Counterproof printed on four sheets of vellum (detail, sheet [1])

Monogrammist SK

The Battle of Ponte Milvio, after Raphael

[Rome? *circa* **1550]**

ENGRAVING on four joined plates (image 360 × 1220 mm, sheets 405 × 1255 mm), COUNTER-PROOF on parchment, in first state (of two), lettered on a tablet (here in reverse) 'Imp. Caes. Constantinus Prostrato Ad Pontem Milvium Tyrano Maxentio Post Graviss. CCC. Fere Annorum Persecutionem Afflictam Christi Ecclesiam Libertati Asseruit. Raphael Pinxit in Vaticano', with the printmaker's monogram beneath 'SK'.

PROVENANCE William August Ackermann (1793–1865) — sale by Rudolph Weigel, 'Catalog der sorgfältigst gewählten und kostbaren Sammlung von ältesten, älteren und neueren Kupfer-stichen, Radirungen und anderen Kunstblättern von den wichtigsten zur Kunstgeschichte gehö-rigen Büchern und einigen anderen Kunstgegenständen', Leipzig, 29 March 1853, lot 463 (Lugt 21288) — Christie's, 'Important old master prints from a German family of title, Part II', London, 18 June 1992, lot 93 — Robin Halwas Limited[1] — Private collection, USA

Old soiling, creases, small hole near the top of the fourth plate, and lesser defects.

Hinged on acid-free board, framed.

A **COUNTERPROOF ON PARCHMENT** of the Monogrammist SK's large print repro-ducing Raphael's 'The Battle of Ponte Milvio' in the Sala di Costantino of the Vatican (completed by Giulio Romano and Giovanni Francesco Penni in 1524).

The print is not based on the finished fresco, but on an unknown *modello* (interme-diary drawing) of Raphael's design, transferred to the copper plate in the normal manner, which resulted in the printed image being reversed left to right. To regain the direction of the original fresco, this counterproof was taken: clean vellum sheets were placed on top of freshly-inked impressions, and run through the press. The use of parchment as a support is unusual in sixteenth-century Italy and suggests a spe-cially dedicated copy.[2]

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[1] Robin Halwas Limited, 'Catalogue 3: Illustrated and other rare books' (London 1995), pp.110–111 item 57.
[2] See the discussion of parchment prints in Clay Dean, Theresa Fairbanks and Lisa Pon, *Changing Impressions: Marcantonio Raimondi & Sixteenth-Century Print Connoisseurship* (New Haven 1999), especially p.43 note 48, and p.56; also Michael Bury, *The Print in Italy 1550–1620* (London 2001), p.48.

Our counterproof was made from an impression of the print in first state. Later impressions have an added publication line 'Antverpiae [excu]debat Martin Petreius in insigni fontis prope [novam?] in Bursam'. This publisher Marten Peeters van Gheele was active at Antwerp between 1533 and 1563 and is known for striking old plates obtained from a variety of sources, including large subjects of Lucas van Leyden (printed in folio, full-sheet or extra-folio),[3] as well as first states of reproductive prints engraved by Philips Galle.[4]

The productions of the Monogrammist SK and Monogrammist SR are confused by early print historians and the identity of SK is still uncertain.[5] Nagler describes this print as 'in vier Platten in M. Cartaros Manier'[6] and similarities of style are apparent. Mario Cartaro was a printmaker active in Rome after about 1557 (d. 1620), who signed much of his work with the monogram MK or MKAV (Marius Kartarus Viterbensis); it could be that SK was an older relation. Alternatively, the restriking of the plate at Antwerp could signify that SK was active in Northern Europe, not in Italy.

These impressions are known to the writer

FIRST STATE ● Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina, It. 21, p.23[7] ● Unlocated (Galerie Bassenge, 'Auktion 95: Druckgraphik des 15.–19. Jahrhunderts', Berlin, 3 June 2010, lot 5190)[8]

SECOND STATE ● Florence, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe degli Uffizi, vol. 89 (st. vol. 7526)[9] ● Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2002.PR.82**[10] ● Rome, Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica, Fondo Corsini, 7, It. Sec. XVI, formato grande, cart. 345[11]

Counterproof printed on four sheets of vellum (detail, sheet [2])

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[3] Jan Piet Filedt Kok, *The New Hollstein: Dutch & Flemish etchings, engravings, and woodcut, 1450–1700. Lucas van Leyden* (Rotterdam 1996), pp.10, 26.
[4] A print by Philips Galle after Primaticcio has the address 'Martini Petri excude in insigne aurei fontis prope novam burseam'; see *L' École de Fontainebleau*, exhibition catalogue entry by Henri Zerner, Grand Palais (Paris 1972), no. 342, and *Primatice. Maître de Fontainebleau*, exhibition catalogue, Musée du Louvre (Paris 2004), no. 182.
[5] Paola Coccia, in *Giulio Romano pinxit et delineavit*, catalogue of an exhibition, Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica (Rome 1993), p.52.
[6] Georg K. Nagler, *Die Monogrammisten* (facsimile reprint, Nieuwkoop 1977), V, p.21 no. 118.
[7] Coccia, *op. cit*., no. 44.
[8] 36 × 125 cm, 'Mit feinem Rändchen, teils um die Einfassungslinie, partiell auch minimal knapp innerhalb dieser geschnitten'. Watermark: 'Krone mit Buchstabe B und Schriftband'.
[9] Alessandra Baroni, *I 'libri di stampe' dei Medici e le stampe in volume degli Uffizi* (Inventario generale delle stampe; 3) (Florence 2011), p.213 and fig. 41.
[10] Four sheets 36.25 × 27.5 cm and smaller, on two mounts 75 × 102.5 cm and smaller. Ex-'Collection of the Princes of Liechtenstein' (GRI online catalogue).
[11] Coccia, *op. cit*., no.44/II (reproduced); Evelina Borea, *Lo specchio dell'arte italiana: stampe in cinque secoli* (Pisa 2009), II, Capitolo VII, no.28 (reproduced).

Counterproof printed on four sheets of vellum (detail, sheets [3] and [4])

UNKNOWN STATE ● Unlocated (Sotheby & Co., 'Important album of engravings, etchings and woodcuts collected in the 16th century from a Continental Princely collection,' London, 10 March 1964, lot 106 – part lot)[12]

The only earlier print reproducing the decoration of the Sala di Costantino is a detail of 'The Battle of Ponte Milvio' engraved in 1544 by Giulio Bonasone (Bartsch XV, p.34 no. 84) after a drawing attributed to Giulio Romano. The Monogrammist SK did not depend on that source, nor did he utilise another well-known drawing (on two sheets measuring together 376 × 851 mm) in the Musée du Louvre (Cabinet des dessins no. 3872).[13] SK's print is significantly closer to the fresco, in the organization of the foreground and in the representation of the architecture of the bridge;[14] his landscape background is simpler than both the Louvre's drawing and the finished fresco, with the three angels with swords in the sky notable omissions. Most likely SK's *modello* was lost in the process of transfer to the copper plate.

The Monogrammist SK's print was copied by the French engraver Pierre Woeiriot de Bouzey (1532–1599) in the mid-1560s (*Inventaire du Fonds Français*, II, p. 171 no. 53; Robert-Dumesnil, *Le peintre graveur français*, Paris 1844, VII, p. 95 no. 208). Woeiriot reversed his model, so that the print is again in the same direction as the fresco, and reduces the composition (from 360 × 1220 to 158 × 498 mm). He includes the lettered tablet on SK's print (which differs from the inscription on the fresco), but transfers its final line (Raphael Pinxit in Vaticano) to a cartouche he adds along the top (a dedication, in French, to Charles III, Duke of Lorraine).[15]

About 1571, the Roman printmaker Giovanni Battista Cavalieri (*circa* 1525–1601) produced an engraving of the subject, in the same direction as the fresco (on four plates, joined 410 × 1206 mm).[16] Cavalieri includes Raphael's three angels and introduces decorative elements; otherwise his print closely resembles SK's. It could be that SK and Cavalieri shared the same *modello*, or more probably that Cavalieri depended partly on SK's print and partly on other sources (like Marten Peeters, he is known for re-striking old plates and copying earlier prints).

A third print reproducing the fresco, also in the correct direction (on two plates, joined 326 × 1399 mm), was commissioned *circa* 1575 by the Roman publisher Lorenzo Vaccari from the printmaker Cornelis Cort.[17] Cort's *modello* is identified as a drawing by Hans Speckaert.

LITERATURE Karl-Heinrich von Heinecken, *Nachrichten von Künstlern und Kunstsachen* (Leipzig 1768–1769), II, pp.348, 476; Johann D. Passavant, *Le peintre-graveur, VI: Suite des maîtres italiens du XVe. et XVIe. Siècle* (Leipzig 1864), pp.164–166 no. 9

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[12] This impression on four sheets joined together was extracted from an album assembled about 1570, containing mostly prints published by Hieronymus Cock, 1550–1570.

[13] The provenance of this drawing can be traced back to the Bolognese historian Carlo Cesare Malvasia (1616–1693) and no farther; see Dominique Cordellier and Bernadette Py, *Inventaire Général des Dessins Italiens: Raphaël, son atelier, ses copistes* (Paris 1992), no. 920; Konrad Oberhuber and Achim Gnaan, *Raphael und der Klassische Stil in Rom 1515–1527*, catalogue of an exhibition, Mantua & Vienna (Milan 1999), no. 148.

[14] Compare *Raffaello nell'Appartamento di Giulio II e Leone X* (Milan 1993), pp.167–169.

[15] Impressions are in the British Museum, 1850,0612.86; Bibliothèque-médiathèque de Nancy, M_TS_ES_00150.

[16] *Raphael invenit. Stampe da Raffaello nelle collezioni dell' Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica*, exhibition catalogue by G. Bernini Pezzini, S. Massari & S. Prosperi Valenti (Rome 1985), p.113. Corinna Höper, *Raffael und die Folgen. Das Kunstwerk in Zeitaltern seiner Graphischen Reproduzierbarkeit* (Stuttgart 2001), p.416.

[17] A unique impression in unfinished state survives: Johan C.J. Bierens de Haan, *L'Oeuvre gravé de Cornelis Cort graveur Hollandais 1533–1578* (The Hague 1948), pp.177–178, no. 195.