lightning is visible in the sky, between the catalogue’s state II and III (MMA inv. no.2011.521.3; Fig.44). While many of the copies are exact reproductions in the same direction or reverse, some ‘improve’ on Rembrandt’s original, for instance the mezzotint after Jan Uyttenbogaert (‘The Goldweigher’) by van der Bruggen, who added a monkey eating from a fruit basket in the foreground (NH 172 copy 4).

Hinterding and Rutgers have chosen to organise the prints chronologically, in contrast to other, who organise them by subject following the tradition derived from Bartsch set in the original Hollstein volumes. They are not the first to order the prints in this way: Hind, among others, also organised his catalogue chronologically. In this case, the wealth of illustrations allows one to fully appreciate the artist’s development as a printmaker. The chronological arrangement makes clear that certain characteristics that we associate with the mature Rembrandt, such as working on an image through many states or a somewhat messy technique of stray scratches and marks, were part of his process right from the start. In certain instances, evidence of watermarks has prompted a change in the dating, for instance Cottages and farm buildings with a man sketching (NH 201) has been moved from 1645 to 1641 on the basis of its watermark. While the chronological arrangement offers great insight into the artist’s development, it can also be a source of frustration when consulting the book. Who, for instance, organises them may be, the Hollstein volumes are first and foremost reference books which should, above all, be easy to use. If one is looking for a specific print, but does not have its date or a specific reference number from an earlier catalogue with which to consult the concordances, this publication is cumbersome to use. Even armed with an earlier reference number, one may have to consult as many as four of the seven volumes in order to locate a particular work and assemble all the related information and illustrations. An organisation by subject, which does not require scholarly knowledge on the part of the user to find a work, along with thumbnail images next to each text entry, would have made the volumes easier to consult.

I pass these comments on to future compilers of Rembrandt’s etchings because, while these volumes now seem like the ne plus ultra of Rembrandt catalogues, given the history of the print literature so far, no doubt there will be more to come. Hopefully there will be online versions, so that users can enlarge the digital photographs themselves rather than rely on the printed black-and-white images that are sometimes difficult to read. Nevertheless, this excellent catalogue, which delves deeply into Rembrandt’s printed aware and offers many new insights, is the one for our generation. It sets a high standard for research and provides a model for the cataloguing of early modern printmakers.


Reviewed by Jan Piet Filedt Kok

In his lifetime the fame of Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617) was based largely on his prints, which were distributed all over Europe and even to Asia. Only after 1600 did he turn to painting, although this did little for his posthumous reputation. A renewed appreciation of his work in the second half of the twentieth century resulted in major museum acquisitions, exhibitions and publications. His printed aware is now catalogued in the four New Hollstein volumes under review here. The first two include all the prints engraved by Goltzius himself (380), while the third and fourth volumes catalogue those by other printmakers after his designs (more than four hundred, including doubtful and rejected prints). Both catalogues are arranged iconographically, as is traditional in the Hollstein publications. Those interested in Goltzi’s stylistic development thus need to turn to the introduction, which discusses chronology and other aspects of Goltzius’s print production, including many new discoveries.

Goltzius was trained in 1574/75 by the engraver and humanist Dirck Volkertsz Coornhert (1522–90), both as printmaker and designer. He designed and engraved for Coornhert several series that embodied the humanist’s moral and ethical philosophy. Between 1577 and 1581 he engraved some ninety copperplates, partly after his own designs, for the Antwerp print publishers Philips Galle and Aux Quatre Vents. Another aspect of his early work is the many (mostly small) portraits engraved in silver and gold as medallions and in copper for printing. Only a few of the medallions have survived, whose impressions show the inscription in reverse. The copperplate for a Portrait of a man facing right was recently acquired by the Rijksmuseum (Fig.45).

With the publication in 1582 of a few prints under his name as ‘gedruckt te Haerlem’ (‘printed in Haarlem’), Goltzius became the first in the Northern Netherlands to publish prints for an international audience, which subsequently put an end to the quasi-monopoly of Antwerp, moving the centre of the printmaking business to Holland. Between 1582 and 1601 he published some four hundred more showing an innovative iconography in a new style and engraving technique. They form the core of Goltzius’s aware and are mainly after his own designs, although there are also prints after designs by Anthonie Blocklandt, Bartholomeus Spranger, Cornelis van Haarlem and others. Although Goltzius’s engravings for Antwerp publishers hardly differ in style and composition from those by his Haarlem colleagues, for his Haarlem prints he developed a new, more virtuose, engraving style reflecting the idealised idiom of Spranger, his most important source of inspiration in the later 1580s. He included erotic nudes in his mythological subjects and profane allegories on a scale unprecedented in Northern printmaking.

Among the best-known and most widely distributed and copied Goltzius prints are The Roman heroes of 1586, The wedding of Cupid and Psyche after Spranger of 1587, The large Hercules (or ‘Koolsman’) of 1589, and The birth and early life of Christ of 1593/94 and the Pietà of 1596. Shortly after 1598 Goltzius must have decided to stop his engraving and publishing activities and leave his business to his stepson, Jacob Matham. In the first years after 1582 Goltzius still did most of the engraving himself, but he started to train pupils and assistants to turn his designs into prints using a similar engraving style; they were increasingly responsible for the prints issued under Goltzius’s name. Through them he was able to build over a relative short period of time a stock of prints, mainly designed by himself (about three hundred) but also after other Northern artists, to which were added, after the trips to Italy by Goltzius (1591) and Matham (1593–96), a number of reproductive prints after Italian masters.

Goltzius’s stepson, Jacob Matham (1571–1611), Jacques de Ghelyn II (1565–1612) and Jan Muller (1571–1628) must have been trained in Goltzius’s workshop in Haarlem between 1585 and 1588. De
prints are often lacking. Around 1800, when was certainly more practical because the studying the entire output of one artist, and design by others, which makes sense when pasted into one or more bound albums. Such an approach certainly informed the organise principle of important Seven- style in the service of the original design. Goltzius's studio, where the final products were meant to be in a more or less uniform form. While the names of the engravers are often missing. The Hollstein catalogue of 1953 are all included in the four New Hollstein numbers and the New Hollstein numbers. This is yet another reason for the larger printrooms to rearrange their Goltzius collections using the New Hollstein numbering, as indeed the British Museum, London, has already done.

1 For the chronological catalogue of all the prints published by Goltzius, see J.P. Filedt Kok: 'Hendrick Goltzius: Engraver, Designer and Publisher 1539–1616', Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek 42–43 (1991–92), pp. 207–18. The prints designed by Goltzius are all included in the four New Hollstein volumes and a chronological table of the prints designed by other artists published by Goltzius, but engraved by his workshop, is published in volume IV, pp. 309–12.


Reviewed by NICOLA COLDSTREAM

THE SCOPE of this book is narrower than the title suggests. Its focus is the Cistercian abbey of Valmagne, near Montpellier, with a broader interest in the Languedoc; and, although the author makes frequent and lengthy sorties to other parts of western Christendom, these scarcely justify the all-encompassing wording of the title.

Sternberg's principal theme is the extent to which the Cistercians mixed with the lay world, which was far greater than most scholars have suggested. He cites both documentary sources and the architecture, arguing that the Cistercians themselves built opportunities for mingling with the laity into their convents, and publicly admitted this through their sculptured imagery. Gateways, the narthex, doorways and screens were not barriers but thresholds; in the cloister the chapterhouse itself, second in holiness only to the church, received lay people on occasions. In addition, the Cistercians established themselves in cities, for commerce, to fight heresy and—in Paris—for the monks to attend the schools. Sternberg opposes the notion that Cistercians were a completely withdrawn order; and also rejects the idea that their churches were completely plain architecturally and bare of ornament. For him the monks inhabited a monastic city, confronting an ambiguous existence that both withdrew from and engaged with the world. The plan and structure of the convent allowed them to do this, after the monastic paradigm established in the Plan of St Gall.

The St Gall Plan, a Carolingian drawing existing in one manuscript in a Swiss abbey of black monks, was unlikely to have occupied the front, or even particularly the back, of the minds of white monks in southern France four or five centuries later. Although Sternberg shows in places that he is fully aware of the passage of time, this is one of many instances when he chooses to ignore it. The use of the Plan is a rhetorical device that seems contrived and adds little to the main points of the argument he is trying to make, while most of the ideas he puts forward are not new, Sternberg efficiently pulls together the work of many other scholars, combined with his own observations at Valmagne, supplemented by analysis of the more substantial sculptural remains at the abbey of Villelongue. What is welcome is his general attitude to the Cistercian order. The Cistercians have suffered from an extraordinary scholarly attitude, applied to no other reformed order, of extreme censure for falling short of their early ideals. These ideals, at least in the form presented, were modern constructs; the Cistercians are blamed for not living up to standards imposed centuries after the supposed lapses. A significant theme of this book is that the Cistercians resolved the complexities of being both withdrawn from and within the world in the context of social development as a whole. This enquiry eschews blame.

While the argument is broadly persuasive, some of the evidence appears to contradict it. For example, in his discussion of the great gatehouse and outer court, Sternberg uses the account of Ailred's arrival at Rievaulx (1134) to be greeted at the gatehouse by a crowd of monks to demonstrate that the monks were not confined to the cloister but mingled with lay people outside it. Yet Ailred was scarcely typical. His first visit had been in the company of the abbey's patron, so when he turned up shortly afterwards to join the community it is scarcely surprising that he was given a special welcome. Abbeys were human beings...