

Prestige and Emulation, Eroticism and Morality: Mythology and the Nude in Dutch Painting of the 16th and 17th Century

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The mere mention of the Dutch Golden Age conjures up visions of landscapes, still lifes, portraits and genre pieces. These are the works to which Dutch painting rightly owes its fame, and they may be admired in great numbers in museums around the world. In the seventeenth century the production of paintings with such subject matter reached unprecedented heights, in both quality and quantity, and it is these paintings that largely determine the picture we have of Dutch art and culture of that period. Mythological subjects, on the other hand, are more likely to bring to mind artists of the Italian Renaissance, or French art of the 17th and 18th century. Nonetheless, there were quite a few Netherlandish painters who were intensely occupied with such themes and a public very interested in their depictions. These paintings, however, did not fit in with the picture one later had of 17th-century Dutch art, with the result that these paintings were for a long time ignored and even forgotten.

Although the number of paintings of mythological representations pales into insignificance when compared to the unbelievable number of landscapes produced in the 17th century, they deserve our attention because they give us a more complete picture of the culture in which they originated and because they tell us something about the way in which the heritage of classical antiquity was put to use at that time. Moreover, nearly all the qualities for which Dutch painting is so famous are also present in these works. Great technical virtuosity and a refined palette are as clearly evident in these paintings as in other genres. International trends were continually transposed by Dutch artists into a recognisable, characteristic idiom. In addition, 'northern' specialisms - such as the above-mentioned landscapes and still lifes - generally feature prominently in these mythological representations, which often display a more 'realistic' setting than is common in the art of other countries.

THE EARLY 16TH CENTURY: JAN GOSSAERT AND HIS
'POESIE CON FIGURE NUDE'

The painting of 'Historie & poesie con figure nude' was brought by Jan Gossaert van Mabuse from Italy to the Netherlands at the beginning of the 16th century', wrote the Florence-born merchant, scholar and historiographer Lodovico Guicciardini - who had been living since 1542 in Antwerp - in his *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi* (1567).¹ The term 'historie' was used to refer to portrayals of stories from the Bible and classical antiquity, and 'poesie' was understood to mean representations of 'poetic' narratives, these being chiefly subjects taken from classical mythology. In the Netherlands such tales were usually called 'pagan fables' ('heydensche fabulen') or 'fables of old' ('fabulen der ouden'), but the terms 'poetic fables' ('poëterijen') or 'poetic inventions' ('poeetsche versieringen') were also used, and meant something along the lines of charming, imaginative stories containing a deeper meaning.² It is clear from Guicciardini's statement that for him the introduction of the painting of naked human figures ('figure nude') was connected with the introduction of poetic inventions ('poesie'), and that he considered Italy to be the cradle of this phenomenon.³ Of course, it was not as though no nudes at all had been painted before this time (one only has to recall depictions of Adam and Eve by Jan van Eyck or Hugo van der Goes), or that portrayals of mythological stories were totally lacking. In the late Middle Ages we already encounter, in illuminated manuscripts of texts by the classical authors, miniatures depicting mythological scenes. And when illustrated books began to appear in printed form, the first *Metamorphoses* in a 'modern' language - a moralising prose text based on the medieval *Ovide Moralisé*, published in French in 1484 at Bruges - contained several woodcuts depicting episodes from some of the stories (fig. 12).⁴ These, however, still display a style which we would certainly not associate



¶ Et commence Ovide son
quart livre, dont la pre-mie-
re fable est des trois filles
d'Alceste qui despitoyent le di-
au Bacchus.

¶ Et non alchifoe d'Alceste
d'Alceste. Et non alchifoe
d'Alceste. Et non alchifoe
d'Alceste.

¶ Et non alchifoe d'Alceste
d'Alceste. Et non alchifoe
d'Alceste. Et non alchifoe
d'Alceste.

12.
ANONYMOUS
Pyramus and Thisbe
woodcut,
in: *Cy commence Ovide...*
(Colard Mansion),
Bruges 1484

with themes from classical antiquity. The combination of a classical subject in a 'classical' form - which had already been standard practice in Italy for several decades - was indeed introduced to Netherlandish art at the time of Jan Gossaert.

Jan Gossaert visited Italy in 1508/09, in the retinue of Philip of Burgundy (a bastard son of Philip the Good), and spent two months there drawing ancient monuments. His employer, who aspired to keep a royal household after the Italian model, subsequently charged him with the specific task of making antiquity live again in paintings, which he commissioned first for Souburg Castle near Middelburg and later for Duurstede Castle.⁵ This he did in close collaboration with Philip himself and his young court humanist Gerrit Geldenhouer, called Noviomagus. The result was mainly paintings with mythological nudes: these were, after all, the kind of subject one frequently encountered in

descriptions of paintings from antiquity. Some of Gossaert's paintings of mythological subjects had as their aim - in a way not hitherto seen in the Netherlands - the glorification of the sovereign, as was the case in the large painting *Poseidon and Amphitrite* dating from 1516 (Philip was likened Poseidon because he was an admiral in the Habsburg-Burgundian fleet; fig. 13).⁶ Other works, however, seem to have been made chiefly for the sake of erotic entertainment. From Philip's inventory it emerges that he owned a number of paintings that were presumably valued primarily for their erotic content. In a room that was probably used as a study, for example, there was a large painting of Aphrodite and Eros, which was covered with a curtain, while a small house which Philip probably used to receive young women featured two 'exquisite scenes of the boelscap' - undoubtedly depictions of Aphrodite and Ares making love.⁷

13.
JAN GOSSAERT
Poseidon and Amphitrite, 1516
panel, 188 x 124 cm
Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu
Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz,
Gemäldegalerie





These works have been lost, though we do know representations by Gossaert of Aphrodite, with or without Eros (fig. 14), and of amorous mythological couples such as Heracles and Deianeira (fig. 15).

When Geldenhouer wrote an ode to the painters at the court of Philip of Burgundy, making specific mention of a number of mythological subjects which could be conjured up in paintings - such as 'Aphrodite's tricks', 'the sweet adultery of Ares' and 'the spear-thrower Artemis' - he was comparing the painters of his time with Parrhasios, Zeuxis and Apelles, painters who, according to him, had achieved great fame, as well as being well-loved by kings and extolled by poets.⁸ Geldenhouer was doubtless referring first and foremost to Jan Gossaert. Elsewhere as well, Geldenhouer called Gossaert 'the Apelles of our century'.⁹ The notion that he was following in the footsteps of the great Greek painters of antiquity would therefore

have contributed to the picture that Gossaert himself had of his status as a painter. Admittedly, one had no direct experience of paintings from antiquity - let alone knowledge of what the works of Apelles, Zeuxis or Parrhasios looked like - but thanks to the history of painting set forth by Pliny the Elder in his *Naturalis Historia*, their fame and the subjects of their most renowned works had survived the intervening centuries. The most celebrated of them all was Apelles, the 'prince of painters', who was said to have surpassed all his fellow-painters, especially in the rendering of feminine beauty and grace.¹⁰ Among his most famous works were depictions of Aphrodite, an example being the Aphrodite he painted for Alexander the Great using the latter's mistress Campaspe as a model (see cat. no. 29). It is said that when death overtook him he was working on an Aphrodite that would surpass all others in beauty. The fact that all

14.
JAN GOSSAERT
Aphrodite and Eros
panel, 41.5 x 30 cm
Brussels, Koninklijke Musea voor
Schone Kunsten van België

15.
JAN GOSSAERT
Heracles and Deianeira, 1517
panel, 36.5 x 26 cm
Birmingham, The Barber Institute of
Fine Arts, The University of
Birmingham

ambitious painters, from the Renaissance onwards, aspired to be called the Apelles of their time – in panegyrics to painters his name was seldom missing – also implies that mythological subjects incorporating feminine beauty must have been viewed by many as paradigmatic for the highest possible achievement in the art of painting.¹¹

As mentioned above, paintings by Gossaert of Aphrodite are still known, and it is striking that one of them has a double frame bearing a text in Latin (fig. 14). This confirms Geldenhouer's assertion that Philip employed poets to compose verses to accompany the paintings in his collection, so that they could be displayed both speaking and silent. In the verse on her frame, the 'speaking' Aphrodite issues a warning to her 'impudent' son Eros to stop shooting gods and people, and even his own mother, with his arrows.¹² In another depiction of Aphrodite, objects lie at her feet which refer to the kindling of love in general and to her own conquest in particular: the arrows and quiver of Eros and the helm of Ares. At the same time, however, we see her with the traditional symbols of vanity and the fleeting nature of all beauty: the mirror in her hand and the vase of flowers beside her. All these works are painted in an exceedingly subtle and detailed manner, entirely in keeping with the Northern tradition. The figures, however, are carefully drawn according to classical proportions and are surrounded by architectonic motifs meticulously constructed along the lines of the central perspective, by means of which Gossaert displayed his knowledge of the forms, ornaments and proportions requisite to the art of antiquity.

Furthermore, Philip seems to have called on his court artist Gossaert not just to produce paintings or to make triumphal carriages decorated with 'poetic antiquities', but even to make a Heracles of snow during a 'snowman festival' that took place in 1511 in Brussels, of which there is a detailed report in verse by the poet Jan Smeken.¹³ According to this account, Philip himself, 'My Lord the Admiral', apparently lent a helping hand in

making this Heracles, remarkable for its fine proportions, in the inner courtyard of his residence at Brussels. We may assume that this Heracles figure was based on drawings after a classical example, especially as we know of one such drawing by Gossaert (fig. 3). Heracles, the personification of virtue, strength and constancy, was – in the Habsburg iconography of princely propaganda – undoubtedly the favourite classical figure, and even this snowman-Heracles – just like the painted Poseidon – must have been an allusion to Philip's prominent role in the Habsburg empire.

THE SECOND HALF OF THE 16TH CENTURY: 'APELLIAN' BEAUTY AND MORALITY

This rather long introduction, dwelling on the work of Jan Gossaert, enables us to conclude that, already at the time of the introduction of mythological themes into Dutch painting, various aspects immediately come to the fore which will remain typical of the way these themes were put to use. In the first place, attempting to rival the legendary artists of Greek antiquity would continue to be of crucial importance to artists and their patrons. The aspiration to be seen as a latter-day Apelles – enabling patrons to be extolled as 'an Alexander' – would henceforth be a driving force in the career of ambitious painters. As indicated earlier, displaying one's ability to paint the nude – in a style inspired by one's knowledge of the art of antiquity – was necessary to the pursuit of this goal. Moreover, we have already seen that from the very beginning mythological themes could serve the princely propaganda machine: comparisons with gods and heroes of classical antiquity lent the princely image a special prestige, thereby underscoring allegorically the virtues of the sovereign, his ability to govern well and his elevated position. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that it was mainly via the Habsburg court and the nobles in its circle that antique themes in the Renaissance style spread northward, especially by means of the many temporary decorations made for the



'triumphal entries' of Habsburg rulers.¹⁴ We have ascertained, however, that depictions of naked mythical gods and goddesses could also be the vehicle for sensual scenes with powerfully erotic overtones.¹⁵ And, as we saw in Gossaert's representations of Aphrodite, these could be made acceptable by calling on help from moralisations - verbal ones - or by means of details referring to the transient nature of earthly beauty and desire. In the case of depictions in which the erotic played an important role, there was a particular penchant - in this misogynous age - for scenes presenting a titillating picture of the dangers of the female powers of seduction, of which men were the defenceless victims.¹⁶ Gossaert's painting of Heracles with the beautiful but jealous Deianeira, the one who eventually brings about the ruin of this invincible hero, is an example of this (fig. 15). The seductive Aphrodite, whose image was naturally supposed to be the epitome of feminine beauty, was - and continued to be - the deity most frequently depicted in paintings and prints. Her adulterous love for Ares was a subject also favoured by succeeding generations of 16th-century artists.

Their loving union could, in one context, feature in allegories of war and peace¹⁷ - in which case the image of the disarmed Ares, the god of war, is central to its meaning - while within another framework their lovemaking was sometimes accompanied by moralisations, either overt or implied, aimed at exposing the shame of infidelity that can never be kept secret, portrayed in scenes exuding tremendous sensuality. Good examples of life-size nude representations of Aphrodite dating from the 16th century are those of Maarten van Heemskerck (fig. 16) and Anthonie Blocklandt (cat. no. 6), whose style was greatly inspired by Italian art, though - unlike their examples - they also display built-in moralisations. In the painting dating from 1545, Van Heemskerck demonstrates his knowledge of the latest developments in the rendering of a 'Venetian' Aphrodite type lying in a landscape, which he combined with a Michelangelesque style of drawing and anatomy. We see Aphrodite taking the bow away from Eros, while preparations for her own disgrace take place in the background: in his smithy, her husband Hephaistos is engaged in making the net that

16.
MAARTEN VAN HEEMSKERCK
Aphrodite and Eros, 1545
panel, 108 x 157.5 cm
Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz Museum



18.

HENDRICK GOLTZIUS AFTER
BARTHOLOMEUS SPRANGER
Aphrodite and Ares seen by Apollo, 1588
engraving, 44.2 x 33 cm
Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen

17.

MAARTEN VAN HEEMSKERCK
Aphrodite and Ares surprised by Hephaistos
panel, 96 x 99 cm
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum

he will throw over the adulterous lovers who are caught in the act. According to the text in the cartellino - the illusionistic piece of paper at the lower left - Aphrodite warns against the consequences of the carnal lust aroused by Eros.¹⁸ In Anthonie Blocklandt's later work (c. 1580) as well, we see Eros being disarmed, this time by a standing Aphrodite who is strongly reminiscent of works by Italian mannerists active in Florence and Rome. The frontally exposed, naked body of Aphrodite confronts the viewer with a great physical proximity, though this is tempered somewhat by the humorous motif of Eros, who, like a whining child, reaches in vain for the bow that Aphrodite has just taken from him.

In Maarten van Heemskerck's depiction of Ares and Aphrodite surprised in their lovemaking, we find a moralisation which is very pointed indeed (fig. 17). The back of the panel shows the figures of Justitia and Prudentia, as well as

an admonitory biblical quotation on divine justice that always triumphs.¹⁹ Some decades later, towards the end of the 16th century, we meet these lovers again in several explicitly erotic engravings by Hendrick Goltzius. One of them was engraved after a drawing by the Flemish painter Bartholomeus Spranger (fig. 18), who was a great favourite at Rudolf II's court in Prague. Spranger's extremely stylised and affected manner fascinated Goltzius at this time. There is nothing in these amorous scenes which so much as hints at a moralising intention. Nonetheless, the Latin captions preach the traditional moral of the shame of secret sins that must inevitably be discovered.²⁰

In small paintings of the same subject by Joachim Wtewael, the erotic element is uncommonly blatant (figs. 19 and 93).²¹ At the same time the depiction has been turned into an amusing comedy by the infectious mirth of the gods, who laugh



uproariously at the unfortunate situation in which the lovers – so rudely interrupted in their lovemaking – now find themselves. This somewhat farcical eroticism also enjoyed a tradition in literature, as evidenced by a racy morality play by the previously mentioned Jan Smeken, *Hue Mars en Venus tsaemen bueleerden* (How Ares and Aphrodite made love), extant in various manuscripts and printed as late as 1621.²² These works by Wtewael, both painted on very small copper plates, were probably not hung on the wall, but were kept instead in a drawer, to be brought out by the owner for his own viewing pleasure and that of interested friends.

The countless representations of Aphrodite in prints and drawings by Goltzius no longer show her as the one who disarms Eros, but rather as the worldly temptress who receives the apple from Paris, or else as the goddess of sensual pleasure who cannot function properly without the help of her ‘servants’ Demeter and Dionysus (or food and drink), as a well-known adage of that time made clear (figs. 20 and 21).²³ Artists and collec-

tors could justify the depiction of all this pagan beauty by invoking the prestigious tradition underpinning such images. It was none other than Erasmus who, referring to the immense prestige enjoyed by all things antique, had already complained that art-lovers and connoisseurs of antiquity preferred frivolous mythological subjects to Christian representations, adding that it was all only a pretext to lead young people astray.²⁴ He considered such depictions dangerous, because he thought – following the example of classical writers – that visual experience had a far greater impact on the mind than the spoken word.

The owners of such paintings would have been well aware of the fierce criticism levelled at these works. Painters who wished to measure themselves with Apelles (as well as collectors who, like Alexander, wanted to patronise an Apelles) would have thought it only natural that portrayals of ‘Apellian’ beauty could also be a powerful stimulus to the senses (and the idea would not have troubled them in the slightest). Their awareness of this is evidenced, for example, by the fact that images of



19.
JOACHIM WTEWAEEL
Aphrodite and Ares surprised by Hephaistos
copper, 20.2 x 15.5 cm
Malibu, The J. Paul Getty Museum



20.
JAN SAENREDAM
AFTER HENDRICK
GOLTZIUS
Aphrodite and Eros
engraving, 20.8 x 14.2 cm

21.
HENDRICK GOLTZIUS
Aphrodite with Demeter and Dionysus, 1593
pen and brown ink on paper, 63 x 49.5 cm
London, British Museum

22.
HENDRICK GOLTZIUS
Aphrodite/Pictura
panel, 69 x 70 cm
Germany, private
collection



23.
JAN SAENREDAM
AFTER HENDRICK
GOLTZIUS
*Visus (Aphrodite/Visus as
model of the painter)*
engraving, 24.4 x 18.4 cm

Aphrodite and Pictura - the personification of the art of painting - sometimes merged with one another, so that the latter was presented as the representative of supreme - and therefore supremely seductive - beauty (fig. 22).²⁵ Neither should it surprise us that Aphrodite, pre-eminent temptress of the eye, also appeared occasionally in this period as the personification of Visus, or sight, the sense that was considered to be both the highest and the most dangerous, because love and lust were thought to be kindled most easily through the eyes. An allegory by Goltzius, which shows a painter portraying Aphrodite as the personification of Visus, encapsulates this notion most ingeniously (fig. 23).²⁶

The criticism of paintings with mythological subjects could be quite fierce, however, and right from the start we see - as already noted in the case of Erasmus - that objections to the pagan nature of the stories and disapproval of the sensuality of the depictions frequently intermingle. It was not only the pugnacious Anna Bijns who warned of people who put Eros and Aphrodite '(...) or one of her cousins, stark-naked, in their rooms'.²⁷ The celebrated humanist Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert - who taught Goltzius the art of engraving - expressed his opinion of images of naked Aphrodites in even stronger terms: according to him, she would

only stir up unchaste thoughts and kindle burning desire. Censure of this kind would continue throughout the 17th century, coming from various religious quarters.²⁸ Opinions differed greatly as to the appropriateness of mythological subject matter and whether or not depictions of the nude should be permitted, and the tension this caused must have been felt by everyone, also by those in art-lovers' circles.²⁹ In literature such opinions were usually voiced in disapproving terms, as witnessed by the words of Jacob Cats, who condemned the possession of 'lustful pictures', because the 'unbridled senses' of youth were especially vulnerable to such images. Sometimes, however - in particular in poems which Joost van den Vondel and Jan Vos wrote as accompaniments to paintings - it was possible to toy light-heartedly with thoughts of the titillating power of painted nudes.³⁰ In one of Vondel's poems, for example, which was inspired by a naked Aphrodite owned by the stadholder Willem II, the painted Aphrodite 'speaks' to his consort, saying that if her nakedness arouses the desires of her husband, she needn't fear he will fall in love with 'paint and the semblance of life'. 'Aglow with desire', he will, rather, 'take his vengeance on you'. Do not wholly despise me, says Aphrodite, but admire instead the ability of the painter.³¹

AROUND THE TURN OF THE CENTURY: GREAT AMBITIONS, EXPANSION OF THE MARKET AND THE POPULARISATION OF THE 'METAMORPHOSES' IN WORDS AND PICTURES

The little paintings on copper by Wtewael and the engravings by Goltzius have brought us up to a period - the late 16th century - in which the division between the Northern and Southern Netherlands became a fact, and in which - owing in part to the great influx of painters and merchants fleeing from the Southern provinces, and from Antwerp in particular - the production of paintings in Holland and Utrecht underwent explosive growth. The portrayal of mythological scenes also increased by leaps and bounds in this period. Until the last decade of the 16th century, paintings of such subjects were relatively uncommon, and those produced were made for members of an elite group schooled in humanism and familiar with ideas that had usually developed in Italy.

Things now started to change, however. The countless print designs by Goltzius and paintings by Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem, Abraham Bloemaert and Joachim Wtewael contributed greatly to the popularisation of these themes. The paintings they made in the last decade of the 16th century still display a great variety of subjects, especially the ambitious, large-scale paintings with great numbers of nude figures. At the beginning of the 17th century, however, the production of much smaller paintings was stepped up, and more and more repetitions were made of the same subjects. The large works were made either to hang in a specific place, such as the famous *Marriage of Peleus and Thetis* which Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem made in 1593 for the Prinsenhof in Haarlem (fig. 24), or for members of an elite group of wealthy collectors, such as Bloemaert's spectacular *Slaying of the Niobids* (1591), which was owned by an extremely wealthy (and fraudulent) banker

24.
CORNELIS CORNELISZ. VAN
HAARLEM
Marriage of Peleus and Thetis
canvas, 246 x 419 cm
Haarlem, Frans Halsmuseum





25.
ABRAHAM BLOEMAERT
Slaying of the Niobids, 1591
canvas, 203 x 249.5 cm
Copenhagen,
Statens Museum for Kunst

and art connoisseur of Italian descent (fig. 25).³² In his *Marriage of Peleus and Thetis* (fig. 24) Cornelis presents a picture of love, abundance, and harmony, which is about to be seriously disrupted - a disruption eventually leading to war and disaster - by the apple of discord, to be claimed by the fairest, which was thrown among the wedding guests (in the background we see the minuscule figure of Zeus, with the apple in his hand, while elsewhere in the background we see the outcome of this incident, the Judgement of Paris). Within the framework for which it was intended - the Prinsenhof, the place where the stadholder and other worthy guests stayed whenever they came to Haarlem - the depiction must have been loaded with political comment, corresponding to Van Mander's

explication of this story: nothing is more disastrous for countries, cities and states 'than black, vile discord'.³³ However, nearly the same representation of naked figures eating, courting and making music was used by Cornelis with the biblical Flood in the background, endowing the representation with a moralising tenor of a different nature: the picture of love and plenitude then becomes an expression of the sinfulness of humankind. In the first place, such works were intended to display a high degree of accomplishment in the painter's ability to portray the human body and in the staging of great numbers of human figures. This is, incidentally, even more true of the above-mentioned painting by Bloemaert, which shows the punishment of pride, though its primary objective is to show off the virtuosity of the painter.

Starting at the beginning of the 17th century, the steady increase in the number of well-to-do burghers who bought paintings must have caused the repetition, usually in a relatively small format, of a smaller number of subjects by the above-mentioned painters. At the same time, the relationship between producer and consumer was changing: painters began more and more to sell paintings from their own stock instead of painting them on commission.³⁴ A painter would therefore have tended to make paintings which he knew he could sell easily to a public he already had in mind when producing them. That public was expanding more than ever before, and this would also have been true of those clients interested in mythological themes.

Without even needing to know Latin, a growing group of literate burghers were becoming familiar, by means of both words and pictures, with the stories of the classical gods and goddesses via popular literature. Starting in the mid-16th century, many editions in the vernacular were published of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a book that was viewed as a handy compendium of mythology and a sort of 'Who's Who' of the world of antique gods, goddesses and their mortal cohorts. These books ranged from complete prose translations to editions in which the text had been abridged, offering only a short synopsis of each story. What these popular editions in the vernacular had in common was their wealth of illustration.³⁵ Editions in Latin, on the other hand, were rarely illustrated, as these had a different aim entirely. In this way, attractive books of prints were produced in which the illustrations were at least as important as the text, so that the stories could imprint themselves, in words as well as images, on the minds of a relatively large readership, including of course the painters themselves. The title-pages of such works, therefore, frequently bear recommendations such as, 'Very enjoyable and also edifying for all Noble Minds, and such Artists as Rhetoricians, Painters, Image-carvers and Goldsmiths'.³⁶ Indeed, these little works appear to have fulfilled an important function. In 1604 Karel van Mander writes accordingly that the *Metamorphoses* 'was called in our circle the Painters' Bible, for many of its stories were the subject of paintings'.³⁷

Of crucial importance was the first completely illustrated edition of the *Metamorphoses*, published in 1557 in Lyons in a French and Dutch version. It was illustrated with no fewer than 178 very lively woodcuts by the French illustrator Bernard Salomon, and supplied with a short synopsis in verse of each story, written by the Fleming Guillaume Borluit (fig. 26). A short time later, all 178 of these woodcuts were freely copied by the German illustrator Virgil Solis, and copies of his woodcuts were reprinted, from the second printing in 1566 until the mid-17th century, in countless editions of the first complete Dutch translation of the *Metamorphoses* by Johannes Florianus, the first edition of which dates from 1552 (fig. 27). In addition, there appeared various editions with illustrations which were variations of the compositions by Salomon and Solis, examples being those of Pieter van der Borcht (Antwerp 1591), Crispijn de Passe the Elder (Arnhem 1607) and the Italian Antonio Tempesta (Antwerp 1606), all of which were published in small volumes in the Netherlands.³⁸

These attractive and easy-to-use print books not only ensured that the stories became widely known: their illustrations were also of prime importance for 17th-century painting. They codified the episode of a story that was always chosen for portrayal, and often the corresponding pictorial scheme as well.³⁹

In a portrayal of the story of Artemis and Actaeon, for example, one expected to see the bathing Artemis with her nymphs and an approaching Actaeon, who already displays the first signs of his transformation into a stag.

At the beginning of the 18th century, the painter Gerard Lairesse complained in his *Groot Schilderboek* that painters always chose subjects they knew from prints, and never took the trouble to depict other scenes. Lairesse was unsparing in his criticism, maintaining that laziness was the main reason:

'(...) while the stories of Ovid are nowadays depicted in such profusion, and are so easy to come by, accompanied by three or four lines which clearly tell us what the pictures are supposed to represent: Aphrodite and Adonis, Vertumnus and Pomona, Zephyr and Flora, and so on. Is that not enough, they ask: the one is



26.
BERNARD SALOMON
Artemis with her Nymphs surprised by Actaeon
woodcut
in: *Excellente figuren ... Ovidius*
(Guillaume Borluit), Lyons 1557

Van de transformatie
borsten maecken groot ghetier, soo dat men se al het
bosch deur hoordt, een yegelijc dedt haer herte om
Dianam te bedecken, nochtans was sy thoofte lāger
dan genige van hun leden al stont sy daer tusschen
alle dander goddiſſing, nochtans soo keerde sy laer
van ter tijden, op datte haer te bat bedrecken soude,
ende om datte haer pielen mit soo ghereet en hadde
als sy wil wenschte, soo besoot si hē met water der
fonteynen, segghende: Gaet nu verrecken condy,
datghy Dianam nactē ghesien hebt, met dele woer-
den soo creech Acteon op sijn hooft twee hoornen,
enen langen hals, lange beenen, een rouwe gescic-
kelde en haerachtighe huyl, hier en bouen soo qua-
hem een ergote verbaſſelheyt ouer, soo dat hy alint
half hert noch half mensche, nēch in versondde



seer van sijn selt selheyt. Als hy ten seiten by een
water comende, ende hem spieelde sijn lāge hoor-
nen senſach, seer geirne hadde hy hē dōt beelaecht
maer de slemme was hem vergaen, anders en was
hem

27.
AFTER VIRGIL SOLIS
Artemis with her Nymphs surprised by Actaeon
in: *Metamorphosis* (translation Johan-
nes Florianus), Antwerp 1566



28.
ANONYMOUS
*Artemis with her Nymphs
surprised by Actaeon
in: Thronus Cupidinis*
(ed. 1620)



29.
JOACHIM WTEWAEEL
*Artemis with her Nymphs
surprised by Actaeon*, 1607
panel, 58 x 79 cm
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches
Museum

naked and the other dressed, this one is a man and that one a woman, this one has a dog, and that one a basket of fruit, and the other a flowerpot. Why should I not follow the story without further questioning, considering these events are thus portrayed by such a famous Master.⁴⁰

According to Lairese, therefore, most painters did not even bother to read the texts: 'It is usually in the print books, and not in the original text, that one looks nowadays,' he writes. Lairese says this in a mocking tone, but it is an attitude whose existence is confirmed by the large numbers of related compositions depicting the same subject. Of course there was more than laziness at work here. After all, their clients, too, had become acquainted with the classical myths primarily through this illustrated literature, and they would have tended to buy paintings with representations they not only recognised and found appealing, but which were in keeping with the type and idiom they had come to expect from a certain painter. Moreover, a painter could be more productive if he was not required to think up a new subject and a completely different composition for every painting. Lairese's call to painters to chose entirely new subjects for a change would probably have meant commercial suicide for many of them. That the stories from the *Metamorphoses* had meanwhile become widely known is also clearly demonstrated by the way in which many fables functioned in lyrical love poetry, in numerous songbooks, in wedding verses and

in the typical Dutch love emblems dating from the first decades of the 17th century. These contain fairly frequent references to the well-known stories from the *Metamorphoses*, and the salient facts of such stories were assumed to be known to the reader. In such texts a simple moral exemplum was usually connected with the fable, not unlike the pages reproduced here from a slender volume of love emblems, illustrating the story of Artemis and Actaeon in word and image (fig. 28).⁴¹ Here we see a Dutch motto which translates as 'Seeing too much is harmful' ('Te veel ghesien is schadelijk'), while the accompanying verse by Bredero clearly states that youngsters must shield their eyes, for seeing forbidden things arouses lust and can only lead to shame and suffering, as Actaeon found out when he gazed upon the virgin nakedness of Artemis.⁴² Shortly afterward Cats expressed it aptly:

'Actaeon became a stag, you ask the reason why? He saw the goddess of the hunt, her nakedness did spy A Prince of lofty spirit, a brave hero at the least, But the sight of a nude woman made him turn into a beast. A beast, as told in all the tales, and lecherous to boot, Transformed by lustful longing into a hot-blooded brute'.⁴³

In several of his paintings Joachim Wtewael seems to toy with the ambiguity inherent in the subject, which places the viewer in the same position as Actaeon and allows him to gaze, unpunished, on the same delights as Actaeon, the 'voyeur' in

the painting (fig. 29). At the same time the viewer, who admires the nudes posing in all manner of attitudes and positions, is playfully reprimanded, as it were: not only is he confronted with the intruder at whom Artemis directs her rage and upon whose head antlers have begun to sprout, but he sees a minuscule portrayal in the background of the gruesome punishment in store for the stag that was once Actaeon: he is torn to pieces by his own dogs.⁴⁴

Any viewer would have known that these stories also contained a moral. Texts were endlessly referring to the lessons to be learned from these 'poetic fables'. The prefaces to the above-mentioned editions of the *Metamorphoses* always stressed that these 'pagan fables' should not be read only as entertainment, for under the amusing surface there were deeper truths to be gleaned. In Moormann's contribution to this catalogue, one may read about how – since late antiquity – these stories have been brought in line with Christian ethics, often resulting in very complicated allegorical explications. This trend reached its high point in the late Middle Ages, though this line of thinking persisted, albeit in a different form, into the 16th and 17th centuries.⁴⁵ The theological allegories that had been sought in these fables in the Middle Ages were now rejected and the astrological interpretations were given less credence, though readings of a generally moral nature are met with continually, becoming more and more like simple 'exempla' of good and evil, which one could also distil from the stories through contemplation, without having any erudition at one's disposal. If one only bore in mind that virtue was rewarded and vice punished, there were many edifying lessons to be gained from these fables – this was more or less the line of reasoning.

Owing to the profound truths they were said to contain, the stories from the *Metamorphoses* were defended in full in the preface to the first Dutch commentary on the *Metamorphoses*, Karel van Mander's *Wtlegghingh op den Metamorphosis* of 1604. Many decades later Vondel was still using every weapon at his

disposal to defend these stories in the foreword to his translation of the *Metamorphoses* (1671). Apparently it was still necessary to make a stand against the unrelenting criticism, especially that emanating from religious circles. Since the *Metamorphoses* had been available in translation many people had derided and despised these stories, viewing them as lies that were not worth the reading, according to Van Mander, who went on to say that 'gnawing off the outer husk has not been at all to their liking, not having sharp enough teeth to bite through to the nourishing core'.⁴⁶

The explications of the *Metamorphoses* which Van Mander included in his *Schilder-boeck* are firmly rooted in a very old literary tradition and depend strongly on Italian examples. His was a sincere attempt to underscore the venerability of these stories, by putting a justification for their use within easy reach of painters and art-lovers. 'All for the purpose of promoting pious and honest conduct, and for the benefit and convenience of painters, poets and art-lovers, compiled and composed for their edification', proclaims the title-page.⁴⁷ It was stressed, over and over again, that under the surface these stories contained uplifting pieces of wisdom, and this was reiterated to justify the use of what were often quite licentious stories. This in no way implies, however, that paintings – often tinged with eroticism – of episodes taken from these stories were always supposed to bear a moralising message or were meant to be interpreted in a moralising light. A verbal moralisation, however, was always close at hand and could be activated at will.

POPULAR SUBJECTS IN THE 17TH CENTURY: THE NUDE OBSERVED

In the cities of Holland, therefore, a climate developed in which the production of paintings of such subjects was able to flourish. The subjects most favoured by painters and their public included the courtship of Aphrodite and Adonis, Artemis being spied on by Actaeon while bathing with her nymphs, the discovery of Callisto's pregnancy by Artemis



30.
CORNELIS CORT AFTER
TITIAN
*Artemis and her Nymphs discover-
ing Callisto's Pregnancy*, 1566
engraving, 44.1 x 36.8 cm



31.
MARCANTONIO RAIMONDI
AFTER RAPHAEL
The Judgement of Paris
engraving

and her nymphs - also while bathing - and the Judgement of Paris, by which he was forced to decide which of the three goddesses - Aphrodite, Hera or Athena - was the fairest (the equally popular scene of Vertumnus and Pomona, which is derived from an Italic rather than a Greek myth, will not be discussed here). In the powerful pictorial traditions developing around these subjects, book illustrations were not the only thing to play an important role: in the case of certain themes, a few famous prints appear to have been of overriding importance, both for their popularity and for the continual employment of the same pictorial scheme. This is especially true of Cornelis Cort's print after Titian of Artemis and her nymphs discovering Callisto's pregnancy (fig. 30) and of Marcantonio Raimondi's print after Raphael with the Judgement of Paris (fig. 31): for more than a century, both prints exerted a powerful influence on the way in which these themes were portrayed anew again and again.⁴⁸

If we take a look at the character of the depictions of these favourite subjects, it appears that they all offered the possibility of painting erotic scenes with many female nudes in distinctly idyllic surroundings: the woods where Aphrodite and Adonis rest under a tree after hunting, the sheltered pool in the woodland glade where Artemis bathes with her nymphs (in

both Artemis representations), and the pastoral surroundings of Mount Ida where Paris, brought up as a shepherd, pronounces judgement. A striking feature of all these stories, as we saw in the tale of Actaeon, is that all these idylls end in disaster. Adonis is killed by a wild boar, Actaeon is transformed into a stag and is mauled by his own dogs, Callisto is chased away and changed into a bear, and the Judgement of Paris eventually leads to the Trojan war and the death of Paris and his family. As in the previously discussed depictions of Actaeon by Wtewael, we sometimes see the gruesome ending as a tiny depiction in the background, though one often has to look closely to find it (see, for instance, cat. no. 7). Finally - and this point is stressed continually in the moralising explications of these stories - they all have something to do with the struggle between chastity and unchasteness. The moral that chastity is rewarded and unchasteness punished was easy to glean from the fables in question. The paintings in which episodes from these stories are portrayed, however, show extremely pleasant situations of a distinctly sensual nature. The tension between eroticism and morality which many of these paintings must have contained for viewers at that time undoubtedly contributed to the attraction they held.

In the representations of both Actaeon and Paris, it is indeed remarkable that the stories themselves are about viewing naked female beauty. In Wtewael's portrayal of Actaeon we already saw that the viewer in fact indulges in the same activity as the male protagonist in the picture (fig. 29). This feature connects these subjects to the two biblical representations which were also extraordinarily popular at that time: David spying on the bathing Bathsheba and the bathing Susanna being spied on by the elders.⁴⁹ All of the 'voyeurs' in question - Actaeon, Paris, David, the elders - are severely punished for their deeds. The Actaeon episode has already been discussed. Paris' downfall is due - according to the explication - to his choosing sensual love and beauty instead of either wisdom and reason or power and riches. Both 'exempla' were cited by Van Mander when counselling his pupils to work hard and not to follow Eros, who only leads youth astray. He impressed upon them that the senses disperse like the dogs at a hunt who devour the flesh of their own master; this, he said, had been Actaeon's fate because he had dared to gaze upon the naked Artemis, while the flame that was kindled in Paris eventually reduced Troy to ashes.⁵⁰

The viewer of such depictions can therefore enjoy looking at sensual beauty, while a strict moral is always close at hand to justify his viewing pleasure, both to himself and to others. The preoccupation discussed above, i.e. the notion that the most dangerous of the five senses and the one most likely to arouse lustful passions is the sense of sight - something that we come across in countless publications of the time which address themselves especially to the danger in observing the naked human figure, and likewise the danger in observing paintings of nudes - is reflected in the fascination with just such subjects.

In the first two decades of the 17th century, themes containing large numbers of naked figures reached their zenith in the hands of such painters as Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem, Hendrick Goltzius, Joachim Wtewael, Abraham Bloemaert and Paulus Moreelse. The paintings varied in size from small (cat. no. 86) to extre-

mely large formats, as evidenced by a few late works by Goltzius. In some of these paintings the erotic element is portrayed with amazing directness, such as in the painting of the sleeping Antiope, whom Zeus approaches in the shape of a grinning Satyr (cat. no. 27). Antiope lies in an attitude which the art-lover would have recognised immediately as referring to a famous pose - stemming from antiquity and popularised in Venice - of the sleeping nude,⁵¹ but at the same time the suggestion of physical proximity and the degree of naturalism in the portrayal of the nude is greater than was customary before this time. Even nowadays, Antiope's naked body still has a slightly shocking effect. Its powerful sensuality is somewhat alleviated by the humorous motif of the little Satyr child, who pinches Antiope's nipple and puts his finger to his lips to warn the viewer to keep still and not to wake her.

CIRCA 1615-1640: UNUSUAL SUBJECTS AND LANDSCAPES WITH FIGURES

Among the most important history painters of the younger generation, such as Pieter Lastman and his circle in Amsterdam (also called the 'pre-Rembrandtists') and the so-called Caravaggisti in Utrecht, mythological themes were of much less importance than they were to the mannerists discussed above. They seldom depicted scenes with female nudes: these were not in keeping with the naturalistic style adopted by such painters as Lastman or Van Baburen, by means of which their portrayals were brought closer to the viewer's realm of experience. Although very different in character, these painters display little or no idealisation of figure types, and women's bodies are for the most part largely concealed in clothing. Even the languishing Ariadne (cat. no. 46) is dressed by Lastman in an undergarment, bodice and skirt - only her breasts are bared - causing her to look more like the many Old-Testament heroines that Lastman painted than like a mythical beauty. It was not the portrayal of a Dionysian atmosphere, but the sudden confrontation with Dionysus and the accompanying change in emotion that made this an attractive subject for Lastman.

In the work of these painters we frequently encounter unusual subjects from Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in depictions that are not at all idyllic or erotic in character. Most of these portray suspenseful situations that can be interpreted as positive 'exempla'. Instances of these in Lastman's oeuvre are the paintings he devoted to the story of Odysseus being washed ashore in the kingdom of Alcinous and approaching the king's daughter, Nausicaa (fig. 32).⁵² It is a scene which clearly expresses the notion that one should be hospitable under all circumstances: Nausicaa's friends and servants, disporting themselves on the shore, flee in fright at the sight of the ragged Odysseus. Only the noble princess stays to welcome the naked stranger who has been robbed of all his possessions. Such exemplary subjects were naturally highly suitable to adorn a specific place, and it is therefore understandable that this scene was chosen several years later as the subject of an overmantel made to decorate the 'Desolate Boedelkamer' of the Amsterdam town hall,

the place where bankruptcies were declared. This served to show that even those who had lost all their worldly goods should not despair completely under the merciful government of the Amsterdam town fathers. Burgomaster Huydecoper also considered this a suitable subject to hang above the fireplace in the reception room of his own home.⁵³ In a realistic style related to that of Lastman, Jan Tegnagel painted a representation of Circe who turned Odysseus' companions into swine (cat. no. 80). Surprisingly, it is not Homer, but once again Ovid, who is the point of departure for this portrayal, the composition of which is based on a *Metamorphoses* illustration by Antonio Tempesta. Like Lastman, Tegnagel was more interested in rendering the drama of the situation than the seductiveness of Circe. Incidentally, here we see one of the few scenes in which the process of metamorphosis occupies a conspicuous place in the picture. Although these transformations of people into animals or plants are frequently encountered in book

32.
PIETER LASTMAN
*Nausicaa and her Companions
surprised by Odysseus*, 1619
panel, 90 x 115 cm
Munich, Alte Pinakothek





illustrations, one seems to have avoided these themes in paintings, in which the human body was preferably rendered intact.

In the work of the generation active from the 1620s until the middle of the century, mythological scenes were principally depicted as staffage in idyllic landscapes. By the second half of the 16th century, the landscape had already developed into a thriving specialism in the Southern Netherlands. Most of these were usually supplied with staffage in the form of small biblical scenes, but starting in the late 16th century, these landscapes were more and more frequently filled in by specialists like Paul Bril and Gillis van Coninxloo with small mythological scenes suited to an outdoor setting, such as that of Leto and the Lycian peasants who were transformed into frogs, a subject that was also rendered some time later by Abraham Bloemaert in one of his splendid landscapes (cat. no. 8). Specialisation was taken to such

lengths that painters such as Roelant and Jacob Saverij, who concentrated on the rendering of landscapes with a variety of animals, painted - in addition to representations of Paradise - many versions of Orpheus making music for the animals. Later in the century, Aelbert Cuyp, a specialist in landscapes with cattle, also had a particular penchant for this theme (fig. 33 and cat. no. 18).

In the work of several painters in Lastman's circle - in particular that of Jacob Pynas - the landscape often plays an important role. The staffage always contains small 'histories', including the occasional mythological representation. Their hilly landscapes with ruins were inspired mainly by the Antwerp painter Paul Bril, who pursued his career in Rome, and the influential Adam Elsheimer, a German painter also active in Italy. The mythological scenes by Jacob Pynas, for example, as well as those by the young Nicolaes Moeyaert who was strongly

33.
AELBERT CUYP
Orpheus charming the Animals
canvas, 113 x 167 cm
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts (on
loan from a private collection)



34.
MOYSES VAN UYTENBROECK
Io (as a Heifer) with her Father and Sisters
panel, 46 x 62 cm
Whereabouts unknown



35.
CORNELIS VAN POELENBURCH
Artemis and her Nymphs watched by Actaeon
panel, 59 x 83 cm
Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst

influenced by Pynas, are often very pastoral in character, even though they are based on stories full of horror and deceit. For example, Jacob Pynas made several depictions of the shepherd Battus who shows Hermes where Admetus' stolen flock has been taken (after which Battus is turned into stone; cat. no. 60). The apparently idyllic scene in which the same divinity plays on his flute for the shepherd Argus - sent by Hera to guard Io, who has been turned into a heifer (Hermes lulled Argus to sleep and then chopped off his head) - also became increasingly popular during this period.⁵⁴ In the Northern Netherlands, however, it was primarily Moyses van Uyttenbroeck and Cornelis van Poelenburch (and the latter's many followers) who produced great numbers of Italianate landscapes, with staffage consisting of mythological scenes in which nude figures and love or eroticism both play an important role. In the work of Van Uyttenbroeck we sometimes see rather conventional subjects from the *Metamorphoses*, though often unusual choices as well. He preferred to depict scenes to which he could give a comic touch, such as the story of the hot-blooded nymph Salmacis and the innocent Hermaphroditus, who in Van Uyttenbroeck's depiction actually flees from her (cat. no. 84), or scenes in which he could show off his ability to paint both nudes and cattle. He painted, for example, a number of singular moments from the story of Io who was turned into a heifer (fig. 34).⁵⁵ In the work of Van Poelenburch, whose extremely refined Arcadian landscapes were very popular at the stadholder's court, we seldom encounter unusual themes. His are either themes frequently painted by artists of an older generation, such as the many banquets of the gods and scenes with Artemis and her

nymphs, or else subjects from the *Metamorphoses* which had lately enjoyed a certain popularity among artists in Elsheimer's circle, who used them as staffage in idyllic landscapes, one example being the scene in which Hermes, spying upon a group of maidens as they make their way home from the temple, falls head over heels in love with the beautiful Herse (cat. no. 57).

However, the subjects which were unrivalled favourites of Van Poelenburch and his followers were the scenes from the stories of Artemis and her nymphs, whom Actaeon spied while they were bathing, or else - another bathing scene - the discovery of Callisto's pregnancy. In their paintings of these subjects, the narrative element referring to the fable in question became less and less important: Actaeon is sometimes extremely difficult to find (see the minuscule figure in the ruin in the background in fig. 35), while in the beautiful painting of Artemis and Callisto in the Hermitage (cat. no. 56), for instance, it is not at all obvious what is happening. Although the group of nymphs holding Callisto still recalls Titian's composition (fig. 30), whether or not Artemis - whom we see only from the back - addresses Callisto is a matter for conjecture. Neither do we see that the latter is being undressed. Often these elements disappear completely, and all that remains is a group of nymphs disporting themselves in an idyllic setting.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, even then one often sees motifs that still recall the stories in which they originated, such as the frightened reactions of fleeing nymphs. The buyer of Van Poelenburch's works, which were among the costliest of the period, would have purchased such paintings primarily to enjoy the meticulously rendered nude nymphs and the sunny landscapes

with antique ruins, all painted with great refinement. The viewer could of course reflect on the mythological stories of Actaeon or Callisto, but there was nothing to stop him giving free rein to his imagination, which had been fed by the sight of these naked women.

The collector, however, could also choose to buy a painting in which the scene was unambiguously portrayed, making the moral of the story spring more easily to mind, an example being the beautiful painting of *The Judgement of Paris*, made by Van Poelenburch in collaboration with the landscape painter Jan Both (cat. no. 58), in which the group of figures still clearly displays the design of the print by Marcantonio Raimondi after Raphael (fig. 31). The painting by Both and Van Poelenburch is a fine example of a phenomenon we encounter frequently in such works: the collaboration between a true landscape painter and a

painter, such as Van Poelenburch, who also enjoyed great fame as a figure painter. The connoisseur with sufficient means at his disposal could thereby acquire a sample of the work of two celebrities in one painting, which undoubtedly added to the appeal of such works.

REMBRANDT: IN A CLASS OF HIS OWN

In the few paintings which Rembrandt made of mythological subjects - most of them produced early on in his career - he experimented a few times with small-scale figures in a landscape, as witnessed by a spectacular picture in which he combines a representation of Actaeon surprising Artemis bathing with her nymphs with the discovery of Callisto's pregnancy (fig. 36).⁵⁷ In nearly all the subjects taken up by Rembrandt, the basis of the portrayal was his unparalleled knowledge

36.

REMBRANDT VAN RIJN
Artemis bathing, with Actaeon and Callisto, 1634
canvas, 73.5 x 93.5 cm
Anholt, Museum Wasserburg Anholt,
collection Fürst zu Salm-Salm



37.
REMBRANDT VAN RIJN
Danaë, 1636
canvas, 185 x 203 cm
St. Petersburg, Hermitage

of the pictorial traditions of themes and motifs - knowledge which he acquired mainly by studying prints by artists of various countries, of which he himself owned a large collection. Rembrandt, however, always gave an unusual twist to existing conventions by concentrating on the emotion at the heart of the story. In this painting as well, many motifs may be traced to well-known prints of the same subject. Unlike his predecessors, however - and in stark contrast to Cornelis van Poelenburch - Rembrandt, in this combination of the Callisto and Actaeon scenes, increased the violence of the actions and reactions, pulling out all the stops in his rendering of the accompanying emotions. We see the furious Artemis, using both hands to splash water on a frightened Actaeon, an action whose effect is intensified by

Artemis' terrifying hounds, who throw themselves on Actaeon's: the dog lying on its back at the left points ahead to the fate of Actaeon, who will be ripped to shreds by his own dogs. Panic-stricken nymphs scramble out of the water, while a knot of nymphs, locked in a wild wrestling match, roughly reveal the pregnancy of poor Callisto. Rembrandt managed to weld all of this into a highly coherent composition: the viewer's gaze goes first from Artemis to Actaeon, bounces back to the nymphs in the foreground, turns from there via the chain of fleeing nymphs to Callisto, and ends at the nymph on the right, maliciously laughing her head off at the brawl involving Callisto. From there the viewer's gaze glides back to bottom left, stopping to rest on the innocent young girl who, noticing nothing of the incident taking



place behind her, cautiously wades into the cold water of the pond. Rembrandt tells in humorous yet unmistakable terms of the fate of sinners who break the laws of chastity, which are zealously guarded by Artemis.

In complete contrast to his teacher Lastman, Rembrandt, when painting a mythological subject, chose precisely those themes in which women find themselves in an erotically charged situation. If his painting of the Artemis themes was an experiment in the depiction of small-scale nudes and violent action, his representation of Danaë was a conscious effort aimed at gaining a place in the prestigious tradition of portraying life-size female nudes: a tradition to which Apelles owed his renown and which, in more recent times, had been raised to great heights by Titian and Rubens, the two painters whom Rembrandt must have admired most (fig. 37).⁵⁸ Rembrandt's rivalry was directed especially at Titian, who had made a number of famous paintings of Danaë, who was impregnated by Zeus in the form of golden rain. It is certainly no coincidence that Rembrandt's *Danaë*, along with those of Correggio and Titian, is one of the most sensuous nudes in the history of European painting. The literature of that time often referred to a painting of Danaë - one which had played an important role in a piece by Terence, Rome's famous comic dramatist - which was remembered for having aroused strong feelings of lust in the viewer. This legendary scene from antiquity therefore became the prototype, so to speak, of a painting that could be a powerful stimulus to the senses, causing this subject in particular to be favoured by painters as a means of vying with one another in the rendering of the most lifelike, sensuous nude possible.⁵⁹

Rembrandt would have viewed his *Danaë* primarily as an answer to a famous work - about which he would have read - made by the greatly-admired Titian for Cardinal Farnese. Rembrandt, however, replaced Titian's shower of gold coins with a golden glow that seems to hold Danaë's body in a loving embrace. In doing so, he banished all unnatural elements, avoiding a reference to the traditional explication of the

story, which maintains that nothing - not even virginal chastity - can withstand the power of money. Rembrandt was interested only in rendering, as convincingly as possible, a sensuous, naked woman who is startled - yet at the same time overjoyed - by the sudden arrival of her lover.

The fact that the *Danaë* which Titian made for Farnese was described critically in the literature, from Vasari to Van Mander, as a paragon of 'Venetian' painting - the school of painting based on concepts of paint and colour, light and shadow - would have provided an extra incentive to Rembrandt to choose this very theme for his first life-size nude.⁶⁰ This manner of painting, in which lifelikeness and naturalness were of prime importance, was usually discussed by theorists - starting with Vasari - in a somewhat denigrating tone, who contrasted it with art based on line and correct drawing: for these critics it was not working 'from life' but the portrayal of idealised beauty that was most important. With this *Danaë*, Rembrandt presented himself as a painter of nudes who had chosen the 'Venetian' manner with complete conviction. By introducing endless variety and subtle shifts in warm, tonal colours, and by using broad brushstrokes that kept the paint structure clearly visible, he suggested in a miraculous way the palpably soft skin - so palpable it almost seems to breathe - of this plump woman.

THE MID-17TH CENTURY (1): RIVALRY IN THE PAINTING OF THE NUDE

In the 1640s and 1650s we see, especially in Amsterdam and Haarlem, a number of painters engaged in a veritable competition to paint life-size nudes. Sometimes these were Bathshebas or Susannas, but mythological subjects remained the most notable vehicles of such themes. Although these painters were mostly somewhat younger than Rembrandt, they undoubtedly had to compete with him for the attention of an elite group of collectors who were based for the most part in Amsterdam. Unlike Rembrandt, they worked in an academic style and were dismissive of the 'Venetian' manner of painting.



38.
JACOB VAN LOO
Artemis and her Nymphs
canvas, 162 x 199 cm
Brunswick, Herzog Anton Ulrich-
Museum

Clear contours as well as ideal anatomy and proportions were their point of departure, and this gave their nudes a more distant character: their less intrusive nature undoubtedly made the portrayal of a life-size naked body more acceptable. Compare, for example, Rembrandt's Danaë with the taut lines of Caesar van Everdingen's Callisto, who was deceived by Zeus in the form of Artemis (cat. no. 21), or with the sharply delineated body of Eos by Johannes van Bronkhorst (cat. no. 15), or with the cool Artemis and her nymphs by Jacob van Loo (fig. 38), or again with the Callisto painted in broad areas of bright colour by Nicolaes Berchem (fig. 39). In spite of their classicising style, these painters maintained a certain measure of naturalism in their rendering of proportions and characterisation of figure types. The often meticulous depiction of added detail in the form of plants and animals

also shows that they did not shun traditions that were so deeply rooted in Holland. An unusual feature of the handsome painting by Van Everdingen depicting the seduction of Callisto (cat. no. 21) is his original idea of not depicting Zeus as Artemis, as was customary in this scene of seduction. On the contrary, we see Zeus in his true, masculine form; only Callisto sees the false guise that is her undoing. This is clearly illustrated by the mask bearing the face of Artemis, with a half-moon above her forehead. Held up by the Erotes, this mask is in itself a symbol of deceit. The painting by Berchem also offers a unique solution (fig. 39): he chose to depict the preceding moment, when Zeus, watching her from the heavens, is stricken with love for her. In this form the subject is connected with the above-mentioned 'voyeuristic' themes. As is always the case in portrayals of such subjects, the voyeur outside the painting -



the beholder - has a considerably better view of the enticingly beautiful young women than the voyeur in the painting, whether he be Zeus, Actaeon, Paris, David or the elders spying on Susanna: often they see the beauty, who is usually turned to face us, only from the back and often from a great distance to boot. Many of Rembrandt's pupils also became converts to a more academic style. A larger measure of idealisation and a greater emphasis on line and contour is to be seen in Ferdinand Bol's paintings of Aphrodite and Adonis, for example. Bol painted both the uninterrupted lovemaking (cat. no. 11) and the episode which enjoyed greater popularity at this time: Adonis leaving Aphrodite - against her advice - to go off and hunt a dangerous wild boar (cat. no. 12). This scene is not recounted in any classical text. It is a pictorial motif that was introduced for the first time by Titian in a famous composition and was

subsequently developed by others, including Rubens. The latter's composition - of which several variations exist - must have been famous as well.⁶¹ These works soon became a source of inspiration for several Dutch painters, including the elderly Abraham Bloemaert (cat. no. 7). The scene of Adonis' departure contains much more drama than the lovemaking, the more so because the informed viewer knows that Adonis, by ignoring Aphrodite's warning, will meet his fate. A representation of such a subject could undoubtedly instigate a sophisticated conversation between the owner and his guests regarding the question of whether Adonis personifies chastity - as evidenced by his flight from sinful temptation and lust, in which case the death of Adonis is seen as Aphrodite's punishment - or whether he stands for vain youth chasing after worldly pleasure in his disregard for divine love, or whether he is simply disobedient, casting

39.
NICOLAES BERCHEM
Zeus and Callisto
canvas, 129 x 168 cm
New York, Jack Kilgore & Co., Inc.



40.
JACOB BACKER
Aphrodite and Adonis
canvas, 200 x 237 cm
Eichenzell, Hessische
Hausstiftung, Museum
Schloß Fasanerie

good advice to the winds and consequently meeting his end. All these interpretations can be found in the literature of the period.⁶² These verbal games are however less important than the much more powerful visual communication, which is conveyed by the picture of beauty and eroticism on the verge of turning into one of death and sorrow. Dating from the same period as the works by Bol are a variety of paintings of this subject made by Amsterdam painters, such as Jacob Backer (fig. 40) and Jacob van Loo. These paintings offer us a glimpse of the artistic rivalry in which these artists – just as the ambitious collectors who bought such life-size nudes – must have been involved. Once in a while we also see a dramatic rendering of the sorrowful end of this story – the mourning Aphrodite next to the body of the dead Adonis – such as the depiction by Cornelis Holsteyn, also active in Amsterdam (cat. no. 35).

THE MID-17TH CENTURY (2): MONUMENTAL ENSEMBLES

It was the painters with a more academic style who received commissions for large-scale ensembles. Around the mid-17th century the Northern Netherlands saw an upsurge in the production of such paintings in large format,

made for the stadholder's palaces and commissioned as decorations for public buildings, especially town halls. The paintings produced for such patrons reflected the international tradition of using gods and heroes in allegorical representations for the purpose of glorifying a ruler or city. In this princely or civic propaganda, gods and heroes appear chiefly as personifications intended to underscore and legitimise the image of power.

The scenes painted in the 'Oranjezaal' (Orange Hall) of the Royal Palace 'Huis ten Bosch' were commissioned after the death of the stadholder Frederik Hendrik by his widow, Amalia van Solms, to glorify the deeds and virtues of her late husband, whose secretary, the famous poet Constantijn Huygens, conceived the project, together with the classicist architect and painter Jacob van Campen. While the most eye-catching part of this huge ensemble is the triumph of Frederik Hendrik – depicted in the form of a Roman 'triumphal procession' running round the entire hall – in the various episodes from his life, Frederik Hendrik is usually accompanied by gods of antiquity.⁶³ Rubens's Medici cycle provided the great example for this series of paintings, and if it had been at all possible, they would undoubtedly have wanted Rubens to execute this commission in The Hague. Not



surprisingly, several painters trained in Antwerp and working in the Southern Netherlands were commissioned to decorate the Orange Hall, in particular Jacob Jordaens, Theodoor van Thulden and Thomas Willeboirts Bosschaert, the last-mentioned having already executed many commissions for the stadtholder's court (see also De Poorter, p. 69ff.). However, there were also several Dutch painters invited to participate who were capable of producing history paintings in very large format. Looking around this hall, one immediately recognises which works came from the Southern Netherlands and which from the North. The painters from Antwerp, on the one hand, and those from the cities of Holland, on the other, clearly display their own idiom. The fluent movement and dynamic compositions which the Antwerp painters had learned in the studios of Rubens and Van Dyck are easily distinguishable from the more static scenes and the greater degree of detail and naturalism of the Northerners.

A nice example of the use of mythological figures in this context is the large overmantel depicting the birth of Frederik Hendrik, painted by Caesar van Everdingen (fig. 41): Athena holds the shield upon which the infant rests, while Ares hands him a lance. In paintings on either side of the mantelpiece, the muses sing his praises (in scenes by Van Everdingen and Jan Lievens), his weapons are forged in Hephaistos' smithy (by Theodoor van Thulden) and Aphrodite receives the weapons for this 'new Aeneas' (also by Van Thulden). Above, Apollo - preceded by Eos - flies upwards in his golden chariot (by Jacob van Campen himself), which heralds the birth of Frederik Hendrik as the coming of a new golden age. That pretentious allegorisations were rapidly taken up by Amsterdam's ruling elite for their own private use is evidenced by a large portrait by Ferdinand Bol, in which the education of three children is allegorised by presenting Athena as their instructor (cat. no. 10).



41.
CAESAR VAN EVERDINGEN
The Birth of Frederik Hendrik
canvas, 373 x 243 cm
The Hague, Royal Palace Huis ten Bosch

42.
ABRAHAM VAN DEN TEMPEL
The Maid of Leiden welcomes 'Nering', the personification of the textile Industry, 1651
canvas, 207 x 266.5 cm
Leiden, Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal



43.
ARTUS QUELLINUS
Hermes and Argus
bas-relief
Amsterdam, Royal Palace

Meanwhile, cities and civic institutions had also learned how to bend mythology to their will, endowing very earthly affairs with prestige by giving them a mythical wrapping. The town council of Leiden, for example, had its most important industry - the drapers - glorified in three large paintings (fig. 42).⁶⁴ Among other things, we see how the patroness of the city of Leiden, flanked by Freedom and Justice, receives a female figure symbolising the drapers' industry, while this event is blessed with the approving look of Athena and Hermes, the gods of wisdom and trade: the two mainstays of the industrial and university city of Leiden. Although the paintings in the Amsterdam town hall, the largest civic ensemble in the Netherlands, are primarily depictions of stories from Roman history intended to legitimise the unprecedented power which the city and its burgomasters wielded at that time,⁶⁵ we also encounter the occasional antique god and hero. Not only was Amsterdam portrayed as the centre of the universe by placing large statues of the planets at the four corners of the town hall - personified by the gods Zeus, Hermes, Aphrodite, Ares and Cronos, the sun by Apollo, the moon by Artemis and the earth by Cybele - mythological stories were also used whenever convenient.⁶⁶ One example is the previously mentioned painting of Odysseus and Nausicaa above the mantelpiece in the Desolate Boedelkamer (the chamber of bankruptcy) of the town hall. Anyone entering this room sees above the entrance a relief with a highly appropriate portrayal of the Fall of Icarus. If necessary, a story could also be manipulated to bring it more in line with the ideology desired, as demonstrated by the relief with Hermes and Argus above the door leading to the burgomasters' chamber (fig. 43). In this depiction, Argus is not lulled to sleep by Hermes' flute-playing, but instead stays wide awake: the message, of course, is that the burgomasters of Amsterdam are ever vigilant and never let themselves be misled.

The choice of Hermes and Argus probably had to do with the fact that this was a subject familiar to many people. We encounter it frequently among the Amsterdam pupils of Rembrandt, who tended to paint static situations which were nonetheless filled with tension. In these paintings the idyllic

nature of the scene is usually underscored - as when Hermes, disguised as a shepherd, puts on a concert champêtre for his intended victims (cat. no. 20) - though sometimes the stress is placed on the point at which the idyll turns into a blood bath, such as the moment when Hermes pulls his sword to cut off the head of the sleeping Argus (cat. no. 4).

CIRCA 1660-1710: OUTSIDERS AND CLASSICISTS

During this period even the famous genre painters Johannes Vermeer and Jan Steen - though of an entirely different disposition - attempted a mythological subject at times. As far as we know, Vermeer did this only once, in one of the earliest and also largest works that we know by his hand: an Artemis with her nymphs (fig. 44), the composition of which resembles that of works by the Amsterdam specialist in nudes, Jacob van Loo (fig. 38). However, the warm, nearly glowing, 'Venetian' palette and the subdued atmosphere of Vermeer's painting give it a character all its own. The pieces by Jan Steen are anything but subdued: once in a while he loosed his comic talents on classical subjects as well, which does not mean to say that he meant to parody them.⁶⁷ Exceptional indeed is his portrayal of a story of the famished Erysichthon, whom Demeter punishes with insatiable hunger for desecrating her sacred grove. Desperate for the means to buy food, he sells his own daughter (cat. no. 74), but because she has the power to change shape, she always manages to escape from the person who buys her, only to return to her thoroughly bad father who then sells her again. Steen even dared to make a tragicomic portrayal of the Sacrifice of Iphigenia (cat. no. 76), which had already been rendered by various painters in a highly dramatic way (cat. no. 13). Steen's painting was cited a century later by the English painter Sir Joshua Reynolds as an example of an unsuitable blending of the higher and lower categories in art and described as 'perfectly ridiculous'.⁶⁸ Steen, however, had certainly not intended to render a dramatic-heroic scene according to the rules of decorum laid down by academic artists like Reynolds. As in nearly all his works, he wanted to confront the viewer with the folly of human



actions, and in this endeavour many different subjects could suit his purpose - in this case two themes from classical antiquity. By enlarging upon the all too human reactions of familiar stereotypes - some of whom also people his genre pieces - ranging from the mourning father, the hypocritical priest, the eager hangman and the crazy old woman to the innocent child and the curious little dog - he created a tearful tragicomedy not lacking in serious overtones. Men like Reynolds, however, and many later authors looked upon such paintings either as parodies or as unsuccessful attempts to practise a higher kind of art.

Just as had happened in Italy and France, in the Netherlands during the last decades of the 17th century a very marked classicising style gained the upper hand, which attached a great deal of importance to academic decorum. As was only to be expected, we see many subjects taken from classical antiquity in the work of painters employing this style, of whom the Liège-born history painter and theorist Gerard Lairese is the best-known representative (fig. 45, cat. no. 44). At the same time, a very meticulous manner, based on the style practised by the Dutch *fijnschilders* in their field of genre painting, was also used - by the sons of Frans van Mieris I, for example, as well as by Godfried Schalcken - to produce small, extremely smooth

and refined history paintings (cat. nos. 49-51 and 71). Both styles were united to advantage in the work of the highly successful Adriaen van der Werff.

Although, as we saw earlier, Lairese reproached painters for choosing the same subjects over and over again, his work also displays many traditional elements, such as the frequently portrayed Judgement of Paris. Internationally seen, this subject was without doubt the most popular mythological theme ever,⁶⁹ primarily because it allowed painters to show off their ability to paint the most beautiful female nude imaginable from three different perspectives,⁷⁰ while also offering a chance to emulate the previously mentioned composition by Raphael (fig. 31). In the Netherlands as well, it continued to be popular from the 16th century until well into the 18th (cat. nos. 30, 54, 58 and 63). For a painter like Adriaen van der Werff it was an especially suitable vehicle for presenting his extremely polished ideal of beauty in a depiction of nearly enamel-like smoothness (fig. 46).

In the works of these classicists, among whom Gerard Hoet may also be counted, we indeed find - just as Lairese had hoped - a much broader range of subjects than in the works of the preceding generation. Characteristic of an ambitious painter like Lairese is his predilection for depicting scenes of which famous pain-

44.
JOHANNES VERMEER
Artemis with her Nymphs
canvas, 97.8 x 106 cm
The Hague, Mauritshuis

45.
GERARD LAIRESSE
Achilles discovered by Odysseus among the Daughters of Lycomedes
canvas, 138 x 190 cm
The Hague, Mauritshuis

tings must have existed in antiquity. We know from his hand, for example, various portrayals of the young Achilles, who, concealed in women's clothing, hides among the daughters of Lycomedes. He is discovered by the cunning Odysseus, however, when he reaches for the weapons concealed in a gift of jewellery (fig. 45).⁷¹ Pliny records this as the subject of an especially fine work by the Greek painter Athenion. In the first half of the 17th century the theme was very popular with Rubens, Van Dyck (cat. no. 19) and various other Antwerp painters, though it was taken up only later by a number of Dutch painters, including Lairese. Besides offering the possibility to revive a renowned work of antiquity, the combination of feminine charm and typical masculine behaviour – portrayed in one and the same figure – must have presented an irresistible challenge to painters.

Representations of scenes from Virgil's *Aeneid* also enjoyed growing popularity among these painters of the late 17th century. The unhappy love story of Dido and Aeneas clearly appealed most to the imagination. The story was even used to decorate whole rooms from floor to ceiling, a fashion that was emerging at that time. Practically no examples have survived, one notable exception being a complete room decorated with scenes from this story by the hand of Gerard Hoet.⁷²

In the work of the 'fijnschilders', we find small paintings with somewhat affected female nudes in rather conventional – though extremely refined – compositions (cat. nos. 51 and 71). Occasionally an unusual theme was chosen, however, an example being the scene of Circe threatened by Odysseus, by the hand of the talented Jan van Mieris who died tragically young (cat. no. 49). Van Mieris not only shows his virtuosity in rendering materials, but also demonstrates his ability to portray dramatic action in a convincing way, something that can seldom be said of his contemporaries.

PRESTIGE, EROTICISM, MORALITY AND THE MYTHOLOGICAL PORTRAIT

The so-called *portrait historié*, which had developed in the 16th century mainly at the French and English courts, was commissioned rather frequent-

ly in the 17th century by members of both the nobility and the burgher-elite in the Northern Netherlands.⁷³ Dutch burghers, when they had their portraits painted in a certain role, preferred to pose as Old-Testament figures, though in the second half of the 17th century we also encounter gods (and goddesses) and heroes (and heroines) of antiquity.

Since the first half of the 16th century, young women at the French court had been having themselves portrayed as the chaste goddess of the hunt, a fashion that spread in the 17th century to court circles in the Northern Netherlands.⁷⁴ However, we soon see its appearance in portraits of young wives and daughters of well-to-do burghers. It is highly likely, for example, that the lady whom Willem van Mieris portrayed as Artemis (cat. no. 50) came from a Leiden regents' family. The reference to feminine virtue (Artemis' famous chastity) and to aristocratic pastimes (hunting), combined with a touch of the erotic (a scantily clad woman, suited to the portrayal of a classical goddess), were doubtless the ingredients which made Artemis the goddess most often chosen for 'mythologising' portraits of young women.⁷⁵

Just how far these portraits could go in the portrayal of light-hearted eroticism emerges from Ferdinand Bol's portrait of a married couple with a small child: he painted them as Aphrodite, clasping Eros to her breast, receiving from Paris the apple 'for the fairest' (cat. no. 9). A painting like this is the visualisation of a motif encountered rather often in wedding verses of the time: the bride whose praises are being sung surpasses all the goddesses in beauty, and, what's more, unites the qualities of Aphrodite, Athena and Hera in one and the same person: she is truly the one who deserves the apple.⁷⁶ The following events in the story – full of treachery, war and murder – are forgotten in such cases. It is only the picture of love and beauty that counts.

It is remarkable, however, that an upper middle-class couple had themselves portrayed in this engaging, though quite frivolous, manner. But the previously mentioned aversion of many Dutch authors – especially those who were clergymen – to the use of 'unenlightened paganism, the foolishness of the invented gods' in literature and the visual arts,⁷⁷ and the sometimes extremely fierce



criticism of what they considered to be licentious paintings did not prevent a considerable group of well-to-do burghers in the cities of Holland from buying works depicting 'Venus [Greek = Aphrodite] and her cousins'. And, as we have seen, once in a while someone even went so far as to have herself portrayed in this role. Just as there were poets who considered this legacy essential to their art,⁷⁸ there were painters and collectors who felt the same way. Their numbers remained relatively small, however, as reflected by the percentage of mythological representations to be found in estate inventories.⁷⁹ The number of different subjects cannot be considered large either, although this can be said of the range of styles, genres and formats of mythological representations, which exhibited a greater variety in the North than in the Southern Netherlands. In the cities of Holland, the choice of subject matter depended mainly on the suitability of a theme for the type of painting that a painter tended to produce. At the same time, the manner of portraying certain subjects often appears to have been adapted to the painter's specific idiom, which he employed in the hope of cornering his share of the art market - an art market that was unrivalled in all of Europe as regards the volume of paintings produced, the great variety in subject, genre and price range, as well as the breadth and social diversity of its clientele. The special status of classical authors and the

prestige of antique traditions in the visual arts could legitimise the creation and possession of such works for certain groups of painters and patrons. At the same time, the 17th-century literature testifies to the constant necessity to defend the use of classical myths, and this defence argued time after time that profound truths lay hidden beneath the surface. In the case of paintings intended for the privacy of one's own home, however, it would have been possible to indulge in the carefree enjoyment of a world that often functioned as the vehicle for pictures of an erotic nature. Whenever necessary, the defence mechanism amply supplied by the literature could be brought to bear on the subject in question to provide a moral explication. Ultimately, it was the owner of the painting who supplied its context, bestowing the representation with a meaning derived from his own intellectual, social and religious background. As Van Mander wrote at one point: '(...) but as to its meaning I advise one to consult the piece's owner'.⁸⁰ For the opponents of such art, however, both the painting - with a mythological depiction viewed as light-hearted or even overtly lewd - and its verbal explication would have been equally unacceptable. For people like that, such paintings were merely:

'An eye-tempting deceit, whereby 'tis clearly proven,/What they're like at heart, both the artist and his patron.'⁸¹

46.

ADRIAEN VAN DER WERFF
The Judgement of Paris, 1716
panel, 63.5 x 45.7 cm
London, Dulwich College, The
Dulwich Picture Gallery

BETWEEN OLYMPUS AND MERWEDE. GREEK GODS AND HEROES IN DUTCH CULTURE IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES AND THE RENAISSANCE

Eric M. Moormann

- 1 'Though much is light-hearted, there is a great deal of truth under the false surface.' John of Salisbury, *Entheticus*, verses 19-20, quoted from Seznec 1995, p. 91. I am grateful to C.L. Heesakkers, R.T. van der Paard and G. Tournoy for allowing me to read their as yet unpublished contribution to the entry 'Die Nederlande', which I am also helping to compile, for *Der neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike*, 15, *Rezeptions- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte*. Their contribution contains a great deal of information about the impact of antiquity on Flanders and the Netherlands. I am also grateful for the useful advice I received from the medievalist Dr G.J.A.M. Nijsten, the Renaissance specialist Dr B. Kempers and co-author Dr E.J. Sluijter.
- 2 *De doctrina christiana* II, XL, 145 (translated by R.P.H. Green, *Augustine, De Doctrina Christiana*, Oxford 1995, 124-125) and Sluiter 1999, p. 108.
- 3 Cf. Vanderjagt 1981, p. 24. On Aeneas in the Middle Ages, L.J. Engels in: Gerritsen/Van Melle 1993, pp. 108-113. Cf. also L.J. Engels in: Gerritsen/Van Melle 1993, pp. 164-172ff. Hector.
- 4 Cf. Baudouin 1979, p. 141; L.J. Engels in: Gerritsen/Van Melle 1993, pp. 164-172.
- 5 See, for example, Jongen 1988 on Statius's influence on Maerlant.
- 6 For Alexander: L.J. Engels in: Gerritsen/Van Melle 1993, pp. 19-30; Moormann/Uitterhoeve 1995, pp. 31-54. In the latter, see also the entries on Caesar, Kyros II, Nero, Pompeius, Scipio Maior, Scipio Minor, Traianus.
- 7 Vanderjagt 1981, p. 153.
- 8 Van Oostrom 1996, p. 100.
- 9 See Van Buuren 1979, pp. 12-13; Van Oostrom 1996, pp. 48-80 (he gives the number as 60).
- 10 Van Oostrom 1996, pp. 438-440. A representative sample of his work can be found in Biesheuvel 1998.
- 11 Van Oostrom 1996, p. 420.
- 12 Van Oostrom 1996, p. 272.
- 13 Van Oostrom 1996, pp. 114-115 and 272. On Maerlant's use of classical texts, see: Berendrecht 1996.
- 14 Van Oostrom 1996, pp. 114-115 and 272; Van Anrooij 1997, p. 82.
- 15 Van Oostrom 1996, pp. 414, 419 and 430.
- 16 Van Oostrom in: Kooper 1994, p. 38.
- 17 Van Buuren 1979; Van Buuren in: Kooper 1994, pp. 151-167.

- 18 Van Buuren 1979, pp. 80-83 and 99-104.
- 19 Term used by Van Buuren in: Kooper 1994, p. 160.
- 20 Hogenelst 1997, pp. 119-120, 131 and list no. R5.
- 21 Van Buuren 1979, pp. 134-135. On its dissemination, compare Moormann/Uitterhoeve 1995, pp. 597-599.
- 22 Van Oostrom 1983; Van Oostrom in: Kooper 1994.
- 23 Van Anrooij 1997, pp. 79-81.
- 24 Cf. Vanderjagt 1981.
- 25 Hogenelst 1997, p. 182, list no. R279. Cf. Pleij 1988, p. 170: city-dwellers were also carried by this wave of patriotism. He refers to a poem by Gillis Peys on this theme.
- 26 Snoep 1975, pp. 16-17 and 19. In Utrecht Heracles was also the central figure in a series of large wooden sculptures. The Pillars of Heracles appeared in Charles's coat of arms and the wooden figure now carried them on his back.
- 27 See Vanderjagt 1981.
- 28 Klamt 1983, p. 75 and fig. 13.
- 29 Cf. for example, Baudouin 1979, pp. 137-146, figs. 1-7 and pl. 1-2.
- 30 Pleij 1988, p. 24; Hogenelst 1997, p. 177.
- 31 See Snoep 1975. The index to Hummelen 1968, lists numerous characters from antiquity; they appear in pieces containing classical material (Lucretia, Darius, Cephalus and Procris, Dido and Aeneas), but also as individual characters in essentially Christian pieces (for instance Seneca in a presentation on St Paul) and in the company of allegorical figures ('amoureux heart', 'high wind') or as character figures ('greybeard', 'miser'). See Pleij 1988 for Brussels; he mentions numerous other examples. See also Sluijter in this catalogue.
- 32 Van Anrooij 1997, pp. 67-73.
- 33 Van Anrooij 1997, p. 37.
- 34 Van Anrooij 1997, pp. 167-171.
- 35 De Ridder 1989, pp. 14-19 and figs. 14-19.
- 36 De Ridder 1989, pp. 38-47 and figs. 11-12.
- 37 For the theme, see Moormann/Uitterhoeve 1995, p. 689.
- 38 De Ridder 1989, pp. 55-62 and figs. 15-17; Moormann/Uitterhoeve 1995, pp. 377-378; Van Anrooij 1997, pp. 198-199.
- 39 See Brenninkmeijer-De Rooij in Washington/Detroit/Amsterdam 1980-1981, p. 66 and fig. 2.
- 40 Cf. Moormann/Uitterhoeve 1995, pp. 694-700 for the image of Virgil in the Middle Ages.
- 41 Cf. Seznec 1995, pp. 37-83.
- 42 Cf. Baudouin 1979, pp. 146-147; Seznec 1995.
- 43 Brussels/Rome 1995, no. 108. Comprehensive treatment of Gossaert, with references to literature see Sluijter in this catalogue.
- 44 Baudouin 1979, p. 165, fig. 21.
- 45 Baudouin 1979, pp. 170-171, fig. 24.

- 46 Cf. Kempers 1998, p. 141 on the Antwerp-based Hieronymus Cock with fig. 5.
- 47 Brussels/Rome 1995, no. 156; Veldman 1977 is still essential for Van Heemskerck.
- 48 Brussels/Rome 1995, no. 113.
- 49 Brussels/Rome 1995, no. 156.
- 50 50 Important studies on him have been published by Hessel Miedema, who has also produced editions, commentaries on and English translations of some of his works, the most recent being Miedema 1994-1999. He has not produced a study of the *Willeghingh*; cf. Sluijter 1986, p. 312-321 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 179-193).
- 51 See Bremmer 1998.
- 52 They had already been used in antiquity, for instance in connection with the tale of Pyramus and Thisbe and the legend of Icarus: see Moormann 1988.
- 53 Sluijter 1980-1981; Sluijter 1986 (2000-A). He argues that two periods can be distinguished in terms of the popularity of certain subjects in the northern Netherlands: 1590-1620 and 1650-1690.
- 54 Kempers 1995, pp. 81-83, figs. 10-11. The drama *Een Nassausche Perseus* ('A Perseus of Nassau') by Jacob Duyt about William of Orange was highly successful. A tableau vivant on the theme honouring Frederik Hendrik in this capacity was planned for the visit of Queen Henrietta Maria of England to Amsterdam in 1622, but the performance was evidently not staged: Snoep 1975, pp. 64-76. The stadholder escorted the queen during this reception, accompanied by the later stadholder William II, his young wife, the daughter of the English royal couple, and Amalia van Solms.
- 55 For the said historical motifs, see Moormann/Uitterhoeve 1995, under the various keywords, with references to literature.
- 56 Much can be found on Rubens's erudition in: Van der Meulen 1975 and Muller 1989. See also the contribution by De Poorter.

PRESTIGE AND EMULATION, EROTICISM AND MORALITY: MYTHOLOGY AND THE NUDE IN DUTCH PAINTING OF THE 16TH AND 17TH CENTURY

Eric Jan Sluijter

- 1 Guicciardini 1567, p. 98. Guicciardini was probably expressing an opinion that was current already in the time of Gossaert. Guicciardini's statement was repeated a year later by Vasari (Vasari 1568, vol. 3, p. 858), who amended it slightly (see note 3 below), and again by Van Mander (Van Mander 1604-A, fol. 225v).
- 2 For a discussion of this terminology: see Sluijter

- 1986, pp. 11 and 326-328 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 14-15 and 185-187). It emerges from 17th-century probate inventories that the term 'poeterij' was also frequently used to describe paintings with mythological themes. Naturally the term could also refer to representations of subjects taken from poetic, post-classical fantasy stories, such as Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*.
- 3 Following Vasari (see note 1), Van Mander altered the meaning somewhat. He writes: '(...) te maken Historien vol naeckte beelden, en alderley Poeterijen' [...] to make 'histories' full of nude images and all manner of poetic inventions). They took this to mean, therefore, that Gossaert had introduced the genre of history paintings with nudes, as well as the painting of 'poeterijen', or poetic inventions.
 - 4 Mansion 1484. This text was based mainly on the *Ovidius Moralizatus* by Pierre Bersuire and on the *Ovide Moralisé*, both of which date from the first half of the 14th century.
 - 5 Sterk 1980, pp. 95-149.
 - 6 Sterk 1980, pp. 117-122. This is probably the only Souburg decoration to have been preserved.
 - 7 Sterk 1980, pp. 56, 137, 227, 285 and idem, pp. 58, 136, 264, 315. See Sluijter 1999, pp. 10-14. The inventory of the estate of his friend Philip of Cleve also contained quite a few erotic mythological subjects - Aphrodite, Aphrodite and Ares, Artemis and Actaeon - probably most of them by the hand of Gossaert (for references see Sluijter 1999, note 24).
 - 8 A translation of this poem appears in: Sterk 1980, p. 111.
 - 9 Ibidem, pp. 112, 180 (in 1510 he spoke of De' Barbari and Gossaert as 'the Zeuxis and Apelles of our time', and in a text dating from 1529 he again calls Gossaert 'the Apelles of our century').
 - 10 Pliny the Elder and Van Mander 1604-B, fol. 76v-82r. See also Sluijter 1991-1992, pp. 368-369 (English translation in: Sluijter 2000-B, pp. 138-139).
 - 11 See Sluijter 1991-1992, pp. 362-371 (Sluijter 2000-B, pp. 131-144).
 - 12 See, among others, Sterk 1980, pp. 117-122 and 133-136.
 - 13 On this subject see: Pleij 1988, pp. 25-29. The Brussels snowmen described by Smeken also include figures of Aphrodite, Ares, Hades and Poseidon.
 - 14 See Van den Boogert 1998.
 - 15 For the role of the nude within the framework of late-medieval developments in the civilising of burghers, Pleij 1988, pp. 90-109.
 - 16 For this subject see: Bleyerveld 1999.
 - 17 On Ares and Aphrodite in allegories of war and peace, see Baumstark 1974, pp. 177-186.
 - 18 For this painting see Amsterdam 1986, pp. 250-251.
 - 19 See Veldman 1977, pp. 24 and 38-42. (The quotation is from *Proverbs* 11:1: A false balance is abomination to the Lord: But a just weight is his delight.).
 - 20 For the captions see: Ibidem, pp. 40-42.
 - 21 For these works see: Lowenthal 1986, pp. 97-98 and 117-118, and Lowenthal 1995. In my opinion she incorrectly interprets this painting in a moralising light, thereby ignoring its obvious humour (see also Sluijter 1999, p. 38).
 - 22 Pleij 1988, pp. 102-103 and 141-143. This play must have originated before 1519 and exists in a manuscript dating from 1551, but it was reprinted in Den Handel der Amoureuushey, Rotterdam 1621, which was published under the name of Jan Baptist Houwaert (Hummelen 1968, nos. ID11-12 and 351; attributed by him to Van Ghiste). The 1621 edition of the play is illustrated with an etching - by Jan van de Velde after Willem Buytewech - depicting Ares and Aphrodite surprised by Hephaistos (Rotterdam/Paris 1974-1975, no. 198, fig. 88).
 - 23 For examples of prints of Aphrodite - from series with Athena and Hera, or only with Paris' apple in her hand, as well as from prints of Dionysos and Demeter, or with references to the 'support' given by Dionysos and Demeter - see Sluijter 1991-1992, pp. 359-361 (Sluijter 2000-B, pp. 127-128). For the portrayal of the adage, handed down to us from Terence via Erasmus, 'Sine Cerere et Baccho [Gr. Demeter and Dionysos] friget Venus [Gr. Aphrodite]', see, among others, Renger 1976-1978.
 - 24 See Sluijter 1999, p. 17.
 - 25 See Sluijter 1991-1992, pp. 363-366. (Sluijter 2000-B, pp. 131-136).
 - 26 See Sluijter 1991-1992, passim (Sluijter 2000-B, pp. 86-159).
 - 27 See Pleij 1988, p. 106. Regarding the criticism voiced by Erasmus and Molanus, see: Freedberg 1971.
 - 28 For 16th- and 17th-century opinions regarding the viewing of portrayals of nudes see Sluijter 1986, pp. 270-275 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 157-160) and Sluijter 1991-1992, pp. 356-357 (Sluijter 2000-B, pp. 120-123).
 - 29 For opinions regarding the use of mythological subjects in literature, see Sluijter 1986, pp. 326-339 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 185-192) and Spies 1999.
 - 30 Sluijter 1986, pp. 270-275 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 157-160); for Vondel's poems on 'erotic' paintings, see especially Porteman 1986 and regarding Jan Vos see: Weber 1991, Chapters IV.3 and 4.
 - 31 Sterk 1927-1940, vol. 8, p. 639.
 - 32 For this painting see: Amsterdam 1993-1934, no. 31, pp. 371-372. For the owner mentioned by Van Mander, the moneylender Sion Luz, see Versprille 1957.
 - 33 On the portrayal of the theme of Peleus and Thetis and its interpretation, see Sluijter 1986, pp. 16-21 and 198-210 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 20-22 and 119-125). Regarding Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem's painting and his decorations for the Prinsenhof, see also Van Thiel 1999, pp. 101-105 and 205-220.
 - 34 For a summarising overview of the art market in the Northern Netherlands, see North 1992.
 - 35 For a brief survey, including bibliographical references, see Sluijter 1986, pp. 295-312 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 170-179).
 - 36 Sluijter 1986, p. 311 (Sluijter 2000-A, p. 178). See also the article by Hijmans in this catalogue.
 - 37 Regarding the preface to Van Mander's *Wtlegghing op den Metamorphosis*, see Sluijter 1986, pp. 312-321 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 179-183).
 - 38 For a brief discussion of the illustrated editions of the *Metamorphoses*, see Sluijter 1986, pp. 306-312 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 175-179). See also Henkel 1930, pp. 58-144 and The Hague 1980.
 - 39 Sluijter 1986, vol. 1, passim (Sluijter 2000-A, vol. 1, passim). Several of these editions are on display in this exhibition.
 - 40 Lairese 1707, vol. 1, pp. 50, 123-124, see also p. 45. See also Sluijter 1986, pp. 160-162 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 97-98).
 - 41 For this little emblem-book, the *Thronus Cupidinis*, which was published in three editions between 1618 and 1620, see Porteman 1977, pp. 93-95.
 - 42 *Thronus Cupidinis*, ed. 1620, no. 30 (ed. 1618, p. 50): 'Zo de broodtdroncken jeught haer wilde laten raden/ Van reden en verstant, zy quamen in gheen noodt/ Maer wellust doet haer zien de dinghen die haer schaden,/ En die teef bijt zeer vaeck haer eyghen meester doot,' ('If spirited youths would only let themselves be led/ By reason and good sense, they'd come to no disaster/ But lust drives them to look at wicked things instead./ And this dog often bites to death its own dear master').
 - 43 Cats 1625 (ed. 1712), p. 393. For explications of the Actaeon myth in the 16th- and 17th-century literature (in commentaries on the *Metamorphoses*, songbooks, emblem books, captions on prints, etc.), see Sluijter 1986, pp. 168-179 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 103-108).
 - 44 For the portrayal of the Actaeon story by the mannerists and the interpretation of their paintings, see Sluijter 1984 and Sluijter 1986, pp. 29-33 and 180-181 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 26-28 and 103-112).
 - 45 For more on this subject see the article in this catalogue by Moormann. For commentaries on the *Metamorphoses* and justification of the use of mythological themes in Dutch literature (with further bibliographical references), see Sluijter 1986, pp. 295-335 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 170-190).
 - 46 Van Mander 1604-C, fol. iiiir. See Sluijter 1986, pp. 313-314 (Sluijter 2000-A, p. 179).
 - 47 For a discussion of Van Mander's preface and the place occupied by the *Wtlegghing* within the tradition of myth commentaries, see Sluijter 1986, pp. 312-321 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 179-183). One must bear in mind that these explications pertain to texts, which should not be confused with the interpretation of paintings depicting themes from the *Metamorphoses*. It is likely that Van Mander originally intended to publish this *Metamorphoses* commentary as an independent work. See Sluijter 1986, pp. 318-319 (Sluijter 2000-A, p. 182). The extent to which these explications are relevant to paintings must be decided from case to case. See also De Poorter in this catalogue.
 - 48 On the importance of these prints for the Dutch paintings, see Sluijter 1986, pp. 33-37, 76-79, 132-133, 24-28, 68-69, 71-72, 139-140, respectively (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 28-30, 52-52, 80-81, 24-26, 48, 49-50, 84-85).
 - 49 See Sluijter 1993 and Sluijter 1998.
 - 50 Van Mander 1604-D, fol. 6v. Regarding the explication of the Paris fable in literature, see Sluijter 1986, pp. 210-218 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 125-129).
 - 51 See Sluijter 1991-1992, pp. 378-381 (Sluijter 2000-B, pp. 153-159). For this 'Venetian' sleeping position, which was derived from a Hellenistic statue of the sleeping Ariadne (also used at that time for a number of other 'spying scenes', especially of Aphrodite or Artemis being spied upon by satyrs, and the theme - which was very popular in the Netherlands - of Cymon observing the sleeping Iphigenia), see Meiss 1976; see also Bober/Rubinstein 1986, pp. 113-114.

- 52 For a discussion of this subject see Sluijter 1986, pp. 52-54 (Sluijter 2000-A, p. 40).
- 53 For the works made by Thomas de Keyser for the town hall and by Joachim von Sandrart for Huydecoper (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum) see *ibidem*.
- 54 For examples of both see Sluijter 1986, pp. 63-66 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 45-46).
- 55 On Van Uyttenbroeck's choice of subject matter, see Sluijter 1986, pp. 66-69 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 47-48).
- 56 Sluijter-Seijffert 1984, pp. 134-140; Sluijter 1986, pp. 73-79, 181-185 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 50-53 and 110-111).
- 57 For this painting see Sluijter 1986, pp. 90-94 and 195-197 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 59-61, 117-118) and Grohé 1996, pp. 195-223.
- 58 For a discussion of the Danaë theme, see Sluijter 1999, *passim* and Grohé 1996, pp. 225-276.
- 59 The scene in question is from Terence's comedy *The Eunuch*, in which a young man, upon viewing a painting of Danaë, is moved to rape a girl. This scene was cited several times by the church-father Augustine (causing the passage to be cited again frequently later on). See Sluijter 1999, pp. 15-20 and Ginzburg 1989.
- 60 See, for instance, Van Mander 1604-E, fol. 176v. (see also Sluijter 1999, pp. 25-26).
- 61 See Sluijter 1986, pp. 37-42 and 121-128 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 30-33, 75-78).
- 62 See Sluijter 1986, pp. 225-242 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 133-141).
- 63 See especially Brenninkmeijer-de Rooij 1982, pp. 133-191 and Peter-Raupp 1980. See also Brenninkmeijer-de Rooij 1980-1981.
- 64 For the whole ensemble see Rotterdam/Frankfurt 1999, pp. 254-263.
- 65 See Blankert 1975.
- 66 See Fremantle 1959 and Goossens 1995.
- 67 For a repudiation of the opinion that many of Steen's history paintings were intended as parodies (as Reynolds thought, an idea that was also expounded by B. D. Kirschenbaum in: Kirschenbaum 1977), see Westermann 1997, Chapter 7, 'History as Tragicomedy'.
- 68 Westermann 1997, pp. 302-303.
- 69 See also the article by De Poorter in this catalogue.
- 70 For this reason the theme could also feature in allegories of the art of painting; see Sluijter 1986, pp. 218-220 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 129-130).
- 71 Pliny, *Naturalis Historia*, XXXV, 134, Van Mander 1604-A, fol. 75r.
- 72 Sluijter 1980. On the use of this subject matter in Dutch art, see Sluijter 1982.
- 73 It is striking that the portraits produced in this genre by Southern Netherlandish artists were almost never made for patrons in Brussels or Antwerp, but were mostly commissioned by members of the court at The Hague. See the article by De Poorter in this catalogue, p. 69ff.
- 74 See Haarlem 1986, pp. 76-78.
- 75 See Wishnevsky 1967, pp. 75-78 and 181-192. De Jongh 1986, pp. 76-78.
- 76 Sluijter 1986, pp. 215-217 (Sluijter 2000-A, p. 128); Haarlem 1986, pp. 322-324.
- 77 This expression comes from Geraerd Brandt see Sluijter 1986, p. 338 (Sluijter 2000-A, p. 191).
- 78 See Spies 1999 and Sluijter 1986, pp. 326-335 (Sluijter 2000-A, pp. 185-190).

- 79 As far as the relationship between the choice of subject and the intellectual, religious and socio-economic background of the owners is concerned, a great deal of research will be necessary before any reliable conclusions may be drawn. The various studies on paintings in probate inventories show percentages of paintings with mythological themes which vary between 0.9 and 4.2 percent): Montias 1982, p. 234 (between 0.9 and 4.2 %); Fock 1986-1992, p. 19 (3 %, including classical history and post-classical literature); Montias 1991, p. 350 (between 1.9 and 4.2 %); Loughman 1992-199, p. 46 (1.7 %).
- 80 Van Mander 1604-D, fol. 33r (Van Mander wrote this about Plato's Cave by Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem).
- 81 Camphuysen 1647, p. 224 (in the poem 'Tegen 't Geestigdom der Schilderkunst'). Camphuysen goes on to say that one defends such portrayals by arguing that one must give them an interpretation. But, says Camphuysen, no explication is of any use in the case of representations whose intrinsic nature is harmful to the mind. 'Nochtans 't heeft mee (segt gy) sijn nut. Men kan 't uytleggen./ En leven naem en dae al 't saem doen sien, door seggen./ Maer (och!) wat uytleg en wat lof kan veylig staen./ By toonsels die 't gemoet uyt eygen aert beschaen?'. ('Yet it is of use (you say), one can explain/ By means of words their lives and deeds, the tale sustain/ But what words are proof against pictures of the kind/ Whose very nature can do naught but harm the mind?'). For a discussion of this see Sluijter 1997, p. 86.

OF OLYMPIAN GODS, HOMERIC HEROES AND AN ANTWERP APELLES

Nora de Poorter

- * Revised version of an essay previously published in German, in: Cologne/Vienna 1992-1993, pp. 121-132.
- 1 On this debate, see among others: Alpers 1983; Sluijter 1988; Amsterdam 1989; Bedaux 1990; Raben/Vermeij 1990; Sluijter 1990; Sluijter 1991; Bruyn 1991.
- 2 Sluijter 1986 (Sluijter 2000-A).
- 3 Sluijter 1987, p. 228; for the literary tradition to which Van Mander's *Wlegghingh* belongs, see also the essay by B. Hijmans in this catalogue.
- 4 On this commission, see: Martin 1972 (from which other information is also derived).
- 5 On Rubens's allegorical depictions of war and peace with Mars, Venus, Minerva and Hercules as protagonists (Gr. Ares, Aphrodite, Athena and Heracles), see: Baumstark 1974.
- 6 De Poorter 1988, pp. 228-231, figs. 5-6; Heinrich 2000, pp. 122-124.
- 7 See: Judson/Van de Velde 1977.
- 8 De Bruyn 1988, pp. 124, 126, no. 45.
- 9 Not a single example is cited by Van der Stighelen 1990.
- 10 Eros (a nephew in costume) appears demonstratively holding up an arrow in the Portrait of Mary Villiers (c. 1636; Raleigh, North Carolina Museum of Art; Washington 1990-1991, no. 78); he presents a basket of roses to Dorothy in the Por-

- trait of Lady Elizabeth Thimbelby and Dorothy, Viscountess Andover (c. 1637; London, National Gallery).
- 11 The dating is also disputed; see among others: Hedley 1999, pp. 79-105.
- 12 Jaffé 1990; Washington 1990-1991, no. 17; the identification is not generally accepted.
- 13 See among others Held 1967; it is somewhat odd that there is no attribute of Aphrodite to clarify the identification; it might be worth investigating whether Rubens was thinking instead of the divinely beautiful Helena of antiquity or Campaspe (who was painted as Aphrodite by Apelles).
- 14 See among others: Martin 1978; Von Barghahn 1979, *passim*; Orso 1986, *passim*.
- 15 Antwerp 1993, pp. 258-266.
- 16 Van Gelder 1949; Baudouin 1984; Heinrich 2000.
- 17 These 'portraits' are in Potsdam, Staatliche Schlosser und Gärten and Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (Wishnevsky 1967, p. 49, fig. 3).
- 18 For the paintings by Willeboirts and Van Thulden for the Royal Palace Huis ten Bosch mentioned here, see Peter-Raupp 1980, no. 14, fig. 31; no. 9, fig. 22; nos. 2-3, figs. 10-11; he incorrectly identifies the child on Chiron's back as Frederik Hendrik himself (*ibidem*, p. 63).
- 19 The now lost paintings were by among others Pieter Thijs and Justus Daneels; for a detailed description of this unsavoury affair and the legal proceedings which followed, see Duverger 1972.
- 20 Balis 1986, nos. 12-13, 20-27.
- 21 Alpers 1971, pp. 101ff.
- 22 The Hague 1997-1998, no. 25.
- 23 Alpers 1971.
- 24 N. de Poorter in Rotterdam 1990, p. 117.
- 25 The origins of this French collection (also with among other things plates by Pierre Brébiette with exactly the same subjects) still present quite a few unresolved problems, so no date has been established for Van Diepenbeeck's participation; a large number of his designs are said to date from before 1638 (Johnson 1968; Hairs 1977, pp. 161-163, 180; Vlieghe 2000, pp. 58, 64, 148 n. 68, no. 39).
- 26 See: De Maeyer 1955.
- 27 De Maeyer 1955, Doc. 104.
- 28 De Maeyer 1955, Doc. 265; for the Counter-Reformation's rejection of mythological paintings, see: Freedberg 1971.
- 29 De Maeyer 1955, pp. 86-87.
- 30 Prado, Madrid (Ertz 1979, no. 332, fig. 428); the Bacchanal is also shown in the foreground of the Allegory of Sight dated 1617 in the same museum (Ertz 1979, no. 327, fig. 399).
- 31 De Maeyer 1955, p. 118.
- 32 De Maeyer 1955, p. 157, n. 4, 5; the identification is made more difficult by similar ('or the same') paintings which were in Rubens's estate, and so had evidently never been in Tervuren (Ertz 1979, p. 394; Muller 1989, pp. 138, 139, nos. 269, 270).
- 33 Ertz 1979, no. 354, fig. 464; Balis 1986, pp. 57-58, n. 38, fig. 5; the interpretation cited is in: Ertz 1979, pp. 393, 394.
- 34 Munich, Alte Pinakothek (Ertz 1979, no. 375, fig. 480).
- 35 On these preparatory stages, and more particularly the cartoons, see: De Poorter 1978, pp. 136-149.
- 36 This dates, however, from after 1650 (see: Van Tichelen/Vlieghe 1990, pp. 109-117).