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Paris, 26 November 2012

Dear Sir,

After closely examining your double sided drawing, I can confirm that it is in fact an authentic drawing by **Théodore Géricault**. I am proposing the following entry:

Théodore Géricault (1791-1824)

- **Study of a female nude for the Erotic Trio (*Trio érotique*)**, recto. 1816-1817, Conté crayon on white paper (no watermark), 12.8 x 20.6 cm (measurements include the mount).
- **the Combat of Hercules and Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons**, verso (reversed compared to the recto), and **Woman on the ground a woman in half-length** (reversed, as underlying sketch), 1816-1817, Conté crayon on white paper, 12.8 x 20.6 cm.
- This work will be included in the *Catalogue raisonné des dessins inédits et retrouvés de Théodore Géricault*, currently being prepared by Mr. Bruno Chenique.

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1° **Study of a female nude for the Erotic Trio (*Trio érotique*)**, recto. 1816-1817, Conté crayon on white paper (no watermark), 12.8 x 20.6 cm (measurements take into account the mount).

According to Charles Clément, the first cataloguer of his work, Théodore Géricault created an erotic painting which he catalogued as follows:

“Paintings (1818-1820).

“[n°] 131. *Interior Scene*. A man holding a woman around the waist. Another woman is lying on a bed. A. Dantan jeune.

“H. , 20. – L., 29 cent.¹”

This painting was for a long time totally unknown until its reappearance on the art market in 1992. It is now at the Getty Museum (Los Angeles) with the rather more explicit title of *Three Lovers*.²

¹ Charles Clément, *Géricault. Étude biographique et critique avec le catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre du maître*, [1866-1867 et 1868], troisième édition augmentée d'un supplément, Paris, Didier, 1879, p. 309, n° 131.

² Philippe Grunchev, “Un tableau érotique de Géricault retrouvé”, *Connaissance des Arts*, n° 484, June 1992, p. 125 [article was also published in *La Gazette de l'Hôtel Drouot*, n° 22, 29 May 1992, p. 52]; Germain Bazin, *Théodore Géricault. Étude critique, documents et catalogue raisonné*, t. VII, *Regard social et politique: le séjour anglais et les heures de souffrance*, documentation É. Raffy, Paris, Wildenstein Institute & Bibliothèque des arts, 1997, pp. 284-285, n° 2769, colo. repr.; Bruno Chenique, « Désirs », catalogue of the exhibition *Géricault, la folie d'un monde*, Lyon, musée des Beaux-Arts, 19 April - 31 July 2006, « Suppléments au tome IV », p. 139, n° 71, colo. repr.

The recto of the drawing which is the subject of this expertise is not only the first drawing known that is directly related to this painting, but it is an addition to a long series of erotic drawings which have gradually come to us, surviving decades of prudishness which Paul Huet evoked as early as 1857 during a tour around Normandy:

“I wanted to talk to you about Mortain, since I promised you. Following a family dispute, two or three old women own a few pictures by Géricault and a few hundred sketches. You can judge the desire I felt in glancing at these lost sheets by our great painter. Our attempts, it must be admitted, were unsuccessful. These witches, incapable of judging, or of benefitting from these works which chance has thrown into their hands, do not allow, it is said, anyone to glance at them; on the first day, a fire lit by some priest will end up devouring these drawings, on the pretext of nudity or other more or less diabolical or cabbalistic signs. Have therefore a home town and family, be Géricault, so that destiny can play in this way with your dreams of glory and thus with your entire existence of struggles and effort.”³

Géricault’s eroticism, which is undoubtedly still not fully rediscovered, would not have been anything exceptional in itself if behind it one of the most fiery artists of the 19th century didn’t hide behind it, who challenged the academic standards of the grand genre in the same way that he transgressed the laws of marriage and incest.⁴ Among art historians, two pioneers have studied this series of drawings.⁵

Yours, as I have already said, therefore wonderfully complements an entire series of erotic drawings like the one in the Jean Bonna collection in Geneva (which has only been known since 1994) showing an *Embracing Couple* (graphite, Conté crayon, pen and black ink, white gouache highlights on beige paper, 19.4 x 24.2 cm),⁶ *The Coupling* (Conté crayon, 14.6 x 23 cm)⁷ and, even more recently *Susanna and the Elders* (pencil 17.9 x 22.3 cm) drawn around 1815-1817.⁸

Your drawing, as I have said, is on the other hand the first of these erotic drawings that can be directly related to the famous *Three Lovers*. Although some variants compared to the painted version should be mentioned, it is easy to agree that this is in fact a true preparatory study. I will point out the differences:

³ Letter from Paul Huet to his wife, Vire, 1 October 1857, published by René-Paul Huet, *Paul Huet (1803-1869) d’après ses notes, sa correspondance, ses contemporains*, Paris, H. Laurens, 1911, p. 224.

⁴ Michel le Pesant, “Documents inédits sur Géricault”, *Revue de l’Art*, n° 31, 1976, pp. 73-81.

⁵ Hans A. Lüthy, “Passion and Violence in Géricault’s Drawings”, *Paris, Center of Artistic Enlightenment*, Papers in Art History from Pennsylvania State University, t. IV, 1988, pp. 168-188; Lorenz Eitner, “Erotic Drawing by Géricault”, *Master Drawings*, t. XXXIV, n° 4, Winter 1996, pp. 375-389. [The text is repeated in: “Jean-Louis-André-Théodore Géricault. *Couple Entwined with a Nude Spectator*”, catalogue of the exhibition *Fifty Paintings 1535-1825 to celebrate Ten Years of collaboration between The Matthiesen Gallery and Stair Sainty Matthiesen*, London, The Matthiesen Gallery, New York, Stair Sainty Matthiesen, 20 October 1993 - 28 February 1994, pp. 198-207, 211].

⁶ Bruno Chenique, “Théodore Géricault: *Couple enlace*” *Suite française. Dessins de la collection Jean Bonna*, edited by Emmanuelle Brugerolles, Paris, École nationale supérieur des Beaux-Arts, 14 February– 23 April 2006, Geneva, Musée d’Art et d’Histoire, 7 December 2006 - 25 February 2007, pp. 252-254, colo. repr.

⁷ This drawing, which was unpublished at the time, was sold by Sotheby’s, New York, 29 October 2002, p. 11, n° 5, repr; Bruno Chenique, “Désirs”, catalogue of the exhibition *Géricault, la folie d’un monde*, Lyon, Musée des Beaux-Arts, 19 April - 31 July 2006, p. 138, n° 70, repr.

⁸ François Croissy, “Le Marché de l’art vu par ses acteurs. Ventes. Un érotique de Géricault”, *Prussian Blue*, n° 1, summer 2012, p. 87, repr.

- The woman's right arm is folded
- Her head is looking upwards
- Her body is completely naked and reveals her legs

Although the graphic style is still characteristically that of Théodore Géricault in the years 1815-1817,⁹ it is nevertheless very hard, given the current state of research on Géricault, to say whether the painted version is contemporary with the artist's sojourn in Italy (October 1816-November 1817), earlier, or slightly later (the canvas bears traces of the stamp of a French supplier).

This beautiful drawing of a female languid nude again dispels the myth according to which the painter was hardly interested in women.

Michelet, who was partly responsible for this legend, had the information from Belloc, a childhood friend of the painter. On 12 February 1846, during one of his lectures at the Collège de France, the historian lamented Géricault's early death and exclaimed: "he was only at his period of struggle. Like so many others of the Empire, he was a hero. He had the period of grace (he could not yet make a woman and said to Mr. Belloc: "When I want to do a woman, it turns into a lion")".¹⁰ Expressed again in 1848: "I start a woman," he would say, "and it becomes a lion",¹¹ the phrase would be peddled by Théophile Gautier¹² and validated by Clément.¹³

Much later, the expression which had become famous would cause his paintings to be proclaimed as misogynistic,¹⁴ his masculine nature dominant,¹⁵ and the hypothesis of his homosexuality to be suggested.¹⁶ The final sentence in fact came from Chesneau: he *never* painted women.¹⁷ In 1867, Clément followed the general trend and amplified it: Géricault "did not, so to say, depict women. [...] it seems that the audacious and erudite painter did not understand feminine beauty in what it has

⁹ Germain Bazin, *Théodore Géricault. Étude critique, documents et catalogue raisonné*, t. IV, *Le voyage en Italie*, Paris, Bibliothèque des arts, 1990, p. 93, n° 1059, repr; p. 181, n° 1318, repr; p. 184, n° 1325, repr; pp. 201-202, n° 1366, repr.

¹⁰Jules Michelet, "Troisième leçon (jeudi 12 février [1846]. Géricault" *Cours au Collège de France*, published by Paul Viallaneix, t. II, Paris, Gallimard, 1995, pp. 121-125.

¹¹Jules Michelet, "Cinquième leçon. 13 janvier 1848 (Leçon non professée)", *Cours professés au Collège de France, 1847-1848*, Paris, Chamerot, 1848, p. 147.

¹² Théophile Gautier, "Troisième exposition de l'association des artistes. Bazar de Bonne-nouvelle", *La Presse*, n° 4204, Sunday 13 February 1848, p. 1.

¹³ Clément, 1868 and 1879, p. 218.

¹⁴ Édouard, duc de Trévise, "A propos du centenaire de Théodore Géricault. Géricault, peintre d'actualité", *La Revue de l'art ancien et moderne*, t. XLV, January-May 1924, pp. 297.

¹⁵ Norman Bryson, "Géricault and 'Masculinity'", *Visual Culture. Images and Interpretations*, edited by Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly and Keith Moxey, Hanover and London, Wesleyan University, Wesleyan University Press, 1994, pp. 228-259; Linda Nochlin, "Géricault, or the Absence of Women", *October*, n° 68, Spring 1994, pp. 45-59; Stefan Germer, " 'Je commence une femme, et ça devient un lion': On the Origin of Géricault's Fantasy of Origins", symposium papers, *Géricault*, (Paris, Auditorium of the Musée du Louvre, 14-16 November 1991 and Rouen, Auditorium of the Musée des Beaux-Arts, 17 November 1991), collective publication directed by Régis Michel, t. I, Paris, La documentation Française, 1996, pp. 423-447.

¹⁶ Nissim Bernard, "Géricault et les dames", *Arcadie. Revue littéraire et scientifique*, n°s 31-32, July-August 1956, pp. 63-64; Pierre Nedra, "Géricault et ses amis", *Arcadie. Revue littéraire et scientifique*, n° 35, November 1956, pp. 31-40; Edward Lucie-Smith, "The Homosexual Sensibility in Géricault's Paintings and Drawings", *The European Gay Review*, t. II, 1987, pp. 32-40; Dominique Fernandez, *Le Rapt de Ganymède*, Paris, Grasset, 1989, pp. 169-171, 173, 176, 183; Dominique Nidas, "Géricault et Delacroix homosexuels ?", *Arcadie. Mouvement homophile de France. Revue littéraire et scientifique*, XXVII, December 1980, pp. 689-696.

¹⁷ Ernest Chesneau, "Le Mouvement moderne en peinture. Géricault", *Revue Européenne*, t. XVII, 1 October 1861, p. 485.

of delicacy and distinction. He said [...] in a very informal way, in striking the shoulder of one of his friends “We two X..., we love fat w...” he needed ample and robust forms, well defined and violent movements”.¹⁸

But when he used the adverb *yet* (“he could not yet do a woman”), Michelet did not stipulate in any way any lack of interest whatsoever towards women. Quite the contrary. Alert to the artist’s sexual morals, his criteria for beauty, eroticism and sensuality, the historian took care to note in his *Journal* of 12 May 1840 the few anecdotes he had been able to glean: “Géricault blushed for taking precautions to... with his ephemeral mistresses. And when he was ill at ease from it, as a result, he would say: How do you want me to degrade a beautiful creature with these delinquencies? In the least noble pleasures, he retained something of the sentiment of love (according to Belloc)”.¹⁹

Clément’s assertions display a deliberate, if not puritan, desire to erase any romantic relationship from Géricault’s life”.²⁰ In response to Houssaye’s letter, who doubted that Clément knew much about the painter’s loves, Clément admitted to him that one of his relations had in fact played “a lamentable role in Géricault’s life”.²¹ The biographer was in fact perfectly aware of the birth of Géricault’s illegitimate son on 21 August 1818, the fruit of his adulterous relationship with Alexandrine Modeste Caruel (née de Saint-Martin), his uncle’s young wife. The secret was well kept and it is only in 1885 that Antoine Etex mentioned the existence of this child and in 1976 that Michel Le Pesant revealed his mother’s name.²²

For Clément, therefore it was a question of obliterating all traces of this scandalous incestuous relationship. An act of adultery for which at that time the two lovers could have been punished by a two year prison sentence.²³ In other words, the rebel in art was clearly coupled with a transgressive libertine who undermined the symbolic maintenance of social order and its taboos. We understand the censorship better.

In this context, the association of the *woman* and the *lion* is especially interesting because it indicates on what level the artist’s sexual urges, which appear in his famous erotic drawings, were experienced or fantasized.

Around the omnipotence of desire, Géricault explored the different phases of the excesses of the drive and laid out a discourse on brute force, abduction, rape and intercourse in art that is hardly obscene. Regarding these tragic hand to hand combats Régis Michel writes: “according to Géricault, intercourse is only a pure principle of instinctive violence: he aims to *annihilate* the other. [...] Elsewhere, Géricault *denied* the woman in her being (femininity), by saturating her body with virile signs, where the muscle, phallic attribute par excellence, triumphed. Here he

¹⁸ Clément, 1868 and 1879, p. 218.

¹⁹ Jules Michelet, *Journal (1828-1848)*, complete text established and published by Paul Viallaneix, t. I, Paris, Gallimard, 1959, p. 328; Bruno Chenique, “Le masque de Géricault ou la folle mémoire d’un culte sentimental et nauséabond”, catalogue of the exhibition *Le Dernier Portrait*, directed by Emmanuelle Héran, Paris, Musée d’Orsay, 5 March - 26 May 2002, p. 159.

²⁰ Clément, 1879, p. 433, n° 173 *bis*.

²¹ Bruno Chenique, “Lettres et documents”, catalogue of the exhibition *Géricault*, t. I, Paris, Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, 10 October 1991 - 6 January 1992, pp. 318-319.

²² Antoine Etex, *Les trois tombeaux de Géricault, 1837-1884*, Paris, Perrin, 1885, p. 17; Le Pesant, 1976, pp. 75-81.

²³ Patricia Mainardi, “Husbands, Wives and Lovers. *Mazepa* or *Marriage* and its Discontents in Nineteenth Century France”, symposium papers, *Géricault*, (Paris, Auditorium of the musée du Louvre, 14-16 November 1991 and Rouen, Auditorium of the Musée des Beaux-Arts, 17 November 1991), collective publication directed by Régis Michel, t. I, Paris, La documentation Française, 1996, pp. 278-280, 285.

destroys her in her body under the furious effect of mythological impulses. It is little to say that she is a victim.”²⁴ The sadistic climate is added to by that of threat, jealousy and the war of the sexes, where men who are called Paris, Hercules and Mazeppa clash with women and in turn are the victims of their love.

Around 1822-1823, in one of his too rare love letters, Géricault questioned in this way the mystery of the difference between the sexes: “men are not made like women and they would be grossly wrong if they wanted to judge us by comparison, I do not want to talk about the physical difference, which as you know consists of very few things... but I mean the moral difference [...]. Have I already told you that I was very jealous, do you like that, it seems that it does not hurt when we have no reason to be so. Tell me do I have to reassure you?”²⁵

Since the physical is minor and this sexual difference creates an impossible, is it not vain to want to name what would be the relation between the man and woman. Before the enigma of this otherness, it would be important to *be* oneself. This is very clearly the *Sadean* program of the romantic revolt: to invent, through sexuality, a world that is unlimited in its freedom of expression, to extol absolute freedom from morals while refusing the alliance of freedom and virtue. Faithful to this line of thought, we should hardly be surprised that at the announcement of the dismissal of Decazes, Louis XVIII's favourite minister, Géricault, like the far left, unleashed his political mockery and celebrated the news by *fucking* (he used the Italian *chiavare*).²⁶

Shortly before his death at the age of 32, Géricault confided again, to those close to him who recorded his words, the subjects he would like to treat if his strength allowed him: “I will also make a painting of horses, life size, and one of women. But of women of women,” he added, these last words implying the idea of the force which he hardly separated from beauty.²⁷ In Géricault's mouth, the repetition of the word *woman* is like a manifesto and the claim of an excess of desire.

2°) The Combat of Hercules and Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, verso (reversed compared to the recto), and **Woman on the ground a woman in half-length** (reversed, as underlying sketch), 1816-1817, Conté crayon on white paper, 12.8 x 20.6 cm.

The recto of your drawing again contributes new information to the study of Géricault. We have additional proof that Géricault, while he was exploring sexual themes, was still interested in the life and exploits of Hercules.

²⁴ Régis Michel, « Le nom de Géricault ou l'art n'a pas de sexe mais ne parle que de ça », symposium papers, *Géricault*, (Paris, Auditorium of the musée du Louvre, 14-16 November 1991 and Rouen, Auditorium of the Musée des Beaux-Arts, 17 November 1991), collective publication directed by Régis Michel, t. I Paris, La documentation Française, 1996, pp. 26-27.

²⁵ B. Chenique, 1991, p. 319, col. 2.

²⁶ Bruno Chenique, “Géricault: une correspondance décapitée,” *Nouvelles approches de l'épistolaire. Lettres d'artistes, archives et correspondances*, papers of the international symposium held at the Sorbonne, 3 and 4 December 1993, texts presented by M. Ambrière and L. Chotard, Paris, H. Champion, 1996, p. 43.

²⁷ Clément, 1868 and 1879, p. 261; Yvelines Cantarel-Besson, “Le manuscrit de Montfort”, catalogue of the exhibition *Géricault*, t. I, Paris, Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, 10 October 1991 - 6 January 1992, p. 316, col. 1.

The theme of Hercules was an early one for Géricault. There are two depictions of Hercules in the famous Zoubaloff sketchbook in the Louvre,²⁸ an early sketchbook worked on from 1810. In his catalogue, Clément, under numbers 86 and 87, listed two drawings of *Mars and Hercules* “nude and standing on a chariot”²⁹ which he dates to the years 1816-1817 but the precise title of which we find on a list of subjects that Géricault was planning to work on in 1814: “Mars and Hercules on their chariot wanting to leave to help the [...] are separated by Jupiter who has launched a bolt of lightning between the [...] wanting to terrify [...]”³⁰

Géricault’s time in Rome (1816-1817) is often summarized by three subjects of major importance for which he prepared a very large number of drawings: the famous race of the riderless horses to which he had hoped to devote a monumental painting, the series of the Roman populace and robbers and finally the group devoted to the loves of the gods.³¹

Of this series, Wheelock Whitney has recently brought to light – for the first time – the legendary figure of the demigod Hercules (son of Zeus and Alcmena), by reproducing seven drawings by Géricault illustrating the episode of Hercules fighting the Nemean Lion, a panther and a bear³² – a series to which two other drawings have been added.³³ In smothering the Nemean Lion, Hercules accomplished the first of the twelve tasks which he had been ordered to complete by Eurystheus (a great-grandson of Zeus) for having killed his wife and children as a result of a delirious episode caused by the jealous Hera (wife of Zeus).

In Rome, Géricault therefore seized the life and tasks of Hercules to make a large number of studies. The cycle opens with a magnificent drawing of *Hercules as a child, asleep*,³⁴ and continues with the following tasks: *Hercules and the Nemean Lion* already mentioned; *Hercules and Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons*,³⁵ *Hercules Combatting the Dragon in the Garden of the Hesperides* Paris, École des Beaux-Arts);³⁶ *Hercules Replacing Atlas*.³⁷ Other episodes from Hercules’ eventful life were also illustrated by Géricault: *Hercules and Lychas*;³⁸ *Hercules saving Hesione from the dragon*;³⁹ *Hercules and the Centaurs*;⁴⁰ *The Abduction of Deianeira, Hercules’*

²⁸ Germain Bazin, *Théodore Géricault. Étude critique, documents et catalogue raisonné*, t. II, *L’œuvre, période de formation*, Paris, Bibliothèque des arts, 1987, p. 393, n° 205 et p. 394, n° 207.

²⁹ Clément, 1879, p. 345; Germain Bazin, *Théodore Géricault. Étude critique, documents et catalogue raisonné*, t. IV, *Le voyage en Italie*, Paris, Bibliothèque des arts, 1990, pp. 162-163, n° 1264.

³⁰ Lorenz Eitner, *Géricault. An Album of Drawings in the Art Institute of Chicago*, Chicago, The University Press, 1960, p. 34 and f° 34, verso. Germain Bazin has provided a better transcription of this subject (Germain Bazin, *Théodore Géricault. Étude critique, documents et catalogue raisonné*, t. III, *La gloire de l’Empire et la Première Restauration*, Paris, Bibliothèque des arts, 1989, p. 147, n° 720; Bazin, t. IV, 1990, p. 12).

³¹ Wheelock Whitney, *Géricault in Italy*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1997, pp. 157-198.

³² W. Whitney, 1997, pp. 190-192.

³³ Bazin, t. IV, 1990, p. 90, n° 1049, p. 171, n° 1289.

³⁴ Bazin, t. IV, 1990, p. 168, n° 1279.

³⁵ Bruno Chenique, *Les Chevaux de Géricault*, Paris, Bibliothèque de l’Image, 2002, p. 34, n° 32.

³⁶ Bazin, t. IV, 1990, p. 169, n° 1283 and Marc Fehlmann, “Hercule combattant le dragon du jardin des Hespérides”, catalogue of the exhibition *Géricault. Dessins & estampes des collections de l’École des Beaux-Arts*, Paris, École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, 25 November 1997 - 25 January 1998, p. 179, D. 71.

³⁷ Bazin, t. IV, 1990, pp. 171-172, n° 1290.

³⁸ Bazin, t. IV, 1990, p. 117, n° 1137. See also on this subject, Philippe Grunchev, “Géricault: problèmes de method”, *Revue de l’art*, n° 43, 1979, pp. 48, 50.

³⁹ Bazin, t. IV, 1990, p. 170, n° 1286.

Wife, by the Centaur Nessus.⁴¹ The cycle of Hercules' exploits end finally with a landscape evoking the gift he had made to Philoctetes of his arrows so he could agree to light the pyre which would end his life: *Philoctetes on the island of Lemnos, shooting a bird with Hercules' arrows* (Alger, Musée des Beaux-Arts).⁴²

An important drawing must be added to this list, which had been catalogued this way in 1867 by Clément: "*Hercules raising a bull to his shoulders*. Drawing in sepia with white gouache highlights and a blue sky. – A. Benoît-Champy. height, 120. – width., 170 mill.– [sic: the dimensions have been inversed].⁴³ Finally it was classified in the section "(1816 to 1817)", in other words the two years that correspond to Géricault's Italian voyage (late September 1816 – late October 1817 to be precise).⁴⁴ This drawing reappeared in December 2003, at Piasa under the title: *Hercules and the Bull of Minos*.⁴⁵

Hercules and Géricault, we understand, form an enigmatic couple which the biographers of the artist have to discuss. Why, during his Italian journey, did the artist take on the famous hero? The murderer of his wife and his children, Hercules is stricken by remorse and his masochistic tasks aim to repair the original fault (he is only a demigod). His twelve legendary tasks, like an initiatory journey aim to make him reborn in himself through the victory over his enemies and regenerating death (death on the pyre in order finally to reach Olympus).

Géricault created two further skilful compositions of Hercules' hardships, catalogued and reproduced by Clément in 1867:

- "The Man driven by pleasure and madness", from the His de La Salle collection⁴⁶

- "The Man tearing himself away from the arms of Vice. (this inscription which appears above the drawing is in Géricault's hand.). The Herculean figure, which is repelling the various vices, is very powerful. – in pen. – A. M. Sauvé. Height, 170. – Width., 135 mm."⁴⁷

In fact, Clément does not stipulate that it relates to episodes from the life of Hercules, even though he uses the expression "Herculean figure". The titles that Géricault gave to his drawings apparently confirms that the vision he had of Hercules was not limited only to that of a slaughterer of monsters, a champion of strength, but that he also embodied a model of self control. Before being condemned to execute

⁴⁰ Bazin, t. IV, 1990, p. 158, n° 1251.

⁴¹ Bazin, t. IV, 1990, pp. 26, 155-158, n°s 1243-1250. Drawings from this series have recently been found on the verso of a drawing of *Leda and the Swan* (Marc Fehlmann, "Léda et le cygnet", catalogue of the exhibition *Géricault. Dessins & estampes des collections de l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts*, Paris, Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, 25 November 1997 - 25 January 1998, pp. 175-177, D. 65-68). Finally, we should refer to a copy by Géricault of the monumental sculpture the *Farnese Hercules* (Bazin, t. IV, 1990, p. 109, n° 1111).

⁴² Bazin, t. IV, 1990, pp. 102-103, n° 1088.

⁴³ Charles Clément, "Catalogue de l'œuvre de Géricault (suite et fin) [dessins]", *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, t. XXIII, 1 October 1867, p. 362, n° 79; 1879, p. 346, n° 88.

⁴⁴ Bruno Chenique, "Géricault: une vie", catalogue of the exhibition *Géricault*, t. I, Paris, Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, 10 October 1991 - 6 January 1992, pp. 276, 279.

⁴⁵ *Importants dessins anciens et des XIX^e – XX^e siècles*, Piasa, Bruno and Patrick de Bayser, experts, Paris, Drouot-Richelieu, Room n° 11, 10 December 2003, n° 69, colo. repr.

⁴⁶ Charles Clément, "Géricault (premier article)", *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, t. XXII, 1 March 1867, p. 241 repr. Strangely, Clément does not include this drawing in this catalogue; Bazin, t. II, 1987, pp.498-499, n° 512.

⁴⁷ Charles Clément, "Catalogue de l'œuvre de Géricault (suite et fin) [dessins]", *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, t. XXIII, 1 October 1867, p. 363, n° 84; Ch. Clément, 1879, p. 346, n° 93; Bazin, t. II, 1987, p. 499, n° 513.

his twelve tasks, we know that the young Hercules was sought after by Vice who dangled the pleasures of a soft and voluptuous life before him, while Virtue showed him the steep path that leads to honour and glory (it is a scene that Annibale Carracci placed at the centre of the Farnese Camerino, a painting now at the Capodimonte museum in Naples).

The third drawing by Géricault in pen and ink and broadly washed with india ink (whereabouts unknown) undoubtedly complements the two drawings already mentioned. It shows *The Young Hercules Slaying a Lion, a Bear, a Tiger and a large Snake*. Géricault annotated it: *La force victorieuse de ses ennemis* [Strength victorious over its enemies]. When commenting on this sketch in 1879, Etienne Charavay, claimed that Géricault apparently “in a way, has painted himself in this sketch”.⁴⁸ The hypothesis is seductive and was repeated in 1912 by François Monod: “Géricault appears today as the symbolic centre of all the new forces which triggered the art of the century after David, like Heracles, who died too early, who carried in himself not only the pathetic and dramatic zeal of romanticism, but the same powerful sap of human and picturesque realism from which Millet, Daumier, Courbet came.”⁴⁹ In 1983, Lorenz Eitner also wrote: “These works seem to be personal messages, which he possibly sent himself.”⁵⁰

Hercules’ victorious strength associated with Géricault’s creativity (the father of Romanticism) would be in a way the emblem of a moral and aesthetic heroism, serving the combat of his enemies, in other words his internal monsters.

Therefore, we can understand perhaps even better the rediscovery of this drawing of the *Combat of Hercules and Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons*, of which a more finished version exists in a private collection (pen and brown ink, Conté crayon, brown wash and white gouache highlights, 13 x 19.7 cm).⁵¹

Your beautiful drawing (recto and verso) – in which we find the graphic style that is so typical of Géricault – was until now, completely unknown to the specialists on the artist. This explains its absence from Germain Bazin’s catalogue raisonné.

I can confirm to you that I will therefore reproduce this work in my future *Catalogue raisonné des dessins inédits et retrouvés de Théodore Géricault*.

Yours sincerely,

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⁴⁸ *Inventaire des autographes et des documents historiques composant la collection de M. Benjamin Fillon, séries IX et X, artistes, compositeur de musique*, Baudry, auctioneer, Etienne Charavay, expert, Paris, Hôtel Drouot, room n° 4, 15-17 July 1879, p. 87, n° 1911.

⁴⁹ François Monod, « L’Exposition Centennale de l’art français à Saint-Petersbourg (deuxième et dernier article) », *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, t. VII, April 1912, p. 306.

⁵⁰ Lorenz Eitner, *Géricault, His Life and Work*, London, Orbis Publishing, 1983, p. 146; *Géricault, sa vie, son œuvre*, translated by Jeanne Bouniort, Paris, Gallimard, 1991, p. 196.

⁵¹ B. Chenique, 2006, p. 140, n° 73, repr..