

Classical Gods and Heroes In The National Gallery Of Art



by
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To
FRANK M. SNOWDEN, JR.
who suggested that I undertake this project

*. . . tua me, genitor, tua tristis imago
saepius occurrens haec limina tendere adegit.*

Vergil, Aeneid VI, 695-96

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This handbook is the result of my experiences as an instructor of Classical Mythology at Howard University in Washington, D.C. I have always believed that no discussion of the myths of the ancient Greeks and Romans would be complete without mention of the influence of these stories upon the visual arts since the Renaissance. Consequently I have led many students through the National Gallery of Art to view the numerous art objects, many of them the most outstanding examples of their periods, which focus upon the Classical myths. My purposes have been not only to demonstrate to my students the importance of these myths upon Western art thematic, but also, and perhaps more importantly, to emphasize the artist's freedom to change and interpret ancient myths according to his own purposes.

The following pages, therefore, are intended as a guidebook of the National Gallery of Art for students of Classical Mythology. It makes no pretention to be a work of art history and omits many details which a modern art critic would consider important.

I have chosen for this guidebook only paintings or sculpture with direct Classical connections. Other works, which employ similar mythic themes, but not according to the Graeco-Roman version, have been passed over; e.g. Rembrandt's *Joseph Accused by Potiphar's Wife*, which can easily be associated with several Greek stories about false seductions, including those of Hippolytus and Bellerophon. Artwork related to Roman historical legends has also been excluded; e.g., Crespi's *Lucretia Threatened by Tarquin*.

Only artwork on permanent exhibit in 1981 is included in this handbook. Many of the Gallery's other fine holdings based upon Classical myths, such as Bellini's famous *Orpheus*, are not currently on display. It is hoped that these, too, will eventually be placed in the public eye as the Gallery's exhibition space expands.

For convenience I have used only the Latin names for the Classical gods and heroes. Those Greek equivalents not provided in parentheses in the text can be found in the appendix.



N.G. 231 Gallery 19
Venus c.1525
 Bernardino Luini
 Milanese c.1480-1532
 Wood, 42 x 53 1/2 (1.07 x 1.36)
 Samuel H. Kress Collection 1939

The arrangement of the National Gallery's holdings according to chronology and national school is very conducive to the study of the influence of Classical Mythology on Western art thematic. A stroll through the first eighteen galleries emphasizes to the viewer the strong hold which Christian themes held over Western art into the Renaissance. It is not until the early sixteenth century in Italy that one finds so-called "pagan" themes beginning to infringe upon Christian iconography. This change is due especially to a general renewed interest in Antiquity, and notably to the rise of enlightened artistic sponsors, such as Alfonso d'Este of Ferrara in Italy, who enabled artists sometimes to put aside religious commissions in favor of more secular themes, especially Graeco-Roman myths.

Only in Gallery 19 does one come upon a painting which is clearly not religious in theme: *Venus*, by the Milanese artist Bernardino Luini (c.1480-1532). The contrast is striking between the reclining nude in Luini's painting and the piously clad Virgins in the earlier galleries. With a classical theme, the artist was allowed the freedom, not possible in religious art, to study the beauty of the human form. Some critics have argued that the figure depicts a "Nymph of spring" rather than Venus, the ancient goddess of love and fertility. While either attribution is possible mythically, the tradition of the bathing Venus dating back at least to the *Aphrodite of Knidos* by Praxiteles (c.350-330 B.C.) makes Venus the more likely subject of this painting.

Mythically Venus is usually depicted bathing or "at her toilet" for two reasons. First of all, as Aphrodite she was born from the sea foam (Gk. *aphros*) where Saturn threw his father Uranus' genitals. For the story of Venus' birth, see Hesiod's *Theogony* 188-198. Secondly, as goddess of love, Venus embodies feminine charm and beauty and she, unlike the more matronly Juno or Ceres and the virgins Diana or Minerva, has no aversion to posing in the nude.

Luini depicts the goddess wearing a sheer cloth which covers only her thighs and lower torso. Venus clasps the ends of this cloth in both hands; her right hand rests on her right knee while her left hand is raised toward her right shoulder. The goddess, with carefully braided brown hair, glances toward the viewer's left. The rest of the goddess' clothing, in a red and white pile, lies at the left.

The artist has included several traditional attributes of the goddess: jewelry, such as the pendant earrings and also the necklace on the rock at Venus' left, and the bed of flowers on which the deity reclines. Also to be noted is the small spring at the bottom right-hand corner of the painting. All of these objects emphasize the goddess' birth in the sea and her function as goddess of procreation (flowers) and feminine charm (jewelry).

The background is detailed but apparently unconnected to the main subject of the painting. At the right is a grove of trees. At the left are two fortified towns, both of which are built beneath towering cliffs. Below the town at the left is a stone bridge over a river. Three human figures, two pedestrians and one on horseback, can be seen crossing the bridge. To the right of the other town is a much larger body of water, either a lake or the sea. Far in the distance is a cloud-covered mountain. It is not uncommon for paintings of this period to have backgrounds unconnected with the main subject. Artists such as Luini are thus demonstrating their skill in depicting perspective.



N.G. 1362 Gallery 21
The Infant Bacchus c. 1515
 Giovanni Bellini
 Venetian c.1430-1516
 Wood, 18 7/8 x 14 1/2 (0.480 x 0.368)
 Samuel H. Kress Collection 1961

In Gallery 21 is located the *Infant Bacchus* of Giovanni Bellini (c.1430-1516). The painting depicts a young boy dressed in a bright blue tunic and sitting on a rock. The wreath of vine leaves around his head and the pitcher which he holds in his left hand both suggest Bacchus or Dionysus, the ancient god of wine. The background landscape is mountainous with a straggling tree in the right hand corner. In the right foreground is the twisted base of a grapevine.

In ancient art, Bacchus was most commonly depicted as a beautiful (usually beardless) young man, such as he is in Euripides' *Bacchae*, or as a bearded middle-aged figure indistinguishable from his father Jupiter were it not for attributes such as grape leaves. Dionysus could also appear as a child or a young boy; e.g. the famous statue of Mercury holding the infant Dionysus found at Olympia. Since the ancient gods, as anthropomorphic deities, had the distinction of having a birth but no death, many myths developed about their births. The story of Dionysus' origin was particularly popular. It is told both in Euripides' *Bacchae* and in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (III, 256-315). Jupiter fell in love with the mortal Semele, daughter of Cadmus, founder of Thebes, and visited her frequently at night. Jupiter's wife, Juno, discovered the infidelity and jealously plotted to destroy her rival. Juno appeared to Semele in disguise and told her that her lover was a fake, that if he was really a god he should appear to her in his divine glory. On Jupiter's next visit, Semele compelled her divine lover to promise her whatever she wished and the god reluctantly had to appear to her in his divine state. The sight of the god of thunder and lightning was too much for poor Semele who was burned to a crisp, but Jupiter saved the fetus in her womb, placed it in his own thigh and brought it to term. Thus Bacchus was born.

The date of Bellini's painting has been debated. Comparison with the figure of the child Bacchus in Bellini's *Feast of the Gods* (in Gallery 22) reveals a close similarity between the two. Perhaps the same model was used for both compositions. Some critics have argued that N.G. 1362 was a study for the *Feast*, while others suggest that this Bacchus was painted after the *Feast*. Since the latter was signed by Bellini in 1514, at the very end of his life, it seems more probable that *Infant Bacchus* slightly precedes or is contemporary with the *Feast*. The visitor to the National Gallery is fortunate to have both paintings available for comparison. A painting similar to *Infant Bacchus*, probably painted by an unknown artist in imitation of the National Gallery work, is now in the Palazzetto Venezia in Rome.



N.G. 597 Gallery 22
The Feast of the Gods c. 1515
 Giovanni Bellini
 Venetian c.1430-1516
 Canvas, 67 x 74 (1.70 x 1.88)
 Widener Collection 1942

Bellini's *Feast of the Gods* in Gallery 22 is probably the most important of the National Gallery's collection of artwork based upon Graeco-Roman mythology. The ancient source of this painting is the aetiological story found in Ovid's *Fasti*, I, 391-440, concerned with why the Romans sacrificed an ass to Priapus, an ancient woodland and fertility deity. A feast was given for the gods by Cybele, an Eastern fertility goddess adopted by the Greeks and Romans. At the gathering, Vesta, the virgin goddess of the hearth, fell asleep and the sexually-hyperactive Priapus tried to rape her. He would have succeeded were it not for the braying of an ass, which woke the slumbering Vesta. For thwarting his plans, Priapus then demanded that the ass henceforth be the victim at his sacrificial rituals.

Bellini depicts the scene just at the moment before the ass brays. Vesta (sometimes identified as Lotus), dressed in white, sleeps at the bottom right hand corner of the painting. Her immodestly bared bosom is quite unlike the ancient depictions of this prudish goddess. Priapus, wearing a flowery wreath, white shirt and burgundy tunic, stands above Vesta and is about to make his play. The ass is in the left hand portion of the painting. It is probably the ass' master Silenus, another ancient woodland deity, who rests his left arm on the animal's back. Silenus is dressed in an orange garment, with a wine keg at his right side. At Silenus' right stands a figure with his back to the viewer and a vase on his head. This figure is human from the waist up but has goat legs and feet and a tiny tail. These are the distinguishing features of woodland gods which the Romans called fauns. At Silenus' feet the figure of the infant Bacchus (discussed above) stoops to fill his wine jug from a cask. Like Bellini's other Bacchus, this one wears a blue tunic and a wreath of grape leaves, but unlike the other Bacchus, this one wears a long-sleeved white shirt. Mercury reclines against the cask, to Bacchus' left. The ancient messenger god can be identified by the caduceus or herald's staff which he leans against his left shoulder. Mercury also wears a helmet, another traditional attribute of the god, but this helmet lacks the wings with which Mercury's headpiece is usually adorned. This Mercury is also missing his winged sandals or feet (for which see the bronze statue of Mercury in the Rotunda of the National Gallery). Bellini's Mercury is equipped with more pedestrian footwear: calf-length, blue sandals with gold trim. Mercury is elaborately dressed in white shirt, light purple tunic and a green velvet cloak pinned at his right shoulder. To Mercury's left a middle-aged god drinks from a goblet. Wreathed with oak leaves and with an eagle at his left this figure is meant to represent Jupiter, the king of the gods. Jupiter wears a white shirt and red tunic. At the bottom centre of the painting sits a female holding a quince in her right hand. She is usually identified as Cybele, the hostess of the feast in Ovid's story. Cybele, dressed in a white shirt and peach colored tunic, has her left

arm around the neck of a male who unabashedly rest his left hand on her thigh. The trident, or three-pronged fork, at his feet designates the figure as Neptune, god of the sea. Neptune wears an olive colored tunic with a red cloak over his left shoulder. Another couple sits between Neptune and Priapus. The male, sipping from a golden bowl, wears a laurel wreath and holds a violin in his left hand. These attributes suggest Apollo, the god of music and prophecy. Note that Bellini has replaced Apollo's traditional lyre with an anachronistic violin. Apollo is dressed in a blue tunic with a red-orange cloak draped around his shoulder and over his feet. The dwarf-like features of Apollo have drawn much comment and puzzlement. The female with Apollo is usually identified as Ceres, goddess of agriculture, because of the wreath of wheat which she wears. Ceres is dressed in a white shirt and pink tunic. Her bare left breast is atypical of ancient representations of the goddess, who, like Vesta, was very modest. Association of Ceres with Apollo is unusual mythically. A more traditional companion for Apollo would have been his twin sister Diana, goddess of the hunt, who does not appear in Bellini's *Feast*.

Many of the figures in the back row cannot be identified mythologically. At the right, between Neptune and Ceres, stand two females. The woman on the right is dressed in a white shirt and blue tunic and carries a vase on her head. The other, in white shirt and orange tunic, wears a wreath in her finely coiffed hair. Both women have their right breast bared. Behind Cybele and Neptune sits a naked figure wreathed in grape leaves and playing a flute. This is Pan, another ancient woodland deity. Pan sits with his right side to the viewer. At his back an unidentifiable female dressed in white and blue holds a large porcelain basin in her left hand. A similar basin is balanced on the head of a man to her right. In his left hand this man holds a branch in front of his lower torso. Between this figure and Silenus' ass can be seen another male, usually identified as Silvanus, god of forests, who wears a grass wreath on his balding head. In the bottom right hand corner of the painting, note the wooden basin upon which the artist has signed and dated his work.

Bellini has thus depicted most of the major gods and goddesses of Antiquity with their appropriate attributes. Modern x-ray analysis of the painting, however, reveals the fascinating fact that all the divine attributes, such as Mercury's caduceus and Neptune's trident, were features added to the painting, probably by Bellini himself. *A Feast of the Gods* was commissioned in 1513 by Alfonso d'Este of Ferrara, Italy, for his *Camerino d'alabastro*. Perhaps Bellini's original attributeless painting looked too mortal to Alfonso and therefore the gods' trademarks were added. At least another revision of the painting was made by Bellini's famous student Titian, who reworked the background (e.g., the mountain at the left). It is usually believed that Titian, having also been commissioned to paint for the d'Este *Camerino*, made certain changes to Bellini's *Feast* in order to harmonize the painting with his own contributions to the room.

While the bawdy, comic elements of the painting, such as Vesta's bare breast and Apollo's stature, do not conform to modern Christian conceptions of deity, Bellini has well captured the spirit of the ancient anthropomorphic gods. The ability to laugh at one's gods was a tradition going back at least to Homer. Ovid's story of the origins of Priapus' ritual is in the same humorous vein. Bellini and other artists of the Renaissance, have succeeded in transmitting this comic side of the Graeco-Roman gods into painting.

The care with which Bellini has balanced the painting should also be noted. The four major participants (Priapus, Vesta, Silenus and the ass) are paired at either end of the painting, with the other deities in the centre. Some modern critics have also seen Christian symbolism in Cybele's quince, which is not in Ovid's story. Since the quince is a Christian and Renaissance symbol of marriage, it might serve as a contrast to the illicit plans of Priapus. Such an interpretation of the painting reveals the openness of Classical Mythology to variants and to different interpretations by people of diverse cultures and time periods.

Finally, it should be noted that some critics have tried to identify various figures in the painting with important personages in Ferrara; e.g., Neptune as Alfonso and Cybele as Lucrezia Borgia, his wife. This is not widely accepted.



N.G. 324 Gallery 22
Cupid with the Wheel of Fortune c. 1520
 Titian (Tiziano Vecellio) attribution debated
 Venetian c.1477-1576
 Canvas, 26 x 21 3/4 (0.66 x 0.55)
 Samuel H. Kress Collection 1939

In the same gallery with *The Feast of the Gods* are four mythologically based paintings by Bellini's student Titian. The first, *Cupid with a Wheel of Fortune*, was painted about 1560 in *grisaille*, a monochromatic style of painting which uses shades of grey. It is not attributable to Titian with complete certainty.

Cupid is here depicted as a young child. In his earliest ancient form, both in art and poetry, Cupid was not shown as a young child, but rather as a pubescent youth; see, for example, Edmé Bouchardon's *Cupid* in the West Corridor of the National Gallery. Cupid has the distinction of growing smaller as he grew older. By the Hellenistic period (c.200 B.C.) the god had generally become a winged child, as he is conceived in Titian's painting and still today.

Titian's Cupid wears a diaphanous cloth over his torso and has wings, but not the bow and arrows by which he is usually identified. Instead Cupid is holding the rim of a wheel with both hands. A garlanded ox head hangs upon a tree trunk behind his back. The ox head, often a symbol of patience, has sometimes been interpreted together with the wheel, as Cupid's patience in setting the wheel of Fate in motion. However, ox heads have also been included in art as ornamental or sacrificial details as early as the *Ara Pacis Augustae*, the Altar of Peace of Augustus (1st cent. B.C.).



N.G. 1095 Gallery 22
Portrait of a Young Lady as Venus
Blinding the Eyes of Cupid after 1555
 Titian (Tiziano Vecellio) attribution debated
 Venetian c.1477-1576
 Canvas, 48 1/8 x 38 1/4 (1.224 x 0.973)
 Samuel H. Kress Collection 1952

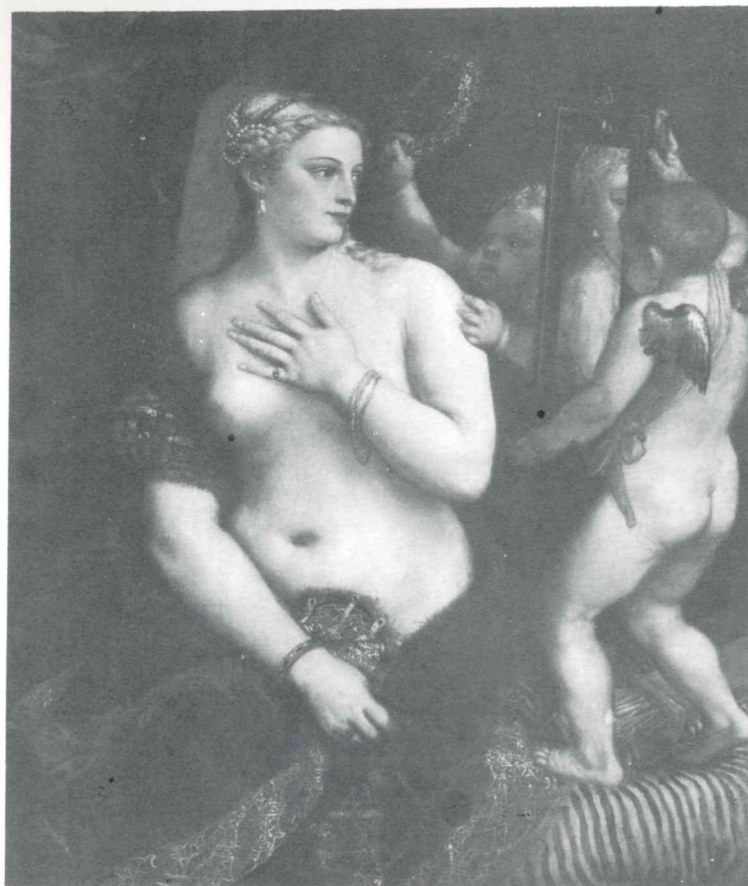
Cupid Blindfolded appears to be based directly upon an earlier painting by Titian now at the Villa Borghese in Italy. The painting shows Cupid being blindfolded by his mother, Venus. The goddess is seated with her torso in full view, but with her head turned slightly to her right. Venus is fully clothed in a golden dress styled in the fashion of Titian's Renaissance Italy rather than of Antiquity. The artist has bejeweled his goddess with a pearl necklace and earrings, a diadem, bracelets and a jeweled baldrick placed across her chest.

Venus is tying a blindfold on her son, who is leaning against her lap with his winged back to the viewer. He holds one of his arrows in his left hand.

Behind Venus, a second Cupid stands with his face and front to the viewer. He is resting his mouth on his right hand, which lies against Venus' right shoulder. While Venus technically had only one child whom the Romans named "Cupid" (or "Desire") and the Greeks "Eros" (or "Sexual Passion"), it was not uncommon, even in Antiquity, for more than one Cupid to appear in a single scene. Perhaps this duplication of her child is meant to emphasize Venus' procreative powers.

The female figure in the top right hand corner, with a platter apparently balanced on her head, was painted over by Titian himself and was only recently discovered during restoration.

The conception of a blindfolded Cupid can be traced back to Antiquity; e.g., the Pompeian fresco of Venus and Cupid now in the Naples Museum. Also related is the aphorism that "Love is Blind" which first appears in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (15th cent.).



N.G. 34 Gallery 22
Venus with a Mirror c.1555
 Titian (Tiziano Vecellio)
 Venetian c.1477-1576
 Canvas, 49 x 41 1/2 (1.245 x 1.055)
 Andrew Mellon Collection 1937

Titian once again paints the goddess of love with several Cupids in his *Venus with a Mirror*, also in Gallery 22. Many versions of this painting survive, but this one, dated about 1555, is the only canvas painted entirely by Titian himself. The artist was apparently so fond of his work that he never sold this painting, which was in Titian's house at the time of his death in 1576.

In the painting a partially nude Venus sits with her legs turned to the left but with a frontal view of her torso. The goddess' arms are modestly placed; her right arm rests across her lap and her left covers her left breast. The depiction of a nude goddess who tries to cover her private parts with her hands is a traditional pose which is often referred to as the *Venus Pudica* or "Modest Venus." An excellent example is the Medici Venus in the Uffizi Gallery of Florence. Titian has adorned this Venus with jewels, but not as lavishly as in *Venus Blindfolding Cupid*. This goddess wears one ring and one bracelet on each arm, a modest tiara and pendant earrings. Venus turns her head to the right in order to view herself in a mirror held by a straight-haired Cupid, who stands on Venus' couch with his back to the viewer. Cupid, naked but for a golden sash draped over his right shoulder, has left his quiver of arrows at his feet. The bow, however, is nowhere to be seen. Venus' image is partially reflected in the mirror. It was not uncommon in Antiquity to associate the goddess of love and beauty with the mirror, which can be considered one of the goddess' attributes. Cupid, it should be noted, is looking at Venus' reflection in the mirror, rather than directly at the goddess. The head and arms of a second Cupid can be seen in the background between Venus and the first Cupid. This Cupid, with curly hair, rests his left hand on Venus' left shoulder and reaches out with his right hand to crown the goddess with a wreath of leaves and white flowers. This is probably the myrtle, Venus' tree, although the leaves have been identified (erroneously, I think) as laurel.

Recent x-ray analysis of the painting revealed the surprising discovery that the canvas contained three successive compositions. The first, a portrait of a man and a woman, was covered by an earlier version of Venus, quite similar to the present one, except that the goddess was more clothed the first time.

The compositional unity of the final version is striking. Not only has Titian varied the position of the *Pudica's* arms to make them parallel, but he has also placed the left arm of the Cupid with the garland and the right arm of the Cupid with the mirror in essentially the same geometric position.



N.G. 680 Gallery 22
Venus and Adonis c.1565
 Titian (Tiziano Vecellio)
 Venetian c.1477-1576
 Canvas, 42 x 53 1/2 (1.06 x 1.36)
 Widener Collection 1942

Titian's *Venus and Adonis* in Gallery 22 is in most features the same composition as that of paintings in New York and Madrid. Painted by the artist and his workshop c.1560-1565, the National Gallery's version is nearly identical to the painting in New York and differs from that in Madrid in only minor details. The myth is taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, X, 520-739, which Titian follows in the main:

Cupid accidentally scratched his mother with a love arrow. Venus consequently fell in love with the handsome hunter Adonis. Goddess and mortal spent pleasant times together until Adonis felt drawn to the hunt. Venus was reluctant to see him risk his life, and, in order to dissuade him, the goddess told Adonis the sad story of Atalanta and Hippomenes. Thinking her lover convinced, Venus flew away to Olympus in a chariot of swans, only to hear on her way the death cries of her disobedient lover, who was gored by a wild boar. Venus, helpless to save Adonis' life, metamorphosized him into the beautiful but fragile flower, the anemone. Immortality was no preventive in ancient times against the pain of a lost love.

In his painting Titian depicts the goddess beseeching her lover not to depart. Adonis, prepared for the hunt with two hunting dogs on his left hand and a spear in his right, is caught in the very stride of departure. A blue tunic covers his lower torso and is strapped over his right shoulder by a golden belt. He wears another golden belt and a hunting horn at his waist. The dogs' ropes are tied around his left arm, which is protected from burns by a pink cloth. Only Adonis' right leg is visible. He wears an ornate, mid-length sandal with a Gorgon head at the top. Venus, naked but for a semi-diaphanous shift covering her right thigh, has her back to the viewer and sits on a chest covered with a burgundy colored velvet cloth. Venus has her arms wrapped around Adonis' chest and looks imploringly at her lover. The goddess' son Cupid cowers in a grove behind his mother. He holds a dove, Venus' bird, perhaps by virtue of both its beauty and amorous habits. A rainbow can be seen behind the lovers; this is a detail added by Titian, as it is not found in Ovid. Absent in this painting are Cupid's bow and quiver, which hang from a tree in the New York version.

Titian was criticized as early as 1584 for deviating from his Ovidian source by depicting Venus trying to detain Adonis when in the *Metamorphoses* Adonis departs for the hunt in the goddess' absence. Yet the artist very well may have in mind the dramatic moment in Ovid's story just before Venus implores Adonis to stay with kisses and the story of Atalanta. Titian has powerfully depicted the tension between the lovers, Venus drawing her lover to the left (towards Cupid and the pleasures of love) and Adonis thrusting to the right (towards his hunting dogs and death). The contrast between Venus and Adonis is further marked by Titian's utilization of a popular artistic technique, that of placing the female and male figures in back and front view respectively.



N.G. 1632 Gallery 23
The Judgement of Paris c.1570
 Bertioia (Giacomo Zanguidi)
 Parmese 1544-1570
 Canvas, 47 3/4 x 65 1/8 (1.21 x 1.65)
 Samuel H. Kress Collection 1961

The Judgement of Paris in Gallery 23 was formally attributed to Niccolo dell'Abate and Denys Calvaert and was only recently declared the work of the 16th century Italian painter, Giacomo Zanguidi, more commonly called Bertioia.

The myth is perhaps one of the best known. All the gods and goddesses were invited to the marriage of the goddess Thetis (a sea nymph) to the mortal Peleus. Only Eris, goddess of Strife, did not receive an invitation, so she spoiled the occasion by throwing into the crowd a golden apple marked "To the Fairest." Three goddesses claimed the prize: Juno, the queen of the gods; Minerva, goddess of wisdom and crafts; and Venus, goddess of love. Since no one on Olympus was foolish enough to volunteer as judge, Jupiter sent his son and messenger god, Mercury, to give the task to a mortal, the Trojan prince Paris, who, ignorant of his true identity, was living as a shepherd on the slopes of Mt. Ida. None of the goddesses left the decision to chance or fair play. Juno tried to bribe Paris with great power, the opportunity to be the most powerful king in the world. Minerva offered great wisdom. Venus offered the most beautiful woman in the world as Paris' bride. The Trojan chose Venus, who eventually arranged Paris' theft of and marriage to Helen, the wife of the Greek Menelaus. The Trojan War followed.

Bertioia depicts the moment of decision when Paris awards the golden apple to Venus. The bearded Trojan youth, wearing only a red garment across his thighs, sits with his back to the viewer. Paris is holding his shepherd's staff in his left hand and is presenting the golden apple to Venus with his right. At Paris' left stands Mercury, who is dressed in a red tunic and brown traveler's cloak, Mercury wears his winged hat and in his right hand holds his caduceus, which leans against a tree root. With his left hand Mercury gestures to the three goddesses. Immediately to Paris' right is Minerva, recognizable by her helmet and spear. Contrary to ancient depiction of this very masculine goddess, Minerva is shown semi-nude, with only a scanty sheer cloak hanging from her left shoulder across her thighs. Minerva has her left hand raised as if to beseech Paris to reconsider his decision. To Minerva's left is Venus, who is receiving the apple in her right hand. Cupid stands at her feet with a bow in his left hand; his right hand is raised towards Paris. Venus wears a diaphanous cloak similar to Minerva's, but which also covers her head. A blue robe is wrapped around Venus' shoulders. Unlike Minerva and Venus, who stand facing the viewer, Juno, at Venus' left, has her back turned, Juno is leaning on her left foot towards Venus and is gesturing with her right hand, as Minerva is doing, for Paris to halt the awards ceremony. The artist has adorned Juno in a tiara, perhaps because she is queen of the gods, and with pendant earrings. Hanging from the goddess' right shoulder are a white cloak and a transparent cloth which partially covers Juno's lower rear torso. The goddess holds part of the white cloak in her left hand.

Bertioia has surrounded the primary scene with several minor figures. In the bottom left hand corner of the painting, a hoary naked male leans against a huge jug from which water flows. This is the customary way to depict a river god. At Juno's feet the water from this jug forms a pool in which the goddess' legs and white cloak are reflected. Behind the river god a woman is being chased into a thicket by a faun. In the background behind the goddesses, a city lies at the foot of a mountain range. While this should be Troy, the architecture is neither ancient nor even Renaissance, but is almost surrealistic. A flock of sheep graze in the hills before the city and the male figure in the distance behind Juno is a shepherd. Also behind Juno is a puzzling group; a veiled woman on a donkey, with another figure walking alongside with a child on his shoulder. This group suggests the Christian story of the Flight into Egypt, of which there are several artistic versions in the National Gallery: e.g., Patinir's *Flight into Egypt* in Gallery 41A. The presence of the Holy Family appears incongruous to the theme of the Judgement of Paris. At the far right of the painting, a fully-clothed huntress aims her bow at a deer grazing in the woods. If this figure is meant to be Classical, it is the hunter goddess Diana, who had no care to compete for the Golden Apple. Diana, in fact, may be the key to an interpretation of the seemingly superfluous background scenes. Since the decision of Paris in favor of Venus was based upon love and sex, Bertioia may have added in the background several variations of this theme: complete rejection of love and sex in Diana; excessive acceptance of the same in the faun scene at the far left; and the virtuous religious view of marriage represented by the Holy Family in flight.



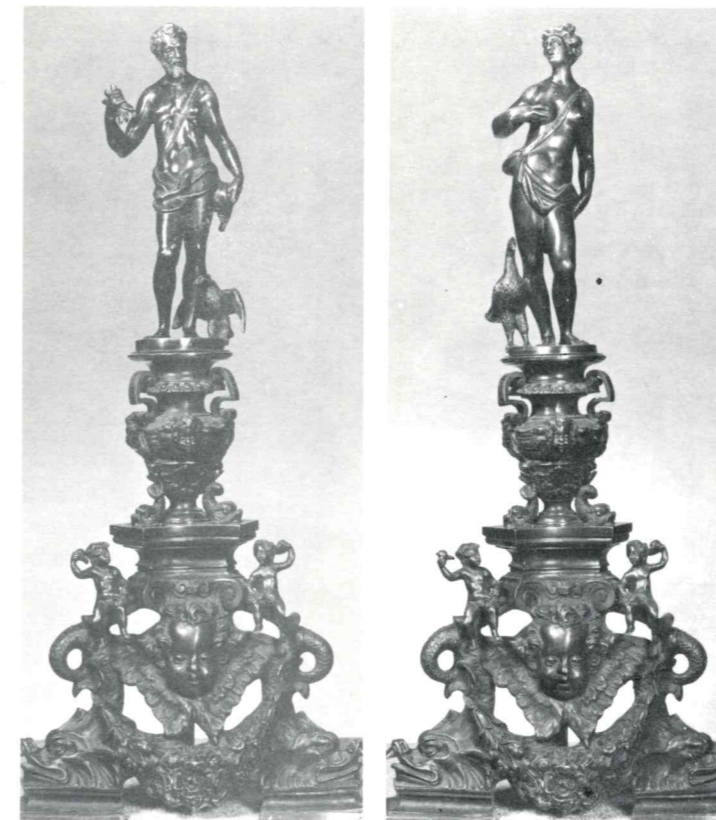
N.G. 716 Gallery 25
*Circe and Her Lovers in
 a Landscape* 1515/20
 Dosso Dossi (Giovanni de Lutero)
 Ferrarese active 1512-d.1542
 Canvas, 39 5/8 x 53 1/2 (1.008 x 1.361)
 Samuel H. Kress Collection 1943

The source for Dosso Dossi's *Circe and Her Lovers* in Gallery 25 is ultimately Homer's *Odyssey*, X, 135ff. When Ulysses (Odysseus) and his men landed on the island of Circe, a divine enchantress, Ulysses sent out some scouts to reconnoitre the unknown island. All but one of the men were charmed by the pretty song and hospitality of the goddess, who ruthlessly changed them into pigs with the help of a magic wand and potion. Warned by the survivor, Ulysses set out to save his men. With the aid of Mercury, he obtained a magic plant called *moly* as an antidote to Circe's potion. He then proceeded to the goddess' house, drank her potion which was naturally ineffective, and then agreed to sleep with Circe, but only after the goddess promised to work no enchantment thereby. Once Ulysses had slept with Circe, and thus obtained a power over her, he demanded the release of his men and the goddess complied. In passing, Homer mentions other victims of Circe, men who were changed into wolves and mountain lions and who ate humbly from the hands of Ulysses' men. In Vergil's *Aeneid*, VII, 10-24, the goddess' island is avoided by Aeneas, who knows of her ability to transform men into lions, boars, bears and wolves.

Dosso Dossi, a 16th century Italian artist, depicts Circe in the midst of her transformed victims. In the centre of the painting sits the goddess, nude except for a dark green cloak covering her left thigh and leg. She holds at her left side a large tablet, on the top fourth of which illegible writing is inscribed. Perhaps Circe is reading a spell from this tablet. A book, open to a mystical chart, lies at her feet. Circe wears a wreath of red and white flowers in her unbound hair which falls down her shoulders. The setting is a grove of trees near a lake shore or river bank (visible at the bottom left of the painting). A human dwelling can be seen in the distant background.

The types of animals into which Dosso Dossi's Circe has transformed men are more varied than either Homer's or Vergil's witches: At Circe's left, at her feet, are two dogs, a white one lying down and a greyhound standing. A deer buck stands in the trees behind the greyhound. Two birds, a falcon and an owl, are in the trees in the background. At Circe's right stands a doe. A white spoon-billed bird feeds on the shore. Behind the doe, the rear of another animal is visible as it walks away towards the right. At the far left of the painting is a lion with a human face. This last feature is an ingenious way for the artist to remind his viewer that these animals are former human beings. Perhaps Dosso Dossi is suggesting, by the wide variety of animals he paints, that Circe has changed men into animals which suited their human personalities; e.g., a fawning man becomes a dog; a ferocious man becomes a lion; a pedant becomes an owl; etc.

A word must be said, too, about the depiction of the witch, Circe. To a 20th century American, the word "witch" conjures up the image of an ugly hag dressed in black and pointed hat while riding on a broom stick. This was the image of a witch in the time of neither Homer nor Dosso Dossi, for both of whom a witch was a beautiful seductress who charmed men into her power by means of her beauty as well as her magic. Witches of former times were more likely to perform their spells, as Dosso Dossi's does, naked with hair unbound. While Dosso Dossi does not follow in detail the ancient story of Circe, he has captured well the power and beauty which Homer created in his goddess.



N.G. A-137 Gallery 26
Andirons Representing Jupiter and Juno
 Venetian School 16th Century
 Bronze
 Jupiter andiron: 31 1/8 x 14 3/4 (0.792 x 0.376)
 Juno andiron: 31 1/4 x 14 3/4 (0.796 x 0.376)
 Widener Collection 1942

Gallery 26 contains several bronzes with Classical themes. On the left as one enters are a magnificent pair of andirons dating from the 16th century and attributable to the Venetian School. The elaborate and multi-tiered pedestals are identical and are distinguished by several pairs of sea monsters and heads of children with cheeks puffed (to represent the wind). Also, a pair of naked boys are listening to conch shells in one hand and holding seaweeds and seashells in their laps with the other. On top of each pedestal stands a figure, Jupiter on the left andiron, and Juno, his wife, on the other.

Jupiter wears only a cloak across his thighs and a belt across his left shoulder. The bearded god holds a fold of his cloak in his left hand and a thunderbolt in his right. The latter is an attribute often brandished by the god of the sky, even in Antiquity. Ancient thunderbolts held by Zeus looked more like modern dumbbells, but even this 16th century Venetian version is too small and stylized for modern tastes. At Jupiter's left foot perches his bird, the eagle, with wings outstretched.

Juno's figure is complementary to her husband's. The goddess is also naked except for a cloak across her thigh and a belt across her left shoulder. Juno holds her right hand over her right breast while her left arm hangs at her side. While Jupiter rests his weight on his left leg, Juno's weight is on her right. At Juno's left foot sits her bird, the peacock, with his tail feathers shut.

The creator of these andirons has been careful to identify the gods by their traditional attributes, especially birds. There are many stories in which Jupiter was associated with his eagle, the appropriate bird of the sky god because of its power and ability to soar high in the sky. Jupiter often used his bird in his service, as when he sent an eagle daily to consume the liver of the Titan Prometheus. Ovid, in his *Metamorphoses*, X, 155-161, even has the god take on the shape of his bird in order to carry off a Trojan prince, Ganymede, to be his cupbearer and to satisfy his homosexual lust. Perhaps the peacock is Juno's bird because of the goddess' great pride. The peacock is also featured in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, I, 568-746, in Juno's attempt to punish Io, one of her husband's mistresses. Jupiter tried to hide poor Io from his suspicious wife by changing her into a cow. Juno was wise to his tricks and had the unfortunate bovine girl hounded 24 hours a day by a 100-eyed (and hence never sleeping) monster called Argus. Jupiter finally came to Io's rescue by directing his son Mercury to slay the monster. As a result Mercury gained the epithet "Slayer of Argus" (Argéiphontes), and Juno took Argus' eyes and placed them of the tail of her bird. This story is thus an aetiology of how the peacock got its tail.



N.G. A-115 Gallery 26
Hercules Carrying the Erymanthian Boar
 Giovanni Bologna
 Flemish-Florentine 1529-1608
 Bronze 17 1/2 x 6 3/4 x 10 (0.455 x 0.170 x 0.255)
 Widener Collection 1942

The other two bronzes in Gallery 26 represent the most famous of all Classical heroes, Hercules, who was an extremely popular figure in Italian Renaissance art, philosophy and symbolism. The hero was the son of Jupiter by the mortal woman Alcmena. As Jupiter's bastard, Hercules earned the long-lasting enmity of Juno, despite the close relationship between the Greek names for the goddess and the hero ("Hera-cles" means "Glory of Hera"). Juno delayed Hercules' birth so that the hero became subordinate to his weaker cousin, Eurystheus (see Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, IX, 281-322). The core of the hero's story is a series of Twelve Labors which Hercules performs for his cousin. The National Gallery's bronzes represent two of these Labors.

The mythically earlier of the two Labors is depicted in the 16th-century bronze attributed to the Flemish-Florentine artist Giovanni Bologna and entitled *Hercules and the Erymanthian Boar*. In this, his third Labor, Hercules had to capture alive a wild boar which was ravaging a region of Greece called Erymanthus. The hero drove the poor animal into deep snow where he netted it and then brought it back to the king, who hid in a large storage jar out of terror of the beast. The ancients particularly enjoyed showing Hercules and the boar before the king: e.g., the famous Caeretan hydria now in the Louvre. Bologna, however, has chosen to show the hero on the way to the king's palace. Hercules, naked, is in mid-stride with his right foot forward. He balances the boar upside-down on his left shoulder. Hercules' left arm is swung around the boar's chest and his left hand restrains one of the boar's forelegs. A club is one of Hercules' trademarks, along with a lionskin which is lacking in this composition. Both club and lionskin had been acquired during the hero's first Labor against the Nemean Lion.



N.G. A-1701 Gallery 26
Farnese Hercules
 Florentine Second Half of 16th Century
 Bronze 22 3/8 x 10 3/4 x 10 (0.568 x 0.273 x 0.254)
 Gift of Stanley Mortimer 1960

The second bronze of Hercules, called the *Farnese Hercules*, is from Florence and dates from the second half of the 16th century. The hero is depicted here on what is often his final Labor (the order varies), the Golden Apples of the Hesperides. These apples were guarded by a dragon in a walled garden, the location of which was known only to the Titan Atlas, who held up the world as a punishment for offending Jupiter. Hercules graciously offered to spell for Atlas while he got the apples and the Titan readily agreed. One famous ancient version of the myth, from the Temple of Zeus at Olympia, shows the hero holding up the world with the help of Minerva. When Atlas returned with the apples, he suddenly decided not to take back his burden, but to leave Hercules hanging. The hero did some quick thinking and asked the Titan if he would only hold the earth for a minute while he adjusted his lionskin. The Titan foolishly agreed, and the hero ran off with the apples in hand.

The unknown Florentine artist has depicted the victorious hero. A very muscular, naked Hercules stands with his left foot forward. He is leaning to the left on his club, over which is draped a cloak and the lionskin. The hero holds his right hand behind his back. In his right hand are the three golden apples. While the National Gallery displays this bronze right against a wall, this composition was clearly meant to be viewed from all sides. The artist shows the hero having completed all his Labors and contemplating the fruit of his work. Since the Labor of the Golden Apples, as well as the other last Labors, the Capture of the Cattle of Geryon and the Capture of Cerberus, have often been interpreted as symbols of the quest for immortality or the conquest of death, this Hercules may be reflecting not only on the struggles involved in his Labors, but also on the prize, deification, which Hercules, unlike most ancient heroes, does obtain.



N.G. 1366 Gallery 28
Venus Adorned by the Graces c.1595
 Annibale Carracci
 Bolognese 1560-1609
 Transferred from wood to canvas
 52 3/8 x 67 1/8 (1.330 x 1.706)
 Samuel H. Kress Collection 1961

Venus Adorned by the Graces in Gallery 28 is the work of the Bolognese artist Annibale Carracci, c.1595. As early as 1678, the main female figure in the painting was identified as Diana rather than Venus. However, Carracci has included too many features special to the goddess of love to make plausible attribution to Diana.

The goddess is seated facing toward the right on a pile of cushions. While her lower torso is covered by a blue cloak, the nudity of her upper torso is sufficient reason to identify the figure as Venus, who is usually depicted naked, rather than Diana, who is almost always fully clothed. Venus is looking at herself in a mirror, another attribute of the goddess (cf. Titian's *Venus with a Mirror*). The mirror is being held up by a naked Cupid and is supported by the goddess' left hand. Several other Cupids are present. One at the far right hand corner of the painting carries on his right shoulder a vase which is probably filled with perfume. Another Cupid (but his wings are not visible) is seated at Venus' feet and tying her sandal lace. A fourth Cupid kneels in the foreground and is selecting jewelry from a chest to adorn the goddess. A fifth Cupid is at the far left, squatting behind an ornate box from which he is taking a comb in his right hand and a hair pin in his left. This Cupid is glancing up at one of three naked females who are preparing Venus' hair. Behind Venus, one of the women is braiding the goddess' hair. Another stands at the goddess' left and is curling her forelocks. The third stands in the background and is looking at a pearl pendant raised in her hands. These three women are the Graces (*Charites*, in Greek), often associated with Venus as personifications of feminine charm and beauty.

In the background at the right is a large fountain on top of which is a statue of Bacchus or Dionysus, god of wine. Bacchus is naked but for a wreath of grape leaves on his head. He holds the thyrsus, a Dionysian staff, in his left hand and a bunch of grapes is raised in his right. Sansovino's *Bacchus and a Young Faun*, a bronze in the West Corridor of the National Gallery, is similar to Carracci's Bacchus in many details.

Behind the Bacchus fountain, two men sit chatting. The one on the left is dressed in full armor, including helmet and spear, and may represent a guard of the goddess' household. However, the second male, not in armor, is bald and holds a hammer in his right hand. The latter figure suggests the Classical blacksmith god, Vulcan (Hephaestus), the husband of Venus in the *Odyssey* (VIII, 266-367). If the bald man really is meant to represent Vulcan, then the armored figure would be Mars (Ares) and the painter would be alluding to Homer's tale of the love affair between Venus and Mars. When Vulcan learned of his wife's infidelity, he fabricated a trap for the lovers, who were caught naked in bed under a net. Vulcan called all the gods of Olympus to witness the sight. Carracci's painting, of course, does not retell Homer's story, but only alludes to the tale by means of the background figures. The primary focus of the painting is the naked goddess, as it is for both Luini's *Venus* and Titian's *Venus with a Mirror* discussed above.



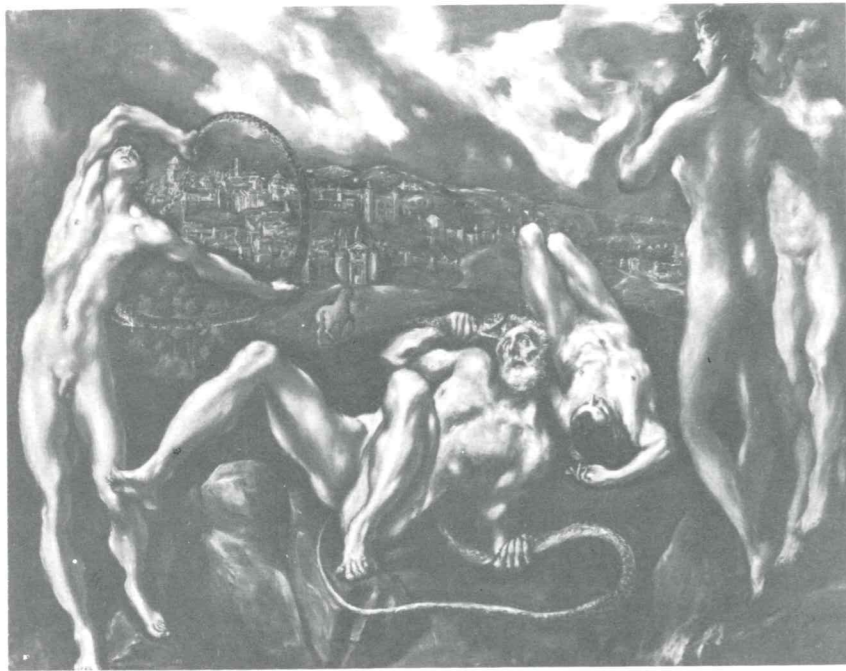
N.G. 1157 Gallery 33
Apollo Pursuing Daphne 1755/60
 Giovanni Battista Tiepolo
 Venetian 1696-1770
 Canvas, 27 x 34 1/4 (0.688 x 0.872)
 Samuel H. Kress Collection 1952

Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, a Venetian artist of the 18th century, was particularly fond of Classical myths and used them widely in his paintings. The theme of his *Apollo Pursuing Daphne* in Gallery 33 is taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, I, 452-567. Apollo, the god of prophecy, music and medicine, was also noted for his skill as an archer. Apollo once denigrated Cupid's use of the bow and, as a result, the mischievous god of love shot Apollo with an arrow of love for Daphne, a beautiful nymph and daughter of the river god Peneus. At the same time, Cupid shot Daphne with an arrow of hatred for Apollo. Consequently, Apollo relentlessly pursued an unwilling Daphne until the exhausted girl prayed to her divine father to preserve her virginity. Her wish was granted by transformation into the first laurel tree. Apollo, thwarted in his pursuit and heartbroken at his loss, promised to honor Daphne forever by making the laurel his tree. (*Daphne* is Greek for "laurel").

Tiepolo has chosen to depict the very moment of metamorphosis. Daphne, seated on a large jug, is already changing into the laurel. Her fingers have become twigs and branches and her right leg a tree trunk. The girl is still partly covered by a white garment, behind which Cupid hides at the far left of the painting. A quiver hangs from Cupid's right shoulder. In front of Daphne sits her father Peneus, whose identity as a river god is suggested by the oar at his feet and by the water flowing from a jug (cf. the river god in Bertoia's *Judgement of Paris*). Peneus is naked except for a red cloak which covers the god's lower torso and which partially lies beneath his jug. The river god has a white beard and disheveled dark hair. His right arm is resting on his jug.

At the right, a grief-stricken Apollo runs while pointing with his right hand toward his unwilling lover. The pained glance of the god is met by the cold expression of Daphne. Apollo is clothed in a gold colored cloak and sandals. He wears a quiver at his left side and a laurel wreath in his hair. While both are traditional attributes of the god and important to this particular myth, the laurel wreath is an anachronistic feature in a painting in which the laurel is only just being created.

The arrangement of the figures suits the story. The canvas can be sectioned into the Daphne-Peneus-Cupid group on the left and Apollo on the right. The stream of Peneus divides the two groups. The diagonal position of Daphne's body emphasizes her aversion to the god, while the thrust of Apollo's body is vainly toward the nymph.

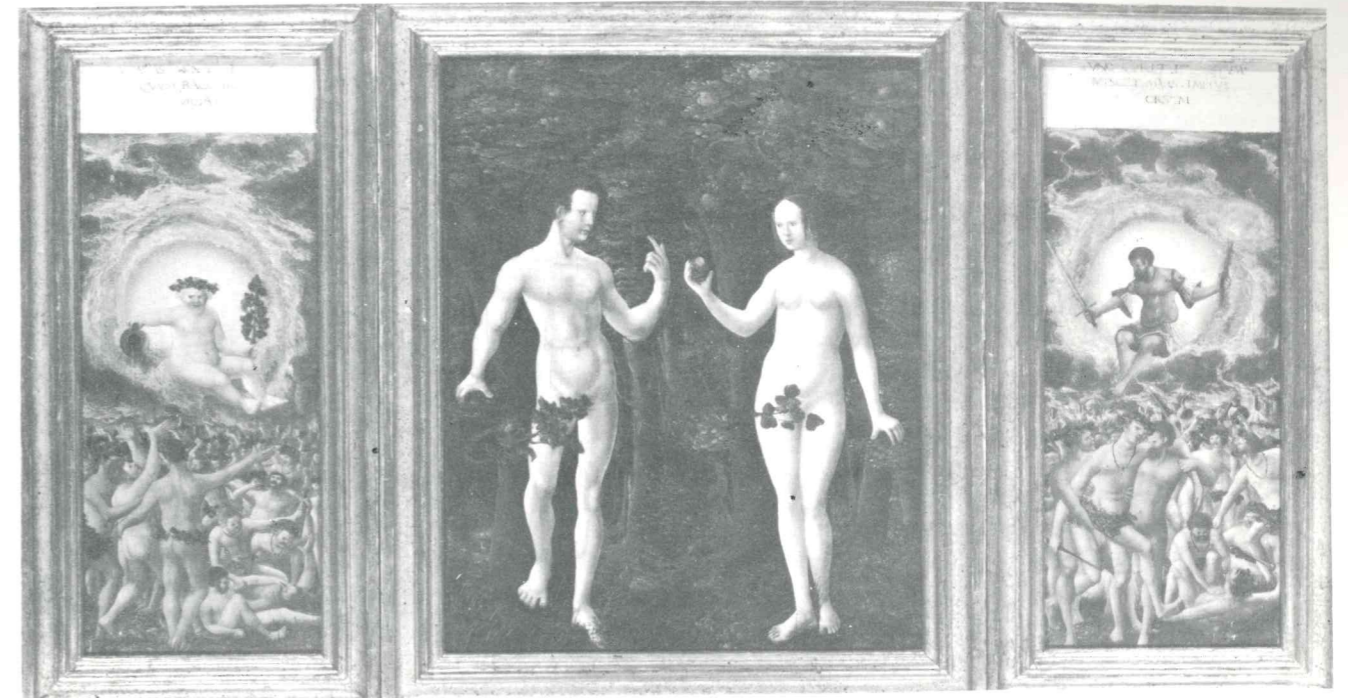


N.G. 885 Gallery 34
Laocoön c.1610
 El Greco (Kyriakos Theotokopoulos)
 Greek-Spanish 1541-1614
 Canvas, 54 1/8 x 67 7/8 (1.375 x 1.725)
 Samuel H. Kress Collection 1946

The painting entitled *Laocoön* in Gallery 34 is the work of the artist whom his Spanish patrons called El Greco (or "The Greek"), but who was known as Kyriakos Theotokopoulos in his native Greece. In *Laocoön* El Greco (1541-1614) had chosen to paint in his distinctive grey colors a myth about the Trojan War which is best known from Vergil's *Aeneid* (II, 40-55; 199-233). Aeneas here describes how a large wooden horse was left before the city of Troy by the Greeks who had apparently fled in defeat. Laocoön, priest of Neptune, warned the Trojans not to bring the horse into the city. The warning of the priest, in fact, has become an aphorism: "Beware of Greeks even when they are bearing gifts," *Aeneid*, II, 43-44. To demonstrate to the Trojans that there was cause to fear the horse, Laocoön even struck the horse's flank with his spear. Two huge serpents then appeared from the sea and seized the priest and his two sons in their coils. The Trojans, interpreting Laocoön's death as punishment for sacrilege, took into the city the horse laden secretly with Greek warriors, and the city of Troy was captured.

El Greco shows the actual punishment of Laocoön, who lies naked in the centre of the painting and struggles with a huge snake. At his head lies one son already dead, while the second son stands at his father's feet and struggles with another serpent. In the distance behind the priest can be seen a city meant to represent ancient Troy, but which looks more like the 17th century city of Toledo in Spain, where El Greco lived. By this anachronism the artist may be suggesting the universality or timelessness of myth, i.e., the story of Laocoön was just as relevant to El Greco's own day as it was to Vergil's. A horse trots towards the gates of this city; once again the artist has taken liberties with the myth by transforming the wooden horse into a real one. Three naked figures stand at the right hand side of the painting. Two look toward the priest while one turns away; none do anything to help. Perhaps these men represent the Trojans, whose fate is being decided before their eyes, yet who stand at the side powerlessly or apathetically and even try to ignore the scene. The depiction of 17th century Toledo instead of ancient Troy also suggests the possibility that these men may represent the general apathy or powerlessness of mankind in general towards the suffering of individuals.

A famous ancient version of Laocoön found in Rome was probably an artistic source for El Greco's painting, as this marble group was admired and greatly studied during the Renaissance as an example of static depiction of motion.



N.G. 1110 Gallery 35A
The Fall of Man c.1525
 Albrecht Altdorfer
 German c.1480-1538
 Wood, height of each panel 15 1/4 (0.388)
 width of middle panel 12 (0.305)
 width of side panels 6 1/4 (0.159)
 Samuel H. Kress Collection 1951

In Gallery 35A *The Fall of Man* by the 16th century German artist, Albrecht Altdorfer, is distinctive in that it blends both ancient and Christian themes together. The work is a triptych, or three paneled painting. The central panel depicts the Biblical story of the Fall of Man, *Genesis* 3. Adam and Eve stand in frontal view, with Eve on the right holding the sinful apple in her right hand and Adam at the left gesturing towards his mouth with his left index finger. Adam is resting his right hand on a tree limb while Eve does the same with her hand. Both are shown in the innocent nakedness of Eden, but the artist, painting after the Fall, has hidden their private parts behind tree branches. Behind Adam and Eve is the fruit-laden Tree of Knowledge in a grove of trees. The serpent is coiled above Eve's head in the Forbidden Tree. Wild animals, including a stag and a lion, are in the woods behind Adam and Eve.

The left panel shows Bacchus, the ancient god of wine, presiding over a drunken revel. The god, wearing only a wreath of grapes and leaves, holds a wine jug in his right hand and a branch from a grapevine in his left. Unlike Bellini's *Infant Bacchus*, the god here appears as a somewhat-comical, fat, middle-aged man, as even the ancients sometimes conceived of their wine god. Bacchus is seated on a cloud surrounded by a bright circle of light. Below him, his mortal worshipers are massed in Bacchic frenzy. All of the men are naked except for scattered grape wreaths or garlands and necklaces, some with jeweled pendants. Many of the figures hold wine vessels. Some are standing and some are reclining. In the right hand corner one man is being struck down by another holding a sword. At the top of this painting is an inscription in Latin, only partially legible: . . . M SANAS MENTES PESTE QUUM BACCHICA TURBAT ("... with the Bacchic disease he disturbs healthy minds"). The Bacchic disease is, of course, drunkenness.

The right panel depicts Mars, the ancient god of war, dressed in armor and holding a sword in his right hand and a torch in his left. Like Bacchus, he is seated on a cloud surrounded by light. Below Mars a crowd of mortals (perhaps the same men as in the Bacchus panel, since some of them still wear grape

crowns or wreaths) are engaged in plunder. Vessels and swords are raised above their heads. Another murder is taking place in the bottom right hand corner. Above this painting is the following partially lost Latin inscription: TUNC . . . RIT . . . UM MISCET MARS IMPIUS ORBEM ("then . . . impious Mars stirs up the world"). Cf. Vergil, *Georgics* I, 511.

Originally the Adam and Eve scene formed a two part cover to the closed triptych and was later transferred to the central inside panel, which once probably depicted a scene with the goddess Venus now lost. Thus, as conceived by Altdorfer, the triptych combined Biblical and Classical themes in a moralizing allegory; i.e., the Fall of Man on the cover led to the evils of drunkenness (Bacchus), sexual passion (Venus) and war (Mars) represented in the open triptych.

Bacchus and Mars were not universally liked, even in Antiquity. There are many myths which suggest the opposition which the Bacchic cult faced during its earliest stages of Greek development; see, for example, the stories of Lycurgus and Orpheus, and especially Pentheus in Euripides' *Bacchae*. Even the Greek gods had a strong distaste for Ares, Mars' Greek counterpart. In fact, the war god's own father, Jupiter, had little patience for him in *Iliad* V, 889-897:

*Don't sit by me and whine, you fickle head.
Of all the Olympian gods, you are the most hateful to me.
For strife and wars and battles are forever dear to you.
You have your mother Hera's unrestrainable and unyielding character,
And I cannot control her with words either. . . .
If anyone as destructive as you were born to any other god,
Long ago would you have been far below the heavenly gods.*

Altdorfer's unfavorable depiction of Bacchus and Mars is thus not completely the result of Christian influence, since both of these deities represent aspects of human nature which are not always favorable.



N.G. 1497 Gallery 35A
The Nymph of the Spring after 1537
Lucas Cranach the Elder
German 1472-1553
Panel 19 x 28 5/8 (0.483 x 0.727)
Gift of Clarence Y. Palitz 1957

Contemporary with Altdorfer's *Fall of Man* and in the same gallery is *The Nymph of the Spring*, by the 16th century German artist Lucas Cranach the Elder, who painted several slightly different versions of this theme. The northern European nymph in N.G. 1497 is strikingly similar to Luini's Italian *Venus* discussed above. In both paintings, a nude female is depicted reclining by a body of water, an artistic subject which has led to some controversy as to an appropriate title for each painting. Luini's work has been titled by different critics either *Venus* or *Nymph at a Spring*. Cranach's female is more solidly called a nymph because of the Latin inscription in the upper left hand corner of the painting which reads: FONTIS NYMPHA SACRI SOM/NUM NE RUMPE QUIESCO. "A nymph of the holy spring, I am resting; do not disturb." Note the artist's trademark, a serpent with folded wings, on the rock to the right of the text. Despite the inscription's reference to a nymph, several details of the painting suggest Diana, goddess of the hunt, rather than a water nymph: two partridges grazing at the goddess' feet (Diana was protectress of wild animals and the young); and a bow and a quiver filled with arrows on a tree at the far right, both traditional attributes of the hunting goddess even in Antiquity.

Cranach's goddess is reclining in the foreground in front of a spring and on a lawn scattered with wild strawberries. The nymph's head lies at the left side of the painting and rests on her right arm, which is bent behind her. A red satin dress is used as a pillow. The nymph's hair falls loosely down her back. Her left hand rests on her knee, which is slightly bent. Like the several representations of nude Venus in the Gallery, including Luini's, Titian's and Carracci's, the nymph wears jewelry: around her neck, a string and a chain with a pendant; on her left hand a bracelet and several rings. A sheer cloth is draped across her thighs. Both the nudity and jewelry of the figure suggest the willingness of artists after the Renaissance to apply traditional features of Venus to the equally beautiful but stringently chaste goddess Diana.

In the background at left is a large bush in front of a rock from which water flows into the spring. In the distant background at right is a fortified medieval village lying on the other side of a bridge. The Gothic towers are suggestive of Cranach's northern origin.

Whether a water nymph or Diana is intended as the subject, it is clear from the warning in the inscription that Cranach, like Altdorfer, has created a moralizing tone which is absent in Luini's work. The viewer is being cautioned concerning the dangers of sensuality.



N.G. 661 Gallery 45
Philemon and Baucis 1658
 Rembrandt van Ryn
 Dutch 1606-1669
 Wood 21 1/2 x 27 (0.545 x 0.685)
 Widener Collection 1942

The 17th century Dutch artist Rembrandt van Ryn was particularly fond of three types of artistic themes: contemporary portraits; scenes from the Bible and the life of Christ; and Classical myths. *Philemon and Baucis* in Gallery 45 represents this last group. The story is from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, VIII, 618-724, a tale which is quite similar to the Biblical story of Lot and the angels (*Genesis*, 29: 1-26). Jupiter and his son Mercury went in disguise on earth in search of any just men. The gods sought shelter in a thousand homes only to be refused a thousand times. Only a poor elderly couple, Philemon and Baucis, opened their home to the unknown guests, who were offered a simple country meal. When the wine bowl ran out but began to replenish itself, Philemon and Baucis guessed that they had extra-special guests and they offered to slaughter their only goose for a feast. The gods saved the goose by revealing their identities, took the couple up a mountain and destroyed the valley of inhospitable mortals. Jupiter and Mercury rewarded their generous hosts by offering them one wish and they replied:

*Since we've lived together all our lives,
 So may we share the moment of our death.*

The gods granted their wish. Philemon and Baucis were metamorphosized into trees, one a lime, the other an oak,

*Two trees so close together that their branches
 Seem[ed] to grow upward from a single trunk.*

Unlike Tiepolo, who chose to depict the moment of Daphne's metamorphosis, Rembrandt shows the quiet simple meal in his typical subdued tones. The gods are seated at a bare wooden table on which is placed a modest bowl of food. A youthful Mercury sits at the right and a middle-aged Jupiter is in the centre. No divine attributes are visible, as is proper since the gods are disguised as mortals; however, a bright light does surround Mercury's head. The regal dress of both gods contrasts vividly with their impoverished mortal surroundings. At the left of the table Philemon and Baucis offer the gods their beloved goose. In the background can be seen the couple's simple house with ropes and nets hanging from rafters and a fire in the hearth.



N.G. 1104 Gallery 52
The Feeding of the Child Jupiter c.1640
 Nicolas Poussin
 French 1594-1665
 Canvas, 46 1/8 x 61 1/8 (1.74 x 1.553)
 Samuel H. Kress Collection 1952

The tour of the East Wing of the National Gallery begins with three 17th century French paintings in Gallery 52. Nicolas Poussin's *The Feeding of the Child Jupiter* is freely based upon Hesiod's *Theogony* 453-91. Jupiter's father Saturn tried to avoid having one of his offspring overthrow him by swallowing all of his children as they were born. His wife Ops eventually tired of Saturn's savage appetite and saved her last born son Jupiter at birth by giving Saturn a rock to swallow and by hiding the baby in a cave on the island of Crete. The child was protected by the Cretans who fed him goat's milk and honey and disguised the child's cries by the clash of drums and cymbals. *Kouretes* or "Young Men" annually reenacted this myth on Crete by dancing to the sound of drum and cymbal.

Poussin's painting takes place not in a cave but in the countryside. In the centre the child Jupiter, naked, drinks from a goat's horn held to his lips by a fully clothed woman who sits on the ground. The woman is wearing a blue cloth on top of a yellow garment. She has a single red band in her tightly braided hair. To the right, a second woman stands holding a honeycomb in her hands. For a plate she is using an oak leaf. (Jupiter's tree is the oak.) This woman is dressed in a pink garment with a green cloak and wears a white headband decorated with blue geometric designs. At the left hand side of the painting a man sits on a rock and holds a shepherd's crook upside down in his right hand. He is naked except for a blue cloak across his left thigh and right arm and wears a wreath on his head. In front of him, a bearded man dressed in a yellow tunic has put down his crook and sack and kneels on the ground to milk a goat for the child. In the centre background, two naked females recline on a hill. Both wear wreaths made from the rushes growing behind them. These females represent water nymphs, since each is associated with a vase, one of which has water flowing from it. (Cf. similar depictions of water deities by Bertola and Tiepolo.) Poussin has balanced the painting by placing two old and twisted trees in the background on either side of the nymphs. The trees are of different types, but both have the rugged appearance of trees struggling to grow in high altitudes. This is perhaps Poussin's nod to the tradition that Jupiter was raised in a mountain cave. The tree on the right is an oak, Jupiter's tree. In Dodona in western Greece, there was an oracle of the god where the divine pronouncements were interpreted from the rustling of leaves in an oak grove. The oak is Jupiter's tree because it is often the tallest tree in a forest and also statistically the tree most likely to be struck by lightning (which is also in the god's control).



N.G. 1613 Gallery 52
The Muses Urania and Calliope c.1634
 Simon Vouet
 French 1590-1649
 Wood 31 1/8 x 49 3/8 (0.798 x 1.250)
 Samuel H. Kress Collection 1961

Simon Vouet's *The Muses and Calliope*, also in Gallery 52, is based upon Hesiod's *Theogony* 36-84, where Jupiter and Mnemosyne (Memory) were made the parents of the Muses, goddesses of inspiration. Vouet's painting does not tell a story about the Muses, for whom there were few myths, but rather depicts two of the Muses seated before the base of a Doric temple. At the left sits Urania, the Muse of astronomy, which was considered an art rather than a science by the ancients. Urania is identified by the huge sphere upon which she rests her right arm as well as by the starred diadem on her head. This Muse, wearing white and blue clothing, looks towards the viewer and rests her left hand on the shoulder of a second female figure who is dressed in yellow and pink and wears a gold tiara. The function of this second Muse, Calliope, the goddess of epic poetry, is suggested by the text of Homer's *Odyssey* which she holds in her lap. It is interesting to note that this book is an anachronism, since such bound volumes were not used until about the 4th century A.D. The ancients would have depicted Calliope holding a scroll instead. At the right fly three Cupids holding laurel wreaths in their hands. The presence of laurel in the painting is perhaps due to the tradition of awarding such wreaths as prizes at contests in honor of the Muses. The Cupids, however, have no mythological connection with Urania and Calliope.



N.G. 2355 Gallery 52
The Judgement of Paris 1645/46
 Claude Lorrain
 French 1600-1682
 Canvas, 44 1/4 x 58 7/8 (1.123 x 1.495)
 Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund 1969

The myth of Claude Lorrain's *Judgement of Paris*, dated 1645/46, has already been told for Bertoia's painting of the same name. Although based upon the same story, Lorrain's and Bertoia's works could not be more dissimilar. Where Bertoia chose to depict the moment when Paris awarded the apple to Venus, Lorrain has depicted a moment just prior to the actual judgement, while the goddesses are still bribing their judge. Where Bertoia created a complicated painting with numerous minor scenes, Lorrain, an enthusiastic landscape painter, has instead made the Judgement scene a minor part of a large bucolic landscape. The mythic figures are situated in the lower left hand portion of the painting, at the foot of a precipice. Behind them is a waterfall and a grove of trees. To the right a mountainous vista can be seen. Upon one of the mountains are some anachronistic ancient ruins. If these ruins are meant to represent Troy, the artist has projected the destruction of the city which will result from Paris' Judgement. In the foreground some of Paris' sheep and goats are grazing.

A beardless Paris sits on a rock with his right side to the viewer. He is naked except for a red cloak which covers his right leg. His staff rests at his left side. Paris' right hand is stretched towards one of the goddesses, who is speaking. This is Juno, who has her right arm raised while her left holds the fold of her cloak. This Juno, unlike Bertoia's, is fully clothed in red and blue garments. The goddess is identified by her bird, the peacock, which stands at her right side with its tail feathers displayed. Behind the peacock stands Venus, naked except for a diaphanous cloak. The modest arrangement of Venus' arms and cloak suggests the traditional type of Venus called *Pudica* (cf. Titian's *Venus with a Mirror*). Venus is looking towards Juno and awaiting her opportunity to speak. At Venus' right stands her winged son, Cupid, naked except for his quiver. Cupid is looking at Paris and has his left hand raised towards his mother. Significant by his absence in this painting is the god Mercury who is present both in the myth and in Bertoia's painting.

Perhaps the most interesting figure in this group is Minerva, who sits on a rock behind Juno. Like Bertoia's goddess, and again contrary to ancient custom, Poussin's Minerva is only semi-dressed in a white cloak covering her lower torso. The goddess is sitting on a yellow cloak which is draped over the rock and over the goddess' spear. Her other attribute, her helmet, lies on the ground in front of the rock. Minerva is bending over to adjust her left sandal and this pose is quite similar to a 5th century B.C. relief of Nike (Victory) adjusting her sandal which was from the parapet of the Temple of Athena Nike on the Athenian Acropolis. Poussin very well may have used this stone relief of the goddess as a study for his painting.



N.G. 739 Gallery 55
Venus Consoling Love c.1750
 François Boucher
 French 1703-1770
 Canvas, 42 1/8 x 33 3/8 (1.07 x 0.85)
 Gift of Chester Dale 1943

François Boucher's *Venus Consoling Love* in Gallery 55 was painted c.1750 for Mme de Pompadour, mistress of Louis XV of France. The subject matter of the painting is indeed appropriate to its commissioner. Venus is shown trying to control, if not console, her son Cupid, whose temper tantrums were famous even in Antiquity, as is clear from Ovid's story of Apollo and Daphne related above. Cupid's ungovernable nature is vividly described to Juno and Minerva by Venus in Apollonius of Rhodes' 3rd century B.C. epic, *Argonautica*:

"But ladies," said Cypris, speaking now to both of them, "he is far more likely to obey you than me. There is no reverence in him, but faced by you he might display some spark of decent feeling. He certainly pays no attention to me: he defies me and always does the opposite of what I say. In fact I am so worn out by his naughtiness that I have half a mind to break his bow and wicked arrows in his very sight, remembering how he threatened me with them in one of his moods. He said, 'If you don't keep your hands off me while I can still control my temper, you can blame yourself for the consequences.'"

Boucher's Venus demonstrates a great deal more patience than her counterpart in the *Argonautica*.

Boucher's painting depicts a naked goddess drawing the resisting god of desire towards her with her left hand. Venus is sitting on her white and blue clothing which lightly covers her right thigh. She wears pearl earrings and a string of pearls braided in her hair. In her right hand Venus is holding Cupid's quiver which is at his left side. The quiver, filled with arrows, is red with gold trim and a blue strap. Cupid's bow is absent. Cupid himself, winged and semi-naked, wears a yellow cloak over his shoulders and dips his right foot into a pool of water. Two doves, Venus' birds, rest at the goddess' feet (cf. Titian's *Venus and Adonis*). At the right are two other Cupids: one resting on Venus' cloak with flowers in his lap; the other standing in the background with his right hand to his lips and his left hand behind the head of the sitting Cupid. The setting is pastoral, with trees in the background and a stream in the foreground. The artist has meant a contrast between the angry Cupid and the peaceful setting, between the tense figure of Cupid at the left and the tranquil pose of Venus and the two Cupids at the right.



N.G. 1720 Gallery 86
Pandora 1910/12
 Odilon Redon
 French 1840-1916
 Canvas, 56 1/2 x 24 3/4 (1.436 x 0.629)
 Chester Dale Collection 1962

Themes from Classical Mythology were not as popular to artists of the 19th century French Impressionist period. These painters generally preferred to depict everyday scenes and people. However, two of the National Gallery's Impressionist holdings utilize ancient themes: Odilon Redon's *Pandora* in Gallery 86 and Auguste Renoir's *Diana* in Gallery 93.

Redon's theme is taken ultimately from Hesiod's *Works and Days* 54-105, where the first woman, Pandora, was created by Jupiter as a punishment for mankind. As the misogynist Hesiod recounts, Pandora was given a jug as a wedding gift by Jupiter and instructed never to open it. Pandora's feminine curiosity led her to disobey and thereby she released all the evils of the world, sickness, pain, death, etc. Unfortunately, she shut the jug in terror before hope could escape. Later tradition transformed the Greek storage jug into a box.

The artist shows Pandora standing at the left side of the painting. She is dressed in blue and white clothes and wears a single gold headband. Pandora is shown in profile from her right as she contemplates the unopened box in her hands. The background is an impressionistic pastel of flowers and mountains which well suits the mood before the box is opened. One could imagine a complementary painting depicting the scene after the box is opened; then the pastels would be replaced by dreary darker colors.



N.G. 1869 Gallery 93
Diana 1867
 Auguste Renoir
 French 1841-1919
 Canvas, 77 x 51 1/4 (1.995 x 1.295)
 Chester Dale Collection 1962

Renoir's *Diana* was not begun as a mythological painting, as the artist himself states:

I intended to do nothing more than a study of a nude. But the picture was considered pretty improper, so I put a bow in the model's hand and a doe at her feet. I added the skin of an animal to make her nakedness seem less blatant—and the picture became a Diana.

Even with such modifications, the artist's work met with a cool reception when it was finished in 1867, and the painting was unsellable.

The "goddess" is shown naked except for an animal skin with bright red straps attached. The figure is seated on a rock and rests her outstretched arms on a large unstrung bow. A quiver lies on the rock behind her right thigh. At her feet lies a doe killed by an arrow through its neck. A tree and a hill can be seen in the background.

While the artist has added the goddess' traditional attributes, i.e., the bow, arrows, and a wild animal, Diana would never have been depicted naked in Antiquity; she was too devoted to her virginity. In fact, one well-known tale in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, III, 137-253, recounts how a hunter named Actaeon happened upon a forest pool where Diana was bathing naked. The goddess was so insulted at the innocent mortal's imprudence that she transformed him into a stag, and he was cruelly torn apart by his own hunting dogs. Can the viewer of Renoir's painting expect a similar fate?



N.G. A-20 Rotunda
Mercury 1603/13
 Adriaen de Vries
 Dutch-Florentine c.1560-1627
 Bronze without base 69 5/8 x 19 x 37 1/4
 (1.770 x 0.485 x 0.949)
 Andrew Mellon Collection 1937

There are several mythologically-based sculptures in both the East and the West Corridors of the National Gallery. Most conspicuous, however, is the statue of Mercury over the fountain in the Rotunda. This unsigned work, attributed to the Dutch artist Adriaen de Vries, who worked in Florence in the early 17th century, is very similar in composition to the famous Medici Mercury by Bologna, now in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. The differences between the two bronzes are minor; e.g., the Medici Mercury has nozzles for water at its base, while the National Gallery statue does not.

The location of the Mercury over the fountain is magnificent, almost overwhelming, but it makes appreciation of the detailed artistry of this bronze difficult to appreciate. The god is depicted naked with his Classical attributes, including winged feet and helmet and his caduceus or herald's staff in his left hand. The caduceus is winged and has two snakes twisted around it. In its earliest form, Mercury's caduceus, which probably originated partially as a shepherd's staff and partially as a herald's staff, was not winged, but was topped by two circles, the higher of which was open: ☿. Gradually the caduceus took on the shape that it has in this bronze. The god is shown running, with his right leg thrust backwards and his left foot raised on a gust blown from the mouth of a human head below. This head is depicting the wind, which was often personified in Antiquity; e.g. the Tower of the Winds in the Roman Agora of

Athens. The god's right arm is raised and his index finger points towards heaven, perhaps to emphasize Mercury's function as intermediary between heaven and earth.

This 17th-century version of Mercury is not much different from the picture drawn by Homer's *Odyssey*, V. 43-54, as the god hastens to Calypso's island to obtain the release of Ulysses (Odysseus):

*Hermes the Guide and Argus-slayer obeyed.
Straightway he tied on his feet beautiful sandals,
Ambrosial and golden, which carry him with the gusts of wind
Either over the sea or the boundless land.
And he took his staff, the one with which he lulls
Men's eyes, as he wishes, and awakens those who sleep.
Holding this in his hand, the mighty Argus-slayer flew off.
Heading toward Pieria he fell seaward from the sky
And he chased the waves like a sea gull
Who wets his well-formed wings with brine
While catching fish along the lap of the mighty, barren sea.
So Hermes rode the white-capped waves.
As he neared the island, visible in the distance,
He veered from the violet-colored sea
And heading toward the shore he reached the great cave.*

Note that instead of Homer's winged sandals, the National Gallery bronze has wings attached to the god's bare feet.



N.G. A-22 West Corridor
Bacchus and a Young Faun
Jacopo Sansovino (Jacopo Tatti)
Florentine-Venetian 1486-1570
Bronze 71 1/2 x 30 x 25 5/8
(1.815 x 0.760 x 0.652)
Andrew W. Mellon Collection 1937

In the West Corridor are four bronzes based upon Classical Mythology. The first, *Bacchus and a Young Faun*, by the 16th century Italian artist Jacopo Sansovino, depicts the naked god of wine holding a broad-rimmed cup in his left hand and raising a bunch of grapes in his right. Apparently the god and his companion are admiring the products of a good harvest. Bacchus wears a garland of vine leaves and grapes around his head. He is shown here as a young man, much more similar to the god in Euripides' *Bacchae* than to the infant Bacchus painted by Bellini (see above). Here is how the god is described by his future victim Pentheus in the *Bacchae*, 233-38:

*They say that some stranger has come,
A wizard, a sorcerer, from the land of Lydia,
With yellow locks and perfumed head,
Possessing the wine-colored charms of Aphrodite in his eyes.
Night and day he lives with young girls
While celebrating Bacchic rites. . . .*

At Bacchus' left stands a faun, a hybrid mythological creature often associated with the god of wine. The Greek term for the Latin "faun" was "satyr." The ancients depicted these creatures at all stages of life, from childhood through old age (when the term "Silenus" was used instead of "faun" or "satyr"). Sansovino has created a boyish faun, with goat's legs and hoofs as well as a small tail. Like Bacchus, the faun wears a crown of grapes and leaves. Across his right shoulder is draped a cloth belt. At his left side the faun holds a bunch of grapes. At the base of the statue lies a vine branch with leaves and grapes still attached.

Compare Sansovino's boyish faun to the more mature creature in the left hand corner of Bellini's *Feast of the Gods*.



N.G. A-21 West Corridor
Venus Anadyomene c.1527
 Jacopo Sansovino (Jacopo Tatti)
 Florentine-Venetian 1486-1570
 Bronze 65 1/2 x 17 1/4 (1.66 x 0.44)
 Andrew W. Mellon Collection 1937

Also by Sansovino is *Venus Anadyomene*. The epithet, which means “rising from the sea,” refers to the goddess’ peculiar birth following the castration of Uranus by Saturn in Hesiod’s *Theogony*, 188-195:

As for the organs themselves, for a long time they drifted round the sea just as they were when Cronus [Saturn] cut them off with the steel edge and threw them from the land into the waves of the ocean; then white foam issued from the divine flesh, and in the foam a girl began to grow. First she came near to holy Cythera, then reached Cyprus, the land surrounded by sea. There she stepped out, a goddess, tender and beautiful, and round her slender feet the green grass shot up.

Venus is shown naked, with her right heel slightly raised, as if she were stepping from the sea or from her bath. Her hair, loosely bound in front and behind, trails down her shoulders and back. In her right hand she holds a seashell, which is an ancient attribute connected with her birth as well as a convenient cup for bathing. At her right side she clasps a cloth in her left hand.

Other major studies of the goddess in the National Gallery, including those by Luini, Titian and Carracci, depict Venus either sitting or reclining. The standing pose of Sansovino’s goddess can therefore be compared more closely to the 4th-century B.C. *Aphrodite of Knidos* by Praxiteles and to the 16th century *Birth of Venus* by Botticelli.



N.G. A-1618 West Corridor
Apollo of Lycia
 Elia Candido (Elias de Witte)
 Netherlands-Florentine, active second half
 of 16th century
 Bronze 55 x 19 1/2 x 13 3/8
 (1.400 x 0.497 x 0.340)
 Samuel H. Kress Collection 1952

A third bronze in the West Corridor is *Apollo of Lycia* by the Dutch artist Elia Candido, active in Florence in the second half of the 16th century. The title of this work is based upon the god’s Greek epithet *Lykeios*, which may indicate Apollo’s origin as a wolf-*(lykos* in Greek) averting deity or as a non-Greek god from Lycia (in what is now Turkey). The god is shown naked except for a fig leaf (a Christian rather than ancient custom). Apollo stands with his weight on his right leg and his left heel raised. His right arm is bent behind his head and he holds a stringless bow in his left hand. Apollo’s left arm leans upon a marble tree trunk over which is draped a tasselled belt. The pose of this statue is very similar to that of an Amazon, perhaps by Polycleitus and now in New York. Note the presence of tree trunks in both works. While ancient life-sized stone sculpture often needed such trunks as braces, such supports became a tradition rather than a necessity in bronze.

While moderns associate Apollo more with the lyre (see, for example, Bellini’s *Feast of the Gods*), the bow was just as frequent in Antiquity as an attribute of the god, who used it in his function as god of healing and disease. It is the bow which leads to the sad story of Apollo and Daphne, and it also features prominently in the tale of Niobe (Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, VI, 146-312). Niobe, the mother of seven handsome sons and seven beautiful daughters, felt herself the most fortunate of mothers, even more fortunate than the goddess Latona, mother of the twin deities Apollo and Diana. Angered at this slight to their dear mother, the gods took their bows and shot down all Niobe’s children before their mother’s eyes. So severe was her grief and so flowing were her tears that Niobe eventually was transformed into a pillar of salt. “And even today tears drip from the marble” (*Metamorphoses*, VI, 312).



N.G. A-1699 West Corridor
Mercury
 Italian 16th Century
 Bronze 61 3/8 x 25 1/4 x 16
 (1.560 x 0.640 x 0.407)
 Andrew Mellon Fund 1959

The last West Gallery bronze, like de Vries' statue in the Rotunda, also depicts the ancient messenger god, Mercury. However, in this 16th century bronze by an unknown Italian artist, the god is shown at rest rather than in flight. Naked, Mercury stands with his wingless legs crossed. He is standing on his left foot, with his right heel raised. Mercury wears a winged helmet and should be holding a caduceus in his hands, but the attribute has been lost. The tubular inserts for the caduceus, however, can still be seen in the god's hands.

Mercury is resting his left hand on his hip and his right elbow upon a tree trunk. The small snake beginning to crawl up the trunk is another Classical feature; e.g., a lizard crawls up the tree trunk of the *Apollo Sauroktonos* or "lizard-killer" and a snake on the *Apollo of Belvedere*, both dating from the 4th century B.C. and now in the Vatican. Associated with Apollo, such creatures have a mythic function because Apollo slew the snake called Pythia at Delphi and thus gained control of the oracle (see the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*). Used with Mercury, the snake has no apparent mythic *raison d'être*, except its frequent presence on Mercury's attribute, the caduceus.



N.G. A-1631 East Corridor
Calliope c.1774
 Augustin Pajou
 French 1730-1809
 Marble 62 1/8 x 23 7/8 x 18 1/8
 (1.580 x 0.608 x 0.461)
 Samuel H. Kress Collection 1952

While the West Corridor of the National Gallery is devoted to Italian works in bronze, the East Corridor displays French sculpture in marble, four of which are based upon themes from Classical Mythology.

Calliope, by the 18th century French sculptor Augustin Pajou, depicts the Muse of epic poetry, who also appeared in Vouet's painting, *The Muses Urania and Calliope*, discussed above. Where Vouet's Muses are reclining, Pajou's Calliope is standing, with her weight on her right foot. The Muse is heavily dressed in tunic and cloak which leave uncovered her right breast and left arm and shoulder. A strap runs across the Muse's left shoulder to hold up her garments. Calliope wears sandals and a simple crown in her ornately bound and braided hair. Like Vouet's Muse, Pajou's holds a book, which lies open in Calliope's right hand. She is pointing with her left index finger to the following words inscribed in Latin: CALLIOPE REGINA HOMINUM DIVUMQUE VOLUPTAS CARMINIS HEROI NUMERIS FULGENTIA SIGNIS AGMINA BELLANTUMQUE ANIMOS ET PRAELIA CANTO INCLYTAE AETERNAE COMMITTO NOMINA FAMAЕ. "I Calliope, queen, pleasure of gods and men, in the meters of heroic song, sing of the courage and battles of those fighting armies gleaming with standards, and I entrust famous names to eternal fame." Part of this is based upon Lucretius, VI, 94.

Calliope's importance to the ancients is evident in the fact that their epics began with an invocation, or introductory prayer, to the Muse. In fact, Homer sees himself as the mouthpiece of Calliope at the very beginning of the *Odyssey*:

*Of a man sing in me, Muse, a man of many turns
 Who greatly suffered after he sacked the holy city of Troy.*

Calliope's power of inspiration and fame are perhaps the source of her appeal to later artists, such as Pajou and Vouet.

Pajou's statue may have belonged to a group of five bas-reliefs and nine life-size statues of Apollo and the Muses, which the artist was commissioned to create for Mme du Barry, mistress of Louis XV. The project was apparently never completed and only this Muse survives.



N.G. A-127 East Corridor
Diana 1724
 Jean-Louis Lemoyne
 French 1665-1755
 Marble 71 3/4 x 30 1/8 x 22 3/4
 (1.825 x 0.765 x 0.578)
 Widener Collection 1942

Diana, an early 18th century sculpture by Jean-Louis Lemoyne, shows the ancient goddess of the hunt standing with one of her dogs. Diana wears a short-sleeved, knee-length tunic which falls off her shoulders and bares her right breast. The tunic is slit along the left thigh and an oval button is located at the top of the slit. A jeweled belt binds the goddess' waist. In her hair, which falls down her neck and left shoulder, is a double headband with a pendant attached in front. The goddess is looking down at her collared dog, which sits at her sandaled feet and returns its mistress' glance while licking her left thigh. Diana is holding a spear in her right hand and in her left she grasps a belt which falls across her right knee. This belt held up around her neck a cloak which is shown now falling down the goddess' back and enveloping the mid-shaft of the spear. With this falling cloak Lemoyne instills action into his stone as he shows Diana about to leave for the chase. For this reason, the goddess' right leg is raised in the moment of departure.

While a bow is more commonly Diana's attribute, as it is in Renoir's painting of the goddess, a hunting spear is also used sometimes by Diana; see, for example, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, III, 166, where her spear is mentioned.



N.G. A-1629 East Corridor
Galatea 1701
 Robert Le Lorrain
 French 1666-1743
 Marble 29 1/2 x 14 3/4 x 17 3/4
 (0.751 x 0.377 x 0.451)
 Samuel H. Kress Collection 1952

Galatea, by Robert Le Lorrain (1666-1743), is based upon another popular myth from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (XIII, 738-897). It is a case of the eternal triangle. Galatea, a water-nymph, loved Acis, the handsome mortal son of a nymph. She, in turn, is beloved by the ugly, one-eyed Cyclops, Polyphemus, the same creature which Ulysses later meets in the *Odyssey*. As much as Galatea loved Acis, so much did she hate the Cyclops. Once, when the frustrated Polyphemus came upon the lovers in embrace, he hurled a mass of rocks at Acis and killed his rival. Galatea could only help by transforming her lover into a stream, since his mother had been a water-nymph.

Le Lorrain does not retell Ovid's myth in his sculpture, but only depicts the nymph tranquilly seated on some rocks at the edge of a body of water (Acis' stream?). Note the two large fish at her feet. Galatea is naked except for a cloak which is draped across her thighs and back and which she holds at her sides, in her left hand at her left breast and in her right at her knee. She wears a band around her upper right arm. Her braided hair is fixed in a bun behind and then falls down across her right shoulder and breast. Galatea's head is turned toward the right. Were it not for the artist's title engraved on the base, it would be difficult to associate this statue with the ancient story of Galatea and Acis.



N.G. A-1617 East Corridor
Cupid 1744
 Edmé Bouchardon
 French 1698-1762
 Marble height 29 (0.739)
 diameter of base 13 1/2 (0.345)
 Samuel H. Kress Collection 1952

Edmé Bouchardon's *Cupid* contrasts with the many representations of this god in the National Gallery in that this 18th century work depicts a youth rather than a child. While the ancients originally conceived of this god as a youth, but gradually made him younger and younger, one of the most famous myths about Cupid, by the 2nd century A.D. Latin author, Apuleius, restores the god's puberty and tells of his love for the beautiful girl Psyche ("Mind" in Greek). Psyche's beauty made even Venus envious because the mortal girl had displaced even the goddess of love in men's eyes. So Venus had her son Cupid shoot Psyche so that she would fall in love with some horrible beast. When no man offered to marry Psyche (because she was too beautiful and too much like a goddess), Psyche's father sought an oracle, which told him to leave the girl on a mountainside as the bride of a winged serpent. After Psyche was abandoned, she came upon a beautiful valley and a palace filled with gold and servants whom she could not see but only hear. That night the girl was visited in darkness by her mysterious husband who left before dawn. Psyche came to love her invisible lover and was happy, but she missed her family. Eventually the girl pleaded with her husband to permit her two sisters to visit. He reluctantly agreed on condition that Psyche not allow her sisters to persuade her to discover what he looked like. He also told her that she had already conceived by him a child who would be divine if she obeyed but mortal if she did not. Psyche happily agreed to her husband's conditions. Psyche's sisters were filled with jealousy when they saw their sister's luxurious and happy state, and suggested to the girl that her unseen husband must actually be an ugly serpent. Psyche, unable to bear that possibility, determined to know the truth and hid a lamp in her bedchamber. After her husband fell asleep that night, Psyche uncovered the lamp and saw the handsome, winged features of Cupid. In her fright she accidentally spilled some of the lamp oil on the god who immediately awoke and departed in anger at his wife's disobedience.

Psyche wandered aimlessly in search of her husband for a long time. Eventually the poor girl was forced to complete for Venus a series of impossible tasks, including the sorting of a huge pile of assorted

grains, which Psyche only accomplished with the aid of an army of ants. Finally, Cupid took his wife back, Psyche was deified and she bore Cupid a daughter, Voluptas ("Pleasure" in Latin).

Bouchardon's Cupid is in the act of carving a bow from a tree trunk. A similar ancient version of the god and his bow is in the Capitoline Museum in Rome. The 18th century Cupid, winged and naked but for a fig leaf, stands with his bow at his chest in both hands and is testing the flexibility of his half-finished weapon. Carvings from his work lie at the base of the trunk, and a sword, used as a carving knife, lies next to its sheath by Cupid's right foot. Over his right shoulder Cupid has a belt to which his quiver is attached behind his back. The god wears a headband which is tied in back. Behind Cupid is a pile of armor, including an emblomed shield, a helmet and a lion skin. These weapons certainly serve to support the stone composition structurally and may be meant to create a comparison between the arms of warfare and the arms of love, a favorite theme of love poets, both ancient and modern; for example, Ovid's *Amores* I, 9:1-20:

*Yes, Atticus, take it from me—
 lovers are all soldiers, in Cupid's private army.*

*Military age equals amatory age—
 fighting and making love don't suit the old.*

*Commanders expect gallantry of their men—
 and so do pretty girls.*

*Lovers too keep watch, bivouac, mount guard—
 at their mistress' door instead of H.Q.*

*They have their forced marches,
 tramping miles for love,*

*crossing rivers, climbing mountains,
 trudging through the snow.*

*Ordered abroad they brave the storm
 and steer by winter stars.*

*Hardened to freezing nights,
 to showers of hail and sleet,*

*they go out on patrol,
 observe their rivals' movements,*

*lay siege to rebel mistresses
 and batter down front doors.*

All this will be the result of the unfinished bow which Bouchardon's Cupid tests in his hands.

A painting entitled *Cupid testing his bow cut with the arms of Mars from Hercules' club*, by the early 16th century Italian artist Parmigianino, may have been the direct source of Bouchardon's composition. While there is no single ancient basis for such an origin of Cupid's bow, there are myths showing Cupid's power over both Mars and Hercules which may have resulted in a story that Cupid used Mars' sword to fashion a bow from Hercules' club. The adulterous love of Mars for Cupid's mother, Venus, has already been mentioned (see the discussion of Carracci's *Venus Adorned by the Graces*). Hercules, too, was always an easy mark for Cupid's dart. In fact, it was passion which led to the hero's death (Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, IX, 9-272). Upon returning from his Twelve Labors, Hercules brought home with him as his mistress a young girl named Iole. Deianira, the hero's wife, attempted to regain Hercules' love through magic. She had in her possession a cloth soaked in the blood of the centaur Nessus, who had been killed many years ago by Hercules with one of his arrows dipped in the poisonous blood of the many-headed Hydra (Hercules' 2nd Labor). The centaur had been shot for trying to rape Deianira and, as he died, he told Hercules' wife to save his blood and to use it as a charm if she ever lost her husband's love. Deianira used this blood-soaked cloth to make a coat for Hercules without realizing that the poison in it would destroy the man she loved and that she would thus fulfill a prophecy stating that Hercules would not be killed by anyone living. When Hercules put on the cloak, his skin burned so badly that he ordered his own funeral pyre built, and he was cremated. However, instead of dying, Hercules was apotheosized, raised up to Mt. Olympus, the abode of the ancient gods, and became a deified hero. Poor Deianira committed suicide when she discovered what she had done.



N.G. A-1621 Concourse Level
A Bacchante
 Clodion (Claude Michel)
 French 1738-1814
 Marble 68 1/4 x 23 x 21 7/8
 (1.735 x 0.586 x 0.556)
 Samuel H. Kress Collection 1952

On the concourse level of the Gallery is displayed a fine marble sculpture by the late 18th century French sculptor, Claude Michel Clodion. Entitled *Bacchante*, this piece depicts a female follower of the god of wine, Bacchus. The bacchant, who can also be called a maenad, is shown in the very act of her exuberant worship of her god. For a vivid ancient literary description of such ritual, see Euripides' *Bacchae*, a play named after its chorus of bacchantes. Clodion's bacchant is dressed in a thin cloth thrown over her right shoulder and tied at her waist by an animal skin. The woman's left breast and leg are left uncovered by the garment. In her right hand she raises one of the tokens of her god, a bunch of grapes, and she also wears a crown of this fruit in her hair, which falls down her back and onto her right shoulder. The bacchant's left arm is bent at the elbow and her fingers are curved around an object which is now lost, but which was probably the thyrsus, a pine staff used in the worship of Bacchus. The grapes, wreath, animal skin and thyrsus are the traditional attributes of bacchantes.

A companion piece, N.G. 120 *A Bacchante with a Cluster of Grapes in her left Hand*, is unfortunately not currently on display in the National Gallery.

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APPENDIX

Some Important Names in Graeco-Roman Mythology

Roman Name	Greek Name	Identity
Jupiter	Zeus	god of the sky and king of gods and men
Juno	Hera	Jupiter's wife and queen
Mercury	Hermes	messenger god
Neptune	Poseidon	god of the sea
Apollo	Apollo	god of music and prophecy
Diana	Artemis	virgin goddess of the hunt
Vesta	Hestia	virgin goddess of the hearth
Minerva	Athena	goddess of warfare, handcrafts and wisdom
Vulcan	Hephaestus	crippled blacksmith god
Mars	Ares	god of war
Venus	Aphrodite	goddess of love and fertility
Cupid	Eros	Venus' son, god of falling in and out of love
Graces	Charites	personifications of feminine charm
Cybele	Cybele	Eastern fertility goddess
Ceres	Demeter	goddess of grain
Bacchus	Dionysus	god of wine
Faun	Satyr	half-human, half-animal, follower of Dionysus
Silenus	Silenus	older Faun
Priapus		Roman fertility god
Pan	Pan	god of woodlands
Silvanus		Roman god of forests
Hercules	Heracles	most important ancient hero; performed Twelve Labors
Ulysses	Odysseus	hero of the <i>Odyssey</i>