H. H. RUMBLER



PHILIPPE THOMASSIN
(Troyes 1562 - 1622)

The Last Judgment

1606
Engraving from 8 plates
147.4 x 105.5 cm (58 x 41 $^{1}/_{2}$ inches)

Provenance

The Princes of Liechtenstein

The monumental composition printed from 8 plates in a rare early impression before the later Rossi address.
For stabilizing diverse deficiencies in preservation of the large-sized sheets mounted separately or in pairs on a total of six strong backing papers with occasional feather retouching to complete smaller flaws. All mounted on the original support sheets of the Collection of the Princes of Liechtenstein.

This is one of the artist's three compositions in giant format, created after his own design.

His Last Judgement, dedicated to Cardinal Pompeio Arrigoni, follows the long iconographic tradition of the eschatological subject. Structured in three horizontal planes arranged one above the other, the composition confronts the heavenly sphere of Christ sitting in judgment with the infernal scene of hell in the lowest register in an even propagandistic manner. The resurrection of the dead on Judgment Day forms, so to speak, the center from which the dramatic events proceed: The bodies rise from the graves, the souls are led out of purgatory by angels, and the scales of the archangel Michael, who struggles with Lucifer for each individual in a combative struggle, decide whether the path leads to eternal bliss or eternal damnation. The gate to the heavenly Jerusalem is open to the blessed. The damned, however, are pulled directly into the maw of hell with all their torments described in detail. Hope of belonging to the elect is conveyed only by the lowest zone of the Heavenly Sphere, where the instruments of suffering are presented to the Judge, so to speak as a reminder of his work of redemption accomplished on the Cross. Thomassin gave a special Franciscan touch to his depiction of the Last Judgement by having the cross held not by an angel but by the stigmatized Saint Francis, who intercedes on his knees, distinguished from the crowd of other saints gathered in the zone above.

Thomassin's Last Judgement has been widely spread as far as Latin America, not least through the new editions by Rossi and the Calcografia Camerale. Particularly impressive is the adaptation by Diego Quispe Tito in his painting of 1675 for the Franciscan convent in Cusco, Peru.