

programmatisch ein Zitat des Regisseurs Werner Herzog voran, das von dem gewöhnlichen Leben als von einer Illusion spricht, hinter der sich die Realität der Träume verberge. Hier wird die Reverie zum Paradigma erhoben, in dessen Dienst das ganze Heer metaphysisch überhöhter Kleinbronzen gestellt wird. Ob man in Frankfurt dabei dem Glanz der Preziose erlegen ist, oder ob es sich hier um eine Kunstgeschichte der Wende handelt, bleibt abzuwarten. Dem an den Kataloganfang gesetzten Zitat Werner Herzogs ist man versucht mit einem Zitat derselben Branche zu antworten, mit Jean-Luc Godards: „Rette sich wer kann: das Leben!“

Andreas Beyer

JACQUES DE GHEYN II ALS TEKENAAR — JACQUES DE GHEYN II DRAWINGS. Exhibition, Rotterdam, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, 14 December 1985 to 10 February 1986; Washington, D. C., National Gallery of Art, 9 March 1986 to 11 May 1986.

In spite of the enormous number of exhibitions of drawings by Dutch and Flemish “old masters” held in recent decades, it was not until the winter of 1985/86 that a comprehensive exhibition of the drawings of one of the very few truly gifted draughtsmen of the Netherlands was presented to the public, in this case, on both sides of the Atlantic. The reason that after Rembrandt, Rubens, Van Dyck, Goltzius and Buytewech, one had to wait so long for Jacques de Gheyn probably is to be found in the circumstance that those in a position to organize such an exhibition did not wish it to precede the authoritative book on the artist by I. Q. van Regteren Altena. His *Oeuvre* catalogue of Jacques de Gheyn having appeared posthumously in 1983 in three volumes, this exhibition and its catalogue can be seen as a tribute to the art historian who devoted a life-long interest to this fascinating, highly gifted and original, at times brilliant artist.

The exhibition was preceded by one of a smaller scope, that of the drawings and prints by Jacques de Gheyn belonging to the Institut Néerlandais (Collection F. Lugt) in Paris, and mounted only in the Institut. Carlos van Hasselt's detailed and careful analysis of the drawings, their subjects, their provenances, and other aspects, constitutes in many respects a significant advance in our knowledge of the artist, also because of the most extensive catalogue to date of a large body of prints by Jacques de Gheyn II and III (mainly those after their own designs).

The organizers of the exhibition, in particular A.W.F.M. Meij and Andrew Robison, set out to represent the artist by means of one hundred drawings. The choice of drawings was excellent. The artist was shown in his baffling many-sidedness, from his earliest to his latest works, from drawings strongly dependent on Goltzius to the unprecedented and hallucinating witch scenes, from the free, bold and anthropomorphic evocation of trees to the meticulous rendering of flowers and insects, from careful designs for prints to the free, late studies for grotto architecture, and in all the varieties of techniques (pen, watercolor, washes, silverpoint). His humanistic and scientific erudition, his fertile imagination, all these facets expressed by a flexible yet precise, dexterous and intelligent graphic hand mark Jacques de Gheyn as one of the most admirable artists Holland produced. One receives the impression that the choice was made to show the best, and

that the owners were persuaded to lend by the significance and timeliness of this exhibition.

Jacques de Gheyn was a remarkably independent draughtsman. In spite of the powerful presence of Goltzius during a large part of his life, it was only in his youth that he was strongly affected by him. Although he incorporated in his approach to reality his knowledge of Dürer (figure studies) and Hoefnagel (flowers), and in his handling of graphic means his acquaintance with Pieter Bruegel the Elder (pen, particularly in landscapes) and Goltzius (silverpoint), Hans Bol (combination of pen and washes), his vision and draughtsmanship were remarkably personal.

In Rotterdam the drawings were shown together with virtually the entire graphic oeuvre of the artist and a fine selection of prints by de Gheyn's Dutch contemporaries (descriptive brochures only, no catalogue). Thus a welcome opportunity was afforded to assess the role of drawing in Jacques de Gheyn's entire graphic oeuvre, and to measure the artist against his entourage.

The writers of the catalogue, Mr. Meij and Jurrie A. Poot, rightly tried to avoid a repetition of all the data included in van Regteren Altena's catalogue by taking over only the essential observations and factual references. Instead, they elaborated on points that interest the present-day reader and student. The catalogue therefore is a welcome addition to the literature on the artist.

The catalogue is preceded by four introductions (mercifully short compared with the ever increasing length of essays in exhibition catalogues). The most original contribution is the one by E. K. J. Reznicek who compares Jacques de Gheyn with Goltzius as draughtsmen, an illuminating comparison no one had made yet and no one could make better than the author of the exemplary monograph on Goltzius. New ground is also broken by Sam Segal in his essay on Jacques de Gheyn's plants. He raises the question of conscious presentation of choice as symbolized by plants (a topic he has expanded since then in an article in *Tableau*, VII, 1985). Furthermore, A. T. van Deursen gives an introduction to the historical, social and cultural setting of Jacques de Gheyn (the brief text reminds one of the need for an English translation of his four small volumes, *Het kopergeld van de gouden eeuw*, 1978—80), J. R. Judson presents an essay on the artist as draughtsman, emphasizing his role as a precursor of Rembrandt, and P. Smit introduces Jacques de Gheyn's drawings of animals.

The exhibition included only very few drawings which not everyone may be willing to accept as works by the artist. At least to me the attribution of four drawings to Jacques de Gheyn is not convincing:

No. 59, *A Painter at His Easel* (Munich; VRA no. 709). The rendering of architectural details, of the costume, and in general the handling of the silverpoint in my opinion does not find sufficient parallels in Jacques de Gheyn's work. Von Regteren Altena himself does not seem to have been sure of the attribution ("the attribution remains a hypothesis").

No. 79, *Four Studies of a Dead Stilt* (Heirs of van Regteren Altena; VRA no 878) likewise seems to lack sufficiently strong similarities in the handling of the brush with watercolor drawings like *Four Studies of a Frog* (no. 80; VRA no. 888). The

brushstrokes of the bird are not equally linear, and seem to point to a considerably later time (the earlier attribution to Jan Weenix may indicate the right period).

No. 88, *Study of a Large Beech* (Heirs of van Regteren Altena; VRA no. 989), in spite of a similarity in the rendering of foliage with drawings like no. 89 (Rijksprentenkabinet), is marked by a more decorative movement of branches and leaves that are defined with less assuredness, and by a lack of clear definition of space in the lower part of the drawing. These aspects seem to make an attribution to Jacques de Gheyn uncomfortable, as does the observation of Sam Segal (p. 29) that the beech was not known in the Netherlands at the time.

No. 91, *Mountainous Landscape with Chapel* (Private Collection, Amsterdam; VRA no. 962a). The drawing (formerly in the J. T. Cremer Collection, New York) is undoubtedly by the same hand as one in the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh (K. Andrews, *Catalogue of Netherlandish Drawings...*, 1985, p. 103, no. D4918, fig. 703, as by Cornelis Claesz van Wieringen; also reproduced in *Master Drawings*, V, 1967, pl. 13, as "circle of Hendrick Goltzius"). I do not believe Cornelis van Wieringen is the author either.

But these are marginal blemishes on a fine selection and useful catalogue.

Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann

Rezensionen

INGO HERKLOTZ, "*Sepulcra*" e "*Monumenta*" del medioevo, Edizioni Rari Nantes, Rome 1985, 268 pp and 87 plates, Lit. 25000.

(with four illustrations)

This deceptively slim book constitutes an important contribution to the study of mediaeval tomb sculpture. As Herklotz claims it is not continuous history but a series of closely integrated studies, concentrating on sculpture in Italy from the Late Antique period until the late thirteenth century. The book is neatly produced, the plates legible and often unfamiliar, the price modest. The text is a reworking of the author's Berlin dissertation submitted in the spring of 1982, but it shows few of the vices of the genre, for its argument is coherent, trenchantly phrased, yet it rarely exaggerates and furnishes the reader with a thought-provoking variety of new ideas. Herklotz is a thoroughly equipped historian, as interested in *mentalités* as artefacts, and willing to develop his themes across a long time span. The most recent literature is thoroughly assimilated and throughout he handles his often complex argument deftly, demonstrating an impressive command of a wide range of historical sources. Refreshingly too, the chronicle material is systematically exploited, and a knowledge of the liturgy put to illuminating use. The translation, by Francesca Pomarici, reads fluently enough, with few slips, the most diverting of which transmogrifies the pacific Franciscan Jerome of Ascoli into the first French general to become Pope. It is the most original book to be published on Italian tomb sculpture of the middle ages for many years, and it is to be hoped that a German version also will appear in due course.