

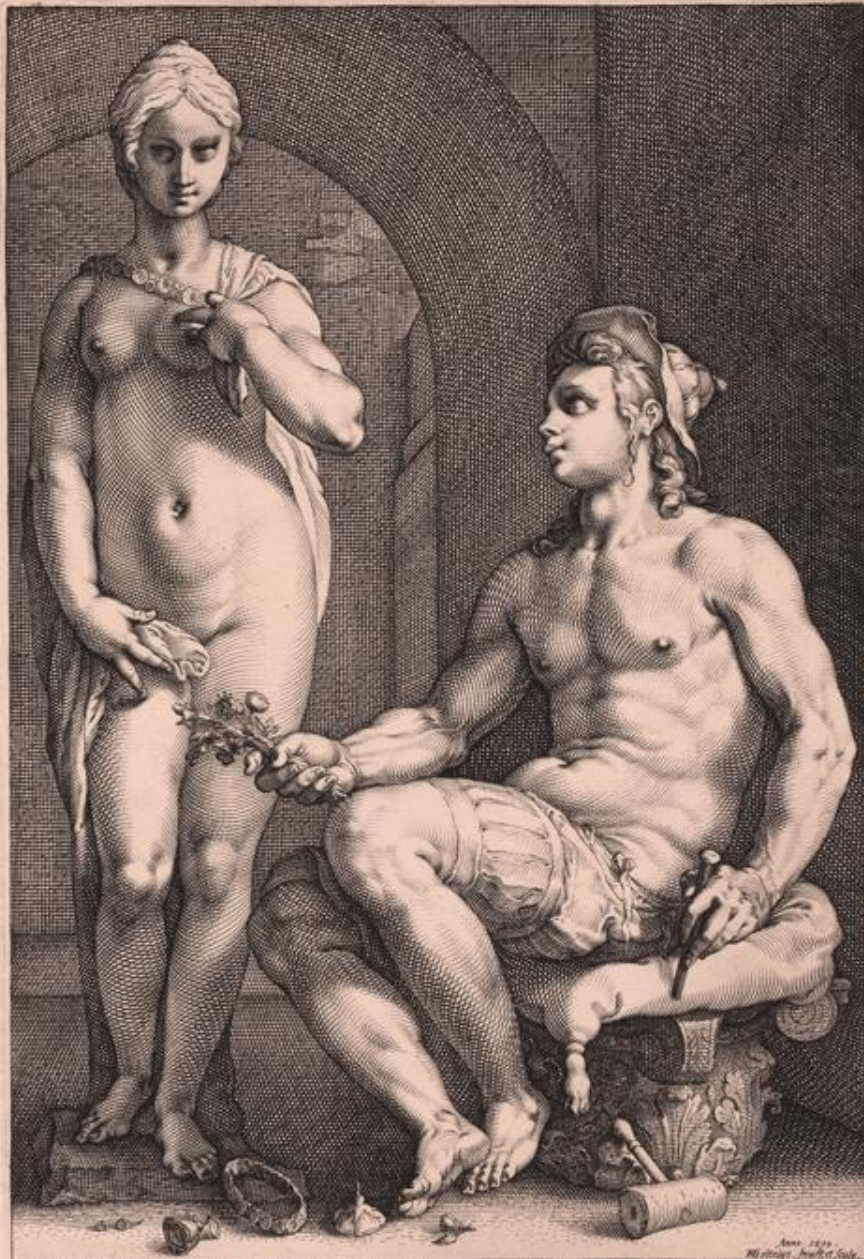
17th-Century Dutch Printmaking: Etching





Rembrandt, *Nude Woman Seated on a Mound*, c. 1631

Etching

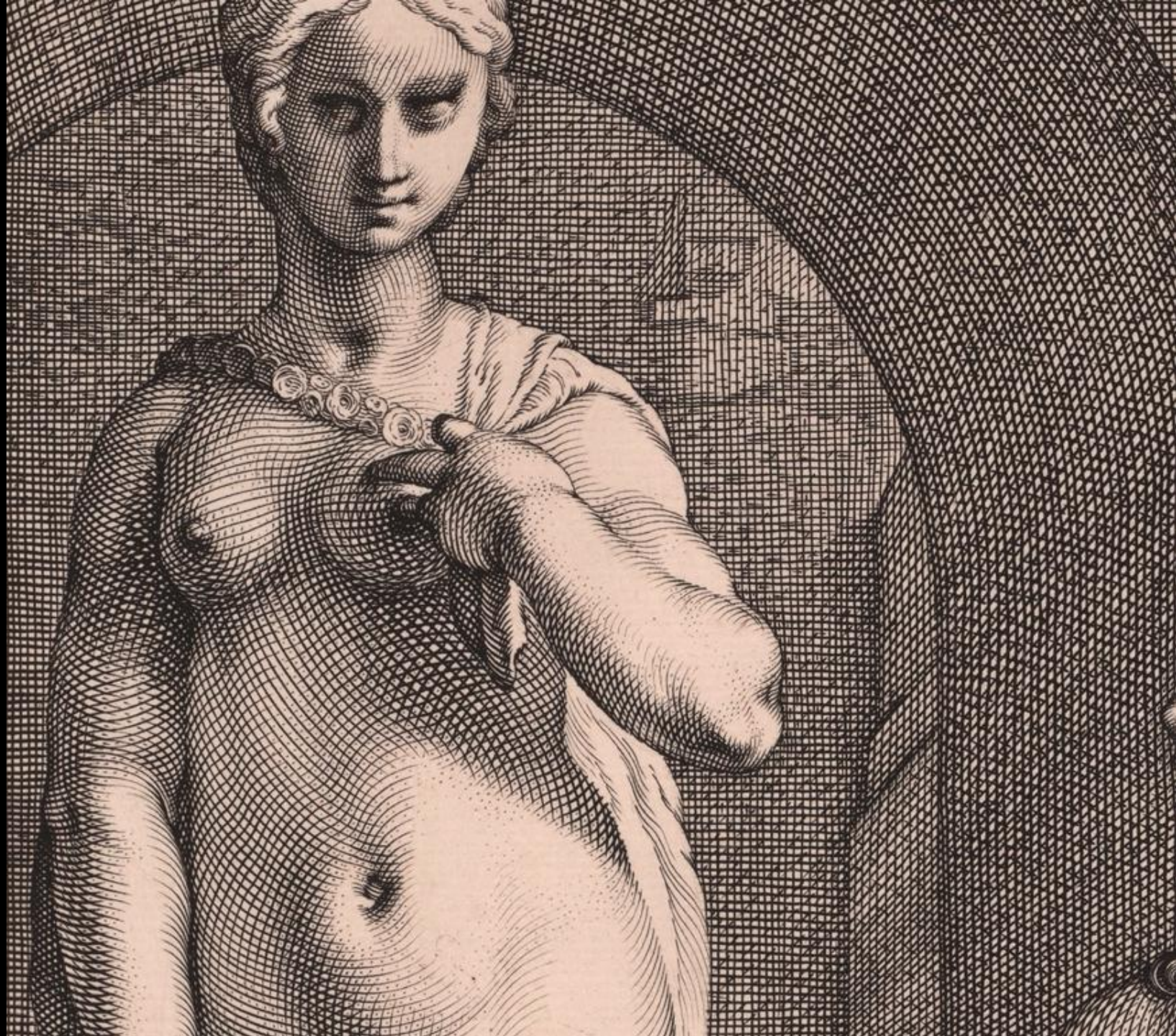


Hendrick Goltzius, *Pygmalion and Galatea*, 1591-92

Engraving

*Subsistit ebur murem quod virginis ora gerebat
Pygmalion, vix dixisset virginis ora.*

*Ipse opus auctor amans in imagine flagrat eburna,
Miserè Acidaliè cupido deum iuncta marito est.*





Compare the rendering of the figures and the quality of the line



Intaglio Technique: Etching



- Metal plate coated with acid resistant ground
- Design scratched onto the ground with an etching needle
- Plate placed in an acid bath, with the acid “biting” into the exposed portions of the metal plate
- Ink the plate, wipe the surface and leave ink in incised parts of the plate
- Run sheet of paper and plate through a high-pressure press

Printmaking was an important part of Rembrandt's output.

- Generates revenue and disseminates his designs
- Uses print in an experimental way—unusual subjects and a range of techniques



Print studio in Rembrandt's house—now the Rembrandthuis Museum

Rembrandt, *The Rat Catcher*, after 1632.
Etching, 6 x 5.3 in.



Rembrandt fecit.

Rembrandt, *Beggar*, c. 1630.
Etching, 3.1 x 1.6 in.



Rembrandt, *Three Trees*, 1643. Etching, 8 3/8 x 11 in.



Rembrandt, *Christ Healing the Sick* ("The Hundred Guilder Print"), 1649
Etching, drypoint, engraving 11 x 15.6"



Drypoint

- Scratching with an etching needle directly into the metal plate
- Metal scrapings on either side of the lines, known as the burr, will hold a velvety film of ink
- Rembrandt uses this technique to enhance the shadows and create atmosphere to his etched plates

Rembrandt, *Christ Healing the Sick* ("The Hundred Guilder Print"), 1649
Etching, drypoint, engraving, 11 x 15.6"



Poem by H. F. Waterloos, 17th-century Dutch poet

Thus Rembrandt's needle draws God's Son from life

and places him amidst the sick, in droves;

So that the World, sixteen centuries on, would see the miracles he wrought for all.

Here the sick are cured by Jesus' hand. And here the children (True Divinity!) are blessed; admonished those who hold them back.

But woe! The Young Man mourns. Phrisees sneer at the Faith of holy men, the rays of Christ's divinity.

Rembrandt's *Hundred Guilder Print* depicts several episodes in Matthew 9.



Rembrandt, *Hundred Guilder Print*, detail. Right: sick being healed



Rembrandt, *Hundred Guilder Print*, detail.

Left: Christ beckons children, skeptics and Pharisees, parable of the rich man



Rembrandt, *Christ Healing the Sick* ("The Hundred Guilder Print"), 1649





Rembrandt's reworking of his plates.

Rembrandt, *Entombment*, c. 1654.
Etching, first state, 8 ¼ x 6 3/8 in.

A "state" is a particular form of a print resulting from deliberate and permanent change to the plate.



Rembrandt, *Entombment*,
c. 1654. Etching, drypoint,
engraving, second state, 8
 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 6 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.

Rembrandt, *Entombment*, c. 1654 (detail). Etching, drypoint, engraving, second state





Rembrandt, *Entombment*,
c. 1654. Etching, drypoint,
engraving, fourth state, 8
 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 6 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.

Rembrandt, *Entombment*, c. 1654 (detail). Fourth state, 8 ¼ x 6 3/8 in.

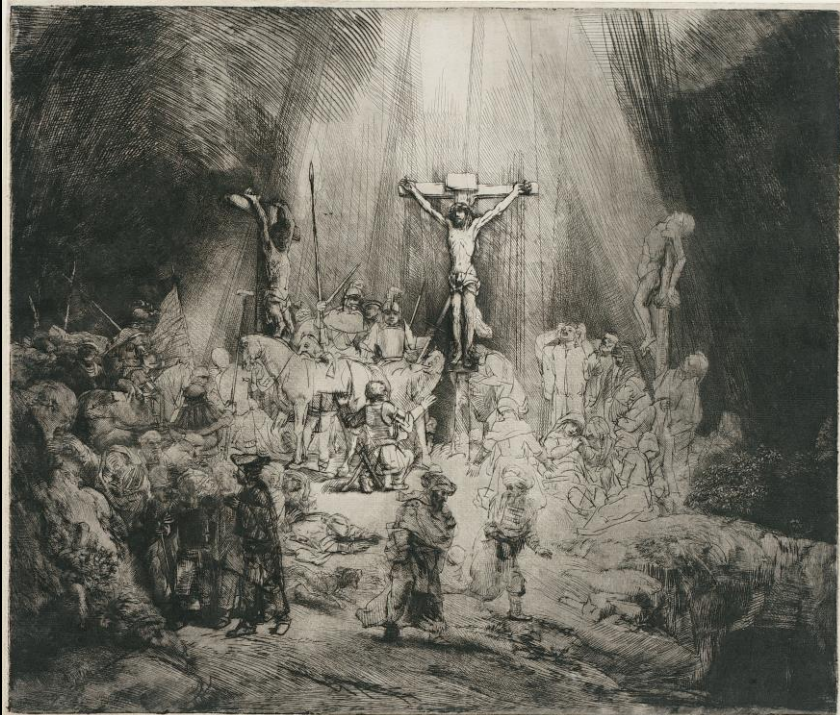


Rembrandt, *Entombment*, c. 1654. Etching, 8 ¼ x 6 3/8 in.
1st, 2nd, 4th states



Arnold Houbraken (primary source from the early 18th century) on Rembrandt's practice of issuing different states of his prints:

This habit brought him great fame and no less financial advantage: especially the trick of minor change, or small and slight additions, which he brought into his prints, whereby he could sell them once again. Truly the desire at that time was so great, that people would not be considered true connoisseurs if they did not [have all the states of a specific print.]

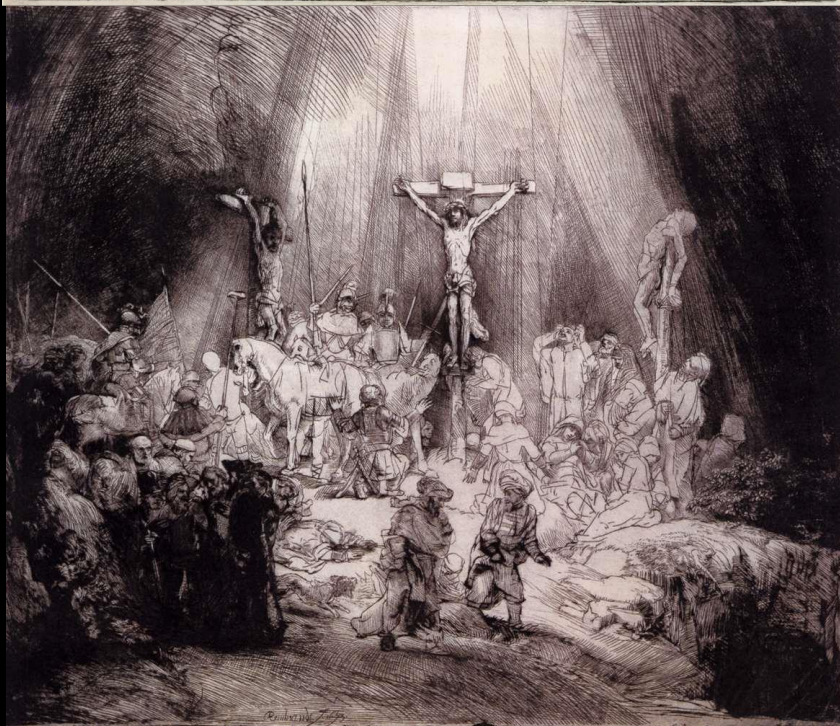


Rembrandt, *The Three Crosses*, 1653

Left: 2nd state of 5

Lower left: 3rd state of 5

Lower right: 4th state of 5



17th-century Dutch Printmaking: Etching

- Learn the differences between techniques of engraving, etching, drypoint
- Rembrandt's novel and experimental approach to etching
- Creation of different states: reworking of plates to create variations and uniqueness
 - Artistic and economic motivations