

H. H. RUMBLER



GEORG PENCZ
(Nuremberg Circa 1500 - 1550)

Thetis and Cheiron

Engraving

13.4 x 18.8 cm (5 1/4 x 7 3/8 inches)

1543

Bartsch 90; Landau 78 ; Hollstein 119

Provenance

Duc d'Arenberg (Lugt 567)

Superbly magnificent showpiece of almost unsurpassable brilliancy.

Velvety deep black in the dense crosshatchings but at the same time of utmost transparency and clarity.

Cut on the platemark. Some thin spots on the reverse side. Traces of a former multiple folding hardly disturbing and are neglectable regarding the outstanding printing quality.

Among the Nuremberg Little Masters it was particularly Georg Pencz who dealt with subjects from the ancient mythology to a special degree. The present composition illustrates a seldom depicted incident from the life of Achilles recounted by P. P. Statius in the first book of his unfinished epic poem >Achilleid<.

Concerned about her son Achill, the nymph Thetis visits the centaur Cheiron in his cave at Mount Pelion. On behalf of her husband, he has taken care of the boy's education. The preparations for the Trojan War are already in full progress and the mother, who, due to her visionary abilities, knows that her son is destined either for a long comfortable life at home or an early but glorious death faraway at Troy, is coming in order to take him away and to bring him to the court of Lycomedes on the Skyros Island where he should hide himself in women's clothes. As described by Statius, Pencz depicts Achill together with his friend Patroclus returning from the lion hunt while his mother takes his teacher into her confidence. Achill has laid down his quarry, a mighty lioness, and is going to fling his arms around his mother's neck. Pencz's classically educated contemporaries, however, did know about the futility of Thetis' maternal precaution. Achill will die as the hero of Troy.

An equilateral pen and ink drawing on blue paper, heightened with white is at the Universitätsbibliothek Erlangen.