



Reduced from 180/181 × 101 mm

### Master of the E-series Tarocchi

Northern Italy (Ferrara?), active c. 1465

**Rhetoric; a female armed warrior wearing a crown and holding a sword, flanked by two winged children blowing horns**

ENGRAVING (180/181 × 101 mm), lettered at lower left C, at lower centre *RHETORICA XXIII*, and at lower right 23; enclosed by a frame of diamonds (outline of four nail holes within the border, as usual).

Softly printed in a delicate grey ink. Only a single state is known.

Fair impression; full plate mark.

PROVENANCE Henry Foster Sewall (1816–1896), his mark on verso stamped in red ink (Lugt 1309) and inventory number [P]966 in brown ink — acquired by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in November 1897 — deaccessioned by the Museum *circa* 1917, stamp on verso in brown ink ‘Duplicate Sold by The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston’ — Anderson Galleries, *Catalogue of engravings, etchings, woodcuts and lithographs: duplicates from the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, New York, 19–20 February 1918, lot 2<sup>1</sup> — private collections

REFERENCES Adam von Bartsch, *Le peintre graveur* (Leipzig 1866), XIII, pp.120–131 nos. 18–67 (Rhetoric: p.126 no. 40); *Catalogue of early Italian engravings preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, compiled by Arthur M. Hind (London 1909–1910), I, pp.217–256 (Rhetoric: p.244 no. 23a); Arthur M. Hind, *Early Italian engraving: a critical catalogue* (London 1938–1948), I, pp.221–240 (Rhetoric: p.236 no. E.1.23a) and IV, pls. 320–369 (Rhetoric: pl. 342); *The Illustrated Bartsch, 24: Early Italian Masters*, edited by Mark Zucker (New York 1980), pp.150–199 (Rhetoric: p.122); *The Illustrated Bartsch, 24: Commentary, part 3 (Le peintre-graveur 13 [part 1]): Early Italian Masters*, edited by Mark J. Zucker (New York 2000), pp.1–62 (Rhetoric: p.34 no. 023a)

**T**HIS PRINT belongs to the first version (conventionally designated E-series) of a group of fifty engravings known as the ‘Tarocchi Cards of Mantegna’ – despite being

<sup>1</sup> The Sewall Collection as acquired by the Museum of Fine Arts contained approximately 23,000 prints. A decision to sell duplicates was quickly made and the first sale (conducted by C.F. Libbie in Boston) was held on 16–17 November 1909. Two further sales were conducted by Libbie (20 January 1910 and 10–11 March 1910); a second sale by Anderson Galleries occurred in New York on 4 February 1921.

neither true tarocchi nor related to Mantegna. Many critics have placed them among the most important of the incunabula of printmaking in Italy; there is lively speculation as to their authorship, use, purpose, iconographical and cultural significance.<sup>2</sup>

'Rhetorica' is one of ten images in the third group of the set (marked with the letter C and numbered 21–30) personifying ten 'Liberal Arts': the classical seven Liberal Arts known as the *trivium* (Grammar, Dialectic or Logic, Rhetoric) and *quadrivium* (Geometry, Arithmetic, Music, Astronomy or Astrology), raised to ten by the addition of Poetry, Philosophy and Theology. The artist is believed to have worked directly from literary sources, such as Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis philologiae et mercurii*, a work of the fifth century widely read, taught, and commented upon throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance (first printed in Vicenza, 1499). The presence of the two children blowing horns may have been suggested by the opening words of Capella's description, in which Rhetoric walks to the music of trumpets.

It appears that the fifty matrices were repeatedly struck, without alterations,<sup>3</sup> perhaps over a period of twenty or thirty years, during which various colours of ink were employed: grey, bluish green, greenish grey, greenish brown, with the ink always watery and thin in quality, often with enhancements in gold.<sup>4</sup> A substantial number of impressions survive, some within the rare sets of all fifty prints which are conserved in The Cleveland Museum of Art,<sup>5</sup> Galleria Degli Uffizi (Florence),<sup>6</sup> Biblioteca nazionale centrale (Florence),<sup>7</sup> British

<sup>2</sup> The literature is immense; recent scholarship includes Kristen Lippincott, 'Mantegna's Tarocchi' in *Print Quarterly* 3 (1986), pp.357–360; *Le muse e il principe: arte di corte nel Rinascimento padano*, catalogue of an exhibition held in the Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan, 20 September–1 December 1991, edited by Alessandra Mottola Molino and Mauro Natale (Modena 1991), pp.436–437 no. 101; Giordano Berti, 'I cosiddetti Tarocchi del Mantegna' in *A casa di Andrea Mantegna: cultura artistica a Mantova nel Quattrocento*, edited by Rodolfo Signorini (Cinisello Balsamo [Milan] 2006), pp.298–307, 454–457; Susanne Pollack, 'I cosiddetti "Tarocchi del Mantegna"' in *Cosmè Tura e Francesco del Cossa: l'arte a Ferrara nell'età di Borso d'Este*, catalogue of an exhibition, Palazzo dei Diamanti, Palazzo Schifanoia, 23 September 2007– 6 January 2008, edited by Mauro Natale (Ferrara 2007), pp.398–403 nos. 107–122.

<sup>3</sup> Hind, *op. cit.* (1938), I, p.228: 'No impressions are known showing differences of state, or later rework'; cf. Mark Zucker, in *The Illustrated Bartsch, 24: Commentary, op. cit.*, p.6: 'There are no impressions showing later rework to the plates'.

<sup>4</sup> For details, see Hind, *op. cit.* (1938), I, p.229.

<sup>5</sup> Cleveland, Museum of Art, Dudley P. Allen Fund, 1924, 432.1–50 (Rhetoric: 1924, 432.23). Matched set from the Strogonoff collection, Rome; 'weak, but early' (Hind, *op. cit.*, 1938, I, p.229). All prints reproduced on the CMA's image database (<http://www.clevelandart.org>).

<sup>6</sup> Galleria degli Uffizi, *La collezione delle stampe*, compiled by Antony De Witt (Rome 1938), p.17 nos. 142–191; *A casa di Andrea Mantegna, op. cit.*, pp.454–457 nos. 100–105 (reproducing pls. 3, 16, 22, 30, 32).

Museum (London),<sup>8</sup> Museo di Capodimonte (Naples),<sup>9</sup> Musée du Louvre – Département des art graphiques, Collection Edmond de Rothschild (Paris), Bibliothèque nationale de France (Paris),<sup>10</sup> and Museo Civico di Pavia.<sup>11</sup> Incomplete sets which include impressions of 'Rhetorica' are reported in the Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz – Kupferstichkabinett (Berlin),<sup>12</sup> Museum of Fine Arts (Boston),<sup>13</sup> Musée Condé (Château de Chantilly),<sup>14</sup> Art Institute of Chicago,<sup>15</sup> Hessisches Landesmuseum (Darmstadt),<sup>16</sup> Hamburger Kunsthalle,<sup>17</sup> Gabinetto nazionale delle stampe (Rome),<sup>18</sup> and Graphische Sammlung Albertina (Vienna).<sup>19</sup> The National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, has a substantial group of the prints (51 impressions, including duplicates), lacking just three: pls. 1 'Misero', 23 'Rhetorica', and 29 'Astrologia'.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Florence, BNF, B. Rari 193 (formerly Magliabechiana E. 6.7.17); see Giannino Giovannoni, *Mantova e i tarocchi del Mantegna* (Mantova [1987]), reproducing pls. 12, 15, 34–37, 40, 48.

<sup>8</sup> Reproductions: Hind, *op. cit.* (1909); Hind, *op. cit.* (1938–1948), pls. 320–369 (Rhetoric: pl. 342); also reproduced on BM's database (<http://www.britishmuseum.org/>).

<sup>9</sup> *La raccolta di stampe di Carlo Firmian nel Museo di Capodimonte*, catalogue of an exhibition, Castello del Buonconsiglio, 21 June–31 July 1984, by Rossana Muzii Cavallo (Trento 1984), pp.20–37 no. 1 (all 50 prints reproduced; Rhetoric: p.28).

<sup>10</sup> Reproductions: Laure Beaumont Maillat, *Suites d'estampes de la Renaissance italienne dites Tarots de Mantegna ou Jeu du gouvernement du monde au quattrocento Ferrare vers 1465* (Paris 1986); Bibliothèque nationale de France, *Les premières gravures italiennes: Quattrocento – début du cinquecento: Inventaire de la collection du département des estampes et de la photographie*, compiled by Gisèle Lambert (Paris 1999), pp.146–160 nos. 277–326 (Rhetoric: p.152 no. 299).

<sup>11</sup> Reproductions: *I tarocchi detti del Mantegna*, texts by Claudia Cieri Via and Elena Calandra (Pavia 1992).

<sup>12</sup> Hind, *op. cit.* (1938), I, p.229, as complete except for pls. 1, 26.

<sup>13</sup> Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Harvey D. Parker Collection, P967 (ex H.F. Sewall collection, purchased 1897), M25969 (ex Brayton Ives collection, his sale 12–14 April 1915; see Emil H. Richter, 'New Acquisitions of the Print Department' in *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin* 13, 1915, pp.64–65). Reproduction of P967 on the MFA's image database (<http://www.mfa.org/collections>).

<sup>14</sup> Hind, *op. cit.* (1938), I, p.229, as complete except for pl. 5.

<sup>15</sup> Within a part-set (ex-collection: J.P. Heseltine, lacking pls. 9, 26, 50); see 'Gift of a Set of Tarocchi Cards' in *Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago* 18 (September 1924), pp.73–74. Reproductions on the AIC's database (<http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/11481>).

<sup>16</sup> Reported by Hind, *op. cit.* (1938), I, p.230; Mark Zucker, in *The Illustrated Bartsch, 24: Commentary, op. cit.*, p.34.

<sup>17</sup> Reproductions: *Le muse e il principe, op. cit.*, pp.436–437 no. 101 (pls. 11, 14–16, 18, 19); Pollack, *op. cit.*, nos. 107–118, 120–122 (pls. 5, 6, 11–20, 27, 39, 42).

<sup>18</sup> Reported by Mark Zucker, in *The Illustrated Bartsch, 24: Commentary, op. cit.*, p.34.

<sup>19</sup> *The Illustrated Bartsch, 24: Early Italian Masters, op. cit.*, pp.150–199 (Rhetoric: p.122).

<sup>20</sup> National Gallery of Art, *Early Italian engravings from the National Gallery of Art*, edited by Jay A. Levenson, Konrad Oberhuber, and Jacquelyn L. Sheehan (Washington, DC 1973), pp.81–157. Eighteen of the NGA's impressions derive from the group (42 prints) assembled by Friedrich August II, King of

Impressions now rarely enter the market and we trace none of ‘Rhetorica’ during the past thirty years. These recent auction results are known to the writer:

2009

- Group of 49 prints (lacking pl. 23 ‘Rhetorica’), Christie’s, *Old Master Prints*, London, 8 December 2009, lot 4, sold £181,250<sup>21</sup>

2008

- ‘Temperancia’ (plate 34), Swann Galleries, *Important Old Master prints, Part 1*, New York, 31 October 2008, lot 4 (ex Holtkott collection; ‘several expertly repaired tears’), sold USD \$14,400 (£8913)

2002

- ‘Poesia’ (plate 27), Christie’s, *Old Master, modern and contemporary prints*, London, 3 July 2002, lot 24 (‘a late rather grey impression, trimmed on or just inside the platemark, an area of skinning just above the head of Poetry, a few pale foxmarks mainly in the sky’), sold £2151

1992

- Two prints entered by the same consignor: • ‘Geometria’ (plate 24), Galerie Kornfeld, *Meisterwerke der Graphik von 1425 bis 1925. Teile der Sammlung Otto Schäfer* [sale 207], Bern, 24 June 1992, lot 22 (ex-collections: George Cumberland, Royal Academy of Arts, Colnaghi; trimmed,

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Saxony (1797–1854), via Lessing J. Rosenwald (presented by him to the NGA in 1943); twenty-three derive from the collection of George Cumberland (1754–1848; his *An essay on the utility of collecting the best works of the ancient engravers of the Italian school*, London 1827, pp.52–68), via the Royal Academy of Arts, and P. & D. Colnaghi & Co., who dispersed the set *hors catalogue* after 1967 (see James Fenton, *School of genius: a history of the Royal Academy of Arts*, [London] 2006, pp.291–292).

<sup>21</sup> Previously offered by Sotheby’s, *Catalogue of Important Old Master engravings, etchings and woodcuts*, London, 26 April 1979, lot 117, when unsold (estimated £20,000–£25,000). The Sotheby’s catalogue describes the group as ‘47 plates from the set of 50’ (lacking pls. 19 ‘Clio’, 23 ‘Rhetorica,’ and 32 ‘Chronico’), ‘later fifteenth-century impressions (?), showing wear’. When it reappeared in Christie’s, prints of ‘Clio’ and ‘Chronico’ were supplied. Prior to their appearance in Sotheby’s, the prints had been mounted (with 38 others) in an album assembled by the collector Natalizio Benedetti of Foligno (1559–1614); for a discussion of the album before its dismemberment, see Bernardino Lattanzi, ‘La mostra dei Tarocchi a Foligno’ in *Bollettino Storico della città di Foligno* 14 (1990), p.565–572 (reproducing plates 3, 19, 28, 33, 41, 49 from the series; and six other prints formerly in the album, by the Master ES, Israhel von Meckenem, and unidentified printmakers). A document listing books owned by Benedetti (not including this album) is transcribed by Luigi Sensi, ‘Natalizio Benedetti e la sua collezione’ in *Peiresc (1604–2004). Actes du colloque tenu à Peyresq du 26 au 30 août 2004, Sciences et Techniques en Perspective* [Louvain], second series, 9 (2005), pp.153–171; the same document is printed by Veronica Carpita, ‘Natalizio Benedetti e Nicolas de Peiresc: dal gusto per le “anticaglie” agli esordi dell’archeologia’ in *Peiresc et l’Italie: actes du colloque international, Naples, le 23 et le 24 juin 2006, Istituto italiano per gli studi filosofici, Palazzo Serra di Cassano*, edited by Francesco Solinas (Paris 2009), pp.105–156.

without margin, touched with colour), sold CHF 30,000 (£13,024, to Bob Light, Santa Barbara, USA; see *Aus dem Antiquariat*, 1992, p.353) • ‘Illiaco’ (plate 31), Galerie Kornfeld, *Meisterwerke der Graphik von 1425 bis 1925. Teile der Sammlung Otto Schäfer* [sale 207], Bern, 24 June 1992, lot 23 (ex-collections: George Cumberland, Royal Academy of Arts, Colnaghi; trimmed, without margin), sold CHF 30,000 (£13,024)

1990

- ‘Re’ (plate 8), Sotheby’s, *Old Master prints*, New York, 16 May 1990, lot 82 (‘posthumous printing’), sold USD \$4400 (£2618)

1986

Six prints entered by the same consignor: • ‘Chavalier’ (plate 6), Galerie Kornfeld, *Graphik und Handzeichnungen alter Meister* [sale 194], Bern, 20 June 1986, lot 199, unsold at CHF 30,000 (£10,833)<sup>22</sup> • ‘Terpsicore’ (plate 13), Galerie Kornfeld, *Graphik und Handzeichnungen alter Meister* [sale 194], Bern, 20 June 1986, lot 200 (ex-collection: Albertina; ‘einige alte Restaurierungen’), sold CHF 5000 (£2088) • ‘Grammatica’ (plate 21), Galerie Kornfeld, *Graphik und Handzeichnungen alter Meister* [sale 194], Bern, 20 June 1986, lot 201, unsold at CHF 22,500 (£8124)<sup>23</sup> • ‘Loica’ (plate 22), Galerie Kornfeld, *Graphik und Handzeichnungen alter Meister* [sale 194], Bern, 20 June 1986, lot 202 (ex-collections: British Museum, Tomás Harris), unsold CHF 30,000 (£10,833) • ‘Musicha’ (plate 26), Galerie Kornfeld, *Graphik und Handzeichnungen alter Meister* [sale 194], Bern, 20 June 1986, lot 203 (ex-collection: Albertina; ‘der Einfassung entlang geschnitten, links in der Mitte kleine Fehlstelle und oben rechts alte Schrift. Alt aufgezogen’), sold CHF 3400 (£1419) • ‘Filosofia’ (plate 28), Galerie Kornfeld, *Graphik und Handzeichnungen alter Meister* [sale 194], Bern, 20 June 1986, lot 204 (‘mit Spuren eines alten Kolorits’), unsold CHF 35000 (£12,639)

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<sup>22</sup> Ex-collections: British Museum, Tomás Harris, the latter’s sale by Sotheby’s, *Catalogue of important old master engravings and etchings*, London, 23 March 1965, lot 49: ‘some small nicks at the edges’, £600 (to Laube).

<sup>23</sup> Ex-collections: British Museum, Tomás Harris, the latter’s sale by Sotheby’s, *Catalogue of important old master engravings and etchings*, London, 23 March 1965, lot 50: ‘two small tears at the edges’, £520 (to W.H. Schab).