

# Selected Drawings

MARCANTONIO RAIMONDI

(c. 1480–between 1527 and 1534)

*Reconciliation of Minerva and Cupid*

*Striding Male Nude Holding a Spear; Partial Male Nude (A Flying Putto or Angel) (verso)*

Unfinished proof of an engraving whose unworked portions are drawn in pen and brown ink on ivory laid paper; verso, pen and brown ink. 207 × 117 mm  
Inscribed above olive branch held by Cupid: *carsi* (?)  
1969.20 Committee for Art Fund

Provenance: Litta collection, Milan (as indicated by the border of black paper strips that framed the verso, now removed); Dr. Henry Wellesley, sale, Sotheby's, London, July 13, 1866; Mrs. E. Morland, sale, Sotheby's, London, June 26, 1969; R. E. Lewis, San Francisco

Bibliography: A. Bartsch, *Le peintre-graveur: Nouvelle édition, maîtres italiens* (Würzburg, 1920–22), vol. 14, no. 393, p. 158; H. Delaborde, *Marc-Antoine Raimondi* (Paris, 1888), no. 393, pp. 193–94; M. C. Growdon, "'Peace' by Marcantonio Raimondi: The Stanford Museum Trial Proof and the Accompanying Drawings," typescript, Stanford Museum, 1970; F. Gibbons, *Catalogue of Italian Drawings in the Art Museum, Princeton University* (Princeton, N.J., 1977), vol. 1, p. 166, vol. 2, pl. 508; Lawrence, The Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas [also Chapel Hill, N.C., and Wellesley, Mass.], *Engravings of Marcantonio Raimondi*, 1981, no. 42 (cat. by I. Shoemaker and J. Broun); C. Eisler, "Marcantonio: The Reproductive Print as a Paradox," *Print Collector's Newsletter* 13, no. 3 (July–Aug. 1982): 80–84; K. Oberhuber, "Marcantonio Raimondi: Gli inizi a Bologna ed il primo periodo romano," in *Bologna e l'umanesimo, 1490–1510* (Bologna, 1988), pp. 51–88; *The Stanford Museum Centennial Handbook* (Stanford, 1991), p. 99, repr.

Exhibition: Lawrence 1981

The unique proof of the print at Stanford<sup>1</sup> dates from about 1515 or slightly later, at the time of Marcantonio's collaboration with Raphael, which began in about 1510.<sup>2</sup> The unfinished engraving has been completed by pen strokes in brown ink, especially on the body and drapery of Minerva and on the face and body of Cupid. This was done to indicate what additional work was necessary to achieve the best chiaroscuro effect in the finished print (fig. 1). There can be little doubt that the author of these additions was Marcantonio himself, and since the ink used to fill in the gaps of the unfinished proof seems to be the same as that used to sketch the two nudes on the verso, all these sketches help to shed light on Raimondi's drawing style in the late phase of his career.

The starting point for reconstructing Marcantonio's late drawing style is a head of the emperor Titus Vespasianus in the Albertina, which was attributed to the artist by Konrad Oberhuber, who dated



it about 1520 in connection with the series of the emperors engraved by Marcantonio.<sup>3</sup> Oberhuber was at first skeptical about the Stanford sketches but later came to accept his tentative attribution<sup>4</sup> (which Gibbons supported) and compared the figures on the verso to an Apollo and a Venus, the recto and verso of a sheet in the Ashmolean.<sup>5</sup>

Oberhuber did not suggest a precise date for the Stanford sketches. It is likely, however, that the drawings were executed at the same time as the engraving, that is, about 1515. The male nude seems to be related, if in reverse, to the soldier in the center foreground of *The Repulse of Attila* in the Stanza d'Eliodoro.<sup>6</sup> The torsion of the body, the arm holding a long

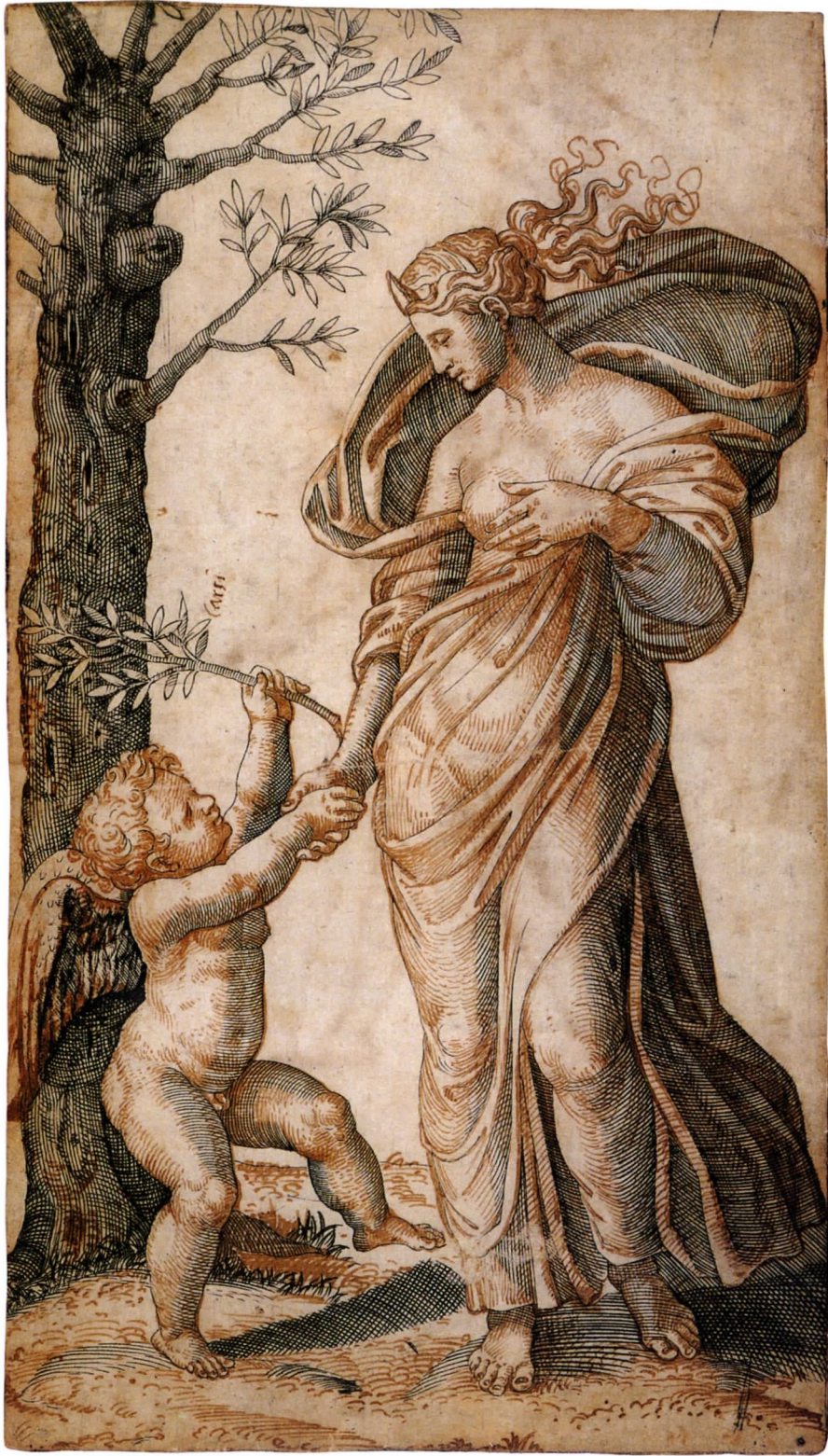




Fig. 1. *Reconciliation of Minerva and Cupid*. British Museum, London.

spear, and the pointing gesture are all elements in common with the male nude at Stanford. In addition, the scene of God Instructing Noah Prior to the Flood, in the vault above the Attila scene, contains, at upper left, an angel whose pose corresponds exactly to the truncated flying figure at the upper left of the sketch at Stanford. It is possible, in other words, that these drawings are related to the frescoes in the Stanza d'Eliodoro, whose ceiling was completed about 1514, which would accord with Vasari's description of "some drawings of Angels by his [Marcantonio's] hand, done with the pen, and some other very beautiful sheets drawn from the apartments that Raffaello da Urbino painted."<sup>7</sup>

The iconography of the print, with its pairing of Minerva and Cupid, is problematic. Vasari thought

that the print represented "a figure of Peace, to whom Love is offering an olive branch."<sup>8</sup> This not entirely inaccurate description was shortened by Bartsch and Delaborde to *Peace*: this is why they added the print to the series of Virtues engraved by Marcantonio, but this was a mistake. The most thorough analysis of the subject was offered by Rudolf Wittkower.<sup>9</sup> He pointed out that the olive tree is an attribute of Pallas-Minerva, the goddess of victory, the upholder of peace and learning, and the defender of wisdom and virtue. Because here Cupid's arrows do not harm her, she is additionally a symbol of chastity. In this dual guise she is Minerva Pudica, reconciling herself with Cupid. Indeed, this is what we read in the copy initialed *L.M.* (fig. 2). Wittkower, following Bartsch, attributed this copy to Lorenzo de Musis, dating it about 1550,<sup>10</sup> whereas Oberhuber thinks that it is by Michele Lucchesi.<sup>11</sup> The text engraved at the top right reads: "The child has received from chaste Minerva the beautiful olive branch, to show that those who pride themselves on having Minerva as friend and really follow the path of virtue enjoy internal peace."<sup>12</sup>

The figure's gesture of pressing the uncovered breast with her left hand, unusual for Minerva, who is often represented wearing full armor, is traditionally associated with charity. The letters *carsi* (?) written above the olive branch in Stanford's proof could be interpreted as an abbreviation of *Caritas* (charity).<sup>13</sup> The very complexity of the iconography of the print further confirms Marcantonio's erudite background and his participation in humanistic circles. Indeed, Raimondi was the most celebrated Italian engraver of the High Renaissance, and it was only toward the end of the nineteenth century that his creative role was reduced to that of a mere reproducer of other artists' inventions.<sup>14</sup> Oberhuber, however, has shown that Raimondi's engravings based on Raphael's designs (approximately fifty) are less numerous than those based on his own drawings.<sup>15</sup>

—A.N.



Fig. 2. Copy by L.M. (monogram in the lower right is partially abraded). *Reconciliation of Minerva and Cupid*. Stanford University Museum of Art.

1. It is a unique unfinished proof of a very rare print; other known impressions are in the British Museum and in the Albertina, Vienna. Five versions after the finished state are listed in Bartsch: 1) a mediocre copy in the same direction (B. 393A); 2) an anonymous copy in the same direction, with inscription at lower center, RA VR INVEN. (B. 393B); 3) a very mediocre copy in the same direction, with the initials L.M. and the number 8 at lower right and a long verse inscription at upper right (B. 393C); and 4) an anonymous copy in reverse (B. 393D). Delaborde (p. 194) points out that the two figures of this last copy are sometimes inscribed with the names of Venus and Cupid. Bartsch lists a fifth, anonymous repetition, in which the tree is missing and clouds have been added (B. 394).
2. According to Vasari, the engraving was part of a group designed by Raphael (G. Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568* [Florence, 1984], vol. 5, p. 10), an opinion supported by the inscribed copy of the print (B. 393B) and upheld by Bartsch and Delaborde. Growdon suggests that the print may have been designed by Peruzzi (p. 12). In the Lawrence exhibition of 1981, Shoemaker and Broun say that it was probably based on a drawing by Raphael and date it to c. 1517–20, whereas Gibbons and Growdon date it to the mid-1510s. In his 1988 essay Oberhuber says only that it is a late work, yet one designed by Marcantonio himself (pp. 84–85).
3. K. Oberhuber, *Marcantonio Raimondi: Albertina Informationen* 1–3 (1971): 1–4. Oberhuber's systematic conclusions come after the deliberations of many scholars. For some earlier considerations of Marcantonio's graphic style, see Gibbons, p. 16, and K. T. Parker, *Catalogue of the Collection of Drawings in the Ashmolean Museum*, vol. 2, *Italian Schools* (Oxford, 1956), pp. 248–49.
4. K. Oberhuber, letter to M. C. Growdon, dated Mar. 25, 1970, in the Stanford Museum files, in which he says that the verso "could not be by Marcantonio"; but in a second, undated letter to the same author, also in the Stanford Museum files, he believes that "[the verso] could well be by the same hand as those attributed to him [Raimondi] by me."
5. Oberhuber 1988.
6. Growdon suggested that the male figure may be related to the central figure in Marcantonio's copy after Raphael's *Battle of Ostia* in the Stanza dell'Incendio, c. 1515–17 (p. 18).
7. Vasari, p. 25.
8. Vasari, p. 10.
9. R. Wittkower, "Transformations of Minerva in Renaissance Imagery," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 2 (1938–39): 199–202.
10. Wittkower, p. 199n4.
11. Oberhuber, Mar. 25, 1970.
12. "Da Pallade pudica/Ha d'oliva il fanciul la bella rama/Per mostrar che chi bram/Haver Minerva amica/Ed in effetto è di virtù seguace/Gode un'interna pace." Wittkower's translation, on which my own is based, is not entirely accurate.
13. It is significant that Wittkower came to his conclusion without the evidence of the inscription on this proof, which came on the art market only in 1969. See also Lawrence 1981, p. 144n8. Yet G. de Tervarent argued that the olive branch is here simply a symbol of peace and that the engraving represents the Reconciliation of Cupid and Venus, an identification that explains the woman's gesture (*Attributs et symboles dans l'art profane, 1450–1600: Dictionnaire d'un langage perdue* [Geneva, 1958], vol. 1, p. 18n3). Yet this explanation focuses on an olive branch, whereas an olive tree is present in the print.
14. F. Wickhoff, "Beiträge zur Geschichte der reproduzierenden Künste: Marcantons Eintritt in den Kreis römischer Künstler," *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* 20 (1899): 181–94.
15. Oberhuber 1988, pp. 84–85.

(c. 1475–1552)

*Hercules Taming Cerberus, after an antique cameo*

Pen and wash in brown ink over black chalk on ivory laid paper. 295 × 230 mm. On old mount. Inscribed on mount in pencil: *after the Antiques/Montfaucon V.2.218*; inscribed on mount in pen: *Bologna/Pellegrino Tibaldi 1527–1592*; inscribed verso of mount in pencil: *Pelegrino/40,92/B/i*

1975.190.2 Arthur W. Hooper Collection

Provenance: Arthur W. Hooper, San Francisco

The traditional attribution of this drawing to Pellegrino Tibaldi is untenable, but it was certainly executed in the area encompassing Bologna, Mantua, and Parma, probably in the 1530s. Among the possible authors, Aspertini is the most plausible candidate: even if the Bolognese artist is better known for his sketchbooks and outline drawings, which are quite different in character from this finished *modello*, the grotesque features of Hercules, the vigorous transformation of the antique source into an original work, and certain technical details support this attribution.

The drawing is an enlarged and free reproduction of a famous Roman cameo, which is known in a few slightly different versions. The most celebrated one is in Berlin: an Arab sardonyx signed by Dioskourides, a Greek artist who lived in Rome at the time of Augustus and whose work was praised by both Pliny and Suetonius. The Stanford drawing, however, is more closely related to a second version of the same cameo, in which the club of Hercules is not represented and in which the leash used to tame Cerberus is not tangled around the hero's wrist. This cameo was reproduced as plate 32 in G. D. de' Rossi's *Ex gemmis et cameis antiquorum aliquot monumenta ab Aenea Vico Parmen incis. Perillustri*, first printed in Rome in 1652 and again later (fig. 1).<sup>1</sup>

It is improbable, however, that the drawing is directly related to the engraving, which, according to the catalogue of the British Library, dates to about 1550. The drawing is neither a preparatory study for nor a copy after the engraving; instead, it is possible that the artist saw the original cameo in a private collection of antique gems.

Like his fellow citizens Jacopo Ripanda and Marcantonio Raimondi, Aspertini was a student of antiquity. This is documented by the early sources, such as Vasari and Malvasia, as well as by Aspertini's own sketchbooks, but Aspertini's interpretation of classical art was remarkably different from that of the other two Bolognese artists. Marcantonio was interested in reproducing single statues, such as the Apollo Belvedere, whereas Ripanda (who was the first to copy the complete cycle of the Trajan Column) was

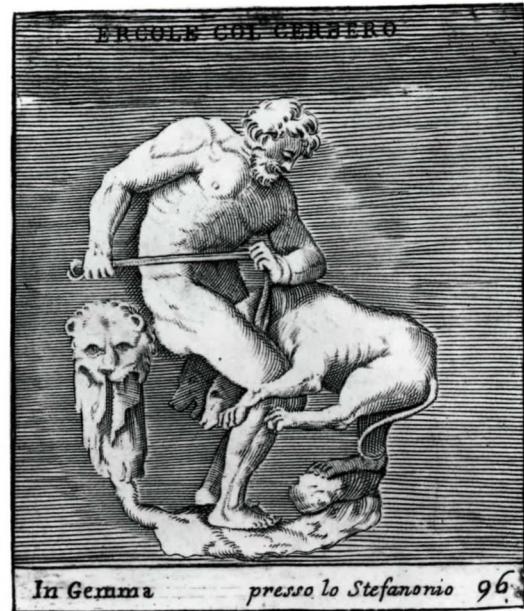


Fig. 1. *Ercole col cerbero*, from *Gemme antiche figurate date in luce da Domenico de' Rossi, colle sposizioni di Paolo Alessandro Maffei*. 1707. Stanford University Libraries.

interested in archaeological accuracy. Aspertini was instead fascinated by reliefs and sarcophagi, by the Dionysian more than by the Apollonian, and his taste for the antique was always eminently unclassical.

Aspertini's numerous drawings after the antique show an independence, ferocity, and fantastic originality comparable to those traits seen in the Stanford sheet. Moreover, his London sketchbooks contain many studies of well-known Hercules sarcophagi, which represent the labors of the hero. Some of these studies were used by the artist to fresco a room in the Isolani Castle at Minerbio: these stories of Hercules were probably painted between 1538 and 1542, but none of them represents Hercules Taming Cerberus. In any case, the Stanford drawing was probably executed in the early 1530s because, besides Aspertini's usual sources and a knowledge of Giulio Romano, it also shows a totally unexpected influence: Parmigianino, who was in Bologna between 1527 and 1531. The elegance of the mannerist pose of the Stanford Hercules is not unprecedented in Aspertini's oeuvre (compare it, for example, with the *Naked Youth Seen from Behind*, engraved by an anonymous monogrammist and whose invention has recently been ascribed to Aspertini by M. Faietti), but the modeling of arms and feet and the highlights are surprisingly very Parmigianinesque. The Stanford drawing, therefore, reveals that even the rebellious Aspertini could not entirely ignore the impact of the



new formal language imported by his younger but much more talented colleague. This drawing might have been executed for one of the triumphal arches erected in Bologna in 1530 to celebrate the coronation of Charles V. Indeed, Hercules was one of the emperor's emblems.

In addition to the arguments above, an attribution to Aspertini is supported by a technical analysis. The drawings of the Wolfegg Codex and the London I sketchbook, executed by Aspertini between 1496 and 1503 and between 1532 and 1536 respectively, are drawn against a hatched or lightly striated background that corresponds to the background of the Stanford sheet. Moreover, in both sketchbooks and in the Stanford drawing, the lines follow a right-

to-left direction, as if the artist were left-handed, and we know that Aspertini was ambidextrous.

Finally, in the Feitelson collection deposited at the University of California, Santa Barbara, there is a drawing of Hercules Taming Cerberus: even though the composition is not related to the Stanford drawing, the sheet has been correctly attributed to an imitator of Aspertini, and it has been tentatively and probably wrongly ascribed to the Bolognese sculptor Prospero Sogari.

—A.N.

1. The engraving of *Hercules Taming Cerberus* was therefore executed by the celebrated Renaissance engraver from Parma, Enea Vico, and this means that the cameo was known in sixteenth-century Italy. See *The Illustrated Bartsch* (New York, 1978), vol. 30, p. 100n131 (324).