"Boreas and Orithyia" (detail, see cat. no. XXV)

CORNELIS SCHUT

PITTORE FIAMMINGO

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Galerie Lowet de Wotrenge

Cover image: "The Holy Family with Saint John the Baptist" (detail, see cat. no. II)

“The Circumcision” (detail, see cat. no. X)

'SLECHTE VODEN [EN] LUTTEL WERCK'

On June 8 1643, the Lisbon-based art dealer André de Saintes wrote to his colleague in Antwerp, Guillermo Forchoudt: 'De stucken die ick ontboden heb moeten van Schut wesen. Ick wil die van anders niemant hebben. [...] Synt my geen slechte voden daer ick vele gelts aen sal verlisen.' ('The pieces I have summoned must be by Schut. I want them from no-one else. [...] Don't send me bad rags (i.e. canvases) on which I will lose a lot of money.') Upon receipt of the paintings however, de Saintes was not happy, as he wrote to Forchoudt on August 20 of the same year: 'De doecken van Sr Schut vinde dier, alsoo luttel werck in hebben [...]'[1] ('The canvases by Sr Schut [I] find expensive, and also not worked enough [...]') An art dealer complaining - how little has changed.

Managing contemporary artists seems always to have been a challenge. Therefore, when asked why I prefer dealing in old masters, I often joke that dead artists aren't that hard to handle. As a dealer, you buy and sell their work, end of story. However, even then, work by some artists seems to 'find' you more often than that by others. Over time, these artists become, in a way, part of the DNA of the gallery. An artist who has 'found' me in this way at various stages throughout my dealing career is the Antwerp baroque artist Cornelis Schut (1597 - 1655) whose work de Saintes was so eager to acquire. When the idea dawned on me a few years ago to plan a solo show on a Flemish old master - something rarely seen in a commercial gallery - Schut was therefore the obvious choice. For years I patiently collected all I could, read up on the artist and did research of my own. This exhibition is the culmination of those efforts, and Schut, who was an interesting figure as well as a versatile and very gifted draughtsman, proved himself a great subject for a monographic exhibition (the first ever, coincidentally.)

Of course, I would have loved to include even more works, such as tapestries (for which he sometimes produced designs) or more large-scale paintings, but I hope my efforts, however humble, have done him at least some justice. I am grateful to the private collectors and to the Rubenshuis who generously agreed to loan some key works, as well as to the authors who contributed to this exhibition catalogue. Their erudition and expertise far exceed mine, and I count myself lucky to have had them by my side in this endeavour. It has been my great pleasure to collect, research and present the following works. I hope you will derive at least as much pleasure from looking at them.

Tyr Baudouin

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[1] J.-B. Denucé, *Kunstuitvoer in de 17e eeuw te Antwerpen. De Firma Forchoudt*, Antwerpen, 1931, 35 and 282.

Cornelis Schut, 'an important Antwerp painter of human figures'

Twenty-five years ago Hans Vlieghe, professor emeritus at the Catholic University of Leuven, published his magnum opus, *Flemish Art and Architecture, 1585–1700* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998). That same year the art-historical journal *Simiolus* devoted a special issue to the canon of seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish painting, which contained a notable contribution by Vlieghe with the rhetorical title 'Flemish art, does it really exist?'[2] In the introduction to his essay, he quoted an unnamed American colleague who allegedly said, in his presence, that 'in Flemish art there is just Rubens and rubbish'. Among the so-called 'rubbish' - the many capable and successful seventeenth-century artists who inevitably stood in the shadow of the peerless Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) and whose names are now practically unknown - was the Antwerp painter, draughtsman, etcher and tapestry designer Cornelis Schut (1597–1655). His likeness features in Anthony van Dyck's (1599–1641) famous series of portrait prints of illustrious men (princes, statesmen, scholars, artists and art lovers), known since the eighteenth century as the *Iconographie* (1632–1645), which is clear proof of the high esteem in which Schut was held by his contemporaries. Below Schut's portrait, engraved by Lucas Vorsterman after Van Dyck (illustrated on the opposite page), is the caption: *Cornelivs Schut. Pictor hvmanarvm figvrarvm maiorum antverpiae* ('Cornelis Schut. An important Antwerp painter of human figures'). That Schut was consigned to oblivion after his death is due not to the quality of his oeuvre but to the simple fact that this versatile artist was eclipsed by the giants Rubens and van Dyck.

Cornelis Schut, born in Antwerp on 13 May 1597, was the son of the merchant Willem Albertz Schu(d)t and Suzanna Schernilla. He had a younger brother, Pieter (°1602), who became a painter and engineer, and a sister, Maria, whom we know only by her Christian name. There is no concrete information about Cornelis Schut's teachers or his training as a painter. In 1618/19 he joined the Antwerp Guild of St Luke as an independent master. Schut's earliest documented activity took place in Italy. From 1624 he sojourned in Rome, where he was a member of the Accademia di San Luca and one of the first members of the Bentvueghels, an informal society of Northern artists. This 'band of birds' was a flamboyant company, most of whom were painters. They came from the Low Countries, northern France and Germany, and thus formed the contingent of *pittori forestieri* (foreign painters), known in Italy collectively as *fiamminghi* ('Flemings'). Although the *fiamminghi* had come to Rome to further their artistry by studying the art of antiquity and the famous Italian masters, their diligent studies were often accompanied by exuberant feasting and frivolous ceremonies. Applicants were ragged in the name of Bacchus, the god of wine, and

[2] *Simiolus* 26 (1998), pp. 187–200.

were given a nickname – Schut was known as 'Broodzak' ('Bread Bag') – and celebrated with a bout of heavy drinking.

In the first decades of the seventeenth century, the building of baroque Rome was still in full swing. An extraordinary concentration of very good artists, such as Domenichino (1581–1641), Giovanni Lanfranco (1582–1647) and Guercino (1591–1666), and a few phenomenal ones – the young Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665), who, like Schut, arrived in Rome in 1624, and the sculptor Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680) – meant that artistic innovation proceeded at a breath-taking pace. *Nuova arte* and *nuova città* coincided perfectly. In this climate, as stimulating as it was competitive, Schut built up an excellent social network. His clients included Pietro Pescatore (Pieter Visscher), a wealthy Flemish banker, merchant and patron of the arts, who in Rome was one of the first to commission work from the talented Brussels sculptor François du Quesnoy (1599–1640). For Pescatore's villa in Frascati, southeast of Rome, Schut executed a fresco cycle of monumental mythological scenes that can still be admired in the Casino Pescatore. Even though there is no surviving inventory of Pescatore's art collection, this Roman Fleming is said to have owned works by such artists as Rubens, Poussin and Domenichino, as well as numerous paintings by the Utrecht Caravaggist Gerrit van Honthorst (1592–1656).

1. *The Adoration of the Magi*

2. *The Massacre of the Innocents*

Another important patron of Schut was *marchese* Vincenzo Giustiniani (1562–1637), an aristocratic banker and art collector who, according to Francis Haskell, could boast 'the broadest and most deeply experienced artistic culture of any man in Rome and

indeed Europe – with the single exception of Rubens'.[3] For Giustiniani – who was, moreover, one of the early benefactors of Caravaggio, by whom he owned a number of works – Schut painted the *Adoration of the Magi* (Caen, Église de la Trinité, ill. 1) and the *Massacre of the Innocents* (Caen, Église de la Trinité, ill. 2), among other works.

Schut's work reveals that he was well-acquainted with the Roman art scene, which is impossible to group under one common denominator. Two aspects of the cultural melting pot that Rome undeniably was would soon take on European dimensions: the increased appetite for naturalism - for a pictorial idiom *dal naturale*, often with surprisingly lifelike details - combined with thoroughgoing attention to the visualisation of emotions or 'affects' (*affetti*). In religious art in particular (but not exclusively), the point was to touch and move and ultimately convince the viewer. Schut, with his indisputable adaptive ability, mastered this new 'Roman style' with astonishing ease. His animated compositions are densely populated with lively and extremely expressive figures, and these stylistic characteristics also typify his electrifying drawings. Strong contrasts of light and dark betray the influence of both Caravaggio and Lanfranco, while his palette recalls the work of Lanfranco and Federico Barocci (c. 1535–1612).

On 16 September 1627, Schut was arrested on suspicion of murder – it was alleged that two months earlier he had fatally stabbed a fellow member of the Bentvueghels, one Joost uit den Haagh ('Schotsche Trommel', or 'Scottish Drum') – and sentenced first to life imprisonment and subsequently to lifelong banishment. On 18 October, however, he was pardoned at the request of the Accademia di San Lucca. In late 1628 he was active for a while as a tapestry designer for the famous Arazzeria Medicea in Florence. Afterwards, he presumably returned to Rome, where in 1630 he rented a house near the Via Margutta in the parish of Santa Maria del Popolo. From his marriage contract with Catharina Geenssins, drawn up in Antwerp on 22 September 1631, it appears that he then returned to his native city. Soon after settling there, he began to obtain important public commissions. In 1634 he delivered several paintings for the Triumphal Entry of Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand into Ghent, and in 1635 he worked as a kind of sub-contractor with Rubens, decorating the city for Ferdinand's Triumphal Entry into Antwerp. This says about all there is to say about the artistic relations between these two masters. Even after Schut's return to Antwerp, the sources of his art must be sought mainly in Italy. The skills he had acquired in Rome ensured him of prestigious ecclesiastical commissions, not only in his hometown but also in Brussels, Ghent, Bruges and Cologne, where his work included three canvases executed for the Jesuit Church. The Jesuits in Antwerp also liked his work, as evidenced by *The Coronation of the Virgin* which he painted for the high altar of the Sint-Ignatiuskerk (now the Carolus Borromeuskerk). It is possible that Schut obtained this commission through his colleague, the Jesuit painter Daniel Seghers SJ (1590–

[3] Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*. New Haven and London, 1980, 30.

1661), to whose floral garlands he frequently added the medallions and cartouches, whether or not in trompe l'oeil. Schut's Antwerp masterpieces also include *The Beheading of St George* (ill. 3) an altarpiece that he painted in 1643 for the Circumcision Chapel of the Guild of the Young Crossbowmen in Antwerp Cathedral (KMSKA, Antwerp) and the *Assumption of the Virgin* (1645–47). This monumental canvas, nearly six metres in diameter, which closes off the crossing tower of the cathedral, testifies to Schut's unparalleled talent in painting *da sotto in sù*, with spectacularly foreshortened figures and a staggering suggestion of speed and momentum.

3. *The Beheading of Saint George*

In Antwerp, Schut continued to paint mythological and allegorical representations, as shown by his masterly designs for the tapestry cycle *The Seven Liberal Arts* (c. 1648). Three of the cartoons for this series – *Musica*, *Astrologia* and *Geometria* – survive (Rubenshuis, Antwerp) but are in a deplorable state. He likewise made paintings for the international art market that were traded by the Antwerp firm of Forchoudt, among others. As in Rome, Schut could also count on prestigious private patrons, including Archduke Leopold-Wilhelm of Austria. Leopold-Wilhelm, governor of the Spanish Netherlands from 1647 to 1656, had an exquisite collection, dominated by sixteenth-century Italian painting, as well as works by contemporary masters such as Rubens and Van Dyck. After resigning as governor, he returned to Vienna and took his collection with him, including Schut's monumental *Triumph of Time* (c. 1650), which now belongs to the core holdings of the Kunsthistorisches Museum. Schut died on 29 April 1655 and was buried in the Sint-Willibrorduskerk in Borgerhout. Now, more than 350 years after his death, it is high time to revisit and reassess the work of this talented artist.

Ben van Beneden

"The Seven Liberal Arts" (detail, see cat. no. VIII)

Cornelis Schut

Schilder van Antwerpen.

EN had de Eel Pinceel van *Schut* niet cloeck gheweest
(Waer uyt Natura soogh het leven vanden Gheest)
Den roem van haere Const en waer hier niet ghestelt,
Van Dyck en had oock noyt sijn wesen af ghebelt.
Midts d'overvloedigheydt van *Nazos* Poesy
Leeft ordonnantich-rijck in alle sijn Schildry.
Het werck bethoont de daet, wat dient het meer gheseyt?
De Druck-pers wijst oock aen sijn Const vol aerdigheyt.

Thus the 17th-century notary and *rederijker* Cornelis de Bie praised the Antwerp painter Cornelis Schut in his *Gulden Cabinet van de Edel Vry Schilderconst* (Antwerp, 1662), a collection of artist biographies and portraits, mostly of artists from the Habsburg Netherlands. The poem he dedicated to Schut is short but sweet, praising his skill as a painter and engraver and noting that van Dyck painted his portrait. De Bie gives us absolutely no further biographical details on the painter, but thankfully Ben van Beneden already did this most eloquently in his introduction.[4]

In the following essay, we will therefore focus on Schut's work, which de Bie so admired, by consecutively discussing the drawings, the paintings and the prints which have been included in the exhibition and by situating them in Schut's wider oeuvre.

[4] Those who wish to explore Schut's life and work even further will find a wealth of information, as well as a lot of published source material on the artist, in: G. Wilmers, *Cornelis Schut (1597 - 1655), A Flemish Painter of the High Baroque*, Turnhout, Brepols, 1996.

"Een pack crabbelingen ende teeckeningen"[5]

On November 3, 1645 the notary Ambrosius Sebille wrote up an appraisal of Schut's paintings and other possessions. The detailed inventory of his holdings which was attached included 'seven boeken van wit pampier dienende omme daerinne te teeckenen met eenige teekeningen daerinne' ['seven books of white paper for the purpose of drawing therein, within them some drawings'].[6] Furthermore, the inventory of Schut's estate, drawn up on June 3 1664 by the notary J. van Nos contained - apart from dozens of copper plates and a huge amount of prints - a total of no less than 1868 drawings, divided into various lots, either loose or bound.[7] Cornelis Schut was indeed a prolific draughtsman.

The inventory does not provide further information about the nature of the drawings but does mention yet another lot with an unspecified number of drawings and *crabbelingen* (sketches). Undoubtedly, these are the sketches in which the artist captured his initial ideas and developed them further in a fleeting manner. The enormous number of drawings and sketches suggests that Schut carefully preserved all his preparatory work, to be able to refer back to certain figures, motifs, and compositions later on. Students and studio assistants may also have made use of this immense reservoir of images. Schut's drawn oeuvre has not yet received the attention it deserves, if only because of its presumed size and diversity. Drawings attributed to him are preserved in numerous public and private collections both domestically and internationally, and they also regularly appear on the art market. A comprehensive study of this part of his oeuvre is still lacking. In Wilmers' monograph (1996), the focus lies mostly on the paintings. Drawings are briefly discussed, but exclusively in relation to his painted works. Moreover, many sheets had not yet surfaced or been identified at that time. The two more recent contributions on Schut and printmaking by Ger Luijten[8] and Ann Diels[9] also only touch upon the drawings in passing. Thus, we still do not have a comprehensive picture of Schut as a draughtsman.

Questions regarding attribution, dating, function, stylistic evolution or the involvement of the studio and assistants cannot yet be definitively answered. The sheets discussed in this catalogue represent some of the different types of drawings found in Schut's oeuvre and illustrate the diverse techniques he used. All these works

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[5] E. Duverger, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen uit de zeventiende eeuw*, Brussels, Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, 1984 - 2004, vol. VIII, 379.

[6] Ibid., vol. V, 260 - 262.

[7] Ibid., vol. VIII, 377 - 379.

[8] G. Luijten, 'Het prentwerk van Cornelis Schut', in: *Liber Memorialis Erik Duverger*, Wetteren 2006, 131-152.

[9] A. Diels, *The Shadow of Rubens. Print publishing in 17th-century Antwerp*, Turnhout/London, Harvey Miller, 2009.

seem to have seen the light as a certain phase in the creative process; the artist has left us no highly finished drawings intended as autonomous artworks (so-called 'picture drawings'). Drawing, which must have been a daily activity for Schut, was evidently not an end in itself but primarily a means in his creative quest. The visible reality was captured in figure and nature studies that were instrumental in developing his paintings, tapestry cartoons, and prints. His ideas for compositions took shape through various design stages on paper. As we will see further on, during the design process, Schut also liked to use oil sketches and panel models; his "cartoons" for tapestries were likely executed in gouache on cardboard at actual size with the help of the studio. The composition sketches in graphite or black chalk, such as the *Rape of Europa* (ill. 1; cat. no. VII), come closest to the so-called *crabbelingen*. Here, the artist handles his drawing materials very loosely and exploratively and the often interrupted or overlapping lines do not yet exhibit clearly defined contours. Sheets like these belong to an early phase in the development of a composition. Certain figures or groups may have been taken from earlier, more fragmentary sketches. Here and there, we see small *pentimenti*, especially in the positioning of hands, feet, and limbs. Any suggestion of volume and light effects is still absent.

1. *The Rape of Europa* (cat. no. VII)

However, the anatomical forms of humans and animals, the movements, and the swirling draperies are depicted with precision and are easily discernible. Schut treated the theme of the Abduction of Europa from Ovid's Metamorphoses on multiple

occasions. However, this sketch does not seem to be related to other surviving versions. There are numerous notable differences. This drawing is the only one where the bull is depicted running away from the viewer, and we see it from a sideways perspective. Europa looks at us, startled, over her left shoulder and upper arm. This manner of presentation imbues an unusual sense of movement and drama that the other versions do not possess. These are all represented more frontally and at eye level, while here the 'de sotto in su' perspective stands out. The composition is clearly intended to be viewed from below, which could indicate that this sheet was intended as a design for a ceiling decoration. Schut must have been well acquainted with the ceiling pieces with religious themes for the Jesuit Church in Antwerp that Rubens painted around 1620. However, the direct influence of Italian models seems to be greater here than that of his illustrious fellow townsman. In his Roman period, Schut himself gained practical experience in painting ceiling decorations in fresco with mythological subjects. In the 'Forge of Vulcan,' the 'Triumph of Neptune and Amphitrite,' and especially the 'Bacchus and Ariadne' that he painted for the 'Casino'

2. *Apollo and Daphne* (cat. no. I)

on the estate of the Flemish-Italian trader and banker Pietro Pescatore (alias Pieter Visschers) in Frascati near Rome, we see the same perspective and a similar dynamism. The similarities are remarkable, especially with the latter composition, painted in a rectangular compartment in the middle of the ceiling. Just like the two protagonists in this work, Europa's right foot is visible from below. The flying putti – though a

recurring motif throughout Schut's oeuvre – also show notable similarities. Could we be dealing with a compositional sketch for a lost or never executed work from Schut's Italian period? Upon returning to the Netherlands, Schut would hardly have had any opportunity to execute ceiling paintings with secular subjects. An interesting detail of this sheet is that both upper corners appear to be chamfered with a light line and a fold. Is this a coincidence, or does it suggest the shape of a cassette in the coffered ceiling of the *Casino Pescatore*? Did Schut and his patron ever consider incorporating this theme into the decorative scheme? As Cornelis de Bie notes in his praise poem, Schut was skilled at depicting mythological scenes, especially those from the 'poetic' versions or *Metamorphoses* of Ovid.

A similar composition sketch in graphite and black chalk, shows the metamorphosis of the nymph Daphne, who, fleeing from Apollo's advances, turns into a tree (ill. 2; cat. no. I). The hasty sketch technique with numerous pentimenti, as well as the dynamic composition with naked bodies depicted in complex poses and foreshortened body parts, corresponds well with the Rape of Europa. As far as we know, Schut only treated the subject in this composition sketch. We do not know what - if anything - the drawing led to, although intriguingly a painting after Cornelis Schut depicting 'Daphne in eenen laurierboom verandert' was recorded in the inventory of Schut's son-in-law Guillaume Huysmans in 1685.[10] Its origin in his Italian period, where he may have found more patrons or buyers for secular and mythological scenes, cannot be excluded. Its somewhat low viewpoint suggests that it, too, may have been intended for a ceiling painting.

The subject of another drawing, technically and stylistically similar, has not yet been definitively identified. It depicts a military leader triumphantly standing on the edge of a boat, holding a flag in his hand (illustration 3; cat. no. IV). It is not clear whether the lines under his front foot suggest a wave or a strip of land. The figures in the background, however, seem to be waving at the vessel. More than in the Rape of Europa, Schut has emphasized certain areas with heavier lines in black chalk. The men in the foreground and the bow and sides of the boat are more clearly defined against the thinner figures in the background. The elegant, elongated, and somewhat twisted figure of the soldier in ancient attire in the foreground is highly Mannerist and reminiscent of the work of Bartholomeus Spranger. The triumphant pose, depicted in an exaggerated contrapposto with the right arm gesturing in foreshortening, brings to mind the resurrected Christ floating above an open grave. This further demonstrates that Schut, compared to most of his Antwerp contemporaries, could and did maintain a certain distance from the influence of Rubens and his more robust figure types. He developed his own style in which elements of Northern Mannerism from around

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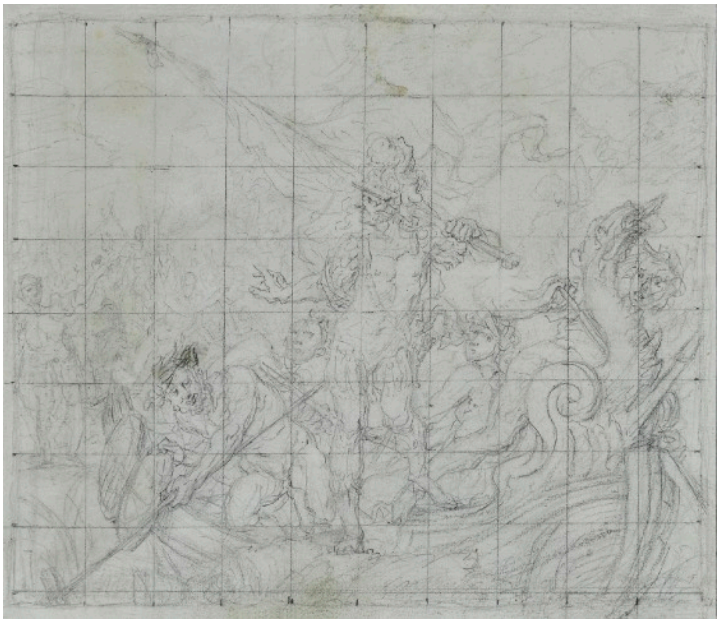
[10] 'Item een stuck schilderye, naar C. Schut, representerende Daphne in eenen laurierboom verandert', see: Stadsarchief Antwerpen, *Notaris Nic. Bernier*, 1685 -1686, no. 202 (published by Wilmers (1996), 242 - 243).

1600 continued to resonate, alongside influences from Italian artists such as Barocci, the Caracci, Reni, Pietro da Cortona and Guercino. The scene possibly represents a mythological episode from the Iliad or the Odyssey. It could also depict a passage from Roman history, such as an event from the Punic Wars. Perhaps the drawing is related to a tapestry design depicting Scipio Africanus, which Schut is said to have created for the *Arazzeria Medicea* in Florence in 1628. Unfortunately, no trace of it exists today, but it is mentioned in an inventory from 1637.[11] The composition shows certain similarities to an older tapestry cartoon in the Rijksmuseum attributed to Michiel Coxcie (object no. RP-T-2004-1), depicting the landing of Scipio Africanus in Carthage. Giulio Romano, too, had already designed cartoons for a Scipio series, which Schut would likely have been familiar with. Regrettably, we are not certain about the outcome of the drawing. However, the squared grid indicates that it was copied and further developed on a larger scale. Schut and his assistants must have frequently employed this system of tracing and enlarging compositions, as it appears repeatedly in his drawings.



3. *Scipio Africanus arriving at Carthage* (?) (cat. no. IV)

A drawing depicting *The Seven Liberal Arts*, a composition that eventually resulted in a tapestry from the series of the same name and was also made into a print, seems to be the result of meticulously retracing previous *crabbelingen* (ill. 4; cat. no. VIII). This can be observed from the absence of pentimenti and the precise, sometimes even angular,

[11] See Wilmers (1996), 182 no. B63.

lines. This sheet was squared to transfer it again (possibly on a larger scale), thus providing us with insights into Schut's working method. In the tapestry, the composition remains largely unchanged, but significant modifications must have been introduced during one or more intermediate stages. For instance, the smooth Tuscan columns were replaced by twisted Solomonic ones. The tapestry depicts more and slimmer organ pipes that ascend in the opposite direction. The chair on which a boy holds open a book on the right was replaced by a large bale of merchandise. Almost all of these changes can also be found in the mirror-image print. This suggests that the drawing served as an intermediate step in the design of the tapestry cartoon or, at least, the final *modello* from which the cartoon was made, rather than a preparatory stage for the print. Preliminary drawings and studies for his prints form an important part of Schut's drawings but will be further discussed in relation to his graphic work.

4. *The Seven Liberal Arts* (cat. no. VIII)

Cornelis Schut made extensive use of various techniques in addition to line drawings in chalk, graphite, and pen during the design process. Wash drawings allowed him to work on volume and lighting effects. One such sheet, both sketchy and precise, depicts the final moments of Saint Gertrude, a popular Brabant saint (ill. 5; cat. no. V). It is a design for a typical Counter-Reformation altarpiece that clearly shows the influence of Rubens. The drawing can be linked to a preserved painting that was

recently attributed to Schut.[12] This altarpiece on canvas, currently located on the southern side altar of the Church of Saint Gertrude in Machelen, shows us what Schut's working process ultimately led to. Unlike the purely linear chalk drawings, here he suggests the lighting and volume with brown washes. The brown pen lines are rough and angular, seemingly executed quickly. However, there is an underdrawing in

5. *The Death of Saint Gertrude* (cat. no. V)

black chalk, remnants of which are faintly visible in some areas that are less heavily washed and overdrawn. Schut may have developed the composition in an earlier sketch using this technique. The drawing and the painting of Saint Gertrude correspond well in most details. The proportions are the same, although the framing has been slightly adjusted; for example, the empty space in the foreground of the

[12] J. Sanzsalazar, 'Cornelis Schut: nuevas pinturas identificadas en Bélgica y España', *Archivo Español de Arte 86,* 2013, no. 343, 211-213.

drawing has been eliminated. This likely indicates that the dimensions were agreed upon with the patron from the outset. However, modifications were still made at a later stage. Notably, on the painting, the priest administering her last communion is assisted by a colleague. The figure is no longer leaning towards her but stands upright, with his eyes cast downward, looking at the host in his hand and at the face of the dying saint. Furthermore, the nuns and other individuals present at the deathbed of the Holy Abbess have been moved or replaced in certain places. The two kneeling figures at the foot end have been replaced by a praying nun. The two vaguely depicted heads observing have been replaced by a nun looking up at the host and two sisters watching the scene from a distance on the far right.

The purpose of this drawing was clearly to further study the complex composition, arranged in three superimposed levels, in terms of volume and lighting. Comparing the drawing with the finished painting, it can be observed that the lighting in this study was largely incorporated into the completed altarpiece. Only the scene in the upper register with the Holy Trinity, waiting in heaven with a crown to receive the saint, is slightly more shadowed compared to the drawing. This shifts the emphasis slightly towards the foreground, with the dying Gertrude receiving communion. The art of the Counter-Reformation aimed to emphasize recognizable dramatic and human aspects in order to engage the ordinary believer more directly. At the same time, the sacrament of the Holy Communion, another focal point of the Counter-Reformation, is highlighted.

Undoubtedly, Schut further developed everything through intermediate detailed studies on paper and possibly also in an oil sketch. If necessary, he relied on life model studies for certain poses or anatomical details. Several figure studies from life for his fresco with the Forge of Vulcan in the *Casino Pescatore* (Uffizi, Florence) show that Schut worked in this way as well. Model studies could be specifically created for a new commission, but after years in the field, artists often had a large stock of existing studies to draw upon. For this type of work, chalk in black and/or red and white was often used on (blue) tinted paper. The paper then serves as a mid-tone on which depth can be created with red or black chalk and highlights can be added with white chalk. These types of drawings differ greatly from the sketchy line drawings in chalk, graphite, or pen that depict entire compositions. Here, the intention from the start is to work in more detail on the modeling of smaller parts of a composition.

Schut applied this technique for drapery studies and for developing groups of figures. A beautiful study of the *Holy Family on the Flight into Egypt* (ill. 6; cat. no. III) is drawn in black chalk on blue-gray tinted paper. To create the modeling, he not only varied the pressure on the chalk, thus varying the weight of the lines, but also added hatching to suggest shadow areas and highlights in white chalk to indicate the lightest, often shiny parts. After a few sparingly applied highlights, Schut seems to have stopped

6. *The Flight into Egypt* (cat. no. III)

working on this sheet. For example, the hindquarters of the donkey remained unfinished. It is possible that he continued the study in a different technique, but the fact that no painting with this version of the subject or any other related study material has been found so far may indicate that he quickly abandoned work on this version. In its unfinished state however, this sheet provides us with invaluable insights into the artist's working methods on tinted paper.

Bozzetti and modelli

For Schut, drawings or *crabbelingen* were often only the beginning of a creative journey which resulted (or not) in a finished work of art. As was already briefly mentioned, the next steps in the creative process were often the oil sketch (or 'bozzetto') and the 'modello,' two important but not always clearly distinguishable stages in the design process. The difference between the two is usually determined by the level of detail and resemblance to the final executed work. As the name suggests,

the oil sketch is a step in the working process where the artist is still searching for the definitive form. The execution in oil, usually on panel but occasionally on canvas, paper, cardboard, and even copper, allows for experimenting with aspects of volume, lighting, and color in the final medium during the design stage. Oil sketches are sometimes executed entirely in grisaille or in brown tones ('brunaille'), with or without white highlights.

A *modello* is a fully developed version in oil of the final composition but on a smaller scale. It serves a presentation function to the commissioner but also acts as a model for the execution of the definitive painting, which is often largely carried out by apprentices and assistants. Of course, oil sketches can sometimes fulfill both of these roles. The oil sketch emerged in Italy around the mid-16th century. Venetian masters such as Titian and Tintoretto particularly embraced and spread this practice. Schut would have certainly become acquainted with this practice during his stay in Italy. However, it seems that he had already encountered Rubens' oil sketches beforehand, during his time in the latter's workshop. Schut's works in this regard can be compared very well to those of his famous fellow citizen. During his apprenticeship and even afterwards, he would have had the opportunity to see Rubens' *bozzetti* and *modelli* regularly in Antwerp.

A typical characteristic of Rubens' oil sketches is the use of a brown, transparent ground layer, often applied in clearly visible strokes. This layer is applied over a pure white absorbent gesso layer and acts as a buffer, enhancing the intensity and glossiness of the applied paint layers. Moreover, this *imprimatura* serves as a kind of middle tone, comparable to tinted paper in chalk drawings. With opaque and more transparent lighter oil paint, highlights can be created, while darker tones allow for depth. The pattern of brushstrokes also lends a certain liveliness and depth to the background. The colour palette is generally limited. A significant part of the contours and shadows is "painted" with the brush, usually in shades of brown. This is similar to the technique known as "dead coloring," with the difference that in oil sketches, this preparatory layer largely remains visible.

We see a very similar approach in Schut's work, especially in the oil sketch for the *Circumcision of Christ* (ill. 7; cat. no. X). The predominantly vertical lines of the transparent underlayer emphasize the verticality of the composition and follow the direction of the celestial light. Schut skillfully wields the brush as a drawing instrument. A substantial portion of the swirling angels at the top is rendered with precise brushstrokes. He creates volume in the ox and donkey at the bottom by applying layers of translucent brown paint partially overlapping each other. Brilliant white is sparingly used, only for the cloth on which the rosy Christ Child is depicted and for some highlights on faces, wings, and, of course, the flickering knife in the hands of Saint Joseph.

A translucent pink paint colors the cherubs at the top, blending optically with the brown ground layer to create a muted flesh tone. A more opaque pink paint is applied to the bodies and faces of the figures in the foreground. Their garments are also colored in tones of vermilion red, blue, yellow, and purple.

7. *The Circumcision* (cat. no. X)

Today, three related works on this subject by Schut are still known. In an etching and a painting in the Antwerp Jesuit Church, Schut developed the subject horizontally. In a large altarpiece, supposedly from the Elsegem priory near Oudenaarde (now in the MSK Gent), the vertical orientation of the sketch is maintained. However, like in the other two versions, the differences with this oil sketch are significant. This work may be an early study for these well-known versions or for another monumental version that has been lost.

Similar to Rubens, Schut's oil sketches exhibit great diversity. The degree of finish and the use of color can vary greatly. This reminds us that each work was a specific link in a design process that did not follow a fixed, rigid pattern. Each project had its own requirements and history. Schut may have been able to build upon earlier, unfinished studies for certain commissions. Clients may also have had very specific demands. Today, the precise circumstances under which a work was created are rarely reconstructable. In fact, many studies and oil sketches do not have a known resulting finished artwork. This is also the case with a delightful oil sketch depicting the *Return of the Holy Family from Egypt* (ill. 8; cat. no. XIII). It was likely a preparatory work for a larger painting that is now lost or was never executed. Compared to the *Circumcision*, Schut here employs more color and details. The work has been compared to Rubens' version from 1615 (Wadsworth Atheneum), yet there are many differences between the two compositions. Rubens'

version is more monumental and linear, while Schut's is livelier, with numerous endearing, familial interactions among the protagonists. Furthermore, Schut develops the composition horizontally, emphasizing the "striding" character of this Holy journey. The vibrant palette is noteworthy, with subtle, often pastel-like shades of green, red, lilac, gray-blue, and the intense yellow of Saint Joseph's cloak.

8. *The Return of the Holy Family from Egypt* (cat. no. XIII)

The loose and intimate atmosphere and the light, almost whimsical use of color are reminiscent of Rubens' final phase of creation, suggesting a dating from the late 1630s. Schut employs a much darker palette in an oil sketch on paper depicting the story of *Cimon and Iphigenia* (ill. 9; cat. no. XI). Did he intentionally represent the scene at night or in twilight? It appears as though silvery moonlight illuminates the startled body of Iphigenia and her still-sleeping companion, causing her frightened eyes to gleam and the water in the fountain to glisten. We also do not know of a definitive painted version of this work. Like many of Schut's works, the subject was also produced in print, although the composition of the etching differs quite significantly from the design. The work depicts a rather unusual iconography, which derives not from classical mythology or Christian tradition but rather from literature – more specifically, Boccaccio's *Decamerone*. In this medieval allegorical work (written ca. 1350-60), one of the stories told is that of Cimon, son of a wealthy Cypriot father, who seems to have been somewhat of a problem child. Although handsome and fit, he was also a complete idiot, unable even to learn basic manners. Banished to the

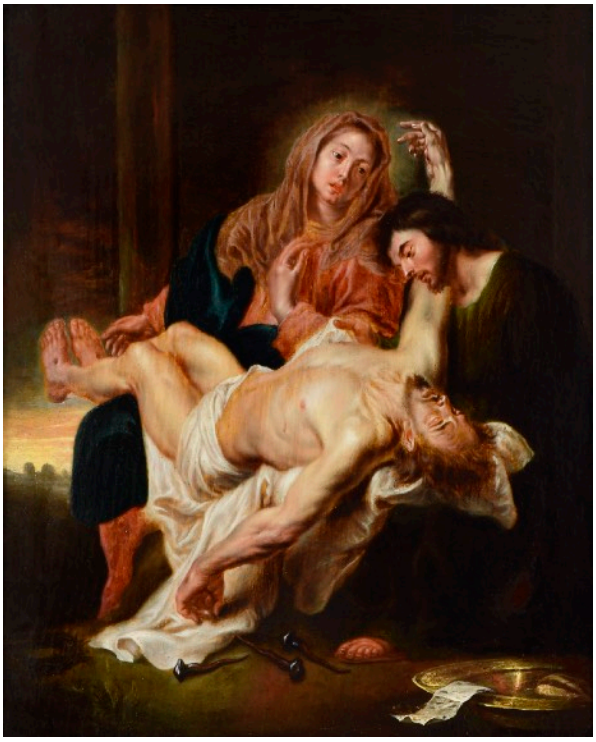
countryside to work on one of his father's estates, Cimon one day came across Iphigenia, sleeping near a fountain and accompanied by several attendants. Enraptured by her great beauty, Cimon leaned on the stick he carried around and stared at the girl for hours.

9. *Cimon and Iphigenia* (cat. no. XI)

As he was looking at her, his simple mind started to change, and he transformed from a hopeless imbecile into a well-behaved and cultured young man. Needless to say, the couple lived happily ever after! This allegory on the power of love, as one might call it, was certainly the most depicted scene from the *Decamerone* – Rubens, for instance, painted a version of it in 1617 (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna). The present work is quite close to other oil sketches by Schut, such as his *Rape of Europa* (Martin von Wagner Museum, Wurzburg) and can be dated to the late 1630's. Quickly and effortlessly painted, it is a testament to the artist's great skill and wide interests.

Schut's *Pièta* (ill. 10; cat. no. IX) is a beautiful example of a so-called *modello,* which he painted in preparation for a *Pièta with St John the Evangelist* commissioned by his sister-in-law Maria Geensins, who was the so-called "spiritual daughter" of a Jesuit priest. Geensins, who died in 1645, instructed in 1644 that the painting should be hung in Antwerp's St James' Church, where she wished to be buried and where the finished painting can still be seen today. It was to be furnished with a fine frame, which Schut probably also designed. The highly emotionally charged painting, with the dramatically lit foreshortened body of Christ, is a beautiful example of Schut's mature style and

of the counter-reformative art of the Flemish high baroque. As it can be linked to a final commissioned piece, it gives us a great insight in the working practice of the artist, as well as being a fine piece of art in its own right.



10. *The Pièta* (cat. no. IX)

Stylistically the work, which was later engraved by Franciscus van den Wijngaerde, one of the leading engravers and print-publishers in 17th-century Antwerp, is certainly indebted to Rubens, who painted a number of Pièta's and Lamentations. The same can be said of the final painting discussed here, which is a small work on copper depicting the story of Judith and Holofernes (ill. 11; cat. no. XII). The high degree of finish and the nature of the support suggest that this probably was not a *modello* but rather a finished cabinet piece.

There are two prints with the same composition. The first is an undated etching, in reverse of the painting, which is signed 'CSchut' and may have been etched by Schut himself. The second is an engraving that shares the scheme of the present work, executed by Schut's pupil Jan Witdoeck and published by Johannes Meyssens in Antwerp in 1633, which identifies Schut as the inventor of the composition: 'Cor Schut invenit'.

11. *Judith and Holofernes* (cat. no. XII)

In the present picture, the delicate rendering of the flesh of the sleeping Holofernes and the wrinkled face of the maidservant, along with the rapidly executed drapery of the figures, all point to a date early in Schut's career, possibly even from before his trip to Italy. The painting strongly resembles Rubens' *Samson and Delilah* (National Gallery, London), another biblical story illustrating the so-called "Weibermacht" which was commissioned around 1610 by Nicolaas Rockox.

Schut as 'peintre-graveur'

Antwerp remained a leading production center for graphic art during the 17th century, with a great international reputation. In the early years of the century, the old families of publisher-engravers dominated the market. They focused mainly on publishing series of engravings for which they commissioned the models. This resulted in a constant production of high-quality graphic art. However, it also hindered the freedom, spontaneity, creativity, and individuality found in prints that

were created at the artists' initiative. Moreover, the artist served the publisher and had little say in what would be brought to print. It was primarily the latter aspect that prompted Rubens to take matters into his own hands. Schut would later follow suit, albeit in his own unique way. Prints were not only an artistic means of expression but also provided additional income. Reproductions of popular compositions could be produced and distributed quickly and cheaply, often travelling far and wide, thus disseminating an artist's work across borders. The medium of print allowed artists to acquire international fame. Moreover, prints allowed even those less fortunate to decorate their walls with art, as was noted by astonished foreign visitors. Even in the humblest of homes they regularly encountered prints, as certain seventeenth-century interior scenes by genre painters like David II Teniers clearly demonstrate.

Rubens saw to it that specialized engravers transformed his paintings into prints, under his strict direction. Schut, on the other hand, actively engaged in printmaking and designed and published more than 200 prints. These are mostly undated, and therefore difficult to categorize chronologically. There are numerous indications that he began his graphic activities shortly after his return from Italy. As early as 1633, he was asked to create a design for a large thesis sheet that was to be engraved by Lucas Vorsterman. Two years later, he was commissioned not only to create the designs but also to coordinate the execution of the prestigious illustrations of the Joyous Entry of the Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand in Ghent. The contract mentions his experience in this field; in order to complete the task, he hired the services of various engravers.

For his print production, Schut clearly preferred the etching technique. He also practiced etching himself. Etching involves using acid to bite lines into a copper plate. It does not require extensive specialized training and is relatively easy to apply on one's own. The inventory of his estate mentions a French handbook on etching, which indicates that Schut was largely self-taught in this regard.[13] In order to etch, the copper plate is covered with a wax layer that prevents the acid from penetrating. The artist can then use a metal stylus to draw on the wax layer. Where the wax has been scraped off, the acid can reach the copper, biting into the plate. Inking and printing the plate are done in the same way as with copper engraving, using a roller press or intaglio press. There were numerous independent "plate printers" in Antwerp whom Schut could rely on for printing editions. However, it is likely that he also had his own small press for making proofs and printing small editions of his experimental etchings.

The etching technique produces a more spontaneous result than engraving, and because the artists can handle the etching needle themselves, the prints resemble pen drawings to some extent. However, the technique also has its drawbacks. Biting errors occur regularly, causing small or larger irregularities that are visible in the prints. Additionally, the shallower grooves in etching wear out more quickly due to inking and

[13] Duverger (1984 - 2004), vol. VIII, 379.

printing. These broader and shallower grooves hold less ink, resulting in a somewhat vague, grayish outcome. Schut certainly appreciated the aesthetics of etching and its creative possibilities, but the low cost of the technique relative to engraving may have also played a role in his choice.

The great etcher of the 17th century was Rembrandt who, starting in the mid-1620s, increasingly presented his own prints to the public. With his etchings, Schut aligns more closely with Italian printmakers of the time. Numerous artists whose work Schut may have known and admired, including Guido Reni and Guercino, occasionally practiced etching. The typical Baroque and Counter-Reformation style and themes of the Italians remain the most significant influences on Schut. After all, they belong to the same Catholic world with which he was so familiar.

12. *Christ at the Column* (cat. no. XV)

Among Schut's most experimental etchings are the tiny prints with sketch-like etched studies of nudes (cat. no. XXXII), body parts, or heads. They are etched versions of his own *crabbelingen*, hastily yet gracefully executed. Most likely, they should be seen primarily as true trials or experiments (cat. no. XVII) Nevertheless, a market for such personal experiments in printmaking emerged. Since only a few copies were usually printed, these were rare and sought after. Such sketch-like etchings quickly evolved into small compositions, such as his *Christ at the Column* (ill. 12; cat. no. XV).

Schut made a great number of these small devotional prints, featuring the Madonna with the Infant Jesus, the Holy Family, and so on. Often, they can be related to compositions that he also executed in painted form. Although these small treasures seem very spontaneous, they probably departed from sketches or even proper preliminary drawings, with Schut likely reusing designs for paintings to the fullest extent. It is therefore not entirely certain that the graceful small wash drawing depicting the *Holy Family with the Infant Saint John the Baptist* (ill. 13; cat. no. II) was the direct model for the small print with the same composition, although it is quite likely.

13. *The Holy Family with Saint John the Baptist* (cat. no. II)

14. *Susanna and the Elders* (cat. no. VI)

Given their identical scale, the finely executed black chalk drawing of *Susanna and the Elders* (ill. 14; cat. no. VI) was almost certainly used as the direct model for the print. A painted version is not known today, but it is by no means certain that it never existed and that this work was conceived as a print design from the outset. Traces of folds and sealing wax indicate that the artwork was once sent as a letter. Also, a strip of paper has been cut off, bearing a crossed-out and now unfortunately illegible inscription. Was this the address of a collaborator who was to etch the print? It was certainly not uncommon for printmakers to reside elsewhere and for designs, and later on the resulting printing plate, to be exchanged by messenger or by mail.

Schut also follows in the footsteps of Italian painter-printmakers like Guido Reni with his small etchings depicting playing children and putti, sometimes representing allegories such as the four elements or the four seasons. Although they vary in size, and it is not always clear today which ones belong together, he clearly intended to sell some of them as series. This is evident from the extremely charming print featuring Cupid leaning back from behind the painter's easel, palette and brush in hand. On the canvas in front of him, we see a Baroque cartouche containing the title of the series, "Varie Capricci di Corneli Schut" (ill. 15; cat. no. XXXVIII). The amusing antics of the putti are meant to entertain us but also demonstrate the inventiveness and talent of their creator. Painters, sculptors, and decorators of all kinds could have used them as examples. Some are even designed to be viewed from below, suggesting that they may have served as models for a *sopraporte* or other decorative element.

15. *Varie Capricci di Corneli Schut*
(cat. no. XXXVIII)

Like Rubens, Schut also wanted to present larger and more significant works to the public, to show off his ability as a history painter with complex visual compositions. To this end, his most important achievements, such as altarpieces, tapestry series, mythological, and allegorical paintings, needed to be translated into prints. However, with a busy studio and numerous commissions, Schut couldn't handle everything on his own. From the early 1630s, he relied on collaborators for the etching and engraving of his works. Remoldus Eynhoudts and Jan Witdoeck were the most significant among them. The latter was also a talented engraver, while Eynhoudts developed an etching style that was hardly distinguishable from Schut's own. Additionally, Jan Vinck is documented as an engraver in Schut's service, although his name does not appear on any print and his precise role is unclear. The *privilegio* - a kind of copyright avant la lettre - that Schut requested for his prints indicate that these collaborators worked for him and that he had full control over the process.

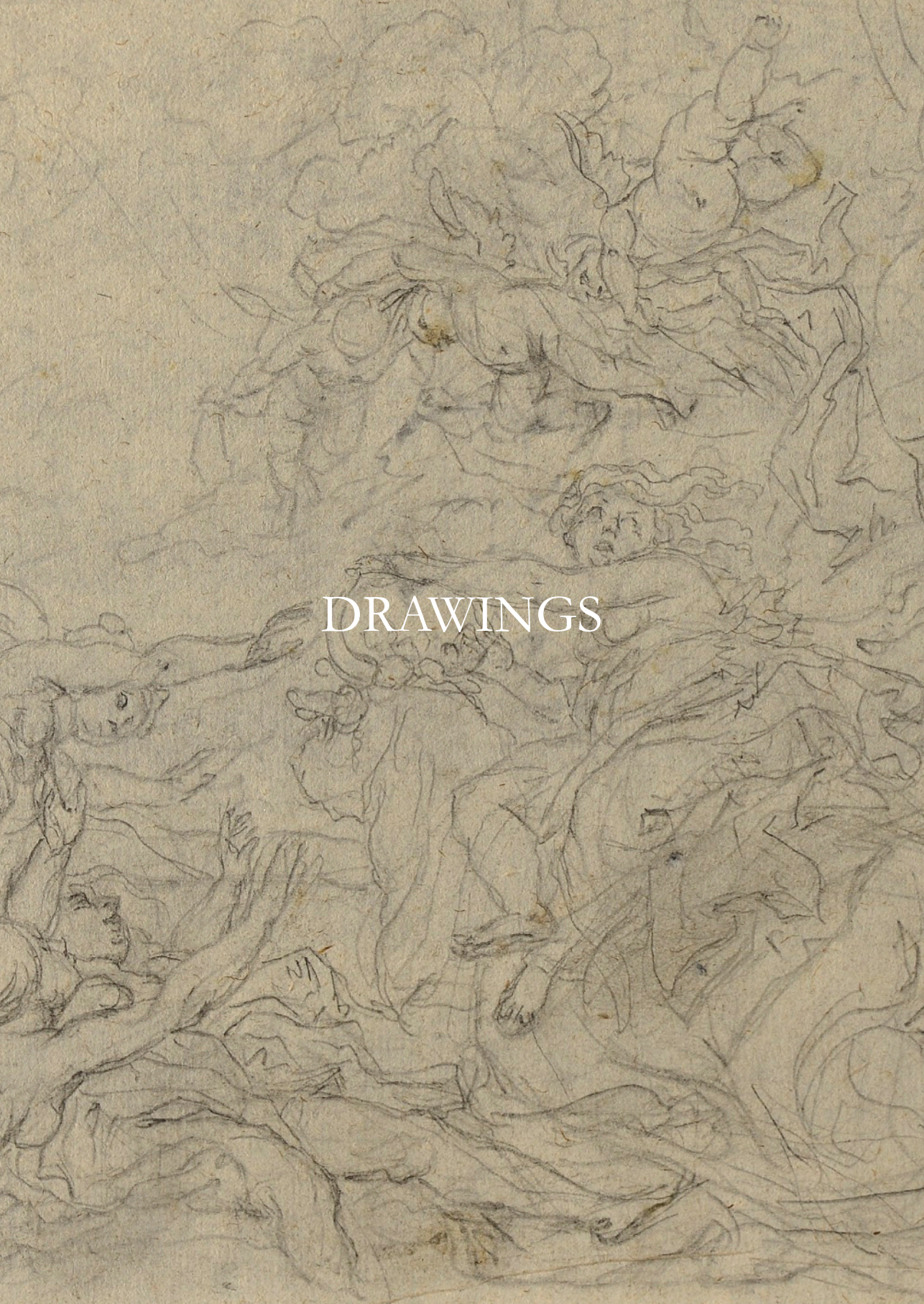
It is plausible that the prints on which Schut is explicitly named as the 'inventor' were not made by him but by a collaborator. If he had etched them himself, it would likely have said 'invenit et fecit', an inscription that appears on only a few prints. Most of the small and spontaneous etchings discussed earlier are not signed, which may indicate their authorship by Schut himself, although that is not certain either. While his collaborators clearly understood the master's style and could easily translate his intentions onto the copper plates, translating larger and more complex compositions such as *The Triumph of Galatea* (ill. 16; cat. no. XXX) into prints required clear and well-developed preliminary drawings. Although not all of Schut's preliminary drawings for prints have been discovered, it seems that he did not have a fixed modus operandi for creating a print. This is in contrast to Rubens, who had detailed preliminary drawings for prints made after his paintings and personally retouched them until the desired result was achieved. The relationship between the drawing, the tapestry, and the print of the *Seven Liberal Arts* suggests that Schut and his collaborators did not always start from the completed work when creating a new preliminary drawing but rather used a suitable drawing or *modello* from the final stages of creation. Schut must

have been deeply invested in his printmaking, as it was his only international showcase as an artist. For sales purposes, he probably had ready-made collector's albums created, some of which have been preserved. Schut's prints contributed to the spread and perpetuation of his fame during his lifetime and even for some time afterward. This is also indicated by the explicit mention of his prints in the panegyric poem by Cornelis De Bie.

Illustration 16: *The Triumph of Galatea* (cat. no. XXX)

This run-through of his graphic work concludes our essay on Schut's work and life. Much more remains to be discovered about the artist's work, and undoubtedly more works by him will resurface in the years to come. In the meantime, we believe Schut's diverse and distinctive oeuvre merits further consideration and that Schut, who has too often been dismissed as a 'mere' follower of Rubens, must be seen as a highly original artist and a remarkable draughtsman and printmaker.

Drs. Joris Van Grieken
Tyr Baudouin



DRAWINGS

I.

The Rape of Europa

black chalk and graphite on laid paper
220 x 284 mm

Provenance

Private collection, France.

The Holy Family with the Infant Saint John the Baptist

pen and brown ink, brush and wash on laid paper

82 x 82 mm

Provenance

Private collection.

The Holy Family with the Infant Saint John the Baptist

etching on laid paper

Rijksmuseum, object no. RP-POB-59.214

III.

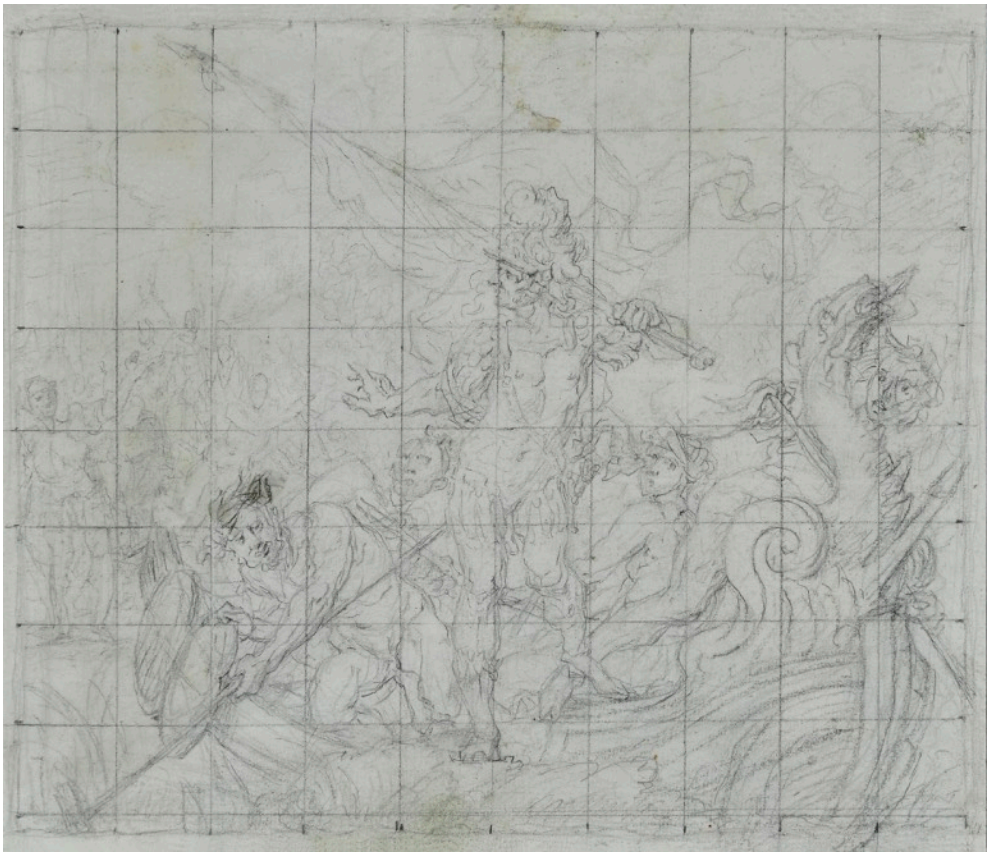
The Flight into Egypt

black chalk and white highlights on blue laid paper
405 x 282 mm

Provenance

Private collection, the Netherlands;
Sold by the gallery to a private collector, Antwerp.

IV.



Scipio Africanus arriving at Carthage (?)

graphite and black chalk on laid paper;
squared for transfer
229 x 318 mm

Provenance

Private collection, France.

V.

The Death of Saint Gertrude

pen and brown ink,
brush and wash over black chalk
on laid paper;
squared for transfer

361 x 201 mm

Provenance

Private collection, France.

The Death of Saint Gertrude

oil on canvas
268 x 165 cm

Saint Gertrude's Church, Machelen

Susanna and the Elders

black chalk on laid paper
153 x 195 mm

Provenance

Private collection,
Portugal.

Susanna and the Elders

etching on laid paper

Rijksmuseum, object no.
RP-P-OB-59.180

VII.

The Rape of Europa

graphite on laid paper
190 x 280 mm

Provenance

Private collection, France.

The Seven Liberal Arts

Pen and brown ink on laid paper; squared for transfer in black chalk
172 x 277 mm

Provenance

Private collection, France.

The Seven Liberal Arts

wool and silk

Gruuthusemuseum
Bruges, inv. no.
XVII.O.0011

PAINTINGS

IX.

The Pièta
with St John the Baptist

oil on panel
36,5 x 29,5 cm

Provenance

Private collection, France;
Sold by the gallery to a
private collector, Antwerp.

The Pièta with Saint John the Baptist

oil on canvas
147 x 131 cm

Saint James' Church, Antwerp

X.

The Circumcision

oil on panel
55 x 39,5 cm

Provenance

Collection H. J. Pfungst 1917;
Christie's, 13 November 1919, lot 218;
Private collection, Germany.

XI.

Cimon and Iphigenia

oil on paper, laid down on panel
19 x 28,7

Provenance

Private collection, Antwerp;
Gifted in 2021 by Tyr Baudouin to the Rubenshuis, Antwerp.

Cimon and Iphigenia

Etching on laid paper

Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. RP-P-OB-59.267

Judith and Holofernes

oil on copper
32 x 25 cm

Provenance

(Probably) Collection Famas, Paris, until 1772; (Probably) His sale (Dufresne), 19 November 1772, no. 60; Private collection, France.

Literature

Getrude Wilmers, *Cornelis Schut (1597-1655): A Flemish Painter of the High Baroque*, Louvain 1996, B67 p. 183 (probably).

Cornelis Schut

Judith and Holofernes

etching on laid paper

British Museum,
object no. 2007,7078.1

XIII.

The Return of The Holy Family from Egypt

oil on panel
35 x 52,5 cm

Provenance

Canon Franciscus Bruyninckx, Antwerp;
His sale, Antwerp, 1791;
Private collection, Belgium.

Literature

Gertrude Wilmers, *Cornelis Schut (1597-1655): A Flemish Painter of the High Baroque*, Louvain 1996, A32 pp. 95-96, ill. p. 362.

Exhibited

's-Hertogenbosch, Noordbrabants Museum, *Meesters van het Zuiden, Barokschilders rondom Rubens*, February 5 – May 7, 2000, Cat. no. 15, p. 51, ill. 14.

“Judith and Holofernes” (detail, see cat. no. XII)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XXXVII.
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"The Triumph of Galatea" (detail, see cat. no. XXX)