

# CLAUDE LORRAIN

THE ENCHANTED LANDSCAPE

6 Oct 2011–8 Jan 2012

PRESS  
IMAGES

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MUSEUM OF ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



**Thumbnail**   **File name**   **Caption**   **Information**



Ascanius

***Ascanius Shooting the Stag of Sylvia, 1682***  
 Oil on canvas, 1200 x 1500 mm, inscribed:  
*CLAUDIO. I. V. F. A ROMAE 1682 Come. Ascanio. saetta il. Cervo di Silvia figliuola di Tirro lib. 7. Vig. and CLAUDIO ROM*  
 © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford

The titles which Claude inscribed on several of his paintings identify, for the most part, subjects which would otherwise be difficult to pin down. This scene of hunting, as Claude carefully noted on the canvas, is taken from Book VII of Virgil's Aeneid. The painting was commissioned by Prince Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna as a companion to *Dido and Aeneas at Carthage*, a painting completed six years earlier. Despite the lapse of time which separates the two, they were probably planned, from the start, as a pair. The buildings on the right side of Dido and Aeneas match the columns on the left side of Ascanius while the light enters from the right in the former and from the left in the latter. Both illustrate subjects from the Aeneid and both include the figure of Ascanius. In the painting, everything has been suffused with an air of fantasy. The hunters are impossibly elongated – Ascanius, in particular, is absurdly top-heavy - but even they are overwhelmed by the vast landscape, lit by a silvery sky, which arches over them and recedes far back into the blue, snow-capped hills. Despite the signature and inscription which normally would have been added when the picture had been completed, the sky, sea, river and the hills on the right appear to be unfinished. It was Claude's last painting and was probably still on the easel when he died on 23 November 1682.

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Christ & the Magdalene

***Landscape with Christ appearing to St Mary Magdalene***  
 Black chalk with pen, brown ink and brown wash on white paper, heightened with white body colour, 191 x 252 mm, inscribed on the verso:  
*quadro facto per leminno et / et Revermo sigre il sigr / Cardinale Spada A Roma/ 1681; and to the left: Claudio IVF; numbered twice: 194*  
 © British Museum

This copy in the *Liber Veritatis* has been compressed to fit the different format of the page but is otherwise an accurate record of the details of the *Noli Me Tangere* now in the Städel, Frankfurt. The painting, according to the inscription on the verso, was commissioned by Cardinal Fabrizio Spada and completed in 1681. The city walls are prominent in the background. On the right, Mary of Cleophas and Mary Salome approach the gate and the angel is visible at the entrance to the tomb. Claude has introduced a tall tree dividing the composition asymmetrically, a device which he used with great frequency in the background of his paintings. This was the second last drawing inserted by Claude into the *Liber*. His hand was not so firm as it had been but it remains a beautifully expressive image, conveying the pathos and mystery of the narrative in an elegiac landscape through contrasting effects of light and shadow.

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Coast View

***Coast View, 1633***

Oil on canvas, 970 x 1220 mm, inscribed:  
*CLAUDIO GELLÉ INV. ROMAE. 1633*; and in  
lower left: *CLAUDIO [..] LE INV[... ] RO[...]*  
© Trustees of the ninth Duke of Buccleuch's  
Chattels Fund

This is the earliest known of Claude's many coastal or harbour scenes set out like a stage with ships and buildings flanking an expansive view of the sea in the centre. Fifteen of the first forty-three items in the *Liber Veritatis*, dating from c. 1633 to 1638, are compositions of this type, each incorporating a number of ancient and modern buildings in different combinations. These are all genre scenes in which porters and sailors mingle with merchants and townspeople on the quayside or on the shore. While it anticipates one of the major themes in Claude's art, this painting also looks back to the port scenes of Agostino Tassi and Paul Bril. This particular scene represents a boat-yard with a galley in dry-dock and a supply of timber in the foreground. Both the galley and the tree alongside the shelter in which the galley has been docked were painted over the architecture and may have been the result of second thoughts. The remains on the shore which include a relief with two figures and fragments of columns, recall the architectural debris which, in Claude's time, littered the banks of the River Tiber at Rome. The companion picture, *Landscape with the Judgement of Paris*, is lit by a similarly low sun, hidden by the trees, which shines from the opposite direction. The bright, cool colours of the coast scene suggest it is a sunrise. The warm light in the other painting would be more appropriate for evening. These are the earliest known pendants in Claude's art, the first of many based on contrasting themes and opposing times of day.

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Country Dance


***Landscape with a Country Dance, 1637***


Oil on canvas, 710 x 1005 mm, inscribed at the  
centre of the lower edge: *CLAUDIO IVF ROMA*  
*163[...]*  
© Private Collection, Great Britain


*Landscape with a Country Dance* is a painting from a series of prestigious commissions which Claude received from Pope Urban VII, which also included the pendant to this composition, *A Seaport* (now in the collection of the Duke of Northumberland). Neither theme was new in Claude's art, but he painted both with an ambitious breadth and detail in keeping with the importance of his patron. As usual, Claude paired a landscape with a seascape and a morning with an evening. In the port scene, the sun radiates from above the horizon on the right; in the *Country Dance*, it suffuses from the left. As was Claude's habit, he based the *Country Dance* on ideas which he had used in earlier compositions.

It has been suggested that the painting represents pairs of dancers competing for a trophy hanging from the sloping tree. When copying this painting into the *Liber Veritatis*, Claude omitted the trophy. More significantly, he extended the river in the background towards the right edge and removed the Temple of the Sibyl, which is perched on a distant rock in the painting, filling the space instead with a branch of foliage. When painting a variant of Urban's painting about two years later, he inserted a view of a fortified manor into this area and recorded this altered detail in the *Liber*. The temple was clearly a detail which worried him. It appears in his preparatory drawing for an etching, partly based on Urban's painting, but was converted into a circle of trees in the print



Thumbnail	File name	Caption	Information
	Dido and Aeneas	<b><i>Dido and Aeneas at Carthage, 1676</i></b> Oil on canvas, 1200 x 1492 mm, signed on a stone at bottom centre: <i>AENEAS ET DIDO CLAVDIO I. V.F. [“In Urbe Fecit”] ROMAE 1676</i> ; and on a cargo bundle borne by a man beneath the triumphal arch: <i>CLAVDIO 1675 ROMA</i> © <b>Kunsthalle, Hamburg</b>	In 1676, Claude finished his last painted harbour scene, <i>Dido and Aeneas at Carthage</i> , which he had begun the previous year – the only such scene he executed after 1650. In the right foreground, in front of a mighty columned portico partially in ruins, stands Dido, queen of Carthage, Aeneas, who has fled from Troy, his son Ascanius (or Julius) and a number of other figures who may be of significance but have not been identified. Dido points to the harbour with its sailing ships and smaller boats, and to a high-domed temple on the left. From there the viewer's gaze wanders rightward again across the water to the monumental triumphal arch and round crenelated tower, before finally gliding into the spatial depths, to the city and the mountains beyond.

Thumbnail	File name	Caption	Information
	Enchanted Castle	<b><i>Landscape with Psyche Outside the Palace of Cupid, c.1664</i></b> Oil on canvas, 871 x 1513 mm, NG6471 © <b>National Gallery, London</b>	The poetic title by which this painting is known, <i>The Enchanted Castle</i> , dates only from the time of an engraving by Vivares and Woollett, published in 1782. It was then believed to represent Armida abandoned by Rinaldo. Baldinucci, however, described it as a picture of "Psyche by the seashore" and this is now universally accepted as the correct subject. The sober pile of the castle against the pale sky gives a melancholic character to the scene. <i>The Landscape with Psyche</i> was painted in c.1664 for Prince Onofrio Colonna, Claude's most important patron in his last years. In c.1666, Claude completed a pendant, <i>Landscape with Psyche saved from Drowning</i> , now in the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne.

Thumbnail	File name	Caption	Information
	Judgement of Paris	<b><i>Landscape with the Judgement of Paris, 1633</i></b> Oil on canvas, 970 x 1220 mm, inscribed: <i>CLAVDIO. IELLE INV. 1633</i> © <b>Trustees of the ninth Duke of Buccleuch's Chattels Fund</b>	This is Claude's first painting with a mythological subject. It represents the moment, very familiar in art, when the shepherd Paris awards a golden apple to Venus in a competition with Juno and Minerva to decide who is the fairest of the three. It might be assumed that the subject was suggested by Claude's patron, but as nothing is known about the patron (other than the possibility that he was French) it is impossible to say. As a painter of landscapes, the story of the shepherd was well chosen to appeal to Claude but he was not known as a painter of nude figures which he introduced very rarely into his compositions. The goddesses have been put in a position where they are lit by a shaft of sunlight entering the scene from a space on the right between Paris and the viewer. The same light catches the temple in the background, set against a dark mass of trees, and spreads a golden haze over the distant landscape. The temple is based on the temple of the Sibyl at Tivoli where Claude was working at this time. This is perhaps the first of many works by Claude in which the temple features although it also appears in an undated but early painting of a piping shepherd in the National Gallery of Victoria which echoes or anticipates the painting of Paris.

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Goatherd

***Landscape with a Goatherd, before 1636***  
 Oil on canvas, 380 x 490 mm. WA1962.17.11  
 © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford

The theme of shepherds and herdsmen runs through Claude's entire career. He never painted ploughmen or harvesters, but shepherds and drovers are very common in his work. As Helen Langdon has pointed out, the pastoral theme was fashionable among Claude's patrons and a commonplace of contemporary poetry. All Claude's paintings of this type derive from a painting of a flute-playing herdsman in The the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne which, from its general resemblance to the Judgement of Paris must date to about 1633. The Ashmolean painting is undated but must be close in date to the painting of a herdsman playing a flute in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Nancy, which is dated 1635 and includes the same seated figure in reverse.

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Noli Me Tangere


***Landscape with Christ appearing to Mary Magdalene ('Noli me tangere'), 1681***  
 Oil on canvas, 845 x 1410 mm, signed bottom left:  
*CLAUDIO I. V.F. ROMAE 168[1]* (the last digit is indistinct)  
 © Kunsthalle, Hamburg


Claude Lorrain executed this painting and its companion piece, *St Philip Baptizing the Eunuch*, between 1678 and 1681 for Cardinal Fabrizio Spada. Following service as papal nuncio in Savoy and Paris, Spada had recently been appointed cardinal and returned to Rome. The special charm of this painting lies in the treatment of the light. A harmonious blend of green, brown and blue creates the delicately shimmering, slightly misty early light of a beautiful clear day. The rising sun is behind the hill on the left. The atmosphere generated by the light not only indicates the time of day, but also serves as an expression of what has come to pass – Mary Magdalene's realisation of faith.

The elongated figures are especially conspicuous here, even if they have their counterparts in other paintings of Claude's late period. In the Frankfurt painting they were considered so disturbing that they were overpainted and shortened in the nineteenth century. It was only in the 1980s that they were restored to their original form. Claude employed the elongation as a means of intensifying the mood. It brings about an aura of unreality alluding to an abstract content above and beyond the visible depiction. This is particularly true of the figure of Christ in his mythical blue garment.



Thumbnail	File name	Caption	Information
	Seaport	<b><i>Seaport with the Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba</i></b> Pen and brown ink with brown wash, heightened with white body colour on brown tinted paper, 270 x 420 mm. INV # 4001 © Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen, Berlin	Apart from some minor changes in the proportions, this drawing corresponds closely to the finished painting of 1648 (National Gallery, London) more closely than the drawing in the <i>Liber Veritatis</i> . Opinion varies as to whether it is a copy by Claude after the painting or a final model drawing. The ruled lines on the jutting entablature could be seen as a sign of preliminary work. Yet it is difficult to believe that Claude could have followed this drawing in such detail, particularly in the deposition of the figures, without the least improvisation. That this is a copy is proved by the results of x-radiography, published by Humphrey Wine, which show that Claude made a number of changes to the painting that are not recorded in the drawing in Berlin. Why Claude made this careful copy directly from the painting in addition to the copy in the Liber is not easy to say. It is unlikely that it was made for a print as Claude did not show much interest in printmaking in the 1650s; it was probably drawn for sale or presentation to an important patron.

Thumbnail	File name	Caption	Information
	Torre Lazzaroni	<b><i>The Torre Lazzaroni, 1663</i></b> Black chalk with pen, brown ink and brown wash on off-white paper, 122 x 184 mm, inscribed by the artist in pen and brown ink on the lower edge: <i>1663 ottobre, A Claud.</i> WA1855.80 © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford	The short, broken touches of the pen, scattered like straws across the shadows, the wiry pen lines and cramped drawing of the foliage are all characteristic of Claude's late drawings. The same building reappears in the <i>Pastoral Landscape</i> of 1645 where it has been enlarged and improved in keeping with the grander format of the painting. In both the painting and the drawing, the Ponte Molle appears on the right. The tower, however, is located on the right bank of the River Tiber while in the painting and in this drawing it is placed on the left bank upstream from the south end of the bridge. There is no evidence that there ever was a tower on this site. Claude probably began the drawing on the spot but completed it later adding the bridge where it appears in the earlier painting.

Thumbnail	File name	Caption	Information
	Tiber	<b><i>View on the Tiber, 1633</i></b> Pen and brown ink with brown wash on white paper with traces of framing lines in brown ink, 104 x 147 mm. WA1855.69 © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford	The effect of bright sunlight recalls similar effects in the work of Cornelis van Poelenburch and Herman van Swanevelt, both of whom were in Rome in the 1620s. An early date is also suggested by the use of dotted pen-work and short, curling pen-lines. The view is taken from a path along the Tiber looking towards Acqua Acetosa, a mineral spring, about half an hour's walk from the Porto del Popolo. It was a popular place for artists, tourists and Romans, and Claude seems to have visited it on many occasions. His drawings of the site extend from a little drawing of the early sketchbook type to several views made in the 1660s. The building on the rocky outcrop on the right was a small votive chapel which can be seen in four later views by Claude, and in drawings by other artists then and later.

## THE 'FIREWORKS' SERIES

**Thumbnail**

**File name**



Square Tower in  
Flames

**Caption**

*The Square Tower in Flames*

Etching, 195 x 139 mm

© Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Kupferstichkabinett

**Thumbnail**

**File name**



Round Tower

**Caption**

*The Round Tower with  
Exploding Fireworks*

Etching, 195 x 136 mm

© Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Kupferstichkabinett

**Thumbnail**

**File name**



Atlas

**Caption**

*Atlas Supporting the World*

Etching and drypoint, 194 x 138  
mm. WA1855.541.2

© Ashmolean Museum,  
University of Oxford

**Thumbnail**

**File name**



Square Tower

**Caption**

*The Square Tower*

Etching, 193 x 140 mm

© Kunstsammlungen der Veste  
Coburg

**Thumbnail**

**File name**



Equestrian  
Statue

**Caption**

*The Equestrian Statue is Guided  
to the Palazzo di Spagna*

Etching, 194 x 137 mm

© Kunstsammlungen der Veste  
Coburg

### Information

In early February 1637, elaborate public festivities lasting several days took place on a number of prominent squares in Rome. The occasion was the election of the Hapsburg successor to the throne, Ferdinand III of Hungary (who was soon to become Holy Roman Emperor), as "King of the Romans". The Spanish ambassador to the Vatican, hosted the celebration on the Piazza di Spagna directly in front of his residence. He was a patron of the arts and in the second half of the 1630s he acted as an intermediary in the process by which Claude received important commissions from the Spanish royal court. It is plausible that he also commissioned Claude to document the festivities in printed (publishable) images.

In Baroque Rome, public celebrations were an integral part of the representation of state. On Sunday, 1 February, a 'festival machine', 16 metres high was erected on the square. It consisted of a splendidly marbled quatrefoil-shaped base surrounded by four wine-spouting fountains, topped by shield-bearing lions and a kneeling Atlas carrying the world on his back. At nightfall, the façade of the Palazzo di Spagna was illuminated with coloured torches, drums and trumpets sounded and – to the crackling and flashing of fireworks – the terrestrial globe on the back of Atlas opened up to reveal a celestial globe with gleaming stars. The festivities continued over the course of the week.

Claude captured the splendour of the displays in a highly unusual series of etchings, executed within an extremely brief space of time. Considering the precision with which they depict the "machines" and their transformations, he is likely to have used drawings no longer extant, possibly mere schematic sketches. The etching technique lent itself well to both rapid production and the adequate illustration of the sensational events. Two of the written descriptions of the festivities were printed just a few days after their celebration, and Claude's prints were presumably also available within just as brief a period.



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