
Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617) is known primarily as a versatile and productive draughtsman, engraver and print designer and publisher, but what is less well-known is that he also left a painted oeuvre. That has now been remedied with this voluminous monograph by Lawrence Nichols. It was in 1990 that Nichols defended his dissertation of the same title at Columbia University in New York. The present volume is the trade edition, supplemented with more than 20 years of further research. It appeared almost 100 years after the first, far more limited study of Goltzius's paintings published by Otto Hirschmann in 1916, and is immeasurably richer in the wealth of new information it contains.

It also rounds off a valuable "triptych" on Goltzius's drawings, prints and paintings. Emil Reznicek's study of the drawings appeared in 1961, followed by a supplement in 1993. Some 520 of Goltzius's drawings have survived, more than for any other sixteenth-century Dutch artist. His graphic oeuvre was published by Marjolein Leesberg in 2012 as part of *The New Hollstein* series. Her research resulted in the inventorization of no fewer that 791 prints designed, engraved and/or published by the artist, preceded by a lengthy introduction on Goltzius as a print designer and engraver and on the great importance of his Haarlem print publishing business.

As an inventive artist who was highly respected in his own lifetime, Hendrick Goltzius has attracted even more art-historical attention in recent decades. In 1991-1992, for instance, Nichols organized an exhibition in the Philadelphia Museum of Art of the so-called "pen works" - virtuoso and minutely detailed pen drawings on paper, parchment or canvas that mimic the look of engravings. The year 1993 saw the publication of *Goltzius-Studies*, an issue of the *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* that was entirely devoted to the artist. In 1993-1994 there were no fewer than 40 works by Goltzius on show in the *Dawn of the Golden Age* exhibition in Amsterdam, and ten years later, in 2003-2004, there was a retrospective of his work in Amsterdam, New York and Toledo with an accompanying catalogue that has since become a standard work.

Goltzius took up painting relatively late. We are fairly well-informed about his life from the detailed biography written by his friend and colleague Karel van Mander in his *Schilder-Boeck* of 1604, who very probably got his information straight from the horse's mouth. Van Mander says that Goltzius took up the brush in 1600, when he was 42 years old. He abandoned engraving soon afterwards and handed his flourishing printing house over to his stepson and collaborator Jacob Matham. In his book Nichols focuses on Goltzius's years as a painter, from 1600 to his death on 1 January 1617. The first chapter describes this new departure in his career. It is followed by a biographical sketch of his life in 1600-1617 and an analysis of the style and iconography of the paintings. The last chapter examines his reputation as a painter, from his own time to the present day.

The bulk of the book, however, consists of a catalogue of Goltzius's paintings and an appendix with documents and other sources dealing with his life and work. The catalogue describes 59 extant works, followed by 160 others that are only known from descriptions by Van Mander or in archival documents and auction catalogues. Nichols closes with a survey of 38 rejected attributions. All the 59 paintings are illustrated full-page and in colour, which makes the book even more desirable, and the 120 comparative illustrations provide plenty of supporting material.

First and foremost Goltzius made history paintings, with a preference for biblical and mythological subjects that allowed him to indulge his fondness for the nude. He also painted allegories and a few genre scenes with ill-matched lovers (cat. nos. A-58 and A-59). Although there is only one surviving portrait, that of *Jan Govertsz van der Aar* of 1601 (cat. no. A-49), inventories and other written sources show that he painted far more (pp. 62-65). So one can certainly not regard him solely as a history painter; he was also a portraitist. His paintings display the influences of the classical sculpture that he studied closely while in Rome, as is known from his many drawings of antique statues, of Italian artists like Michelangelo,
Titian and Veronese, and of north European predecessors like Albrecht Dürer and Maarten van Heemskerck. In the closing years of his life he was also influenced by the paintings of Rubens.

Nichols recounts how Goltzius’s paintings were snapped up by eager buyers from the very outset. That was partly due to his fame as a printmaker, for when art lovers heard that the great master had taken up painting his pictures immediately became sought after and expensive. They were bought by prominent and wealthy citizens of Haarlem, Amsterdam and Leiden, and also found their way into the courtly collections in Prague, London and The Hague. Written sources dating from his own day and the decades following his death show that he was famed not just as an engraver but as a painter too.

Without in any way wishing to detract from the great importance of this monographic study and Lawrence Nichols’s exhaustive research, I do have a few remarks to make and additions to propose. They are intended as a contribution to further discussions about Goltzius’s work, and concern not only paintings but also some related drawings.

In the first chapter Nichols deals with the question of why Goltzius put down his burin for good in 1600 and began painting. He dismisses the theory that it was because of his poor health and weak eyesight, as has been suggested. He points out that in his drawings and prints of 1580-1590 he was already displaying a growing preference for colour in the form of coloured chalks, as well as washes in his chiaroscuro woodcuts. In that respect the switch to painting simply looks like a logical progression. In addition, Nichols regards Goltzius’s grisaille oil sketches as an intermediate stage between drawing and painting. He also believes that Goltzius was encouraged in his choice of painting by the theory of art expounded by Karel van Mander, who regarded history painting as the highest form of art. It is also thought that Goltzius wanted to become part of Haarlem’s strong tradition as a city of painters, and vie with his colleague Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem, who became the city’s leading painter in the 1590s.

All that, though, does not answer the question of why Goltzius only started painting when he was 42 years old, and who taught him. His first teacher, his father Jan Goltz, was a glass painter, and his second, Dirck Volckerstz Coornhert, trained him in engraving. But from whom did he learn to paint on panel, copper and canvas? In 2005 Eric Jan Sluijter came up with the idea that he was inspired to start painting during his time in Italy in 1590-1591, when he saw many pictures by artists which he greatly admired, according to Van Mander. Sluijter says that he did not start painting straight away on his return to Haarlem because he had not yet mastered the technique. He suggests that his good friend Frans Badens in Amsterdam taught him how to paint in oils, supposedly between 1597 and 1600, after Badens got back from Italy, where he had been with Jacob Matham. Van Mander says that that journey earned Badens the nickname of ‘the Italian painter’, because he was the first to introduce Amsterdam to the Italian manner that Goltzius so admired.  

This is an interesting theory that Nichols only discusses in a note (p. 23, note 29) and does not find convincing. According to him, Goltzius’s oil sketches show that he was able to paint before 1600 and that he may have learned to do so before 1591, although Nichols does not speculate about who taught him. He suggests that Goltzius deliberately decided to wait before starting to paint because he still wanted to explore other facets of printmaking, and he points out that the printmakers Albrecht Dürer and Lucas van Leyden found it fairly easy to switch from burin to paintbrush. In my view, though, it is difficult to compare them with Goltzius, because they had been taught in painters’ workshops. As far as we know that was the only training that Lucas van Leyden ever had, which raises the contrary question of how he was able to produce such superb prints at such an early age. It is a pity that Nichols has almost nothing to say about Goltzius’s possible teacher. There is no hard-and-fast answer, but we could speculate. Because if he did not learn it from Badens, which is Sluijter’s theory (and not a bad one in my opinion), then from whom, and when? It is one of the puzzles of Dutch art history.

I also have a few remarks about the relationship between Goltzius’s drawings and paintings. Nichols examines preparatory drawings under the heading ‘Creative Process’ (pp. 52-55). There is only one that is directly connected with a painting, and that is the Crucifixion in Teylers Museum, which is the design for the Karlsruhe Christ on the Cross, with Mary, St John and the Magdalen on copper of around 1600 (cat. no. A-17). Further to that Nichols mentions seven other drawings that Goltzius may have made as designs for grisailles or small pictures on copper (p. 25, note 44, citing Reznicek). He also suspects that