

PRINTS AFTER PIETER PAUL RUBENS – STAMPE.V.111

IDENTIFICATION:

Shelfmark: Stampe.V.111

Fund membership: Vatican Library, Fondo Antico

Object type: Volume

Title: STAMPE DI RVBENS

Description: Large volume with brown leather binding, with golden ornamentation and lettering on the spine. The prints, 37 in total, are trimmed and glued on the pages in different ways. Every print has a collocation number. The volume contains blank pages to make successive additions possible. Often when there is a copy of a print after Rubens, also the original engraving from the workshop of Rubens is present, as to permit a comparison between the copy and the original. The prints are from varying quality and differ widely in state of condition. For instance, very high-quality and well-preserved engravings are: BAV, Stampe.V.111(32) and BAV, Stampe.V.111(37). An example of an engraving in a bad condition, but also restored in an interesting way, is BAV, Stampe.V.111(29).

CREATION:

The volume is part of the Fondo Antico of the Vatican Apostolic Library. The Fondo Antico is the precious prints collection established under Pope Pius VI Braschi (1775-1799). It contains more than 17,000 prints by artists from the 15th to the 18th centuries, bound in 161 large volumes and arranged according to schools. Thirty volumes of the Fondo Antico represent the "Flemish School". The prints were divided according to artist and subject on the initiative of the Milanese cardinal Giovanni Archinto (1736-1799), Prefect of the Apostolic Palace. He appointed the silversmith Bartolomeo Boroni (1703-1787) for the selection and subdivision of the prints.

Artist: Bartolomeo Boroni (1703- 1787)

Place: Vatican City

Dating: c.1775-c.1787 and following years

MATERIAL AND TECHNIQUE:

Material: Leather, paper

Technique: Prints are trimmed and glued in hardcover binding

Measurements: 705 x 494 x 49 mm

Watermarks: Yes

SUBJECT:

- Topics: Religious subjects
- Most important artists:
 - o Inventor: Pieter Paul Rubens
 - o Engravers and publishers:
 - Workshop of Rubens: Schelte Bolswert, Lucas Emil Vorsterman, Hans Witdoeck, Paulus Pontius, Jacob Matham, Christoffel Jegher, Pieter Soutman, Jacob Neefs, Boëce van Bolswert, Pieter Paul Rubens
 - Copies and later publications: Pierre de Loisy, Cornelis Galle, François Rago, Cornelis Danckerts, Giovanni Antonio Belmond, Donato Soprani, Claes Jansz. Visscher, Nicolaes Visscher, Jacques Honervogt, Johannes Meyssens, Antoine Bonenfant, Jacques Moermans, Gillis Hendricx

OTHER INFORMATION:

Ex libris: No

Collector mark: No

Bookbinder: No

Inscriptions: No (except for allocation numbers, 1-37)

Old shelf marks: Yes

STATE OF CONSERVATION: fair/bad (binding of the volume is disintegrating)

At the moment the volumes were assembled in the 18th century, a restoration was carried out for the prints in poor condition. Losses were substituted with perfectly matching paper. On these paper fillings, the missing traces of the prints were carefully complemented with pen and ink. This did not always happen accurately with respect to the original, but it is done in such a precise way that you do not notice the amendments immediately. For the restoration, they probably used recuperated paper acquired from ruined prints. This has the advantage that the filling paper is approximately from the same age, quality and color as the print itself.

Another kind of restoration technique but equally interesting, is visible in BAV, Stampe.V.111(29): This engraving has many losses and is very fragile. Restorers used various other prints to support the engraving from the back. By placing them in the same direction as the engraving, that is, the engraving facing the same way, the supporting prints fill up the missing motives: in other words, losses are substituted by the hatching patterns and the motives of the underlying supporting prints. This makes the paper losses less obtrusive. Some other fragile prints have a paper backing, for which often cut-out pages of the volume were used.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Jatta, B. "La Stanza delle Stampe e la nascita delle collezioni grafiche della Vaticana," in: Jatta, B. (ed.). *La Biblioteca Vaticana e le arti nel secolo dei Lumi, 1700-1797 (Storia della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 4)*, 2016, 175-215.

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