



The Death of Procris

Date

c. 1540 (printed later)

Primary Maker

Giorgio Ghisi

Medium

Engraving

Description

Giorgio Ghisi was an important engraver of the mid-sixteenth century who documented the work and concepts of many well-known painters of the generation before him. Other than church

commissions, the primary market for paintings during this period was wealthy families and individuals, so artists' work circulated more widely through prints, especially in humanist and artistic circles. Ghisi modeled this print, in reverse, on a drawing by the Mannerist painter Giulio Romano, an apprentice to Raphael and a resident of Mantua from 1524 until his death in 1546. Romano was a powerful artistic influence on Ghisi during his early career, and the younger artist made a number of reproductive prints after his fellow Mantuan. In this case, Romano's drawing—which survives in the Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main—was one of a set depicting scenes from the ancient Roman poet Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a poem recounting approximately 250 mythological tales of metamorphosis. The drawings may have been intended as tapestry designs for the wealthy Mantuan patron Federico Gonzaga. The figure at the center of the story, and slightly off center in the composition, is the mortally wounded Procris. She is held by her husband, Cephalus, who visibly mourns her, and surrounded by Cupid and numerous satyrs and nymphs arranged in a dramatic pyramidal composition. In the poses and arrangement of the figures, Romano borrowed from and quoted ancient Roman sculptures and high-relief friezes on sarcophagi, respectively. In the background, Aurora, goddess of the dawn, arrives on a chariot, signaling the arrival of morning. (SOURCE: Alcauskas, INNOVATIVE APPROACHES, HONORED TRADITIONS, 2017)

Dimensions

Sheet (trimmed to edges of plate): 15 1/2 x 22 1/16 in. (39.4 x 56 cm)