

LE CLAIRE

SEIT 1982

KUNST



JACOB JORDAENS

1593 - Antwerp - 1678

Homage to the Poet

Red and black chalk, pen and brown ink, watercolour on paper; c.1660. The sheet enlarged by the artist on all four sides. Inscribed above: *Sinne beeld | de Poesie ofte den Poet gekroond met | Lauriere door Apollo | Mercurius hem inschenckende den Nektar | ofte den Ambrosiaen | de nimphem hem met sangen vereerende.*

205 x 215 mm

PROVENANCE: Jonathan Richardson, Jr. (1694-1771), London (Lugt 2170) – Goodhaert, Brighton – Clifford Duits collection, London; thence by descent

LITERATURE: Leo van Puyvelde, *Jordaens*, Paris and Brussels 1953, p. 195 – Roger-A. d'Hulst, *De tekeningen van Jacob Jordaens*, Brussels 1956, pp. 281 and 386, no. 160 – Roger-A. d'Hulst, *Jacob Jordaens en de Schilderskamer van der Antwerpse Academie, Jaarboek Kononklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten*, Antwerp 1967, pp. 135-6, fig. 3 – Roger-A. d'Hulst, *Jordaens Drawings*, London and New York 1974, II, A366 and IV, fig. 348 – R.-A. d'Hulst, *Jacob Jordaens*, (German edition), Stuttgart 1982, p. 258, no. 228, repr. – Claudia Brink and Wilhelm Hornbostel (eds.), *Pegasus und die Künste*, exhib. cat., Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, Munich 1993, p. 208, no. IV.23, repr. – Christian Dittrich, *Allegorie der Dichtkunst von Jacob Jordaens*, in 'Dresdener Kunstblätter, Zweimonatsschrift der Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen Dresden', 4/97, Dresden 1997, pp. 127-9.

EXHIBITIONS: Mortimer Brandt Gallery, New York 1940, no. 14 – *Tekeningen van Jacob Jordaens*, exhib. cat., Rubenshuis, Antwerp and Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam 1966-7, no. 113, repr.

The present pen and watercolour sketch depicts a scene set on Mount Helicon, sacred to the Muses. The poet, in a red robe, is shown at the centre of the image, seated at the feet of Apollo who is crowning him with laurel. Mercury, on the left, attended by two putti, is filling a cup for the poet with the water of Hippocrene, the source of poetic inspiration. On the right, two satyrs are playing the flute. Seated in front of them are two Muses beside a fountain. In the foreground are musical instruments and a book. Above the figures, amid foliage, is the winged horse Pegasus, who, according to myth, struck the Hippocrene, the sacred spring, from the rock with his hoof.

This mythological subject was highly popular in seventeenth-century Antwerp. The 1651 *Ommegang*, a medieval pageant celebrated annually in the city, included a triumphal *tableau vivant* described in the programme as 'Mount Parnassus, the chariot of the nine Muses'.¹

A variant of the present drawing – at one time in the collection of Dr. M. Rech (Lugt 2745 b) – was with Thomas le Claire Kunsthandel in 1992, when it was sold to the Department of Prints and

¹ See: Roger-A. d'Hulst, 1974, op. cit., p. 433.

Drawings at the Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen in Dresden.² [Fig. 1] In this sheet the poet is depicted kneeling at the feet of Apollo with Mercury's right hand resting on his head. Four Muses in various poses are depicted at the right. One of them is holding a cup to the mouth of the poet, reviving him with water from the Hippocrene. The spring water is gushing from the rock face at the left. Above the group of figures Pegasus is shown in full gallop to the right.

In both drawings the central motif is executed on a rectangular sheet made up on all four sides using thin strips to produce the square format favoured by Jordaens. The enlargement was carried out by Jordaens himself – it was his usual practice³ to supplement the main group with subsidiary figures. He would add these at a later stage to heighten the vitality of the composition.

The present drawing demonstrates the masterly level of draughtsmanship achieved by Jordaens in his late period between 1655 and 1665.

No painting directly based on the present drawing is known to exist. However, several paintings by Jordaens demonstrate his interest in the theme. They differ from the drawings compositionally and they also differ in that in both, a Muse is depicted offering the cup to the poet. One example is a painting titled *Homage to the Poet*, now in the collection of the Museum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, Dortmund.⁴ [Fig. 2]. Another work (oil on canvas, 138 x 85 cm) was with Appleby's, London, in 1950. A further version (Jordaens and studio), also differing compositionally and with a larger group of figures, was sold at Christie's, London on 20 May 1949, lot 161. It is titled *The Inspiration of a Poet* (oil on canvas, 165 x 117 cm).⁵

Finally, two paintings in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Antwerp, are relevant. They are: *Pegasus* (oil on canvas, 265 x 276 cm) and *Industrie and Commerce promoting the Fine Arts* (oil on canvas, 184 x 486 cm). Both paintings were presented by Jordaens to the Antwerp Academy in 1605 as decorations for the Poet's Chamber.⁶ In conjunction, they combine to represent yet another version of the present theme.

² R.-A. d'Hulst, 1974, op. cit., A 367, fig. 385. – *Master Drawings 1500-1900*, catalogue VIII, Thomas le Claire Kunsthandel, Hamburg 1992, no. 22, repr. – C. Dittrich, op. cit., pp. 127-9. – Wolfgang Holler and Claudia Schnitzer (eds.), exhib. cat., *Weltsichten, Meisterwerke der Zeichnung, Graphik und Photographie*, Kupferstich-Kabinett Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, 2004, p. 52, repr.

³ Michael Jaffé, *Jacob Jordaens 1593-1678*, exhib. cat., Ottawa 1968-9, p. 141. – S. Dittrich, op. cit., p. 128.

⁴ See C. Brink and W. Hornbostel (eds.), op. cit., p. 208, no. IV.24, repr. and plate 49.

⁵ R.-A. d'Hulst, 1967, op. cit., p. 139, fig. 5.

⁶ R.-A. d'Hulst, 1967, op. cit., pp. 132-3, figs. 1-2.



Fig 1: *Homage to the Poet*, c.1660,
pen and brown ink, watercolour over black chalk, 245 x 257 mm.
Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Kupferstich-Kabinett [inv. C 1997-45]



Fig.2: Jakob Jordaens (and studio), *Homage to the Poet*,
oil on canvas, 111 x 79 cm. Museum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, Dortmund
Museum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, Dortmund, [inv. C 5198].