



Adriaen de Weerd (c. 1540 - c. 1580)

The Life of the Virgin, before 1573

The Visitation

The Adoration of the Magi

*The Purification of the Virgin*¹

Christ among the Doctors in the Temple

Pen, brush and brown ink, with brown, grey and yellow washes with white heightening, used with oil binder, on beige colored paper, indented for transfer

239 by 177 mm.; 245 by 198 mm.; 242 by 195 mm.; 240 by 195 mm.

Provenance

Sotheby's, London, 13 December 1966, lots 108-111

Peter Claas, London, 1967

Pieter de Boer (1894-1974), Hergiswil, Switzerland²

Phillips, London, 17 April 1996, lot 120 (*The Purification of the Virgin*)

Barbara Piasecka Johnson (1937-2013), Princeton, NJ (*The Purification of the Virgin*), by whom sold

Christie's, London, 30 September 2014, lot 272 (*The Purification of the Virgin* as attributed to de Weerd)

Private collection, The Netherlands

¹ The provenance of *The Purification of the Virgin*, also known as *The Presentation in the Temple* is slightly different. Inherited by P. de Boer's second wife, Mary, it appeared on the art market with Sabrina Förster in Düsseldorf in 1993 and offered for sale in 1996 in London. When it was auctioned again at Christie's in 2014, it was purchased by the present owner and reunited with the other three grisailles.

² Pieter (Piet) de Boer was an art dealer in Amsterdam, who amassed a collection of about 600 to 700 drawings, the majority of which are now in the Stichting P. & N. de Boer, named after him and his first wife, Nellie de Boer-Pressburger. In 1967, De Boer retired, moved to Switzerland, and started a new collection of old master drawings.

Exhibited

London, The Alpine Gallery, Peter Claas Paintings and Drawings, *Exhibition of drawings of five centuries*, 15-27 May 1967, no. 96, p.89, pl. XIV (*The Purification of the Virgin*)

Düsseldorf, Galerie Sabrina Förster, *Sammlung Pieter de Boer: holländische und italienische Meisterzeichnungen, 15.-19. Jahrhundert*, Spring 1993, cat.no. 3, pp. 12-13, ill. (*The Presentation in the Temple*)

Warsaw, Zamek Królewski, *The Masters of drawings. Drawings from Barbara Piasecka Johnson collection*, 4 December 2010 – 6 February 2011, pp. 176-177, ill. (*The Presentation in the Temple as The Purification of the Virgin*)

Literature

Ilja M. Veldman, *De wereld tussen goed en kwaad. Late prenten van Coornbert*, The Hague 1990, p. 19, fig. VI, fn. 39 (*The Visitation*)

Hessel Miedema, ed., *Karel van Mander. The Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters*, Doornspijk 1996, Vol. III, p. 209, fn. 41

Hollstein's Dutch & Flemish etchings, engravings and woodcuts 1450-1700, Vol. LI, Rotterdam 1998, pp. 220-221

Ilja M. Veldman, "Tekeningen van Adriaan de Weert", *Delineavit et Sculpsit*, December 2017, No. 42, pp. 2-22, ill. 4, 5, 8, 12, p. 5

Note

Brussels-born Adriaan de Weerd is known only through an exceedingly rare number of drawings and engravings inscribed with his name as *inventor*.³ The present four grisailles are designs for prints, engraved by Isaac Duchemin and likely published by De Weerd himself in a rare first edition in 1573.⁴ These plates were subsequently published by Peter Overadt, Hieronymus Wierix, and Claes Jansz. Visscher although the total number of prints varies with each edition.



Adriaan de Weerd

Hilly landscape with two classical altars

Pen in brown and black chalk on brown tinted paper, 12.5 x 39.7 cm

Signed & inscribed 'van brussel'

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-T-1905-112

³ Biographical information from Veldman 2017, *op.cit.*, p. 2

⁴ Hollstein, *op.cit.*, nos. 2, 4, 6, 7. Only one complete set of the first edition exists in the Kupferstich-Kabinett, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden.

As no known paintings survive by this intriguing Flemish Renaissance artist, De Weerd is somewhat of an enigma. Most information about the artist's life and work was proclaimed by Karel van Mander's *Schilder-Boeck* from 1604, undoubtedly contributed by Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert's pupil Hendrick Goltzius.⁵ Coornhert, who collaborated on prints with De Weerd during their German exile, is the conduit to Goltzius, whose own chiaroscuro work was indebted to the Flemish draughtsman.

As a young man, De Weerd traveled to Italy to become acquainted with the style of Parmigianino and other Italian Mannerists. Upon his return, the Protestant De Weerd and his mother left tumultuous Flanders around 1566 for Cologne, a sanctuary for artists fleeing the Low Countries.⁶ A conspicuously large number of Netherlandish artists emigrated to the free town of Cologne, a Catholic bulwark, forced to leave for political and religious reasons during the Duke of Alba's reign of terror and worsening economic conditions. Cologne offered good prospects for the Dutch refugees, many of whom were engravers, designers and publishers, professions which were much in demand. Skilled native artists were rare in Cologne, and the wealthy, art-loving patricians and prosperous burghers were eager customers. Possibly for opportunistic reasons, De Weerd converted to Lutheranism, which allowed him citizenship in 1577 and membership to the local guild. He was arrested in his adopted hometown at a secret gathering of Lutherans, but as a citizen, there were no serious consequences. His arrest in 1579 is the last time De Weerd is recorded. His relatively short life perhaps explains his limited artistic output.

In Cologne, according to Van Mander, De Weerd produced designs for prints, among them a series *The Life of Mary and Christ*.⁷ Ilja Veldman suggests that the series originally was conceived as two separate cycles: *The Life of Mary* and *The Life of Christ*, corroborated by Van Mander.⁸ Remarkably, the present four designs appear together in Jan Schabaelje's *Emblata sacra* in 1654, suggesting that some eighty years after their inception, they were separated from the others.⁹ The only other drawing connected to the series is the *Healing of a Leper* in the Albertina, possibly the design for the fourteenth print of the series; its strikingly different style and technique, however, undermine this proposal.¹⁰ Four signed designs for the print series *The History of Ruth*, also in the Albertina, are the only other known surviving drawings for prints.¹¹

The four present drawings executed in an un-Dutch grisaille technique, are clearly influenced by Northern Italian mannerists like De Weerd's man of the hour Parmigiano. According to Van Mander, following in Leonardo's footsteps by imitating the *maniera* and *aria* of one master and making it one's own was the preferred method. The influence of Parmigianino's elegantly elongated figures on the international court style of the Emperor Rudolf II in Prague must have been considerable at the time. Applied washes in brown, grey and yellow reveal the artist's fascination with the Italian chiaroscuro woodcuts, introducing the next generation of Dutch artists, especially Goltzius, to this style and technique.

⁵ Miedema, *op.cit.*, p. 207

⁶ Ilja M. Veldman, "Keulen als toevluchtsoord voor Nederlandse kunstenaars (1567-1612)", *Oud Holland*, Vol. 107, No. 1 (1993), pp. 34-58

⁷ Karel van Mander, *Schilder-Boeck*, Haarlem 1604, fol. 230r19: "een Vrouwe Leven, met Kerstnacht" (*The Life of Mary, with a Nativity*)

⁸ Veldman 2017, *op.cit.*, p. 15. The fact that the last four plates are not numbered supports the idea that *The Life of Mary* was conceived as eight numbered plates.

⁹ Jan Philipsz. Schabaelje (c. 1585-1656), *Den grooten emblemata sacra, bestaende in meer dan vier hondert bybelsche figuren [...]*, Amsterdam, in the printworks of Tymon Houhaer, 1654

¹⁰ Chalk traces, pen in gray, wash, 25.2 x 18.5 cm, inv.no. 26208

[https://sammlungenonline.albertina.at/?query=search=/record/objectnumbersearch=\[26208\]&showtype=record](https://sammlungenonline.albertina.at/?query=search=/record/objectnumbersearch=[26208]&showtype=record)

¹¹ inv.nos. 7972-7975 <https://sammlungenonline.albertina.at/#/query/9755727f-4c89-46ac-ab7a-d7c3ebcc574e>