

HUM 131 01

Fall 2023

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## Module 2 Art Assignment

4.1 Gian Lorenzo Bernini, detail of *Aeneas, Anchises, and Ascanius*, 1618–1619. Marble, 86  $\frac{5}{8}$ " (220.0 cm). Galleria Borghese, Rome, Italy.



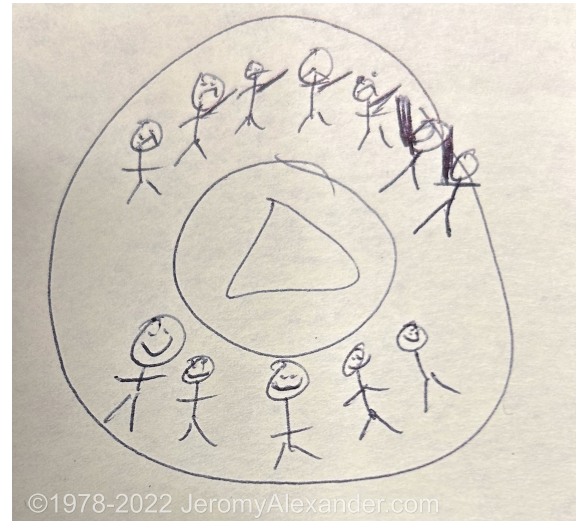
From the Roman chapter, this sculpture by Gian Lorenzo Bernini is a detail of Aeneas, Anchises, and Ascanius, 1618-1619. Sculpted out of white marble it stands just over eight feet tall. It is on display at Galleria Borghese, Rome, Italy. Though it appears much later than what many may call the Roman Period, it is in the true classical style, was sculpted in Rome, and was found in the textbook in the specified chapter.

I had read through several sections before I found this piece, as I first wanted to write about something that I initially liked. This sculpture appeals to me as it is from a single solid material rather than a composition of dyes and fabrics, sturdy and durable, expressive and with details available to all angles. Also being white marble, I can imagine a smooth polished texture in the places where the sculptor wanted it, and the also the roughness of the hair and clothing.

Although not intrinsic to the statue itself, though surely a consideration of the artist, and perhaps what I like the most: The natural white marble is interplayed with the light, creating

dramatic detail and shading in the recess, adding both to it's detail and it's allure. Simpler it could have been said, I liked it when I first saw it and I liked it all the more from then.

2.1 John Flaxman, *The Shield of Achilles*, 1821. Silver-gilt 35 3/4" (90.7 cm) diameter. The Royal Collection, London, United Kingdom.



Next, I wanted to pick out a piece that I didn't initially like. Flipping through the Greek chapter, I quickly found a piece of gold. Nothing against gold, yet I personally think it is "too flashy" except in the smallest amounts- and this shield is no small amount. Amongst a thousand other artifacts, this shield was made as the recreation of an item described by Homer in the Iliad. The originally supposedly made by a "God", Hephaestus, and belonged to Achilles, this one made in 1817 by John Flaxman on a commission. The intricacy and detail are certainly to be appreciated, in the time and skill to create it as well as the artistic mind to envision it (after reading Homer's book.) The shield features two supposedly perpetual states of man kind, to always wax and wan between times of peace and times of war.

This item was made to be a decorative item and was later given to King George IV at his coronation and it now remains on display in the United Kingdom. I believe this piece was made to be an emblem of pride, power, and wealth. Perhaps that is also my initial reaction to many large decorative gold pieces whether in art or fashion, and hence my general repulsion.

However, for its intended purpose, it was well suited- however that King did later learn that sometimes a humble, weak, and poor group of people is all it takes to beat a distant king.

All around, I didn't like it much at first and still don't, though I can certainly appreciate the skill of its creator, and as a visualization to a story element, it also serves well.