

Sculpture “Mercury about to kill Argos” by Bertel Thorvaldsen



- Author Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770—1844)
- Date of production 1818—1829
- Dimensions height: 174.5 cm
- ID no. ND 11280, deposit by the Potocki Family from Krzeszowice
- Museum [The National Museum in Kraków](#)
- Oddział The Europeum Centre for European Culture
- Subjects [sculpted](#), [body](#), [death](#)
- Technique [forging](#), [sculpture](#), [polishing](#)
- Material [white marble](#)
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- Tags [rzeźba](#), [mitologia](#), [3D plus](#), [bogowie](#), [klasycyzm](#), [domena publiczna](#)

The sculpture was purchased by Artur Potocki in 1829 from Thorvaldsen's atelier in Rome. In 1830, it was located in the palace in Krzeszowice, and since 1945 it has been in the National Museum in Kraków. Along with Antonio Canova of Italy, Bertel Thorvaldsen of Denmark was the most outstanding Neoclassical sculptors. The subject of this work was drawn from the *Metamorphoses* by Ovid (book I). Zeus fell in love with the beautiful nymph, Io, who changed into a white heifer and was handed over by Zeus's jealous wife, Hera, under guard of the hundred-eyed Argos. At Zeus's request to set his beloved free, Mercury (identified by the Romans with the Greek god Hermes) played the syrinx (pan flute) to lull Argos to sleep and then kill him. The artist showed the moment just before the murder, when having taken away the instrument from his mouth Mercury is reaching for a sword. *Because of this deed, Mercury, messenger of gods and also the god of trade, earned the nickname Argeiphontes, that is, the killer of Argos.*

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