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Olivia Savatier Sjöholm

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AN AMBITIOUS, NEWLY DISCOVERED DRAWING BY HENDRICK GOLTZIUS

Olivia Savatier Sjöholm

Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617) “is a rare Proteus, or Vertumnus, who can assume all possible guises in his art, and can truly inhabit every style,” wrote Karel van Mander (1548–1606) in his *Schilder-Boeck* (1604).1 Van Mander took this now-famous passage from the dedication of Goltzius’s engraved *Life of the Virgin* series, the so-called *Meisterstiche* (master engravings), which were conceived in imitation of great sixteenth-century models. These lines, written by Cornelis Schonaeus (1540–1611) and addressed to the staunch Catholic William v, Duke of Bavaria (1548–1626), appear on the first plate, an *Annunciation* dated 1594, which was inspired by works by Raphael (1483–1520), Titian (c. 1488/90–1576), Federico Barocci (c. 1535–1612), and Federico Zuccaro (c. 1540/41–1609). Some ten years later, a similar combination of Marian iconography and Italianate style was to be found in an entirely unprecedented drawing, the *Virgin and Child in Glory with St. Cecilia and Music-making Angels*, which was recently on the art market and was purchased in 2017 by the Musée du Louvre, Paris (Fig. 1).2 It is one of Goltzius’s largest surviving drawings on paper.3

**An ambitious composition**

The composition is not mentioned in any archival source, nor is there any known related drawn, engraved, or painted work that can be directly connected with it. The Virgin, with the Child, is seated on clouds with her feet resting on a large crescent moon. She is about to be crowned by two angels whose flowing draperies flutter in the air. She ascends toward heaven, escorted by cherubs who support the clouds. They are flanked on both sides by angels and cherubs praying, playing the trumpet, or bearing symbols of the Song of Songs (roses, lilies, palm tree). In the lower register, St. Cecilia is playing the organ with the help of an angel who operates the bellows. On either side are music-making angels, divided into two groups of three; their stringed instruments accompany the song of the angels shown in the background. That the sheet was once larger and has been significantly trimmed is evident from the cropped figures at upper right, on both sides, and especially on the bottom edge, where fragments of two cherubs’ heads can be seen.

Elements of the new Louvre drawing can be compared to other works by the artist. The motif of St. Cecilia playing the organ with the help of an assistant, accompanied by a choir of three angels gathered around a song book, is similar to the iconography of a drawing of *St. Cecilia* in the Teylers Museum, Haarlem (Fig. 2),4 executed by Goltzius c. 1593, a variant of which was later engraved by his stepson Jacob Matham (1571–1631).5 That red and black chalk drawing already betrays the strong influence of Federico Barocci in its technique and in the rendering of the saint’s face. Goltzius also tackled the theme of the Virgin with the Child as Queen of Angels, in a black and red chalk drawing, touched with red wash, a work once again highly reminiscent of the art of Barocci—the *Virgin and Child with Two Angels*, now in the Anhaltischen Gemäldegalerie, Dessau (Fig. 3),6 which is datable c. 1605–6. The drawing recently acquired by the Louvre stands apart from the other two sheets by virtue of its size and the complexity of its subject matter, making it one of the rare chalk drawings by Goltzius from
after 1600 to feature multiple figures. Today only three other examples are known: the Mars and Venus of c. 1602–5 in the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig,7 the Diana and Callisto of after 1600 in a Swiss private collection,8 and the drawing that offers by far the best comparison with the sheet introduced here: the Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine of c. 1600–1602 in the Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin (Fig. 4).9

Analogies with the Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine in Berlin

The Virgin and Child in Glory with St. Cecilia and Music-making Angels offers striking stylistic and technical analogies with the Berlin drawing. The compositions feature many comparable motifs, such as the Virgin holding the Child on her lap, the angels playing stringed instruments, the pair of angels bearing a crown, and the cherubs in the clouds. The figures’ faces are very much alike, especially that of the Virgin—almond-shaped, with puffy eyelids, and enlivened by a delicate, little smile—which owes much to the art of Barocci. The technique is also comparable with both drawings executed in black and red chalk, with opaque white highlights and colored washes (brown and red for the Paris drawing, gray and red for the one in Berlin). In the Louvre drawing, Goltzius also added a hint of yellow chalk for the hair of the angel playing the viol at bottom right, further recalling the work of Barocci.

Another common feature of the drawings in Paris and Berlin—one shared by The Crucifixion, also in the Teylers Museum, Haarlem (see Fig. 7 below)10—is the method of incorporating cut and pasted paper corrections: the Child, the head of the Virgin, and the host of angels in the Berlin drawing; and the fragmentary putto’s head at the bottom right of the Paris drawing. These revisions reflect the care taken by Goltzius when preparing his compositions. Unlike The Crucifixion in Haarlem, all the contours of which are indented with a stylus, the drawings in Berlin and Paris show only a few slight indentations here and there, as if the result of Goltzius having used highly sharpened pieces of chalk.11 On the Louvre drawing, these indentations are mainly evident in the central motif of the Virgin and Child borne aloft by angels.

The principal technical difference between the Berlin and Paris drawings is the support: the Louvre drawing was originally executed on nine pieces of paper joined together, to which Goltzius added a tenth fragment in the course of correcting the figure of the putto at the bottom right (Fig. 5).12 Whereas Goltzius would often add narrow strips of paper to extend his compositions on one side (as, for example, on the lower edge of The Crucifixion in Haarlem; see Fig. 7), only in exceptional cases—and only at the end of his career—did he draw the composition on sheets assembled beforehand. The Mars and Venus of c. 1602–5 in Brunswick is drawn on three fragments, and a drawing of the Fall of Man in the Royal Library, Windsor Castle, dated 1606, consists of just two.13

The close similarity of the Berlin and Paris drawings raises the question of the purpose of the Louvre’s recent acquisition. The Berlin drawing is probably a preparatory sketch for a painting (now lost), which was described by Van Mander in his Schilder-Boeck as a “large panel made for his traveling companion Jan Mathiijssen” that may “be interpreted as the marriage of St. Catherine.”14 The painting can be accurately situated c. 1600–1602, since its description appears just after The Crucifixion of 1600 in Karlsruhe (see Fig. 8) and before that of two
paintings dated 1602 and 1603. The hypothesis that the Berlin drawing is a preparatory sketch for this painting, first suggested by W. Waterschoot, is corroborated by Lawrence W. Nichols’s observation that the portraits on the right are those of Jan Matthijsz. Ban (c. 1566–1624), his brother-in-law Cornelis Gerritsz. Vlasman (c. 1565–after May 1629), and their respective wives.15

**Modelli for paintings from the early 1600s**

The Berlin and Paris drawings belong to a series of carefully executed *modelli* in black and red chalk made by Goltzius beginning around 1600, when he switched from printmaking to painting. According to Van Mander, Goltzius, then aged forty-two and at the peak of his career as an engraver, suddenly chose to abandon the burin to take up the brush. This shift, as Van Mander further noted, was heralded by Goltzius’s growing fondness for the use of color and “cryons” (i.e., crayons or chalks) in his drawings.16 Goltzius began to adopt black and red chalk more often after his time spent in Italy in 1590 and 1591. The example of Federico Zuccaro, whom Goltzius met in Rome in the summer of 1591, inspired in particular his use of black chalk for draperies and red chalk for flesh tones. He visited Zuccaro’s workshop, and it was perhaps then that he drew his portrait, now in Berlin.17 He studied Zuccaro’s drawings and perhaps brought one of them back to Haarlem to be engraved by Jacob Matham.18 The handling of a host of music-making angels among the clouds in the upper register of the *Virgin and Child in Glory* owes much to *The Annunciation* frescoed by Federico Zuccaro in the church of S. Maria Annunziata, Rome.19 If Goltzius was already familiar with the fresco scheme through a reproductive engraving by Cornelis Cort (c. 1533–1577/78) made in 1571,20 he may also have encountered preparatory drawings during his stay in Rome (e.g., Fig. 6).21 It was also in Italy, in his celebrated series of large portraits of artists, that Goltzius first combined the use of both black and red chalk with colored wash. This highly pictorial approach, with the occasional additional of yellow or brown chalk, as on the sheet under discussion here, is reminiscent of the graphic technique of Federico Barocci. That artist became a focus of interest for Goltzius during his Italian sojourn, as is testified by the account he gave to Van Mander on his return to Haarlem for the latter’s biography of Barocci in the *Schilder-Boeck*.22

Alongside Goltzius’s pen drawings (the famous *Federkunststücke*) made from c. 1600 onward, E.K.J. Reznicek and Lawrence Nichols have identified a group of nine large *modelli* in black and red chalk, often with added wash and/or colored chalk.23 The new Louvre drawing now makes a tenth. These colored *modelli* reflect works that Goltzius admired during his sojourn in Italy. The earliest, *Sine Cerere et Libero friget Venus (Without Ceres and Bacchus, Venus Would Freeze)* in the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels, is not a preparatory drawing for a painting but an incised study for a grisaille oil on paper and the print after it engraved by Goltzius in 1600,24 thus highlighting the need for caution against assuming that all such chalk compositions were preparatory studies for paintings. *The Crucifixion* in Haarlem (Fig. 7), whose contours are also carefully incised, the drawing served as a full-scale cartoon for a small painting on copper of the subject now in the Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe (Fig. 8).25 This is the only known instance of the survival of both the preparatory *modello* and its related painting, but Nichols mentioned a fragmentary drawing of *Venus and Adonis*, destroyed during World War II, which was a preliminary study for an extant painting of the
subject in a private collection, datable c. 1600. He also noted an indented cartoon—the *Allegory of Hearing* in the Albertina, Vienna—which was used for a painting that is now lost, but whose appearance is known from a copy. Only some of these *modelli*—definitely or hypothetically identifiable as preparatory works for paintings or grisailles—are incised.

**A cartoon for a Catholic devotional painting**

The new Louvre drawing is most probably preparatory for a devotional painting. Is it—like the Berlin study—a modello for a large-format painting by Goltzius on panel or canvas? A large altarpiece on panel from 1609, The Annunciation in the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow (Fig. 9), shows similar compositional elements, such as the hosts of angels among clouds and the figure of the Virgin with her almond-shaped visage, bowed head, swollen eyelids, and the smile playing on her small mouth, and particularly the foreshorted and open position of her right hand. This painting may have been commissioned by one of Haarlem’s many clandestine Catholic churches. With Utrecht and Amsterdam, the city was one of the bastions of Catholicism in the post-Reformation Northern Netherlands. The iconography would be appropriate for the Haarlem beguinage, the Begijnhof, which professed great devotion to St. Cecilia.

The drawing’s size—thought to have originally measured c. 800 x c. 600 mm—would suggest that it was a same-size cartoon for a smaller private devotional painting on wood or canvas, rather than for a large-scale altarpiece. Yet since it is not squared and only partially indented (like the Berlin drawing), it clearly was not used to transfer the composition onto another support. Goltzius must therefore have employed a second cartoon, unless the project was ultimately abandoned.

The theme of the glorification of the Virgin, Queen of Angels, was common in the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth, both for altarpieces and for small private devotional paintings. These were found not only in Italy, but also in the heartlands of the Counter Reformation, such as the Bavaria of William v, the dedicatee of Goltzius’s *Life of the Virgin* series. The extensive and explicitly Catholic iconography of this *Virgin and Child in Glory with St. Cecilia and Music-making Angels* celebrates the Virgin Mary simultaneously as the Queen of Heaven and the Mother of the Savior. It also exalts the highly controversial belief in the Immaculate Conception—as alluded to by the crescent moon and the symbols of the Song of Songs (rose, lilies, and palm tree)—which was fervently defended by the Jesuits, who led the Counter Reformation in the Northern Netherlands. In 1607 Jacob Matham engraved after Abraham Bloemaert (1566–1651) a Virgin crowned with stars, surrounded by a host of angels, her feet resting on a crescent moon, adoring the Infant Christ. Jacob Matham, to whom the Louvre drawing was long attributed, and his mother, Goltzius’s wife, were both Catholics. While Goltzius’s own denominational affiliation cannot be established with any certainty, he is known to have had many close friends who were Catholics outside his own family circle. They include Jan Matthijsz. Ban and Tobias Henrixsz. van Swartsenburgh (d. 1607/8), for both of whom he produced paintings. Perhaps this devotional painting was intended for or commissioned by someone in Goltzius’s Catholic network in Haarlem.
The stylistic proximity of the Louvre drawing to the Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine suggests a date of c. 1601–2. It is surprising, however, that Van Mander made no mention of a painting with the subject of the Virgin and Child in Glory with St. Cecilia and Music-making Angels, even though he described all of Goltzius’s other paintings up until the publication of the Schilder-Boeck in 1604.34 Should we therefore assign the Louvre drawing to c. 1605, like the Virgin and Child with Two Angels in Dessau? Or was the painting never realized? The latter hypothesis would explain the lack of any trace of this composition prior to the drawing’s rediscovery.

author’s note
I warmly thank those who generously helped me study this sheet, especially Holm Bevers, Hans Buijs, Valentine Dubard, Xander van Eck, Laurence Lhinarès, Ger Luijten, Léna Widerkehr, and Carel van Tuyl van Serooskerken.

editors’ note
Translated from the French by Susan Schneider.

NOTES

2. Inv. no. RF 55362. Black chalk and two shades of red chalk, with reddish-brown wash, yellow chalk, heightened with opaque white, on nine pieces of light brown paper joined together; a tenth fragment cut and inserted by Goltzius as a paper correction at lower edge; 720 x 490 mm; see http://arts-graphiques.louvre.fr. Inscribed at lower left, in an old hand, in graphite, Matham. Provenance: Unknown. The old annotation is a fairly good imitation of the signature of Goltzius’s stepson Jacob Matham (1571–1631), as kindly pointed out by Léna Widerkehr. The drawing may thus have remained in Goltzius’s studio after the artist’s death, inherited by his stepson. Could it be lot 2242 in the sale of Samuel van Huls (1655–1734), The Hague, 14 May 1736, an “Assomption de Marie” drawn by Jacob Matham? Or is the ex-Huls drawing related rather to Matham’s engraving after Taddeo Zuccaro (see Léna Widerkehr, The New Hollstein Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings, and Woodcuts, 1450–1700: Jacob Matham, Amsterdam, 2007, vol. 1, no. 80, repr.)?

3. Only Goltzius’s drawing of Mars and Venus in the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig (for details, see Note 7 below), is larger in size (738 x 501 mm), but the Louvre composition is cropped and must have originally measured c. 800 x 600 mm.

4. Inv. no. N 070. Black and red chalk, with white highlights, on blue paper; 495 x 451 mm; see E.K.J. Reznicek, Hendrick Goltzius: Zeichnungen, Utrecht, 1961, no. 73, repr.; and
www.teylersmuseum.nl. Goltzius drew St. Cecilia two other times, see ibid., nos. 72 and 74, both repr.

5. Engraving; 180 x 150 mm; see Widerkehr 2007, no. 465, repr.

6. Inv. no. BXIII.15. Black and red chalk; 260 x 188 mm; see Reznicek, 1961, no. 31 (as missing), repr.; Petra Wandrey “Schönheit bändigt allen Zorn: Die Meisterstiche von Hendrick Goltzius,” in Friederike Bösmann et al., *Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617): Mythos, Macht und Menschlichkeit aus dem Dessauer Beständen*, exh. cat. Dessau, Gemäldegalerie and elsewhere, 2017–18, p. 40, repr. The dating to c. 1605–6 is based on stylistic criteria, as proposed by Reznicek, but also, as noted by Wandrey, on the comparison of the watermark with the similar one on the drawing of a *Girl with a Book*, dated 1605, in the Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin (KdZ 2308; metalpoint on ivory-colored prepared tablet; 103 x 86 mm); see Reznicek, 1961, no. 357, repr.


8. Black chalk, with touches of blue and pink chalk, heightened with white chalk; 381 x 509 mm; see Reznicek 1993, p. 236, no. K108a, repr.

9. KdZ 3711. Black and red chalk, with gray and red wash, and opaque white; 372 x 447 mm; see Reznicek 1961, no. 76, repr.

10. Inv. no. N 067. Black and red chalk, with opaque white, pink and brown wash; outlines indented with a stylus; 418 x 287 mm; see ibid., no. 46, repr.; and www.teylersmuseum.nl.

11. See Amsterdam and elsewhere 2003–4, p. 329, under no. 97, n. 51. In 1961 Reznicek mentioned stylus indentation on the Berlin drawing, but Hans Miellek and Lawrence Nichols found no evidence of this when they later studied the drawing. Holm Bevers confirmed in 2002 that the outlines had not been traced with a stylus, though he did note that some lines seem to have been indented, as if Goltzius had used a very sharp piece of chalk in places.

12. The material–technical study of the support, medium, and graphic technique of the drawing was conducted by Valentine Dubard, head of the paper restoration workshop of the Louvre’s Département des Arts Graphiques, whom I warmly thank for providing this schematic illustration.

13. Inv. no. RCIN 904758. Pen and dark brown ink, with pink and gray wash, and white heightening; 288 x 343 mm; see Reznicek 1961, no. 9, repr.; and www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection. Monogrammed and dated 1606.


17. KdZ 5863. Metalpoint on prepared paper; 171 x 133 mm; see Reznicek 11961, no. 303, repr.; and idem 9193, p. 5. Signed and dated 1591.


21. Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art, inv. no. 1971.23.1. Black and red chalk; the contours indented with a stylus; squared in red chalk; 397 x 272 mm; see www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.52465.


24. Oil on paper; 428 x 319 mm; see Amsterdam and elsewhere 2003–4, no. 83.2, repr. (in color).
25. Inv. no. 2854 (oil on copper; 43.4 x 29.4 cm); see Nichols 2013, no. A17, pl. 2; and Amsterdam 2003–4, no. 101.2, repr. (in color).

26. Oil on panel; 54.8 x 41.6 cm; see ibid., no. A43, pl. 3.

27. Oil on panel; 41 x 32 cm; see ibid., no. C35, fig. 120.

28. Inv. no. 1944 (oil on panel; 180 x 126 cm); see ibid. no. A11, pl. 20.

Figure 1 HENDRICK GOLTZIUS Virgin and Child in Glory with St. Cecilia and Music-making Angels Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques

Figure 2 HENDRICK GOLTZIUS St. Cecilia Haarlem, Teylers Museum

Figure 3 HENDRICK GOLTZIUS Virgin and Child with Two Angels Dessau, Anhaltischen Gemäldegalerie

Figure 4 HENDRICK GOLTZIUS Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett

Figure 5 Diagram of the fragments that make up Figure 1

Figure 6 FEDERICO ZUCCARO Study for the Apse of S. Maria Annunziata, Rome Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art

Figure 7 HENDRICK GOLTZIUS The Crucifixion Haarlem, Teylers Museum

Figure 8 HENDRICK GOLTZIUS The Crucifixion, 1600 Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle

Figure 9 HENDRICK GOLTZIUS The Annunciation Moscow, Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts