



Title-plate of Bloemaert's model book for draughtsmen, a pure engraving supplemented by two chiaroscuro tone blocks cut in wood and printed in light and dark ochre (304 × 225 mm)

## Bloemaert, Abraham

Gorinchem 1564 – 1651 Utrecht

**Artis Apelleae, liber hic, studiosa juvenus, Aptata ingenio fert rudimenta tuo:**  
**[centred:] Prima Pars. Hoc duce carpe viam, membratim tota figura Discitur,**  
**his gradibus scandere ad alta dabit.**

**[Amsterdam], 'Nicolaus Visscher excudit, Cum Privilegio Ordinum Hollandiae et Westfrisiae', [after 1682]**

OBLONG FOLIO (285 × 350 mm), 160ff., a series of engravings numbered 1–160 (versoes blank), organised in eight equal parts of twenty prints with divisional title-prints in Dutch and Latin. CONTENTS part 1 (print 1) title transcribed above, with additional lettering *Abrahamus Bloemaert inventor*. | *fredericus Bloemaert filius fecit*, a pure engraving supplemented by two chiaroscuro tone blocks cut in wood and printed in light and dark ochre (darker tone block 304 × 225 mm); print 20 a pure engraving supplemented by one chiaroscuro tone block printed in light ochre (tone block 190 × 151 mm), the other prints line engravings. Part 2 (print 21) lettered *Het Tweede Deel* | *Abrahamus Bloemaert inventor* | *fre: Bloemaert fecit* | *Nicolaus Visscher excudit. Cum Privilegio Ord. Hollandiae*. Part 3 (print 41) lettered *Het Deerde Deel* | *Abrahamus Bloemaert inven:* | *fre: Bloemaert fecit* | *Nicolaus Visscher excudit*. Part 4 (print 61) lettered *Het Vierde Deel*. | *Quarta pars*. | *Abrahamus Bloemaert* | *inventor*. | *fre: Bloemaert sculp:* | *N: Visscher excudit*. | *Cum Privilegio Ordinum Hollandiae et Westfrisiae*. Part 5 (print 81) lettered *Quinta pars*. | *Het Vyfde deel*. | *Abrahamus Bloemaert* | *inventor*. | *fre: Bloemaert filius sc:* | *N: Nischer exc:* | *Cum Privilegio Ordinum Hollandiae et Westfrisiae*. Part 6 (print 101) lettered *Sexta pars*. | *Het Seste Deel*. | *Abraham Bloemaert inven:* | *fre: Bloemaert sc. N: Visscher exc.* | *Cum Privilegio Ordinum Hollandiae et Westfrisiae*. Part 7 (print 121) *Pars Septima* | *Het Sevende Deel*. | *Abrahamus Bloemaert Inventor*. | *Fredericus Bloemaert fecit* | *Nicolaus Visscher excudit* | [above:] *Cum Privilegio Ordinum Hollandiae et Westfrisiae*. Part 8 (print 141) *Pars Octava*. *Het Achste Deel* | *Nicolaus Visscher Excudit, Cum Privilegio Ordinum Hollandiae et Westfrisiae* | [above:] *Abrahamus Bloemaert inventor*. | *Fred. Bloemaert sculpsit*.

In addition to the numerals 1–160, some prints have additional designations: print 20: F; 21: \*I; 40: G; 59: \*c; 60: D; 74: B; 75: E; 76: H; 80: \*b; 91: \*f; 93: \*\*b; 95: \*\*g; 96: \*\*f; 105: \*g; 106: \*e; 110: \*d; 113: \*h; 115: \*\*e; 122: \*2; 123: \*3; 124: \*4; 125: \*5; 136: \*\*m; 138: \*k; 140: C; 141: \*\*a; 142: \*\*4; 145: \*\*h; 146: \*\*d; 148: \*\*2; 149: \*I; 150: \*\*5; 153: *Verscheide Dieren* | *Seer Natuurlijk Afgebeeld* | *door Abraham Bloemaert de Vader* | *en gesneden door Frederic Bloemaert de Soon* | *Uytgegeven by Nicolaus Visscher met Privilegie* | \*\*I; 156: \*\*3; 158: \*6; 160: \*\*y.

PAPER the principal watermark is a crowned escutcheon (height 50 mm) charged with a Strasbourg Lily (observed in plates 1, 21, 23–24, 27–29, 31, 34, 36–40, 81–100); also: arms of London (quartered

shield, height 60 mm), countermark DP (plates 2–19, 101–120, 141–160);<sup>1</sup> crowned escutcheon (height 75 mm) charged with a Strasbourg Lily (plate 20); crowned escutcheon (height 68 mm) charged with a Strasbourg Lily, countermark cursive AJ (plates 22, 25–26, 32–33, 35);<sup>2</sup> crowned escutcheon (height 65 mm) charged with a Strasbourg Lily, beneath initials DP (plate 30); arms of London (with sword prominent in first quartering, height 55 mm), countermark IV (plates 41–80, 121–140).<sup>3</sup>

PROVENANCE French booktrade (clipping from an unidentified catalogue, *circa* 1920, item 37) — Pierre Bères, his sale by Pierre Bergé & Associés, ‘Pierre Bères: 80 ans de passion. 5ème Vente. Fonds de la librairie Pierre Bères. Des incunables à nos jours, 3ème partie’, Paris, 13 December 2006, lot 511.

An exceptionally well-preserved copy, with these minor defects: light creases in the sheets at beginning and end of the volume, very occasional dust-soiling or staining along top edges, some prints lightly spotted with ink while still at the press (nos. 42, 53, 58, 65, 72, 75, 77, 79, 122, 130).

BINDING contemporary Dutch vellum over paper boards; covers decorated in blind with a blind panel, floral ornament at each corner, and centre-piece.

**A**N EARLY ISSUE of Abraham Bloemaert’s widely disseminated model book for student draughtsmen, presenting figure compositions and studies of the parts of the body, and a dozen similar examples of domesticated animals. ‘In almost every large collection of old master drawings, there are drawn copies – by amateurs as well as starting professional artists, but mostly anonymous – after single leaves or parts of Bloemaert’s influential *Tekenboek*.<sup>4</sup>

The work was conceived jointly by Abraham and his son Frederick (*circa* 1616–1690), in the late 1640s, in an attempt to exploit the large stock (more than 1600 sheets have survived) of Abraham’s drawings. A group of drawings, including some connected to paintings dating from the 1620s and 1630s, was assembled, and for the purpose of stylistic unity recopied by Abraham in a uniform technique, apparently within a brief period of time (four

drawings are dated 1648 and one 1650).<sup>5</sup> Frederick then set about engraving these drawings (mostly in reverse), numbering the matrices consecutively, and publishing them in instalments from about 1650.

Instead of a systematic course of instruction, such as his friend Crispijn van de Passe had presented in *La prima parte della luce del dipingere* (and two further instalments, Amsterdam 1643–1644), in which similar plates are combined with a didactic text, Abraham Bloemaert offers a loosely-organised collection of visual models with no theoretical exposition in the form of a text. In the first three of its eight parts, a sequence is followed: studies of heads, hands, and limbs of the body, progressing to entire figures, and finishing with a print (or prints) of religious figures. The remaining five books have no apparent organisation, except that the nudes and animals are grouped together, and it may be the publication commenced without a definite plan established from the start.

By 1656 or 1658, Frederick had completed and published six instalments of twenty plates, each instalment preceded by a title-print in Dutch and Latin with legend *fre: Bloemaert fecit et excudit* (or similar).<sup>6</sup> He subsequently engraved two more fascicules, enlarging the drawing book to eight instalments (160 plates). About a dozen of these forty new plates are further studies of heads, hands, and legs; eight plates are nudes; and the rest are *putti*, figure compositions, and all the animals.<sup>7</sup> Since no impressions bearing Frederick’s *excudit* are known, it is assumed he never published the new prints himself. The impetus to enlarge the work seems rather to have originated with the publisher Nicolaus II Visscher (1649–1702).

<sup>5</sup> These sheets were pasted into an album in the eighteenth century, which is now Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, Inv. PD 166–1963. Some drawings in the album were not engraved and for a few prints the immediate preparatory drawings are found elsewhere (or are unknown); for descriptions of the Cambridge album, see Marcel Roethlisberger, *Abraham Bloemaert and his sons: paintings and prints* (Doornspijk 1993), pp.389–418; Jaap Bolten, ‘Abraham Bloemaert (1564–1651) and his *Tekenboek*’ in *Delineavit et Sculpsit* 9 (March 1993), pp.1–10; Bolten, *op. cit.*, 2007, pp.362–397, nos. 1137–1313.

<sup>6</sup> For dating, see Bolten, *op. cit.*, 1985, pp.66, 286 notes 17–18; Roethlisberger, *op. cit.*, p.393: ‘after 1650, the date borne by Cambridge drawing 97; before 1656’.

<sup>7</sup> According to the inscription in plate 153 *Uytgegeven by Nicolaus Visscher met Privilegie* and lettering lower centre *\*\*1*, Visscher published five of the examples of animals as a separate booklet, of which this is the title-page. The other four are the plates 148 (lettered *\*\*2*), 156 (lettered *\*\*3*), 142 (lettered *\*\*4*), 150 (lettered *\*\*5*). Similar letters and numerals on some other plates (nine lettered *\*b–\*m*, nine lettered *\*\*a–\*\*y*, six numerated *\*1–\*6*), indicate other groups of plates also were published separately by Visscher. One such publication may be the rare suite of fourteen plates ‘Verscheide Beesten en Vogeln, zeer kunstig getekent, door Abr. Bloemaert de Dader, en gesneden door Fred. Boemaert de Toon’ (issued without a publisher’s name or date) recorded by George Rudolph Boehmer, *Systematisch-literarisches Handbuch der Naturgeschichte, Oeconomie und anderer damit verwandten Wissenschaften und Künste* (Leipzig 1785–1789), II/1, p.55.

<sup>1</sup> The countermark DP probably signifies Dirk Pietersz. de Jong, manager of the mill ‘De Visser’. A similar mark is reproduced by Henk Voorn, *Die papiermolens in de provincie Noord-Holland* (Haarlem 1960), no. 155, noting ‘the initials DP accompany the arms of Amsterdam from 1694 to 1722’ (p.541).

<sup>2</sup> The countermark AJ signifies the Amsterdam factor Abraham Jansen, an importer of French papers; according to Voorn, ‘Jansen’s initials AJ are found 1679–1712’ (*op. cit.*, p.134).

<sup>3</sup> The countermark IV signifies either Jean Villedary, a French maker of fine papers, or one of the Dutch makers who adopted the countermark in order to pass off their paper as Villedary’s (Voorn, *op. cit.*, p.121).

<sup>4</sup> Jaap Bolten, *Abraham Bloemaert, c. 1565–1651: the drawings* ([The Netherlands] 2007), p.362.

Visscher had taken over the family business from his father Nicolaus I in 1679 and he continued to operate it until his death in 1702. In March and September 1682, he was granted privileges by the States of Holland and West-Friesland to publish maps and prints. Before that date, he issued an 'interim edition' of the Bloemaert drawing book, replacing Frederick's *et excudit* with his own name on the 120 original matrices, and adding a seventh fascicule of twenty newly-engraved prints.<sup>8</sup> In 1682 Visscher brought out the so-called 'second edition', containing 160 prints organised in eight fascicules, and now protected by a privilege.<sup>9</sup>

The title of the *Prima pars* (plate no. 1), showing a student draughtsman, is a combined engraving and chiaroscuro woodcut: the copper matrice prints the line, one woodblock superimposes the half-tone (sparing the lights), and another woodblock the shadows. In the first edition, six other engravings had been similarly printed, with either one or two chiaroscuro tone blocks cut in wood (plate nos. 20, 40, 60, 74, 75, 76). For Visscher's second edition, an additional engraving was given this special treatment (plate no. 140), and at some point the eight copper matrices to be printed with tone blocks were lettered A–H.<sup>10</sup> In our copy, however, only the title and plate 20 ('Kneeling Saint in prayer') have tone backgrounds added. The copy in the National Gallery of Art is identical in this respect;<sup>11</sup> we presume both copies represent a later issue of the prints after the deterioration or loss of most of the wood blocks. We have yet to trace a copy of Visscher's edition in which all eight possible chiaroscuro plates are present (see provisional census below).

<sup>8</sup> An incomplete copy of this 'interim edition', published by Visscher before obtaining a privilege, was in the sale of the Pierre Berès stock (Pierre Bergé & Associés, 'Fonds de la librairie Pierre Berès. Des incunables à nos jours. 4ème partie', Paris, 17 December 2007, lot 611: lacked plate 1).

<sup>9</sup> The 'second edition' is offered for sale in three catalogues of Visscher's stock evidently published in 1682 (the Dutch version, although undated, is prefaced by the texts of privileges granted to Visscher in that year; see Cornelis Koeman, *Atlantes Neerlandici*, Amsterdam 1969, III, p.155, for partial transcription). The Visscher stock catalogues are accessible through the microfiche project 'Book Sale Catalogues of the Dutch Republic, 1599–1800', as no. 2452 (p.14: 'Teken-Boeck, door Abraham en Fred. Bloemaert, in 8 deelen. 160 Blad'), no. 2116 (p.15: 'Livre a designer par Abraham & Frederic Bloemaert, en 8 parties – 160 [Feuilles]'), and no. 2117 (p.13: 'Buch der Reißenskunst, durch Abraham und Friedrich Blumert, in 8. Theilen – 160 Bogen').

<sup>10</sup> Roethlisberger, *op. cit.*, nos. T–1, 80, 94, 95, 108, 137, 144, 145; Walter L. Strauss, *Chiaroscuro: the clair-obscur woodcuts by the German and Netherlandish masters of XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries; a complete catalogue with commentary* (Greenwich, CT [1973]), pp.346–365, nos 164–170, 172 (the reproductions are derived from unspecified copies of several editions). As the letters do not follow the sequence of prints as they appear in the book, the eight chiaroscuros may have been published separately by Visscher: print 1 (A), 20 (F), 40 (G), 60 (D), 74 (B), 75 (E), 76 (H), 140 (C).

<sup>11</sup> Private communication (4 September 2007) from Peter Parshall, Curator of Old Master Prints, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 20565.



Pl. 111 Engraving by Frederick Bloemaert after a drawing by his father, Abraham

In 1722, the matrices passed into the possession of Louis Renard, who reorganised and renumbered them, and published them as *Artis Apellae thesaurus* at Amsterdam in 1723 in association with Bernard Picart — and refused thereafter to have any reprints made.<sup>12</sup> The matrices eventually were acquired from Renard by Reinier and Josua Ottens, and published in 1740 as *Oorspronkelyk en vermaard konstryk tekenboek*. What began as a collection of teaching models for students became, in the editions published by Reinier and Josua Ottens, nearly a century later, a costly work aimed at collectors, among whom there was strong, ongoing interest in Abraham Bloemaert.

While copies of the Ottens editions quickly found secure homes in libraries, the earlier editions — like most books of instruction — seem to have been thumbed out of existence. All that can be located of Frederick Bloemaert's first edition are a fragment of one hundred prints (five fascicules) in Paris,<sup>13</sup> and five complete copies (six fascicules, 120 plates), in London,<sup>14</sup> Los Angeles,<sup>15</sup> New York,<sup>16</sup> Oxford,<sup>17</sup> and Rotterdam.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Only known copy is Utrecht, Centraal Museum, PK 1952/700; see Bolten, *op. cit.*, 1985, p.67, and Roethlisberger, *op. cit.*, p.393. Renard's edition may have been triggered by unsatisfactory copies of the original prints, first published as 't *Eerste* [–sevend] *deel van de teeken-konst* (140 prints in seven books) by Joachim Ottens (*i.e.*, before 1719), reprinted under the imprints of his widow and sons (*i.e.*, before 1725). A copy of the Joachim Ottens edition is in the British Library (shelfmark 1505.58).

<sup>13</sup> Bibliothèque nationale, Cabinet des Estampes, Ec40a. Described by Bolten, *op. cit.*, 1985, p.66, as 'containing 100 plates arranged in five parts', creating expectations it represents an issue of the work before all 120 prints had been engraved; however, Roethlisberger, *op. cit.*, p.393, describes it rather as '100 plates cut to the edge and mounted into the Mariette volume of the oeuvre of Bloemaert' (*i.e.* without evidential value for the earliest publication of the prints).

<sup>14</sup> British Museum, Prints & Drawings, 156. a. 2. Described by Jaap Bolten, *Method and Practice: Dutch and Flemish drawing books 1600–1750* (Landau 1985), pp.51–53 (title of *Prima pars* reproduced p.49). The title and all six chiaroscuro prints are present in this set. The watermarks are said to be similar to W. A. Churchill, *Watermarks in paper in Holland, England, France, etc., in the 17th and 18th centuries and their interconnection* (Amsterdam 1935), no. 398 (engravings), and no. 315 (engravings combined with chiaroscuro). Strauss, *op. cit.*, p.346, identifies the watermark as a 'crowned escutcheon with fleur de lys'.

<sup>15</sup> Los Angeles County Museum of Art, M.77.105.1–120. Described in David Tunick, Inc., *Catalogue 6: Old Master prints* (New York 1974), no. 10 (\$3000), where the watermarks are identified as 'crowned Fleur-de-Lis Heawood [*i.e.* Edward Heawood, *Watermarks, mainly of the 17th and 18th centuries* (Hilversum 1950) 1664' and 'Horn in Shield Churchill [*op. cit.*] 315'. The title and all six chiaroscuro prints are present in this set.

<sup>16</sup> Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.95.497, 1–139). The title and all six chiaroscuro prints are present in this set (mounted on album sheets).

<sup>17</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Radcl. B. 8. Radcliffe's copy with his engraved exlibris (signed B.B.S.), bound in late 17th-century mottled calf. This copy — unknown to Bolten and Roethlisberger — is

Visscher's second edition is also rare, and complete copies with all 160 prints in good state of preservation, like the present one, are almost unknown. Of the copies of Visscher's edition located in public collections,<sup>19</sup> only the one in the National Gallery of Art like ours contains all 160 prints

- Amsterdam, Universiteit van Amsterdam, OF 80–16. Incomplete: lacks plate 1, according to 'Short Title Catalogue Netherlands' database.

- Chicago, University of Chicago, f ND653.B6B61. Incomplete: lacks plates 47, 92 (supplied in photocopy from Metropolitan Museum of Art copy of the first edition); without part 8 (plates 141–160). Seven chiaroscuro prints are present in this set (plates 1, 20, 40, 60, 74, 75, 76; plate 140 is an engraving only). In a modern cloth binding.

- Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago, 740.7 B65a. Incomplete: lacks plate 40 (supplied in photocopy from University of Chicago copy cited above). Seven chiaroscuro prints are present in this set (plates 1, 20, 40, 60, 74, 75, 76; plate 140 is an engraving only). In a modern cloth binding (exlibris of Algernon Capell, Earl of Essex, dated 1701, on verso of title-page).

- Princeton, Princeton University Library, Oversize ND653.B6A2q. Incomplete: 't.p. and possibly some plates missing' and 'some plates mounted, apparently from a different ed.', according to library Online Public Access Catalogue. Seven chiaroscuro prints are present in this set (plates 1, 20, 40, 60, 74, 75, 76; plate 140 is an engraving only).<sup>20</sup>

- Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art, 1972.30.1. Apparently complete: 160 engravings, 26.9 × 28.6 cm, (according to Gallery website). Two chiaroscuro prints are present in this set (plates 1, 20). In a contemporary plain vellum binding.<sup>21</sup>

entered in Bodley's OPAC as 'A Drawing book, engraved by F. Bloemaert after A. Bloemaert. Amst.? c. 1660'. The title and all six chiaroscuro prints are present in this copy (engraving 4 is lacking). The watermarks include three versions of a crowned escutcheon (one accompanied by initials GG, another with initials PH), and Caduceus (private communication dated 22 October 2007 from Paul Quarrie).

<sup>18</sup> A complete copy, 'kept as loose sheets', is Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Inv. nr. BdH 12322–12441 (private communication dated 19 December 2007 from Dr. Peter van der Coelen, Curator of Prints and Drawings, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Postbus 2277, NL-3000 CG Rotterdam).

<sup>19</sup> Bolten, *op. cit.*, 1985, p.67, cites a copy of Visscher's edition in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Cabinet des Estampes, Kc–11. The library's OPAC clearly states however that the plates in this copy (and a second copy, shelfmark Kc–11a) are in the sequence imposed by Renard and Picart (1723) and adopted by Ottens (1740 *et seq.*).

<sup>20</sup> Private communication (13 September 2007) from Stephen Ferguson, Curator of Rare Books, Princeton University Library, Princeton, NJ 08544.

<sup>21</sup> Private communication (4 September 2007) from Peter Parshall, Curator of Old Master Prints, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC 20565.

- Williamstown, Clark Art Institute, ND653.B53.5a 1650. Incomplete: lacks plate 153, according to library Online Public Access Catalogue. Three chiaroscuro prints are present in this set (plates 1, 20, 60). Formerly in the library of Julius Held.<sup>22</sup>

No modern reprint of any edition exists.

FURTHER REFERENCES Charles Le Blanc, *Manuel de l'amateur d'estampes* (Paris 1854), I, p.380; F.W.H. Hollstein, *Dutch & Flemish etchings engravings and woodcuts ca. 1450–1700* (Amsterdam 1950),II, p. 86, nos. 36–155 (as 120 plates, none reproduced; fragments in the J. Wunsch and von Nostiz-Rieneck sales are cited)

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<sup>22</sup> Private communication (10 September 2007) from Susan Roeper, Librarian, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA 01267.