* now in the Uffizi was long catalogued as the original drawing for the Goltzius print.² A painting in Spoleto’s Pinacoteca Comunale, though closely resembling Spranger’s design, is a late copy rather than an original.

NOTES

1. Clifton 1997, p. 42. 2. The drawing (inv. no. 1081 S)—in the same direction as the engraving—was at one time attributed to Francesco Salviati.

PROVENANCE: [Seiferheld, New York, 1961]; [Stephen Spector, 1961]; Carl Robert Rudolf (ca. 1884–1974); (sold, Sotheby’s Mak van Waay, Amsterdam, June 6, 1977); [David Tunick, 1982]; Blanton Museum of Art, from 1982.

LITERATURE: Seiferheld 1961, no. 25; Van Schaack 1962, p. 79, no. 36; Kaufmann 1992, p. 91; Filedt Kok 1993, pp. 171 (for discussion of engraving), 211, no. 68; Clifton 1997, cat. no. 4; Leeftang 2003, p. 83; Blanton 2006, p. 42.

104

Minerva with the Muses and Pegasus, ca. 1583

Pen and brown ink with brown wash, white heightening, and red highlights on paper grounded with black chalk, 8¼ × 11¾ in. (20.8 × 30 cm)

Albertina, Vienna (7995)

IN EXHIBITION

As recounted by Ovid, Minerva visited the Muses on Mount Helikon to witness the Hippocrene spring created by the winged horse Pegasus.¹ Resplendent in her plumed helmet, the Medusa shield by her side, she holds court among the nine Muses and a river god, while Pegasus leaps off the mountain, headed away from the gathering. Delicate and diminutive figures not yet

fully independent from the style of Spranger’s Italian period display an incipient Prague Mannerism.

The technical quality of the drawing is high. Though creating spatial diversity, expertly distinguishing between background and foreground, Spranger unified the figures into one coherent environment. Pentimenti next to Minerva’s right hand show the stages of the design, beginning with very light brown ink and then finalized with darker ink. For the standing Muse at the center, who is pulling up her drapery in feigned modesty, Spranger used his typical graphic device of multiple vertical strokes to place her lower half in shadow. He rendered her drapery with keen attention to its three-dimensionality, deftly wrapping the fabric around her frame.

This master drawing is loosely related to Bartholomeus Willemsz. Dolendo’s print *The Muses with Cupid* (cat. 197). Further, an entry in the 1607 Prague inventory (no. 1984) lists a print engraved by Aegidius Sadeler II after Spranger’s “Pallas and the Muses.” *Minerva with the Muses and Pegasus* could have served as the initial design for that print (now lost). Spranger’s painting *The Competition between Apollo and Pan* (cat. 24) utilizes a horizontal format similar to that of this Albertina sheet. The figural types also share affinities, and some are actually repeated in the painting, such as the female in profile on the far left and the river god, though in the painting he is reversed. This drawing has been correctly dated in the literature between 1580 and 1585, and the figures indeed parallel those in Spranger’s works from that time. Gerszi noted a similarity between this composition and Hans Speckaert’s *Apollo, Hercules, and Minerva with the Muses* (ca. 1570;



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Národní Galerie, Prague), a drawing that, according to Šíroká, was at one time attributed to Spranger.²

NOTES

1. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 5:250–65. 2. Gerszi in Schultze 1988, vol. 1, p. 387, cat. no. 258; Šíroká 1995, p. 416, no. A39.

PROVENANCE: Duke Albert von Sachsen-Teschen (1738–1822, founder of Albertina Museum); Albertina, from 1796.

LITERATURE: Benesch 1928, p. 31, no. 281, with pl.; Niederstein 1931, no. 4; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z61; Schultze 1988, vol. 1, pp. 387–88, cat. no. 258; Brink and Hornbostel 1993, cat. no. IV.6; Gerszi and Toth 2012, pp. 147–48, cat. no. 55.

105

Saint Ursula, ca. 1583

Pen and brown ink with brown wash and traces of olive green wash, dimensions unknown

Location unknown

Inscribed lower center (by a later hand):
Spranger

Mentioned by Oberhuber in 1958, this drawing is currently lost, and unfortunately the Viennese auction house Nebehay, its last recorded location that same year, maintains that it has

no records of a sale.¹ This elusive sheet is important because it illustrates an aedicule altarpiece for Spranger's *Saint Ursula* painting now in Vilnius (cat. 30). Oberhuber incorrectly associates this design with Spranger's *Saint Ursula* painting now in Prague's Strahov Monastery (formerly in the Národní Galerie) (cat. 39). The architectural framework in the drawing, though composed in an ink similar to that of the interior design, employs a noticeably different style than the image of Saint Ursula, thus two hands were likely involved in creating this sheet.²



NOTES

1. Correspondence with Christian Nebehay auction house, Vienna, July 2013. 2. Oberhuber concurs with Kaufmann on this point.

PROVENANCE: Unknown.

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, no. Z64; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.26.

Venus and Cupid in Neptune's Chariot, ca. 1583

Pen and brown ink with brown and gray washes and white heightening, 10 × 7³/₈ in. (25.4 × 19.6 cm)
 Albertina, Vienna (7993)

IN EXHIBITION

Inscribed lower center, in brown ink: *B.*

Neptune steers rambunctious sea horses, Venus nestles beside him, and Cupid peeks out on the right, poised to pierce the couple with his arrow of love. Putti fly overhead, strewing flowers to celebrate the couple's union. Spranger drew another version of this theme (cats. 109, 110), later engraved by Pieter de Jode I (cat. 186), and painted it as well (cat. 74). Each version displays compositional modifications. Stylistically, this drawing represents an important juncture in Spranger's development, as he breaks from his Italianate style but does not entirely abandon it. He begins to employ sharp, crisp contour lines, the confidence of his draftsmanship becoming more apparent. The execution is looser than in *The Gathering of the Gods* and *Venus and Cupid on a Dolphin*, both earlier drawings made in Vienna (cats. 97, 99). This composition evokes more emphatic Netherlandish Mannerist tendencies, as the figures display additional inner modeling and vitality beneath the flesh. They have a more commanding physical presence than the soft and round figures in *The Gathering of the Gods* and *The Judgment of Paris* (cat. 98). As in some of Spranger's earlier drawings, the tonality suggests a chiaroscuro woodcut. Extensive pentimenti are visible on the right leg of Venus and around Cupid's head. Spranger builds on top of each form,



often leaving earlier strokes but using a darker ink for the final form. *Venus and Cupid in Neptune's Chariot* thus is a paradigm for the artist's developing Rudolfiner style and presents an excellent model for understanding his working methods.

PROVENANCE: Prince Charles de Ligne (1759–1792), Brussels; (his sale, Aloys Blumauer, Vienna, November 4, 1794, no. 2); Duke Albert von Sachsen-Teschen (1738–1822, founder of Albertina Museum); Albertina, from 1794.

LITERATURE: Bartsch 1794, p. 244, no. 2; Benesch 1928, p. 30, no. 280; Niederstein 1931, p. 24, no. 5; Oberhuber 1958, p. 97, no. Z57; Haverkamp-Begemann and Logan 1970, p. 274 n. 1; Stechow 1970, p. 62, cat. no. 88; Schultze 1988, vol. 2, p. 175, cat. no. 644.

COPIES: Drawings, Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (C. 1967–155); Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig, Renssi Collection (vol. 3, p. 72).

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Venus and Cupid, ca. 1583–85

Pen and black ink with gray wash and white and red heightening, on paper rubbed with black chalk, 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 7 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (22 × 18.8 cm)

Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, Paris (1205)

IN EXHIBITION

Executed in subtle *di sotto in su*, Spranger's drawing probably played a role in a cycle of interior decoration for Prague Castle. Based on style, the sheet originates from the mid-1580s, about the time Spranger began to paint



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allegories in the castle for Rudolf. Alternatively, Spranger might have composed *Venus and Cupid* for the Amalienburg in Vienna, during his brief second sojourn there. It should be recalled that after the Augsburg Diet, Rudolf commandeered his entourage to Vienna, as the plague still raged in Prague. An earlier drawing, *Venus and Cupid on a Dolphin* (cat. 99), shows a similar rendition of Cupid. The execution also bears comparison with Spranger's drawing *Minerva with the Muses and Pegasus* (cat. 104), in which sparse inner modeling forms the figures. Also noteworthy is

the connection to *Neptune and Coenis* (cat. 101), as Venus and Coenis each display an upraised arm.

Egbert van Panderen engraved Spranger's design, faithfully following the composition, aside from minor shifts (cat. 206). A drawing of *Venus and Cupid* in reverse in the Uffizi (15732 F) is wrongly given to "School of Parma," but the misattribution demonstrates that this sheet does indeed have an array of Italianate traits, concomitant with the relatively early stages of Spranger's career in Prague.

PROVENANCE: James Kerr-Lawson (1864–1939), London; Frits Lugt, Paris, 1923.

LITERATURE: Niederstein 1931, pp. 12, 25, no. 12; Oberhuber 1958, p. 93, no. Z45; Neumann 1970, p. 146; Boon 1980, p. 194, cat. no. 131; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 445, cat. no. I.272.

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The Wedding of Cupid and Psyche, 1583–85

Pen and brown ink with dark gray wash and white heightening on two sheets of gray-tinted paper joined and backed by a sheet of 18th-century paper, 15 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 32 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (39.7 × 83.4 cm)

Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (RP-T-1890-A-2339)

IN EXHIBITION

Inscribed on cartouche, lower right, in black ink: *Dedico al aff[ablie] Sig[nore] [. . .] ronficio ed con e [. . .] sue Titel*

Unlike Spranger's paintings, few drawings are lauded or even mentioned by van Mander in his *Vita*, but this astounding work he called "grand and astonishingly well-designed."¹ The design served as a preparatory sheet for a master engraving by Hendrick Goltzius, dated 1587 (cat. 178), which encouraged artists throughout their milieu to



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engage in this new, explosive mode of bravura Mannerist expression.

Among twisting cottony clouds the pantheon of gods and goddesses has gathered to celebrate the marriage of Cupid and Psyche. The wedding banquet takes place in the center background of this elaborate composition, nearly obscured by the multitude of figures; relegating the central theme to the background was a common device of Netherlandish artists.

Spranger and Goltzius dedicated the drawing and the engraving to Wolfgang Rumpf, chamberlain to Rudolf II. According to van Mander, it was Rumpf who persuaded Spranger to stay on in Vienna after Maximilian II died, in spite of the artist's frustration about the lack of work and pay. Rumpf also mediated between Spranger and Rudolf in the negotiations to bring the artist to the Prague court and even assisted in

garnering Christina Müller as Spranger's wife.

Spranger put a twist on the tale as told by Lucius Apuleius in *The Golden Ass*:

Presently a rich wedding feast appeared. The bridegroom reclined at the head, clasping Psyche in his arms. Jupiter and Juno sat beside them, and all the deities in order. Ganymede, the cup-bearing shepherd lad, served Jupiter his nectar, that wine of the gods, and Bacchus-Liber served all the rest, while Vulcan cooked the meal. Now the Hours adorned everyone with roses and hosts of other flowers; the Graces scattered balsam; the choir of the Muses sounded; Apollo sang to the lyre, and Venus danced charmingly to that outpouring of sweet music, arranging the scene so the Muses chimed together, with a Satyr

fluting away, and a woodland creature of Pan's piping his reeds.

So Psyche was given in marriage to Cupid according to the rite, and when her term was due a daughter was born to them both, whom we call Pleasure.²

In Spranger's drawing, Vulcan stands on the left, Bacchus as host in the center indeed fills a putto's cup with wine, and at middle left, Apollo serenades the guests with heavenly notes on his harp.

The contours have been marked for transfer with a stylus. Differences between the drawing and the engraving have been partially caused by restoration of the drawing and by the imprecise way the two damaged sheets were put together, probably during the eighteenth century. Two strips, each approximately one centimeter wide, are missing: one in the middle of the

drawing and one on the right side.³ The right side of the sheet has been heavily restored, and the original head of a woman carrying the large covered dish in the bottom corner has been changed into the head of a bearded man. In addition, the landscape has been almost obliterated, and Mercury's arm, which originally was offering a dish to Zeus, is missing. Despite the restorations, the drawing displays the refinements of Spranger's style during the early to mid-1580s.

NOTES

1. Mander 1994, p. 354. Curiously, van Mander specifically states that Goltzius made the engraving known in 1585, but the print is clearly dated 1587.
2. Apuleius 2013, 6.23–24.
3. According to Boon 1978, vol. 1, pp. 152–53, no. 418.

PROVENANCE: Bastiaan Molewater, Rotterdam; (his sale, November 14, 1753, album D, no. 129); M. Oudaen, Amsterdam, 1766; J. F. Ellinckhuysen, Rotterdam; (his sale, Frederik Muller & Co., Amsterdam, December 19–20, 1878, album P, no. 58, no. 239); sold to A. Wildschut; Rijksprentenkabinet, from 1890.

LITERATURE: Mander 1994 [1603–4], p. 354; Diez 1909, p. 114 n. 1; Niederstein 1931, pp. 9–11, 24, no. 10; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z1; Reznicek 1961, pp. 76, 155–56; Boon 1978, vol. 1, pp. 152–53, no. 418; Luijten et al. 1993, pp. 329–30, cat. no. 1; Leeflang 2003, pp. 87–89, cat. no. 28.

COPIES: The drawing and especially the print were copied extensively. A notable drawing by Franz Aspruck after the drawing is in the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig (Z 986).



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Neptune, Amphitrite, and Cupid,
1585–89

Pen and gray-brown ink with gray and brown washes, white heightening, and traces of red chalk on brown-tinted paper, 10¼ × 7⅞ in. (26 × 19.5 cm)
The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg (OP 15491)

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Neptune, Amphitrite, and Cupid,
1585–89

Pen and brown ink with brown wash, 10⅝/16 × 7½ in. (26.2 × 19.1 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Purchase, Anne and Jean Bonna Gift, 1999 (1999.169)

IN EXHIBITION

Inscribed lower right, in brown ink (by a later hand): *Spranger*

These nearly identical drawings represent successive stages of Spranger's design for the engraving *Neptune and Venus* by Pieter de Jode I (cat. 186). That the Hermitage sheet came first is evident from the extensive pentimenti, especially the altered



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position of Neptune's trident. The Metropolitan Museum drawing is a more refined, tighter design, indicating Spranger's satisfaction with the composition. In that sheet, the absence of one putto and a fragment of another are the result of the upper corners' having been eliminated.

In style and composition, both these drawings display a spirit similar to *Venus and Cupid in Neptune's Chariot*

in the Albertina (cat. 106). Spranger may have conceived his design as one of a series celebrating the adventures of the sea god and goddess. This design is more successful and harmonious than the one in Vienna, especially in the presentation of the lovers, arguing in favor of dating these drawings slightly later. Spranger counterbalanced the postures of the central couple so that they fuse in the center, their limbs fanning out in

various directions, resulting in a dynamic composition. Stylistically, the stocky, short-waisted build of Venus looks back to his late Vienna and earlier Prague period, yet he has now mastered a sophisticated design pulsating with energy. The print was made after 1591, so the drawings can be comfortably dated earlier, between 1585 and 1589.

PROVENANCE (CAT. 109): Ivan Betskoy (1704–1795), Saint Petersburg; Academy of Arts, Saint Petersburg, 1767; Hermitage, from 1924.

PROVENANCE (CAT. 110): Charles Gasc, Paris, ca. 1850–60; Fabius collection, Paris; [Jean-François Heim, Paris]; purchased by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999.

LITERATURE (CAT. 109): None.

LITERATURE (CAT. 110): None.

COPIES: Drawings, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven (1961.63.82); Staatsgalerie Stuttgart (1730); Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (13630).

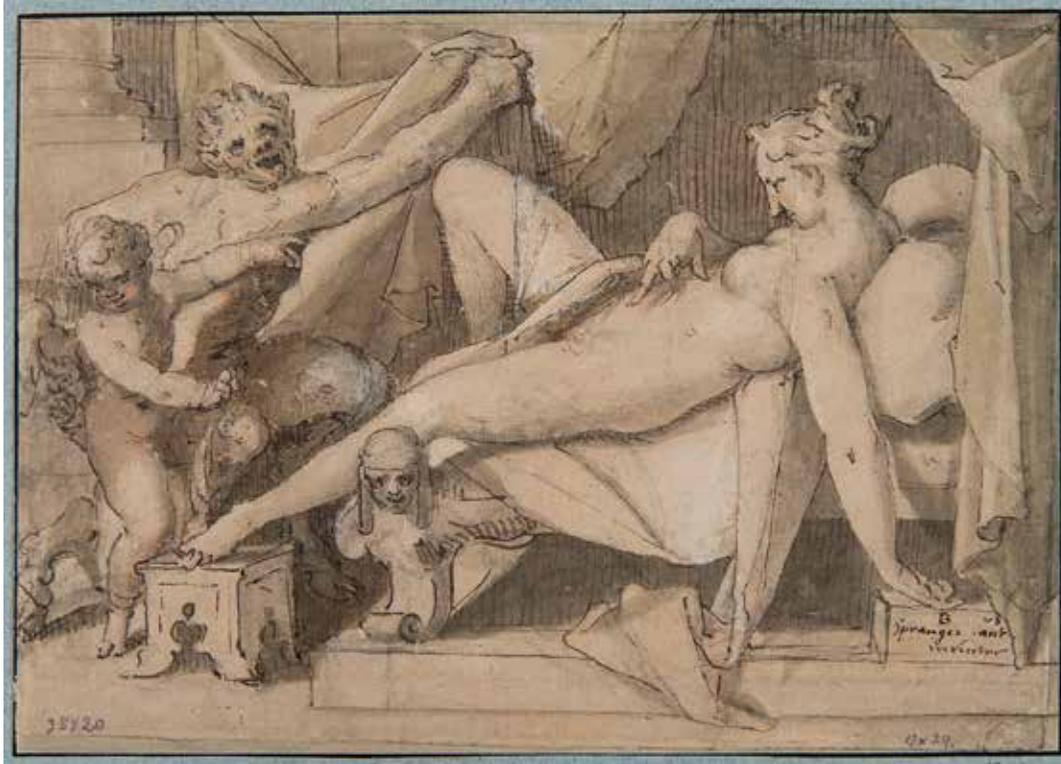
III

The Satyr Mason, ca. 1585–90

Pen and gray ink with brown, gray, green, and red washes heightened with white over black chalk, outlined in pen and gray ink; laid down on old collection mount, 6¾ × 9½ in. (17.1 × 24.2 cm)
The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg (OP 38420)

Signed lower right, on block, in gray ink:
B / Spranger .ant vs / inventor

Venus stretches out in a highly suggestive pose while a lascivious satyr pulls back the curtain and drops a string between her legs. He represents the Satyr Mason, boldly staring back at the viewer, unabashed in his desires. The string he holds, a plumb line, swings back and forth, up and down, until it finds equilibrium, plunging downward, thus conjuring a metaphor



for intercourse.¹ The sphinx-embellished bed reinforces the effect of exotic sensuality. Cupid raises his hands, either to protect his mother or to mimic the satyr's gesture. This composition closely resembles, in reverse, Agostino Carracci's *Satyr Mason* from his infamous *Lascivie* series (fig. 48). An earlier conception of this playfully erotic moment had been engraved by Hieronymus Wierix in 1578 after the artist Willem van Haecht I (fig. 49).² The Carracci and the Spranger designs are so close in date that it is difficult to ascertain which came first, and indeed, both artists may have been inspired by the Wierix print. Whoever first conceived the design, the bedroom antics would certainly have appealed to Rudolf, and Spranger's drawing may have been created explicitly for the emperor's titillation.

Though the signature "Spranger inventor" points toward this design's



Fig. 48. Agostino Carracci (Italian, Bologna 1557–Parma 1602). *The Satyr Mason*, ca. 1585–1600. Engraving, 8 × 5³/₈ in. (20.3 × 13.4 cm). The British Museum, London (1867,0413.549)



Fig. 49. Hieronymus Wierix (Flemish, Antwerp 1553–1619 Antwerp), after Willem van Haecht I (Flemish, Antwerp, ca. 1529–1593 Antwerp). *The Temptation of Man*, 1578. Engraving, 9³/₈ × 12⁵/₈ in. (23.8 × 32.3 cm). Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (RP-P-2005-99)



having served for a print, the colored washes indicate an intended painting. Another of his drawings signed as “inventor” is *Juno, Jupiter, and Mercury* (cat. 134). An absence of inner modeling and the slight flatness of the forms relate the work to early Spranger, as do the affinities with van Haecht and Carracci, thus the composition dates to about 1585–90.

NOTES

1. For more on the possible meanings of the erotic image of the Satyr Mason, see Simons 2009, pp. 201–6. 2. On the Carracci–van Haecht design, see Dunand 1957, pp. 8–9 n. 11.

PROVENANCE: Private collection, Russia, before 1917; State Museums Fund, 1917; Hermitage, from 1929.

LITERATURE: None.

RELATED COPIES: Drawing, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm (748/1973).

112

Allegory of Time and Art, ca. 1585–90
Pen and brown ink with brown wash and red highlights over black chalk underdrawing; mounted on ribbed paper, 8 × 9⁷/₈ in. (20.4 × 25.1 cm)

Museum of the Lubomirski Princes, Ossoliński National Institute (Muzeum Książąt Lubomirskich, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich), Wrocław, Poland (8402)

IN EXHIBITION

Inscribed lower left, in graphite (by a later hand): *Spranger*

Two winged males face each other, heralding the impending arrival of a horse, the faint outlines of which can be seen galloping toward them. The left figure rests a scythe on his shoulder as a banner swirls around him. The figure on the right gestures with his right hand while holding an hourglass in his left.

Oszczanowski astutely deciphers this esoteric allegory as symbolizing time well and badly spent, a theme Spranger explored again in his engraving *Young Artist before Minerva* (cat. 194).¹ One youth in the Wrocław drawing displays wings that could be termed typically angelic, the other satanic. And, as explicated by Oszczanowski, the steed does not represent Pegasus but rather a horse symbolic of time.² Spranger shows his predilection for recondite allegory in this vibrant drawing, and he may have later expanded the theme in his drawing *Allegory of Time* in Braunschweig (cat. 143).

Allegory of Time and Art was first catalogued by Niederstein and affirmed by Oberhuber as an original by Spranger, constituting an important document of his graphic activity during the mid-1580s and early 1590s. The execution of the faces and hairstyles, as well as the overall flow and grace of the forms, flaunts Spranger’s touch. The thick, cursory brushstrokes resemble those in his *Diana of Ephesus* in the same collection (cat. 113) as well as in the later drawings *Saturn* and *Psyche at the Bed of Sleeping Cupid* (cats. 126, 151)—drawings that are all composed with a similar graphic sentiment.

NOTES

1. Dobrzyński and Oszczanowski 2005, p. 30, cat. no. 24. 2. *Ibid.*

MARKS: Watermark (Briquet 6164).

PROVENANCE: Duke Henryk Lubomirski (1777–1850), Lvov; Museum of Lubomirski Dukes, Ossoliński National Institute, Lvov, 1823; Museum of the Lubomirski Princes, Ossoliński National Institute, from 1947.

LITERATURE: Niederstein 1931, p. 14, no. 14; Amsterdam 1955, p. 144, cat. no. 256; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z30; Białostocki and Mrozińska 1982, p. 207, cat. no. 101; Kozak and Monkiewicz 1993, cat. no. 89; Dobrzyński and Oszczanowski 2005, p. 30, cat. no. 24.

113

Diana of Ephesus, ca. 1585–90

Pen and brown ink with brown wash, highlighted with light green and red washes, over graphite underdrawing, $8\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{3}{8}$ in. (22.3 × 13.8 cm)

Museum of the Lubomirski Princes, Ossoliński National Institute (Muzeum Książąt Lubomirskich, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich), Wrocław, Poland (8403)

IN EXHIBITION

Inscribed lower left, in pencil (by a later hand): *Spranger*

The fertility goddess Diana of Ephesus was seldom depicted in the Renaissance, but Spranger, in his typical mode of surprise and invention, boldly limned her striking form. Even though the subject was rare among contemporary artists, such a bizarre figure would have appealed to the Mannerist fondness for artifice and whimsy. The Temple of Diana in Ephesus, Turkey, was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, but since most of the temple was destroyed and Spranger never traveled to Turkey, he probably took inspiration from a fountain in a wall at the Tivoli Gardens in the Villa d'Este, which depicts the figure. Spranger's *Diana* differs from the Italian statue as it proffers a full-length, independent figure and one not spouting water or milk from her breasts.

Diana of Ephesus is an essay in Mannerist physique, affectation, and action. Although Diana's pose is fundamentally static, she curls her left arm into her hip and extends the other vigorously, inviting the viewer to admire her unusually abundant fertility. She juts out her right hip, but counterbalances this by bracing her left foot on a small post. Even though Spranger enlivened his drawing with colored washes, it was



never realized in a major painting or fresco. Thick, bold strokes express the artist's technical fluency and confidence. The style displays marked similarity with Spranger's drawing *Allegory of Time and Art* (cat. 112), and both drawings are from 1585–90, during Spranger's Prague period.

PROVENANCE: Duke Henryk Lubomirski (1777–1850), Lvov; Museum of Lubomirski Dukes, Ossoliński National Institute, Lvov, 1823; Museum of the Lubomirski Princes, Ossoliński National Institute, from 1947.

LITERATURE: Dobrzyniecki and Oszczanowski 2005, p. 30, cat. no. 25 (with earlier literature); Niedzielenko and Vlnas 2006, cat. no. II.6.7.



114

Diana, ca. 1587–93

Pen and gray ink with gray wash over black chalk underdrawing, $4\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{8}$ in.

(10.7 × 8.4 cm)

Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München (1978:38)

A crescent, quiver, and dog identify this lithe nude as the goddess Diana. Spranger also painted her in an equally evocative manner, though just from the waist up (cat. 75). The painting could have been cut down, and this

drawing might have served as a preliminary study or, at the very least, initial inspiration for it. The composition exemplifies Spranger's style from the late 1580s, marked by a fluidity of line and spontaneity. The contouring of Diana and the lack of inner modeling align this figure with Venus in the Hermitage's *Neptune, Amphitrite, and Cupid* (cat. 109). Deft application of wash achieves a high quality of modeling here. Spranger employed his characteristic gridlines for shadowing, using quite an extensive network of them.

The hands are formed in a typical manner, especially the sharp, Mannerist curve and turn of Diana's wrists—a position painful if not impossible in real life. Adroitly rendered drapery billows behind her back.

Despite the numerous characteristics indicative of Spranger's hand, doubt about the drawing's authenticity has been voiced, principally by Schnackenburg. In favor of Spranger, he remarks that Diana's face and the overall modeling of her body bring to mind Spranger's Venus in his painting *Bacchus and Venus* in Hanover (cat. 70). However, he also argues that the obsessive quality, as well as the extensive pentimenti, indicates a copy; but these two characteristics would seem more to align the drawing with Spranger's hand than distance it.¹ The sheet has been squared with black chalk, suggesting that Spranger conceived *Diana* for an engraving or painting, and the extensive pentimenti around the dog and at the contact point between the dog and Diana also point toward originality rather than replication.

NOTES

1. Schnackenburg 1970, p. 152.

PROVENANCE: Dr. R. Alexander-Katz (Lugt 2812); private collection, Munich, 1977; (Galerie Gerda Bassenge, Berlin, Auction 29, April 1977, no. 250); Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, from 1978.

LITERATURE: Schnackenburg 1970.

115

The Toilette of Venus, ca. 1588

Pen and brown ink with brown wash and touches of black ink with white heightening on paper rubbed with black chalk,

$8 \times 5\frac{1}{4}$ in. (20.3 × 13.2 cm)

Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig (I. 2209)

IN EXHIBITION



Inscribed lower right, in brown ink (by a later hand): *B. Spranger f.*

Venus, resting her foot on a turtle, gazes in the mirror held up by her son Cupid while her three handmaidens—the Graces Aglaia, Euphrosyne, and Thalia—attend to her toilette. A putto strews flowers overhead. *The Toilette of Venus* epitomizes Spranger's bravura draftsmanship; he varied the thickness and the length of the strokes and created the figures with loosely formed contours. A brittle quality of the strokes—for instance, around the feet of the Grace at far left—gives a delicacy to the figures. Parallel lines delineate the background and denote depth. The Grace at far left has the characteristic Spranger countenance: wide eyes and just a flick of ink for her nose and mouth. Her hair, rendered as a mass of piled-up, unspecified curls, is also typical of Spranger. Her S-curve posture brings to mind standing figures in Spranger's drawing *Minerva with the Muses and Pegasus* (cat. 104), and the figure to the right of Venus resembles her counterpart in *Neptune, Amphitrite, and Cupid* (cats. 109, 110). Jan Harmensz. Muller's engraving after Spranger, *Venus Honored by Nymphs* (cat. 181), depicts a similar scene, and this sheet may have been Spranger's early sketch for it.

PROVENANCE: Private collection, Blaschkow, Bohemia; [Kunsthändler Gaston von Mallmann, Berlin]; Museum der Bildenden Künste, from 1913.

LITERATURE: Voss 1913, p. 226; Niederstein 1931, p. 13, no. 13; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z29; Fučíková 1987, p. 17, with pl.; Gleisberg 1990, no. 33.

COPIES: Drawing, Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig (7435).

116

Hercules and Omphale, ca. 1588

Pen and brown ink with brown wash, traces of white heightening (predominantly on Hercules's drapery), and traces of black ink over black chalk underdrawing, $9\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$ in. (24.2 × 19.8 cm)
Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi, Florence (2362 F)

Originally attributed to Hendrick Goltzius, *Hercules and Omphale* was ascribed to Spranger by Oberhuber in 1958. An engraving of the composition by Anton Eisenhoit, inscribed with Spranger as inventor and a date of 1590 (cat. 195), reinforces Oberhuber's original supposition. Spranger also painted a related design on copper (cat. 43), which has dimensions similar to this drawing, but there is a putto in the painting and the posture of Hercules is different. Spranger depicted Hercules and Omphale on several other occasions as well. Aegidius Sadeler II engraved a print after an unknown drawing by Spranger related to the couple, but in that print Omphale is seated (cat. 218). Another drawing of Hercules and Omphale, signed and dated 1599, is in Prague (cat. 148), and a copy of a lost Spranger original on the subject is in the Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Vienna.¹

This drawing in the Uffizi is one of Spranger's earliest versions of the subject. Pentimenti around the feet of Omphale and the middle section of Hercules record the preliminary stage of Spranger's creative process. The right foot of Hercules is unclear, as heavy ink obscures some of the figure and damaged the paper. Omphale's drapery was first rendered in an underdrawing of black chalk, then finalized with brown ink. Spranger conveyed shading in his

characteristic technique of penning parallel lines close together.

NOTES

1. Pen and brown-purple ink over black chalk on white paper, $11\frac{1}{8} \times 10\frac{1}{8}$ in. (28.1 × 25.7 cm), Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Vienna (4292). The background of the composition is heavily washed, and thin, weak strokes indicate a hand other than Spranger's.

MARKS: Inscribed lower left, in graphite: *E. Golzio*; verso, upper center, in graphite (on repair tape): *Spranger / 1189-Enrico Golzius*.

PROVENANCE: Prince Leopoldo de' Medici (1617–1675), Florence (1793 inventory).

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, pp. 233, 249, 283, no. Z24; Kloek 1975, no. 187; Kloek and Meijer 2008, pp. 51–54, no. 28.

COPIES: Drawing, Hamburger Kunsthalle (22541).

117

Mars Embracing Venus, ca. 1588–93

Pen and brown ink with brown-gray wash, white heightening, and highlights of black and red chalk, $4\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ in. (11.3 × 9 cm)
The British Museum, London (SL,5226.51)

IN EXHIBITION

The theme of entwined lovers absorbed Spranger for more than a decade, apparent in his drawings from the 1580s, including *Mars and Venus with Cupid* (cat. 120), and continuing well into the 1590s, as in the *Mars and Venus* in Frankfurt (cat. 140).

Spontaneity of execution infuses his amorous conception in *Mars Embracing Venus*. Some awkward passages, such as Venus's right hand, reflect this rapidity, and indeed this drawing served as Spranger's conceptual sketch for his *Mercury, Venus, and Cupid* drawing in Basel (cat. 144), a design later engraved by Pieter de Jode I (cat. 204). Comparing this first sketch and Spranger's more finished Basel drawing shows that he



later corrected some of the unsuccessful passages. Most prominently, he reversed the position of the couple and configured them into a much more erotically charged composition.

Here, Venus's head does not smoothly connect with her torso, turning to the right while her head and shoulders are in opposition. Of course, this could be an intentionally Mannerist interpretation, but it is more likely the consequence of the artist's rapid-fire sketching. Despite the extensive pentimenti and the unfinished quality, the

drawing displays Spranger's distinctive traits, such as the parallel lines separating the two figures and the characteristic dashes of the pen for the inner modeling of Mars's arm. Spranger first rapidly drew a foundation for the outline of form with light brown pen and ink, then added emphasis with a darker brown ink, either strengthening the figure or slightly altering the line. The style foreshadows his use of line in *Achior* and in *Psyche at the Bed of Sleeping Cupid* (cats. 150, 151).



PROVENANCE: Sir Hans Sloane (1660–1753), London; bequeathed by Sloane to the British Museum, 1753.

LITERATURE: Popham 1932, p. 179, no. 1; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z34.

118

Hercules and Omphale (Mars and Venus?), late 1588–early 1590s

Pen and brown ink with white heightening and brown wash on paper rubbed with black chalk, 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 4 in. (11.8 × 10.1 cm)
Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (Z 13627)

Niederstein eliminated this sketch from Spranger's oeuvre and categorized it as a copy. Oberhuber accepted it as an original. Bock and Rosenberg, in their 1931 catalogue of the Berlin collection, classify the drawing with a question mark, and that assessment has prevailed in the Berlin Kupferstichkabinett. But as Oberhuber points out, the relaxed strokes enhance the overall freshness of the drawing, and indeed, it is an original sketch by Spranger, stemming from late 1588 to the early 1590s. A striking spontaneity and fluent swelling of lines and contours declare the master's hand. Hollow, triangular eyes and a background indicated by parallel lines, typical graphic characteristics for Spranger, confirm the attribution. The center of Venus's waistline shows a "v" turned sideways, another of Spranger's graphic habits, as is the amalgamation of corrected contour lines in Hercules's arm. The design was not realized in a known painting by Spranger; rather it represents a conceptual *disegno*. The comfortable intimacy of the male and female gods is analogous to Spranger's other half-length depictions of couples such as Mercury



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and Venus (cat. 144). The paucity of attributes leads to confusion about the exact identity of the pair, especially the male.

MARKS: Watermark (Briquet 12460).

PROVENANCE: Entered the Kupferstichkabinett before 1878.

LITERATURE: Bock and Rosenberg 1931, vol. 1, p. 48; Niederstein 1931, no. 323; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z7.

119

Cupid and Psyche, ca. 1589

Pen and brown ink with brown wash and white heightening over some black chalk,

6 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 5 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (16.8 × 13.8 cm)

The British Museum, London

(SL,5226.144)

IN EXHIBITION

Having languished for years in the British Museum labeled as an anonymous Italian drawing, this evocative, highly sophisticated composition was rightly recognized as an original

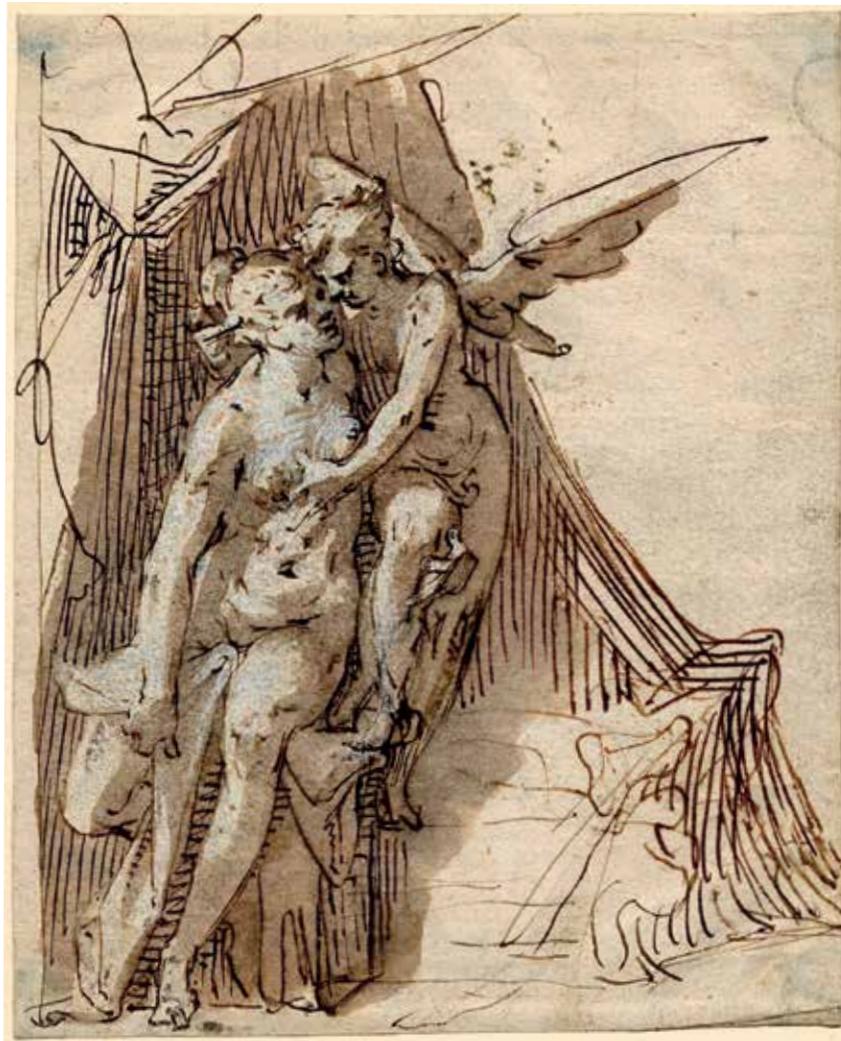
Spranger by Popham in 1932. The eroticism and force of execution establish it unconditionally as by his hand. Though it is a rapid sketch, his dexterity and mastery are apparent. The composition has been extensively copied—primarily in drawings, but a painting in Lille attributed to Dirk de Quade van Ravesteyn may be a copy of a lost painting by Spranger, indicating that this drawing functioned as a preliminary study (fig. 50). Among the many copies, some loosely interpreted and with

added motifs, the drawing now in the Muzeum Narodowe, Warsaw, comes closest to this original.¹

Extensive pentimenti show that Spranger altered the forms, masking corrections with white heightening, especially when showing foreshortening, which often proved a challenge to him. Parallel lines between the two figures separate the forms—a technique evident in other drawings by Spranger, such as *Mars Embracing Venus* (cat. 117)—but in this case they are horizontal rather than vertical lines. The extensive white heightening of the

figures brings them forward, such as the knee of Cupid protruding into another spatial plane. Cupid's eye, composed of an extended upper line, recalls those of the putti in the *Mars and Venus* drawing in Frankfurt (cat. 140).

Cupid held special appeal for Spranger, who featured him on several occasions. The figures of Cupid and Psyche here are related to those in his painting *Cupid Fleeing Psyche* (cat. 73), and the figure of Cupid would again enliven a sheet by Spranger in a masterful drawing of 1599, now in Nuremberg (cat. 147).



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NOTES

1. *Cupid and Psyche*, ca. 1590, pen and black ink with brown-gray wash over traces of black chalk, 7¼ × 5½ in. (18.4 × 13.6 cm), Muzeum Narodowe, Warsaw (710).

PROVENANCE: Sir Hans Sloane (1660–1753), London; bequeathed by Sloane to the British Museum, 1753.

LITERATURE: Popham 1932, p. 179, no. 3; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z33; Hannema 1961, p. 29, no. 132a; Jost 1961, esp. p. 184.

COPIES: Drawings, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne (Z216); Collection Victor de Stuers, Vorden, the Netherlands.



Fig. 50. Dirk de Quade van Ravesteyn (Netherlandish, active ca. 1576–1612). *Cupid and Psyche*, ca. 1600. Oil on canvas, 6½ × 4½ in. (16.4 × 11.4 cm). Palais des Beaux-Arts, Lille (P. 2026)



120

120

Mars and Venus with Cupid,
mid- to late 1580s

Pen and brown ink with brown wash
over black chalk underdrawing,
3⁷/₈ × 3¹/₈ in. (9.3 × 8 cm)

Národní Galerie v Praze, Prague (K 9409)

This provocative drawing invites the viewer into the bedroom of Mars and Venus. Cupid admires himself in the mirror that Venus holds on her lap while Mars embraces her from behind, kissing her shoulder. The sheet was originally catalogued in the Prague collection as “seventeenth-century

anonymous Italian,” but Fučíková attributed it to Spranger in her 1967 doctoral dissertation.¹ Anton Eisenhoit’s engraving after this image, inscribed *B. Spranger inventor* and dated 1589 (cat. 180), confirms her supposition. Though Fučíková dated the drawing later in the 1590s, the date of Eisenhoit’s engraving situates Spranger’s creation earlier.

The facial types and figures are clearly Spranger’s, and he repeated the position of the faces of Venus and Mars almost exactly in his drawing *Jupiter and Juno* (cat. 121). The worn condition

of the drawing, many areas erased by time, makes it difficult to ascertain what stage this drawing served in the process of Eisenhoit’s engraving. Visible changes made by Spranger in the composition indicate his design was still inchoate. For example, he repositioned the hand and left leg of Venus, and her mirror has been redrawn several times. Also, a cursory treatment of the figures and particularly of the background is evident.

NOTES

1. Museum curatorial files noted this change of attribution based on the doctoral research of Fučíková in 1967.

MARKS: Stamps, verso, lower right: in blue rectangle: *GSP*; in purple: *TOMAN* (Lugt 2401).

PROVENANCE: Dr. P. Toman; Dr. F. Macháček, Prague; Národní Galerie, from 1946.

LITERATURE: Fučíková 1978, cat. no. 21; Fučíková 1987, p. 17; Rollová 1993, cat. no. 13.

121

Jupiter and Juno, late 1580s

Pen and brown ink with brown wash on
gray-brown-tinted paper rubbed with
black chalk, 8⁷/₈ × 6³/₄ in. (22.5 × 17.3 cm)
Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum,
Braunschweig (246)

Inscribed lower right, in brown wash
(authenticity doubtful, even though this
signature resembles the one in *Achior*,
cat. 150): *SPRANGER*

Tension and balance infuse this depiction of an amorously entangled couple, one of Spranger’s favorite motifs. Juno’s peacock beams on the left, while Jupiter’s eagle spreads its wings on the right. Though Jupiter is placed behind Juno, he firmly grips bolts of thunder, signifying his command over the universe. The configuration is similar to Spranger’s drawing *Neptune*



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and Coenis (cat. 101), but *Jupiter and Juno* is a more sophisticated composition. This is Spranger's initial sketch of intertwining two bodies amid swirling clouds; he refined and solidified the design in another drawing of Jupiter and Juno now in the Block Museum (cat. 122).

Extensive pentimenti on the left side, underneath Juno's right arm, obscure Spranger's intentions.

Spontaneity of draftsmanship and informality of composition, as in Juno's right hand, indicate a design in process. As evident in other Spranger compositions, he segmented the limbs, particularly at the wrist and elbow, marking the divisions with firm lines. He varied the thickness of the strokes, lending the appearance of a swelling line and infusing elasticity into the contours and thus the forms. Virtuosity of technique and

composition situate the drawing among Spranger's mid-career achievements.

PROVENANCE: Entered Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum before 1850.

LITERATURE: Niederstein 1931, no. 6; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z13; Mundy 1981, cat. no. 28; Heusinger 1992, no. 256; Braunschweig 1998, p. 133, cat no. 52 (with extensive earlier literature).

Jupiter and Juno, late 1580s

Pen and black ink on gray prepared paper,
7 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 5 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (19.3 × 14.1 cm)
Block Museum, Northwestern University,
Evanston, Illinois (1985.6)

Spranger first sketched the romantic pairing of Jupiter and Juno on a sheet now in Braunschweig (cat. 121). He refined his design in this drawing, evident in the cleaner and more precise contours. Though the styles diverge, only subtle compositional differences exist; in the Braunschweig sheet, Juno does not hold a scepter, which Spranger added later. The positioning of the heads, cheek to cheek, and the facial morphology are identical to Spranger's treatment of Venus and Mars in his drawing *Mars and Venus with Cupid* in Prague (cat. 120).

This second version was used by the master glassmaker Caspar Lehmann to create a glass plaque (fig. 51). He



Fig. 51. Caspar Lehmann (German, Uelzen, ca. 1563/65–1622 Prague). *Jupiter and Juno*, 1589–90. Glass, 7 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 6 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (18 × 17 cm). Grünes Gewölbe, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (VI 70)



obtained the drawing when he worked for Rudolf in Prague, beginning in 1588. The drawing and the plaque share similar dimensions, but the plaque is in the reverse of the drawing. The overall clarity of this composition suggests that it was the final version, later used by Lehmann. Christian I of Saxony purchased Lehmann's plaque, and the 1595 inventory of the Dresden Kunstkammer records the work. Based

on Lehmann's activity at the Prague court, the glass plaque can be dated between 1589 and 1590.¹

NOTES

1. On Lehmann's activity and the plaque, see Pazaurek 1993; Hoffmann 2002.

PROVENANCE: C. G. Mathes, 1985.

LITERATURE: Mundy 1981, cat. no. 28, ill.; Pazaurek 1993.



123

Venus and Cupid, late 1580s

Pen and brown ink with brown wash and white heightening over black chalk under-drawing, 7⁵/₈ × 7⁵/₈ in. (19.4 × 19.3 cm)
The British Museum, London (SL,5226.143)

Venus and her son Cupid embrace, their stylized pose graceful and disturbingly sensual. Pointing an arrow toward her chest, Cupid underscores his role in sparking the fire of love and desire. This erotic drawing, originally

catalogued as the work of Paolo Farnati, was correctly attributed to Spranger by Popham. The spontaneity and flair, the formal aspects of the figures, and the tight graphic technique are in accord with Spranger's style during the late 1580s. As no surviving painting or engraving features such a design, this captivating sketch is an independent drawing or an early stage in the conception of a painting or engraving. The unusual form of Venus's ear also appears in Spranger's painting

Jael and Sisera (cat. 49). Spranger uses his typical backward number seven on Cupid's knee for modulation and parallel diagonal shading lines on Venus's left leg, a graphic trait visible also in his drawing *Adam and Eve* in a New York private collection (cat. 135).

PROVENANCE: Sir Hans Sloane (1660–1753), London; bequeathed by Sloane to the British Museum, 1753.

LITERATURE: Popham 1932, p. 179, no. 2; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z35; Keach 1978, pl. 50.



124

Hercules, Dejanira, and Nessus,

1589–93

Pen and brown ink with brown wash
and white heightening, 5⁵/₈ × 9⁷/₈ in.

(14.2 × 25.1 cm)

Private collection, New York

IN EXHIBITION

Spranger brilliantly matched technique with theme in this dynamic drawing narrating struggles of passion and violence. In the center, pushed close to the picture plane, the centaur Nessus grabs Dejanira. On the right, Hercules extends his left arm to prevent his wife's abduction. She is luscious and voluptuous, depicted with firm, full breasts and supple hips. Other figures surround the main threesome, adding to the commotion. Thin, wiry lines infuse the agitated forms

with motion. An abundance of Spranger's trademark techniques appear on this sheet, such as parallel strokes for shading and depth. The spontaneity is striking. For example, Spranger merely suggested the fingers of Dejanira, penning staccato calligraphic loops, aiming for the overall effect rather than trifling details. His full powers of composition and form come alive in this mythological drawing.

A few years earlier, Spranger had painted the central protagonists in this tale foreshadowing the death of Hercules. But the composition here has been expanded with figures and depicts an earlier stage of the narrative. The fact that there is a copy of this design—very similar, but in the opposite direction—may indicate this drawing served as a preparatory sketch for a lost or never-realized print.¹ The copy is ascribed to Joachim

Anthonisz Wtewael, based on similarities to his drawing *The Rape of Europa*.² The stocky figures relate to others by Spranger in the 1590s and even earlier, which contradicts Oberhuber's date of 1600. The figure of Hercules foreshadows his counterpart in the drawing *Hercules and Omphale* from 1599 (cat. 148).

NOTES

1. Goldschmidt (1986, no. 55) attributes to Wtewael a drawing very similar to Spranger's, but the design is in the opposite direction and there are some design modifications. 2. Lindeman 1929, no. 4.

PROVENANCE: (?Sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, March 1, 1920, no. 135); (Kornfeld and Klipstein, Bern, June 20, 1986, no. 194); Konrad Oberhuber, Vienna; Steiner family, Larchmont, New York.

LITERATURE: Oberhuber and Kehl-Baierle 1988, p. 89, cat. no. 53.

*An Oread Removing a Thorn from
the Foot of a Satyr, 1590*

Red chalk over black chalk underdrawing,
with additional passages in black chalk,
10 × 8½ in. (25.4 × 20.5 cm)
Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique,
Collection de Grez, Brussels (3434)

IN EXHIBITION

Signed and dated lower right, on pedestal,
in red chalk (almost illegible): *B / Spranger
/ F / 1590*

Though Niederstein rejected this drawing as a copy, Oberhuber and Reznicek designate it as an original. An engraving by Jan Harmensz. Muller, with similar dimensions, nearly replicates the design in reverse (cat. 192), and passages of indentation along the contour lines further affirm authenticity. The hilly background also appears in Spranger's painting *Bacchus and Venus in Hanover* (cat. 70). Spranger rarely used red chalk for his expressive style, as in *Mercury Leading Psyche to Heaven* (cat. 100), and indeed van Mander mentions that only in early youth, before working for the pope, did Spranger prefer chalk as his sole material for composition. But here he appears to be exploring aesthetic possibilities with these denizens of the woods engaged in open-air surgery. Spranger achieved painterly and textural effects in his sheet by his unusual application of red chalk rubbed and moistened.

An oread is a female mountain nymph, the feminine counterpart of a satyr. Spranger's depiction of an oread operating on the foot of a satyr is highly unusual in the history of art. There appears to be no precursor, and the oread is only vaguely mentioned in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, as a secondary character in the myth of Ceres sending



famine to Erysichthon.¹ Owing to the exceptional originality of this scene, the design realized in Muller's print was enormously popular, and countless artists made engravings and drawings copied after Spranger's design.

NOTES

1. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 8.777–822.

PROVENANCE: Jan Pietersz. Zoomer (1641–1724), Amsterdam (Lugt 1511); Jean de Grez

(1837–1910), Breda; bequeathed by de Grez to the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, 1913.

LITERATURE: Grez 1913, no. 3434; Niederstein 1931, no. 42; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z18; Wilde 1967, p. 21, cat. no. 45; Reznicek 1968, p. 373; Schnackenburg 1970, p. 150; Wilde 1980, p. 80, cat. no. 28.



126

Saturn, ca. 1590–95

Pen and brown ink with green wash and red highlights over black chalk underdrawing, 9½ × 3⅝ in. (24.2 × 9.4 cm)

Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Vienna (4295)

Inscribed across bottom, in brown ink (contemporary with drawing; now almost illegible): *Saturno La vostra [vest?] de ormis* [ormisio?] *turchino con maniche*; lower right, in dark brown ink (by a later hand, same signature as in *A Fury Leading a Bridled Horse*, cat. 127): *Spranger*; and lower right, in graphite (barely visible, by a later hand): *Sprang*.

A bearded old man bites the flesh of a baby he props up on his shoulder. His action and his scythe identify him as Saturn. Though engaged in a disgraceful act of violence, he strikes a graceful pose with his Mannerist *contrapposto*. This composition is a rapid sketch similar to *A Fury Leading a Bridled Horse* (cat. 127), both drawings depicting fantastic creatures. Thick strokes have been employed, and overall the draftsmanship is highly confident. Saturn's legs, however, display numerous *pentimenti*. On his knee appear two characteristic marks resembling a backward number seven, which reinforce the attribution to Spranger.

Oberhuber rightly considered this drawing and *A Fury Leading a Bridled Horse*, in the same collection, as somewhat problematic, acknowledging strong affinities with the hand of Spranger but also citing differences, such as an abstract quality and an exaggerated cubic quality to the limbs. He does note the similarity of these two drawings to *Allegory of Time and Art* in Wrocław (cat. 112). *A Fury Leading a Bridled Horse* and *Saturn* may not boast the

same refined bravura as the Wrocław sheet, but they exhibit characteristics markedly similar to it—indeed, they are all clearly by the same hand. As with many artists, not every drawing by Spranger achieves the same caliber, owing to any number of factors, such as the work's purpose as well as the speed of its execution. All three of these sheets display a similar structure of line, stroke system, and figural morphology, aspects also apparent in Spranger's drawing *Psyche at the Bed of Sleeping Cupid* (cat. 151).

PROVENANCE: From Abbé Franz de Paula Neumann (1744–1816) to Akademie der Bildenden Künste, ca. 1850.

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, no. Z105.

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A Fury Leading a Bridled Horse,
ca. 1590–95

Pen and brown ink with brown wash and highlights of red and light green wash over black chalk underdrawing, 9³/₈ × 7⁷/₈ in. (23.7 × 20 cm)

Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Vienna (4296)

Inscribed lower right, in dark brown ink (by a later hand, same signature as in *Saturn*, cat. 126): *Spranger*

An otherworldly horse, only its front half visible, rears up and turns its head toward a horrific female figure, with long sagging breasts and snakes for hair. She also wears snakes around her waist and clutches several more. With technical virtuosity Spranger has boldly created forms in almost a fury of his own, as if to invoke the theme of the drawing in the style. Contour lines often do not meet. The horse is conceived with very few strokes, an economy that is nonetheless successful in



creating form. Its legs are more suggestions than solid contours, but this illusion of transparency reinforces the notion of its leaping into the air. This fluidity of execution is highly characteristic of Spranger.

MARKS: Watermark (Briquet 312).

PROVENANCE: From Abbé Franz de Paula Neumann (1744–1816) to Akademie der Bildenden Künste, ca. 1850.

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, no. Z104; Salmen 2007, p. 27, cat. no. 30.

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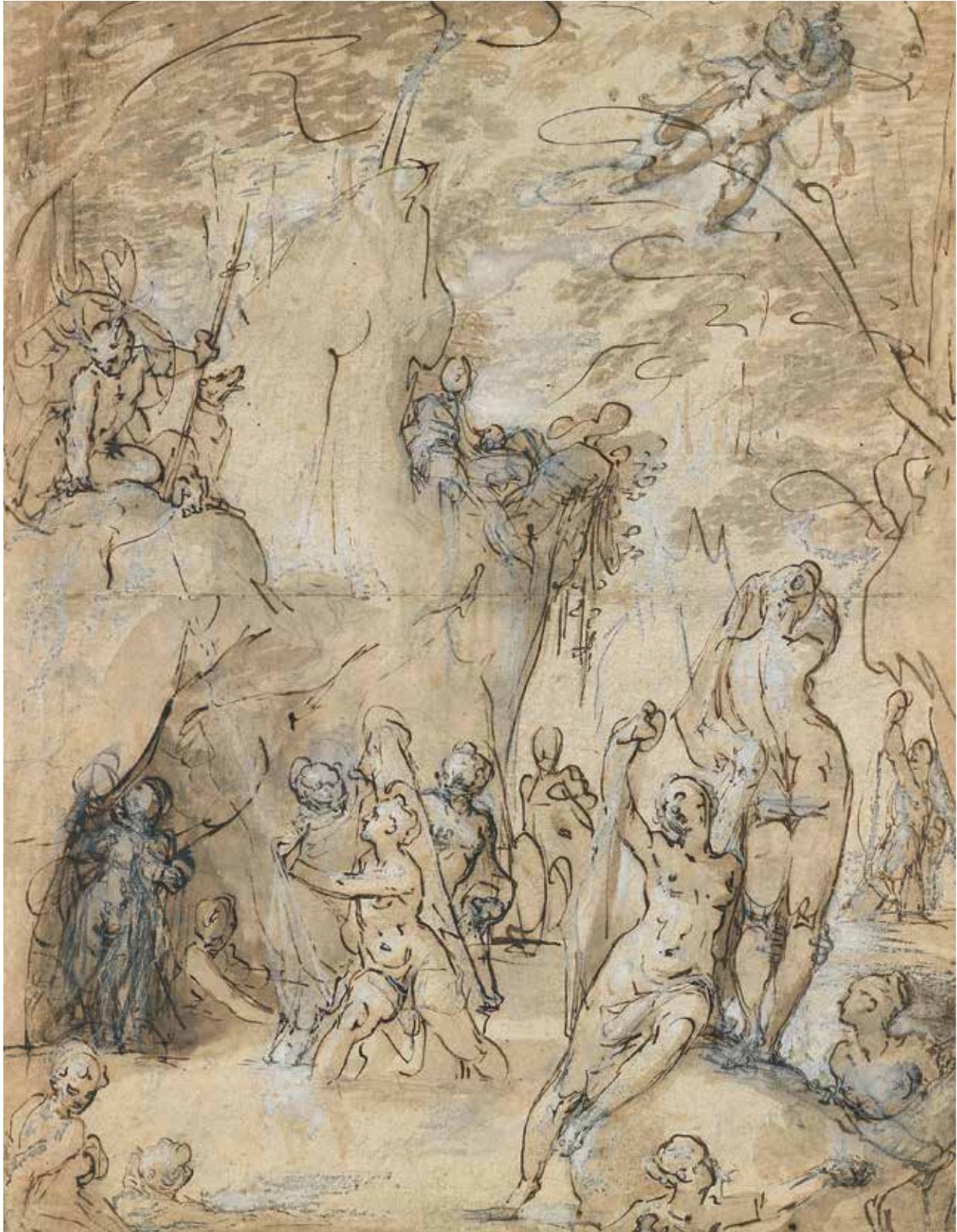
Diana and Actaeon, ca. 1590–95

Pen and brown ink, brush and brown and gray wash, white heightening, over traces of black chalk, on paper washed blue and pink, 16¹/₄ × 12³/₈ in. (41.3 × 32.1 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Purchase, Lila Acheson Wallace Gift, 1997 (1997.93)

IN EXHIBITION

Inscribed verso, upper left, in graphite: *Spranger*.



Gingerly perched on a rock, Actaeon surreptitiously watches Diana bathe while his dog howls at the putto flying overhead. Though only a sketch, the drawing divulges Spranger's mastery of composition. Diana is discreetly differentiated from her nymphs, slimmer by a hair's breadth and with her legs expertly depicted in the water from her feet up to her calves. The two nymphs on the right, standing and sitting, are elegant Mannerist expressions, particularly the figure seen from the back taking a stylized S-curve stance. The tight, narrow space and tall, ponderous rocks lend tension and a sense of foreboding, appropriate for this ultimately tragic myth.

This dynamic drawing served as an initial sketch for a painting. Although no such work has been discovered to date, an inventory dated February 27, 1624, of the Palazzo Patrizi-Costaguti in Rome lists a painting by Spranger of precisely this subject.¹ The extensive pentimenti and white heightening as well as the immediacy of the execution further support the conclusion that the drawing functioned in planning a painting. Diana and her nude female attendants are depicted in various stages of finish. To the far left, underneath the precipice where Actaeon kneels, a nymph has been almost obliterated and drawn over in graphite. Spranger also experimented with the seated figure in the right foreground. He first attempted to position her hands between the knees of the standing nymph seen from the back, then redrew her left hand grasping her companion's outer leg, slightly higher than before.

Because the figures are still somewhat squat, the drawing can be assigned to Spranger's mid-Prague years. Multi-figure compositions such as this appear

infrequently in Spranger's oeuvre; he clearly preferred to focus on amorous couples or solitary saints and mythological figures. The transformation, voyeurism, and veiled sexual frustration central to this tale no doubt made it tempting to him and to his eccentric patron, Rudolf. Stylistically and thematically, Italianate sentiments linger, with a nod to Parmigianino's poetic frescoes of Diana and Actaeon in the Rocca Sanvitale, in Fontanellato, near Parma, witnessed by Spranger in his youth. Here, decades later, Spranger metaphorically revisited Parma and captured the delicacy, lyricism, and grace of Parmigianino's frescoes but heightened the drama.

NOTES

1. See Spezzaferro 1983 and f383v in *Archivio de Stato*, Rome (1624, vol. 92, ff355–411).

MARKS: Inscribed verso, in pen and brown ink: *Achille Rijkhiner*; right center, in pen and brown ink: *Portefeuille No 7 Dessein No 50* (mark of John Strange); below, in graphite, *WAW*; lower right, in graphite, *SI*; below, in graphite: *Lpz Sul. [?]/C Weigel [?]/Entr 1867 ou Apr 68/[. . .]*.

PROVENANCE: Achille Ryhiner-Delon (1731–1788), Basel; John Strange (1732–1799), Britain; ?formerly collection in Göppingen; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, from 1997.

LITERATURE: Bellinger 1997, no. 8, ill.; Goldner et al. 1997; Aikema and Brown 1999, pp. 634–35, ill., cat. no. 198.

129

Minerva with the Prague Coat of Arms, ca. 1590–95

Pen and brown ink with brown wash and white heightening, 7 × 4⁵/₈ in. (17.9 × 11.9 cm)

Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid (1292)

IN EXHIBITION

Signed lower left, in brown ink: *B / [S]prangers / F*

130

Minerva with the Shield of Saint Luke, ca. 1590–95

Pen and brown ink with white heightening and colored washes, 7¹/₄ × 5¹/₈ in.

(18.3 × 12.9 cm)

Albertina, Vienna (8000)

Inscribed lower left, in brown ink (by a later hand): *Spranger Inv. et fec.*

Before the sheet in the Prado came to light in 1996, the drawing in Vienna, which is nearly identical in design and dimensions, was considered Spranger's original and only version, albeit with some degree of controversy about the attribution. But subtle differences in Minerva's shield and an overly obsessive, exaggerated quality of many of the strokes and forms in the Vienna version call for reevaluation. The Prado shield includes the coat of arms for Prague, recognizable by its gate tower between two smaller towers, whereas the Vienna shield represents the Guild of Saint Luke. The signature on the Prado sheet is unquestionably Spranger's, whereas the Vienna sheet is signed by a later hand.

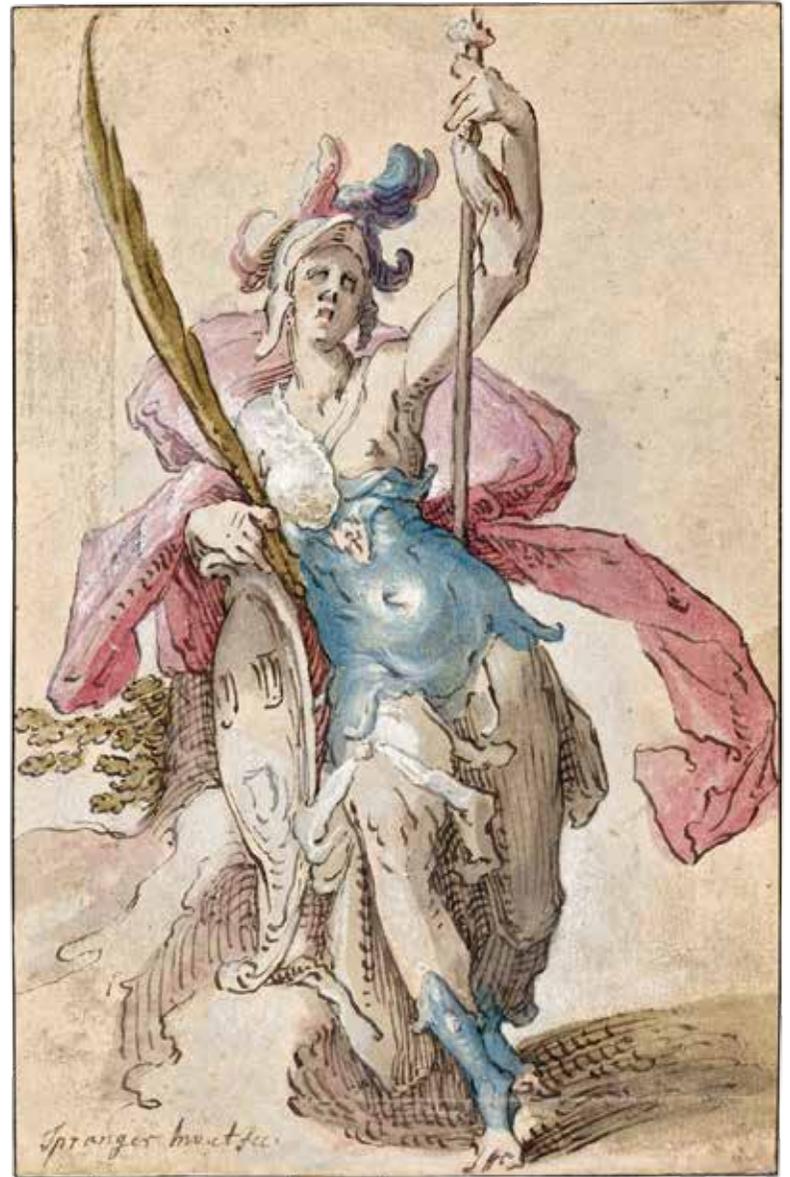
Minerva—in the guise of protector, conqueror, and artistic muse—served as a leitmotiv for Spranger, and indeed for Rudolfine aesthetics. Here she plays a more passive role, bearing the torch for artists in Prague, both inside the court and out. Voluptuous and muscular, her female form elicits confidence, with the solidity of her body serving as a metaphor for her resolve of purpose.

Spranger's signature on the Prado drawing resembles the one on his *Apollo* drawing from about 1597 (cat. 142). A similar date can be presumed for *Minerva with the Prague Coat of Arms*, based also on stylistic traits and the motif Spranger



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employed on the shield. In April 1595, Rudolf established painting as a liberal art, thus raising the status of painters in the Prague Guild of Saint Luke. His Letter of Majesty specifically stated “because members’ [painters’] art and mastery is different from other handicrafts . . . it shall no longer be described as a craft by anybody.”¹



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Niederstein rejected *Minerva with the Shield of Saint Luke*, pointing to Minerva’s schematic expression and the heavy application of watercolor, unusual in Spranger’s drawings. Decades later, Oberhuber catalogued it as original, maintaining that it was the preparatory drawing for the coat of arms Spranger painted for the Guild of Saint Luke in

Prague in 1595, but he later changed his mind. Kaufmann originally concurred with Oberhuber’s initial conclusion, but once he saw the Prado drawing in 1996, he was convinced that the Vienna sheet is a copy. He published his findings that year, changing an attribution that had remained unquestioned for decades.

Comparison with the Prado sheet makes clear that the execution of the one in Vienna lacks spontaneity, indicating it is a copy or second version of the original. This sheet displays pockets of awkward execution, especially in the right foot: the extremely long middle toe exaggerates Spranger's usual form, and the rendering of the back toe is highly confused, as if the artist did not understand Spranger's original intent. The signature is clearly not in Spranger's hand. There is a marked ponderousness, and numerous passages are not found elsewhere in Spranger's oeuvre. There is a remote possibility that this sheet is a second version by Spranger of his design for the Guild of Saint Luke, but it is more likely a contemporaneous copy, perhaps by Franz Aspruck, a talented colleague whose draftsmanship comes closest to Spranger's.

NOTES

1. For a translation of the letter, see Heuer 2008, p. 152.

MARKS (CAT. 130): Stamped lower right (monogram): AS.

PROVENANCE (CAT. 129): Bequest of Spanish aristocrat Pedro Fernández Durán y Bernaldo de Quirós (1846–1930), Madrid, to Museo del Prado, 1931.

PROVENANCE (CAT. 130): Duke Albert von Sachsen-Teschen (1738–1822, founder of Albertina Museum); Albertina, from 1796.

LITERATURE (CAT. 129): Kaufmann 1996.

LITERATURE (CAT. 130): Benesch 1928, no. 282; Niederstein 1931, no. 91; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z60; Schultze 1988, vol. 1, cat. no. 45; Kaufmann 1996; Schröder and Metzger 2013, p. 180, cat. no. 87.

COPIES (CAT. 129): Drawings, Hill Stone Collection, New York; Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (C. 7120 and C. 7123).



131

Venus and Cupid Standing before a Tree, ca. 1591

Pen and brown ink with brown wash, highlighted with green, red, and blue washes, 8 × 5⁵/₈ in. (20.2 × 14.3 cm)
Hessisches Landesmuseum Darmstadt (AE 417)

Venus brandishes a flaming heart as she pierces Cupid's breast with an arrow. Spranger shows his ingenuity by reversing their traditional roles, giving Venus the power of love. An engraving dated 1597 by Jacob Matham after Hendrick Goltzius shows a similar composition, but in that depiction, Cupid is



Fig. 52. Jacob Matham (Netherlandish, Haarlem 1571–1631 Haarlem), after Hendrick Goltzius (Netherlandish, Mühlbracht 1558–1617 Haarlem). *Venus*, 1597. Engraving, 4 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 3 in. (11.8 × 7.7 cm). Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (RP-P-OB-27.157)

the master of the arrows of love (fig. 52). Large overhanging branches shade her beauty from the harsh sun, and a small town is visible in the left background. The motif of the large tree trunk goes back as far as the 1570s, visible in Spranger's drawing *Saint Dominic Reading* (cat. 89). The overall composition shares a sentiment with Spranger's painting *Venus and Adonis* in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (cat. 65).

A liberal application of colored washes intimates this drawing was a sketch for a painting either now lost or never realized. In spite of a few atypical elements, such as Cupid's flat, nearly concave torso, the subject and composition, coupled with the morphology of figures, evoke Spranger's spontaneity and confidence. This fluidity of execution and the serpentine form of Venus

situate this sheet in his mid-Prague years of the early 1590s. Several graphic mannerisms of Spranger persist here and throughout his oeuvre, such as the hatching lines penned in the inner folds of the drapery and the backward number seven on Venus's abdomen.

PROVENANCE: Emmerich Joseph von Dalberg (1773–1833), until 1812; Grand Duke Louis I of Hesse (1753–1830), 1812–21; bequeathed to the state of Hesse-Darmstadt, 1821; thereafter Hessisches Landesmuseum.

LITERATURE: Bergsträsser 1979, p. 117, no. 87, with pl.; Bender 2010, p. 83.

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Minerva Crowning Mercury, ca. 1592

Pen and gray-brown ink with wash over black chalk underdrawing, 5 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.

(13.5 × 9.6 cm)

Albertina, Vienna (25437)

Inscribed lower left, in brown ink: *cosi tratta*

Minerva [?] *la ser* [. . .]

Spranger saturated the page with rapid strokes in this preliminary sketch for Jan Harmensz. Muller's print *Young Artist before Minerva* (cat. 194).



The cursory execution makes identification of the figures challenging, but clearly it is Minerva on the left, extending her right arm over the head of a kneeling male nude wearing a cape. Upon closer inspection, it is clear that she is placing a crown of laurels on his head. He wears a petasos, the winged hat commonly atop Mercury's head, although the god's other attribute, the caduceus staff, is not entirely perceptible. A female torso is visible in the lower right corner. The experimental quality declares Spranger's creative power.

Kaufmann discusses the iconography of this sheet in relation to the status of the artist and the arts in Prague around 1600, especially the invocation of the Hermathenic image, symbolizing the union of arts and eloquence. The undefined female torso, upon close inspection, is that of Fama, who holds two horns in her hand. Thus Minerva, protector of the arts and wisdom, crowns Mercury, known for his eloquence. The presence of Fama honors them both. The attenuated forms are similar to those in Spranger's painting *The Baptism of Christ* (cat. 80). Interestingly, the two works also share a symbolic message, which has been secularized in this sheet: Minerva (Saint John) sanctifies (baptizes) Mercury (Christ).

A similar fluidity of line is also apparent in Spranger's drawing *Psyche at the Bed of Sleeping Cupid* (cat. 151). The numerous strokes—especially evident in Minerva's arm, with its heavy pentimenti—indicate that Spranger was still giving shape to the idea, which identifies this sketch as an early design for the print. By this time, Spranger has moved toward thinner, more streamlined forms, which also appear in later

compositions, including *Allegory of Painting*, 1603, in Saint Petersburg as well as *Fama* of 1605 (cats. 152, 156). This type is also seen in drawings from the late 1590s and early 1600s, such as the Louvre's *Judith and Holofernes* (cat. 149).

PROVENANCE: Stefan von Licht (1880–1932), Vienna; (his sale, Hugo Helbing, Frankfurt am Main, December 7, 1927); Albertina, from 1927.

LITERATURE: Benesch 1928, p. 31, no. 281a, ill.; Niederstein 1931, no. 18; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z62; Kaufmann 1982b, p. 130; Schultze 1988, vol. 2, p. 176, cat. no. 646.

133

Venus and Cupid, ca. 1592

Pen and brown ink, light and dark brown and gray wash, heightened with white (partly oxidized); traced for transfer; laid down; 7 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 5 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (19.4 × 13.5 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 (1975.1.844)

IN EXHIBITION

Venus combs through her long, damp tresses while her son Cupid playfully practices archery. Spranger carefully balanced the composition by intersecting occasional diagonal with vertical forms. Extensive pentimenti, such as those on Venus's head and at the base of the large water vessel, record his creative decisions. Small nuances demonstrate Spranger's artistry, such as the S-curve of the water vessel handle, reflecting the movements and contours of Venus.

Engravings of this scene in the same direction are known by Aegidius Sadeler II (cat. 183) and by Hieronymus Lederer, dated about 1613 by Szabo. There are several differences in the composition between the drawing and the engravings. The top knob on

the shallow vessel of water in the foreground has been made round in Sadeler's print. In the drawing, the tip of Cupid's arrow is undefined, whereas in Sadeler's print the arrowhead is highly detailed. The large column in the background of Lederer's print has an extensive design, including grotesques, whereas the drawing has no such design, thus indicating the degree of artistic license the engravers took with Spranger's drawing.

The dating of Spranger's *Venus and Cupid* drawing has been debated in previous literature. In 1931 Niederstein considered Spranger's drawing to be from 1587, based on affinities with Hendrick Goltzius's engraving *The Wedding of Cupid and Psyche* (cat. 178) from that year. Oberhuber assigned a slightly later date, about 1601. He supports this with a comparison to the figures in Jan Harmensz. Muller's print after Spranger, *Cupid and Psyche* (cat. 199). Kaufmann concurs with Oberhuber, noting the appointment of Sadeler as imperial engraver in 1597. However, the dating of the drawing must be reconsidered. Spranger's drawing could have preceded the engraving and Sadeler's appointment. And, in fact, the compact, stocky body type of Venus points to an earlier date, though the figure of Cupid is indeed more advanced and sophisticated, as is the entire composition. The figure of Venus can also be compared to the figure at far left in the *Allegory of the Reign of Rudolf II* painting of 1592 (cat. 61). Thematically, this drawing relates to a number of Spranger's compositions depicting the toilette of Venus, including an earlier drawing in Leipzig (cat. 115) and a later painting now in Bysta, Sweden (cat. 85).



MARKS: Stamp, Adolf Klein (Lugt suppl. 2786b).

PROVENANCE: Adolf Klein, Frankfurt am Main; Victor Koch, London (sale, Frederik Muller & Co., Amsterdam, November 21, 1929, no. 67); acquired by Robert Lehman by 1934 and possibly as early as 1929; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, from 1975.

LITERATURE: Swarzenski 1924, no. 29; Baldass 1925; Niederstein 1931, no. 9; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z25; Szabo 1978, no. 10; Kaufmann 1982a, pp. 142–43, cat. no. 50; Haverkamp-Begemann et al. 1999, pp. 142–44.

COPIES: Painting, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (GG_2880). Drawing, auction catalogue, Horst Rittershofer, Berlin, October 18, 1960, no. 726.

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Juno, Jupiter, and Mercury,
ca. 1592–95

Pen and brown ink with gray-brown
wash and white heightening, Diam. 8 in.
(20.3 cm)

Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Purchase in Honor of Konrad Oberhuber with Funds Presented by an Anonymous Donor (1983.142)

Signed lower left, in brown ink: *B. vs / Sprangers antver / inventor*

A faintly drawn peacock, eagle, and thunderbolt affirm the identities of the central couple as the young goddess Juno and her husband, Jupiter. Casually resting in the clouds, she leans back to gaze at Jupiter, who touches her left shoulder and appears to speak with her. Mercury enters at lower right, gesturing with a vivacious, Mannerist hand to the couple. Though set within the clouds, the figures have a perceptible physical volume.

Rendered *di sotto in su*, Spranger's design can be linked to other round designs by him, principally the *Venus and Cupid* drawing in Paris (cat. 107) and the *Mercury and Minerva* fresco in



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Prague Castle (cat. 58). Neumann goes so far as to suggest that this drawing, along with the others, formed a series of paintings, no longer extant, that once decorated Prague Castle. Yet, as mentioned in relation to the *Venus and Cupid* drawing (cat. 107), Spranger also decorated the Amalienburg in Vienna, thus his designs rendered in the perspective of being seen from below could also relate to that work. One more function of this design must be noted: it was a preparatory drawing for an engraving by Joannes Bara dated 1599 (cat. 211). He did rework the shape and titivate Spranger's original composition, adding ornate corners to the new octagon shape.

Since the engraving is dated 1599, the original design by Spranger must have originated earlier. The tight, compact bodies certainly characterize his style during the 1580s, but as similar physiques are also present in his *Allegory of the Reign of Rudolf II*, painted in 1592 (cat. 61), concise dating of the Fogg drawing is problematic. Based on both form and technique, it can comfortably be ascribed to anywhere from the mid-1580s to the early 1590s, yet its seamless connection to Bara's print of 1599 likely places the drawing a few years later.

PROVENANCE: Unidentified collector (Lugt 881a); [F. H. de St. Priest, Paris, January 7, 1920];

unidentified collector (Lugt 1226); [Thomas le Claire, Hamburg]; Harvard Art Museums, from 1983.

LITERATURE: Neumann 1970; Hamburg 1983, pp. 10–11, cat. no. 3; Kaufmann 1985a, p. 105; Kaufmann 1988, p. 262, no. 20.41; Courtright 1990, p. 4, cat. no. 21; Sievers 2000, p. 59 n. 9, no. 10.

135

Adam and Eve, ca. 1593

Pen and brown ink, black chalk with brown and gray washes, and white heightening, 9½ × 7 in. (23.7 × 17.6 cm)
Private collection, New York

IN EXHIBITION

Signed lower right, in brown ink (by a later hand): *Bmo Sprangers fecit*

This drawing boasts a prestigious pedigree, having been owned both by Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, and by Nicholas Lanier, music master and art agent for Charles I.¹ Though Lanier probably never went to Prague, his travels to Antwerp might have allowed him the opportunity to acquire Spranger's *Adam and Eve*. Alternatively, Thomas Howard did visit Prague and, like Lanier, he had a deep appreciation for drawings. Serving as Charles I's ambassador, in 1636 Howard was received by Emperor Ferdinand II in Prague, where he may have acquired Spranger's drawing as a gift or purchase.

Spranger created a Paradise inhabited by a snake, an elephant, an antelope, and two rabbits. In the lower left corner a bitch nurses her pups, symbolizing the nourishment of the human



race by Adam and Eve. The dog stares directly at the viewer, the only animal in this picture posed so forthrightly. The rabbits also signify fecundity, but the meaning of the antelope is mysterious. As noted by Konečný, the inclusion of an elephant in Paradise is unusual, and encountering one in the flesh in Europe at this time would have been equally rare.² Because it mates for life, an elephant often represents loyalty and

monogamy, chastity and moderation. But Spranger's inclusion of the elephant may signify a more nuanced Christian allegory. Konečný cites a passage in the book of *Physiologus*, a text from as early as the second century interpreting animals through Christian allegory, likening Adam and Eve to the elephant: "The great elephant and his wife represent the persons Adam and Eve. While in a state of virtue (that is, while they



Fig. 53. Daniel Fröschl (German, Augsburg 1563–1613 Prague). *Adam and Eve*, 1604. Tempera and gouache on parchment, 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (23.8 × 17.6 cm). Albertina, Vienna (3352)

please the Lord), before the transgression, they had no knowledge of copulation, nor any awareness of mingling the flesh."³ Further connecting the elephant to Adam and Eve is the passage about the birth practice of the elephant, noting that when the female elephant is ready to reproduce, she travels to the Far East, near the original location of Paradise. In Spranger's presentation, Adam and Eve have yet to transgress,

but their physical intimacy—she nestled on his lap and between his legs, holding up the sinful apple—indicates that knowledge of the flesh is imminent. And perhaps the crouched position of the elephant also signals she is ready to give birth.

Spranger might have taken his visual inspiration for the elephant from a book of prints by Aegidius Sadeler II, featuring 124 engravings he reengraved from the *Esbatement moral des animaux* (1578). In Sadeler's book, published in Prague by Paul Sesse in 1608 under the title *Theatrum morum: Artliche Gespräch der Thier mit wahren Historien den Menschen zu Lehr*, an elephant very similar to Spranger's appears on the title page and on page sixty-one.

Daniel Fröschl, Rudolf's imperial antiquarian, copied this drawing in the form of a miniature (fig. 53), altering the position of Adam's right hand. Fröschl's miniature is dated 1604, so Spranger's work must be earlier, and indeed this composition dates from nearly a decade before, in the early 1590s. Oberhuber expresses uncertainty about the sheet, wary of the unusual use of "Bmo" in the signature. But Lanier is known to have made his own notations of attribution on drawings, which could explain the curious signature.⁴ Despite Oberhuber's reservations, a graceful fluidity prevailing in the contours, ease of design, and facial characteristics of humans and animals confirm Spranger's aesthetic.

NOTES

1. For Lanier and his collecting, see Wood 2003.
2. For a discussion of the elephant in the story of Adam and Eve, and specifically in this drawing, see Konečný 2008. 3. *Physiologus* 2009, 20.30–32. Authorship of the *Physiologus* is uncertain. It was written in Greek at Alexandria and over the years has been ascribed to Saint Epiphanius, Saint Basil, and Saint Peter of Alexandria. Regardless of

authorship, it was in print with woodcuts accompanying the stories in 1577. 4. Wood 2003.

MARKS: Watermark (Briquet 8880-5, Bavaria, ca. 1570s).

PROVENANCE: Nicholas Lanier (1588–1666), Britain (Lugt 2886); Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel (1585–1646); Sir Robert L. Mond (1867–1938), London (Lugt 2813a); (Christie's, London, March 30, 1971, no. 104); (anonymous sale); (Christie's, London, July 8, 1975, no. 87); (Christie's, New York, January 25, 2005, sale 1476, no. 182, to present owner).

LITERATURE: Borenienus and Wittkower 1937, no. 383; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z83a; Kaufmann 1988, p. 39, fig. 31; Schultze 1988, vol. 1, p. 340, cat. no. 196.

COPIES: Drawing, Albertina, Vienna (3352).

136

The Penitent Saint Magdalen,

ca. 1593

Pen and brown ink with brown wash and white heightening, 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (22 × 19 cm)

Collection G.G., Brussels

IN EXHIBITION

Focusing on religious piety and spiritual transformation, Spranger restrained his characteristic Mannerism in this half-length portrait of the penitent Magdalen. She contemplates the simple crucifix, while the viewer and the skull contemplate her. She is beautifully melancholic, full of pathos. Her long locks are delicately rendered, communicated with only a few strokes, the texture and weight of her tresses palpable upon her shoulders and back. Spranger applied striations of white heightening close together to enhance the effect of three-dimensionality, a technique also used in his early drawing *Mercury Leading Psyche to Heaven* (cat. 100).

This composition served as the preparatory drawing for a print engraved

by Pieter de Jode I (cat. 196), and the sheet indeed displays slight indentations for transfer. Hendrick Goltzius liberally utilized Spranger's design in his own print from about 1597 of the penitent Magdalen, though he makes no reference to Spranger in the inscription.¹ Spranger's drawing lacks the sharply edged lines so characteristic of his later Prague drawings. The contemplative mood and religious subject compare with earlier sheets made during his late Italian, early Vienna period, in particular his half-length saints engraved by Johannes Sadeler I. *The Penitent Saint Magdalen*, however, was engraved by de Jode, and a few differences from the drawing are apparent, especially the more detailed landscape background. Compared to Spranger's earlier interpretations of half-length saints, this depiction conveys a keener sense of emotion combined with a delicacy of form, arriving at a sophisticated piety and quietude.

NOTES

1. For example, his print in the British Museum (1928,12.12.62) and in Bartsch 1978–, vol. 3, no. 197.262. This print is dated ca. 1597, so in all likelihood, Spranger's design preceded Goltzius's.

PROVENANCE: Private collection; (sale, Bookseller L. Moorthammers, Brussels, 1980s, to present owner).

LITERATURE: Antonovich 1992, no. 240, ill.; Sary 1993, pp. 171–72, cat. no. 8; Dijon 2002, p. 97.

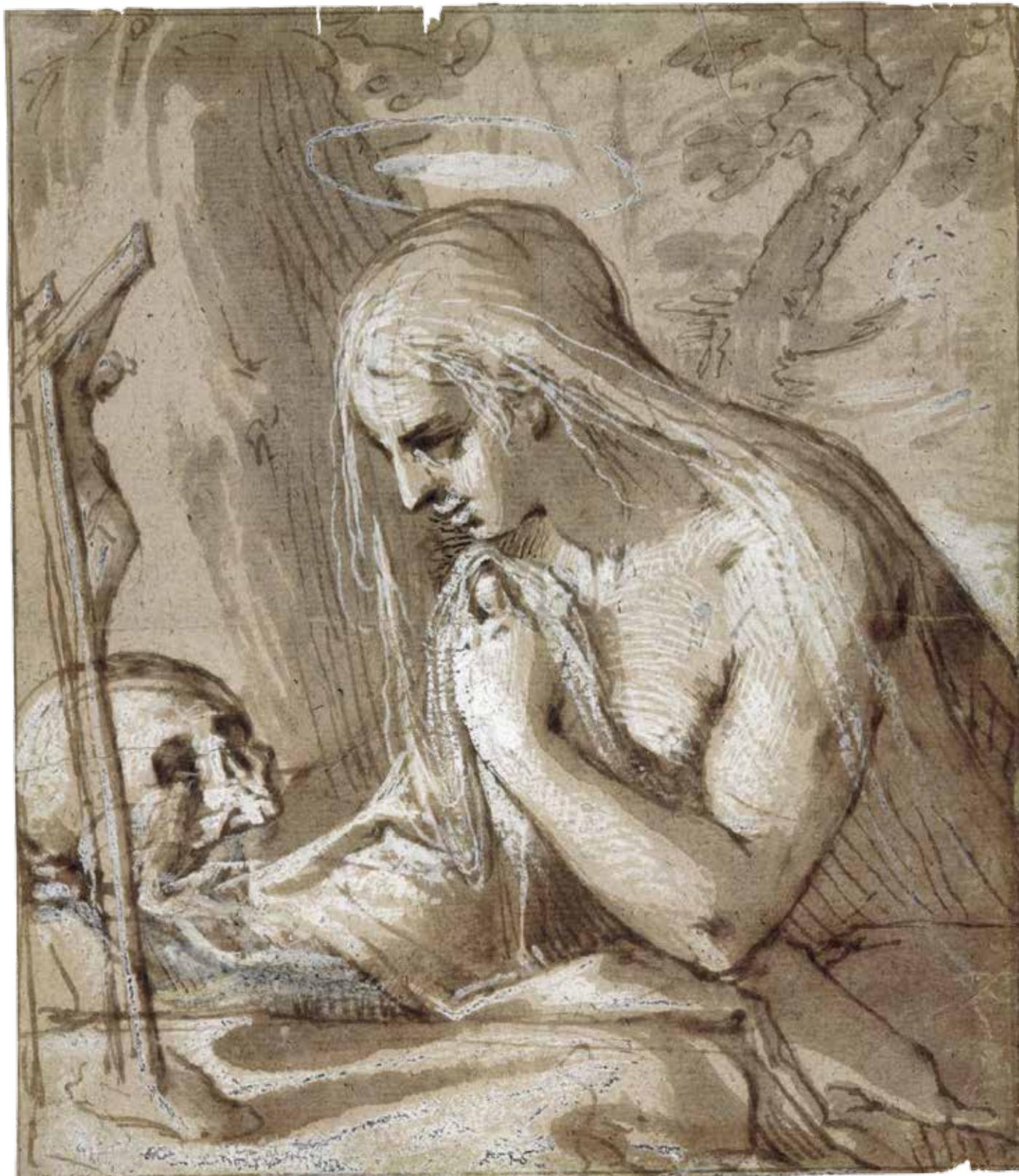
137

Adam and Eve, ca. 1593–95

Pen and black ink over black chalk underdrawing with extensive brown wash, 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 4 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (24.1 × 11.7 cm)
Staatliches Museum Schwerin (1209HZ)

IN EXHIBITION

Inscribed verso, in graphite: *Spranger / Spranger*.





Spranger spontaneously sketched the first couple in so cursory a manner that the feet are unfinished, lacking proper toes and, more significantly, even lacking his familiar two-toed abbreviated foot. He painted two large versions of this composition, both entitled *Fall from Paradise* (cats. 62, 63), and the design process from sketch to painting is most evident in the configuration of the hands. In the paintings, Eve reaches up to take the apple from the serpent, whereas in the drawing she raises her hand in a cautionary gesture, either to warn Adam or to resist his embrace. Spranger experimented with the positioning of Adam's hand on Eve's hip, as faint pentimenti attest. A copy of this drawing in the Kunstsammlung der Universität in Göttingen is dated 1605



Fig. 54. Anonymous German artist after Bartholomeus Spranger. *Adam and Eve*, 1605. Pen and brown ink with blue wash and white heightening. Kunstsammlung der Universität, Göttingen (H.71)

(fig. 54), thus providing a terminus ante quem for the drawing and the paintings.

PROVENANCE: Maximilian, Elector of Cologne (1756–1801).

LITERATURE: Baudis 1992, p. 28, cat. no. 12 (with extensive literature).

138

Saint Martin and the Beggar,

ca. 1593–1600

Pen and brown ink with light brown wash and extensive white heightening, 9⁵/₈ × 4⁵/₈ in. (24.6 × 12 cm)

Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (RP-T-1884-A-409)

IN EXHIBITION

Inscribed lower right, in brown ink (by a later hand): *Spranger*

One cold night the Roman soldier Martin encountered a nearly naked beggar and compassionately gave him a swath of his warm cloak. That very night Martin dreamed that the beggar was Christ. Soon thereafter, he renounced military life and was baptized. The charming legend of Saint Martin's offering warmth to the beggar could be viewed as an exemplum, reminding the privileged of their Christian duty to perform acts of charity. Spranger broke from the traditional iconography of Saint Martin, who is typically shown astride a horse, bending down to hand the beggar part of his cloak, whereas Spranger placed the two men on more equal footing.

The dimensions and composition of Spranger's drawing closely match an engraving by Zacharias Dolendo, which was published by Jacques de Gheyn II (cat. 187). That the drawing stems from Spranger's later career, about 1593–1600, is affirmed by its style and by the



fact that de Gheyn was publishing prints during this period. The muscular form of Martin brings to mind Spranger's *Achior* (cat. 150), a drawing from the early 1600s, although *Saint Martin* is slightly earlier. A copy drawn after the print and dated 1606 further reinforces the dating of Spranger's drawing to before 1600.¹

The figures are set in a niche, intended to be viewed from below. This may explain the foreshortening of Saint Martin's hand, which appears to be out of proportion. The vertical format and overall design relate to paintings executed during Spranger's tenure in Prague, such as his *Saint Catherine* in the Prague Castle Picture Gallery (cat. 37). Though the design was likely preliminary to a painting intended for an architectural setting—or, as proposed by Fučíková, even for an altarpiece—no such work is known. Another version of *Saint Martin and the Beggar* in the Pushkin Museum, Moscow, is erroneously attributed to Spranger (see Appendix).

NOTES

1. *Sketchbook of an Anonymous Breslau Artist*, Wrocław Historical Museum (UB, HS. IV F23n).

PROVENANCE: Jacob de Vos Jbzn (1803–1882), Amsterdam; (his sale, Frederik Muller & Co., Amsterdam, May 22–24, 1883, no. 709); purchased for the Rijksmuseum by D. Dirksen, The Hague, 1884.

LITERATURE: Niederstein 1931, no. 11; Amsterdam 1955, cat. no. 255; Oberhuber 1958, p. 187, no. Z2; Frerichs and Regteren Altena 1963, cat. no. 33, ill.; Boon 1978, vol. 1, p. 152, no. 417, ill.; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 446, cat. no. I.278.



I39

Minerva, 1596

Pen and brown ink with brown and gray washes and extensive white heightening over black chalk ground, on two pieces of paper joined together, 2 1/2 × 8 5/8 in. (54.7 × 22 cm)

Hessisches Landesmuseum Darmstadt (AE 2138)

Inscribed lower left, in black ink: *Zuccari*, uR: 10

Minerva, muse of the Prague court, stands proud and confident. She would appear again in Spranger's iconic painting for Rudolf, *Minerva Vanquishing Ignorance* (cat. 67), and in several propagandistic drawings by Spranger.

An unsigned engraving of similar dimensions and in the same direction as this drawing has traditionally been identified as by Jan Harmensz. Muller after Spranger, but the absence of any inscription specifying the engraver or designer means that the attribution must be approached with caution (cat. 213). The subject matter, style, and execution of this elegant drawing align with Spranger, so only the authorship of the engraving is in question. It could be that the original signed engraving is lost and that what remains is only a copy, which would explain the same direction of the drawing and print. Alternatively, Spranger could have composed this drawing after the engraving, in which case it is his first preparatory drawing that is lost. Both are plausible hypotheses, neither of which refutes the authenticity of this Darmstadt drawing. Unfinished passages in the drawing and the engraving are important to note.

Pentimenti on Minerva's left arm and the original contour line are visible underneath a layer of white heightening.

Spranger uncharacteristically used numerous thick strokes, perhaps the result of the demands of such a large composition. The copious application of white heightening yields an overall appearance of grisaille. Numerous gridlines are used to convey pockets and folds of drapery—a typical Spranger technique. Kaufmann relates this drawing to designs made by Spranger for the facade of his house in Prague, which were executed during the first half of the 1580s. Van Mander mentions designs in grisaille on Spranger's house, but of a Victory rather than Minerva.¹

The sheet stems from the late 1590s, reflecting a stroke system similar to the drawing *Ceres and Bacchus Flee Venus* (cat. 154). Minerva also relates in style to her counterpart in *Cybele and Minerva* (cat. 153).² The central figure of Minerva here shares the sheet with two smaller, unrelated designs: one on the right resembles waves, and another on the right partially eclipses Minerva's drapery. These designs, having no relationship to the main drawing of Minerva, could have been already present on the sheet when Spranger used it for *Minerva*. Originally, the sheet was larger and cut down.

NOTES

1. Mander 1994, p. 349. 2. Metzler 1997, no. A19.

PROVENANCE: Emmerich Joseph von Dalberg (1773–1833), until 1812; Grand Duke Louis I of Hesse (1753–1830), 1812–21; bequeathed to the state of Hesse-Darmstadt, 1821; thereafter Hessisches Landesmuseum.

LITERATURE: Bergsträsser 1979, p. 118, no. 88, ill.; Kaufmann 1988, p. 260, no. 20.35.

I40

Mars and Venus, 1596

Pen and black ink with gray wash, white heightening, and touches of brown ink, 9 7/8 × 8 in. (25 × 20.4 cm)

Städel Museum, Frankfurt (14458)

IN EXHIBITION

Dated lower right, in black ink (on the bed skirt, near the helmet): 1596

I41

Mars and Venus, 1597

Pen and brown ink with brush and gray wash and white heightening, 10 1/4 × 8 1/4 in. (25.8 × 20.9 cm)

Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts (1963.52)

Originally inscribed left center, in brown ink: *B. Sprangers / Inventor / 1597*; only the date remains

Spranger explores the furtive tryst of Mars and Venus, focusing on their moments together before their adultery is discovered and scandal ensues. That they are indulging in intimate lust, unfettered by fear or guilt, is confirmed by the absence of Apollo, who spied on the lovers, and of any blatant reference to Venus's cuckolded husband, Vulcan.

Spranger repeated this prototype of an erotically intertwined couple in his design for Bartholomeus Willemsz. Dolendo's engraving *Pluto and Ceres*, dated 1598 (cat. 214). By this time, Spranger had mastered conveying forms on a flat surface within several layers of atmosphere, exemplified by the putto between the couple's legs, pushing into the viewer's space. Physically "caught" between the legs of Venus, the putto represents a humorous allusion to how the couple would soon be caught beneath Vulcan's net as well as the



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notion of Mars being trapped by the beauty and wiles of Venus. The abundant drapery overhead may refer metaphorically to Vulcan's net, as well as provide privacy for their coupling.

Thematically and compositionally, the design of *Mars and Venus* conjures the figures in Spranger's painting *Vulcan and Maia* (cat. 44), but Mars and Venus are more developed and streamlined. This composition is related even more closely to Spranger's design for

the *Mars and Venus* engraving of 1588 by Hendrick Goltzius, though that print is more sensual, with the muscularity of the figures amplified (cat. 182). An earlier antecedent for the Mars figure was noted by Oberhuber, who compared him to the soldiers in Michelangelo's lost *Battle of Cascina*, known from the engraving by Agostino Veneziano.¹

A nearly identical version of *Mars and Venus* is at Smith College, in Northampton, Massachusetts, but the

Frankfurt version is more polished and refined, possessing a sophisticated distinction between foreground and background. For example, the putto at center in Frankfurt appears closer to the viewer and spatially more successfully composed. An overall subtlety in the midst of robust draftsmanship distinguishes the Frankfurt version from the more contrived design, stiffer forms, and forced technique of the Smith sheet. *Prima facie*, both drawings strike a strong impression of Spranger's hand and aesthetic in his mature years, yet protracted examination of the two reveals noteworthy discrepancies. Comparing the drawings carefully, it becomes clear that many of the strokes in the Smith version have been copied one by one, and sometimes in a strange manner, as in Venus's navel, for example. The left arm of Venus is ungainly, the lower half very wide and almost manly in its proportions, the transition between upper and lower arm less subtle. The lower back of Mars is not as smooth and well proportioned. The Smith drawing exhibits a heavier hand in terms of contours and control of ink, and the deliberateness of the strokes

suggests that the Smith drawing is indeed a second version.

Curiously, and inexplicably, in the Smith sheet, the signature “B. Sprangers Inventor” was cut out sometime between 1933 and 1963. Now only the date remains, barely visible through the gridlines on the left center, in the area directly above the putto leaning on the bed. It would also appear that this uncharacteristically sloppy signature was then also drawn over with parallel

lines. After the signature was cut out, a piece of paper was added to fill in the void. The alteration where the signature was removed is barely discernible on the recto, but the verso shows a rounded oval shape where the paper was added. The drawing was conserved in 1982 at the Fogg Museum’s conservation laboratory, but no treatment photos are on file at Smith College, so further clues concerning the extracted signature no longer exist. At this time, there is no

account of when the signature was removed, but it was present when the sheet was exhibited in Kassel in the winter of 1930–31.

Oberhuber, although not able to examine the drawing firsthand, catalogued the Smith drawing as an original.² According to Kaufmann, the drawing is an authentic second version, based on the fact that the word “Inventor” is in the signature, yet this could in fact be interpreted to mean that Spranger was the inventor of the design.³ He disagrees with Oberhuber’s supposition that the drawing was preparatory for a print and posits that Spranger drew this version as a gift or for sale. Based on the deficiencies of the Smith drawing in comparison to the one in Frankfurt, and given the extracted signature, it seems most plausible that the Smith sheet is not by Spranger.

NOTES

1. See, for example, the British Museum, London (H,3,71). 2. Oberhuber 1958, no. Z11. 3. Kaufmann 1982a, cat. no. 49.

PROVENANCE (CAT. 140): From Walter Hochschild to Städel Museum, 1923.

PROVENANCE (CAT. 141): Bernhard Deiker, Braunfels, 1930; [Lucien Goldschmidt, New York, March 1963]; purchased by Smith College, 1963.

LITERATURE (CAT. 140): Kaufmann 1982a, pp. 140–42, fig. 13; Strech 2000, p. 36, cat. no. 9.

LITERATURE (CAT. 141): Luthmer 1930, p. 27, cat. no. 215; Oberhuber 1958, p. 92, no. Z11; Reznicek 1961, vol. 1, p. 155, no. 41; Oberhuber 1970, pp. 221–22, no. 23; Stechow 1970, p. 63, cat. no. 89; Geissler et al. 1979, vol. 2, p. 189; Kaufmann 1982a, pp. 140–42, cat. no. 49; Kaufmann 1984, pp. 204, 206; Henning 1987, pp. 112–13; Sievers 2000, pp. 57–60, no. 10.

COPIES: Drawings, Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, Kraków (RT 23/88); Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig (Z 2347).





142

Apollo, ca. 1597

Pen and brown ink with brown wash and touches of red chalk highlights on paper rubbed with black chalk,

8 × 5½ in. (20.2 × 14 cm)

Albertina, Vienna (7996)

IN EXHIBITION

Signed lower left, in brown ink:

B / Spranger / F

Apollo's serpentine form suggests an elasticity evoking the strings of his lyre. And though graceful, his physique is unnaturally contrived. The intense yet effortless method of execution demonstrates Spranger's mastery of *sprezzatura*. He conveyed on paper the illusion of three-dimensional form achieved with a remarkable economy of line. Spranger successfully combined aspects of classical proportion within the figure of Apollo while simultaneously thrusting the body into an extreme Mannerist posture.

Based on Apollo's mannered pose, his back swaying opposite from his forward-thrusting hips and legs, Niederstein proposes a date of 1590. Closer study, however, calls for a later date, especially given the similarity with Spranger's signed and dated drawing of 1604, *The Triumph of Wisdom over Ignorance and Envy* (cat. 155); *Apollo* stems from a few years earlier. Comparable treatment of the billowing drapery and the overall curvature of line align these drawings technically. Thematically, the drawing also calls for a later date, as Spranger did not focus on single mythological figures until later in his career, such as the Nuremberg *Cupid* and *Achior* in Stuttgart (cats. 147, 150). The face and hairstyle of Apollo are similar to the half-length *Portrait of a God*, painted about 1601 (cat. 79). In

fact, these two works seem to depict the same god, thus providing stimulus to call the mysterious figure in the painting Apollo as well.

Spranger imparted inner modeling with his familiar short, quick strokes, and the toes are typical for him—the middle toes serve as secondary attachments, resembling appendages rather than a unified portion of the foot. The drapery, rendered in thinner, lighter lines than the body, establishes textural differentiation. Spranger carefully, even obsessively, stylized the drapery to reflect the curve of Apollo's contraposto form. Evoking a Mannerist credo, it flows counter to the curved figure, yet at the very tip dips inward toward Apollo, setting up a sense of balance and imbalance simultaneously.

PROVENANCE: Prince Charles de Ligne (1759–1792), Brussels, ca. 1790; (his sale, Aloys Blumauer, Vienna, November 4, 1794 [Lugt 5245]); Duke Albert von Sachsen-Teschen (1738–1822, founder of Albertina Museum); Albertina, from 1794.

LITERATURE: Benesch 1928, pp. 31, 74, no. 283; Niederstein 1931, no. 19; Benesch 1957, p. 23, with pl.; Oberhuber 1958, p. 158, no. Z56; Hutter 1966, p. 64, no. 23, p. 132, with pl.; Benesch 1974, p. 133, pl. 76; Benesch 1981, p. 354, no. 141; Schultze 1988, vol. 1, p. 388, cat. no. 259.

COPIES: Drawing, Gustav Leonhardt collection, Amsterdam.

143

Allegory of Time, 1597

Pen and brown ink with brown-gray wash and white heightening, 13 × 9³/₈ in. (32.9 × 23.9 cm)
Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig (245)

IN EXHIBITION

Dated lower left (in a shadow), in white heightening: 1597



Inscribed lower right, in graphite (extremely faint): B; lower right: 8; verso, in graphite: C: B Spranger VIII 36

Spranger strikingly conveyed the agitated motion of the winged horse as a nude woman struggles to bridle it.

Quick, confident strokes dominate the drawing, rendered as swiftly as the action depicted. On the left, a putto dashes forward, brandishing a lance, his left leg swinging behind, while the female's leg swings ahead, giving compositional tension to the design.



Fig. 55. Pierre Milan (French, ca. 1500–ca. 1557), after Giovanni Jacopo Caraglio (Italian, Parma or Verona, ca. 1500/1505–1565 Kraków [?]). *Saturno*, 1520–39. Engraving, $6\frac{5}{8} \times 5\frac{1}{8}$ in. (16.9 × 13 cm). The British Museum, London (1870,1008.2033)

Copious pentimenti show Spranger playing with the forms, and in light of the penned boundaries on the sheet and the generous dimensions, this drawing probably was a sketch for a painting that is unknown today or never realized.

This drawing reveals Spranger's penchant for recondite allegory, while demonstrating the lasting effects of the art of Parmigianino and the Italians on his art, particularly the invention of composition and theme. He surprises by changing the identity of the winged horse, traditionally representing Pegasus, to a guise of Saturn. Pierre Milan's copy of a closely related engraving by Giovanni Jacopo Caraglio after Rosso Fiorentino, titled *Saturno* (fig. 55), and a composition by Parmigianino (fig. 56) strongly suggest that Spranger's subject is the obscure myth in which Saturn transforms himself into a stallion to lure the nymph Philyra.¹ Spranger relied heavily on Rosso's design, in which the

front half of the horse thrusts forward, its hind end nearly unarticulated.

Hyginus tells the obscure story of Saturn and Philyra in his first century *Fabulae*: "When Saturn was hunting Jove throughout the earth, assuming the form of a steed he lay with Philyra, daughter of Ocean. By him she bore Chiron the Centaur, who is said to have been the first to invent the art of healing. After Philyra saw that she had borne a strange species, she asked Jove to change her into another form, and she was transformed into the tree which is called the linden."²

In a twist, this depiction shows that rather than caressing her lover, Philyra bridles him, so Spranger could also have been alluding to Saturn as the personification of time and thus to the impossibility of controlling it. Conversely, Pegasus is often associated with fame, which is as fleeting as time. Oszczanowski proposes that Spranger inventively conflated both themes into one winged horse, representing metamorphosis as well as the inexorable pace of



Fig. 56. Parmigianino (Girolamo Francesco Maria Mazzola) (Italian, Parma 1503–1540 Casalmaggiore). *Philyra and Saturn*, ca. 1530. Oil on panel, $29\frac{3}{4} \times 25\frac{1}{4}$ in. (75.6 × 64.1 cm). Private collection

time and the concomitant flight of fame.³ Additionally, Kaufmann forwards the idea that the winged horse represents artistic ingenuity, hence it is unbridled and uncontrolled under the aegis of the RudolFINE artist.⁴

Spranger's 1597 date on this sheet is visible only upon close examination. Niederstein mistakenly dates the drawing about 1590, and Oberhuber dates it about 1605.

NOTES

1. Parmigianino drew and painted the subject. In addition to fig. 56, see his drawing *Saturn and Philyra* (ca. 1531–35; Royal Collection, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II). Most prints by Caraglio after Rosso's design have the inscription cut off, but an impression in the Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest (6752), shows the design titled "Saturno."
2. Hyginus 1960, Fable 138. The tale of transformation is also mentioned in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 6.126, "How Saturn in a Horse's Shape Begot the Centaur, Chiron." 3. See Dobrzyniecki and Oszczanowski 2005, p. 190. 4. Kaufmann 1995, p. 298.

PROVENANCE: Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, from 1800 (Sammelband, vol. 8, sheet 36).

LITERATURE: Flechsig 1923, pp. 2, 55, ill.; Niederstein 1931, no. 15; Tolnay 1943, p. 132, no. 163, ill.; Benesch 1945, pp. 133, 158; Rotterdam 1948, pp. 54–55, cat. no. 64, ill.; Nuremberg 1952, cat. no. W.130; Amsterdam 1955, cat. no. 256; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z14; Adriani 1967, p. 30; Braunschweig 1974, cat. no. 54; Białostocki and Mrozińska 1982, p. 207, cat. no. 101; Heusinger 1992, no. 257; Brink and Hornbostel 1993, p. 82; Braunschweig 1998, p. 136, cat. no. 53.

I44

Mercury, Venus, and Cupid, ca. 1598

Pen and brown ink with brown wash and white heightening on gray-blue paper rubbed with black chalk, $6\frac{5}{8} \times 4\frac{7}{8}$ in. (16.7 × 12.5 cm)

Kunstmuseum Basel, Kupferstichkabinett (U.I.214)

IN EXHIBITION



Mercury and Venus are embracing. It is an unexpected pairing. Usually Mercury merely warns Venus against adultery, but on other occasions the scene is complemented by either Mars, the illicit lover of Venus, or by Vulcan, her husband. Here they not only embrace but clearly are erotic lovers. Wearing his signature winged hat, Mercury wraps his arms around Venus, emphasizing her voluptuous form and inviting breasts. Cupid hovers above them and sheds light on the

scene. Ovid in his *Metamorphoses* does not mention their coupling, as Mercury loved Chloris, not Venus. Although Venus and Mercury are not husband and wife, with a typically inventive twist Spranger presents a visual epigram for conjugal bliss by following Plutarch's *Moralia*, later expounded in the Renaissance by Vincenzo Cartari. In Plutarch's chapter "Pollianus and Eurydice Sendeth Greeting," he specifically notes what is translated as "conjugal precepts": "It was the ancients who

placed the statue of Venus by that of Mercury, to signify that the pleasures of matrimony chiefly consist in the sweetness of conversation."¹ Here, Mercury is no longer the messenger god but plays his role as god of eloquence and embraces love, symbolized by Venus. Cupid flying over unites and consummates them. He acts as the mediator of the alchemy of love, that of conjoining mercury and sulfur (Mercury and Venus).

The drawing presents a perfect design. Three figures are interconnected thematically, compositionally, emotionally. Abundant hatching covers Spranger's initial creative decisions. With few strokes Spranger expresses the physical realities of the forms, such as the position and bend of the joints; for example, Cupid's ankle floating in the air or Mercury's finger caressing the face of Venus. Except for a quick notation in pen and ink, the contour of Venus's jaw is undelineated. Yet in spite of the sparse graphic description and device, the volume of the face is thoroughly communicated with the aid of white heightening. With one bold stroke Spranger adds tension to the overall drawing, the sharp bend and break of the form highlighting the joints and the tension intensifying the overall eroticism. This drawing, appealing in both technique and subject matter, served as a preparatory drawing for Pieter de Jode I's print *Mercury Embracing Venus* (cat. 204).

NOTES

1. Plutarch 1871, pp. 486–87.

PROVENANCE: Remigius Faesch (1595–1667), Basel; Kunstmuseum Basel, Kupferstichkabinett, from 1823.

LITERATURE: Niederstein 1931, no. 8; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z6.



I45

Apollo and the Muses, 1598

Pen and gray ink with colored washes and gold heightening; squared in black chalk, 11 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (30.1 × 24 cm)
Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (KdZ 23330)

IN EXHIBITION

Signed and dated lower left, in gray ink:
Spranger f 1498 (altered from 1598)

A river god faces inward to enjoy the beautiful Muses and music, the direction of his gaze bringing the viewer into the scene. He closely resembles a river god in Spranger's drawing *The*

Wedding of Cupid and Psyche

(cat. 108)—another example of the artist's readiness to reuse his creations. Originally catalogued as "Anonymous early seventeenth century German," and rejected by Niederstein, this drawing was correctly identified as an original Spranger by Kaufmann.¹ Any

doubts about its authenticity can be put to rest by the smooth flow of line, the deft application of washes and grids, the elegant postures, and especially the facial elements such as hollow eyes and half-moon mouths, common touches in other sheets firmly attributed to Spranger. The smooth transition between the landscape and the figures highlights his ability as both landscape and figural painter.

Kaufmann notes the colored washes and the squaring of the sheet, which indicate it likely functioned as a *modello* for a painting, possibly one in a private collection in the Netherlands.² A painting sold at auction but now lost could be the final realization of this drawing, and it might even be the same painting mentioned by Kaufmann, but both works are currently unlocated.³ Thematically, compositionally, and formally, *Apollo and the Muses* evokes the spirit of Spranger's drawing *Minerva with the Muses and Pegasus* (cat. 104). Though Kaufmann dates it before 1585, the very faint signature indicates 1598, and the parsimonious use of contour lines also points to Spranger's style from this later period.

NOTES

1. Kaufmann in Schultze 1988, vol. 2, p. 174, cat. no. 643. 2. *Ibid.* 3. Oil on panel, 19⁷/₈ × 13³/₄ in. (48 × 35 cm), last mentioned at auction house Lempertz, Cologne, November 11, 1964, no. 214. For copies related to the Berlin drawing, see Lindhagen and Bjurström 1953, cat. no. 54, and Oberhuber 1958, no. Z49.

MARKS: Watermark (Briquet 939).

PROVENANCE: Entered the Kupferstichkabinett before 1878.

LITERATURE: Niederstein 1931, no. 86; Lindhagen and Bjurström 1953, cat. no. 54; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z49; Schultze 1988, vol. 2, p. 174, cat. no. 643.

COPIES: Drawings, Národní Galerie, Prague (K-42432); Nationalmuseum, Stockholm (THC 4073).



146

The Triumph of Venus over the Sea, ca. 1598

Pen and brown ink with wash,
7³/₈ × 7³/₈ in. (18.7 × 18.7 cm)
Stichting Collectie P. en N. de Boer,
Amsterdam

This drawing represents Spranger's initial conception for both a painting and a print, the latter engraved by Jacob Matham (cat. 200), with several added figures. The drawing appears to have been cut down, so the complete composition is unknown. Careful study

reveals that the drawing matches much more closely the composition in the engraving, though of course in reverse. For example, the positioning of the three sea horses transporting the couple's chariot simulates Matham's engraving, not Spranger's painting *Neptune and Amphitrite* (cat. 74). Other design discrepancies between the drawing and the print center on Cupid. He presses the breast of the nymph in the lower right corner in both painting and engraving, but in the painting he looks upward, into her eyes.

The attenuated and Mannerist figures concur with those in other works stemming from the 1590s.

PROVENANCE: [Kunsthandel Burlet, Basel]; Sir Robert L. Mond (1867–1938).

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, no. Z4.

COPIES: Drawing, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi, Florence (14348F).

147

Cupid, 1599

Pen and brown ink with brown and gray washes and white heightening on blue paper, 7³/₈ × 5⁷/₈ in. (18.6 × 14.9 cm)
Germanisches Nationalmuseum,
Nuremberg (HZ 28)

IN EXHIBITION

Signed and dated lower right, in brown ink:
bartolomeo Sprangers fecit prag / del .99.

The founder of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Hans Philipp Werner Freiherr von und zu Aufseß, once owned this exquisite drawing. His family came from Bamberg, where Rudolf had close ties with two bishops, so in all likelihood the provenance of this drawing can be traced to Bamberg and even to the *Kunstskammer*.

Spranger composed the youthful male figure to appear as if suspended in space, the atmospheric effects tantalizingly palpable. The air around Cupid is as perceptible as the flesh of his body or the beat of his wings. He leaps out from the flat surface of the paper, each limb occupying a different plane. Cupid's left toes burst forth from the surface, as does his left hand holding the bow. One can feel his toes touching the space closest to the viewer while he thrusts his right hand into the distance; even further back is the bottom of his quiver case, and his torso is in the middle

ground. Spranger masterfully achieves this perspectival differentiation without the aid of landscape, architecture, or any other accoutrement. Pen and ink, with heightening, create the physical presence of Cupid (*disegno esterno*) while expressing Spranger's conception or *idea*, the *disegno interno* of the allegory of Love.

The unfinished contours conjure an ethereal presence, yet Cupid possesses volume all the same. Embodying the Mannerist credo, his figure is

ambiguously, simultaneously real and unreal. The drawing is constructed in layers, starting with light contours to establish the forms, then short, bold strokes to solidify them. A bare minimum of lines shape Cupid's contours. This is particularly apparent in the rendering of his left leg, nearly devoid of pen and ink; its inner contour is almost nonexistent. A faint pentimento records how the contour of the left leg was altered; it had previously extended to the right, and corrections with white





heightening indicate Spranger's difficulties with foreshortening the right foot. The right arm displays his usual parallel lines for shading. Quick flicks of pen on the knees convey the fleshy surface. The white heightening is expertly applied; mere touches create the hair, without any pen and ink. Spranger imparted just enough musculature to indicate that Cupid is no longer a child, yet also gave him a hint of youthful fleshiness.

Spranger entertained the theme of Cupid on other occasions, insinuating different meanings and composing various designs. Compositionally, this pen-and-ink rendering recalls Spranger's trompe l'oeil painting of about 1599, *Cupid Fleeing Psyche* (cat. 73). About the same time, he painted his compelling and mournful *Vanitas* (cat. 71).

MARKS: Stamp, verso, Lugt 2750 (Freiherr von und zu Aufseß).

PROVENANCE: Possibly Bamberg bishopric, 1599–1600; Hans Philipp Werner Freiherr von und zu Aufseß (1801–1872, founder of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum).

LITERATURE: Nuremberg 1856, p. 90; Niederstein 1931, p. 21, no. 25; Nuremberg 1952, cat. no. W.134; Braun 1955, cat. no. D25; Oberhuber 1958, p. 176, no. Z41; Oberhuber 1970, p. 220; Schnackenburg 1970, pp. 154, 160 n. 30; Schultze 1988, vol. 1, p. 390, cat. no. 262; Schoch 1992, p. 130, cat. no. 50, ill.; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 447, cat. no. I.282.

COPIES: Universitätsbibliothek Erlangen-Nürnberg (91).

148

Hercules and Omphale, 1599

Pen and brown ink with gray wash and white heightening with traces of red chalk highlights on paper rubbed with black chalk, 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 5 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (20 × 14.5 cm)
Národní Galerie v Praze, Prague (K-42835)

IN EXHIBITION

Inscribed upper center, in brown ink:
*Bartolomeus Sprangers fecit a l'anno 1599
cio per compiaser* (Spranger composed in 1599 for a friend)

Hercules and Omphale epitomizes Spranger's fully developed style at the turn of the century, highlighting his mastery of graphic technique and manipulation of media. This signed and dated sheet reiterates a theme Spranger repeated several times over a decade. Except for pentimenti on Hercules's lower body, the drawing is highly finished and polished. The figures are extensively modeled as Spranger concentrated on the three-dimensionality of the human form and subdued his contorted and Mannerist figures from the previous decade. A multitude of diagonals lead the eye up and down, left and right, connecting all the figures and objects. Swirling lines of white

heightening outwardly model Omphale's chest while conveying the sense of flesh and blood pulsing within.

Spranger composed his figures with thinner strokes than in the past, displaying more confidence. He rendered the figures with a generous application of white heightening and touches of red chalk on paper rubbed with black chalk. The expressive faces evoke individual personalities; a smug and triumphant Omphale looms over a chastened Hercules. Comparing this sheet to an earlier design dedicated to these Ovidian characters (cat. 116) elucidates Spranger's development. Before, in his preparatory sheet now in Florence, the graphic technique and outline of forms displayed a more self-conscious execution, and compositionally the figures were static and isolated from one another. Spranger resolved this by creating spatial and physical relationships, connecting the characters emotionally and formally. Hercules also brings to mind Mars in Spranger's *Mars and Venus* drawing in Frankfurt from the late 1590s (cat. 140). Fučíková suggests that Spranger was inspired by Veronese's painting *Mars and Venus United by Love* (1570s; The Metropolitan Museum of Art), particularly the pyramidal composition.¹ Veronese's work was owned by Rudolf, so it may indeed have served as inspiration for Spranger's initial conception. Spranger modified his design by transforming Veronese's full-length figures into masterful half-lengths, inserting a typical ambiguity.

The dedicatory inscription signals Spranger's personal connection to the work, which was perhaps intended for a *Stammbuch* or *album amicorum* (friendship album), as was his *Fama* drawing for the young Benedikt Ammon's *Stammbuch* (cat. 156).

NOTES

1. Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 447, cat. no. I.281.

PROVENANCE: Dr. Eduard Šafařík, Bratislava; Národní Galerie, from 1972.

LITERATURE: Weyde 1928, pl. 1; Pigler 1956, vol. 2, p. 115; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z48; Kotalík 1976, cat. no. 4; Kesnerová and Lippold 1977, cat. no. 20; Fučíková 1978, cat. no. 22; Fučíková 1987, p. 18; Schultze 1988, vol. 1, pp. 390–91, cat. no. 263; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 447, cat. no. I.281.

COPIES: Goethe-Nationalmuseum, Weimar (Schuch I 310, 255).

149

Judith and Holofernes, ca. 1601

Pen and brown ink with brown wash and white heightening on paper rubbed with black chalk, 12 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (32.1 × 21.4 cm)
Musée du Louvre, Paris (20474)

IN EXHIBITION

Inscribed lower right, in brown ink (by a later hand): *spranger 2 [1?] / 12 f.*

Spranger blended drama with graphic virtuosity to illustrate the Old Testament story celebrating Judith, the brave and beautiful Jewish widow, and her defeat of the Assyrian general Holofernes, who had ordered the destruction of her village. The story recounts how Judith covertly entered the general's tent, then seduced him with her beauty and a considerable amount of wine. As he was lying in bed, intoxicated and anticipating pleasure from his guest, Judith severed his head with his own sword. Spranger captured the bloody aftermath, showing the headless body of Holofernes splayed on the bed. His left hand, uncannily lifelike, rests under his shoulder, but his limp right arm drops to the floor, suggesting his loss of power both physically and militarily. Judith triumphantly holds up the evidence, poised to place the head in the

sack held open by her maid, Afra. Spranger broke from convention by portraying Afra as a young woman, bowing her head in subservience to Judith while keeping a firm grip on the sack.

The figure of Judith is a masterpiece of arrested movement. Her headdress and drapery gently trail behind her as her left foot thrusts forward while her right foot falls behind, conveying a sense of tension and action. Compositionally, the horizontality of Holofernes balances out the strong verticality of the rest of the scene. Typically Mannerist in the depiction of supernatural space, there is little transition in perspective between foreground and background, a trait not uncommon for Spranger. Contours for the most part have been left unfinished, adding tension to the mannered pose of Judith, as the eye instinctively works to finish, to connect and complete the contours.

Judith's struggle and victory came to symbolize the triumph of Judaism over Eastern oppressors and later, more generally, the female power of seduction. Thematically, *Judith and Holofernes* relates to Spranger's painting *Allegory of the Triumph of the Habsburg Empire over the Turks* (cat. 81), celebrating the victorious female over the defeated male warrior. The rapid execution evident in the Louvre sheet points to its function as a preparatory sketch for a painting. No painting with such a theme is recorded in the inventories of Rudolf's collection, but there are several entries of paintings by Spranger without titles or descriptions.

A decade earlier, Goltzius had engraved another design by Spranger of the same subject, and the compositions are somewhat related (cat. 176). The greater drama and dynamism in the



drawing register Spranger's artistic progression. In the engraving, Judith is central to the composition, emphasizing her triumph, whereas the more extensive composition of the Louvre drawing, incorporating Judith's maid, stresses the narrative. *Judith and Holofernes* is stylistically related to Spranger's drawings of the early 1600s, especially *Achior* (cat. 150). The statuesque yet slender form of Judith is analogous to Saint John in Spranger's painting *The Baptism of Christ* in Wrocław (cat. 80). Oberhuber contends that *Judith and Holofernes* dates from Spranger's late period (1606–7). However, if compared to *The Triumph of Wisdom over Ignorance and Envy* (cat. 155), signed and dated by Spranger in 1604, as well as to his *Fama* of 1605 (cat. 156), the Louvre drawing is more in keeping with slightly earlier sheets, suggesting a date of about 1601.

PROVENANCE: Possibly Gilbert Paignon-Dijonval (1708–1792), Paris, 1810; Musée du Louvre, before 1827.

LITERATURE: Niederstein 1931, no. 20; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z43; Paris 1965, p. 74, cat. no. 172, with pl.; Bacou 1968, no. 46, with pl.; Lugt 1968, p. 132, no. 642; Ramade 1978, p. 83, cat. no. 127; Schultze 1988, vol. 2, p. 177, cat. no. 647.

150

Achior, ca. 1601

Pen and brown ink with brown wash and white heightening on paper rubbed with black chalk, 9½ × 7 in. (24.1 × 17.8 cm)
Staatsgalerie Stuttgart (SF II/284)

IN EXHIBITION

Originally signed lower center, but signature has been cut off

The subject of this drawing has traditionally been identified as Saint Sebastian, but the absence of

arrows, his common attribute, calls tradition into question. Spranger might have intended to draw Prometheus, Marsyas, or Achior (the Ammonite commander who warned Holofernes against fighting the Israelites). Sebastian should be pierced with at least one arrow, Prometheus should have an eagle nearby, and Marsyas should be in the company of Apollo and, perhaps, have goat's feet. However, in favor of Marsyas, the hair slightly peaks into two horns. Sebastian is rarely depicted bound between two trees—an impractical position for Roman soldiers trying to shoot arrows at him. Further distancing this figure from Sebastian is Spranger's own painting of the saint, which follows traditional iconography; however, his etching of Sebastian does depict a male figure tied to a tree and indeed without arrows (cat. 158). A drawing of Marsyas in the Art Institute of Chicago, which is attributed to the circle of Baccio Bandinelli or Benvenuto Cellini, features a male nude figure, his outstretched limbs tied to a tree, offering potential precedent for the captivating nude in Spranger's drawing.¹ But Achior, today the most obscure of characters, seems to match the iconography of Spranger's drawing best, especially compared with other depictions of Achior around this time. An engraving from 1564 by Maarten van Heemskerck does show Achior bound to a tree, though in this instance he is outfitted in a general's armor.² Abraham Bloemaert's painting of Achior tied to a tree, signed and dated 1593, shows a muscular, young male nude like Spranger's.³ Spranger was exploring the legend of Judith and Holofernes, as evidenced by his drawing in the Louvre (cat. 149), and likely he was inspired to imagine this additional protagonist in the drama as well.

The sheet has also suffered an identity crisis in terms of attribution. It was originally catalogued in the museum's records as by Luca Cambiaso, owing to the crisp strokes, which were favored by both Cambiaso and Spranger. But the textural nuances and muscular, Mannerist form infused with emotional tension unquestionably identify this sheet as by Spranger. Here his technical virtuosity reached an apogee, as it did in other works at the turn of the century. A tension implicit in the theme is made visible in the pose: each limb is tied to a rough tree trunk, thrust forward and backward, heightening the discomfort. Spranger further amplifies the strain by compressing the figure between the trees, artificially shrinking the space.

In terms of overall conception and pose, the figure is strikingly similar to Spranger's Saint John the Baptist in *The Baptism of Christ* epitaph, signed and dated 1603 (cat. 80). Based on its affinity with the epitaph, the drawing should be dated close to 1601, hence later than in the traditional literature. At this time, Spranger favored a sophisticated abstraction of form, visible in the hands and right foot of Achior.

NOTES

1. *Marsyas Tied to a Tree*, ca. 1550, Art Institute of Chicago (1922.2055).
2. Philips Galle after Maarten van Heemskerck, *The Israelites Finding Achior Tied to a Tree*, 1564, Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum (G9041). For more on Achior, who was rarely depicted in art, see Roitman 1992.
3. Bloemaert's painting is in a London private collection; for illustration and background, see Luijten et al. 1993, p. 375, cat. no. 32.

MARKS: Stamps, lower left, in blue: *F.K. // Z.F.* (Collection of Schloss Fachsenfeld); lower left, in purple: *HE* (Edward Habich, Lugt 862). Verso: label of Freiherrn Franz Koenig Fachsenfeld, 1898, with a large griffin.

PROVENANCE: Schloss Fachsenfeld, 1898; (sale, Heinrich Georg Gutekunst, Stuttgart,



April 27, 1899, no. 30); Edward Habich (1818–1901), Kassel.

LITERATURE: Stuttgart 1967, p. 127, cat. no. 128; Geissler et al. 1984, p. 21, cat. no. 21; Strauss and Felker 1987, p. 330; Schultze 1988, vol. 1, pp. 392–93, cat. no. 266; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 448, cat. no. I.286.

151

Psyche at the Bed of Sleeping Cupid, 1602–5

Pen and brown ink with brown wash over black chalk underdrawing, 8¾ × 7¾ in. (22.2 × 18.7 cm)
Leiden University Libraries (1070)

IN EXHIBITION

Spranger illustrated the suspenseful moment from Apuleius's *Golden Ass* when Psyche takes a forbidden peek at her sleeping lover Cupid.¹ Hovering over him with her oil lamp, she spills hot oil, a mere drop, but enough to enrage her sleeping god. Cupid flees, but the couple later reconcile, as witnessed in the magnificent pageantry of Spranger's drawing *The Wedding of Cupid and Psyche* (cat. 108). He returned to the saga of Cupid and Psyche a number of times, no doubt finding its mix of eroticism and intrigue attractive. Here, he focused on the moment before discovery. A print by Jan Harmensz. Muller after Spranger depicts the couple at a similar moment of suspense (cat. 199), and this sketch may indeed have sparked Spranger's design for the print.

This sheet, a spontaneous sketch, exemplifies Spranger's graphic method and creative process. Initially, Spranger considered depicting Psyche holding an oil lamp, as in the faintly visible black chalk outline. He either left this unfinished or decided against it altogether. He also played with various positions of



the bodies, evident again from the underdrawing. He has surrounded the figures with believable space and infused volume into ethereal bodies, a Mannerist exposition of ambiguity and form. Spranger achieved considerable aesthetic effect with few strokes. Cupid's bow lying on the floor near his bed is faintly rendered in wash, a technique appearing elsewhere in Spranger's drawings. He merely implied the structure of the bed, using soft wash to indicate the outlines, and left the background undefined. These characteristics and overall approach appear in a

group of earlier Spranger drawings, including *Allegory of Time and Art* and *Diana of Ephesus*, both in Wrocław (cats. 112, 113). All are executed with similar vivacity and pronounced contour lines.

Gerszi dates the drawing after 1602 and discusses Michelangelo's influence on the figure of Cupid, noting a similarity to Michelangelo's drawing *The Dream* in the Courtauld Gallery, London.²

NOTES

1. Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, 5.20–24. 2. Gerszi in Schultze 1988, vol. 1, p. 392, cat. no. 265.



MARKS: Watermark (Briquet 1245).

PROVENANCE: [F. Lenz, Prague, before 1939]; Dr. Albertus Welcker (1884–1957), Amsterdam, 1939–57; Leiden University Libraries, from 1957.

LITERATURE: Doorne 1955, cat. no. 60; Oberhuber 1958, pp. 192–93, no. Z32; Fučíková 1987, p. 18, with pl.; Schultze 1988, vol. 1, p. 392, cat. no. 265; Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 448, cat. no. I.284.

152

Allegory of Painting, 1603

Pen and brown ink with white heightening and black chalk on prepared brown-gray paper, 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 5 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (17.4 × 13.4 cm)
The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg (OP 46682)

Signed and dated center right, in brown ink:
+ / B / Sprangers / F / ammicia / 1603 / praga

Drawn in the last decade of Spranger's life, *Allegory of Painting* strikes a temperate chord in execution and form, leaning toward a mature classicism and away from his exuberant Mannerism. The signature implies he composed this work for a *Stammbuch* or *album amicorum* and, according to Hermitage curator Alexei Larionov, possibly for the Nuremberg sculptor Emanuel Schweigger (d. 1634).¹ This personal nature of the drawing explains its subdued manner compared to other works from the same time, such as *Ceres and Bacchus Flee Venus* and *The Triumph of Wisdom over Ignorance* and



Fig. 57. South German artist after Albrecht Dürer (German, Nuremberg 1471–1528 Nuremberg). *Female Nude Seen from Behind*, early 17th century. Honestone, 6 × 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (15.2 × 6.7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.467)

Envy, both of 1604 (cats. 154, 155). Collectively, Spranger's figures begin to slim and elongate by this time, a tendency also visible in his painting *The Baptism of Christ*, of 1603, and the *Venus and Adonis* in Duchcov (cats. 80, 88). The scarcity of inner modeling strokes, a predominant characteristic of earlier Spranger compositions, also sets *Allegory of Painting* apart from other drawings around this time and from his *Fama* drawing of 1605 (cat. 156).

A pronounced intimacy and delicacy suffusing the figure and the clear detour from his typical Mannerist proportions indicate that Spranger may have used a nude model. Yet in typical Mannerist ambiguity, *Pictura* is far from a typical female form, her gently curving contours and posture raising her above the commonplace. This figure and composition are informed by Dürer's design for *Female Nude Seen from Behind* (fig. 57), among the many occasions the German Renaissance master influenced Spranger.

NOTES

1. According to correspondence with Alexei Larionov, curator of Dutch and Flemish drawings at the Hermitage, June 2014, two drawings in Moscow's Pushkin Museum (one by Friedrich Sustri, dated 1599; the other by Raphael Sadeler I, dated 1608) bear the same type of mount and similar numbering. Inscriptions on those drawings indicate they were executed as a gift for Emanuel Schweigger. See Sadkov 2010, nos. 346, 378.

PROVENANCE: Likely Emanuel Schweigger (Nuremberg, d. 1634); Stepan Yaremich (Jaremich) (1869–1938); Hermitage, from 1979.

LITERATURE: Kaufmann 1995, pp. 299–300.

153

Cybele and Minerva, 1603–7

Pen and brown ink with brown wash and white heightening on beige paper grounded with black chalk, 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (19.5 × 13.2 cm)
Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf
(F.P. 4817 K.B. 798)

IN EXHIBITION

Signed lower right, in brown ink (some of signature appears cut down): *B / Spranger*

A nude female presses her breasts, spurting milk. She wears a fortress-shaped crown, alluding to her role as protector of cities, and is none other than Cybele, a revered Phrygian goddess. Lions were said to drive her chariot and guard her temple, thus the lion prancing by her side. Her cult revered Cybele's maternal control over wild beasts and were known to conduct orgiastic, ecstatic celebrations in her honor. Minerva strides confidently into the scene from the right; as defender of wisdom and supporter of the arts, she protects Cybele. Together, the two female deities send an encouraging message for any city—on this occasion, Prague. Under their watch, the arts will flourish in the imperial city on the Vltava.

Spranger's design is indebted to a print of Ops (a goddess conflated at times with Cybele), by Giovanni Jacopo Caraglio after Rosso Fiorentino (fig. 58). The slender forms and bravura draftsmanship of *Cybele and Minerva* share an aesthetic outlook with other of Spranger's drawings made after 1600, particularly the affinity in body composition between Cybele and Spranger's *Fama* of 1605 (cat. 156). He rendered his lithe females with delicate washes and incomplete contours. He applied the heightening thickly, in concentrated

areas, especially on the Cybele figure. Minerva's knee is marked by his typical backward number seven stroke, and Cybele's long veil consists of his characteristic cross-hatching. Short, quick strokes, each one purposeful, compose the figures.

MARKS: Unidentified stamp (semicircle), in black, lower center, on edge of paper, cut off.

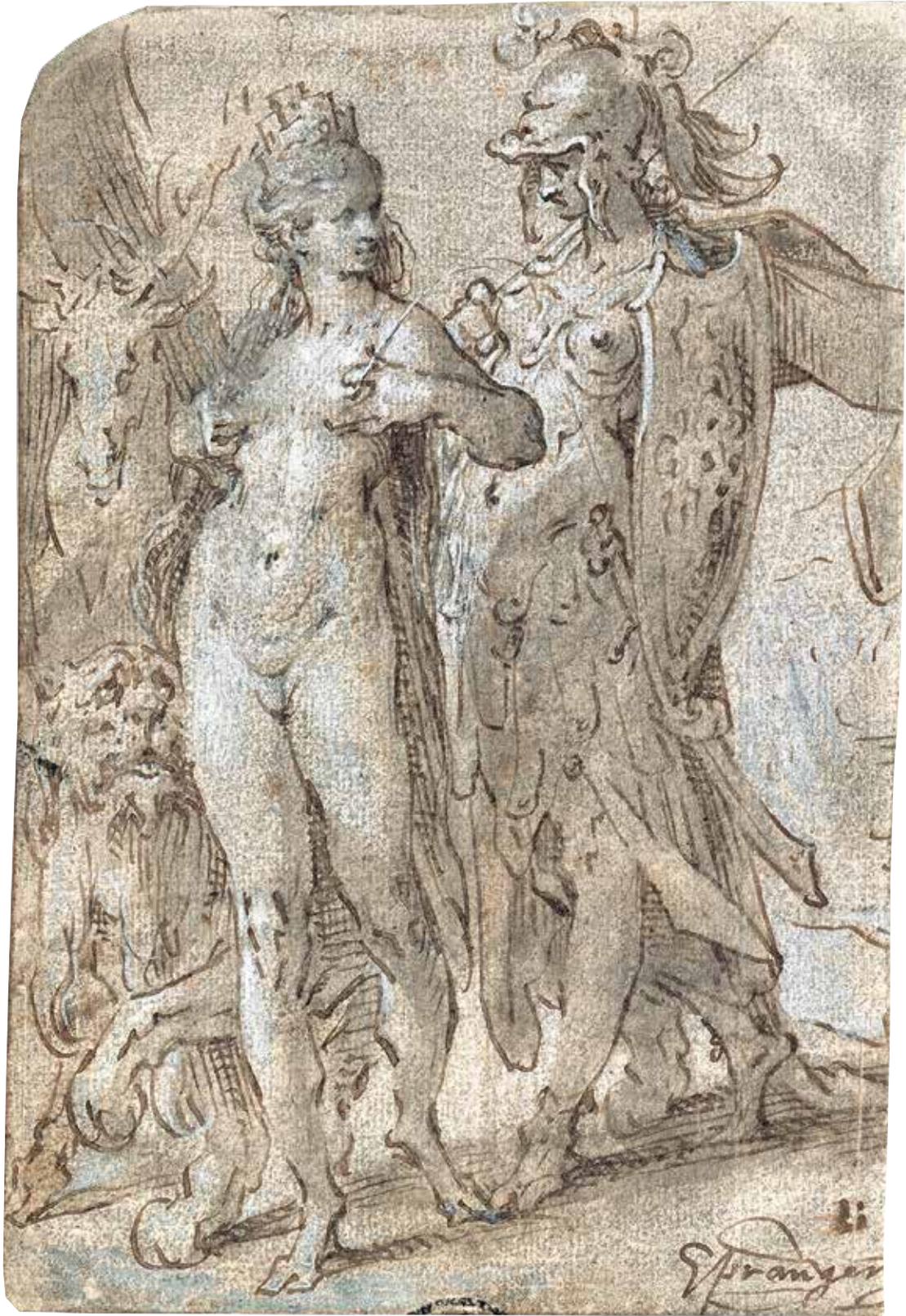
PROVENANCE: Lambert Krahe (1712–1790), Düsseldorf; Duchy of Berg, from 1778; Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, from 1932.

LITERATURE: Budde 1930, cat. no. 798; Niederstein 1931, no. 16; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z20; Schaar and Graf 1969, p. 72, cat. no. 136; Schultze 1988, vol. 1, p. 389, cat. no. 260.

COPIES: Universitätsbibliothek Erlangen-Nürnberg (912).



Fig. 58. Giovanni Jacopo Caraglio (Italian, Parma or Verona, ca. 1500/1505–1565 Kraków [?]), after Rosso Fiorentino (Italian, Florence 1494–1540 Fontainebleau). *Ops (Opis)*, 1526. Engraving, 8 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 4 $\frac{3}{16}$ in. (20.7 × 10.7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.97.223)





154

Ceres and Bacchus Flee Venus, 1604

Pen and brown ink with white heightening
over black chalk ground on brown paper,
10³/₄ × 6³/₄ in. (27.5 × 17.3 cm)

Stichting Collectie P. en N. de Boer,
Amsterdam

IN EXHIBITION

Signed and dated lower left, in brown
ink: S[. . .]anger fecit 1604

Spranger created other works inspired by this evocative theme from the Roman playwright Terence, including a painting and a print (cats. 56, 191). This particular design appears to be unique, as there are no known copies. Compared with the painting, executed in 1590, the drawing demonstrates how Spranger further developed this theme. Here, he decided to position Venus standing, rather than crouching by the fire in the background, taking perhaps a more dominant role and allowing the viewer to enjoy her nude backside. Ceres and Bacchus have exchanged places from the painting (but take the same positions as in Spranger's design for Muller's print). Though thematically Spranger has shunned any significant alterations, the drawing provides interesting insight regarding his aesthetic process.

The date of this drawing, 1604, corresponds to that of Spranger's *Triumph of Wisdom over Ignorance and Envy* (cat. 155). Both sheets illustrate his mature style, employing dynamic curved strokes and a complicated system of shading. The figure of Bacchus



Signed and dated lower center, in brown ink: *Bartomeo Spranger f. praga 1604*

This signed and dated sheet from 1604 depicts a political allegory honoring Minerva, seen perched on a pedestal, holding up her Medusa shield in triumph. She has vanquished Envy, symbolized by the bare-breasted female figure chained below. She has eradicated Ignorance, represented by the male figure with donkey ears and manacled neck. Her valor protects wisdom and the arts in Prague.

The figures are eccentric forms, their positions seemingly impossible, yet their refinement and formal qualities make them plausible. In this highly sophisticated composition, Spranger created various spatial fields. Envy's form zigzags through several planes, her body creating a series of diagonals. The entire design is one large X, half formed by Minerva's long staff, continued by her drapery, and culminating in the

is particularly vibrant. As he briskly strides away from Venus, he gestures emphatically, his feet nearly lifting him off the ground.

PROVENANCE: Coenraad W. A. Buma, Marssum, the Netherlands (Fryslân), ca. 1887–27; Paul de Boer, Rotterdam, then Amsterdam, ca. 1936–40; to present collection.

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, no. Z3; Laren 1966, p. 36, cat. no. 216; Oberhuber 1970, p. 219.

155

The Triumph of Wisdom over Ignorance and Envy, 1604

Pen and brown ink with brown and gray washes, white heightening (oxidized), and touches of red wash (as heightening) on paper rubbed with black chalk, 7³/₈ × 5³/₈ in. (18.7 × 13.6 cm)

Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe (1967–21)

IN EXHIBITION



Fig. 59. Giorgio Vasari (Italian, Arezzo 1511–1574 Florence). *Allegory of Justice*, 1543. Oil on panel, 13⁷/₈ × 9⁷/₈ in. (35.3 × 25.2 cm). Museo di Capodimonte, Naples (Q 101)

right knee of Ignorance. Ignorance looks backward, behind the pedestal, forcing the viewer to glance into the background and thus creating the illusion of depth. The figures have an ethereality appropriate to their role as allegorical representations. By suggesting forms rather than making them explicit, Spranger captured their essence, removed from everyday reality. He heavily washed the figures, filling in with either brown wash or white heightening. Color is used sparingly to communicate his aesthetic intent and enliven the design, such as the touches of pink wash on Minerva's left foot, the left knee of Ignorance, and Envy's cheek.

This theme of triumph relates to Spranger's painting *Minerva Vanquishing Ignorance* (cat. 67) and to Aegidius Sadeler II's print after Spranger's *Triumph of Wisdom* (cat. 202), but here Minerva conquers not only Ignorance but also Envy. Spranger's preoccupation with this theme might have been sparked early on by Giorgio Vasari's *Allegory of Justice*, commissioned by Cardinal Alessandro Farnese for his Palazzo della Cancelleria in Rome, where Spranger lived for a time (fig. 59).

Iconographically, *The Triumph of Wisdom over Ignorance and Envy* certainly implied a personal message from Spranger: the superiority of the Arts, aided by his own technical virtuosity and by his elevated position in Prague. In 1604 Spranger was a fully established painter, favored by the emperor. Earlier in his career, the subject matter of primarily amorous mythological couples had served the pleasures of the emperor. Now, the subject reflects Spranger's own aspirations.

MARKS: Stamp, Lugt II 1561c.

PROVENANCE: Armand Gobiet (d. 1975), Seeham (Land Salzburg); (XLe Antiekbeurs, Brussels, March 3, 1966, stand no. 11); Jan Willems; (Sotheby's, London, December 13, 1966, no. 106); acquired by the Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, 1967.

LITERATURE: Lauts 1968; Oberhuber 1970, p. 219; Kaufmann 1978b; Geissler et al. 1979, vol. 1, p. 58, cat. no. B12; Fučíková 1987, p. 18.

COPIES: Drawing, private collection, New York.

156

Fama, 1605

Pen and ink with brown wash, red highlights, and heightening on paper grounded with black chalk, 4½ × 6¾ in. (11.5 × 16 cm)

Hartung & Hartung Auctioneers, as agent of the owner, Munich

IN EXHIBITION

Signed and dated lower center, in brown ink: *bartolomeo Sprangers / fera questo per compiacera / al l'amico praga 1605* (I composed this with pleasure for my friend in Prague 1605)

Spranger's last known signed and dated drawing, *Fama*, encapsulates the brilliance and erudition of his late style. He portrayed Fama in the process of sounding the trumpet, as attested by her puffed-up rosy cheeks. He deftly distributed her weight, capturing the sense of balancing on the sphere. Unfinished contour lines demonstrate his confidence. Wash and black chalk fill in the forms only when absolutely necessary. The slim body of Fama serves as an interesting counterpart to Spranger's drawing of the airborne Cupid in Nuremberg, a more robust figure composed six years before (cat. 147). One constant in both is the outward-thrusting line of the left leg and heel. The Prague

inventory of 1621 lists a painting by Spranger of Fama (no. 1053), which is not known today. Although this sheet is a fully independent drawing, the composition could relate to that lost painting or could have been the inspiration for it.

Spranger composed this drawing in the *Stammbuch*, or *album amicorum* (friendship album), of Benedikt Ammon, who visited Prague in 1605 at age seventeen. Born in Nuremberg in 1588, Ammon studied law and theology, then rose to the position of deacon in the small Bavarian town of Oberviechtach. Other entries in the book chronicle Ammon's ports of call in Marburg, Warsaw, Nuremberg, Cologne, and Vienna, and the personalities he encountered en route. The book is filled with good wishes and sage advice for leading a virtuous Christian life. Most of the pages are decorated with coats of arms and mottoes; there are also a few detailed maps, but only two figurative drawings—one a portrait of Ammon, the other Spranger's *Fama*. Such a gift from Spranger would have been highly prized. In essence, he was wishing the young man fame in his bright future. The oversized wings of the appealing female figure emphasize all the more the exuberance of praise and affection. Another page shows an extremely faint sketch of Cupid in graphite, which is likely Spranger's early conception of his *Fama*.

PROVENANCE: Count Heinrich Lamberg, Ottenstein (Niederösterreich); [Hartung & Hartung, Munich, 1970].

LITERATURE: Buberl 1911, pp. 124–25; Niederstein 1931, no. 27; Oberhuber 1958, no. Z42.



Santolomeo
fera questo
al Sanico

Spangor
Compiafere
Maga 1605



Spranger as Etcher

M

uch attention has been devoted to the prints *after* Spranger but little to his own prints, the etchings that he designed and produced himself. Exactly how many there were originally remains a mystery: as many as six have been listed in the literature, but only three are known now.¹ Those three, which are thematically and stylistically harmonious, appear to be numbered sequentially. They depict the religious martyrs Saint Bartholomew, Saint Sebastian, and Saint John the Evangelist. The first print of the series, *Saint Bartholomew* (cat. 157), bears the artist's signature, the place of execution (Prague), and the date (1589). Spranger also indicated that it was a trial, or first proof, inscribing "prova priema." The others, numbered two (cat. 158) and three (cat. 159), are inscribed with an identical signature: *B Sprangers Antvs F*. All three signatures, curiously, appear in reverse.

These martyred saints of Spranger's series constitute a theme that would have appealed both to him and to his patron, Rudolf II. Saint Bartholomew is the artist's namesake, which suggests a personal meaning for Spranger. For Rudolf—a ruler often alienated from religious and political advisers and eventually deposed by his brother—such images of male saints may have reflected his self-image as a misjudged, victimized, and even martyred ruler.

Etching, which allows the direct and rapid execution of a design with a needle on a waxed plate, is a medium well suited to Spranger's artistic expression. His masterful pen-and-ink drawings attest to his penchant for crisp, sharp strokes, as well as for imbuing his figures with a tension achieved by a fluid, elasticized line. His etchings likewise display this graphic approach, suggesting why he preferred etching to the more calculated and labored medium of engraving.² Many of his drawings are supremely finished independent works, which can be compared to his etchings. For example, Spranger's drawing *Mars and Venus* in Frankfurt (cat. 140) displays his aptitude for rapidly penning a multitude of lines to evoke depth and nuances of shade. This technique is especially visible in the background, in the cozy alcove of drapery surrounding the two lovers, and on the left arm of Venus. Spranger has also applied this practice to Saint Sebastian's face in the etching. The upper half of the face is devoid of shading lines, the lower half covered with parallel lines, thus effectively conveying the downward tilt of the head.

These etchings show Spranger the draftsman in a raw state. The technical trappings of engraving are unavailable in etching, as are the accoutrements of

drawing, such as applying wash or heightening for body contouring and three-dimensional modeling. But in his etchings a simple curve or a subtle variation in the thickness of a line could create an illusion of depth, tonality, and texture. Spranger exploited the unadorned line in his etchings, clustering strokes effortlessly in order to achieve specific effects. The wispy lines in the wings of the eagle in *Saint John the Evangelist* evoke the softness of the feathers, markedly contrasting with the stiff material of the Evangelist's book. Saint Bartholomew's hair is composed of S-curve strokes in tufts that frame the aging saint's face and add a suggestion of his remote, spiritual nature. Spranger used cross-hatching extensively. The more complicated the crisscrossing of lines, the more deeply the forms recede into the background.

The rapid-fire execution of the etchings betrays an experimental quality. There is nothing calculated or labored in the three compositions, and the plates are, for the most part, lightly bitten. Some might argue against the success of Spranger's etchings, citing an amateurish quality and the reversed signatures. But this backward signature was not the result of ineptitude. Since the prints were completed in succession, Spranger could easily have made the necessary corrections to his second and third etchings. It seems to have been an intentional expression of spontaneity and rapidity of execution. Nor can his etchings be regarded as amateurish, for they were admired in his day, as attested by the contemporary copies made from them. One drawing, now in the British Museum (SL,5236.5), replicates Spranger's *Saint John the Evangelist* so effectively that the sheet was formerly attributed (incorrectly) to Spranger himself. Another drawing, in Prague's Národní Galerie (K-1289), astutely copies the Saint Sebastian etching. Replicating the etching line for line in pen and ink would have been a laborious task, thus validating the high esteem commanded by Spranger's etchings. Most surprising is how effectively these prints were translated into pen-and-ink drawings, confirming the narrow distance in his artistic conception between etching and drawing.

The function and purpose of Spranger's etchings remain unclear. The previous royal engraver, Martino Rota, had died in 1583, and Aegedius Sadeler II was not appointed until 1597, eight years after Spranger's first etching. So it is possible that Spranger's activities as etcher may have served an official function. He may also have explored etching as a way to exercise his draftsmanship and to experiment with the technology of printmaking. Such interest in novel techniques would not have been surprising at the intellectual Prague court, which was a stimulating environment for eclectic creative pursuits. Prints, and most probably the artistic and creative process of making etchings, would have piqued the interest of Rudolf, who reveled in the mysterious and complex, even establishing an alchemical laboratory at Prague

Castle. When the emperor encountered one of Hendrick Goltzius's ambiguous "pen works"—a trompe l'oeil painting drawn on canvas to resemble an engraving—he solicited experts to help him solve the mystery of the inexplicable technique.³ In this same spirit, Rudolf would likely have exhibited curiosity about the process of etching, the biting of the waxed plate with chemicals in order to create an object of artistic beauty, and the need to reverse the design. His interest in the mechanics of art is evident from his insistence that Spranger maintain his workshop within the castle walls, giving Rudolf control over production and daily access to the studio. His involvement was by no means merely passive, as he engaged in artistic pursuits of his own. A curious drawing in Erlangen has Rudolf's signature on the verso.⁴ The emperor also tried his hand at the lathe, which is confirmed by an inventory that mentions hippopotamus tusks turned by Rudolf himself, and by 1599 he had installed a turning workshop at Prague Castle, supervised by Georg Wecker.⁵

Long before the birth of Rudolf's collection, prints formed a niche in princely collections.⁶ Etchings represented only one of the many types of objects in the Kunstkammer, but just as tastes varied among the princes and rulers of central Europe, so too did the appeal of prints. The inventories of Rudolf's Kunstkammer do not list each print in his collection, but some do mention copper plates of engravings, including plates engraved after designs by Spranger.⁷ It is unlikely that Rudolf would have admired a print as much as a painting, an object he alone would possess. Nonetheless, as a fusion of technology or science with art, etchings would have represented a valued element in Rudolf's Kunstkammer.

Notes

1. Niederstein (1931, pp. 12–13) posits that in all probability the Saint Bartholomew print, in which the saint holds a knife, was confused with Saint Paul, who is often depicted holding a sword, and therefore scholars incorrectly assumed that there were two different prints. Hollstein (1949–, vol. 28, pp. 24–25, nos. 1–3) agrees.

2. Writing about artists working in Spranger's milieu, Riggs comments: "In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century etching continued to be . . . a medium used occasionally by artists who did not wish to learn the craft of engraving." See Riggs and Silver 1993, p. 114.

3. This account appears in van Mander's biography of Goltzius. See Nichols 1992, esp. p. 4. He speculates that the object Rudolf saw was likely *Without Ceres*

and *Bacchus, Venus Would Freeze*, ca. 1600–1603 (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1990-100-1).

4. The drawing, in the Universitätsbibliothek Erlangen-Nürnberg (910), depicts the Madonna praying before the sleeping Christ Child and is signed *Keißer Rudolf: zu Prag fec.*

5. See Melion 1993, esp. pp. 81–84.

6. Fučíková (in Edinburgh 1991, p. 21) mentions that prints were regarded as "works of art sui generis, equal to the paintings and drawings of any one master."

7. Two plates engraved by Aegidius Sadeler II after Spranger appear in Kunstkammer inventories:

1. *Pallas and the Muses*. 2. *Hercules Spins While Omphale Holds His Club*. See Bauer and Haupt 1976, nos. 1984, 2004.

CATALOGUE OF ETCHINGS

157

Saint Bartholomew, 1589

Sheet: $6\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ in. (15.4 × 11.3 cm)

Albertina, Vienna (HB50[1] fol.53,34)

Signed and dated in reverse, bottom: *Bartholomeus Sprangers antverpiensius fecit per prova priema in praga 1589* (Bartholomeus Spranger of Antwerp made as first try in Prague 1589)

Spranger began his series of etchings with this depiction of his namesake. As his first etching, it bears an extensive signature indicating the place and date of execution—Prague, 1589. The inverse signature is intriguing for an artist as dexterous as Spranger, either a novice's mistake or intentional cleverness, possibly mirroring the practice of Leonardo da Vinci.

Strategically placed parallel lines convey shadow and light, adding expressive and pictorial effects to the portrait of Bartholomew. The saint's right hand, balancing what is likely the book of Gospels, is an elaborate network of lines. Spranger relied on his usual convention of repeated parallel lines near the saint's beard, but the webbing around the hand and book is a new graphic device.

LITERATURE: Niederstein 1931, pp. 12–13 (with earlier literature); Oberhuber 1958, no. S1; Strech 1996, no. 1.



157 (DETAIL)



Feit & grove firma in brodo 1888
Bartolomeo / sprandens autpensionat



158

Saint Sebastian, Bound to a Tree,
ca. 1589
Sheet: 7⁷/₈ × 3¹/₁₆ in. (20 × 9.1 cm)
National Gallery of Art, Washington;
Gift of Ruth Cole Kainen (2012.92.152)

Signed in reverse, bottom: B / SPRANG-
ERS. ANTvs / F / 2

Spranger also painted an altarpiece featuring Saint Sebastian for the Augustinian church of Saint Thomas in Prague (cat. 78). Here the saint stands alone, in contrast to the dynamic crowd of soldiers and horses surrounding Sebastian in the painting. The large, sinuous tree trunk in the etching cleverly mimics the Mannerist profile of the saint's body.

LITERATURE: Niederstein 1931, pp. 12–13; Oberhuber 1958, no. S2; Luijten 1994, no. 85; Strech 1996, no. 2.



159

Saint John the Evangelist, ca. 1590–96
 Sheet: 5¹⁵/₁₆ × 8 in. (15.1 × 20.3 cm)
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The
 Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha
 Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.95.1868)

IN EXHIBITION

Signed in reverse, upper left: *B / SPRANGERS: ANTvs / F / 3*

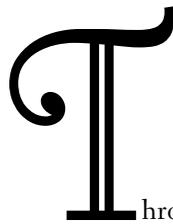
Saint John the Evangelist is the third in Spranger's series of engravings. Unlike traditional depictions of John, in which the eagle plays only a minor role as identifying attribute, here the two share equal space, the eagle nearly dominating. The bird's wing provides a sweeping backdrop for the elegant profile of the young saint. Spranger has twisted the eagle's head in Mannerist fashion to look directly at the saint, as

if they were engaged in conversation. God's presence is suggested by the diagonal lines sweeping in from the right, a few of them even touching Saint John's plumed pen. Almost imperceptible, the letters *BART* can be glimpsed along the outside edge of the plume.

LITERATURE: Niederstein 1931, pp. 12–13; Oberhuber 1958, no. S3; Luijten 1994, no. 86; Strech 1996, no. 3.

Spranger in Print





Throughout Spranger's career, printmakers jockeyed for the privilege of making engravings of his paintings and drawings. They created more than seventy engravings using his designs, responding to an increasing demand from collectors. At the same time, scholars and humanists began to theorize about the organization of a proper collection, or *Kunstkammer*, and prints played a role in this evaluation. Foremost among these collectors and scholars was Samuel Quicchelberg, who served both Johann Jakob Fugger in Augsburg and later Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria. In 1565 Quicchelberg published *Inscriptiones vel Tituli Theatri amplissimi*, proposing that knowledge could be gathered into a universal theater.¹ His complex and often quirky system of categorization (such as excluding oversized objects) placed engravings in the same category as paintings. The attention he paid to engravings and the resultant increase in their estimation explains in part the enthusiastic reception by engravers of Spranger's designs. Printmaking also became a lucrative endeavor: an engraving of 1607 by Aegidius Sadeler II depicts a bustling art fair held inside Vladislav Hall in Prague Castle, and engravings are visible among the motley wares offered in the stalls.²

Few of Spranger's original drawings used by engravers have survived, thus the engravings after him often serve much more than a reproductive purpose. They present his stylistic genesis in a sphere distinct from his paintings and drawings, illustrating the depth of his artistic capacity for composition and design. His subject matter for prints embraces saints and nymphs, gods and goddesses. The engraver usually inscribed his name, Spranger's name, and the name of any additional publisher. Dates are sometimes present, sometimes not. Latin verse embellishes most of these engravings, usually placed below the image and separated from the design. Erudite Latin poets contributed the verses; chief among them were Franco Estius, a Catholic humanist from Haarlem, and Cornelis Schoneus and Theodor Schrevelius, principals of the Latin school in that city.³ The poetry enlivens the engravings and often casts a different light on the designs—for example, offering a new reading of what could have seemed merely an erotic composition. Prints were more widely distributed than unique drawings or paintings and hence more likely to be seen by censors and church authorities, so adding moralistic Latin verse would have forestalled complaints. Such was perhaps the case with Spranger's *Mars and Venus* engraved by Hendrick Goltzius (cat. 182), a ribald portrayal of sexuality bordering on

the offensive. On other occasions, prolix Latin dedications illuminate the compositions, as with Aegidius Sadeler II's print *The Three Marys Returning from the Tomb*, dedicated to Archduchess Marie of Austria (cat. 216). Here, as in other instances, the theme or narrative is explained, further highlighting connections between subject matter and dedication.

THE ENGRAVERS

About twenty-one different engravers translated with burin and steel plate Spranger's original designs. Nearly all hailed from the Netherlands. They slightly favored Spranger's secular allegories but engraved several of his religious designs as well. Many had their own particular preferences for subject matter and their own artistic personalities—often the prints are more about the engraver than about Spranger. Foremost among them was Hendrick Goltzius, who used Spranger's work to develop his own novel form of artistic expression. Several other talented engravers, such as Jan Harmensz. Muller, Jacob Matham, and Aegidius Sadeler II, also used Spranger's paintings and drawings as a springboard for their own bravura engravings. Later, countless others copied these engravings in turn, proliferating Spranger's designs for decades. Those copies, engravings after engravings, reveal which designs and themes were popular in Spranger's time and later. Two standouts in particular are the whimsical *Ceres and Bacchus Flee Venus* and *Oreads Removing a Thorn from a Satyr's Foot* (cats. 191, 192).

Goltzius reigned as the major force in disseminating Spranger's style, but he focused on Spranger for only a relatively short time. In 1583, in Haarlem, van Mander showed him several Spranger drawings that he had presumably attained while collaborating with Spranger in Vienna.⁴ Enraptured by this new artistic idiom, Goltzius transformed Spranger's designs into engravings of unrivaled brilliance. Both artists were already famous in their own right, but when they joined artistic forces they rose to international stardom. Spranger's style now reached far beyond Rudolf's private chambers: a merchant in Haarlem could relish a Spranger mythology and a priest in Rome could cherish one of his devotional images. The collaboration was equally beneficial to Goltzius. From 1585 to 1588 he engraved Spranger's designs using a new technique, introducing a "flowing play of swelling and tapering lines."⁵ This aesthetic of "flowing play" stands at the crux of Spranger's graphic technique.

Goltzius's manner of interpreting Spranger's designs varied sharply throughout this brief phase. Prints featuring religious themes evoke an Italianate and classical style, such as *The Holy Family before a Column* (cat. 172) and *Adam and Eve with the Serpent* (cat. 170), in which an unusually flat Eve is contrasted with Adam's

masculine physique of articulated muscles. Goltzius broke from this tempered religiosity and produced in 1587 the most ambitious print generated in decades: *The Wedding of Cupid and Psyche* (cat. 178). Thereafter he produced engravings of Spranger designs exhibiting passion and a sensual muscularity, even in religious works such as his *Dead Christ Supported by Angels* (cat. 171), which harkens back to Michelangelo, presenting a tribute to the Italian master's Pietà compositions. The pronounced muscularity of Christ in Goltzius's engraving signals a new path of artistic expression for both artist and engraver. Comparing his engravings after Spranger to those he made after other artists reveals to what extent he interpreted Spranger's stylistic nuances versus imparting his own artistry. He brilliantly captured Spranger's conception and aesthetic intent, raised to a new level by his mastery of burin techniques. Rather than merely recording Spranger's design, Goltzius transformed it, their collaboration fusing their two creative forces into one masterful result.

The Sadeler family of engravers first directed their energies toward Spranger in a series of religious prints by Johannes Sadeler I. His work conveys scant new artistic invention, featuring half-length portraits of Saints Francis, Dominic, and Jerome that offer soothing images on which to meditate (cats. 167–69). Such prints would have been popular during the Counter-Reformation surge in Bohemia and beyond. Several of his prints are dated 1580–82, so the designs likely stemmed from Spranger's days in Vienna. Aegidius Sadeler II, Johannes's nephew, was the family's most prolific and talented engraver of Spranger designs. Born in Antwerp in 1568, his life changed completely when he moved to Prague to become royal printmaker for Rudolf. Aegidius's prints span much of Spranger's creative output, from the mid-1570s to 1606. The two artists knew each other; in fact, Sadeler lived in one of Spranger's houses.⁶ His allegory on the death of Spranger's wife ranks among the most poignant and compositionally poetic works of the Rudolfiner milieu (cat. 217).

Aegidius Sadeler II composed engravings after several of Spranger's paintings, but interestingly his inscriptions refer to Spranger as *inventor* rather than using *pinxit* (as Lucas Kilian did). He adeptly communicated the rich chiaroscuro of Spranger's mature works, as in his engraving *The Three Marys Returning from the Tomb*. Sadeler rose to imperial engraver in 1597 and therefore would have had firsthand knowledge of Spranger's paintings. Spranger's *Three Marys at the Tomb* (cat. 72) is signed and dated 1598, and Sadeler's engraving of it is dated 1600, so there is no doubt he made his print after the painting. Aegidius engraved one of two versions of Spranger's painting of the post-Resurrection Christ as gardener (cat. 208); the other, engraved by his uncle Johannes (cat. 209), acknowledges Spranger's role as painter in the inscription. Another print by Aegidius closely related to a painting by Spranger is *The Triumph of Wisdom* (cat. 202). Many of the original elements and

the overall scheme of the painting *Minerva Vanquishing Ignorance* (cat. 67) are present in Sadeler's engraving, yet its composition is not as refined as that of the painting, the central figure of Wisdom being more static than Spranger's Minerva. Along with Martino Rota, Sadeler was the only engraver awarded the title of royal printmaker to the court. He died in Prague in 1625 and was buried in the Augustinian church of Saint Thomas, the site of Spranger's altarpiece of Saint Sebastian (cat. 78).⁷

A most lively collaboration ensued between Spranger and the engraver Jan Harmensz. Muller, born in Amsterdam a generation after Spranger. An inheritor but by no means an imitator of the Goltzius tradition, the gifted Muller was meticulous yet lyrical. Of the twelve engravings he made after Spranger, about half are dated. Muller may have worked in the Goltzius workshop before 1590, and if so it seems that all his engravings after Spranger were made after leaving the Haarlem workshop. About this time his father, Harmen Jansz. Muller, became the publisher of his prints. Jan Muller also favored the designs of Rudolfine artists Hans von Aachen and Adriaen de Vries (to whom he was related by marriage).

Even though Muller's engravings after Spranger stem from after 1590, he had access to earlier Spranger designs. Indeed, Muller's prints after Spranger such as *The Holy Family and Two Music-Making Angels* and *Venus and Mercury* (cats. 189, 190) bear a stronger affinity in design and technique with those by Goltzius than his later prints do. Once he broke from the spell of Goltzius, Muller's prints developed an ardent sense of individual style; he expertly shaded the figures and added nuances of shadows and light effects. Meticulous and abundant hatching partly achieved this, as well as a strong three-dimensionality and overall painterliness. Prints dated later, primarily from the 1600s, present more pronounced, sculptural forms, reflecting Muller's encounters with de Vries.

Muller also engraved some of Spranger's most iconic and propagandistic images created at the dawn of the seventeenth century, such as *Bellona Leading the Armies of the Emperor against the Turks* (cat. 212). According to Filedt Kok, Muller sent proofs back to Spranger, who meticulously corrected them (see fig. 69).⁸ Thus several engravings by Muller honestly and faithfully replicate the original design by Spranger. The propagandistic tone dissipated in Muller's last print for Spranger: an elaborate devotional image, *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, that features earthly and heavenly figures congregating to celebrate the holy birth amid the tenebristic effects of nocturnal lighting (cat. 223).

Like Muller, Jacob Matham, the stepson and pupil of Goltzius, represents the second generation of Northern Mannerist artists engraving Spranger. Receiving a royal privilege, or copyright, from Rudolf in 1601, Matham engraved only a handful

of prints after Spranger, but these rank among his most detailed and thematically varied. Matham's 1610 engraving of Spranger's *Flight into Egypt* has a charming pastoral flavor (cat. 228), and the classical, solid figures lend an early Baroque attitude to a design reflecting Spranger's later years as well. Matham's other two engravings after Spranger, *The Triumph of Venus over Neptune* and *The Vestal Virgin Tuccia* (cats. 200, 224), present multifigure compositions, with no one principal figure or pair dominating—a detour from Spranger's usual approach.

Pieter de Jode I is another leading exponent of the second generation of engravers after Goltzius. His works after Spranger exhibit unrivaled technical finesse and perception in translating Spranger's lyricism, in part because of his training with Goltzius and his pride in Spranger as a fellow artist from Antwerp. During the last decade of the sixteenth century, de Jode was in Rome, where he composed engravings after Italian masters, predominantly the Mannerists. His prints after Spranger, more than those of the other artists he engraved, display a Mannerist splendor and acuity. De Jode captured Spranger's design *Neptune and Venus* in a most alluring and sensual engraving (cat. 186), translating the electricity between the couple. He applied congeries of horizontal and vertical lines to render rounded, fleshy forms, encapsulating the spirit of Spranger in his disciplined control of line.

The Augsburg native Lucas Kilian ranks among the most diverse interpreters of Spranger in terms of thematic range, engraving both religious and allegorical subjects and applying a Mannerist muscularity to his figures. He spent 1601–4 in Italy, including a year's sojourn in Venice, and engraved his first design after Spranger shortly thereafter. Filled with Italian spirit, his religious prints—such as *The Holy Family with the Infant Saint John the Baptist and an Angel* and *The Holy Family with the Infant Saint John the Baptist and Musical Angels* (cats. 221, 222), both made in 1605—burst with energy and elasticity of form. Kilian achieved a sense of depth by his masterful shading and meticulous hatching, and he applied this same intensity to his engravings after Spranger's allegorical images. Interestingly, these engravings share motifs, whether religious or allegorical. He worked primarily for his stepfather, the successful publisher Domenicus Custos, in Augsburg. Kilian also engraved designs after Joseph Heintz the Elder, who had residences in both Prague and Augsburg and may have transported drawings by Spranger to Kilian. After the early Kilian engravings from 1604–5, a second phase marks a powerful new artistic direction, whereby his prints incorporate figures featuring an unprecedented degree of muscular attenuation. The masterful *Hercules and Antaeus* and *Saint Jerome and the Lion*, both from 1610 (cats. 226, 227), exude a powerful Mannerist flair, displaying forms of intense physicality but never reaching the full-blown musculature of figures by Goltzius.

In contrast to those consistently producing works after Spranger, a few artists interpreted Spranger only once or twice, such as the brothers Zacharias and Bartholomeus Willemsz. Dolendo. They engraved very similar erotic compositions representing Spranger's mature phase in Prague and his penchant for couples intertwined in Mannerist and sexually charged poses. Other infrequent visitors to Spranger's designs were Joannes Bara, Egbert van Panderen, and Gillis (Aegidius) Horbeck, the latter an obscure figure who engraved a multigure *Baptism of Christ* after Spranger (cat. 165). The German artist Anton Eisenhoit, born in Warburg (near Kassel) in 1553 or 1554, engraved two designs after Spranger, one of which is a notable version of Spranger's popular couple *Hercules and Omphale* (cat. 195). Eisenhoit was also a goldsmith, a natural expression of his talent for precision and meticulous design. He lived for a time in Italy, working in Rome and engraving a few designs after Taddeo Zuccaro's *Ecce Homo* fresco in Santa Maria della Consolazione and a portrait of Pope Gregory XIII, so he shared with Spranger similar artistic experiences in the eternal city.⁹

Most surviving prints after Spranger represent a collaboration between a coeval designer and engraver, an alliance so close that Spranger sometimes corrected the engraver's proofs. Others were more distant relationships, in which the engraver used Spranger's drawing as merely the foundation for his print. Andrea Scacciati from Florence (1644–1710) left behind an important legacy of Spranger's creativity. His print *The Competition between Apollo and Pan* (cat. 229) illustrates a subject known from Spranger's painting and drawing (cats. 24, 104), and it could record Spranger's inception of the theme.

A few engravers even turned to Spranger designs more than a century after his death, such as Jan Jiří Balzer, who preserved for posterity several compositions attributed to Spranger for which the original designs are completely unknown.¹⁰ Born in 1736 or 1738 in the Bohemian town of Kuks, Balzer ran a successful publishing house in Prague with his brothers Mathias and Gregor, publishing designs by the Italians Guido Reni and Parmigianino and by Rudolfiner court artists such as Matthäus Gundelach and Spranger.¹¹ Two prints inscribed by Balzer as "after Spranger" feature designs never witnessed elsewhere, suggesting that Balzer could have copied original works by Spranger that are now lost or destroyed. He engraved two versions of *Danae*, each bearing the same signature, "Spranger del." and "J. Balzer fe." (cats. 230, 231). They reflect Spranger's style, so reason exists to suspect that the original drawing was by Spranger. Balzer also inscribed an engraving depicting Venus, Cupid, and Neptune with Spranger's name; this composition is based on two drawings known today only through anonymous copies attributed to "after Spranger,"

both in reverse of Balzer's composition and nearly identical.¹² He signed this engraving similarly to the others: "Spranger del. J. Balzer fe," again implying that he copied drawings rather than paintings by Spranger.

Spranger was the creator of designs that brought fame to many engravers, and this enterprise benefited him as well, for without the engravers, both contemporary and posthumous, he might never have attained such international renown. Working almost exclusively for Rudolf II, he was relatively isolated. Most of his paintings hung for many years at court, hidden from public view. It was indeed the engravers, the famous like Goltzius and the not-so-famous like Balzer, who ensured that Spranger's evocative Mannerist masterpieces would endure through the centuries.

Notes

1. See Hajós 1958 for an excellent exposition on Quicchelberg's treatise. Quicchelberg went even further by suggesting how to organize a collection of engravings, primarily dividing them by subject matter—the Bible, saints, portraits, etc.

2. Limouze (1989, p. 10) maintains the scene in Vladislav Hall showed not a special "fair" but a common occurrence.

3. Franco Estius (1544–1594) was born two years before Spranger but died nearly a decade before him. Cornelis Schoneus is also a contemporary of Spranger, as he lived 1540–1611. Theodor Schrevelius (1572–1649) represents the second generation of poets.

4. In the Goltzius biography in *Het Schilder-boeck* (1603–4), van Mander mentions that he showed drawings by Spranger to the engraver in 1583 (fol. 274).

5. See Filedt Kok 1993, esp. p. 167.

6. When Aegidius first arrived in Prague, he resided at the home of Hans von Aachen, who owned property within the Hradčany. Later, in 1608, Sadeler rented a part of the residential complex owned by Spranger, the property along the Zámecká Schody. Limouze 1990, p. 140.

7. Recent research has uncovered a document of the Saint Thomas church mentioning the burial of Sadeler in 1625. This is a revision from the previously listed dates of 1628 and 1629. See Limouze in Volrábová and Kubíková 2012, p. 140 n. 14.

8. See Filedt Kok 1994, esp. p. 249.

9. For more on Eisenhoit, see the exhibition catalogue devoted to him: Stiegemann 2003.

10. Balzer first trained under Michael Heinrich Rentz, who worked for the distinguished patron Count Franz Anton von Sporck. He dedicated much of his energy to engraving delicate landscapes and other designs by his friend the Bohemian painter Norbert Joseph Carl Grund (1717–1767). Among Balzer's chief works were ninety plates engraved with portraits of artists and learned men of Bohemia and Moravia. These were published in 1775 in Prague by Johann Karl Hraba under the title *Abbildungen böhmischer und mährischer Gelehrten und Künstler, nebst Kurzen Nachrichten von ihren Leben und Werken*.

11. Balzer engraved Gundelach's drawing *Mercury Discovers Herse*, now in the Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest (81). Gundelach signed and dated his drawing "M. Gundelach F. 1613," and Balzer's print is signed: "M. Gundelach del. 1613, J. Balzer fe." The print is in the opposite direction of the drawing.

12. *Venus, Cupid, and Neptune*, etching and aquatint, 8¾ × 6¾ in. (21.1 × 16.3 cm), Národní Galerie, Prague (R-2331). Balzer's print follows more closely the sheet now in the collection of the Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, and in fact its dimensions are almost identical. Unlike the other version of Spranger's drawing, now in Berlin, the Budapest drawing and Balzer's engraving delineate the foliage sprouting from the tree, in particular the grapes and leaves above Cupid's head. Another engraving in the Národní Galerie by Balzer, also inscribed by him as after Spranger (R-33962), depicts an antique figure and is far removed from Spranger—likely after Abraham Bloemaert.

CATALOGUE OF ENGRAVINGS AFTER SPRANGER

This catalogue presents all the known primary engravings produced after Spranger's designs. It emphasizes his creative input and approach to a particular theme rather than the specific qualities and mechanics of the print. Preparatory drawings by Spranger for most of these prints no longer exist, so even though the engravings are not by his own hand, they augment understanding of his artistic development. The catalogue illuminates the reception of Spranger's designs, showing who was engraving them, when they were engraved, and the preferences for certain themes and designs. Some, but by no means all, of the copies made after the engravings — in the form of paintings, drawings, or engravings — are noted at the end of the relevant entries. The extent of these copies indicates Spranger's popularity and influence. Recording all of them would be nearly impossible, as they are geographically and numerically boundless.

Unless otherwise indicated, all prints are engravings after Spranger; when etching is also present, that is duly noted. Because Spranger's designs are the primary interest, the first finished state is usually illustrated and discussed; the various other states of the engraving are not the focus, and they are presented only when revealing a noteworthy aspect of Spranger's design.

Further details concerning states and impressions can be found in the Hollstein and Bartsch references listed under literature. The catalogue is compiled in chronological order, according to either the design date or the date inscribed on the print. Dimensions, unless otherwise indicated, are for the plate. The collection credit and the inventory number refer to the particular impression illustrated.

Expanding the dissertation of Konrad Oberhuber (1958) and the master's thesis of Annette Strech (1996), this catalogue is the first to provide an illustration and a commentary for each known engraving after Spranger. It is also the first to transcribe and translate all the inscriptions accompanying Spranger's designs. Francesca Tataranni provided astute translations of the Latin verse; all other translations are my own.

160

Cornelis Cort (Netherlandish, Hoorn, ca. 1533–1578 Rome)

Saint Dominic Reading, print 1573

13 × 8¾ in. (32.9 × 21.3 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.95.1827)

Inscribed and dated lower left: *BER-
THOLOMEE SPRANGHERS INVE. /
Corneli cort fe. / 1573*

Cort was in Rome in 1572–73 and associated with Giulio Clovio, so he almost certainly would have known Spranger. He probably obtained Spranger's *Saint Dominic Reading* (cat. 89), one of the earliest known drawings from his Rome years, through Clovio. The religious simplicity of the theme found numerous admirers, and several versions of the print exist.

Spranger's preparatory drawing for *Saint Dominic Reading* has been incised and pricked for transfer, but differences occur between the drawing and the engraving in both the size and the composition — for example, the approach to the lily held by Dominic. Cort also added more detail to the landscape, in particular the distant village signaling Dominic's retreat from secular life. Thus, there was likely another, more precise final preparatory drawing for Cort's engraving, now lost or destroyed in the process of engraving.¹

NOTES

1. Kaufmann (1982a, pp. 138–40) plausibly proposes that a drawing now in the Louvre provided the intermediate stage between Spranger's drawing and the engraving. The Louvre drawing (21.232) has been squared for transfer, and its dimensions are similar to those of Spranger's drawing, yet the design is in reverse. The cursory nature and spare execution of the Louvre drawing make this attribution disputable. Alternatively, Cort may be its author, but the style seems to deny his hand. The existence of other versions of this engraving,



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in particular by Hieronymus Wierix and Antonio Tempesta, further complicates the issue concerning which drawing served as the first or final version for Cort. Kaufmann mentions that the Louvre drawing

is not stylistically related to Spranger, Cort, or Wierix.

LITERATURE: Bierens de Haan 1948, no. 127; Sellink 2000, vol. 2, no. 126.106.1.

161

Crispijn de Passe the Elder (Netherlandish, Arnemuïden 1564–1637 Utrecht)

Saints Anthony, John the Baptist, and Elizabeth, design 1572–75

Published by Hans van Luyck

Sheet: 9⁷/₈ × 7¹/₂ in. (25 × 19 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.95.1834)

Inscribed bottom: *Barthol. Spranger Invent. // Crispin d.p.fecit // Hans van Luyck excud. // S. Antonivs. // S. Iohannes Baptista. // S. Elisabetha.*

According to van Mander, after the death of Pope Pius V, Spranger's first major public work was a painting depicting Saints Anthony, John the Baptist, and Elizabeth, for the church of San Luigi dei Francesi. The church was still under construction in 1572 and not fully consecrated until 1589. Though the altarpiece no longer exists, de Passe's engraving offers a glimpse of a quintessential work by Spranger from his late Roman phase.

Italian antecedents are evident in Spranger's design: Saint Elizabeth is inspired by Raphael, and the central figure of John suggests work by Federico Zuccaro in the chapel at Caprarola. The gestures overall recall Parmigianino. Most striking is the repetition of the Madonna and Child in another print after Spranger, this time by Anton Wierix II; see his *Madonna and Child in the Moon* (cat. 162). Wierix also engraved a copy of de Passe's Saints Anthony, John the Baptist, and Elizabeth (in reverse and with no reference to Spranger). The design made its way to Bohemia in 1607, particularly the



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central figure of Saint John the Baptist, which is evident in Elias Hauptner's epitaph for the provost John Sternsky in Saint Wenceslas Cathedral in Olomouc.¹

Saint Anthony is draped in heavy robes reminiscent of Spranger's drawing of Saint Dominic for Cort's engraving (cats. 89, 160). He is shown in a similar mode of understated Mannerism and shares Saint Dominic's spiritual remove from worldly affairs. The two figures also share a contrapposto pose.

De Passe was active in Antwerp but left in 1585 to avoid impending religious unrest. He engraved designs by

Flemish artists, especially Joos van Winghe and Maerten de Vos, making a detour to the Italianate Mannerism of Spranger. His *Saints Anthony, John the Baptist, and Elizabeth* engraving was likely made from someone else's drawing of the San Luigi dei Francesi altarpiece rather than firsthand observation.

NOTES

1. For an image of Hauptner's epitaph, see Bartlová and Šroněk 2007, p. 212.

LITERATURE: Mander 1994 [1603–4], p. 342; Hollstein 1949–, vol. 15, no. 254; Devisscher 1995, cat. no. 201.

162

Anton Wierix II (Netherlandish, Antwerp, ca. 1559–1604 Antwerp) *Madonna and Child in the Moon*, design 1570s

Published by Anton Wierix II

3¼ × 2¾ in. (8.1 × 5.9 cm)

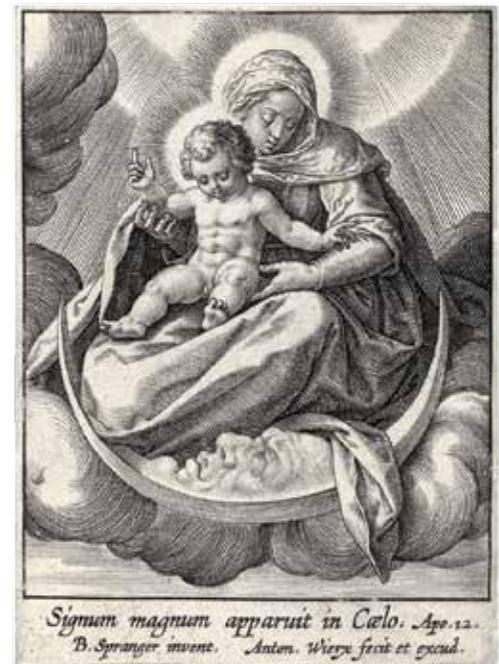
Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (RP-P-1910-1758)

Inscribed bottom: *B. Spranger invent. // Anton. Wierix fecit et excud.*

Latin verse: *Signum magnum apparuit in Caelo. Apo. 12.*

Translation: A great sign appeared in Heaven. Apocalypse 12

This motif of the Madonna and Child in the clouds is nearly identical to that in the upper tier of Crispijn de Passe's engraving *Saints Anthony, John the Baptist, and Elizabeth* (cat. 161). The initial inspiration for Wierix's print—whether Spranger's original painting in the church of San Luigi dei



Francesi or de Passe's engraving after it—cannot be determined. Interestingly, Wierix also made an engraving after the de Passe engraving, in reverse, but the signature makes no mention of Spranger as inventor.

LITERATURE: Mauquoy-Hendrickx 1978–83, vol. 1, no. 722; Ruyven-Zeman 2003–4, vol. 5, no. 995.

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Anton Wierix II (Netherlandish, Antwerp, ca. 1559–1604 Antwerp) *Saints Peter, John the Baptist, Paul, and the Holy Spirit*, design 1572–75
Published by Johannes Baptista Vrints
10⁹/₁₆ × 7⁷/₈ in. (26.8 × 20 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.95.1866)

Inscribed bottom: *Bartholomeus / Spranger invent. // Antonius Wirix fecit. // Joannes Baptista Vrints excudit.*

Latin verse: *EGO VOBISCVM SVM, ET SPIRITVS MEVS ERIT IN MEDIO VESTRI. AGG. II. / Quanta fuit quondam, mortales, cura salutis / Vatibus aethereis, picta tabella docet. // Aspicias ut sedeat totis ea sola medullis, / Corpora terra tenet, mens colit alta Poli.*

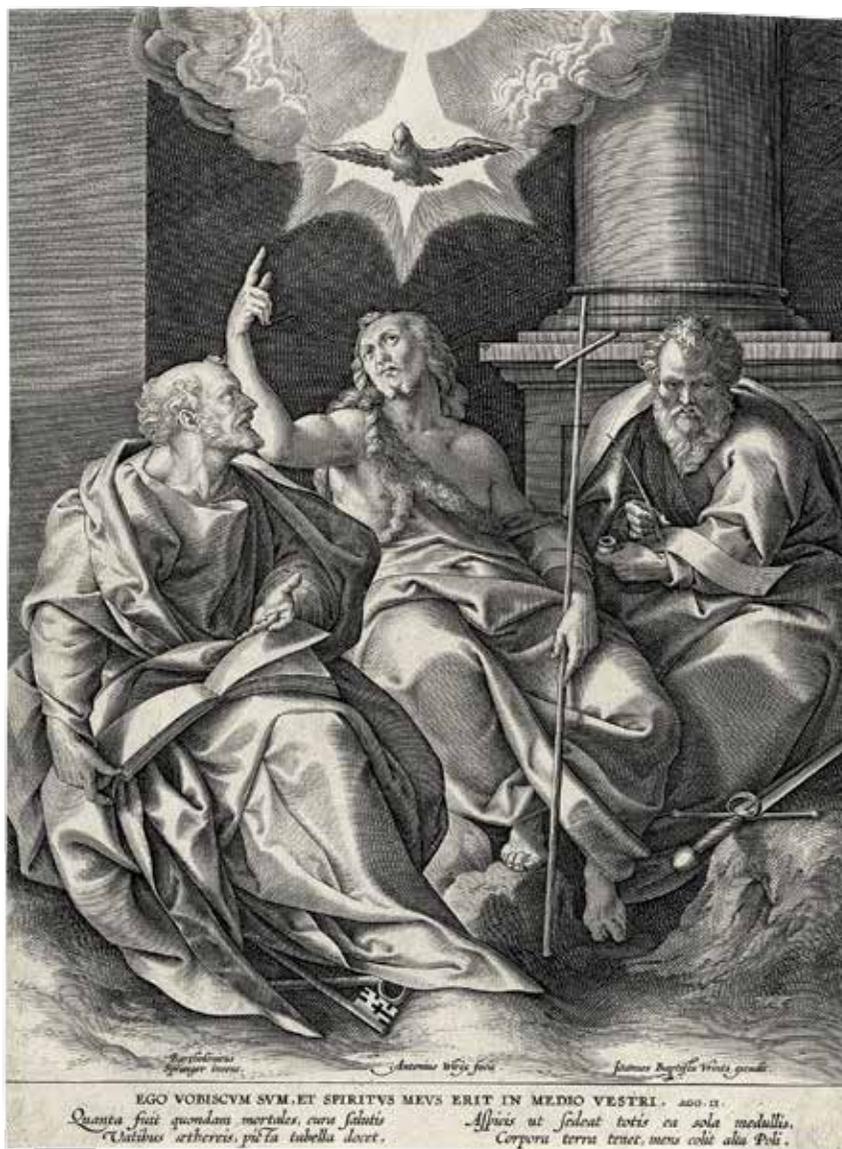
Translation: I am with you, and my spirit will be in the midst of you all. Aggeus 2 [from The Prophecy of Haggai, chapter 2]. O mortals, the painting shows how much the celestial prophets once cared for salvation. You see how salvation alone resides in the innermost depths of the human heart, earth holds the bodies, the mind attends to the height of heaven.

After the death of his papal patron in 1572, Spranger embarked on large-scale public commissions such as *The Martyrdom of Saint John the Evangelist*, his altarpiece for the church of San Giovanni a Porta Latina (cat. 14).

Though the print *Saints Peter, John the Baptist, Paul, and the Holy Spirit* exhibits traits from Spranger's later Roman period, especially the burgeoning monumentality, *grazia*, and piety, the precise date of the design is unknown. The Latin verse does seem to indicate that the source was a painting by Spranger, but it is not known if it was a public altar or a private work.

Enfolded in voluminous drapery, the figures are separate yet harmonious.

Each one stares in a different direction, engaged in a different activity but connected through physical placement and spiritual purpose. In the center sits Saint John, pointing up to the heavens. The static composition is enlivened on the left by Saint Peter, also gazing up, and Saint Paul, on the right, directing a piercing stare at the viewer. A subtle Roman, Michelangelesque monumentality is evident in the figure of Saint John. Considering the conservative



composition and pious theme, Spranger could have conceived the design for Pius V or shortly thereafter. There is an unmistakable correlation between this design—in particular, the figure of Saint John the Baptist—and the Saint John in Spranger's composition for San Luigi dei Francesi, a work definitely created after the pope's death in 1572 (see cat. 161).

The design was popular with contemporary engravers. Theodore Galle published it, and at least six different states with various alterations have been recorded by Strech.

LITERATURE: Mauquoy-Hendrickx 1978–83, vol. 2, no. 1184; Strech 1996, no. 69; Ruyven-Zeman 2003–4, vol. 6, no. 1215.

164

Monogrammist MGF

The Birth of the Virgin, design 1574,
print 1584

Published by Johannes Stadius

Sheet: 21⁵/₈ × 16⁹/₁₆ in. (55 × 42.1 cm)

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Gift of Robert
Bradford and Barbara Ketcham Wheaton
(2008.11)

IN EXHIBITION

Inscribed and dated bottom: MGF // Roma
1584 // Stacius Formis [Johannes Stadius] //
B.Sprangers Inventor.

Latin verse: *Nascere Virgo parens; tuus
hic mortalibus Ortus / Ingens praesidium
laetitiamque feret. // Nam DEVS, humanos
ex te dignabitur artus / Sumere, qui ueteris
crimina tollet Adae'. // Vita per hunc nobis
dabitur; mors non erit ultra'. / Nostri spes
generis, nascere Virgo parens.*

Translation: Be born, O Virgin mother; this
son of yours will bring great help and joy to
mortals. For God will deem himself worthy
of assuming a human body from you and will
take away the faults of old Adam. Life will
be given to us through him; there will be no



more death. Be born, O Virgin mother, hope
of our race.

Van Mander mentioned that he
witnessed Spranger painting an
altarpiece of the Birth of the Virgin in
1574 for a little church near the Trevi
Fountain in Rome. Though unnamed, it
was likely the Church of the Trinity
(S. Maria in Trivio, formerly known as

S. Maria in Synodo), which was dedicated
to the Virgin. This engraving preserves
the only surviving image of Spranger's
altarpiece. The date 1584 records the
year of the print's execution rather than
of Spranger's design, for he was living in
Prague by that time, and there is no
record he went back to Italy after 1575.

Traditionally, Matthäus Greuter from
Strasbourg was named as the engraver,

but he did not arrive in Rome until after 1600, which is too late for this print. In addition, other prints known to be by Greuter do not bear this MGF monogram, thus authorship must be reconsidered. An engraving of Saint Peter Martyr, published by Cristoforo Blanco about the same time as *The Birth of the Virgin*, is inscribed with the same monogram MGF and shows a face very similar to that of Joachim (British Museum, 1874,0808.1942). Other possible candidates are Michelangelo Guidi or Michele Greco da Lucca, but at this time the engraving can be firmly attributed only to Monogrammist MGF.

Elements of Zuccaresque style permeate Spranger's composition, and the design is related to Cornelis Cort's engraving of a painting by Taddeo Zuccaro on the same subject (fig. 60). In the Palazzo Pitti, there is a miniature from



Fig. 60. Cornelis Cort (Netherlandish, Hoorn, ca. 1533–1578 Rome), after Taddeo Zuccaro (Italian, Sant'Angelo in Vado 1529–1566 Rome). *The Birth of the Virgin*, 1568. Engraving, 12 × 8 in. (30.4 × 20.3 cm). The British Museum, London (U.5.139)



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1568 (inv. no. 688) that combines part of the design from this engraving and from the one by Cort. That same unidentified artist painted another miniature (inv. no. 680), titled *The Birth of the Virgin*, incorporating the background scene of Anna, Joachim, and a maidservant from cat. 164. Interestingly, the miniature from 1568 is titled *The Birth of Saint John the Baptist*.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1954–, vol. 12, p. 108.

COPIES: Drawing, Staatens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen (GB5702; catalogued as Zuccaro).

Gillis (Aegidius) Horbeck (Dutch or French, flourished ca. 1585)
The Baptism of Christ, design
 ca. 1570–75, print 1582–86
 Engraving and etching, 11 1/8 × 8 3/8 in.
 (28.1 × 21.2 cm)
 Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum,
 Amsterdam (RP-P-1892-A-17520)

Inscribed bottom: *B. Spranger inven // Gielius van hoorbeck fe*

Latin verse: *IN PATRIS IN FILII, SANCTIQVE IN NOMINE FLATVS / FOEDERIS ACCIPIVNT MOLLIA VINCLA NOVI*

Translation: In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, they receive the soft bonds of a new covenant.

This is the only known print that Horbeck engraved after Spranger, though in 1958 Oberhuber did note that another Horbeck print after Spranger, depicting the Holy Family, was mentioned in the card catalogue of the Berlin Kupferstichkabinett but could not be located.¹ Works by Horbeck after any artist are rare, and even his nationality is uncertain—either Dutch or French. A title page to a Bible dated 1587 is among the few other prints known by him (British Museum, 1918,0112.3). He flourished around 1585 and engraved designs after Cornelis Cort and Federico Zuccaro, connecting him to Spranger's Italian milieu, though possibly a bit later. He is also mentioned as possibly serving at the Munich court in 1582.²

In this composition, soldiers representing the pagan world and various other figures congregate on the banks of the River Jordan, waiting to be baptized after Saint John has finished Christ's baptism. Spranger's design clearly dates from his Italian years, evidenced by the graceful, Mannerist, and muscled figures and by the Italianate ruins at upper left. The cluster of God the Father and putti in the upper left corner is strikingly similar to a group in Spranger's painting *The Conversion of Saint Paul* (cat. 11). Decades later, Spranger would turn again to the Baptism of Christ for an epitaph commissioned for a church in Żórawina (cat. 80).

NOTES

1. Oberhuber 1958, no. S82; Strech 1996, no. 20. For more on Horbeck, see Nagler 1860, p. 608.
2. Nagler 1860, p. 608.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949–, vol. 9, no. 1; Oberhuber 1964, p. 182; Strech 1996, no. 20.



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Aegidius Sadeler II (Netherlandish, Antwerp 1568–1625 Prague) and Joris Hoefnagel (Netherlandish, Antwerp 1542–1601 Vienna)
The Rest on the Flight into Egypt, design ca. 1575, print ca. 1589–90
 8½ × 6¾ in. (21.5 × 16 cm)
 The British Museum, London (F.1.147)

Inscribed lower right: *B Spranger Inve. / G Sadl: Sc:*

Latin inscription at top: *SOLVM QVOD SALVET NOMEN // IHS // EMMA // NVEL // HABET.*

Translation: (Jesus) Emmanuel has the only name that saves.

On right side, a pentagram star with letters: SALVS // YGEIA (“Salvation” in Latin and Greek)

The picture sits on an altar pedestal, in which five lines are inscribed. The initial and concluding letters of each line are capitalized, and when read together vertically they become IESVS (Jesus).

Latin verse in pedestal: *In rebus tantis
Trina coniunctio mundi / Erigit humanum
sensum, laudare venustE / Sola salus nobis,
et mundi summa. potestaS / Venit peccati
nodum dissoluere fructV / Summa salus
cunctis nituit per secula terriS.*

Translation: In matters of such importance the threefold conjunction of the world inspires praise. The only salvation for us and the highest power of the world comes to loosen the bond of sin with the fruit. The highest salvation has begun to shine for the entire world through the ages.

Below inscription: *Damasus Epis: Romanus
Can:*

Translation: *Damasus, the Bishop of Rome,
sings*

Recondite symbols designed by Joris Hoefnagel surround this otherwise traditional composition by Spranger, whose preparatory drawing captures his original intentions (cat. 96). Sadeler engraved a compositionally related piece but used Hans von Aachen’s drawing of the Adoration of the Magi for the central design and again embellished the scene with an erudite border by Hoefnagel.¹ The composition of the Holy Family decisively speaks of Spranger’s early Italian period, reminiscent of Federico Barocci, Correggio, and Giulio Clovio’s miniatures. The symbolic border creates an alluring dichotomy of stylistic approaches. As Sadeler did not arrive in Prague until 1597, it is pure speculation how he came upon Spranger’s drawing. Hendrick Goltzius



might have introduced Sadeler to Spranger’s style during Goltzius’s visit to Munich in 1590. More likely Sadeler acquired Spranger’s drawing through Hoefnagel, who was in Rome by 1577 and was associated with the circle of Cardinal Farnese.

The esoteric engraving can be likened to a devotional talisman for Rudolf, fusing traditional religious imagery, Mannerist style, and intellectual trope, an ideal combination for the erudite emperor.

NOTES

1. For an illustration of Hoefnagel’s print based on von Aachen’s design, see Jacoby 2012, p. 106.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949–, vol. 21, no. 36; Limouze 1990, pp. 44–45; Strech 1996, vol. 1,

p. 12, vol. 2, p. 41; Fusenig 2010, p. 163, cat. no. 43; Jacoby 2012, pp. 104–7.

167

Johannes Sadeler I (Netherlandish,
Brussels 1550–1600 Venice)

Saint Francis, print 1580

Published in Antwerp

Third state

5⁷/₈ × 4³/₁₆ in. (14.9 × 10.7 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Harris
Brisbane Dick Fund, 1953 (53.601.13[196])

Inscribed lower left: *B. Spranger invetor /
I. Sadeler scalpsit Antuer.*

Inscription on first state: *S. FRANCISCO
// 1580 / B. Spranger invet. / I. Sadeler
excudit.*¹

Latin verse: *Christe sciant quecunq[ue],
alij, mihi sufficit una / Cognition[ue] mei,
cognition[ue] tuj.*

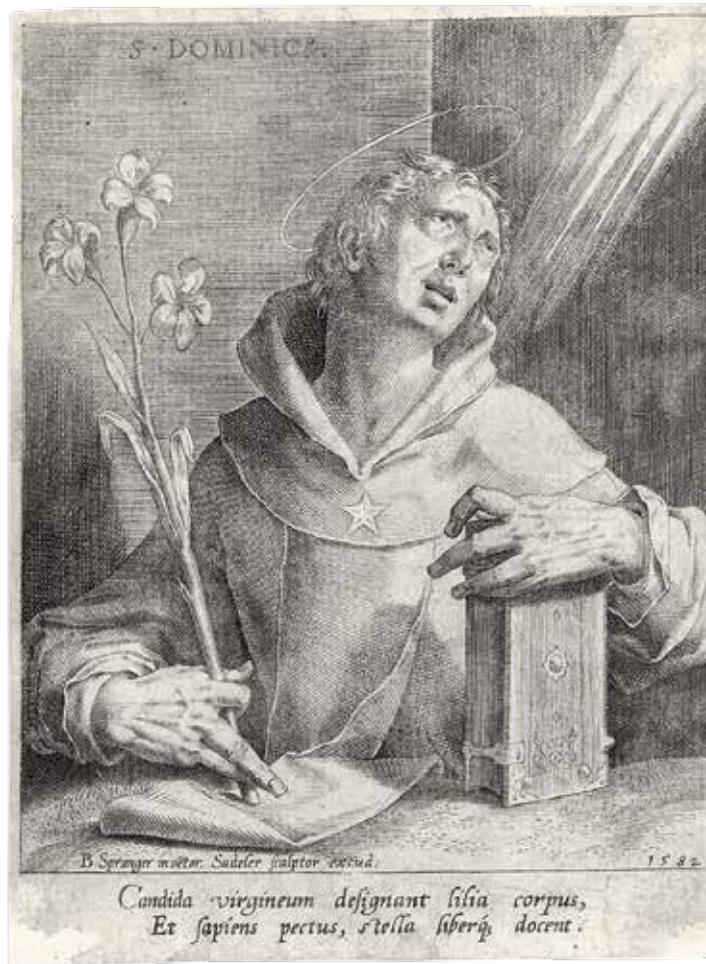
Translation: O Christ, let others know; for me one thing is enough: to know myself and to know you.

Spranger conveyed the ascetic life of Saint Francis by his slight physique and chiseled face. The landscape matches his austerity, and his features are as angular as the craggy mountains and the roots of the tree. The mountain on the left refers to La Verna, the isolated peak in the Tuscan Apennines where Saint Francis meditated, receiving the stigmata after a fast of forty days.

Sadeler engraved other half-length portraits of saints after Spranger designs, producing *Saint Dominic* (cat. 168) in a similar format and size two years later. The last in the series, *Saint Jerome* (cat. 169), though slightly larger than the other two, reflects the same approach to composition. *Saint Francis* is dated 1580, so Spranger would have created the design in 1579 at the latest.



Fig. 61. Paolo Piazza (Italian, 1560–1620 Venice), after Bartholomeus Spranger. *Saint Francis*, ca. 1600. Oil on slate, 10⁷/₁₆ × 10⁷/₁₆ in. (26.5 × 26.5 cm). Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Purchased with funds provided by the Joseph B. Gould Foundation and the European Art Acquisition Fund (M.2007.39)



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Johannes Sadeler I (Netherlandish, Brussels 1550–1600 Venice)
Saint Dominic, print 1582
5³/₄ × 4 in. (14.5 × 10.2 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection; The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.95.1911)

Inscribed bottom: *B. Spranger inventor. Sadeler scalptor excud. // 1582*

Latin verse: *Candida virgineum designant lilia corpus, / Et sapiens pectus, stella liberq[ue] docent.*

Translation: The white lilies represent the virginal body, and the star and the book indicate the wise soul.

The piety of the subject matter suggests a composition from his days in Rome. This design was later replicated on slate by Paolo Piazza, an Italian artist and monk working for a brief time in Prague (fig. 61).

NOTES

1. The impression consulted is in the collection of the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig (A1:2368e).

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949–, vol. 21, p. 144, no. 365; Lechner 1988, p. 35.

Saint Dominic is second in the series of three half-length saints that Sadeler engraved after Spranger, and it is Spranger's second depiction of Saint Dominic, the first nearly a decade earlier (cat. 89). Sadeler's engraving is dated two years later than his *Saint Francis* (cat. 167) but shares a similar composition, format, and size.

Spranger's simple design captures the emotional intensity of the saint. Dominic holds his traditional attribute of a lily stalk and gazes toward the heavens, where a beam of light illustrates the grace of God cast upon him. His eyes roll back in religious ecstasy. A five-pointed star adorns the middle of his robe, referring to the legend that his godmother saw a star appear on his forehead during his baptism. Strong, sharply defined hands emerge from the folds of his robe, the bones visible through the taut skin, alluding to his ascetic lifestyle.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949–, vol. 21, no. 363.

169

Johannes Sadeler I (Netherlandish, Brussels 1550–1600 Venice)

Saint Jerome, print ca. 1590

6³/₈ × 4⁵/₈ in. (16 × 11.6 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1953 (53.601.13)

Inscribed lower left: *B. Sprangers iv. / I. Sadeler scalps.*

Latin verse: *Dum saxo pectus, dum pectore mollio Numen, / Dum digitis mortem, pollice tango crucem, / Spem mihi fert saxum, spes complet Numine pectus, / Mors uitam, uitae, crux bona cuncta parit.*

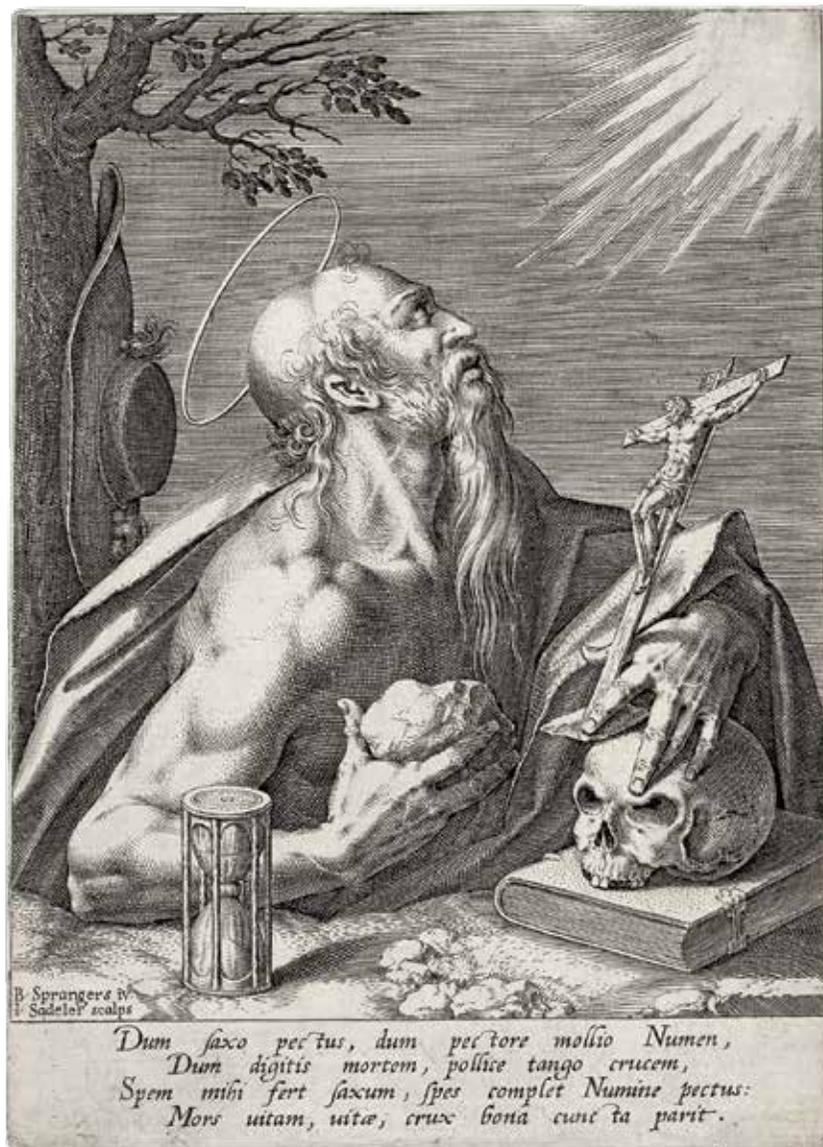
Translation: As I touch my chest with a stone, as I impart the divine will in my chest, I touch death with my fingers, I touch the cross with my thumb, the stone brings me

hope, hope fills my chest with the divine will: death bears life, to life, the cross bears all good things.

Made about 1590, this is the last in the series of three half-length saints engraved by Sadeler after Spranger's designs. Saint Jerome gazes up toward the heavenly light, similar to Saint Dominic from the series, but Jerome exerts a more emphatic physical presence, his bulging muscles

highlighted by sharper contrasts. The hourglass at his side, half full and half empty, reminds the viewer of the transience of life. Sadeler achieved Saint Jerome's sculptural form with a refined shading technique that yielded a painterly effect. A similarly muscular Saint Jerome appears in a Spranger design engraved by Lucas Kilian two decades later (cat. 227).

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949–, vol. 21, p. 146, no. 371.



Hendrick Goltzius (Netherlandish,
Mühlbracht 1558–1617 Haarlem)
Adam and Eve with the Serpent,
design ca. 1576–79, print 1585
7 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 6 in. (20 × 15.3 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art;
Bequest of Grace M. Pugh, 1985
(1986.1180.1472)

Inscribed lower left and dated lower right:
Bartholomeus Spranger invent. / HGoltzius sculp / et excud. // 1585

The influence of Dürer's iconic engraving of Adam and Eve from 1504 is unmistakable (fig. 62). Spranger altered the gestures of the hands, unifying the couple more than his predecessor, and replaced the cat in the center with a dog. The subdued sensuality, constrained Mannerism, and moralizing tone relate more to the preferences of Maximilian than of Rudolf. Goltzius engraved *Adam and Eve with the Serpent* two years before



Fig. 62. Albrecht Dürer (German, Nuremberg 1471–1528 Nuremberg). *Adam and Eve*, 1504. Engraving, fourth state, 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (25.1 × 20 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Fletcher Fund, 1919 (19.73.1)



his pathbreaking *Wedding of Cupid and Psyche* (cat. 178) and the same year as *The Holy Family before a Column* (cat. 172). The two prints from 1585 share a mood of austerity and rectitude.

In this composition, Spranger has emphasized not the sensuality and sin of Adam and Eve, but their naked innocence in Paradise. Nonetheless, a slight unease can be detected. The sinewy

tree trunk alludes to the twisting serpent that threatens Eve as she reaches for the apple. The porcupine at lower right refers both to the wondrous variety of nature and to the pain that will be inflicted on humankind after the Fall. Spranger's later depictions of Adam and Eve strike a far more erotic chord, focusing instead on the couple embracing (cats. 62, 63). In contrast, this rendition

Dedication from Goltzius to Baron Paul Sixtus von Trautson: *Illus: Generoso et Magnifico Domino Divo / Paulo syxto Trautson libero Baroni in / Sprechenstain et Schrofenstain &c. Sacre / Caes^{ae} M.^{is} Camerario, supremo Curiae Mareschalco, / et Concily Imperialis Presidi, Dno suo B. Spran- / ger Inve. et H. Goltzius sculp, hoc benevoli animi, / humilisq[ue] obsequy Mnemosynon quantulu[m]c[um]q[ue]* D. D.

Translation: The designer B. Spranger and engraver H. Goltzius give this memorial of their benevolent disposition and humble service, however small, as a gift to the illustrious, generous, and magnificent divine master Baron Paul Sixtus von Trautson in Sprechenstein and Schrofenstein and Chamberlain of the Imperial Majesty, highest Marshal of the Church, Chair of the Imperial Council.

Latin verse: *O'homo qui cernis nostrum sub imagine funus, / Esto memor quam sim pro te crudelia passus, / Qui fueram plastes, ferem salvator ut idem. // Authorem venerata suum, et testata dolorem / Intremuit tellus magno concussa fragore, / Et tum nec silices, nec saxa carentia sensu, // Obtexit rutulos et Sol caligine vultus, / Et stupuit Natura parens miserata parentem / Nec gemitum vos ô coeli tenuistis Alumni. / Franco Estius copos.*

Translation: O man who look at my death in the image, be mindful of what cruel things I have suffered for you, so that I who had been the creator would become also the savior. Revering its creator and being a witness to his pain, the earth trembled, having been shaken by a great noise, and then neither the rocks nor the stones were devoid of feeling. Both the Sun covered his golden face with darkness and Mother Nature was astounded, pitying the Father, and you all, O heavens, did not hold back a sigh for the Son. By Franco Estius.

Two angels display the limp yet muscular body of Christ while another gathers up the crown of thorns and instruments of the Passion. In the distance to the right, the three Marys discover the empty tomb. This arresting engraving, produced the same year as *The Wedding of Cupid and Psyche* (cat. 178), is dedicated to Baron Paul Sixtus von Trautson, one of Rudolf's ministers. In this design, Spranger has pressed the central figures close to the picture plane, communicating the religious pathos with intense immediacy. The dramatic expanse of the angel's

wings stretches across the entire image; the verticality of the angel and of Christ's body intersects with the wing span to form a cross.

Spranger and Goltzius's expressive interpretation shows a well-toned Christ whose physique would be the envy of any modern-day body builder. The contrast of opposites resonates: the limp body exudes life through rippling muscles, enhanced by stark chiaroscuro and swelling crosshatches. The Italianate classical style and devotional subject of Spranger's design suggest that it was conceived earlier than Goltzius's



print, likely during his time in Vienna. Spranger followed Michelangelo's *Pietà* (as discussed in "Spranger in Print") in the positioning and postures of the two main figures but changed Michelangelo's figure of Mary to an angel. A close affinity with Federico Zuccaro (fig. 63) and Andrea del Sarto (fig. 64) must also be noted. A terracotta relief attributed to Spranger features his design in reverse plus an additional angel opposite the one in the foreground of the print. However, the poor quality of the relief prevents a definite attribution to his hand.¹

NOTES

1. Reznicek 1968.

LITERATURE: Reznicek 1968, pls. CLXX–CLXXIII; Bartsch 1978–, vol. 3, no. 273; Filedt Kok 1993, pp. 171–72, 209, no. 32; Müller et al. 2002, cat. no. 51.

I 72

Hendrick Goltzius (Netherlandish, Mühlbracht 1558–1617 Haarlem) *The Holy Family before a Column*, design ca. 1579, print 1585
6 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 4 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (16.9 × 11.7 cm)
Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (RP-P-OB-10.212)

Inscribed and dated bottom: B.Spranger Inven.. // HGoltzius sculp. et excu. A° 1585

Latin verse: *Infans ille piae qui pendet ab ubere Matris, / Est Deus, in terras celso demissus olympo.*

Translation: That infant who is attached to the breast of his pious Mother is God, sent down to earth from high Olympus.

Goltzius engraved Spranger's graceful and dignified Holy Family in 1585, but the composition dates earlier. The pious sincerity and more classical style derive from Spranger's



¹⁷³

late years in Vienna. A marked Italianate quality is unmistakable, particularly the Raphaellesque composition and the Parmigianesque Madonna. The engraving technique here predates that practiced by Goltzius in his masterful print of the Holy Family (cat. 177) after Spranger's preparatory drawing now in the Blanton Museum collection (cat. 103).

LITERATURE: Bartsch 1978–, vol. 3, no. 274-1(3); Filedt Kok 1993, p. 167, no. 18; Acton 1994, p. 132.

I 73

Johannes Sadeler I (Netherlandish, Brussels 1550–1600 Venice) *Neptune and Coenis*, design ca. 1578, print 1580
Publisher: Cornelius Caijmox
Sheet: 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 5 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (21 × 15 cm)
Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (RP-P-OB-7424)

Inscribed and dated lower left and right: JSadler: scalptor. / Bart: SPrangens Invent: 1580. Cornelius Caijmox excud.

Latin verse: *Ars est contenta doceri. // Neptunus compressam a se Coenidem in viru transformat redditq[ue] invulnerabilem. Ovid: Metam: Lib: 12*

Translation: Art is content with being taught. After raping Coenis, Neptune transforms her into a man and makes her invulnerable. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book 12

Spranger also presented the design of the entangled couple in a drawing (cat. 101), which includes additional figures and omits the trident seen here. The 1580 date inscribed on the engraving illuminates his style in his nascent years with Rudolf. The compact, curvy, yet smooth figure and fluid Mannerist pose of the female nude resemble those in other early works, such as his painting *Angelica and Medoro* (cat. 25) and the drawing *Venus and Cupid on a Dolphin* (cat. 99), in which the dolphin



Fig. 65. Anonymous Netherlandish sculptor. *Neptune and Coenis*, late 16th–early 17th century. Bronze, with dark brown lacquer patina, H. 12½ in. (31.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Jack and Belle Linsky Collection, 1982 (1982.60.127). IN EXHIBITION

is nearly identical. The overall simplicity of this composition, without Mannerist fillips, also aligns it with Spranger's earlier works. This simplicity may have appealed to sculptors, and indeed a bronze was made of this composition near the time of Spranger's original design (fig. 65).

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949–, vol. 21, p. 161, no. 479 (also for copy); Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.4.

COPIES: Painting, now lost, formerly in Augsburg. Drawing, Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig, Rensi Collection (vol. 3, p. 78).

I 74

Johannes Sadeler I (Netherlandish, Brussels 1550–1600 Venice)
The Holy Family with Musical Angels and Infant Saint John the Baptist, print 1581

10 × 7 in. (25.5 × 17.9 cm)
Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (RP-P-1906-2737)

Inscribed lower right: *B. Sprangers Inv: JSadl: fec. et exec: / cu[m] gratia et privil Sac. Caes. M*

Latin verse: *Ecce senex, et virgo Dei Rectoris Olympi / In genus humanum, munera laeta canunt. // Hic Baptista sedes, Hic in complexibus almae / Matris, CHRISTE sedes, Biblia sacra docens: // Hos circumfusi sacrum Paeana canentes / Aligeri coetus, turbaq[ue] larga poli.*

Translation: Here an old man and the Virgin sing of the rich gifts to the human race from the ruling God of Olympus. Here you, John the Baptist, and you, Christ, sit in the embrace of the loving mother teaching the Holy Bible. Surrounding them, singing sacred hymns, are the winged company and the vast throng of heaven.

Dedication: *Illustri et Genereso D.D. Wolfgango Rumpff, Baroni in Wielros, Sac: Caes. M. Consil. / et supremo cubiculi Praefecto, observantiae ergo Bartholomeus Spranger*

Invent: D. D. / Eidemq[ue] se Joannes Sadlerus Scalptor, perofficiose commendat. D LXXXI.

Translation: Bartholomeus Spranger, the designer, and Johannes Sadeler, the engraver, bestow this work as a gift to Baron Rumpf of Wielross, colonel chamberlain and privy councillor of the emperor. 1581.

The popularity of this print was so far-reaching that a Mughal miniaturist produced his own copy for the court of Prince Salim before he became Emperor Jahāngir in 1605 (fig. 66). Spranger and Sadeler dedicated their print to Wolfgang Rumpf in 1581 in gratitude for Spranger's transfer to Prague from Vienna and for Sadeler's award of royal privilege (or copyright) that same year. Sadeler probably engraved it while still residing in Cologne.¹ The design might have its



Fig. 66. Abu'l Hasan Nadir al-Zaman (n.d.), after Bartholomeus Spranger. *The Holy Family with the Infant Christ, Saint John the Baptist, and Three Angels*. Allahabad, 1600–1605. Opaque watercolor, gold, and silver on paper, 9¼ × 6⅝ in. (23.1 × 17 cm). The British Museum, London (2006,0422,0.1)



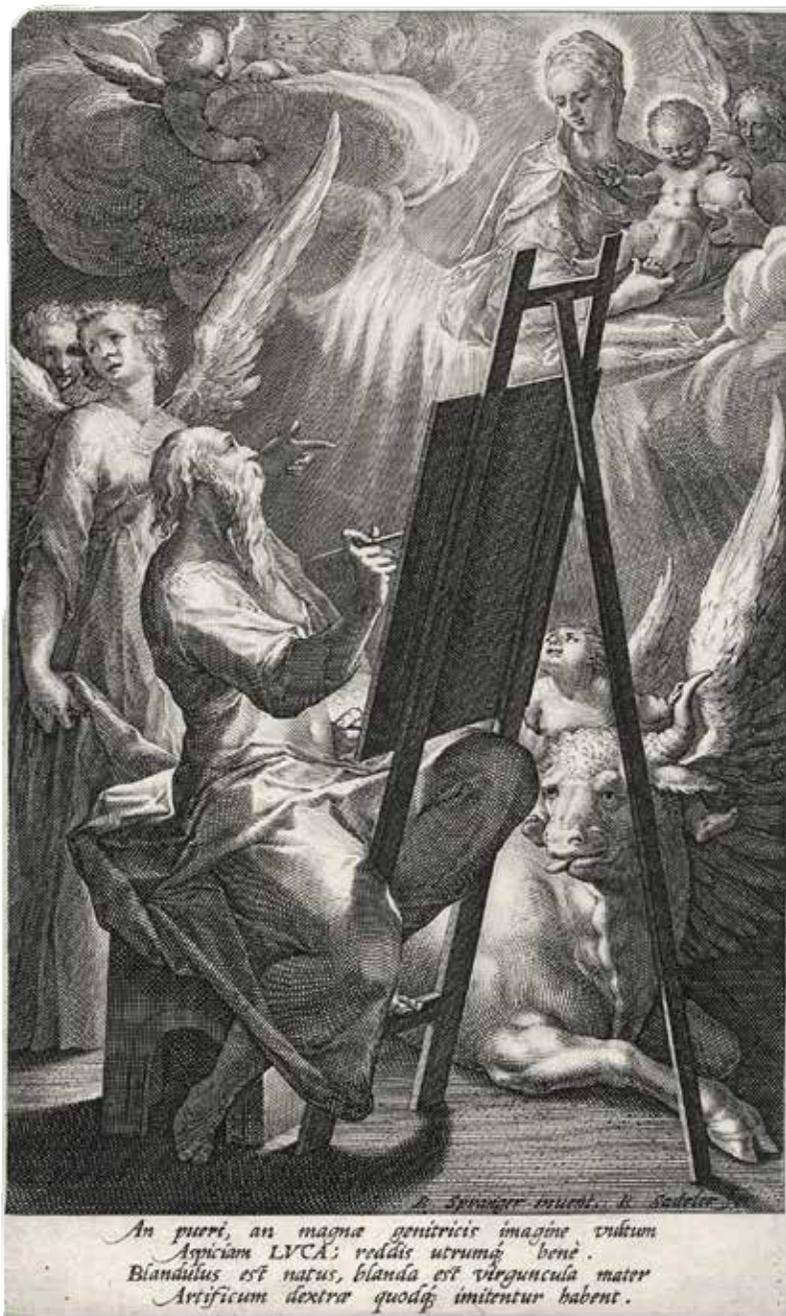
origins in a painting in the Rouen cathedral. Painted before 1560 by an unknown artist from Antwerp, it depicts the Antichrist preaching and includes, in reverse, nearly identical figures of the Virgin, Child, and young Saint John the Baptist.² Spranger's design adds a ruined column on which Joseph rests his foot, thus announcing the replacement of paganism by Christianity.

NOTES

1. Volrábová and Kubíková 2012, p. 178. 2. Rouen 1981, p. 127, cat. no. 180.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949–, vol. 21, no. 300; Limentani Viridis et al. 1992, p. 66, cat. no. 60; Volrábová and Kubíková 2012, p. 178.

COPIES: Painting, Palais Fesch, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Ajaccio, France (MFA 852.1.422).



175

Raphael Sadeler I (Netherlandish,
Antwerp 1560–1628 Venice [?])
Saint Luke Painting the Virgin,
design 1582
Etching and engraving, 7¹/₁₆ × 4⁷/₈ in.
(19.5 × 11.8 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art;
Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1953
(53.601.13 [206])

Inscribed lower right: *B. Spranger invent.
R. Sadeler fec.*

Latin verse: *An pueri, an magnae genitricis
imagine vultum / Aspiciam LVCA; reddis
utrumq[ue] bene. / Blandulus est natus, blan-
da est virguncula mater / Artificum dextrae
quodq[ue] imitentur habent.*

Translation: Do you see the features of the
Child and the Mother in the painting, Luke?
You rendered both correctly. Sweet is the
Child, sweet the Virgin Mother. You have
imitated the hands of the artist.

Raphael Sadeler turned to Spranger's
work only once in his career.

Though Sadeler did not date this engraving,
Spranger dated a nearly identical
design he painted in grisaille in 1582
(cat. 29), the year Sadeler was admitted
to the Antwerp Guild of Saint Luke. As
Saint Luke was the patron saint of art-
ists, this composition would have served
as a fitting tribute for the event.

The engraving emphasizes charming
details that are less evident in Spranger's
grisaille painting: for example, a putto
straddles the winged ox (Luke's attri-
bute), which sticks out its tongue. Saint
Luke's vision of the Virgin and Child,
hovering in the clouds and surrounded
by angels, is shown in the upper right
corner. Sadeler expertly delineated the
bright, almost blinding light of heaven
from which the Virgin and Child
emerge. The physique of the compact,
heavily draped figures is reminiscent of
Spranger's style in the late 1570s and
early 1580s.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949–, vol. 22, p. 193,
no. 65.

176

Hendrick Goltzius (Netherlandish,
Mühlbracht 1558–1617 Haarlem)
Judith with the Head of Holofernes,
design 1581–85, print ca. 1587
Diam. 6¹/₁₆ in. (16.9 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.95.1909)

Inscribed top: *B. Spranger Invt. / HGoltzius sculp.*

Latin verse: *Nemo suis nimium confidat viribus, ausis // Nemo suis temere; Docet hoc Holofernis amarus // Exitus; en dir[e] c[la]esa ceruice Tyranni // Te saluam Judith memoranda Bethulia fecit.*

Translation: Nobody should have too much confidence in his own strength, nobody should rely on his own daring attempts; the tragic death of Holofernes teaches this. See! By severing the head of the hateful tyrant, the famed Judith saved you, Bethulia.

Spranger presents Judith as a muscular heroine fully capable of the bloody act of violence she bravely committed to save her town of Bethulia. She holds up the severed head of Holofernes by the hair, intensifying the drama by displaying the evidence so close to the picture plane. The composition is expertly crafted in a tightly constricted space within a challenging round format. Spranger cleverly pushes Judith's finger outside the circle, reaching toward the viewer.

Spranger would turn to the theme of women's power again, especially in his

later Prague years, reaching a climax in his masterful full-length drawing of Judith (cat. 149). Here her voluptuous form exemplifies his style after mid-1580. As noted by Nadine Orenstein, the technique of Goltzius's engraving dates it to the years 1587–88.¹ The physique and Mannerist composition of *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* relate far more closely to Goltzius's print *Mars and Venus*, dated 1588 (cat. 182), than to earlier Goltzius prints. Filedt Kok dates the print 1586; either dating would position the design during Spranger's early Prague period, 1581–85.



NOTES

1. Conversation with Nadine Orenstein, curator at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2012.

LITERATURE: Bartsch 1978–, vol. 3, no. 272; Filedt Kok 1993, p. 170; Leeftang 2003, p. 315 n. 6.

177

Hendrick Goltzius (Netherlandish, Mühlbracht 1558–1617 Haarlem) *The Holy Family*, design ca. 1580, print ca. 1585

11¼ × 8½ in. (28.4 × 21.6 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1953 (53.601.336[9])

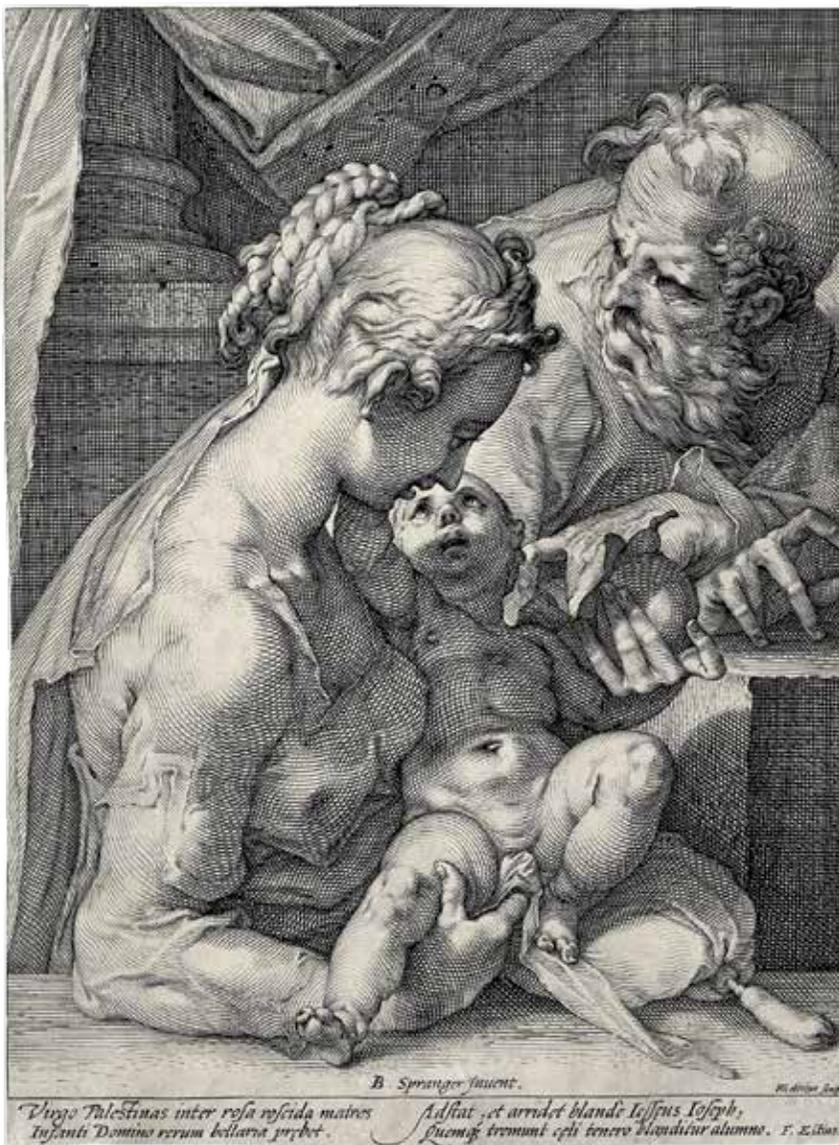
IN EXHIBITION

Inscribed bottom: *B. Spranger Invent // HGoltzius sculp.*

Latin verse: *Virgo Palestinas inter rosa ros-cida matres / Infanti Domino rerum bellaria praebet. // Adstat, et arridet blande Iesus Ioseph, / Quemq[ue] tremunt c[ae]li tenero blanditur alumno. // F. Estius.*

Translation: The Virgin, a dewy rose among the mothers of Palestine, provides a treat to the infant lord of the universe. Joseph of the tribe of Jesse stands by and smiles pleasantly. He pays tribute to his delicate foster child, at whom the heavens tremble. F[ranc]o Estius.

Spranger's composition, though steeped in Italian tradition, displays forms gradually escalating into solid masses exuding human vitality. The tightly cropped central design, pushed close to the picture plane, communicates the spiritual message to the viewer. The Virgin sits calmly holding her son, who reaches to touch her cheek or ear, as if to console her. The sad countenance of Joseph, as if he is cognizant of the fate awaiting his son, contrasts with the scene of maternal comfort. In making the print, Goltzius



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faithfully rendered Spranger's original design (cat. 103), though he added a fold of drapery to cover the Child's genitals and further defined several areas, particularly the passages of drapery and architectural elements.

LITERATURE: Bartsch 1978–, vol. 3, no. 275.

COPIES: Drawing, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi, Florence (1081 S).

178

Hendrick Goltzius (Netherlandish, Mühlbracht 1558–1617 Haarlem) *The Wedding of Cupid and Psyche*, design early to mid-1580s, print 1587
Published by Hendrick Goltzius
16¼ × 33⅞ in. (43 × 85.4 cm)
(three plates conjoined)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Purchase, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, Martha

Feltenstein Gift, and A. Hyatt Mayor Purchase Fund, Marjorie Phelps Starr Bequest, 2000 (2000.113)

IN EXHIBITION

Inscribed and dated lower right of right panel: BARTO.^{VS} SPRANGERS ANT.^{VS} / INVEN. ANNO. 1587 / HGoltzius sculp. et excud.

Dedication on tablet held by Cupid, left panel: ILLV: ET GEN D.D. / WOLFGAN- GO RVMPF / LIBERO BARONI A WIEL- ROS ET WEITTRACH & C. / Sac. Caes. Maiest.ti. A Consily / intimo et supremo cubiculam / B. Spranger Inven. et H. Goltzius / sculp., se que officiosissime commen- dant / suamque hanc qualemcumque / operam D. D.

Translation: The inventor Bartholomeus Spranger and the engraver Hendrick Goltzius commend themselves most humbly to the illustrious and eminent Lord Wolfgang Rumpf, Baron of Wielross and Weitrach, councillor and chancellor of His Imperial Majesty, and present to him their work, trifling as it may be.

Latin verse: *En thalamus Psyches, et caelestes Hymenaeos, / Invisamque nurum Veneri, sed amoris Amorem, / Fas sit Apuleij commenta haud vana sagacis, / Regia progenies, et proles tertia Psyche, // Sed vultu roseo, sed formae prima decore, / In se thuricremos Veneris traduxit honores: / Indignata Dea est, gnadique Cupidinis artes / Implorat; visa sed virgine prodinus ardet // Flammiger ille puer, mandataque Matris iniqua / Sincero Psyches flagrans mutavit amore, / Delectam zephyris ad Dia palacia ducens / Connubijque fide socios, vincloque iugali. // Felicem primae sortem invidere sorores / E'que aula technis exturbavere beata. / Sacrati divina thori nam iura fidemque / Elevat, et vanis aequat fraus aemula monstris. // Illa procu fraudata Deo, et foelicibus arvis / Post exantlatos terraeque marisque labores, / Connivente Jove, et tandem exorante marito / Arce recepta poli est, peperitque enixa perennem // Diva*

voluptatem, superisque admista triumphat. / Si licet ex finctis quicquam decepere very. / Mel legere instar apis, virusque relinquere Arachnae, / Et gentilitios non exhorrescere fumos: // Psyche haec, illa Anima est divino aequata decori, / Quam malesuada Venus (meliore Cupidine sponso) / Quamque soror Mens ila procax, quae nupsit Averno / Angelico exturbata choro, et soror altera, Carnis // Illecebrae, incautam tanta oppressere ruina, // Quantam homines patimur; frigus, morbumque, famamque, / Bellaque, et insidias, et fata novissima Mortem. / Non tulit hoc Amor ille sacer, Diisque Cupido, // Sed Patris imploravit opem, sponsaeque miser- tus / Impetrat aeternum Nectar, vitaeque baetae / Ambrosiam; potitur votis iam laetus, at illam / Foecundat saeclo nullo interitura Voluptas.

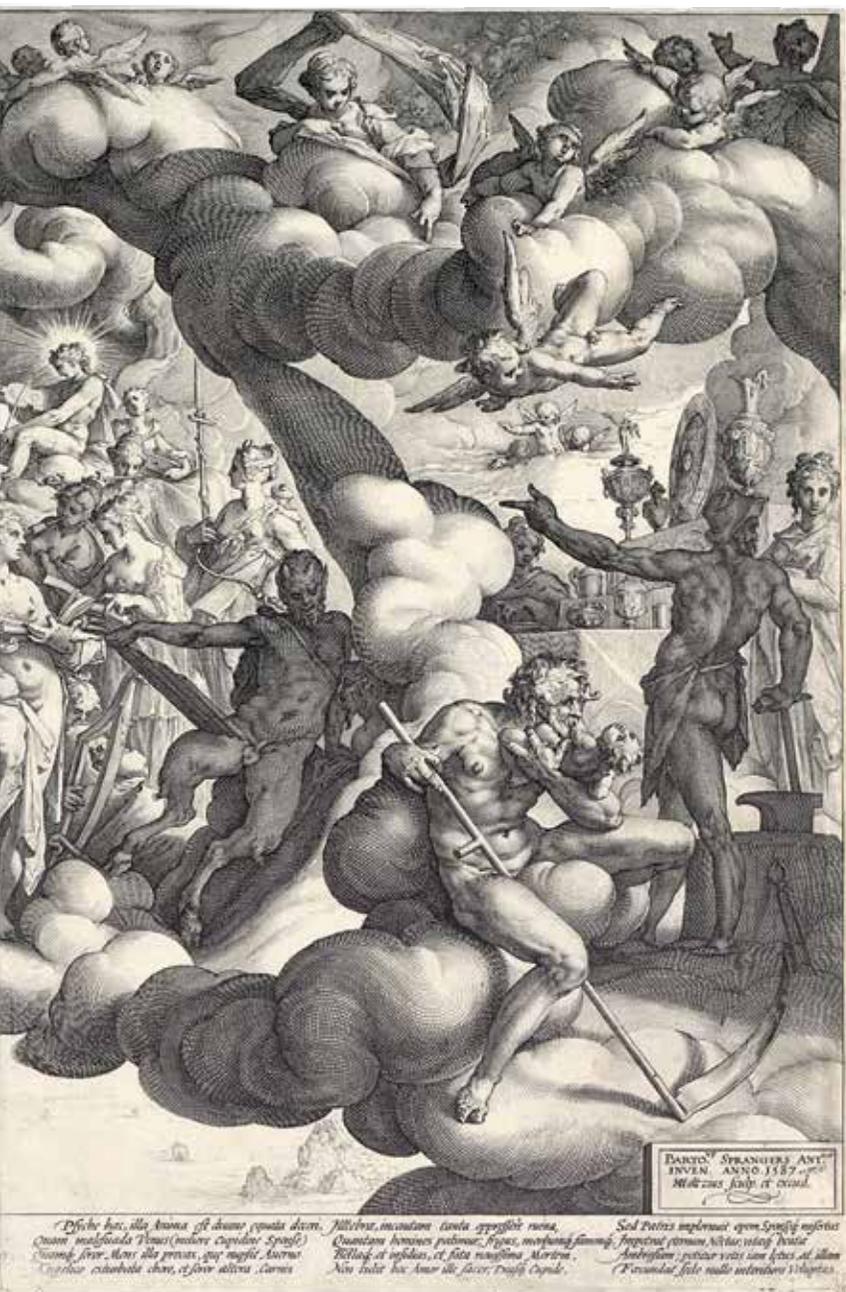
Translation: See here the wedding, the heavenly marriage of Psyche, the girl who was hated by Venus, but was Amor's love, at least if the account of the erudite author Apuleius does not lie. Psyche, a princess, the third daughter but the first because of her rosy face and beauty, drew to herself the tributes of incense for Venus. The Goddess was outraged, and called on the assistance and skills of her son Cupid; but as soon as the torch-bearing lad saw the girl he was aflame, and burning with true love for Psyche, he changed the unjust instructions of his Mother, took his love on the west wind to a divine palace and had congress with her in conjugal fidelity and the bonds of matrimony. Her sisters were the first to be made jealous by her good fortune and drove her from the divine court by trickery. For deceit that is born of jealousy violates divine rights and the fidelity of the divine marriage and makes unreliable monsters of them. Bereft of her divine lover and the blessed fields and after undergoing much misery on land and at sea, she was at last, through Jupiter's accession to the entreaties of her husband, admitted to the heavenly dwelling, where she bore children and as a Goddess gave birth to eternal Happiness, and accepted among the

gods, she celebrated triumphs there. If one may derive truths from fictitious stories, may gather honey like a bee and leave poison to the spiders, and if one has no fear of heathen fabrications, then here Psyche is the soul who rose to divine rank and who, because of Venus and her evil plans (her husband Amor was better) and because of her sister Lucifer, the shameless Spirit who married the Underworld after she was banned from the angelic host, and because of her second sister, the Temptations of the Flesh, was unexpectedly plunged into as much misery as we humans have to endure: cold, disease, hunger, wars, evil tricks and, as the ultimate disaster, death. The holy Amor, the divine Cupid, did not tolerate this, but called on his Father for help, and received through compassion eternal Nectar for his bride and the Ambrosia of the blessed life; Overjoyed, he saw his wishes granted and they were abundantly blessed with a daughter: eternal Happiness.¹

Dürer's print *Triumphal Arch for Maximilian* (1515) trumps it in size, but the complexity of design and the multitude of figures in *The Wedding of Cupid and Psyche* earn it a place among the most ambitious engravings of the sixteenth century. Dated 1587, the print premiered at the Frankfurt Book Fair in mid-September of that year, and orders came swiftly.² Miraculously, the preparatory drawing for the print survived, although certain details have eroded (cat. 108). Goltzius followed Spranger's design, adding touches of his own artistry and emphasizing passages at his discretion.

The betrothed couple, seated in the distance, is easy to miss among the myriad other figures. Examination of the design reveals many delightful details. A faint landscape is visible below, indicating that the wedding indeed takes place in the heavens, on billowing,





twisting clouds. A full pantheon of gods participate in the elaborate celebration, suggesting the importance of the guest list. Bacchus pours wine, Ceres offers food. A group of Muses play instruments; Saturn sits at the right, holding his scythe, while Vulcan stands behind him and points to the event. Among the various interpretations of the print is that the celebration symbolizes the prosperity and peace under Rudolf's reign, and some have even speculated that the presence of Hercules, holding his club at far left, refers to the emperor.³

NOTES

1. English translation from Leeftang 2003, cat. no. 28. 2. *Ibid.* 3. Froitzheim-Hegger 1993, pp. 64–68; Strech 1996, p. 23.

LITERATURE: Bartsch 1978–, vol. 3, no. 277; Froitzheim-Hegger 1993, pp. 64–68; Strech 1996, p. 23; Leeftang 2003, p. 87, cat. no. 28 (with earlier literature); Leesberg 2012, vol. 2, no. 341 (also copies after print).

COPIES: Drawings, Musée du Louvre, Paris (22596, 2102); Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (A4585); auction, Hampel, Munich, April 11, 2013, no. 739.

I 79

Aegidius Sadeler II (Netherlandish, Antwerp 1568–1625 Prague)
Venus Receiving Gifts, print 1588–90
 Published by Joris Hoefnagel
 11 1/8 × 7 1/2 in. (28.1 × 19 cm)
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.95.1831)

Inscribed bottom: *Bartol. Sprangers / In: et figuravit / G: Sadler Scal.*; inscribed vertically on the quiver to the right: Hoefnagel's nail monogram entwined with *Ex / Cum / pra*

Latin verse: *APOSTROPHE AD VENEREM / Primitiis gnatae foecnuda[e] fertilis anni / Oblatis Dominam te VENVS alma,*



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colunt // Omnia seruitiis obstricta tenentur amoris, / Qui vinculum vita[e] cuncta creata ligat. / Ancel: stoekll eques can.

Translation: By offering the first fruits of the productive year, the fertile daughters honor you as mistress, O nurturing Venus. All things are kept bound by the service of love, which ties with a bond of life all the things that have been created. This is sung by Ancel Stöckll.

The fleshy figure of Venus places Spranger's design in the same period as his *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* engraved by Hendrick

Goltzius (cat. 176). Joris Hoefnagel inscribed his monogram and royal privilege (or copyright) on the quiver of arrows, thus pointing to a date in the late 1580s. The design celebrates the fulfillment of love, embodied by Cupid, nymphs, and a satyr all attending to the goddess. Their generous physiques and drapery allude to the abundance of desire. The ornamental hairstyles, including a Mannerist bun and braided twists, became a hallmark of Spranger's females.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949-, vol. 21, no. 110; Limouze 1990, p. 44.



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Anton Eisenhoit (German, Warburg 1553/54–1603 Warburg) *Mars, Venus, and Cupid*, design mid- to late 1580s, print 1589. Published by Balthasar Caymox 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (12 × 9 cm) Albertina, Vienna (Album HB 57[3], fol. 27, no. 105)

Inscribed and dated, lower left and right: *B. Spranger inventor / Anton Eisenhoit / 1589 B. Caimoix exc.*

Latin verse: *Hic Deus et Veneris tenerique Cupidinis arma / Cura dolorque procul tristitia cuncta procul.*

Translation: The weapons of Cupid bind this God and Venus. Take care of the pain and the sadness, all at a distance.

This engraving captured Spranger's design known in a now-faint drawing (cat. 120). Eisenhoit dated his engraving 1589, thus providing an important reference for Spranger's original. The composition and the unassuming physicality of the figures place the design in the mid- to late 1580s. The year before Eisenhoit completed *Mars, Venus, and Cupid*, he commenced what would be the most important work of his career, a massive silver altar for the Paderborn prince-bishop.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1954-, vol. 8, no. 3;
Stiegemann 2003, p. 82, cat. no. 30.

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Jan Harmensz. Muller (Netherlandish, Amsterdam 1571–1628 Amsterdam) *Venus Honored by Nymphs*, design late 1580s, print 1591 or after Published by Harmen Jansz. Muller 11 1/8 x 7 7/8 in. (28.1 x 20 cm) The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.95.1830)

Inscribed bottom: B.^{us} Sprangers inventor. / JMuller sculptor. // Harman Muller excud. / Amsterodami.

Latin verse: *En Veneri ter grata Deae munuscula, vultu / Quae promunt Nymphae, Satyri, Genij[ue], sereno. // Pomum, Flos, Vitis, petulans his iuncta Columba, / An non mollitiem spirant, luxumq[ue] loquuntur? // Tu, quem casta iuvant socialis foedera lecti, / Has fugito pestes rabido cane peius & angue.*

Translation: Behold the thrice-pleasant small gifts that the Nymphs, Satyrs, and Genii [tutelary gods] offer to the goddess Venus with cheerful faces. Don't a fruit, a flower, a vine branch, joined by a wanton dove, express voluptuousness and indicate luxury? Those of you who are delighted by the morally virtuous contract of a nuptial

bed flee these plagues more than a rabid dog or a snake.

This sophisticated composition reflects Spranger's mature style, full of confidence and grace. Every detail animates the overall conception. An ivory relief after the design, made about 1730, attests to its popularity and appeal (fig. 67). The design is from the

late 1580s; at the earliest, the print is from 1591, the year Jan Harmensz. Muller started to engrave on his own and the year he began to include his father's name as publisher.

In these later decades of Spranger's career, certain motifs begin to recur in his compositions, such as the figure of the satyr holding up a basket of doves in the background, which also appears in





Fig. 67. Jacob Dobbermann (Polish, 1682–1745). *Homage to Venus*, ca. 1730–40. Ivory, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{5}{8}$ in. (14 × 11.6 cm). Victoria and Albert Museum, London (A.22-1962)

Spranger's painting *The Toilette of Venus and Vulcan* (cat. 85) and in his earlier *Venus Receiving Gifts*, engraved by Aegidius Sadeler II (cat. 179). The same theme of honoring Venus has been treated in a much different way here, offering a glimpse into Spranger's progress toward a more courtly style.

LITERATURE: Diez 1909, p. 133; Filedt Kok 1994, p. 233; Filedt Kok 1999, vol. 2, no. 73 II/V.

COPIES: Painting, auction, Sotheby's, London, June 16, 1977, no. 205. Drawing, Städel Museum, Frankfurt (15146).

182

Hendrick Goltzius (Netherlandish, Mühlbracht 1558–1617 Haarlem) *Mars and Venus*, print 1588
Sheet: $16\frac{3}{4} \times 12\frac{13}{16}$ in. (42.5 × 32.6 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art;
Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1953
(53.601.338[63])
Inscribed and dated bottom: *B. Spranger inventor. / HGoltzius Sculptor. / A° 1588.*

Latin verse: *Mundi oculus Phoebus, mundi Lux, omnia cernit, / Sub nitido arcanum est Sole, latensq[ue] nihil. // Martis adulterium blanda cum Cijpride, nexu / Mulciberis, dictis praebet abunde fidem. // Nudus uterq[ue] iacet: nil sic caelatur, et atra / Nox operit, prodat quin, referetq[ue] dies.*

Translation: Phoebus [Apollo], the eye and the light of the world, sees all; under the shining Sun nothing remains secret or concealed. Mars's adultery with the charming Cipris [Venus, who emerged from the sea near Cyprus], wife of Mulciber [Vulcan's surname], makes this saying very believable.

Both lie naked, thus there is nothing hidden and concealed by dark night that the day does not reveal and disclose.

A dedicatory tablet was added to later states: *Illu^{mo} Domino. Dno Octavio / Spinulae. Baroni etc. equiti, ac / Commendatario Hierosolymitano / etc. Sac. Caes. ae M.^{tis} intimo Camerario. / Dno suo B. Spranger Invet et H. Goltzius sculpt. hoc benevoli / animi; humilisq[ue] obsequij / Mnemosynon quantulu[m]cuque D.D.*

Translation: Dedicated to Octavius Spinula, Baron, Knight and Commandant of Jerusalem.



Personal chamber servant to Rudolf II. B. Spranger and H. Goltzius invented and engraved this work for him. Given to him, whatever it may be worth, in commemoration of his devoted, humble character and service and his obedience.

Sexual passion rather than warnings of betrayal permeates this tableau. Confronting the viewer with exceptional directness, the adulterous couple languish on a lavish bed, under drapery designed both to conceal and to entrap. Venus, who offers her flagrantly sensuous body to Mars and the viewer alike, wears the magic girdle, mentioned in Homer's *Iliad* (book 14), that makes her irresistible to all. An open window reveals Apollo, who had spied on the lovers and now races in his chariot to inform Vulcan of his wife's infidelity.

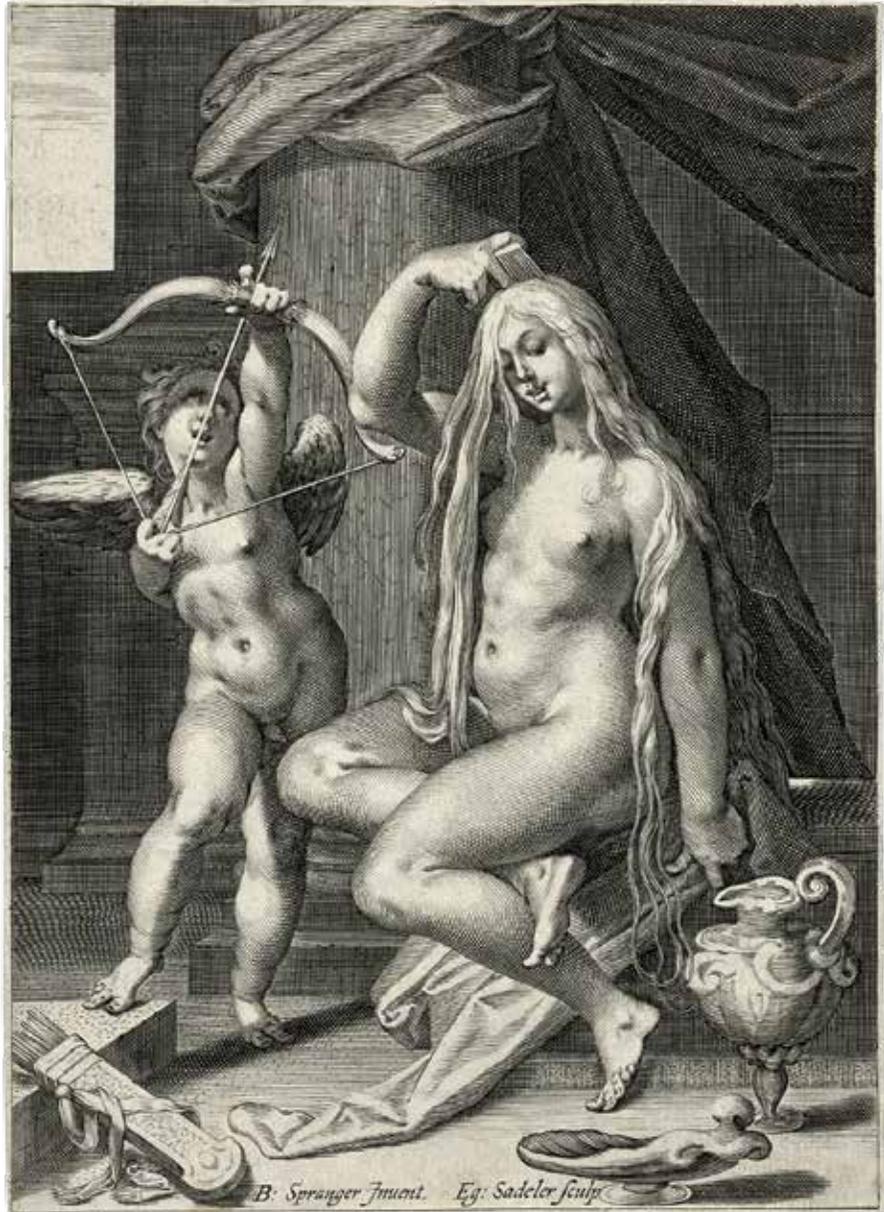
Even today the viewer might feel he has trespassed into a scene of intense intimacy. Perhaps to avoid censors, a moralizing text was added later, cautioning that all acts are witnessed by the heavens. The inscribed tablet dedicates the engraving to Octavius Spinula, honoring his service and obedience to the emperor. Without the added moralizing text, this image of betrayal might have been considered an inappropriate tribute to a loyal deputy of Rudolf.

Three years earlier, Goltzius had produced a print of his own design featuring the illicit lovers, and it has been suggested that Spranger created this one as a bit of competition.¹ However, the compositions are so different that this notion seems unlikely.

NOTES

1. Leeeflang 2003, p. 96, cat. no. 32.

LITERATURE: Bartsch 1978–, vol. 3, no. 276; Korazija 1982, p. 62, cat. no. 22; Leeeflang 2003, p. 96, cat. no. 32.



183

Aegidius Sadeler II (Netherlandish, Antwerp 1568–1625 Prague)
The Toilette of Venus with Cupid,
 design 1588
 7½ × 5⅜ in. (19 × 13.8 cm)
 Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum,
 Amsterdam (RP-P-OB-7021)

Inscribed bottom: *B: Spranger Invent. Eg: Sadeler Sculp.*

Latin verse (second state): *Expedit in celum
 flammis ferrumq[ue] Cupido: / Ne nimium,
 si me torreat igne, querar.*

Translation: Cupid hurls his flames and

arrows of love into the sky, so that should he scorch me with fire, I will not bewail.

This erotic design places the viewer in the role of voyeur, watching the comely Venus comb her hair, fresh from the bath, as she prepares for a lover's tryst. Lubomír Konečný remarks on the compositional antithesis between the downward orientation of Venus, manifest in her gaze and hair combing, and the upward direction of Cupid's pointing arrows. He associates these contradictions with the Latin verse stating that love that burns brightly also consumes and destroys, connecting this to an emblem in Johannes Sambucus's *Emblemata of Amor Dubius*.¹ Though that is an interesting hypothesis, the design may simply embody the epigram about the destructive force of all-consuming love.

There is a preparatory drawing in the same direction as the engraving (cat. 133), with indented lines that record its role in creating the engraving. The dimensions of this print and the drawing match closely, yet the fact that both are in same direction indicates that there was an additional stage required to make the engraving. A few other versions in the opposite direction of Sadeler's print exist, including an unsigned version in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.83.318.80).

NOTES

1. Konečný in Volrábová and Kubíková 2012, p. 170.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949–, vol. 21, no. 112; Kaufmann 1982a, pp. 142–44, cat. no. 50; Volrábová and Kubíková 2012, p. 170.



184

Unknown engraver

The Holy Family with Joseph Holding a Rose, design ca. 1595, print after 1606

Published by Claes Jansz. Visscher
9 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (24.5 × 17.5 cm)

The British Museum, London
(1875,0710.3018)

Inscribed bottom: *B. Spranger Inve'*
CJ Visscher excu.

Latin verse: *Et soror, et mater, et Regis filia nati, / Qui mare cum terris, lucida[ue] astra regit. // Infantem puerum nutu compellat amico, / Ridentesq[ue] iocos, verbaq[ue] blanda serit. / F.E.*

Translation: The sister and mother and daughter of the born King who rules over the sea and the lands and the shining stars addresses the infant with a friendly nod, and interweaves playful jokes and sweet words. F[ranc]o E[stius]

Spranger enlivened this rather static composition with dynamic gestures and multiple diagonals. The Virgin pulls on Christ's blanket, wrapping a corner of the fabric around her fingers in stylized affectation. The foreshortened body of the Christ Child provides an illusion of depth. The oddly exaggerated right hand of Joseph, gingerly clasping the large rose, strategically fills a void in the composition. The Virgin's serpentine braid evokes a crown, fitting for the Queen of Heaven.

The engraver did not inscribe his name on the print, but Pieter de Jode I,

who worked in Hendrick Goltzius's studio while his master was in Italy, has been named as a likely candidate.¹ Gottfried Müller reproduced the print in the opposite direction with less successful results, lacking in modeling and overall refinement. The bravura foreshortening and the Mannerist gestures relate the design to Spranger's more mature oeuvre in Prague.

NOTES

1. Filedt Kok 1993, p. 182, no. 69.

LITERATURE: Bartsch 1978–, vol. 3, no. 297; Filedt Kok 1993, p. 182, no. 69.



185

Pieter de Jode I (Netherlandish, Antwerp 1570–1634 Antwerp) *The Nativity*, print before 1593 6¾ × 4⅞ in. (17.1 × 12.5 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Rogers Fund, 1966 (66.634.11)

Inscribed bottom: *B: Sp[r]anger // P. De Iode sculp.*

Latin verse: *O' f[a]elix mater, f[a]elix de Virgine partus, / F[a]elices cum[a]e vagit quibus AETHERIS author. // F. Estius*
Translation: O blessed mother, O blessed offspring of the Virgin, O blessed cradle in which the creator of Heaven cries. F[ranco] Estius

A night scene is unusual for Spranger. The small background view of the Annunciation to the Shepherds, barely visible through a jagged opening in the barn, adds charm to this episode. Yet for all the success of the



Fig. 68. Claes J. Clock (Dutch, active Leiden and Haarlem, 1589–1602), after Bartholomeus Spranger. *The Nativity*, 1593. Engraving, 6¼ × 4½ in. (15.8 × 11.4 cm). Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (EC-36 [A]-FOL)

design, an imbalance of proportions, such as Joseph's overly large hand, makes this design one of Spranger's less successful. The composition is related to Claes J. Clock's copy of the design in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (fig. 68), inscribed with Spranger as inventor and with the date 1593. The design overall can also be compared to engravings of the Holy Family by Jan Harmensz. Muller after Spranger.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949-, vol. 9, no. 1;
Filedt Kok 1993, pp. 181 n. 61, 204.

186

Pieter de Jode I (Netherlandish,
Antwerp 1570–1634 Antwerp)
Neptune and Venus, print after 1591
Published by the Widow of Gerard de Jode
10½ × 7½ in. (26.7 × 19.6 cm)
Bound into *Oeuvres de Cornelius Bos*,
I. Speccard, B. Spranger, C. Schwarz
Albertina, Vienna (Klebeband, Hofbiblio-
thek, no. 50[1], fol. 61, no. 47)

Inscribed bottom: *Pet. de Jode sculp. //*
Vidua Gerardi de Jode excud.

Latin verse: *Salsipotens teneram medio vehit*
aequore Nympham. / Sensit et hic Paphy
feruida tela dei.

Translation: He that rules the salt sea drags
the young nymph in the middle of the sea.
Even this [Neptune] feels the burning
arrows of the god of Paphos [Cupid].

The inscription identifying the publisher as the widow of Gerard de Jode provides a key to dating Spranger's original invention, known through two preparatory drawings (cats. 109, 110). Gerard, the patriarch of the de Jode printing dynasty, died in 1591, a date that serves as terminus post quem for the engraving. Spranger paid homage to these sea deities on several other



occasions, but this design is among his most successful in its tightly constructed foreground and central figures riding the waves on a large seashell. A gentle sea breeze catches Venus's long tresses, pulling them upward, her curls and the undulating tails of the sea creatures in the foreground cleverly simulating the waves of the sea. For all the

popularity of the design (at least two other capable copies after Spranger's drawings are extant), the engraving by de Jode is obscure: few collections own an impression.

LITERATURE: Niederstein 1931, nos. 5, 34; Oberhuber 1958, no. S54; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.44;
Filedt Kok 1993, p. 181 n. 61.



187

Zacharias Dolendo (Netherlandish,
Leiden 1561–ca. 1600 Leiden)
Saint Martin and the Beggar, design
ca. 1593–1600, print before 1601
Published by Jacques de Gheyn II
9¾ × 5¾ in. (24.8 × 13.6 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The
Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha
Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.95.1869)

Inscribed bottom: *B. Spranger // Inven. Z.
dolendo, sculp. // IDG. excu. // S. Martinvs.*

Spranger's preparatory drawing for this engraving is in Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum (cat. 138). According to Hollstein, Dolendo made the print about 1593.¹ It was listed in Cornelis Claesz.'s collection in 1609: "Historien van J. de Geyn: Sinte Marten en Elisabeth / Spranger twee Folien."² Unlike most other prints after Spranger, no verse or prose appears below the image, only the identification of Saint Martin. The design suggests an ecclesiastical decorative scheme, yet no statue or mural of this composition is known. Saint Martin, graceful and muscular at once, marks Spranger's mature Prague work and particularly ties in with his other triumph figures, such as his Minerva conquering Ignorance in his painting and an engraving by Aegidius Sadeler II (cats. 67, 202). See the engraving *Saint Elizabeth of Hungary* for further discussion (cat. 188).

NOTES

1. Filedt Kok and Leesberg 2000, vol. 1, p. 158.
2. Rijksmuseum 1984, p. 31.

LITERATURE: Filedt Kok and Leesberg 2000, vol. 1, p. 158, no. 103.



188

Jacques de Gheyn II (Netherlandish,
Antwerp 1565–1629 The Hague)
Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, design
ca. 1590, print 1592–before 1601
Published by Jacques de Gheyn II
10³/₈ × 5³/₈ in. (26.2 × 13.7 cm)
Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum,
Amsterdam (RP-P-1983-25)

Inscribed bottom: *B. Spranger Inven. //
IDGheyn Sculptor et excu. // S. Elizabeth*

Handing a roll to a crippled beggar, Saint Elizabeth has removed her crown out of humility, concerned more with charity than with status. Notably, Spranger had repeated the design of this crown in past paintings of female saints. The composition bears striking similarity to the engraving *Saint Martin and the Beggar*, also published by de Gheyn (cat. 187), but Saint Elizabeth is more static and statuesque, resembling stone more than flesh. Saint Martin, on the other hand, stretches out into the viewer's space, breaking free from his own niche.

A painting attributed to Spranger, now in Prague (cat. 40), is nearly identical to the *Saint Elizabeth* print. It is in the opposite direction and there are a few minor differences between print and painting, so the engraving likely followed a now-lost preparatory drawing by Spranger. The voluminous drapery and physical volume in the figure of Saint Elizabeth indicate that the original composition dates from about 1590 and the print between 1592 and 1600, the year de Gheyn ceased publishing prints.

LITERATURE: Rijksmuseum 1984, p. 31;
Filedt Kok and Leesberg 2000, vol. 1, no. 102.



189

Jan Harmensz. Muller (Netherlandish,
Amsterdam 1571–1628 Amsterdam)
*The Holy Family and Two Music-
Making Angels*, print after 1590
Published by Harmen Jansz. Muller
Second state

12 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (32 × 21.8 cm)
Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum,
Amsterdam (RP-P-OB-32.190)
Inscribed bottom: *Barto.^{us} / Sprangers /
Ant.^{us} inventor. / Joan. Muller sculp. //
Harman Muller. excud. / Amsterodamy.*

Latin verse: *Ut sacer hic parili resonat mod-
ulamine coetus / Aligerum, Maria qui Duce
laetus agit: / Unanimes sic nos studio, Ratione
magistra, / Hoc alacres vitae perficiamus iter.*
Translation: Just as this sacred assembly of
angels that performs joyfully under Mary's
direction resounds with harmonious melody,
thus let us unanimously complete the journey
of life with zeal and gladness under the guid-
ance of Reason.

Spranger recaptured two earlier
designs in this tightly composed por-
trayal of the Holy Family. It looks back to
two of his compositions engraved by
Goltzius: *Dead Christ Supported by
Angels* (cat. 171), nearly quoting the
center angel in placement and expres-
sion, and *The Holy Family* (cat. 177),
taking overall inspiration in terms of the
design. Muller's engraving adds angels,
increases the volume of the drapery, and
makes the pose of the Christ Child more
dynamic. The hairstyles of the Christ
Child and others are embellished with
Mannerist flourishes.

Muller's engagingly sweet composi-
tion of the Holy Family would have been
popular with collectors and the public,
rather than produced for Rudolf. The
engraver and publisher, father and son
Muller, markedly emphasized loyalty to
Antwerp and Amsterdam by indicating
both Spranger's birthplace and their own
ties with Amsterdam rather than noting
allegiance to Spranger's royal patron in
Prague. The engraving must stem from
after 1590, the year Harmen Jansz.
Muller began to sign prints as publisher.

LITERATURE: Edinburgh 1991, cat. no. 34;
Filedt Kok 1994, p. 233; Filedt Kok 1999, vol. 2,
no. 66.

COPIES: Painting, Akademie der Bildenden Künste,
Vienna (253). Drawing, Herzog Anton Ulrich-
Museum, Braunschweig (Z 2342).



I 90

Jan Harmensz. Muller (Netherlandish, Amsterdam 1571–1628 Amsterdam)
Venus and Mercury, design late 1580s–early 1590s, print after 1590

Published by Harmen Jansz. Muller

Second state

15¹/₁₆ × 11 in. (40.1 × 27.9 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1948 (48.67.1)

Inscribed bottom: *B. / Sprangers Ant.^{us} inuens. // Joan Muller sculp. // HMuller. Exeud. Amster*

Latin verse: *Ad Veneris furtum faciunt ut pocula Bacchi, / Sic facit et plectro lingua disertata suo. // Exemplum est huius cursor Cyllenius artis, / Ut nouit uiuis Ida perennis aquis.*

Translation: As the cups of Bacchus deceive Venus, so does an eloquent tongue seduce with its lyre. An example of this art is the runner Mercury as he refreshes himself by the perennial springs of Ida.

Love's consuming power dominates this dynamic composition featuring Venus and Mercury in the bedroom. Slipping under the spell of the beautiful Venus, Mercury no longer wields control of his caduceus, now held by a putto. Each character physically and thematically connects within the composition. Spranger's masterful foreshortening of the putto flying overhead announces the bravura of both designer and engraver. His figures stem from the late 1580s and early 1590s, when his compositions featured curvy, even doughy females, somewhat squat and stocky. Because Harmen Jansz. Muller was the publisher, the print was executed after 1590. This playfully erotic



tableau is another in the series of Spranger's bedroom scenes. The profile of Venus appears in Muller's *The Holy Family and Two Music-Making Angels* (cat. 189). Even more striking is how Venus's Mannerist pose and muscular form nearly mirror those of Salmacis in Spranger's painting *Hermaphroditus and the Nymph Salmacis* (cat. 27), a painting created several years earlier, demonstrating that he mined his own designs for inspiration.

LITERATURE: Filedt Kok 1999, vol. 2, no. 68.

COPIES: Painting, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg (Gm1176). Drawing, Musée du Louvre, Paris (20467).

191

Jan Harmensz. Muller (Netherlandish, Amsterdam 1571–1628 Amsterdam)
Ceres and Bacchus Flee Venus,
print 1590s
Published by Harmen Jansz. Muller
Sheet: 20 × 14 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (50.8 × 35.8 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.50.406)

IN EXHIBITION

Inscribed lower right: *Bart. / Sprangers Ant.^{us} inventor. // Johan. Muller sculpsit*; bottom center: *Harman Muller excud Amsterd.*

Latin verse: *Ah, Venus, extincto quid frigens membra calore? / Quid frigens artus, Pusio parue, tuos? // Scilicet iniecto Bacchus[ue] Ceres[ue] rigore / Aufugiunt: qui vos suscitet, ardor abest. // SINE CERERE ET BACCHO FRIGET VENVS.*

Translation: Ah, Venus, why is warmth extinguished and you are freezing? Why do your limbs freeze, O little boy [Cupid]. Obviously, since a chill has overcome them, Bacchus and Ceres flee: the ardor that should arouse you is absent. Without Ceres and Bacchus, Venus freezes.

Muller's print illustrating an epigram from Terence's comedy *Eunuchus* (161 B.C.) closely resembles Spranger's painting and drawing of the same subject (cats. 56, 154), but all three compositions differ slightly. The designs are in the same direction, yet the painting sets the playful scene at night, whereas in the engraving it takes place outdoors in the daylight. The two central figures are more inclined toward caricature than in the painting. Muller's Bacchus wears an oversize crown of grape vines, which makes him look more comical and stylized, and the right side of his rib cage comprises small circular muscles intimating grapes. The slightly more successful outcome of the painting, more elegant and sensuous, indicates that the painting was probably made first. Muller's print is more didactic, since it has the advantage of being able to spell out the epigram that inspired the image.

LITERATURE: Bartsch 1978–, vol. 4, no. 74; Filedt Kok 1994, p. 250.

COPIES: Painting, Accademia Carrara di Belle Arti Bergamo (120). Drawing, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (49.50.66).

192

Jan Harmensz. Muller (Netherlandish, Amsterdam 1571–1628 Amsterdam)
Oreads Removing a Thorn from a Satyr's Foot, design 1590, print ca. 1592
9 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 7 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (25.2 × 19.4 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.95.1829)

Inscribed lower left: *B. Sprangers Ant.us invent. / Joan. Muller Sculp.^t*

This whimsical design of an oread, or mountain nymph, removing a thorn from a satyr's foot was one of

Spranger's most popular inventions, as is evident from the myriad drawings and engravings made after Muller's engraving. Traditionally, the kneeling figure performing the operation is described as a satyr, but her pendulous breasts, often not noticeable upon first glance, make clear her gender, and current literature calls this eccentric creature an oread.² The pretty nymph consoles the injured satyr while wiping away a tear, and a young satyr helps by holding up the injured leg. Though not immediately evident, the consoling nymph's left leg is impossibly elongated and curved from her hips, and even stranger is how the fur cape draped on her back seems to transform into her leg.

The three figures most likely represent a family. There seem to be no relevant antecedents for Spranger's invention (the closest is Dürer's *Satyr Family*, an engraving that shows a family in the woods, but without injury or operation; British Museum, 1868,0822.190). A related drawing in red chalk, dated 1590, shows little difference between Spranger's original design conception and the engraving, save for a slightly tighter presentation of background details and the stylized, ornamental hair (cat. 125).

NOTES

1. Other states include Latin verse, and interestingly, there are two distinct verses. See Filedt Kok 1994, n. 35, for each version. 2. As noted *ibid.*, n. 34, in which these creatures are identified as mountain-dwelling cousins of the satyrs.

LITERATURE: Bartsch 1978–, vol. 4, no. 71 (287); Edinburgh 1991, cat. no. 22; Filedt Kok 1994, p. 233; Filedt Kok 1999, vol. 2, p. 195, no. 71 (state indeterminate).

COPIES: Drawings, Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt (AE 2573); Städel Museum, Frankfurt (2967); Kunstsammlungen zu Weimar (4602).



192

193

Jan Harmensz. Muller (Netherlandish, Amsterdam 1571–1628 Amsterdam)
Virtue Leading Hercules and Scipio to the Temple of Fame, design late 1580s–early 1590s; print before 1612
 Published by Harmen Jansz. Muller
 Third state
 9½ × 6¼ in. (24 × 15.9 cm)
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.95.1833)

Inscribed upper right: *B.^{us} Sprangers inventor. / J. Muller sculpsit; lower right: Muller excud. Amster.*

Latin verse: *Huc adsis, verae quem tangit cura salutis, / Si sapis, hoc alacris carpe viator iter: // Virtutis ductu, monstrante Cupidine sano, / Quod petit Alcides, Scipio quodq[ue] petit.*

Translation: Pay attention! O swift traveler concerned for true salvation, if you are wise, pursue this way, which Hercules and Scipio follow under the lead of Virtue and the direction of sensible Cupid.

This triumvirate has traditionally been identified as Minerva and Mars leading Hercules, but the Latin verse establishes different identities. The club-carrying figure on the right is indeed Hercules; the middle figure is female, so she must be the Virtue cited in the verse; and so the figure on the left must be the Roman general Scipio. Virtue leads these two heroes on the righteous path. They are flanked by vice, represented by the revelers in the right background, and by virtue, represented by the temple of fame on the left, high on a precipice, to be reached only after arduous effort.

A drawing copied after the print is signed by Hermann Weyer and dated 1612, thus indicating a terminus ante



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quem for the print.¹ Three drawings, all in the opposite direction of the design, relate to this engraving, but none are authentic preparatory drawings (see Appendix). An early proof in the Rijksmuseum (fig. 69) shows corrections made directly on the sheet by Spranger—a remarkable record of the close collaboration between artist and engraver. The composition and the

figural morphology place Spranger's design in the late 1580s–early 1590s.

NOTES

1. The drawing is in the Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento (1871.601).

LITERATURE: Bartsch 1978–, vol. 4, no. 72; Schultze 1988, vol. 1, cat. no. 320; Filedt Kok 1994, p. 234; Konečný 1998, esp. p. 197; Filedt Kok 1999, vol. 2, no. 72-3(4).

COPIES: Drawing, Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (1937-1415).

194

Jan Harmensz. Muller (Netherlandish, Amsterdam 1571–1628 Amsterdam)
Young Artist before Minerva,
design 1592, print 1628
Published in Amsterdam
10 × 6¾ in. (25.3 × 17.2 cm)
The British Museum, London
(1856,0209.320)

Dutch inscription, above image: *d'Ondeugt, luy, Nyt onconst met Schaemt beloont, hier blycklyck leyt gebonden / de leugt door vlyt in Const, befaemt ghecroont, wort Rycklyck oghesonden.*

Translation: Here you can see Vice, Sloth, Envy, and Ignorance tied up and punished with shame, while the youth, characterized by hard work and effort, is amply rewarded.

Latin verse, below image: *Impigro Iuveni specioso pelle bovina / Condecorat caput & lauro Palmaque] Minerva, / Mercurio ductore, opibus ditatur abunde // Quem labor*



Fig. 69. Proof of *Virtue Leading Hercules and Scipio to the Temple of Fame*, corrected by Bartholomeus Spranger, 1589–93. Engraving, indented for transfer, pen and brown ink with white heightening, 8⅞ × 6¼ in. (22.5 × 15.7 cm). Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (RP-P-OB-32.203)

*& studium ingenuas conducit ad artes, /
Fama[ue] eum super Aetherea. & Mortalia
tollit! / Invide, segnis, Iners artis [artis]
froenabere habenis. / A. Clutius.*

Translation: Minerva decorates the head of the zealous youth, beautiful in his oxhide, with a laurel wreath and also a palm frond. Thus rich treasures are showered on the one who, with Mercury's guidance, is led to the arts by diligent work and the practice of his natural talent, and fame raises him above heavenly and human affairs! O Envy, Sloth, and Ignorance, you will be restrained by taut bindings. A[ugerius] Clutius.

Dedication: *B. Spranger Schidia [schedia] haec pro themate G. Sprang[er] M.D.XCII tunc adulescenti D.D. Qui / postmodum ea divulgans maiori natu filio suo Math Sprang, C.D. sculptore I. Mullero. M.D.CXXVIII*

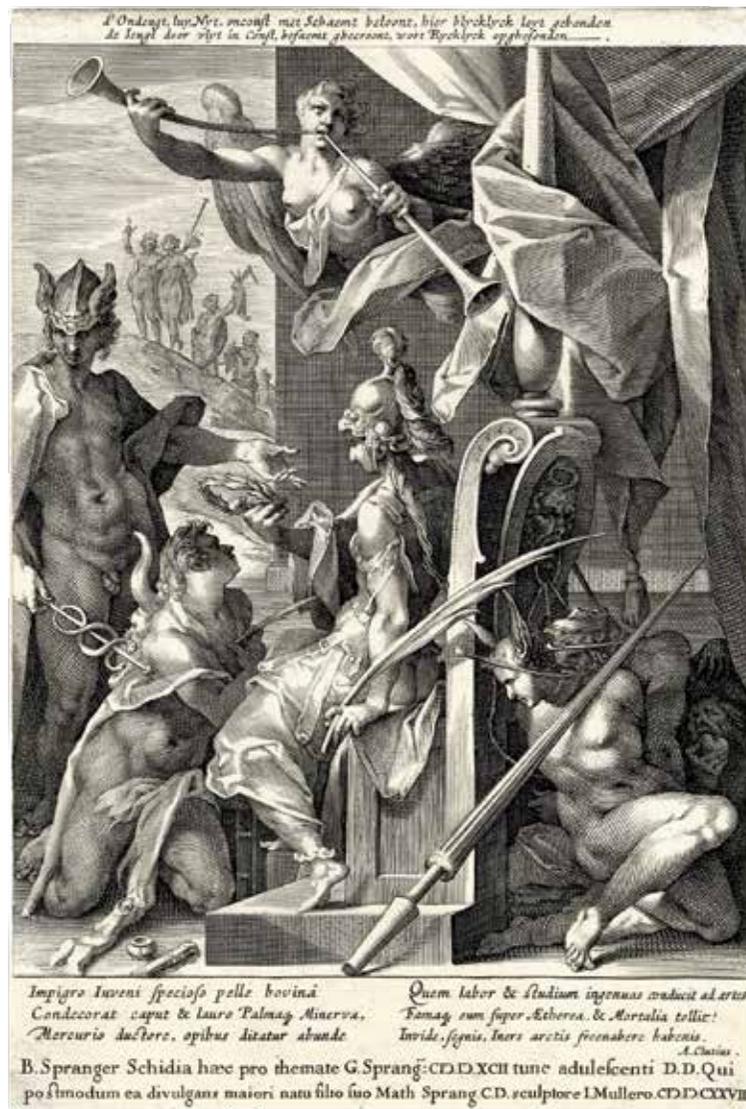
Translation: B. Spranger gave this sketch as a gift to G[ommer] Spranger in 1592, at that time a young man. Gommer Spranger afterward dedicated [or gave a copy] to his own elder son Matth[aeus] Spranger by the engraver J. Muller in 1628.

The precise, elaborate inscription on this print offers insight into the working practices of engraver and designer—particularly the fact that the design can originate much earlier than the print. In this case, the print was produced seventeen years after Spranger's death. Muller's engraving also illuminates little-known personal relationships in Spranger's life. The content is a panegyric to artists, specifically his nephew Gommer Spranger, son of Spranger's brother Mattheus. The inscription records that Spranger gave the design "to G. Spranger in 1592, at that time a young man," and he was indeed just sixteen.

The design and engraving are masterful, displaying the erudition and bravura associated with the Prague

School of artists working for Rudolf. Even the rendering of the drapery smoothly wrapping around the column shows virtuosity. Lofty inscriptions and mythological figures surround the young artist kneeling before Minerva. The oxhide cape on his shoulders, complete with horns, alludes to his hard work. The figure bearing a cornucopia behind him also advises the artist that diligence is rewarded with abundance, and personifications of sculpture, painting, and architecture ascend a hill in the

background, thus recognizing all the arts. Three years after this design, Rudolf raised the status of the arts, proclaiming painting to be a free art, no longer bound to the guild. Spranger would again turn to the shackled figures of Envy and Ignorance—seen here behind Minerva's throne—in the drawing *The Triumph of Wisdom over Ignorance and Envy* from 1604 (cat. 155). Spranger's drawing *Minerva Crowning Mercury* (cat. 132) is loosely related to Muller's engraving.





195

LITERATURE: Bartsch 1978-, vol. 4, no. 67; Konečný 1998, esp. p. 197; Müller et al. 2002, cat. no. 8.

COPIES: Drawing, Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (C7116).

195

Anton Eisenhoit (German, Warburg 1553/54–1603 Warburg)

Hercules and Omphale, print 1590

Published by Balthasar Caymox 12 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 8 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (32.2 × 22.6 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.95.1867)

Inscribed lower right: B.S. inventor: / A. [helmet monogram] fecit: / Bal: Caimox: ex:

Dated lower left: 1590

Latin inscription: *Hercules loquitur // Quas mare velivolam, quas, terra, ferae, orcus, Olympus, / Immanes populi quas timuere manus, / Has ego Maeonia clava tremefactus, inermi, / Femineae cogor supposuisse colo. // Femina tela tulit Lernaes atra venenis, / Ferre gravem lana vix satis apta colum. / Discite mortales sint in amore Venena / Mars quem non poterit vincere vincit amor.*

Translation: Hercules says: frightened by the Maeonian club and unarmed, I am forced to put to a woman's distaff these hands that the sea winged with sails, beasts, Orcus [the underworld], Olympus, and savage peoples have feared. A woman, unfit to carry a distaff loaded with wool, carried weapons blackened with Lernean

poison. O mortals, learn that there are poisons in love. Love conquers him whom Mars will not be able to conquer.

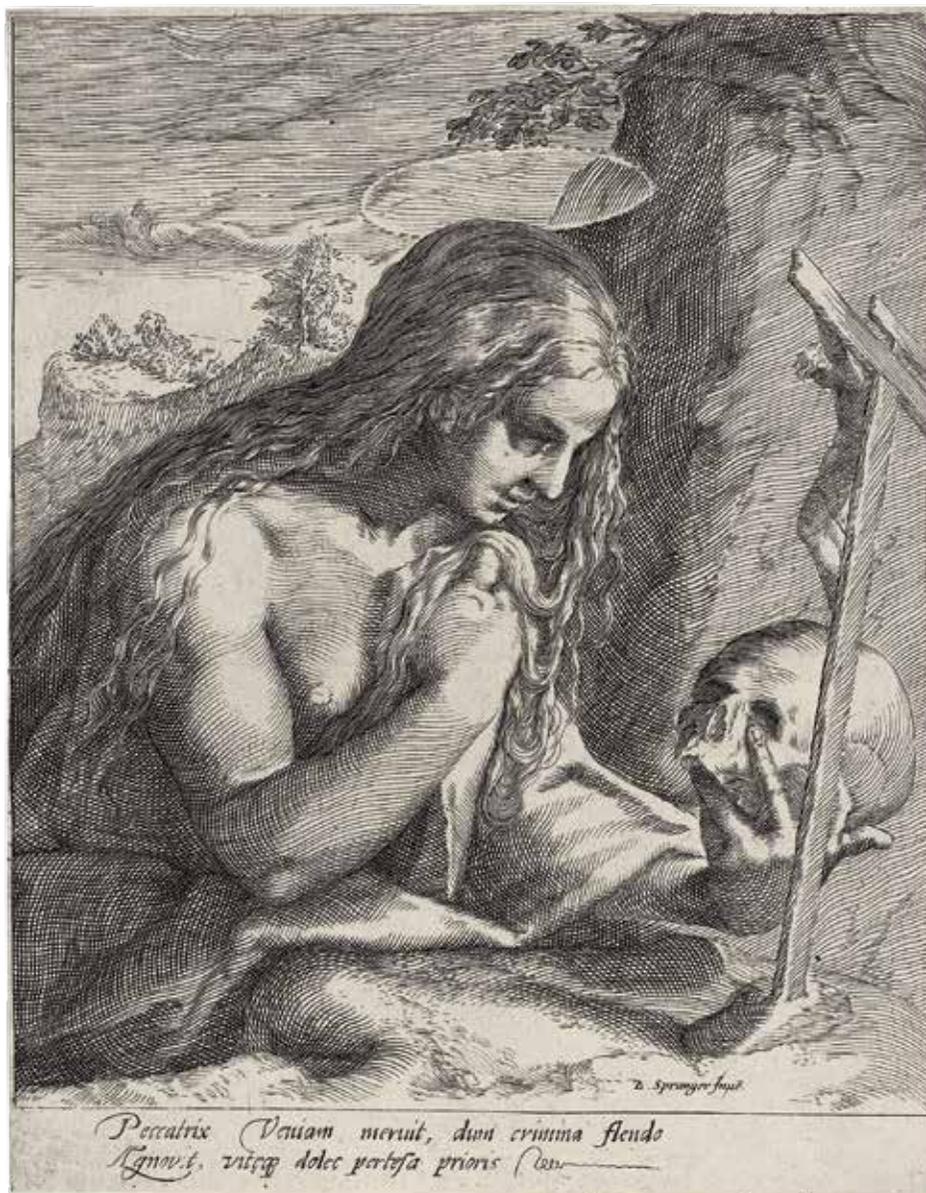
Eisenhoit engraved only two designs after Spranger, and his prints after any artist are rare. A drawing of slightly smaller dimensions, now in the Uffizi, represents Spranger's original invention (cat. 116). Eisenhoit's print incorporates a more detailed background, but it is not known if it was he or Spranger who made these additions. Overall, Eisenhoit remained true to Spranger's composition, incorporating the trees, broken branch, and voluminous drapery.

Spranger depicted Hercules and Omphale several times. In his oil-on-copper painting in Vienna (cat. 43), Omphale is nearly identical, but both the posture and the visage of Hercules differ from this engraving. The setting is the biggest difference between the two works: the painting situates the couple in the intimacy of the bedroom, whereas Eisenhoit's engraving takes the scene outdoors. In the engraving, the figures are more monumental overall, with a muscularity not apparent in the painting.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1954-, vol. 8, no. 2; Kesting 1964, no. 8; Stiegemann 2003, pp. 186–89, cat. no. 33.

196

Pieter de Jode I (Netherlandish, Antwerp 1570–1634 Antwerp)
Penitent Mary Magdalen,
 design ca. 1593, print before 1600
 9¹³/₁₆ × 7⁵/₈ in. (24.9 × 19.4 cm)
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.95.1910)



Inscribed lower right: B. Spranger inve.

Latin verse: *Peccatrix Veniam meruit, dum crimina flendo / Agnovit, vique dolet pertesa prioris.*

Translation: The sinner merits forgiveness, as she weeps and recognizes her misdeeds, she is weary of her former life and feels only hurt.

Spranger's preparatory drawing (cat. 136) allows an assessment of the transformation between his conception and de Jode's interpretation. The engraver masterfully captured the chiaroscuro effects so prevalent in Spranger's original. The drawing and the print are undated, but a copy after the print by Octavio Cavani is inscribed 1600,

providing a firm terminus ante quem.¹ De Jode created a more detailed background landscape than in Spranger's drawing, resulting in a less unified composition.

NOTES

1. For the de Jode engraving and for the Cavani copy, see Hollstein 1949–, vol. 9, p. 26, no. 92.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949–, vol. 9, p. 26, no. 92.

COPIES: Drawing, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (2007.223.56).

197

Bartholomeus Willemsz. Dolendo (Netherlandish, Leiden, ca. 1566–71 to 1626 Leiden)

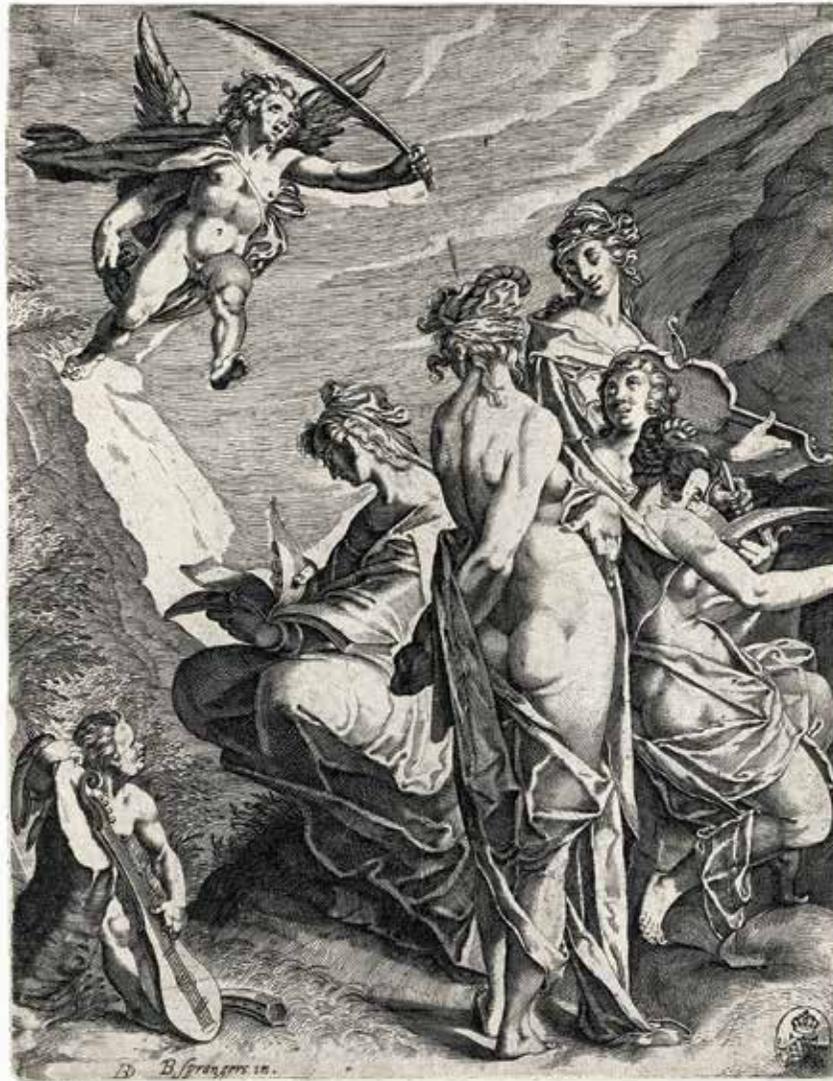
The Muses with Cupid, n.d.

8 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (21.2 × 16.4 cm)

Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden

Inscribed lower left: *BD / B Sprangers in.*

Dolendo's engraving represents half of a Spranger composition known only through drawings in reverse (see Appendix, Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, *Minerva with the Muses and a River God*). One of these drawings has been attributed to Friedrich Christoph Steinhammer, a follower of Hans Rottenhammer I.¹ Spranger's original design features Minerva and a river god along with the Muses and Cupid, but Dolendo's engraving shows only the latter group. Examining the drawings related to Dolendo's engraving, it is evident that Spranger experimented with the placement and grouping of the Muses. Dolendo then conflated these variants into the design seen here. For example, Spranger's drawing *Minerva with the Muses and Pegasus* (cat. 104) shows a similar vocabulary of figures in the central grouping; however, the foreground



nude is in reverse in Dolendo's engraving. The female standing in the foreground, seen from the back, also brings to mind the nude female in Spranger's drawing *Allegory of Painting* (cat. 152).

A particular awkwardness, especially in the faces, signals the possibility that Dolendo was not working from a preparatory drawing by Spranger but rather made his own interpretation. This would also account for the fact that Dolendo rendered only part of the overall design.

NOTES

1. Borggrefe et al. 2008, p. 141, fig. 191.

LITERATURE: Niederstein 1931, nos. 4, 71; Oberhuber 1958, no. S52.

198

Johannes Sadeler I (Netherlandish, Brussels 1550–1600 Venice)

Phyllis and Aristotle, design and print mid- to late 1590s

Published by Johannes Sadeler I
10 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (27 × 21.5 cm)



B. Sprangers Jun. Sculpsit. fecit. et. exc.
cui gratia et privileg. Sac. Caes. M.

Nil studium, nil sacra valent Conamina Vatum
Consilium sapiens ni pietate regat.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1953 (53.601.10[25])
IN EXHIBITION

Inscribed lower left: *B. Sprangers Inv:
JSadl: fec et exc. / cu[m] gratia et privil:
Sac^e: Caes. M.*

Latin verse: *Nil studium, nil sacra valent
Conanima Vatum / Consilium sapiens ni
pietate regat.*

Translation: Study and the sacred efforts
of the poets are not at all useful if the wise
man does not give advice with piety.

Unlike most designs engraved after Spranger, no preliminary studies or other states are known for this amusing print. *Phyllis and Aristotle* could thus have been created for the personal pleasure of Rudolf. The underlying message of the print warns of the power of women. As the inscription insinuates, the learned Aristotle, his erudition made apparent by the books piled on the shelf, was helpless in the face of feminine wiles. According to an apocryphal tale, Phyllis was the favorite consort (or wife) of Aristotle's pupil Alexander the Great. The old philosopher instructed Alexander to shun the temptations of the flesh, lest he neglect his studies. When Alexander followed Aristotle's advice and avoided Phyllis, she took revenge by seducing the philosopher. Commanding him to come crawling to her on hand and foot, she then rode him like a horse. The dominatrix theme and bawdy sexuality are unmistakable. Spranger's design is indebted to an antecedent from 1515 by Hans Baldung,¹ who set his couple outdoors, making the nudity of Phyllis more striking, if not unsettling. By setting the narrative indoors, in a scholarly environment, Spranger connects the image with the story more concisely.

The sophistication of the design and the voluptuous muscled forms express Spranger's later Prague style. The sculpturesque bodies also indicate his awareness of work by Adriaen de Vries. Phyllis's face and hairstyle align her with Jael in Spranger's painting *Jael and Sisera* (cat. 49). As Sadeler received royal privileges in 1581 and 1593, and in light of Spranger's approach to the female form, the engraving can comfortably be dated in the mid- to late 1590s.

NOTES

1. For an image of Baldung's engraving, see Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (RP-P-OB-4120).

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949-, vol. 21, p. 162, no. 488.

199

Jan Harmensz. Muller (Netherlandish, Amsterdam 1571–1628 Amsterdam)
Cupid and Psyche, design ca. 1600–1610, print ca. 1610
Published by Harmen Jansz. Muller
15³/₈ × 20⁷/₈ in. (38.8 × 53 cm)
Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum,
Amsterdam (RP-P-OB-32.216)

Inscribed lower right: *B. Sprangers in
argilla, forma hemisphaerica, prius effinxit /
Joan: Mullerus in aere incidebat. // Harman
Mul. excu.*

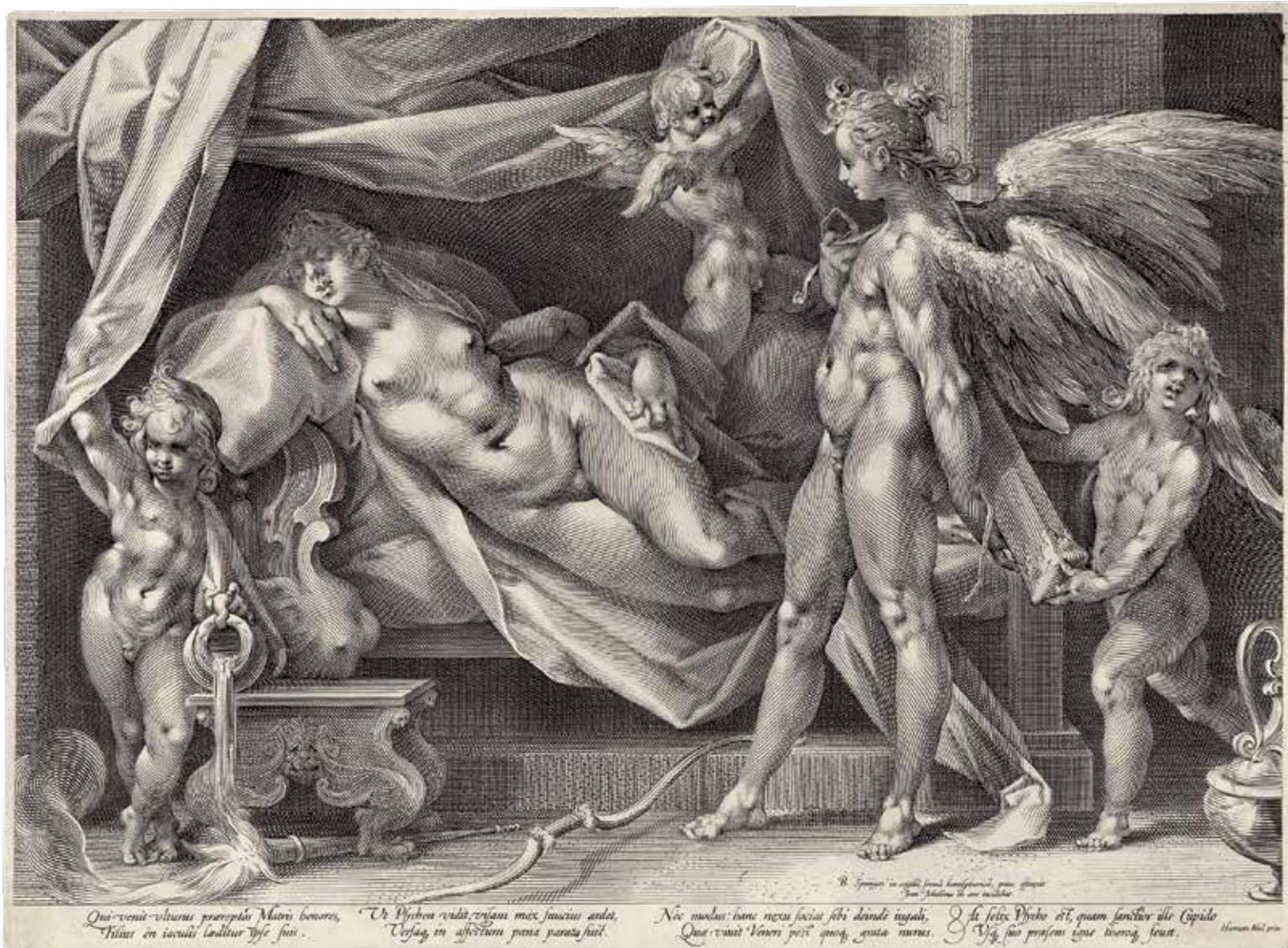
Translation: B. Sprangers first made a low relief, in shape like a hemisphere, from clay. Jan Muller engraved it in copper. Harman Muller publisher.

Latin verse: *Qui venit ulturus praereptos
Matris honores, / Filius en iaculis laeditur
ipse suis. // Ut Psychen vidit, visam mox
saucius ardet, / Versaq[ue] in affectum poena
parata fuit. // Nec modus: hanc nexu sociat
sibi deinde iugali, / Quae vivit Veneri post
quoq[ue] grata nurus. // At felix Psyche est,
quam sanctior ille Cupido / Vsq[ue] suo
praesens igne thoroq[ue] fouet.*

Translation: Behold! The son who has come to avenge his mother's stolen honor is injured by his own arrows. As soon as he sees Psyche, immediately wounded, he burns with love for her, and the prepared punishment has been turned into desire. And there is no limit: he then joins her to himself in nuptial bond, and afterward she is also a dear daughter-in-law to Venus. But blessed is Psyche, whom that more divine Cupid still keeps warm with his own fire and seed.

Rife with sensuality and intrigue, Muller's print brings to life a scene from Apuleius's novel *The Golden Ass*. Spranger depicted a moment of forbidden passion, when Cupid, sent by his jealous mother to harm Psyche, is blinded by her beauty and falls irretrievably in love with her. Their subsequent wedding was memorialized in Spranger's famous composition engraved by Goltzius (cat. 178). An ornate headboard is endowed with round, inviting breasts that mimic those of the sleeping Psyche, heightening the erotic electricity in the room. Ready to join Psyche in bed, Cupid has casually dropped his bow on the floor as a putto helps him remove the quiver case strapped to his back. Another putto quenches the torch of love, perhaps warning of dark times ahead.

Muller's inscription noting that Spranger executed this design in clay implies Spranger first created a terracotta relief of the theme. Though no such work is known, Muller's interpretation indeed seems more sculptural than painterly, and this could also explain the atypical horizontal format.¹ Though Spranger's late painting *Venus and Adonis* (cat. 88) shares a similar horizontality and layout, its figures are slimmer and more attenuated. Instead,



Spranger's Psyche calls to mind his plump Diana resting after the hunt in another late painting (cat. 87). The right hand of the standing putto at left, his gesture visible through the extravagant drapery, is a tour de force of engraving. Spranger often communicated the ambiguities of gender in his work, illustrating the hermetic and alchemic philosophy popular at Rudolf's court, but

in this case, despite Cupid's pretty face and curls, his rippling muscles leave no doubt as to his gender.

NOTES

1. Korazija 1982, cat. no. 49.

LITERATURE: Korazija 1982, cat. no. 49; Schultze 1988, vol. 1, pp. 423–24, cat. no. 316; Filedt Kok 1999, vol. 2, p. 189, no. 70 II/IV; Volrábová and Kubíková 2012, p. 172.



200

Jacob Matham (Netherlandish,
Haarlem 1571–1631 Haarlem)
The Triumph of Venus over Neptune,
print ca. 1610–14

Published by Jacob Matham
10 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (25.6 × 40.2 cm)
Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum,
Amsterdam (RP-P-OB-27.203)

Inscribed bottom: *Cum privil Sa. Cae.
M.^{is} // B. Spranger Inventor. / Iac. Matham
sculp. et excud.*

Latin verse: *Alma Venus quocunq[ue] venis
tua magna potestas, / Imperium sine fine
tuum; supera infera Mundi // Obsequijs
devota tuis: tu gaudia nutris, / Et pecudum
omne genus iucundo pascis amore: // Blanda*

*quies homini, divum[que] aeterna voluptas,
/ Qua caelum, ventos, tempestatesque
serenas. // Te penes arbitrium pelagi, Dom-
inamq[ue] fatentur / Neptunusq[ue] pater
Phorciqu[ue] exercitus omnis. / T[heodor] Schrevelius.*
Translation: Kind Venus, to whatever place
you come, great is your power, without end
your dominion; the higher and the lower
regions of the earth are devoted to your ser-
vices: you foster delight and feed every kind
of creature with pleasant love; agreeable
repose to man, and eternal pleasure of the
gods, by which you calm the sky, the winds,
and the storms. Both father Neptune and
the whole army of Phorcus [a sea god, son of
Neptune] acknowledge your mastery of the
sea. T[heodor] Schrevelius.

This complex pastiche of sea crea-
tures lacks cohesion and thus may
have been produced after Spranger's
death. Indeed, a later state of the
engraving bears the Latin phrase *Lucem
vidit post obitum Inventoris*, meaning
that it was engraved after Spranger
died. Matham received his royal privi-
lege in 1601, and since the inscription
indicates his privilege, the print dates
thereafter and likely more than a decade
later, as a second state is inscribed 1614.

In the standing group in the middle
ground to the right of center, Neptune's
companion is without doubt Venus, for
Cupid stands next to her. The juxta-



position of Venus with Neptune presents the recurring theme by Spranger of the *unvergleiches Paar*, or the older man with a younger woman. (It should be recalled that Spranger painted *Glauco and Scylla* in the 1580s, cat. 26.) A painting (cat. 74) by Spranger relates to Matham's engraving but does not encompass the entire scene of the engraving, just the right half of it. It is possible that Matham himself expanded the composition.

LITERATURE: Edinburgh 1991, cat. no. 20; Widerkehr 2007–8, vol. 2, p. 78, no. 180.

201

Zacharias Dolendo (Netherlandish, Leiden 1561–ca. 1600 Leiden)
Adam and Eve, design ca. 1595–98, print 1598
 Published by Hendrik Hondius
 5³/₈ × 4¹/₂ in. (13.7 × 11.4 cm)
 Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (RP-P-BI-7103)

Inscribed bottom: *Hh. ex. // B. Sprangers Inventor Zacharias Dolende fecit.*

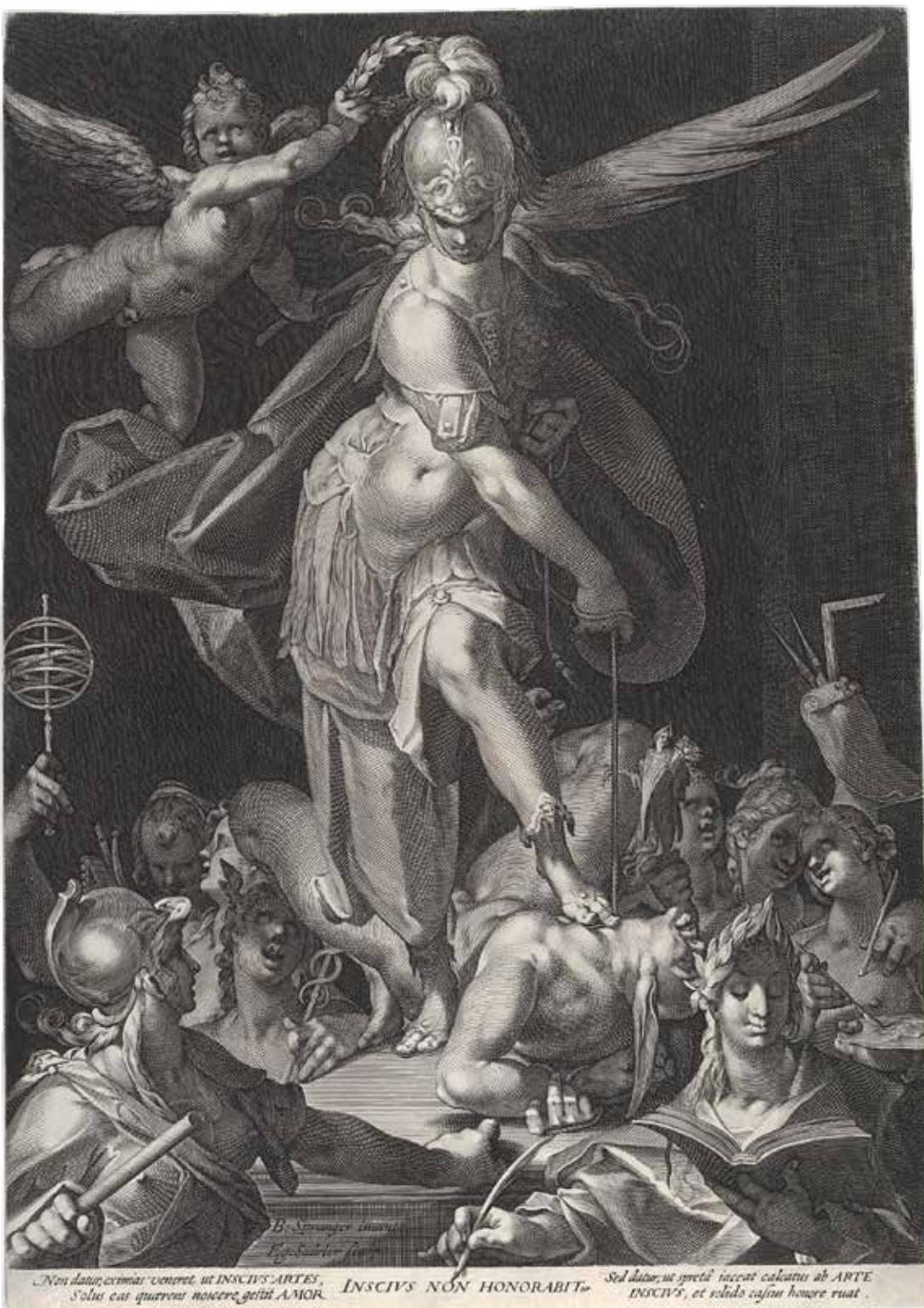
Zacharias was the elder brother of Bartholomeus Willemsz. Dolendo, who engraved Spranger's *Pluto and Ceres* (cat. 214), a design similar to *Adam and Eve* but more sexually charged. A copy of the preparatory drawing for *Adam and Eve* is in Stuttgart (see Appendix), and the design also loosely refers to Spranger's two paintings *Fall from Paradise* in Vienna and Riga (cats. 62, 63). There seem to have been verse inscriptions below the design, but they have been cut off from all known extant versions of the print.

An interior scene painted by Pieter de Hooch (fig. 70) shows above the fireplace a painting nearly identical to Spranger's *Adam and Eve*. However, it is difficult to see if the woman in the painting is actually reaching up to grasp the apple from the serpent, as she does here. The style and composition of Spranger's design stem from the 1590s. According to Oberhuber and Strech, the print published by Hondius is dated 1598; however, no impression with that date can be currently located.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949–, vol. 5, nos. 1, 2; Oberhuber 1958, no. S5; Orenstein 1996, no. 377; Strech 1996, no. 7.



Fig. 70. Pieter de Hooch (Dutch, Rotterdam 1629–1684 Amsterdam). *Leisure Time in an Elegant Setting*, ca. 1663–65. Oil on canvas, 21⁵/₈ × 26 in. (55 × 66 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 (1975.1.144)



202

Aegidius Sadeler II
(Netherlandish, Antwerp
1568–1625 Prague)
The Triumph of Wisdom,
design ca. 1595–1600,
print ca. 1600
19⁵/₈ × 14¹/₈ in. (50 × 35.7 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum
of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey
Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey
Fund, 1949 (49.95.2282)

Inscribed: *B. Spranger Invent. /
Eg. Sadeler Scalps.*

Latin verse: *Non datur; eximias
veneretur ut INSCIVS ARTES.
Solut eas quarens noscere gestit
AMOR. INSCIVS NON HON-
ORABITUR. Sed datur; ut spreto
iaceat calcatus ab ARTE / IN-
SCIVS, et solido cassus honore ruat.*

Translation: It is not granted that
the ignorant should have admira-
tion for the beautiful arts. Love
alone seeking them [the arts] ea-
gerly desires to learn them. The ig-
norant will not be honored. But it
is granted that the ignorant should
lie down, trampled by spurned art,
and should tumble down deprived
of true honor.

The Muse of history, Clio,
reaches into our space
and writes, “The ignorant will
not be honored,” thus declar-
ing the theme of this esoteric
engraving. Spranger also pro-
duced a painting on this
theme, *Minerva Vanquishing
Ignorance* (cat. 67), with a
composition similar but not
identical to this one. Minerva’s
pose differs, and there is only
one putto in the engraving.
Either Sadeler engraved a

design by Spranger from a drawing now lost or he invented the changes, perhaps to make Spranger's composition more to his liking.¹

Minerva in Spranger's painting is more dynamic and elegant than in the engraving. A frequent character in other Spranger compositions, Minerva embodies Rudolfine aesthetics and philosophy. Here she conquers Ignorance, supported by a group of figures including the three arts, Mercury, Urania, and Bellona, along with Clio, absorbed in her book. All of them enjoy

the protection offered by the powerful Minerva. Mercury, in addition to his role as messenger, was regarded as patron and protector of the arts, eloquence, and prophecy. The entire scene offers a metaphor for Rudolf, who in times of struggle provides a haven for the arts to flourish.

The style, composition, and theme date the engraving to about 1595–1600, which is reinforced by Minerva's fleshy form and by her similarity to the female figures in Sadeler's engraving *The Three Marys Returning from the Tomb*, dated

1600 (cat. 216). Limouze, the preeminent scholar of Aegidius Sadeler, dates *The Triumph of Wisdom* more precisely to "ca. 1600."

NOTES

1. Volrábová and Kubíková 2012, p. 166.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949–, vol. 21, no. 115; Bartsch 1978–, vol. 72, no. 114; Limouze 1989, pp. 8–9; Volrábová and Kubíková 2012, p. 166 (with further literature).

COPIES: Drawing, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg (HZ 3999).

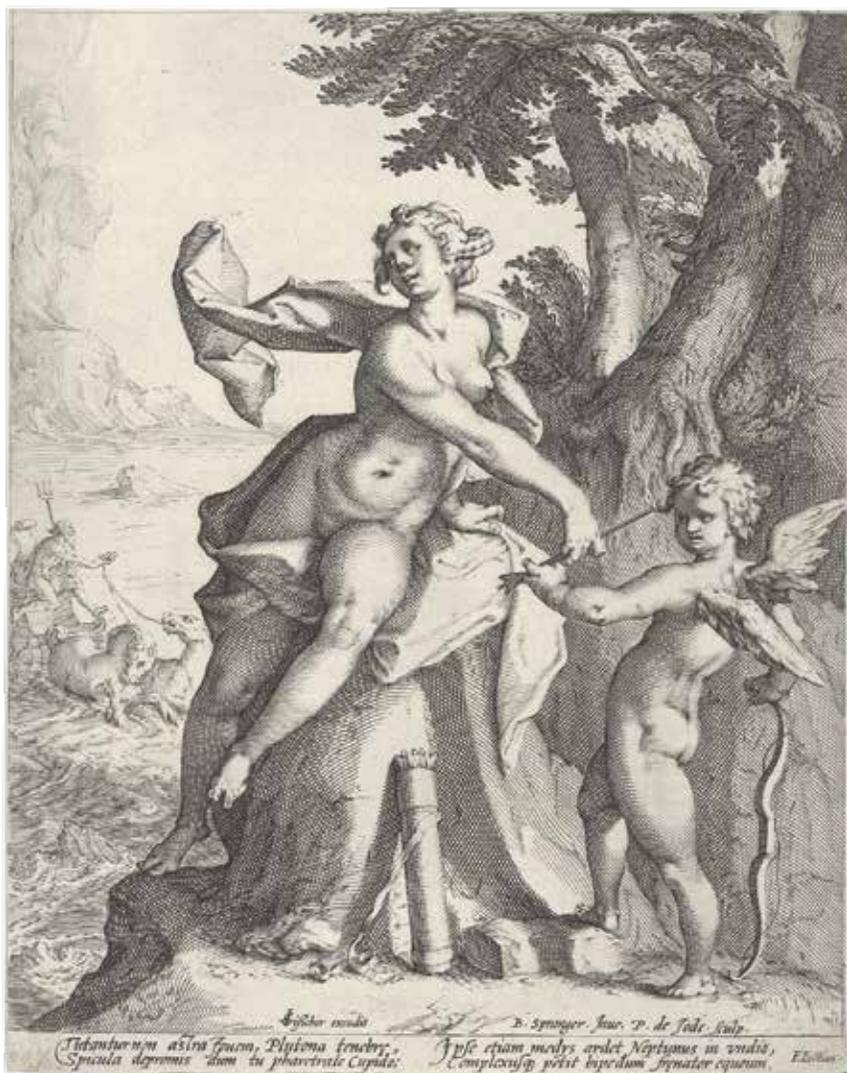
203

Pieter de Jode I (Netherlandish, Antwerp 1570–1634 Antwerp)
Venus Commanding Cupid to Shoot His Arrow at Pluto, design mid-1590s, print 1606 or after
Published by Claes Jansz. Visscher
Sheet: 9¹⁵/₁₆ × 7¹⁵/₁₆ in. (25.3 × 20.1 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.95.1832)

Inscribed bottom: CJVisscher excudit // B. Spranger. Inve. P. de Jode. sculp.

Latin verse: *Tutantur non astra Jovem, Plutona tenebrae, / Spicula depromis dum tu pharetrate Cupido; // Ipse etiam medys ardet Neptunus in undis, / Complexusq[ue] petit bipedum, frenator equorum. // F. Estius.*
Translation: The stars do not protect Jupiter, the darkness does not protect Pluto, when you, Cupid, fetch the arrows from the quiver; even Neptune himself burns in the middle of the waves and the tamer of two-footed horses seeks embraces. F[ranc]o Estius

The face of this Venus is nearly identical to that of the Venus in de Jode's engraving *Mercury Embracing Venus* (cat. 204). Visscher began to publish in 1606, so this engraving was produced sometime thereafter. The



Mannerist pose of Venus, her body twisting impossibly in opposite directions, suggests Spranger's work of the mid-1590s. The overhanging leafy branches are also typical of him at this time.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949-, vol. 9, no. 97a; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.44; Filedt Kok 1993, p. 181 and n. 61.

204

Pieter de Jode I (Netherlandish, Antwerp 1570–1634 Antwerp) *Mercury Embracing Venus*, design ca. 1588–93

Published by Claes Jansz. Visscher
6¾ × 4⅓ in. (17.2 × 12.6 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1956 (56.597.13)

Inscribed lower right: *B. Spranger Inve / P. D. Jode sculp.*



Latin verse: *Furtivos Paphiae, Maiaq[ue] Athlandide creti. / Quod mare, quod sidus, que tellus nescit amores?*

Translation: Which sea, which star, which earth does not know the secret loves of the one from Paphos [Venus] and the son of Maia, daughter of Atlas [Mercury]?

De Jode's engraving captures the sensuality of Spranger's erotic design known from a preparatory drawing in Basel (cat. 144). Here, de Jode skillfully differentiated between the textures of fabric, skin, and hair, as well as suggested the shifting patterns of light on flesh. See cat. 144 for further discussion.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949-, vol. 9, no. 97.

205

Egbert van Panderen (Dutch, Haarlem, ca. 1581–after 1628 Antwerp [?]) *Pallas*, print ca. 1600

Published by Clement de Jonghe
9¾ × 9⅓ in. (24.8 × 25.3 cm)

Philadelphia Museum of Art; The Muriel and Philip Berman Gift, acquired from the John S. Phillips bequest of 1876 to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, with funds contributed by Muriel and Philip Berman, gifts (by exchange) of Lisa Norris Elkins, Bryant W. Langston, Samuel S. White 3rd and Vera White, with additional funds contributed by John Howard McFadden, Jr., Thomas Skelton Harrison, and the Philip H. and A.S.W. Rosenbach Foundation, 1985 (1985-52-7639)

Inscribed bottom: *PALLAS. // B. Spranger inventer // E. van Paenderen sculpsit // 1. / Clement de Jonghe excudit*

Pallas, or Minerva, is omnipresent in Spranger's pantheon. Here, she treads on clouds and wields her wisdom over the sleeping Hercules. Spranger



also devised a masterful sleeping nude camouflaged in the clouds at right. This print is one in a series of three by van Panderen—all in the same unusual circular format—depicting the goddesses Pallas, Venus (cat. 206), and Juno (cat. 207). All three scenes take place amid tightly wound bands of clouds, with a nuanced *di sotto in su* perspective. This is the only one inscribed with the names of designer and engraver, but each is numbered 1, 2, or 3 in the bottom right corner. The absence of signatures on the others has led some scholars to attribute those engravings to Pieter

de Jode I, but the circular format and similar measurements clearly link them all to van Panderen.¹ The signed *Pallas* is slightly less refined, lacking the figural bravura in the foreshortening of the other two, which could be explained by its being first in the series.

The only known sheets engraved by van Panderen after Spranger, these are also among his few allegories; for the most part, he focused on religious subjects. His other major works include *Vita D. Thomae Aquinatis* (Life of Saint Thomas Aquinas), engraved after Otto van Veen in 1610.² Little is known

about van Panderen—even his birth and death dates are uncertain. What is known is that he worked for a while in Spranger's birthplace of Antwerp and flourished there about the time Spranger made his triumphant homecoming in 1602.

NOTES

1. Strech 1996, nos. 27, 28. 2. British Museum (1935,0413.243) and Santa Fe Institute Library, Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology, Berkeley, California.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949–, vol. 15, nos. 46–48; Oberhuber 1958, no. S51; Strech 1996, no. 50.



206

Egbert van Panderen (Dutch, Haarlem, ca. 1581–after 1628 Antwerp [?])
Venus and Cupid, design ca. 1585,
 print ca. 1600
 10¹/₁₆ × 9³/₄ in. (25.6 × 24.7 cm)
 Philadelphia Museum of Art; The Muriel
 and Philip Berman Gift, acquired from
 the John S. Phillips bequest of 1876 to the
 Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts,
 with funds contributed by Muriel and Philip
 Berman, gifts (by exchange) of Lisa Norris
 Elkins, Bryant W. Langston, Samuel S.
 White 3rd and Vera White, with additional

funds contributed by John Howard McFadden, Jr., Thomas Skelton Harrison, and the Philip H. and A.S.W. Rosenbach Foundation, 1985 (1985-52-7641)

Inscribed bottom: *VENVS.* // 2.

The preparatory drawing for this print is nearly identical in design, except van Panderen eliminated the figure of the West Wind at bottom center (cat. 107). The print is number two in his series of goddesses engraved after

Spranger's designs (see cats. 205, 207).

LITERATURE: Niederstein 1931, no. 12; Oberhuber 1958, no. 59; Strech 1996, no. 27.

COPIES: Drawing, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi (15732 F, as School of Parma).

207

Egbert van Panderen (Dutch, Haarlem, ca. 1581–after 1628 Antwerp [?])
Juno, print ca. 1600
 10¹/₈ × 9¹/₁₆ in. (25.7 × 25 cm)



Philadelphia Museum of Art; The Muriel and Philip Berman Gift, acquired from the John S. Phillips bequest of 1876 to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, with funds contributed by Muriel and Philip Berman, gifts (by exchange) of Lisa Norris Elkins, Bryant W. Langston, Samuel S. White 3rd and Vera White, with additional funds contributed by John Howard McFadden, Jr., Thomas Skelton Harrison, and the Philip H. and A.S.W. Rosenbach Foundation, 1985 (1985-52-7640)

Inscribed bottom: *IVNO.* // 3.

Van Panderen's engraving closely follows, in reverse, Spranger's fresco of Mercury and Minerva in the Prague Castle White Tower (cat. 58), but Juno wears a helmet in the fresco and sports a fancy hairstyle in the print; the peacock also differs. The connection between this engraving and Spranger's fresco strengthens the argument that this series of three circular designs engraved by van Panderen was originally designed by Spranger as architectural decorations. This print is the

last in the series. Strech attributes this engraving and the *Venus and Cupid* (cat. 206) to Pieter de Jode I, but the stylistic affinity with van Panderen's signed *Pallas* (cat. 205), the first in the series, argues against that attribution.

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, no. S47; Neumann 1970, pp. 142-44; Strech 1996, no. 28.



208

Aegidius Sadeler II (Netherlandish, Antwerp 1568–1625 Prague)
Christ as Gardener with Mary Magdalen, design ca. 1585–95;
 print before 1599
 11 × 8⁵/₈ in. (28 × 22 cm)
 Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (RP-P-OB-5110)

Inscribed bottom: *B. Spranger Invent. // Eg. Sadeler Sculp.*

Latin inscription: *Te simul abscondis; simul et vis CHRISTE videri: / Hinc flet, teq[ue] una, quaerit Amans et habet // Ludere gestit Amor: turpes abscedite lusus; / Belle et DIVINVS ludere novit AMOR.*
 Translation: O Christ, you hide yourself but at the same time you want to be seen. A lover cries and at the same time seeks and possesses you. Love eagerly desires to play: O shameful games, go away! Divine Love knows how to play delightfully.



209

Johannes Sadeler I (Netherlandish, Brussels 1550–1600 Venice)
Noli Me Tangere, design 1591
 11³/₈ × 8¹/₈ in. (28.9 × 20.5 cm)
 Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (RP-P-OB-5334)

Aramaic inscription: *Maria: Rabboni.*

Latin inscription: *cu[m] privilegio S. C. Maiestat. / PRO ILLVST. AC GENERO. DNO D. IOANNI ALBERTO LIBE BARONI A SPRI[N]ZENSTAIN / ET NEVHAUS, S. C. M. ET SERENISS.*

FERDINANDO ARCHIDVCI AVSTR.^{iae}
etc. A CONS. / *Pinxit Barth: Spra[n]ger,*
Ioan: Sadeler scalps: et dedic:

Translation: To the Illustrious and Generous Lord Hans Albrecht Baron von Sprinzenstein and Neuhaus, councillor to the Sacred Caesarean Majesty and Serene Ferdinando Archduke of Austria etc. / Barth. Spranger painted; Sadeler engraved and dedicated.

The story of Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalen is told in John 20:17. In the guise of a gardener, he warns her not to touch him ("Noli me tangere"). Johannes Sadeler's print shows them directly engaging, gazing into each other's eyes. Mary Magdalen's awe is undisguised as she utters the word *Rabboni*—Aramaic for "my Master"—as written at the top of the print.

Spranger created two versions of this design; the other, *Christ as Gardener with Mary Magdalen*, was engraved by Aegidius Sadeler II. In that rendering Christ is bare-chested and Mary Magdalen appears equally humble, without the pearls she wears in *Noli Me Tangere*. By illustrating Christ shirtless, Spranger emphasized the human aspect of the story, but it is a less dynamic, more static design than Johannes Sadeler's engraving. A drawing copied after the print is signed "DS Witzberg" and dated 1599 (Universitätsbibliothek Erlangen-Nürnberg).

The inscription on *Noli Me Tangere* indicates that Spranger also painted the composition, and a painting of the same name is dated 1591 (cat. 59), so Johannes Sadeler's engraving originates thereafter. He took pains to reverse the image so that it would replicate Spranger's painting, though minute details in the distant right landscape do not match exactly.

LITERATURE (CAT. 208): Hollstein 1949–, vol. 21, no. 61.

LITERATURE (CAT. 209): Hollstein 1949–, vol. 21, no. 255.

COPIES: Drawings, Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, Bologna (258); Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne (Z3765); Universitätsbibliothek Erlangen-Nürnberg (744).

2 I O

Jan Harmensz. Muller (Netherlandish, Amsterdam 1571–1628 Amsterdam)
The Apotheosis of the Arts,
design ca. 1595–96, print 1597
Published by Harmen Jansz. Muller
Third state

Engraving on two sheets using two plates,
26 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 19 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (67.8 × 50.1 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The
Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha
Whittelsey Fund, 1957 (57.581.69)

Inscribed above the tablet, underneath
crowd: *B. Sprangers inven.*; last line of tablet:
Joannus Mullerus sculpsit; lower right:
Harman Muller excudebat.

Dedication on the tablet: *Amplissimis prudentissimis[ue] Reip. Antverpien. Consulibus et / Senatoribus, Dominis et Patronis suis plurimum colendis: / quo erga Patriam et pueritiae suae altricem et Artium / liberalium cultricem, aliquo modo gratum memoremq[ue] se / praestet, Bartholomeus Spranger. S. C. M. Pictor et / Senatūs deditissimus Cliens dicat consecratq[ue]. M.D.XCVII.*

Translation: To the most esteemed and wisest Consuls and Senators of Antwerp, the most honorable Lords and Patrons, in order to prove himself to be in some way grateful and mindful toward the country and nurse of his youth and supporter of the liberal arts, Bartholomeus Spranger, imperial painter and most devoted client of the Senate, dedicates and devotes 1597 / Jan Muller engraved and B. Spranger designed.

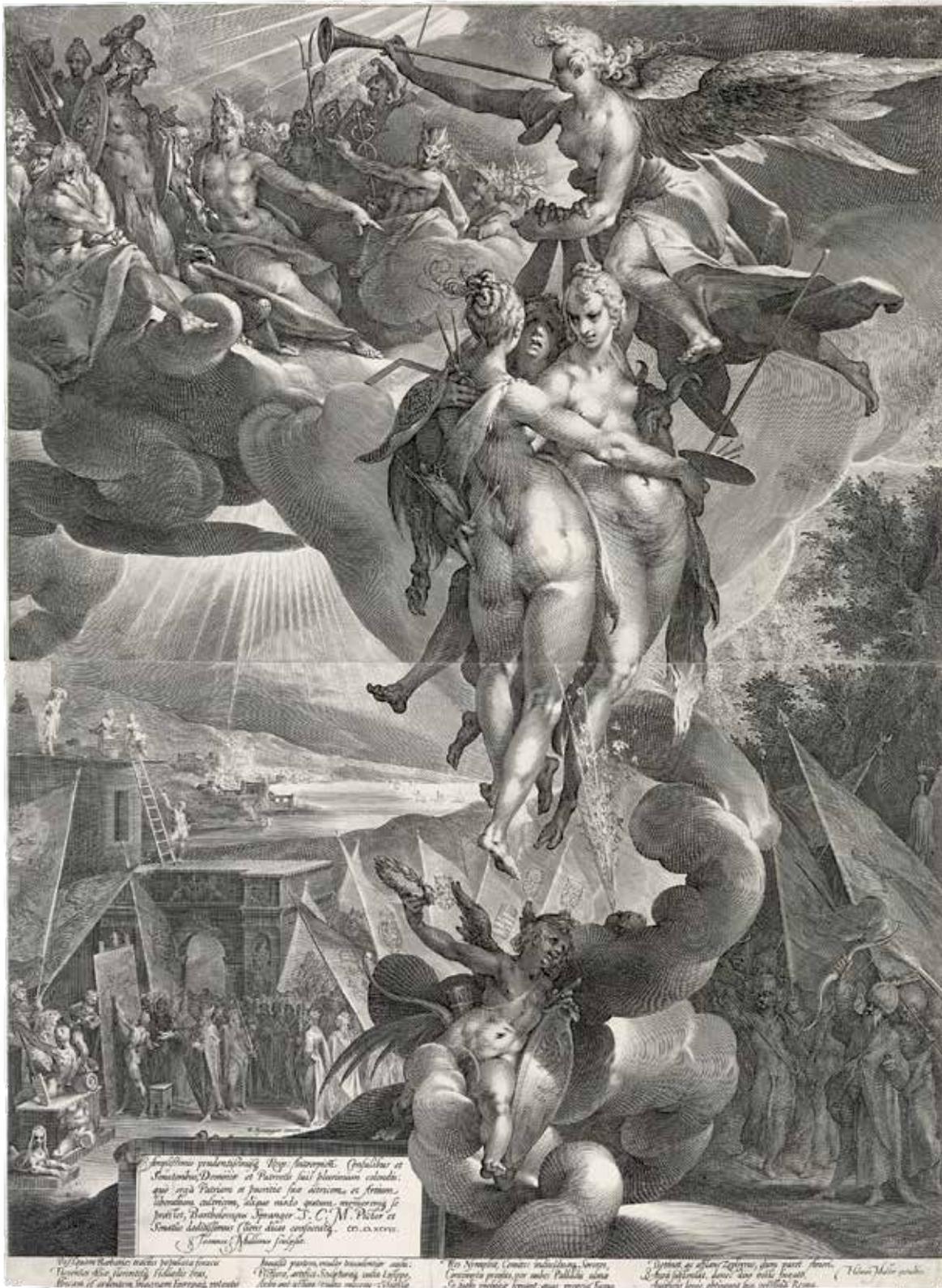
Inscription below picture: *Postquam Barbaries tractus populeata fecaris / Florentes*

Asiae, florentesq[ue] Helladis oras, / Africam et ardentem, magnam Europaq[ue] potentis // Inuasit partem, multo truculentior ausu: / Pictura, artificei Sculpturaq[ue], aulta Lysippo, / Archi-que-tectura, vultu praecone venustae // Tres Nymphae, Comites individuae[ue] Sorores, / Contemptae prorsus, per nubers Palladis almae / Se suasu profugae seruant: quas propria Fama // Detinet, ac afflans Zephyrus, dum paret Amori, / et Aura sustentat, donec diro hoste fugato, / Auspicys Iouis, obtineant sua pristina Regna.

Translation: After barbarism—which had ravaged the prospering regions of fertile Asia and the flourishing coasts of Greece—also invaded hot Africa and a great part of powerful Europe, it became much fiercer in daring: Painting and Sculpture, cultivated by the artist Lysippos, and Architecture, three beautiful nymphs as their faces proclaim, companions and inseparable sisters, precisely adorned, fugitive save themselves through the clouds on the advice of propitious Pallas [Minerva]: their own Fame supports them, and blowing Zephyr, as he obeys Love, and Air sustains them until by the will of Jupiter—the dire enemy having been put to flight—they may obtain their former kingdoms.

Spranger dedicated this sophisticated design, replete with political and artistic allegory, to the leaders of Antwerp. An earlier state in the British Museum, which has corrections made in body color, shows Spranger's direct involvement in this engraving. The year inscribed, 1597, was a politically challenging one for the Holy Roman Empire: one year earlier the Ottomans had claimed victory in the Battle of Mezökeresztes, near what is now Eger, Hungary. The print teems with allusions to Turkish aggression and to Rudolf's reign as a safe haven for the arts.

The design spotlights Fama carrying voluptuous female personifications of architecture, painting, and sculpture to



Mount Olympus, where Jupiter (alluding to Rudolf) will provide sanctuary from the turmoil below. Interpretation of the precise meaning is elusive, but the inscriptions illuminate this multivalent allegory. In the left middle ground, an artist stands before a large canvas, painting a figure that resembles Minerva. He works in the company of a gesticulating pope and dignitaries of the imperial confederates, identifiable by their flags: Spain, France, Venice, Florence, England, Burgundy, Saxony, Pfalz, and Brandenburg. To the left of the painter, a sculptor holding a hammer and chisel practices his art. A figure atop the triumphal arch, holding a compass, points to a group above the ladder, who are building a new structure, which alludes to the building of an empire. For the moment, the sun shines brightly, the seas are calm. But ships looming in the distance portend trouble for the artistic utopia. At lower right, a Turkish army marches forward, and a particularly menacing Turk brandishes his bow at the fleeing triumvirate of the arts.

The three personifications of the arts, majestically sculpturesque, take inspiration from Adriaen de Vries. The print's date of 1597 provides a terminus ante quem for Spranger's original invention; considering the political undertones and the references to the Turkish incursion at Eger, he would have composed his design about 1595–96. Spranger's message emphasizes that during times of both war and peace, the arts would flourish under Rudolf's protection. Jupiter's visage even resembles Rudolf, and if not visually convincing, such a symbolic reference to Rudolf as the leader of all the gods is certainly plausible. A red chalk drawing in Munich that depicts a few of these figures has been ascribed to Spranger,



but the style of execution excludes his hand (see Appendix).

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1967, no. 342; Schultze 1988, vol. 2, cat. no. 675 (with full literature); Strech 1996, no. 48; Filedt Kok 1999, vol. 2, p. 206, no. 76; Mai and Wettengl 2002, cat. no. 51.

COPIES: Painting, Národní Galerie, Prague (O-1166).

211

Joannes Bara (Dutch, Middelburg 1581–1634 London)
Jupiter, Juno, and Mercury,
 design ca. 1592–95, print 1599
 Published by Wilhelm Pieter Zimmerman
 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 7 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (21.3 × 19.6 cm)
 Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München
 (101771 D)

Inscribed top: *Jupiter et Juno*

Inscribed and dated bottom: *B:Sprangers*

in: Joannes bara sculptor: / Wilhelm pieter zimmerman. excud: 1599.

Except for the ornate corner borders, Bara closely followed Spranger's preparatory signed drawing, *Juno, Jupiter, and Mercury* (cat. 134). The *di sotto in su* orientation of the composition, as well as the embellished corners, suggest that Bara was depicting a ceiling design, either observed or imagined. Bara was a Dutch painter, designer, and engraver who sometimes referred to himself as a sculptor and a painter of images of glass. This collaboration with Spranger—evidently their sole print together—is unusual because Bara, originally from the Netherlands, spent his later years in England. He was just eighteen when this print was made.

LITERATURE: Niederstein 1931, p. 7; Hollstein 1949–, vol. 1, no. 32.

212

Jan Harmensz. Muller (Netherlandish, Amsterdam 1571–1628 Amsterdam)
Bellona Leading the Armies of the Emperor against the Turks, print 1600
Published by Harmen Jansz. Muller
28¼ × 20¼ in. (71.7 × 51.2 cm)
Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum,
Amsterdam (RP-P-OB-32.217)

Inscribed lower right: *Harman. Muller. excud. Ano. 1600.*

Dedication: *Serenissimo Principi Domino Dno. MATHIAE, Archduci Austriae, Duci Burgundiae, Stiriae, Carinthiae, Carniolae et Wirtembergae etc. Comiti Tirolis etc. Nec non // Generali et supremo totius Christiani exercitus contra Turcas Duci ac Praefecto foelicissimo, Dno suo clementissimo, Bartholomaeus Spranger S.C.M. Pictor D. D.*

Translation: Honoring Prince Matthias, Archduke of Austria, Duke of Burgundy (and his various titles) and General and Colonel of the entire Christian Army against the Turks, for his leadership and service to Rudolf, Spranger dedicates this print as a gift.

Latin verse: *En Bellona ciet turmas procul aere canoro, / Spicula Marte vibrat dextro, succinctaque flagris / Bella fremit, fremebunda parat, gaudet[ue] paratis. // Nec mora feruet opus, Iouis ales proelia miscet / Quid dubitet? Bona caussa facit. Caducifer inquit: / Macte animis: caussarum sum Deus ipse bonarum. // Exere tu modo vim facto agmine, Romula pubes. / Terrificum Turcis fulmen, victoria vobis / Nube volans praesto est: nihil impedit, exere vires. // Non ergo differ pacis, Germania sedes: // Praesidio maiore iuua Iouis alitis ausus. / Sic sternes Mahomet: victrix tua causa triumphet.*
Translation: Behold! From afar Bellona stirs the troops with her horn, she brandishes javelins with Mars's blessing, and prepared by lashes she roars, and by roaring makes ready for war, and she rejoices in the preparations. The work is carried on swiftly, without

delay, the eagle of Jupiter joins the battle. Why should it delay? It is for a good cause. The one bearing a herald's staff [Mercury] says: "Go on in courage! I'm the very god of good causes. You, O Roman youth, show strength in any way once the army is formed in battle lines. Victory is at hand for you, flying in a cloud in the form of a terrifying thunderbolt for the Turks. There are no obstacles. Show your strength. Therefore, O Germany, dwelling of peace, do not delay: help the daring attempts of Jupiter's eagle with a larger armed defensive support. Thus you will throw Mahomet to the ground: your victorious cause will triumph.

Jan Harmensz. Muller first worked for Goltzius, but by the time he engraved this print in 1600, he had resoundingly achieved skills equal to those of his mentor. This large, masterful print celebrates the goddess of war, Bellona, who leads the emperor's armies against the Ottoman onslaught. This erudite political allegory is dedicated to Prince Matthias, Rudolf's brother, for his leadership and service in the latest Turkish War. The Turkish threat looms everywhere, but the imposing physical presence of Bellona offers security to the Holy Roman Empire.

The prolix inscription underscores the propagandistic tone. Matthias commanded the imperial troops in Hungary against the Turks, conquering Nowigrad in 1594 and Esztergom and Visegrád in 1595. Bellona, as voluptuous as she is courageous, sounds the tantara of Christian victory over the Ottomans. Her muscle and girth emphasize her power, heralding a new era for Rudolf and that of the Prague School artists, witnessed in this design from the later phase of Spranger's career. This print was composed about the same time as Aegidius Sadler II's engraving *The Three Marys Returning from the Tomb*

(cat. 216), and both are dominated by full-bodied figures anticipating the Baroque style.

LITERATURE: Edinburgh 1991, cat. no. 13; Filedt Kok 1994, pp. 249–50; Filedt Kok 1999, vol. 2, p. 205, no. 75.

213

Attributed to Jan Harmensz. Muller (Netherlandish, Amsterdam 1571–1628 Amsterdam)

Minerva, design 1596,
print ca. 1597–1610
20 × 9½ in. (50.8 × 23 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.95.2281)

This unsigned engraving after Spranger's design has been attributed to a variety of engravers such as Aegidius Sadeler II and Jacob Matham.¹ However, most often the engraving is assigned to the hand of Muller, and the recognized authority on Muller's oeuvre, Jan Piet Filedt Kok, concurs. Both the engraving technique and the portrayal of a female heroine as a large independent figure align the print with Muller, who produced engravings of a similar composition, such as *Bellona Leading the Armies of the Emperor against the Turks* (cat. 212). For further discussion of Spranger's original design for the print, see cat. 139.

NOTES

1. See Strech (1996, p. 55, no. 73) for earlier literature on attributions.

LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, no. S50; Filedt Kok 1994, p. 250 n. 60; Strech 1996, no. 73 (for earlier attribution literature); Filedt Kok 1999, vol. 2, p. 251, no. 94.



213

214

Bartholomeus Willemsz. Dolendo
(Netherlandish, Leiden, ca. 1566–71
to 1626 Leiden)

Pluto and Ceres (or *Iasion and Ceres*),
print 1598

Published by Bartholomeus Willemsz.
Dolendo

16 7/8 × 11 5/8 in. (43 × 29.4 cm)

Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum,
Amsterdam (RP-P-OB-50.154)

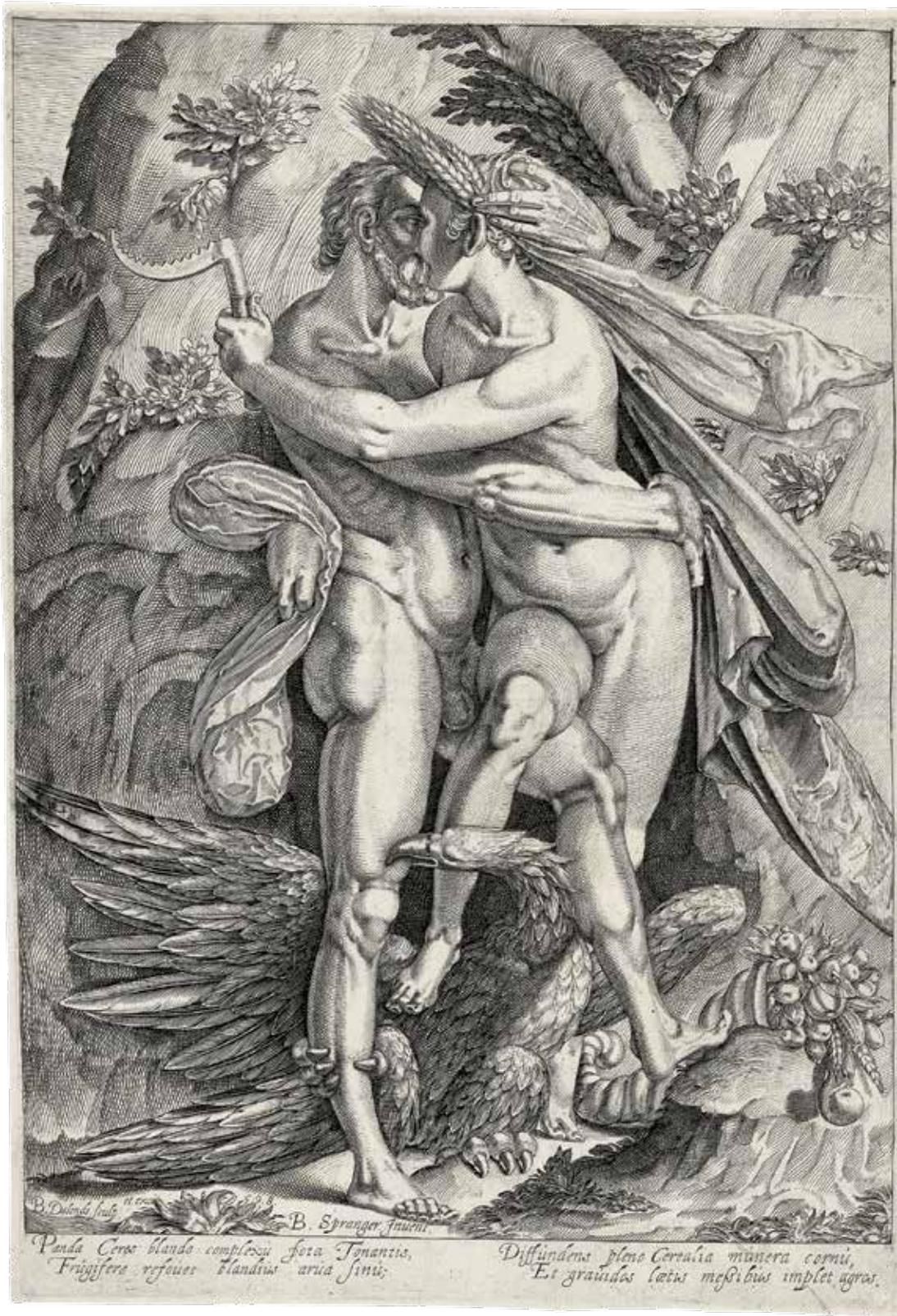
Inscribed and dated lower left: *B. Dolendo
sculp. et excu // 1598 // B. Spranger. Invent.*

Latin verse: *Panda Ceres blando complexu
pota Tonantis, / Frugifero refouet blandius
arua sinu; // Diffundens pleno Cerealia
munera cornu, / Et grauidos laetis messibus
implet agros.*

Translation: Ceres, drunk and swayed by the
enticing embraces of the Thunderer, revives
the plowed lands more agreeably with her
fertile lap. She pours out of a full horn her
gifts and refills the fruit-laden fields with
joyful harvests.

Traditionally, this engraving is titled
Pluto and Ceres, but the male is
more likely Iasion—an agricultural demi-
god Ceres met during the wedding feast
of Cadmus and Harmonia. They slipped
away to make drunken love on a freshly
plowed field, a union that engendered
twin sons. The eagle biting Iasion's leg is
surely the personification of Jupiter, who
swiftly spied their surreptitious coupling
and, enraged with jealousy, killed Iasion
with a bolt of lightning. Rather than
showing the lovers' tragic fate, Spranger
concentrated on their powerful lust. The
likely error in the inscription's reference
to an affair between Ceres and Jupiter
suggests a distant relationship between
designer and engraver.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949–, vol. 5, p. 258, no. 18;
Korazija 1982, p. 69, cat. no. 36.



B. Syringer Juvenc.

*Parca Cereræ blando complexu fœta Tonantis,
Frangere refert blandius arua sinu;*

*Diffundens pleno Cerealia munera cornu,
Et gravitas lætus mœsibus implet agros.*



215

Bartholomeus Willemsz. Dolendo
(Netherlandish, Leiden, ca. 1566–71
to 1626 Leiden)
Hercules and Omphale, print after 1600
Published by Claes Jansz. Visscher
15 × 11¼ in. (38.2 × 28.5 cm)
Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum,
Gift of Belinda L. Randall from the collec-
tion of John Witt Randall (R13954)

Inscribed lower left: *B Sprangers in. //
B Dolen. sculp // CJVisscher. ex.*

Latin verse: *Quid non cogis Amor, si te stim-
ulante peregit / ALCIDES Lyda mollia pensa
colo?*

Translation: Love, is there anything you do
not control, if [even] Hercules, goaded by you,
spins the soft Lydian wool with a distaff?

Dutch verse: *Door Sotte liefde blind, van
wyfs quaet om versaden / staet Hercules
en spint, vergeet syn vrome daden.*

Translation: Blinded by silly love, corrupted
by a woman, Hercules spins, and forgets his
virtuous deeds.¹

Dolendo loosely interpreted one of
Spranger's favorite themes into
his own half-length depiction, and the
nearly caricatural faces of both Her-
cules and Omphale stray far from
Spranger's own hand.

NOTES

1. Translation by Stijn Alsteens.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949–, vol. 5, no. 17.

216

Aegidius Sadeler II (Netherlandish,
Antwerp 1568–1625 Prague)
*The Three Marys Returning from the
Tomb*, print 1600
20¾ × 14¾ in. (51.7 × 36.6 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Harris
Brisbane Dick Fund, 1953 (53.601.12[1])

IN EXHIBITION

Inscribed bottom: *Cu[m]. Privil. Sui
Pontif. et Sac. Cae. M.^{is} // Bart. Sprangers
Inventor //*

Latin verse: *Faemina fortis amor, pietatis
fortius omen, / Fulmineos nimbi terret
odore uiros. // Lumine sublustri MARIAE
dant Balsama CHRISTO: / Suaeolente
ferunt CHRISMATA mixta fide. // Ast ubi
CHRISTE lates? posses persolvere amorem /
Viuis; erat uita persolendus amor.*

Translation: A woman's strong love, a stron-
ger sign than piety, terrifies men as swiftly
as lightning and the first scent of rain. In
the glimmering light the Marys give balsam
to Christ: they carry ointments mixed with
sweet-smelling faith. But where are you
hiding, Christ? You would be able to give the
due love to the living; love that should have
been rendered in life.



Dedication: SERENISS^{AE} MARIAE ARCHIDUCISAE AVSTRIAE, ETC. DVCISAE BAVARIAE, ETC: VIDVAE PIETATI, / Egidius Sadeler Sac. C.^{ae} M^{is} Sculptor obtulit humiliter anni 1600 initio

Translation: To the piety of the Serene Highness Maria, Archduchess of Austria, etc. Duchess of Bavaria, etc. widow, Aegidius Sadeler, court engraver, humbly offered at the beginning of the year 1600

Aegidius Sadeler II engraved the design of Spranger's altar wing painting *The Three Marys at the Tomb* (cat. 72) and dedicated his print to Archduchess Maria of Austria, whose name may have been a factor in his choice of subject. Her husband, Archduke Charles II of Austria, had died in 1590; she would die at age fifty-seven in 1608. Because no original engraver's drawing exists, it is not possible to determine if Sadeler embellished Spranger's preparatory drawing, but he faithfully replicated most of Spranger's composition, aside from extending the background landscape. The three women in the print are sturdier, heavier forms than those in Spranger's painting. The ominous atmosphere of the painting is absent in the engraving, understandable given that Spranger achieved the atmospheric effects by manipulating the paint, whereas Sadeler had only the limited medium of black-and-white lines at his fingertips.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949–, vol. 21, no. 60; Limouze 1990, p. 150; Ramaix 1992, cat. no. 5; Limouze in Fučíková et al. 1997, p. 110; Volrábová and Kubíková 2012, p. 179, cat. no. IV.6.



217

Aegidius Sadeler II (Netherlandish,
Antwerp 1568–1625 Prague)
*Portrait of Bartholomeus Spranger with
an Allegory on the Death of His Wife,
Christina Müller*, print 1600
Sheet: 11¾ × 16⅞ in. (29.9 × 42.1 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Harris
Brisbane Dick Fund, 1938 (38.99)

Fama, at upper left, holds a trumpet
wrapped with a band inscribed: *VIVIT
NUMINE ET NOMINE*
Translation: He lives by divine Will and
through his name.

Spranger leans his arm on a pedestal in-
scribed: *QUID ANTE DIEM VULTIS, TE /
TEMPVS VETAT OCCIDERE TE / ARTES
VOLVT CLARAE CLARIOREM*
Translation: What do you want before the
appointed day? The time of death does not
yet come, art will make you more famous.

In the cartouche above Christina's portrait:
*MORS INIQVA, QVID TANTVM / DECVS
RAPIS? PIETAS AEQVA, / QVAE ET
MORTVAM SERVAS*
Translation: Unjust death, why do you rob
so much beauty? You hold true love in honor
of the dead.

On the frame around Christina's portrait:
*CHRISTINA MVLLERINA VXOR B.
SPRANGER*
Translation: Christina Müller, wife of
B. Spranger

On the post below Christina's portrait:
*ANIMVS MARITI / ANIMAM TVAM /
SEQVITVR NONDV / ASSEQVITVR.
ET / LICET SECVM SVA / ABIICIAT TE
NON / RECOLLIGIT.*
Translation: The heart of her husband, who
has not yet reached heaven, follows your
soul. And even if he throws away his life, he
would not receive you again.

Dedication below the picture: *Priuatat lacrymas Bart. Sprangeri Egid. Sadeler miratus artem et amantem redamans, publicas fecit: et / eidem promotua benevolentia dedicauit. Praga Anno Seculari.*

Translation: Aegidius Sadeler communicated to the public the private tears of Bartholomeus Spranger, because he admires him and from mutual affection dedicated this engraving to him. Prague 1600.

Aegidius Sadeler II engraved these portraits of Spranger and his deceased wife, Christina, in 1600, but uncertainty surrounds the actual designer. Sadeler may indeed have been the sole designer and dedicated his print to the widowed Spranger; on the other hand, Spranger himself may have designed this personal account of grief. Or the two Prague court artists may have worked together to create this masterpiece of symbolic melancholy. Whoever was the author, the print offers rare insight into Spranger's life. Though he is mourning his wife, his name and fame will live on through his art, indicated by Fama holding up a banner. But Death also looms, embodied in Cronos with his scythe and hourglass, the skeleton pointing an arrow at Spranger's heart, and the naked boy holding a skull.

Compositionally, the design diverges from Spranger's preferred vertical format. The sheet is divided thematically left and right, top and bottom. The left side focuses on Spranger as grieving artist; the right, on Christina, who is accompanied by symbols of memory and death. The lower level of the composition is reserved for the living, with Spranger appropriately placed closer to the viewer. The upper level depicts the afterlife, with Christina pushed back in the picture, her sarcophagus rising upward, the frame around it crowned with upward-pointing garlands. As the

elaborate inscriptions make clear, the couple will unite again in heaven. But Cronos still has to empty his hourglass for Spranger, who must continue to create art despite his grief.

This half-length portrait of Spranger calls to mind Titian's *Portrait of Gerolamo (?) Barbarigo* (ca. 1510; National Gallery, London), equating Spranger's fame with Titian's. In fact, even the textured pattern on the billowing sleeves in the Titian has been repeated here.

But did Spranger design the print himself? A compelling argument can be made that the various figures in the engraving derive from other of his works; for example, the portrait of Christina is strikingly similar to her portrait in Spranger's epitaph for her father (cat. 52). Also, the figure of Faith leaning against Christina's portrait corresponds to a figure in Sadeler's print *The Three Marys Returning from the Tomb* (cat. 216).¹ Because so many of these motifs originated in readily available compositions, it is possible that Sadeler composed this engraving as a tribute to Spranger and his wife, as the inscription suggests.² The two artists knew each other well, so Sadeler could easily have compiled this cornucopia of references to Spranger's triumphs and tragedies, professional and personal.

NOTES

1. Strech 1996, p. 57. 2. Limouze (1990, pp. 152–53) posits that some of the facial expressions of the allegorical figures lean more toward Sadeler's work than Spranger's.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949–, vol. 21, no. 332; Strech 1996, p. 56, no. 74 (with extensive literature); Limouze in Fučíková et al. 1997, cat.no. 348; Volrábová and Kubíková 2012, p. 158, cat. no. II.12.

218

Aegidius Sadeler II (Netherlandish, Antwerp 1568–1625 Prague) *Hercules and Omphale*, design late 1590s–early 1600s Etching and engraving, 17³/₈ × 12¹/₂ in. (44 × 31.8 cm)

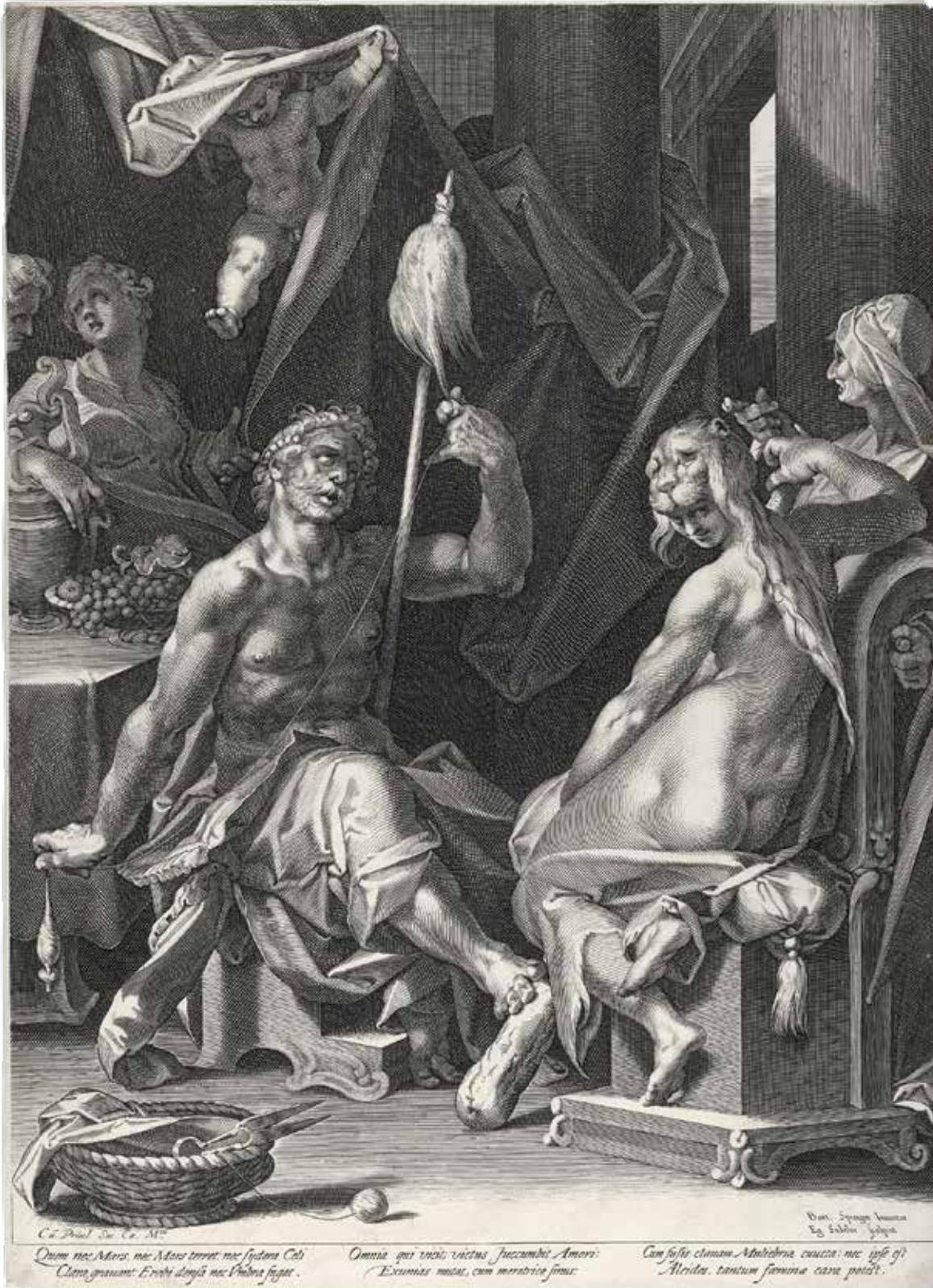
The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1953 (53.601.10[90])

Inscribed lower left: *Cu[m] Privil. Sac. Cae. M^{is}*; lower right: *Bart. Sprangers Inventor / Eg. Sadeler scalpsit.*

Latin verse: *Quem nec Mars, nec Mors terret: nec sydera Celi / Clara grauant: Erebi densa nec Vmbra fugat. // Omnia qui vicit; victus succumbit Amori: / Exumias mutat, cum meretrice sinus: // Cum fuis clauam. Multi-ebria cuucta: nec ipse est / Alcides. tantum faemina cara potest.*

Translation: He whom neither Mars nor Death terrifies, nor the bright stars of the sky oppress, nor the thick shadow of Erebus causes to flee, he who conquers all, having been conquered, yields to love. He exchanges the [lion's] skin for the garment of a courtesan, the club for the spindle. All things are in the manner of a woman, and he himself is not Alcides [Hercules]. So much power does a beloved woman have.

Omphale's coy glance announces her dominance over her captive lover Hercules. Spranger experimented with this theme of female power on several occasions (cats. 43, 116, 148); that this design is a later interpretation is evident from the compositional complexity and the sculptural forms. In contrast to Spranger's earlier rendition painted on copper (cat. 43), here Omphale boasts the powerful arm muscles of an athlete. Her Mannerist form and posture date this composition to the late 1590s–early 1600s. Sadeler—who had been awarded a royal privilege by this time, as evidenced by the inscription—



could have seen Spranger's painting in the Prague *Kunstammer* and been inspired to engrave it.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949-, vol. 21, no. 106; Limouze 1990, p. 150.

219

Lucas Kilian (German, Augsburg 1579–1637 Augsburg)
Venus and Cupid Bind Mercury,
print ca. 1604

First state published by Lucas Kilian
This state (third) published by Jacob Sandrart

14¹⁵/₁₆ × 10³/₁₆ in. (38 × 25.8 cm)

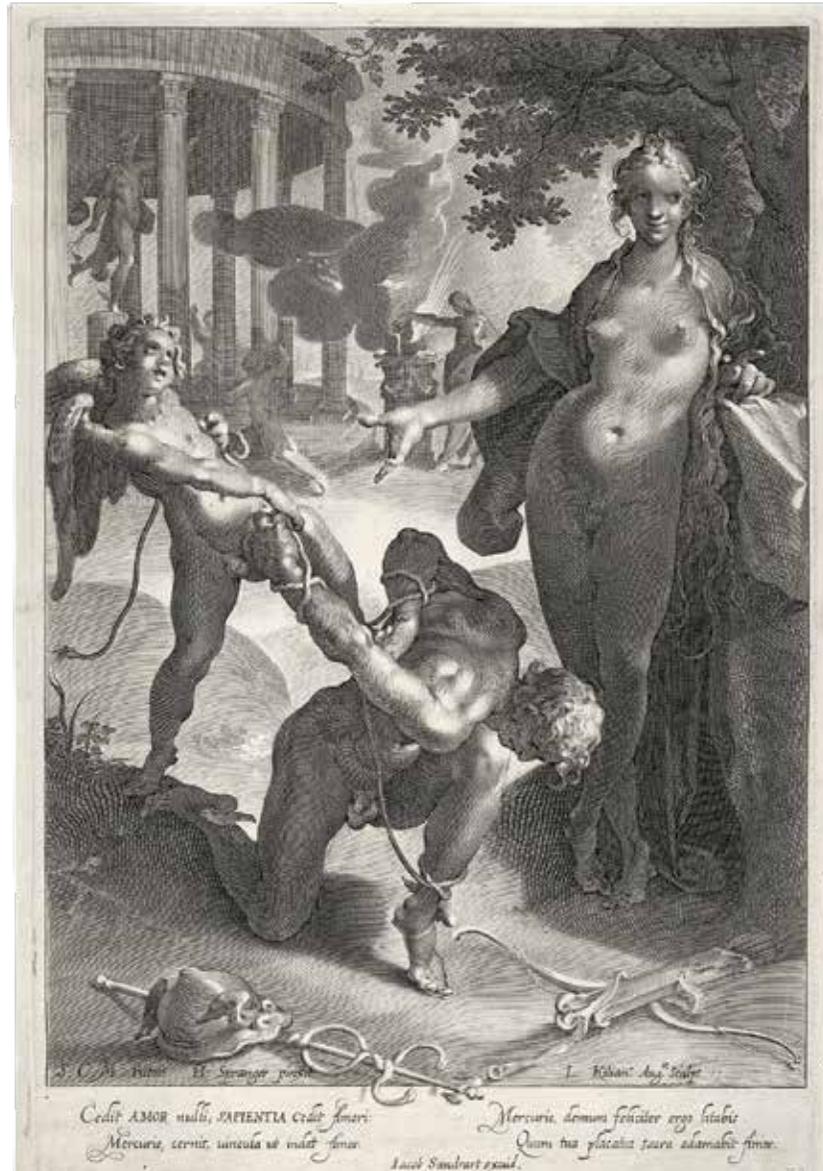
The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1917 (17.3.3210)

Inscribed bottom: S.C.M. Pictor. // B:
Spranger pinxit // L. Kilian. Aug.^{ae} Scalps.
// Iacob Sandrart excud.

Latin verse: *Cedit AMOR nulli; SAPIENTIA cedit Amori; / Mercurio, cernis, vincula ut indat Amor. // Mercurio, demum feliciter ergo litabis / Quum tua placatus sacra adamabit Amor.*

Translation: Love yields to nothing; Wisdom yields to Love; you see how Love ties Mercury with bonds. Therefore, at last you will make propitious offerings to Mercury when Love, having been appeased, will take great pleasure in your sacred offerings.

True to a recurring theme in Rudolfine art, Kilian's engraving cautions against the dangers of love's all-consuming power. Cupid, personification of love, has conquered Mercury, symbol of reason and eloquence, while Venus coquettishly presents herself and her partner in crime. The sophisticated composition and the use of allegory place this work in Spranger's late oeuvre. Spranger was clearly pleased with his Venus, as he reiterated the figure in his painting *Vestal Virgin Tuccia*, which



Matham later engraved (cats. 83, 224). The figure is relegated to the side in both those images, but the similarity is striking.

According to the inscription, Kilian prepared his print in Augsburg after a painting by Spranger. To date, an original painting by Spranger of this description has not appeared, but one with slight alterations, formerly attributed to

Spranger by Rossacher but now to Isidoro Bianchi, comes closest to this design (see Appendix). Kilian has interpreted Spranger masterfully, translating the painted forms into sculptural sensuality and uniting the perspective, shading, and foreshortening.

LITERATURE: Zülch 1932, p. 82; Hollstein 1954-, vol. 17, no. 533; Rossacher 1981; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.77.



220

Jan Harmensz. Muller (Netherlandish, Amsterdam 1571–1628 Amsterdam) *Minerva and Mercury Arming Perseus*, design 1600, print 1604

Published by Harmen Jansz. Muller 22³/₁₆ × 15¹¹/₁₆ in. (56.5 × 39.8 cm) The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.95.2283)

Inscribed lower left: *B. Sprangers inventor // L.M.Q.D.D.Ianus Muller Sculptor.*; lower right: *HMuller excud. Amstelodami / MDCIV* [1604]

Dedication: *Ornatissimo juxta ac Prudentissimo Viro / Henrico Spieghel L.F. studiorum bonarumq[ue] / artium patrono.*

Translation: The engraver Jan Muller out of friendship gladly gave this work as a gift to Hendrik [Laurenszoon] Spieghel, most eminent as well as most intelligent man, patron of studies and liberal arts.

Latin verse: *Quid sibi vult Perseus? Sibi quid Cyllenius? addit / Alarum pedibus par, tegit ense latus. // Dia quid hic Pallas? dat munera singula Quenam? / Aegida. Quid? celer ad Gorgonis ora volet.*

Translation: What is Perseus doing? What is Cyllenius [Mercury] doing? He adds a pair of wings to his feet and girds him with a sword. Why is the goddess Pallas [Minerva] here? She gives him a single gift. Which one? A shield. Why? So he can swiftly fly to the head of the Gorgon.

Muller published this print in Amsterdam in 1604 and dedicated it to the Dutch humanist, poet, and art collector Hendrick Laurenszoon Spieghel. Muller crafted a shining shield for Perseus, cleverly alluding to the name of the honoree (*spiegel* means “mirror” in Dutch). He interpreted Spranger’s design as a kaleidoscope of ornamental shapes and surface patterns, with astonishingly three-dimensional

figures. Minerva twists every limb in Mannerist opposition. In the center, Perseus faces the background, but swivels his neck and shoulders to glance at the viewer. Spranger repeated this affected pose in his design for the engraving *Hercules and Antaeus* (cat. 226).

Because Perseus is preparing to capture the Medusa head, Mercury and Minerva equip him with winged shoes and with Minerva’s sleek mirror-shield, intended to deflect Medusa’s deadly stare. The transparent mirror-shield he holds is masterfully conceived, his arm clearly visible through the transparent surface. As a devout Christian, Spieghel would have looked askance at the vain posture and revealing costume of Perseus, as well as the mirror itself. In 1614 he would publish *Hert-spiegel*, in which he is critical of excessive lavishness in the depiction of antique heroes.

The political overtones in the engraving may not be immediately recognizable, but the work was conceived during the turbulent years of the empire’s battles with the Turks. The hint of a resemblance to Rudolf in Perseus’s visage may be an allusion to the emperor heading for battle or even to his brother, Archduke Matthias, whose impresa delineated an allegory of Perseus overcoming the Medusa. The image of the male hero going off to war to protect his subjects would have appealed to Rudolf at a time when his own position was tenuous, with his brother Matthias plotting to usurp power. It has been proposed that Perseus represents Wisdom and Reason triumphing over Medusa, who signifies lust and sensuality.¹ But given that Medusa is only an implied presence here, the political interpretation seems more convincing.

Minerva and Mercury Arming Perseus provides an excellent example of Spranger’s stylistic and graphic idiom around 1600, when he favored muscular, full-bodied, and long-limbed figures, as in his *Achior* drawing in Stuttgart (cat. 150). That Muller and Spranger were in close contact during the production of the print is shown by the many proofs they touched up.²

NOTES

1. Volrábová and Kubíková 2012, p. 169. 2. See Filedt Kok 1994, p. 250.

LITERATURE: Korazija 1982, cat. no. 51; Filedt Kok 1994, pp. 247, 250; Filedt Kok 1999, vol. 2, no. 69; Müller et al. 2002, p. 60, cat. no. 11; Zaccagnini 2003, pp. 96–98.

221

Lucas Kilian (German, Augsburg 1579–1637 Augsburg) *The Holy Family with the Infant Saint John the Baptist and an Angel*, print 1605

Published by Dominicus Custos 11⁷/₁₆ × 12¹⁵/₁₆ in. (29 × 32.8 cm) The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1966 (66.628.2)

Inscribed: *S.C.M. Pictor. B: Spranger pinxit. / Lucas Kilian Aug. incidit. / Dominicus Custos Eiconogr. Et Bibliobola aug. vind. D.D.D., 1605.*

Latin verse: *Dialogis / Mus // Homo. Quid tibi coelesti tentatae pollice fibrae / Respondent fidicen. [Angelus] nil nisi: Numen amat. / Homo. Da mihi diue chelyn, nostros Deus induit artus, / immortale magis nos mod Numen amat. // Ang. Tu cane mortalibus mortales Numinis actus: / Immortalis ego Numinis acta, cano. / Homo. Est meus iste Deus: ANG. meus est Deus iste [AMBO] canamus / Est utriusque salus est utriusque Deus.*



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Translation: This is in the form of a dialogue between the Angels and Man.

Man: What do the strings touched by the celestial thumb respond, O lyre player?

Angel: Nothing except: God loves. Man: Give me, O divine, the lyre. God assumed a human body, now the immortal God loves us more. Angel: Sing, mortal, of the mortal acts of God; I, who am immortal, sing the acts of God. Man: That is my God. Angel: That is my God. Both: Let us sing. He is the salvation of both, he is the God of both.

Dedication: ADM. REVERENDO DOMINO, DNO JACOBO CHIMARRHAEO

S. R. E. PROTONOT. COMITI PALATINO. APLICO ET IMP. EQVITI AVRATAE / MILITIAE. ELEEMOSYNARIO CAES. MAI. MAIORI. SVBMISS. OBSERV. ERGO DOMINICI CUSTOS EICONOGR. ET BIBLIOPOLA. AVG. VIND. D. D. D. 1605
Translation: To the very venerable Lord, Jacob Chimarraeus, Protonotary of the Sacred Roman Church, Count Palatine, Apostolic and Imperial Knight of the Golden Spur, Major Imperial Almoner, as a sign of obedience and reverence, Dominicus Custos, engraver and bookseller of Augsburg, gave and dedicated as a gift, 1605

222

Lucas Kilian (German, Augsburg 1579–1637 Augsburg)
The Holy Family with Infant Saint John the Baptist and Musical Angels,
print 1605
Published by Dominicus Custos
19³/₈ × 13 in. (49 × 33 cm)
Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (RP-P-OB-53.041)

Inscribed lower right: S.C.M. Pictor. B. / Spranger pinxit. / Lucas Killian chalcograph. civis. / Dom. Custodis A:V.; CI) I(V

Latin verse: *O Puer, o Mater, Deus ille,
Dei ista, quid addam / Addere quid
psalter, quid citharoede potes. // A:
Cernis ut altitonans placidum sit versus
in agnum. / Agnus ut ille fames sit tua,
sitq[ue] sitis.*

Translation: O Child, O Mother, he who
is God, she the Mother of God, I shall
add that which you are able to add mu-
sically and with a lyre accompaniment.
Angel: Know that the high thundering
one will be changed into a gentle lamb.
[And know] that the lamb will be your
hunger and your thirst.

Dedication: *Adm. Reverendo, Domino,
dno Jacobo Chimarraeo S.R.E. Protonot.
Comit palat. Aplico et imp. Equiti
Avratae militia eleemosynario Caes.
Mai. Maiori. Submiss. Observ. ERGO
LUKAS Kilianus Chalcograph. Civis
Av. 1605 / Venundant. In officini Dom.
Custodis A.:V.*

Translation: To the very venerable Lord,
Jacob Chimarraeus, Protonotary of the
Sacred Roman Church, Count Palatine,
Apostolic and Imperial Knight of the
Golden Spur, Major Imperial Almoner,
as a sign of obedience and reverence,
Dominicus Custos, engraver and book-
seller of Augsburg, gave and dedicated
as a gift, 1605

Kilian engraved two composi-
tions by Spranger of the Holy
Family, both published in 1605 in
Augsburg and both putatively after
paintings by Spranger. One composi-
tion is a vertical format (cat. 222)
and the other, a horizontal depicting
half-length figures (cat. 221). No
original paintings reflecting these
designs are known today, but there
are painted copies of the vertical
design. Both prints have the same
dedication and have figures in com-
mon, especially the young Saint
John the Baptist, who is depicted



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from behind carrying the lamb. And in both, Saint Joseph gazes down at Mary and the Christ Child. The similar figures, poses, and expressions suggest that Spranger experimented with the designs to determine which would be more effective. The vertical version is a more sophisticated, courtly design, compared to the religiosity intermixed with sweetness and charm in the horizontal.

The presence of musical angels relates to the dedication of the prints to the court chaplain Jacob Chimarraeus, a singer, musician, and imperial almoner for Rudolf. His musical duties included selecting the repertoire for the court chapel. Rudolf held Chimarraeus in high esteem, even granting him the title of count palatine, a distinction awarded to only a few others, including Giuseppe Arcimboldo.

LITERATURE (CAT. 221): Hollstein 1954–, vol. 17, no. 45; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.79; Volrábová and Kubiková 2012, cat. no. IV.7.

LITERATURE (CAT. 222): Hollstein 1954–, vol. 17, no. 43; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.78; Volrábová and Kubiková 2012, cat. no. IV.7.

COPIES (CAT. 222): Painting, Muzej Mimara, Zagreb.



223

223

Jan Harmensz. Muller (Netherlandish, Amsterdam 1571–1628 Amsterdam)
The Adoration of the Shepherds,
 design early 1600s, print 1606
 23¼ × 17 in. (59 × 43.2 cm)
 Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum,
 Amsterdam (RP-P-OB-32.214)

Inscribed bottom: *CVM PRIVIL. S. CAES. M.^{TI}S*

Dedication: *Illu. viro Domino Joanni Baruitio, utriusq[ue] Juris Doctori, Sacrae Caes^{ae} Matis / Consiliario Imperiali, Aulico et intimo Secretatrio, Bart. Spranger Inventor / et Joan. Muller Sculptor, observantiae et gratitudinis ergo D. D. / M. DC. VI.*

Translation: Bartholomeus Spranger, designer, and Jan Muller, engraver, give this work as a gift to the illustrious Johann Barvitiu, doctor of canon and civil law, adviser [court councillor], and personal secretary to his imperial majesty, in reverence and gratitude. 1606.

Latin verse: *Hei, mihi! Quo malo suada rapit nos gratia fastus? / Quid sumus? Ah! tandem nos meminisse iuuet. / Unde superbit homo, cuius conceptio culpa, / Nasci poena, labor vita, necesse mori? // Ille Sator mundi, Proles aequaeva Parenti, / Cuius ad imperium flectitur omne genu: / Ille Opifex rerum, et summi Fabricator Olympi, / In stabulo abiectus paruulus, ecce, iacet.*

Translation: Ah me! To which evil does arrogance snatch us with persuasive charm? What are we? Ah! At last it will help to be mindful of ourselves. From where does man take pride, man whose conception is a fault, whose birth is a punishment, whose life is a labor and death a necessity? That Creator of the world, Son equal to the Father, to whose power every knee is bent: That creator of things and artificer of the highest Heaven, look! He lies in a stable, a lowly infant.

Spranger and Muller dedicated this quaint nighttime scene to Johann Barvitiu, a lawyer, councillor to Rudolf, and patron of artists. The inscription calls him an illustrious man, and Crispijn de Passe the Elder also dedicated a print to Barvitiu. The brooding, mournful verse stands in contrast to the charming scene, but as the crowd, the celebratory angels, and the darkness outside portend, this is a birth of momentous consequence.

The print comprises an upper and a lower tier of spectators. Ribbons of clouds populated by multitudinous figures are reminiscent of Spranger's print *The Wedding of Cupid and Psyche*, from 1587 (cat. 178), yet closer study of the figures reveals a new physicality and muscularity. The figure of Mary can be compared to the foreground female in Spranger's painting *The Three Marys at the Tomb*, dated 1598 (cat. 72). This design is slightly later, from the early 1600s. A drawing in the Albertina (see Appendix) attributed to Spranger has been considered the preparatory design, but although it is similar in conception, and in reverse, it is not by his hand. *The Adoration of the Shepherds* marks the last collaboration between Spranger and Muller, who so esteemed the result that he asked Rudolf for a royal privilege, or copy-right—his only print after Spranger for which he applied for this honor.¹

NOTES

1. Filedt Kok 1994, p. 256.

LITERATURE: Bartsch 1978–, vol. 4, no. 65(284); Filedt Kok 1994, p. 256.

COPIES: Paintings, Národní Galerie, Prague; Strahov Monastery, Prague; Cathedral of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, Naumburg.

224

Jacob Matham (Netherlandish, Haarlem 1571–1631 Haarlem)
The Vestal Virgin Tuccia, print 1608
 Published by Jacob Matham
 24¾ × 19¾ in. (63 × 49 cm)
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.95.2280)

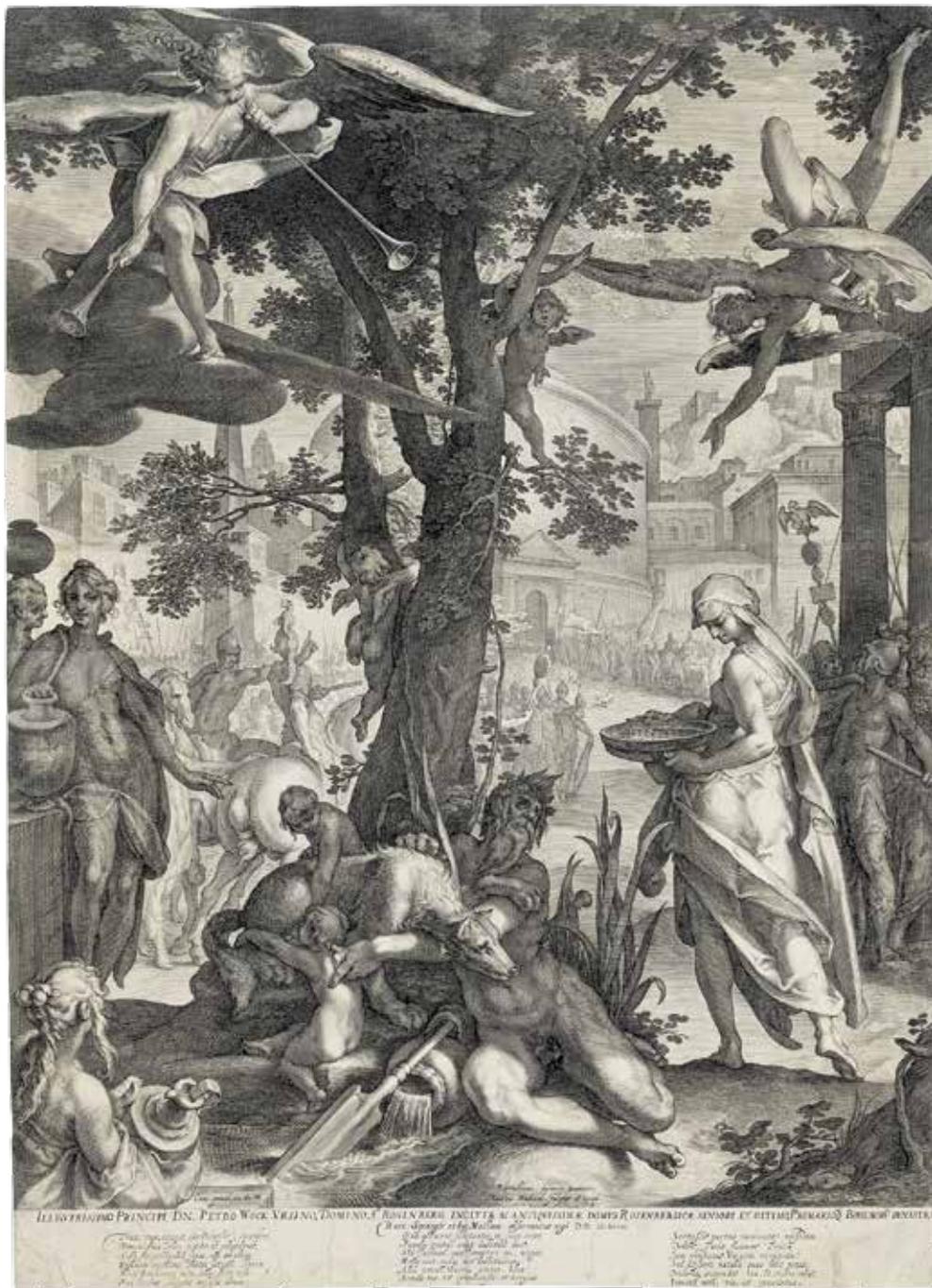
Inscribed bottom: *Cum privil. Sa. Cae. M. // Bartholomaeus Spranger Inventor. / Iacobus Matham sculptor et excud / Anno 1608*

Dedication: *ILLVSTRISSIMO PRINCIPI DN. PETRO WOCK VRSINO, DOMINO A ROSENBERG, INCLYTAE AC ANTIQVIS-SIMAE DOMVS ROSENBERGICAE SENIORI ET ULTIMO, PRIMARIOQ[UE] BOHEMORV DYNASTAE, &. / Bart. Spranger et Iac. Matham observantiae ergo D.D. M.DC.VIII.*

Translation: To the illustrious Prince Peter Wok Orsini von Rosenberg, the older and last lord of the famous and most ancient house of Rosenberg, and chief ruler of the Bohemians, etc., Bartholomeus Spranger and Jacob Matham give as a gift in reverence. 1608.

Translation: To the illustrious Prince Peter Wok Orsini von Rosenberg, the older and last lord of the famous and most ancient house of Rosenberg, and chief ruler of the Bohemians, etc., Bartholomeus Spranger and Jacob Matham give as a gift in reverence. 1608.

Latin verse: *Trux, vage, citate, curvicursor, caxifer: / Paeninigena Tybri pater, et pelagidome, / Siste recipipedes fugas, nec amplius / Refluam impotens Thetin fatiga: Tucia / Nova Romularis meta nunc erit tibi. / Non lenibus stagnis refusus alveis. // Quae alluvio fluitantis in sicco creat / Aquila[e], creatq[ue] unaq[ue] destituit die: / Sed fluctuum, quos impetus tui, integra / Moles ciet, cietq[ue], nec destituere / Alia potest. Uxorie amnis, Ilae: / Somnos tuae te vindicasse, et virginis // Servasse partus imminuta[e]? nec fidem / Debere Tucia[e] suamve Troicae / Iam vindicare Virgini viraginem? / Sed diferet natura quas fecit notas; / Ponderaq[ue] suspendet tua, et cribro vehet / Invicta veri, vis et innocentia[e].*



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Translation: O furious, rambling, swift, loop-bending, stone-bearing father Tiber, born in the Apennines and flowing into the sea, arrest your receding flights and, powerless, no longer exhaust refluxent

Thetis [the sea]: Tuccia will now be your new Romulean destination, not in the calm ponds flowing back into the river's bed, which the overflowing of a small stream of water flowing on the shore creates, both

creates and abandons on the same day; but the waves that the whole might of your impetuosity puts in motion, puts in motion and cannot otherwise set down. O Tiber [Tiberis, husband of Ilia], didn't you avenge the sleep of your Ilia and save the offspring of the unviolated virgin? Shouldn't you now grant the innocence of Tuccia's virginity? But nature will separate the women it made famous; and unconquered, the strength of truth and innocence will lift up your load and carry it with a sieve.

The print is dedicated to Prince Peter Wok of the Rožmberk (Rosenberg) dynasty, one of the oldest aristocratic families of Bohemia. The theme of loyalty and purity as represented by the Roman vestal virgin Tuccia honors Wok by equating his nobility with hers. As noted by Kubíková, at about this time Wok was embroiled in a political conflict involving confessional freedom for the Bohemian estates, and he was a major proponent of anti-Catholicism.¹ Wok personally commissioned this print from Spranger, paying him one hundred guilders for it. Spranger also painted the miraculous tale of Tuccia the vestal virgin (cat. 83). The engraving might even have been made first, with Spranger later painting a version for Wok.

NOTES

1. Volrábová and Kubíková 2012, p. 174, cat. no. III.14.

LITERATURE: Widerkehr 2007–8, vol. 2, no. 195; Volrábová and Kubíková 2012, p. 174, cat. no. III.14.

225

Aegidius Sadeler II (Netherlandish, Antwerp 1568–1625 Prague) *Portrait of Pieter Bruegel the Elder*, print 1606
 12 1/16 x 8 1/4 in. (30.6 x 20.9 cm)
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1917 (17.3.756-1456)

Inscribed lower left, next to architectural tools: *Bar. Sprangers Inventor*

Latin verse around the portrait frame:
 PETRVS BRVEGEL EX AMBIVARITIS
 BELGA PICTOR AEVI HVIVS INTER
 PRINCIPES

Translation: Pieter Bruegel, Belgian from the tribe of the Ambivarites [a people of Gallia Belgica, near the Meuse River].

Painter among the most distinguished of this age

Latin verse below image: *Ars Naturam vicerat nisi et Ars per Naturam esset Natura Artem aeternarat nisi et Naturae nihil aeterni esset Alumnus Altricem / aemulatus qua licuit adsecutus est Altrix Aemulum alumnata qua datum prosecuta est apage liuor Artem Naturae Naturae foedus / sociat apage dolor Naturam Arti Artis foetus sufficit Viuit in Arte Natura quam Patris manus expressit Viuit in Natura Ars quam Fili / Genius adsequitur illam Natura ambiente Virgo Tritonis Heroum choris inseruit hunc Arte prensante Maianatus Olfifer deses flumen / reduxit redaccende facem Lucifuge inique facis nisi Patrem in Filio nosis adtolle tubam Terrigena nihil agis nisi uterque tibi superstes est. // Patrem Filio hunc in illo sibi utrumque seculis Artis Naturae. Posteritatis cultor admirator amator Sac. Caes. Mai. sculptor / Egidius Sadeler exhibet M.DC.VI*

Translation: Art had conquered Nature, unless Art were also through Nature. Nature had made Art eternal, unless Nature had nothing eternal either. The foster child imitating his nurse followed her where it was permitted; the nurse nurturing her imitator accompanied him where it was allowed. Go away envy! A pact of Nature joins Art to Nature. Go away grief! The offspring of Art will supply Nature to Art. Nature, which the hand of the Father expressed, lives in Art. Art, which the genius of the son follows, lives in Nature. With Nature soliciting, Triton's Virgin [Minerva] introduced that [Art] to the multitudes of illustrious men. With Art soliciting, the son of Maia [Mercury] passing along the languid river [the river of the underworld] brought back this man. Rekindle the torch, O light-shunning; you behave unjustly if you do not recognize the father in the son. Lift up the trumpet, O earthborn; you accomplish nothing unless each of the two outlives you. Aegidius Sadeler, supporter, admirer, lover of Art, Nature, Posterity, court engraver, displays the Father to the son, this one to himself in that one, both to the future ages. 1606



Minerva, Mercury, and Fama encircle a portrait of Pieter Bruegel the Elder, who had died in 1569, and the lengthy inscription lauds the painter and his son Pieter Brueghel the Younger. Rudolf held Bruegel in great esteem, collecting many of his lyrical landscapes. According to Oberhuber, Spranger did not design the realistic and sympathetic portrait of Bruegel, only the enclosing Mannerist figures and flourishes. But Spranger did paint portraits, demonstrated by his epitaphs (cats. 52, 53) and his own self-portraits (cats. 45, 46), so the possibility of his having created the portrait cannot be ruled out.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1949–, vol. 22, no. 279; Oberhuber 1958, no. S78; Limouze 1989, pp. 9–10; Volrábová and Kubíková 2012, p. 159, cat. no. II.13.

226

Lucas Kilian (German, Augsburg 1579–1637 Augsburg)
Hercules and Antaeus,
design after 1600, print 1610
17¹⁵/₁₆ × 12⁷/₁₆ in. (45.4 × 31.6 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.95.1873)

Inscribed bottom: S.C.M. pictor. B. /
Spranger pinxit / L.K. ex. cum S.C.M.
privilegio / 1610

Dedication: CL. ET ORNATMO VIRO. DN.
JOHANNI. STAININGERO, SENATORI
AVGAE. VINDEL ANTIQUAE ELEGAN-
TIAE AD MIRATORI ET CONQVISITO-
RI STVDIOSISSO. DNO ET PATRONO
HONORANDO. Lucas Kilianus Glyptes,
civis August. / Vindel, honor, et observae
ergo offic D. D. D. A. V. P. MDCX.

Translation: To the most illustrious and honored Lord Johannes Staininger, Senator of Augsburg, admirer of ancient elegance and

most zealous investigator, honorable Lord and Patron. Lucas Kilian Glyptes, citizen of Augsburg, in honor and observance of his duty gave as a gift and dedicated. Very Venerable Father. 1610.

Latin verse: *Successus hominum non intabesce videndo, / Visa tibi moveant sed damna aliena Dolores. / Invidia afflatu nam quid non polluit? Immo, Viribus Herculeis victum à te crede Leonem, / Millibus è cunctis unus quicumque uibebis (!) / Invidiae domitor, Spem fortunamque valere.*

Translation: Don't be consumed with envy by seeing the successes of men, but let the sight of other people's losses cause you grief. For what did not envy foul with its breath? On the contrary, believe that you conquered a lion with Herculean strength, you alone out of thousands, whoever you are, tamer of envy, will see hope and good luck prevail.

According to the inscription *Spranger pinxit*, Kilian based this engraving on a painting by Spranger. Neither a painting nor a drawing by Spranger of this composition is known, but an inferior copy, in the same direction, recently appeared at auction. Kilian dedicated the print to the Augsburg patrician Johannes Staininger, a city councillor who was admired for his book and painting collections. The mythological subject of Hercules and Antaeus was popular during the Renaissance, appealing to those who equated themselves with Hercules; a statue by Giambologna of the pair was displayed in the main room of Rudolf's Kunstkammer. Simultaneous events from the legends of Hercules are depicted in this engraving. In the background, barely visible, Hercules strangles the Nemean lion. In the foreground, he lifts the giant Antaeus off the ground in order to crush him: Antaeus could be killed only by being separated from his mother, the earth goddess Gaea. Camouflaged as a

tree root behind the dueling men, the grimacing Gaea mourns her son. The Latin verse emphasizes the themes of virtue and bravery triumphing over vice and envy.¹

The figures of Hercules and Antaeus, heightened by the shading that emphasizes their muscles, unmistakably evoke sculpture, particularly the bronzes of Adriaen de Vries (though the figures here appear slightly stockier). The intense shading, achieved in part by what Davis terms Kilian's dense network of engraved lines, lends a painterly effect to the print's surface.² Spranger's original composition was made after 1600.

NOTES

1. Volrábová and Kubíková 2012, p. 173. 2. Davis 1988, cat. no. 127.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1954–, vol. 17, no. 527; Davis 1988, cat. no. 127; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.87; Volrábová and Kubíková 2012, p. 173, cat. no. III.13 (with full literature).

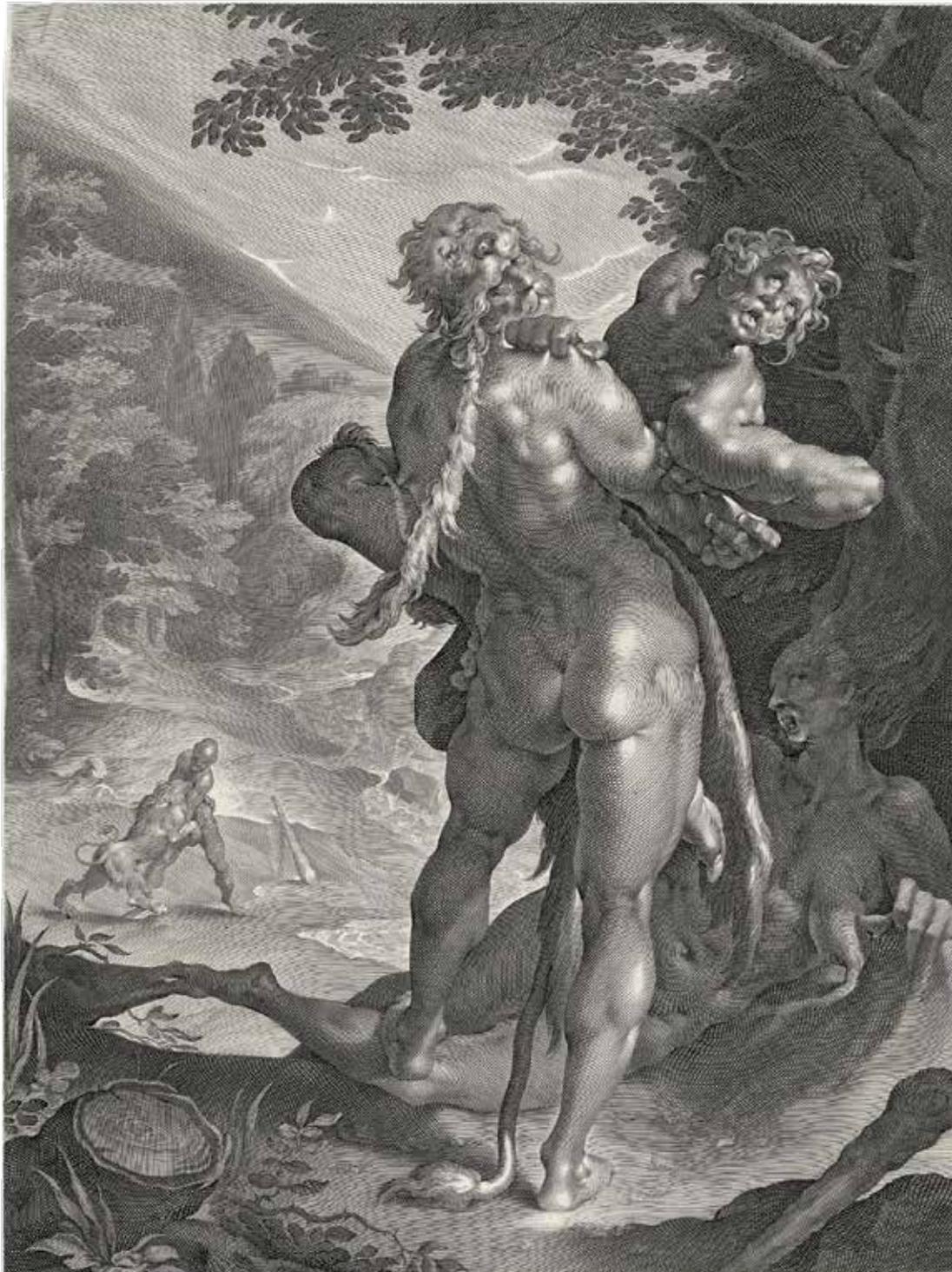
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Lucas Kilian (German, Augsburg 1579–1637 Augsburg)
Saint Jerome and the Lion, print 1610
13¹/₄ × 9¹/₈ in. (33.7 × 23.2 cm)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.95.1872)

Inscribed bottom: S.C.M. pictor B. Spranger
pinxit / L.K. ex. cum. S.C.M. privilegio.

Latin verse: *Pauperiem Christi et Bethlemitica rura secutum / Te sociant opera atque Fides, HIERONYME, Christo, // Quum Tuba terribilem sonitum, dabit aere canoro / Ultima, casurum non, Christo iudice caussa.*

Translation: O Jerome, who have followed Christ's poverty and the fields of Bethlehem, your deeds and Faith associate you with Christ. When the last trumpet will make a terrible sound with its sonorous brass, by



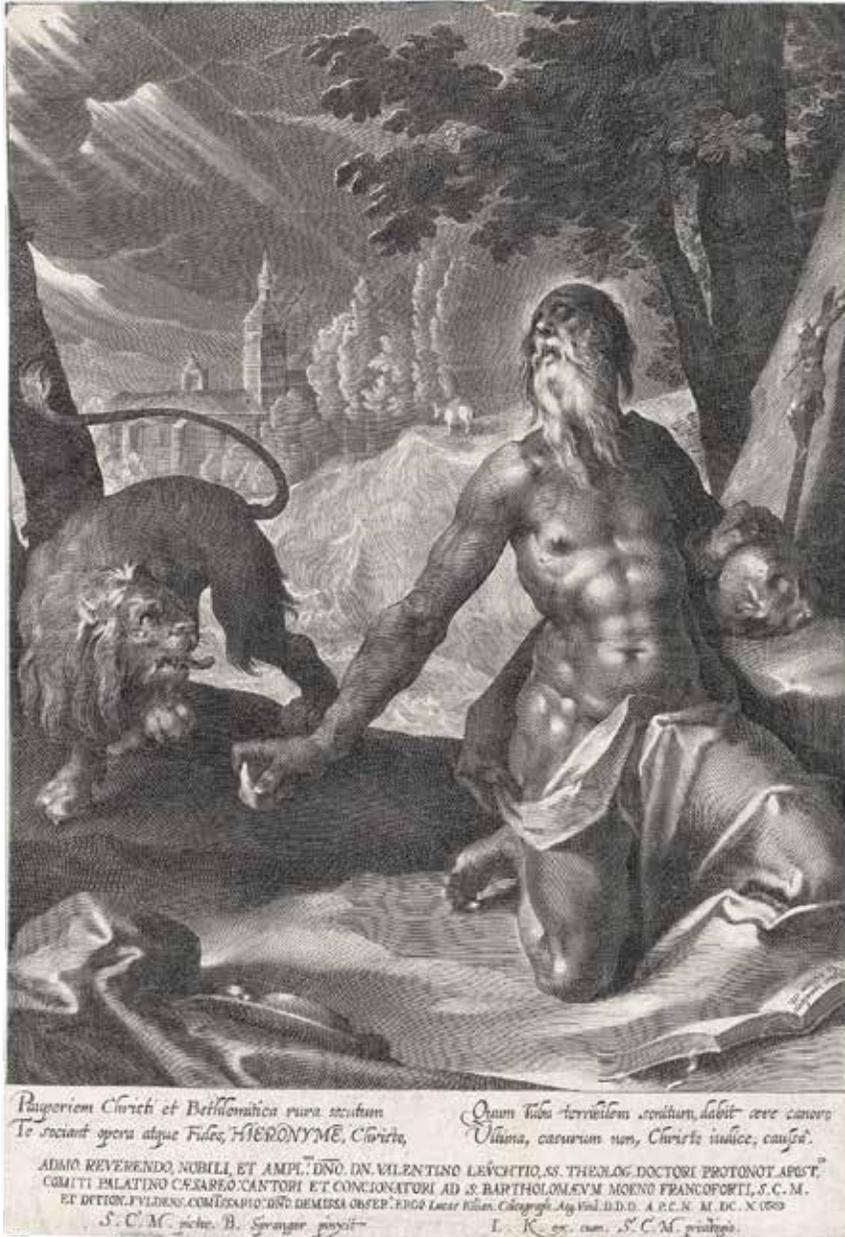
*Succedens hominum non intabesco videndo,
Vira fieri mouent sedulamina aliena dolores,
Invidia afflata nam quid non polluit, Inuitio,*

*Viribus Herculeis victum à te crede Leonem,
Milius e cunctis unum quicumque subebis
Inuidia demitor, Spem, Fortunamque valere.*

S. C. M. pictor. B.
J. J. J. J. J.

CL. ET ORNAT. VIRO. DN. IOHANNI STAININGERO, SENATORI AVG. VINDEL. ANTIQVE ELEGANTIE AD-
MIRATORI ET CONQVISTORI TYDIOSTIS, DNO ET PATRONO HONORANDO. Luceo Kalamus Glycer. cur. Augurt.
Vindel. Anar. et dicit. exp. 1751. B. 63. A. 17. P. 10. 10. 10.

J. K. ex. cum
S. C. M. privileg.



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Christ's judgment, you will not lose your cause.

Dedication: ADMO. REVERENDO, NOBILI, ET AMPL.^{MO} DNO DN. VALENTINO LEUCHTIO, SS. THEOLOG. DOCTORI PRONOT. APOST.^{CO} / COMITI PALA-

TINO CAESAREO: CANTORI ET CONCIATORI AD S. BARTHOLOMAEVM MOENO FRANCOFORTI, S. C. M. / ET DITION. FULDENS. COMISSARIO: DNO. DEMISSA OBSER.^A ERGO Lucas Kilian. Chalcograph. Aug. Vind. D.D.D. A. P. C. N.

[Anno Post Christum Natum] M. DC. X.
 Translation: To the very venerable, noble, and magnificent lord, Deacon Valentino Leuchtio, Doctor of Sacred Theology, Protonotary Apostolic, Imperial Count Palatine, Singer and Preacher at the church of Saint Bartholomew at Frankfurt am Main, Commissary of the emperor and of the imperial house and of the dominion in Fulda. Lord, as a sign of humble reverence, Lucas Kilian, Engraver of Augsburg, gave and dedicated as a gift in the year 1600 A.D.

This powerful image of the penitent Saint Jerome and his companion beast is fittingly dedicated to Valentino Leuchtio, a theologian. Jerome is masterfully fashioned as a muscular yet compact figure, sculptural and painterly at the same time. His abundant unkempt beard acknowledges the hermit's rejection of quotidian concerns. The print is dated 1610, but the design comes from slightly earlier in Spranger's oeuvre. A parallel can be drawn between Jerome's form and the figures in Spranger's painting *The Toilette of Venus and Vulcan*, from 1607 (cat. 85).

According to the inscription, Spranger painted the design, but as Kaufmann points out, concurring with Oberhuber's objections, this print does not necessarily reproduce a painting. Kilian seems to have annotated nearly every one of his prints after Spranger with "pinxit," which he could have used simply to identify Spranger as the creator.

LITERATURE: Hollstein 1954-, vol. 17, no. 80; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.85.

Jacob Matham (Netherlandish,
Haarlem 1571–1631 Haarlem)
The Flight into Egypt, print 1610
Published by Jacob Matham
16 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (41.4 × 29.9 cm)
Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum,
Amsterdam (RP-P-OB-27.202)

Inscribed and dated bottom: 1610 // *Cum
privil. Sa. Cae. M. // B. Spranger Inve. //
Ia. Matham sculp et excud.*

Latin verse: *Eripe praesenti, custos
fidissime, morti / Cum matre infante[m],
Pharysq[ue] absc[on]dere reg[n]is: // Nam
ferus innocuo maculabit sanguine cunas /
Rex frustra. Profugis aderit tutame[m] ab
alto. SHS* [interlaced monogram of Simon
Sovius Haarlemensis].

Translation: O most loyal guardian, snatch
away from instant death the baby with
his mother and hide them in the Pharius
[Egyptian] kingdom. For in vain the fierce
king will stain the cradles with innocent
blood. Protection will come to the fugitives
from heaven.

Spranger illustrated this story from
Matthew (2:13–15) on more than
one occasion, beginning as far back as
his early days in Italy (cats. 6, 7).
Matham signed and dated his engraving
1610, and given the sturdy classical
physique of the figures, anticipating
the Baroque, the design comes from
Spranger's later years. The composi-
tion departs from Spranger's courtly,
refined aesthetic and adopts a heavily
pastoral flair. The overall design, and
in particular the sweet face of Mary,
has been noted as recalling depictions
of the Holy Family by the Italian artist
Federico Barocci.¹



NOTES

1. For a full discussion of the iconography as well
as Barocci's influence, see Volrábová and Kubiková
2012, p. 181.

LITERATURE: Schultze 1988, vol. 1, cat. no. 318;
Widerkehr 2007–8, vol. 1, no. 24; Volrábová and
Kubiková 2012, p. 181, cat. no. IV.8.



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Andrea Scacciati (Italian, Florence
1644–1710 Florence)
*The Competition between Apollo and
Pan*, print ca. 1680

Etching-aquatint, $6\frac{3}{8} \times 8\frac{3}{8}$ in.
(16.3 × 21.1 cm)

Národní Galerie v Praze, Prague
(R-160374)

Inscribed bottom: *Spranger inven. et del. //*
AScacciati incid.

Scacciati, a Florentine artist,
engraved this design of a theme
treated by Spranger in paintings and
drawings (cats. 24, 104); this precise
composition is unknown in any other
form.

LITERATURE: None.

230, 231

Jan Jiří Balzer (Bohemian, Kuks
1736/38–1799 Prague)
Danae, print ca. 1765

Two nearly identical versions: cat. 230 (not
illustrated) is on blue paper, $5\frac{3}{4} \times 11\frac{5}{8}$ in.
(14.7 × 29.6 cm); cat. 231 is on brown paper,
 $6\frac{3}{8} \times 8\frac{3}{8}$ in. (16.2 × 21.2 cm)

Národní Galerie v Praze, Prague (cat. 230,
R-34019; cat. 231, R-34020)

Both inscribed bottom: *Spranger del. //*
J. Balzer fe.

The voluptuous body of Danae,
resembling the female body types
in Spranger's *Recumbent Diana after
the Hunt* and *Venus and Adonis* (cats. 87,
88), indicates that the design is from the
last decade of his career. The simple
and direct composition also reflects
Spranger's predilections in his later
years. Balzer used extensive hatching in
the design, imitating a common trait in

Spranger's drawings. He also evoked the
appearance of washes, imbuing the print
with a painterly aspect, but the signature
indicates that Spranger drew the design
rather than painted it. The original by
Spranger is unknown, but Nagler does
mention a drawing of this subject in the
collection of Prince Charles de Ligne.

Kunstammer inventories make no
mention of a drawing by Spranger of
Danae, but they list primarily paintings.
A painting on copper, described as "very
delicate," depicting Danae and signed
"Bartholomae Spranger fecit," is listed in
the inventory catalogue from 1679 of
F. D. Rethel of Wrocław.¹ There are also
entries in inventories listing a *Danae* by
Hans von Aachen, including a copy by
him after Correggio. However, these
entries list paintings, and Correggio's
famous painting *Danae*, now in Rome's
Galleria Borghese, does not resemble



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Spranger's composition. Works by Spranger and von Aachen have been confused in the past, so it is possible that a *Danae* inventoried as by von Aachen was actually a work by Spranger.² One final example of a Rudolfine *Danae* is a drawing by the Swiss artist Joseph Heintz the Elder.³ Again, this design does not ideally match that of the Balzer-Spranger print, thus the conclusion must be drawn that Balzer's print records a lost design by Spranger rather than a case of mistaken identity.

NOTES

1. Tylicki 2001, p. 189 n. 19. 2. *Venus and Cupid*—a drawing in the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München (1021), long attributed to Spranger—was rightfully catalogued as by Hans von Aachen in his recent monographic exhibition. See Fusenig 2010, p. 204, cat. no. 70. 3. For illustration and discussion of the *Danae* composition by Heintz, see Kaufmann 1988, p. 190, no. 7.25. The Heintz drawing is in the Berlin Kupferstichkabinett (10460).

LITERATURE: Nagler 1860, p. 179; Oberhuber 1958, no. S40.

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Jan Jiří Balzer (Bohemian, Kuks 1736/38–1799 Prague)
The Parable of the Sower, print ca. 1786
 Etching and engraving, 6 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.
 (16.1 × 23.7 cm)
 Národní Galerie v Praze, Prague (R-34030)



232

Inscribed bottom: *Nach einer Zeichnung von Spranger. / gestochen v. Johan Balzer.*
 (After a drawing by Spranger, engraved by Johan Balzer.)

Latin inscription: *VERBUM // Qui Super Petrosa // PERSECVTIO*

Translation: Word. On the Stony Ground. Persecution.

“Qui Super Petrosa” is a quote from the parable of the sower (Mark 4:16): “And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness.”

The style of this print is only distantly related to Spranger, lacking his superior technique and refinement, yet the esoteric subject, coupled with the Mannerist predilection in the figures, reflects the Prague master's conception.

LITERATURE: Niederstein 1931, p. 13 n. 14; Oberhuber 1958, no. S24.

APPENDIX: MISATTRIBUTIONS, COPIES, AND INDETERMINATE WORKS

Misattributions

This abbreviated catalogue of misattributions compiles works that have previously been attributed to Spranger but that do not meet the standards for his authorship established by this monograph. Works judged to be copies by anonymous artists after existing Spranger originals are cited in the three catalogues of paintings, drawings, and engravings elsewhere in this volume. The following abbreviated catalogue aims to correct the better-known and most enduring misattributions of paintings and drawings. It is inevitably incomplete, as listing every work incorrectly attributed to Spranger would far exceed the scope of this monograph, and works misattributed to him continue to surface (especially at auction). For a thorough discussion and listing of the hundreds of drawings falsely associated with Spranger, and for those that show his influence, see Metzler 1997. In addition, Kaufmann (1988, pp. 278–79) has gathered works ascribed to Spranger in inventories but for which no original has ever been found.

Works are listed in alphabetical order by city. Location is the most recent known for the work.

MISATTRIBUTED PAINTINGS

ART MARKET

Jupiter and Antiope, oil on canvas. A pastiche of other Spranger works, such as his *Fall from Paradise* painting in Riga (cat. 63). A previous sale of this work listed it as “after Spranger” (Doyle, New York, January 25, 2005, no. 1050).

Mary Magdalen, oil on canvas.

KROMĚŘÍŽ, CZECH REPUBLIC, KROMĚŘÍŽ CASTLE

Two Female Heads (KE2901/O 310), oil on canvas. Published in Kaufmann as Spranger; copy (ca. 1650–late 17th century) of detail from

Spranger’s *Three Marys at the Tomb* (cat. 72). LITERATURE: Neumann 1985; Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.73.

MILAN, VENERANDA BIBLIOTECA AMBROSIANA, PINACOTECA—MILANO

Lot and His Daughters (106), oil on canvas. Suggested attribution: Jan Harmensz. Muller (print by Muller affirms the attribution, Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam [RP-P-OB-32.187]).

NEW YORK, PRIVATE COLLECTION

Allegory of Good Government, oil on copper. Suggested attribution: Gortzius Geldorp or Master HS (Strohmeyer). Although iconography relates to the Rudolfiner court, style is distant from that of Spranger’s later years in Prague, when the symbolism would have been most relevant. Fučíková’s suggested dating of 1607–10 argues against Spranger; his works from that time feature muscular female forms that have little congruence with this painting. Female’s facial expression and hairstyle are not in harmony with Spranger; eagle is out of proportion. LITERATURE: Fučíková and Konečný 2008.

PRAGUE, PRAGUE CASTLE PICTURE GALLERY

Hercules and Omphale (VO 1828), oil on panel. Hercules’s nearly caricatured visage and awkward anatomy exclude Spranger. Kotková concurred that attribution to Spranger is problematic. LITERATURE: *Alte Meister*, Dorotheum, Vienna, March 1, 1994, no. 172 (as Spranger School); Fučíková 1995–96; Kotková 1999, no. 72 (as School of Spranger/Spranger?).

SOUTH AMERICA, PRIVATE COLLECTION

(formerly Kurt Rossacher collection, Austria) *Mercury Bound by Cupid and Venus*, oil on canvas. Suggested attribution: Isidoro Bianchi (1581–1662). Active primarily in Northern Italy and at the Prague court in 1605–6;

inspired by Spranger’s compositions, especially this one strongly related to an engraving by Lucas Kilian (cat. 219). LITERATURE: Rossacher 1981; De Angelis 1993 (as Bianchi); Michael Miller, *Old Master Drawings*, 2012, <http://oldmasterdrawings.net/2012/07/ceiling/#.U73zxo1dWmE> (as Bianchi).

UNKNOWN (formerly New York, Christie’s, sale 1009, January 25, 2002, no. 16) *Mars*, oil on canvas. Suggested attribution: Manner of Hendrick Goltzius. Muddy palette, anecdotal facial characteristics, and ungainly anatomy as well as lack of atmospheric effects exclude Spranger. Figure relates to Goltzius’s prints of Roman heroes—in particular, Gaius Mucius Scaevola, as they wear similar helmets.

UNKNOWN (formerly Vienna, Dorotheum, sale, April 13, 2011, no. 685) *Truth Conquering Time*, oil on copper. Suggested attribution: Dirk de Quade van Ravesteijn. Facial morphology of female is unlike Spranger, and overall composition is awkward, especially the female’s posture. LITERATURE: Dorotheum 2011, no. 685.

MISATTRIBUTED DRAWINGS

BERGAMO, ACCADEMIA CARRARA DI BELLE ARTI BERGAMO

Warrior (380/379). Suggested attribution: Circle of Abraham Bloemaert or Jacques de Gheyn II. LITERATURE: Bergamo 1963, p. 63, no. 464, with pl.

BESANÇON, MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS ET D’ARCHÉOLOGIE DE BESANÇON

Penitent Magdalen (D.282). Excluded from Spranger’s oeuvre by awkward anatomy of left leg and foot, positioning of right leg, hands out of proportion, and heavy-handed application of

wash. Related in design to an engraving by Hendrick Goltzius. Another version: Musée du Louvre, Paris (19099).

BRAUNSCHWEIG, HERZOG ANTON
ULRICH-MUSEUM

Adoration of the Shepherds (Z 2343). Suggested attribution: Circle of Hans von Aachen.

Fama (Z 247). Suggested attribution: Franz Aspruck.

BREMEN, KUNSTHALLE BREMEN

Apelles Painting Campase (321). Suggested attribution: Joos van Winghe (after his painting in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna [1686]). LITERATURE: Nuremberg 1952, cat. no. W 128.

Concert of Angels (56/344). Suggested attribution: Jan Harmensz. Muller. LITERATURE: Keller 1958, p. 177, with pl.

Nymph, Faun, and Cupid (322). Suggested attribution: Dutch Mannerist.

Rape Scene (1947). LITERATURE: Keller 1958, p. 176.

Three Putti (1948/27). Classified by Oberhuber (1958, no. Z17) as original Spranger, but the washes are applied in strips and have inferior tonal variation.

BRUSSELS, BIBLIOTHÈQUE ROYALE

ALBERT IER

Saint Anthony (S.II 134567). Suggested attribution: After Abraham Bloemaert; it is strongly aligned in composition and technique with his series of saints. Another version: Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden.

BRUSSELS, MUSÉES ROYAUX DES BEAUX-ARTS
DE BELGIQUE

Allegory (3432). Suggested attribution: Dutch Mannerist, Jacob Matham, or Crispijn de Passe the Elder.

Group of Five Figures in Religious Scene (4060/3433). Suggested attribution: Abraham Bloemaert.

Male Nude (4060/3425). Copy after Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem.

River God (4060/3437). Suggested attribution: Copy after Hendrick Goltzius. No known Spranger composition can be associated with this drawing.

BUDAPEST, SZÉPMŰVÉSZETI MŰZEUM

Hercules (1424). Suggested attribution: Copy after Polidoro da Caravaggio. LITERATURE: Gerszi and Bodnár 1987, p. 72, cat. no. 38.

CAMBRIDGE, THE FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM

Christ as Man of Sorrows (PD.77-1959). Exaggerated facial features and feet strongly indicate a copy after a lost Spranger original. Similar in composition to Spranger's drawing of same subject in the Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin (cat. 102), and his painting *The Baptism of Christ* in Wrocław (cat. 80).

Study Sheet (3018). Suggested attribution: Circle of Tintoretto or anonymous Bolognese artist. These red chalk studies were attributed to Spranger based on affinity with a similar study sheet in Munich's Graphische Sammlung, but the awkward anatomy is antithetical to Spranger. LITERATURE: Hand et al. 1986, p. 278 n. 5.

COLOGNE, WALLRAF-RICHARTZ-MUSEUM

Hercules between Virtue and Vice (Z1373). Suggested attribution: Hans von Aachen.

ERLANGEN-NÜREMBERG,

UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK

Judith with the Head of Holofernes (916).

GÖTTINGEN, GEORG-AUGUST-UNIVERSITÄT

Woman Washing Herself (H 68). Suggested attribution: Anonymous Dutch. Oberhuber catalogued as original Spranger, yet the inferior draftsmanship and the method of crosshatching exclude him, as does the subject matter. LITERATURE: Oberhuber 1958, no. Z26; Wille 1965, p. 31.

Young Painter with Three Graces (H83). Suggested attribution: Tobias Stimmer. LITERATURE: Unverfehrt 2000, p. 114, cat. no. 37.

LEIDEN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Minerva Bust (PK-T-AW-916). Niederstein (1931, no. 68) correctly rejected the attribution, but it was reinstated by Oberhuber (1958, no. Z31).

LONDON, THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Four Studies (1946,0713.1023). Figure of male adolescent is closely aligned with Adriaen de Vries's study of Apollo in Muzeum Narodowe, Gdańsk. Scant inner modeling and hesitancy in execution signal a RudolFINE imitator. Curious

signature indicates artist was intentionally mimicking Spranger's style.

LONDON, WINDSOR CASTLE, ROYAL
COLLECTION TRUST

Putto Head after Correggio (905147).

MOSCOW, THE PUSHKIN STATE MUSEUM
OF FINE ARTS

Saint Martin and the Beggar (MPC GZ-497). Suggested attribution: Hans von Aachen. Compare the beggar in this drawing to one in von Aachen's drawing of the Legend of the True Cross, Leiden University Libraries (PK 2413). LITERATURE: Sadkov 2010, no. 372.

MUNICH, STAATLICHE GRAPHISCHE
SAMMLUNG MÜNCHEN

Studies from Fame Leading the Arts (2195). Weihrauch initially connected these red chalk studies to Spranger based on similarities between the group of three women and Jan Harmensz. Muller's print after Spranger, *The Apotheosis of the Arts* (cat. 210). A fold down the center of sheet intimates that the sheet was part of a design book or sketchbook. LITERATURE: Weihrauch 1937-38.

PARIS, MUSÉE DU LOUVRE

The Triumph of Bacchus (RF 29452). Suggested attribution: Emilian Mannerist or School of Rosso Fiorentino. Loose style and broad areas of wash, coupled with soft contours, distance this sheet from Spranger's hand. Another version: Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig, Rensi Collection (vol. 3, p. 21).

ROME, GABINETTO NAZIONALE DELLE
STAMPE

Female Saint (FC 125651). Suggested attribution: 16th-century Bolognese artist. Gerszi based attribution to Spranger on figure's affinity with his other female saints, but the hands, in particular, are atypical. LITERATURE: Gerszi 1990, p. 34.

SCHWERIN, STAATLICHES MUSEUM
SCHWERIN

Relief of Tritons (1210HZ).

WARSAW, BIBLIOTEKA UNIWERSYTECKA W
WARSAWIE

Rest on the Flight into Egypt (T. 1098 nr. 150/II). Attribution based on similarity to painting in

Latvian National Museum of Art, The Art Museum Riga Bourse, but as Roethlisberger (1993) correctly noted, that painting is by Abraham Bloemaert. Suggested attribution: Copy after Bloemaert or Gerrit Pietersz. Other versions: Národní Galerie, Prague (K-5457); Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Vienna (4293). LITERATURE: Sawicka 1967.

WARSAW, MUZEUM NARODOWE
Adam and Eve (701). Composition reflects Spranger, but knotty strokes and inner modeling are unlike him, as are the unclear, awkward anatomy and facial morphology. LITERATURE: Warsaw 1963, cat. no. 85; Białostocki and Mrozińska 1982, cat. no. 100.

Drawings Copied after Lost Originals by Spranger

This section is an abbreviated catalogue of the most relevant drawings after designs by Spranger for which no original by him exists today.

AMSTERDAM, RIJKSPRENTENKABINET,
RIJKSMUSEUM
Virtue Leading Hercules and Scipio to the Temple of Fame (RP-T-2007-25). Heavy-handed and feathery washes, jagged contours (particularly of Hercules), and absence of Spranger's typical grid lines exclude this sheet from his oeuvre. Other versions: Städel Museum, Frankfurt (5952); Nationalmuseum, Stockholm (Anck 442).

BASEL, KUNSTMUSEUM BASEL,
KUPFERSTICHKABINETT
Tarquin and Lucretia (1949.125 II), G. Metellus after Spranger, from volume of sketches after famous paintings. Composition engraved by Christian von Mechel and later published in *La galerie électorale de Dusseldorf* (Basel, 1788) by architect Nicolas de Pigage. Mechel's engraving provides previously unrecognized documentation of an unknown or lost painting by Spranger.

BAUTZEN, MUSEUM BAUTZEN
Hercules and Dejanira (L 670). Suggested attribution: Circle of Ernst van Schayck III (1567–1626).

Venus, Mars, and Cupid (L. 496). Variant of Spranger's painting *Hermaphroditus and the Nymph Salmacis* (cat. 27). Venus's stance and facial expression are evocative of Spranger, and

the pose of Mars lifting his foot to fix his sandal is taken directly from that of Salmacis.

BERLIN, PRIVATE COLLECTION
Diana.

BESANÇON, MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS ET
D'ARCHÉOLOGIE DE BESANÇON
Meleager and Atalanta (D 2588). Extensive Latin inscription indicates Spranger as creator of design.

BRAUNSCHWEIG, HERZOG ANTON
ULRICH-MUSEUM
Venus with Mercury and Putti (Z 2348). Related copies: Princeton University Art Museum (52-93); Collection Victor de Stuers, Vorden, the Netherlands (this sheet does not include Mercury but comes closest in style to Spranger).

BRUSSELS, BIBLIOTHÈQUE ROYALE
ALBERT IER
Flying Mercury (S.III. 68322). Niederstein (1931, no. 40) and Oberhuber (1958, no. 112) correctly rejected this sheet but noted its strong resemblance to Spranger as well as van Mander's mention that Spranger painted a Mercury on his house in Prague.

BUDAPEST, SZÉPMŰVÉSZETI MÚZEUM
Venus and Cupid with Neptune in the Distance (58.70). This copy after a lost preparatory sketch for Pieter de Jode I's engraving after Spranger, *Venus Commanding Cupid to Shoot His Arrow at Pluto* (cat. 203), is related to a lost painting mentioned in the 1623 Prague inventory as having been bought by Daniel de Brierss (no. 47). It also has a strong connection to Spranger's painting *Glaucois and Scylla* (cat. 26). Related version: Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (13644). LITERATURE: Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.10.

DARMSTADT, HESSISCHES LANDESMUSEUM
DARMSTADT
Juno, Venus, and Ceres (AE 414). Entry no. 1200 in the 1621 Prague inventory lists a painting by Spranger titled *Three Goddesses*. This composition bears similarity to Hans von Aachen's paintings of the Three Graces in the Muzeul National de Arta al Romaniei, Bucharest (8.395/429), and the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig (1088). Pose of the goddess at left in von Aachen's painting is nearly identical to a goddess in the Darmstadt drawing. Spranger and

von Aachen were together in Prague when von Aachen would have executed his paintings, and the close association between these compositions makes identification of the original artist difficult. Figure of Ceres also appears in Spranger's *Wedding of Cupid and Psyche* (cat. 108). Other versions: Albertina, Vienna (25921); Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (C 7122; Ceres only).

DRESDEN, KUPFERSTICH-KABINETT, STAATLICHE KUNSTSAMMLUNGEN DRESDEN
Samson and Delilah (C 1937-1414). Painterly aspects of the drawing and execution signal that these sheets replicate a now-lost painting by Spranger. Another version: Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig, Rensi Collection (vol. 8, p. 15). Variants: Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe (VIII 2676-fol. 15v, Klebeband Friedrich Brentel); Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig, Rensi Collection (vol. 3, p. 54).

DÜSSELDORF, MUSEUM KUNSTPALAST
Minerva with the Muses and a River God (FP 5478). Oberhuber noted on the drawing's mat that this was a copy by Hans von Aachen after Spranger. Other versions: Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie de Besançon; Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool (1995.206); Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München (9571).

FRANKFURT, PRIVATE COLLECTION
Cybele and Attis. Composition and technique intimate Spranger, but anatomical weaknesses (fingers of Cybele, flatness of dog's body) separate this drawing from an original.

LEIPZIG, MUSEUM DER BILDENDEN KÜNSTE
Allegorical Figure and *Luna* (Rensi Collection, vol. 8, pp. 18, 20). Two figures from a series of colored-wash drawings, probably for an architectural decorative project.

Figure of Roma Standing on a Globe, Eagle Below (Rensi Collection, vol. 3, p. 34). Other versions: Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (C 7117, C 7118). Also on the Dresden sheet is a copy of Aegidius Sadeler II's print after Spranger, *Christ as Gardener with Mary Magdalen* (cat. 208). These sheets likely capture the design of Roma, mentioned by van Mander (1994, p. 349), that Spranger painted on the facade of his first house in Prague.

MUNICH, STAATLICHE GRAPHISCHE
SAMMLUNG MÜNCHEN

Rape of Sabine Virgin (1012). Other versions: Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (RP-T-00-565); Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest (58.37); Staatsgalerie Stuttgart (1927/76). This sheet and the three versions are nearly identical in design, but no original composition is known, nor is one mentioned in inventories. The female's voluptuous body recalls Minerva in Aegidius Sadeler II's print after Spranger, *The Triumph of Wisdom* (cat. 202), and the pose of the male abductor is akin to Adam's in Spranger's Adam and Eve paintings (cats. 62, 63).

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GALLERY

Venus, Mercury, and Cupid (1974.38). After original preparatory design for Jan Harmensz. Muller's engraving *Venus and Mercury* (cat. 190).

SCHWERIN, STAATLICHES MUSEUM
SCHWERIN

Education of Cupid by Mercury (4514 HZ). Van Mander (1994, p. 353) mentioned a painting by Spranger depicting Mercury teaching Cupid to read, which he later sent to his friend Mr. Pilgrim, an art lover. This drawing and the version in Dresden, though not by Spranger, likely preserve the original composition. The lost original could be that sold by Paul Mulder on May 21, 1928 (present location unknown). Another version: Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (1937-312).

STUTTGART, STAATSGALERIE STUTTGART
Adam and Eve (1729). Copy after original sketch Spranger made for engraving by Zacharias Dolendo (cat. 201).

VIENNA, AKADEMIE DER BILDENDEN
KÜNSTE

Hercules and Omphale (4292). Morphology of the figures recalls Spranger, but the thin strokes and heavy background washes exclude it from his oeuvre.

VIENNA, ALBERTINA

The Adoration of the Shepherds (13260). Though in reverse of Jan Harmensz. Muller's engraving after Spranger (cat. 223), this is not the original preparatory drawing for it.

Indeterminate Works

This section comprises works that come very close to Spranger's hand, but for which the final attribution remains undecided.

AUSTIN, BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART,
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
Saint Ursula (1984.52), painting. Variant of Spranger's altarpiece in Vilnius (cat. 30).

Saint Margaret (1984.52), painting. The face is a near replica of Spranger's *Saint Ursula* in Vilnius.

Saint Catherine (1984.53), painting. Kaufmann and Fučíková each speculated that the inferior execution of these works indicates workshop assistance. Many aspects relate these paintings to Spranger's oeuvre, but inherent weaknesses preclude firm attribution to him. Additional information about their provenance may eventually resolve the issue. LITERATURE: Kaufmann 1988, no. 258 (mentions Fučíková).

DÜSSELDORF, MUSEUM KUNSTPALAST
Penitent Magdalen (FP 4815), drawing.

MUNICH, STAATLICHE GRAPHISCHE
SAMMLUNG MÜNCHEN
Design for the New Room (1948.132), drawing.

NEW YORK, MORGAN LIBRARY AND
MUSEUM
Venus Embracing Cupid (1981.36), drawing.

PAVIA, MUSEO BORGOGNA
Rape of Proserpina (1906.26), painting. The figures somewhat resemble those in Spranger's early Italian paintings, but the landscape seems not to align with his signed works from that period.

PRIVATE COLLECTION (formerly Hebald
Collection, Rome)
Saint Dorothy, painting. The saint's stiff, nearly wooden form distances it from Spranger's hand. LITERATURE: Kaufmann 1988, no. 20.11.

UNKNOWN (formerly Vienna, Dorotheum,
Vienna, sale, March 20, 1995, no. 156)
Portrait of Christina Müller Spranger, oil on hammered-iron sheet. Image nearly replicates portrait engraved by Aegidius Sadeler II (cat. 217), though she appears younger here. Could represent early marriage or courtship

portrait, but the minuscule size makes attribution difficult, as does inaccessibility to first-hand examination. LITERATURE: Schultze 1988, vol. 1, p. 187, vol. 2, p. 111.

VORDEN, THE NETHERLANDS, COLLECTION
VICTOR DE STUERS
Allegory of Victory and Fama, drawing.

WELS, AUSTRIA, STADTARCHIV
Wels Privilege Book (AUR 590, 590a),
miniature.

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