

Willem Bartsius and the art of Dutch history painting

Willem Bartsius (c.1612 – in or after 1639) is a seventeenth-century Dutch painter whose artistic output has puzzled art historians. Only six signed works have survived and on the basis of stylistic analogy, another ten paintings have been attributed to him. The scarcity of his paintings has been explained in the light of his being active for less than a decade during the 1630s, his career being cut short prematurely by his presumed death in or after 1639. The existence of a drawing, signed and dated ‘BARTIVS f. / 1657’, in Cologne¹ at first made me anticipate the possibility that he lived much longer, but the authorship of the drawing proves to be questionable. In this article I will present the known facts of the artist’s life and try to reconstruct his movements. This is followed by a discussion of works by or attributed to Willem Bartsius in an attempt to establish his extant *oeuvre* and define his strengths and preferences in terms of style and iconography. His output will be considered in the context of Dutch history painting at that time in order to arrive at a plausible reconstruction of his artistic achievement.

Biographical data

Very little factual information is available on Willem Bartsius. His name does not appear in the birth records of the Dutch Reformed Church nor in the marital or burial records of the city of Enkhuizen where his parents lived.² This absence of his name from all notarial records makes a reconstruction of his youth in Enkhuizen very difficult, if not impossible. Furthermore, the judicial archive of Enkhuizen is almost completely lost.³ I will start by presenting a chronological sequence of known facts interspersed with hypotheses as to what might have happened in between or as a result of those events.

Willem was the son of Paulus Pietersz. Bartsius, ‘*stadspensionaris*’ (legal adviser to the town council) of Enkhuizen, and of Frederickje Meijnerdsdr. Semejns.⁴ According to their marriage certificate in the records of the Reformed Church of Enkhuizen, his parents were married on 31 March 1598.⁵ The first child born from their marriage was a son named Pieter who was baptised on 23 February 1599 and probably died before 1630.⁶ The dates of birth of their daughter Aecht (or Aagje, Agatha) and son Willem were not recorded. Their daughter Aagje later married the landscape and figure painter Pieter Simonsz. Potter (Enkhuizen, c. 1599 - Amsterdam, 1652) and gave birth to the famous painter Paulus Potter (Enkhuizen, 1625 - Amsterdam, 1654).⁷

It is generally agreed that Willem Bartsius – also spelt Bartius, Baldeus, Baltuis, Bardesius⁸ – was born around 1612 in Enkhuizen.⁹ This approximate date is confirmed by a notarial deed drawn up on 8 July 1636 by notary Jan Cornelisz. Hoogeboom in

Amsterdam. In that document Willem Bartsius declares himself to be 24 years old and to be living in Amsterdam.¹⁰ Willem's father Paulus Pietersz. Bartsius died before September 1626: in three deeds dated 21 September 1626 Frederickje is referred to as a widow.¹¹

It is worthwhile to briefly consider the records relating to Frederickje Meijnertsdr. Semeyns to provide insight into the financial situation of the Bartsius family. The three deeds dated 21 September 1626, provide evidence that Frederickje took legal action in order to receive payment from three different people using land owned by her. The first case was brought against Roeloff Hendricxsz,¹² the second against Arent Jansz¹³ and the third against Jan Crijnsz.¹⁴ Two other documents, also found in the *schepenregister* of Enkhuizen, testify to Frederickje Meijnertsdr. Semeyns's attempts to receive outstanding payments for rental of houses owned by her. The first document is dated 4 June 1627 and identifies Jan Slob as a tenant who owed her payment of house rent.¹⁵ In the second document dated 21 August 1627, Lambert Kistemaker is accused of not having paid his house rent.¹⁶ These documents show that Frederickje Meijnertsdr. Semeyns was a wealthy woman who owned at least three pieces of land and two houses that she rented out. Furthermore, she was a member of the wealthy, prominent Semeyns family that was involved, among other things, in the herring industry and whose members had occupied public offices in Enkhuizen for many generations.¹⁷ On the other hand, the legal steps taken by Frederickje may indicate a measure of financial difficulties starting after the death of her husband.

Her financial situation deteriorated to such an extent that both her son Willem Bartsius and her son-in-law Pieter Potter refused to be instituted as her heirs. This is stated in a document drawn up on 1 December 1635 in Amsterdam, which reveals that, at the time of her death, Frederickje's debts amounted to f 116-18-0 and that she owed Pieter Potter about f 287- for rental of a room over a period of two years and seven months.¹⁸ From another request dated 25 May 1636, it appears that, after Willem Bartsius had once more repudiated his mother's estate, Pieter Potter obtained permission to sell her *boedel* (estate). The proceeds of the sale totalled a miserable f 87-.¹⁹

The above facts allow us to conclude that Frederickje Meijnertsdr. Semeyns, having lost her fortune, was forced to leave Enkhuizen (before May 1633) to live in Amsterdam in the house of her daughter until her death in 1635. Aagje and Willem did, however, still seem to have rights on a property in Enkhuizen. Bredius reports that on 30 July 1636, Pieter Potter, as guardian of his children, together with Willem Bartsius, managed to claim two years' worth of rent of a house on the *Spaensche burchwal* in Enkhuizen.²⁰ Perhaps this house was left to Aagje and Willem by their father Paulus Bartsius. Given his prominent position as *stadspensionaris*, it is possible that he had left his children a handsome inheritance on his death before 1626 although it did not leave them prosperous.

Willem Bartsius's movements during the late 1620s and early 1630s are not known. Did he stay in Enkhuizen or did he move to another town? Despite perceived relationships between Bartsius's work and that of the Haarlem painters such as Hendrik Pot and Willem de Poorter, there is little chance, let alone evidence, that Bartsius practiced his art in Haarlem. His name does not appear in the archives of the Guild of St Luke in Haarlem nor in the recent study by Goosens on painters active in Haarlem.²¹ Another strategy to find out more about Bartsius's movements is to follow the steps of Pieter Potter, given the close family ties between the artists. It has been suggested that Potter who was about twelve years older than Willem Bartsius, initiated Bartsius into the art of painting while still living in Enkhuizen.²² Pieter Potter, however, was initially only a *glaseschrijver* in Enkhuizen and only started painting when he settled in Leiden in 1628. It is also not known who Potter's teacher was (maybe 'een onbekende grootheid te Enkhuizen of te Alkmaar').²³ Pieter Potter was still in Leiden in November 1630 and some time later moved to Amsterdam where he purchased his

right of citizenship on 14 October 1631.²⁴ Unfortunately it is not possible to verify whether Bartsius joined Potter in Leiden because Leiden had no painters' guild during the first half of the seventeenth century.²⁵ Until specific evidence can be traced, this part of Bartsius's life remains unknown.

The earliest factual data situate Bartsius in Alkmaar in 1633. He reported to the Alkmaar Guild of St Luke on 17 September 1633 to be registered as a member. Following this request, Bartsius officially enrolled as a master of the Alkmaar Guild of St Luke in 1634.²⁶ Also in 1634, Abraham Meyndertsz. is recorded as a pupil of Bartsius's on the name list of pupils of the Alkmaar Guild of St Luke.²⁷ Nothing is known about this Abraham Meyndertsz. who, given his surname, could have been a family member of Bartsius's on his mother's side. Bartsius's registration in the Alkmaar guild was prompted by a prestigious commission from the city of Alkmaar for a group portrait of its militia company.²⁸ The *Group portrait of the Oude Schutterij of Alkmaar* is not signed, but it carries the date 1634.²⁹ Given the large scale of this commission, it is possible that Bartsius trained Abraham Meyndertsz. to assist him. Furthermore, this commission seems to imply that Bartsius had already been working as a fully-fledged artist somewhere else and that he had built up such a good reputation that the militia men of Alkmaar felt confident enough to invite him to execute their portrait. Also, the quality of the painting itself suggests that it is the work of a fully developed, experienced artist.

From the provincial city of Alkmaar Bartsius moved to Amsterdam. Although his name is mentioned in a document dated 1 December 1635,³⁰ it is only from May 1636 that he can securely be situated in Amsterdam.³¹ The move to Amsterdam may have been precipitated by the death of his mother, but the decision to stay there – Willem Bartsius was last recorded in Amsterdam in 1639³² – was probably motivated by better financial prospects. Many professional artists, including Pieter Potter, had made the move to Amsterdam before him, attracted by the more lively artistic milieu and in search of potential clients. When Bartsius arrived there, however, he faced tough competition.³³ This may explain why he soon gave up painting: the last signed picture is dated 1638.

After 1639, there is no trace of Willem Bartsius in any document, not even a mention of his death. The Cologne drawing of a *River Landscape with Castle*, signed and

¹ Willem Bartsius, *River Landscape with Castle*, signed and dated: BARTIVS f. / 1657, pen and brush in brown, traces of pencil, 13 x 18,8 cm. Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, inv. no. 1964/13. Repro: Rheinisches Bildarchiv Köln.



dated 'BARTIVS f. / 1657', could place his date of death after 1657 (fig. 1). According to Fred Meijer, however, the signature and date do not appear to be fully reliable and cannot with certainty be interpreted as authentic.³⁴ Moreover, the absence of any evidence, either written or in the form of signed and dated paintings, over a period of nearly twenty years renders it unlikely that he lived until after 1657. It may therefore be assumed that he died in or shortly after 1639.

The paintings of Willem Bartsius

In the art-historical literature Willem Bartsius has consistently been described as a Dutch portrait and genre painter whose portraits were executed in a genre-like manner. The genre pictures – company scenes with many figures – were regarded as related to the work of the interior painters Pieter Codde and Anthonie Palamedesz.³⁵ Bernt's remark that Bartsius rarely represented themes from the Old Testament³⁶ was corrected by Fredericksen. Pointing out that Bartsius's paintings of biblical subject matter outnumbered his genre pieces, he arrived at 'a more accurate appraisal of his style [, placing] him among the artists who specialized in biblical subjects and who were active in and around Amsterdam during this time.'³⁷ Trauzeddel is the only author who credits Bartsius with practising drawing as well as painting.³⁸ Frequently acknowledged is the fact that Bartsius signed with his name in full or with the initials W. B.³⁹ According to Wurzbach, his monogram WB has often been mistaken for that of Willem Buytewech.⁴⁰

Bartsius's known painted *oeuvre*, produced over a very short period between 1631 and 1638, consists of history paintings – Old and New Testament scenes, themes from mythology and literature and allegories – and portraits. Most of them are interior scenes, while some of the historical subjects are set in landscapes. Inventories, however, also mention Bartsius as a painter of landscapes. A small landscape formed part of his mother's estate⁴¹ and another landscape featuring a large tree is mentioned in the inventory of Paulyntje van Beusecom of Amsterdam, dated 20 May 1639.⁴² In the inventory of Willem van Campen of Amsterdam, dated 10 October 1661, we find 'een strandigh van Willem Bartsius'⁴³ and the 1674 inventory of Sara de Witte of Leiden lists a large landscape by 'Bartius.'⁴⁴ The question whether his painted landscapes are all lost or have not been recognised due to incorrect attributions remains unsolved.

I will consider Bartsius's surviving *oeuvre* based on subject matter. A list of subjects is included in the Appendix for easy reference.

Scenes from the Old Testament

Dated 1631, the picture of *Abraham Pleading with Sarah on Behalf of Hagar* is the earliest signed and dated work by Willem Bartsius known to us at present (fig. 2).⁴⁵ The painting represents an old man and woman accompanied by a child sitting at the woman's feet. They are plainly dressed and stand on a step in front of the half-opened door of a house overgrown with vines. As first reported by Fredericksen, a strip of canvas has been cut out and replaced on the left hand side which means that a part of the present composition is probably missing.⁴⁶

The painting was entitled *The Expulsion of Hagar*, but Fredericksen had to admit that 'there are obvious difficulties with this identification.'⁴⁷ The old man in the painting is indeed identifiable as Abraham on account of his white hair, flowing beard and the knife dangling at his left side. The old woman, however, is not Hagar but Sarah, Abraham's wife, who told Abraham to banish the boy Ishmael together with his mother Hagar for the sake of their son Isaac (Gen. 21:9-21). Abraham is portrayed at



2

Willem Bartsius, *Abraham Pleading with Sarah on Behalf of Hagar*, signed and dated bottom right: W.BARTSIUS fet. / 1631, oil on canvas, 106 x 88,9 cm. Zurich, Private Collection. Photograph provided by the owner.

the moment when he pleads with Sarah to reconsider. Holding on to her, he is bending down as if about to go down on his knees. Sarah, however, remains undeterred, turning her head away from him and clenching her fist in stern determination. The child sitting at Sarah's feet can be identified as Isaac who seeks his mother's protection by clinging to her leg. Although the stares of the three figures seem to imply that they are watching a significant event happening on the left-hand side,⁴⁸ the missing part may simply have offered a view of a landscape with some buildings.⁴⁹

What is remarkable about *Abraham Pleading with Sarah on Behalf of Hagar* is the strength of characterisation. Bartsius manages to bring the narrative to life by giving each figure a specific role and externalising their emotions in a compassionate and deeply felt manner by means of expressive faces, gestures and postures. This preoccupation with the convincing depiction of emotions establishes Bartsius as a capable history painter.⁵⁰ Perhaps it is this quality in combination with the rather strong chiaroscuro effects, which prompted Sumowski to describe this picture as a more Rembrandtesque work by Bartsius.⁵¹ In other respects, however, no direct influence of Rembrandt is discernable.

Another striking characteristic of Bartsius's work is the attention to detail. Anatomical features are minutely rendered and the different textures of skin, hair, fabric, stone, metal and other materials reveal a life-like, tactile quality. Of particular interest here is the metal flask with a chain in the bottom right corner, its shiny surface reflecting the light. Although his figures are humble in attire, already the artist's love for rich fabrics comes to the fore in the embroidered carpet cascading from the step, the fur borders of Sarah's coat and the fringes of her long headscarf. The long strip of cloth that is knotted around Abraham's stomach like a belt ending in colourful tassels is a favourite accessory of Bartsius, as will be seen in other paintings.

Since it is dated, we know that Bartsius completed the painting of *Abraham Pleading with Sarah on Behalf of Hagar* in 1631, when he was only 19 years old. It is probable that at that time the artist resided in Leiden because, as Fredericksen observed, the painting fits 'fairly well into the ambience of Leyden.'⁵² Interestingly Bredius mentions a similar work by Pieter Potter representing *The Expulsion of Hagar*, signed and dated 1628.⁵³ This could serve to support the assumption that Bartsius did move to Leiden to join his brother-in-law Pieter Potter, exchanging experiences and even competing with him. The fact that a large landscape by 'Bartius' was listed in the inventory of Sara de Witte of Leiden seems to strengthen this hypothesis.⁵⁴

While on the subject of Abraham and Sarah, it is worth noting that Hofstede de Groot recorded the sale of a painting by Bartsius of *The Sacrifice of Abraham with Sarah, on the promise of Isaac*, which he corrected as a depiction of *The Sacrifice of Manoah*.⁵⁵ Although this work could not be traced, it shows Bartsius's interest in Old Testament scenes popularised by the pre-Rembrandtists such as Pieter Lastman.⁵⁶

Closely related to *Abraham Pleading with Sarah on Behalf of Hagar* is Bartsius's portrayal of the Old Testament story of *Elijah Visited by the Angel* (I Kings 19:4-8) (fig. 3).⁵⁷ He depicted the Hebrew prophet Elijah sitting down against a rock and folding his hands in front of his chest in reverence. He looks up at the angel who hovers slightly above ground level and points his right index finger up to heaven, while extending his left hand towards Elijah's head. The angel is dressed in a loose garment which is tied to the body by means of a long shawl wrapped around the chest over the stomach and around the hips, knotted in front and ending in tassels. The correspondence between this work and *Abraham Pleading with Sarah on Behalf of Hagar* (fig. 2) is noticeable in terms of figural composition and dark exterior setting. Furthermore, the figure of Elijah strongly resembles Abraham, the knotted shawl with tassels reappears and the same metal container with the chain is seen in the bottom right corner. The painting's present location is unknown and only an old photograph is available for visual evidence. Even though it cannot be corroborated by a proper investiga-



tion of the stylistic characteristics, an attribution of this painting to Willem Bartsius seems justifiable. Another version of *Elijah Visited by the Angel* was considered as a work by Bartsius but this suggestion proves to be entirely untenable.⁵⁸

The painting of *Samson and Delilah*, signed and dated W.P BARCIUS 163(2?), marks a change in approach (fig. 4).⁵⁹ The composition involves a rather large number of figures, with the protagonists dressed in rich, colourful costumes. The painting is a representation of the story of Samson and Delilah (Judges 16:19-20), set in a spacious interior. In the left foreground Samson is lying asleep, his head resting on Delilah's left knee. An old manservant with jutting chin is cutting off Samson's hair, while a Philistine with his hands raised, a Moor servant and two children are standing by. Another Philistine standing in the background beckons an old woman and some soldiers entering the room in the background on the right to come closer. To the extreme left appears a high bed canopy. Flowers, a feathered turban, a stick and parasol lie scattered on the tiled floor while a small dog is seen gnawing at a bone.⁶⁰



4
 Willem Bartsius, *Samson and Delilah*, signed and dated bottom right: W.P BARCIUS 163(2?), oil on panel, 66,4 x 86,7 cm. Zurich, Private Collection. Photograph provided by the owner.



5
 Willem Bartsius, *Samson and Delilah*. Detail of fig. 4 showing the signature.

The main protagonists – Delilah, Samson, the old man cutting Samson’s hair, along with the little boy – are caught in a strong beam of light. This strengthens the theatrical atmosphere created by Delilah who looks at the viewer and raises a finger to call attention to the scene enacted. To maintain this focus, the surrounding shaded areas lack definition with the furthest background figures executed in rudimentary shapes and generally dark tones. The main figures, their costumes as well as the objects of still life are characterised by what Sumowski termed elegant *fijnschilderkunst* and exquisite colouring. It is not difficult to see why Sumowski considered the painting of *Samson and Delilah* to be Bartsius’s masterpiece.⁶¹

Bartsius's signature surfaced only relatively recently during cleaning in 1996 (fig. 5). When a layer of overpaint was removed in the bottom right corner, first a false signature and date appeared: G. DOV .../163(7?).⁶² Upon further cleaning, Bartsius's original signature was revealed. The removed layers correspond to the stages in the painting's history: when it was sold in Loenen in 1824, it still showed the original signature and date: W.P. BARCIUS 1632.⁶³ The false Dou signature must have been added between 1824 and 1905, when it was purchased by F. Kleinberger of Paris as a work by Gerard Dou. Some time after 1905 Dou's signature was painted out which left room for art historians to speculate about the painting's authorship. Kusnetzow was the first to propose an attribution of this picture to Willem Bartsius.⁶⁴ Sumowski carefully considered and eventually confirmed the attribution, but added that the artist used the Berlin invention of Willem de Poorter as model.⁶⁵ Van de Watering, on the other hand, is of the opinion that De Poorter must have known and followed Bartsius's picture of the same subject and not the other way round. Usually De Poorter's brushwork is less delicate, his colours are more subdued and his figures lack the elegance of Bartsius's.⁶⁶ The assumption that Bartsius set the example appears to be substantiated by the fact that the painting of *Samson and Delilah* shows remarkable similarities to the 1633 *Lute Player* in Wiesbaden, both in style and execution.⁶⁷ The modelling of the face and hands of the lute player is comparable with that of *Delilah*. Both works display an intense interest in textural differentiation and attention to the finest detail. Similarities to the painting of *Abraham Pleading with Sarah on Behalf of Hagar* can also be observed. For example, the child sitting to the left of the old man who is cutting off Samson's hair clearly resembles the figure of Isaac. Even the metal round vessel makes its re-appearance, though partly obscured by the parasol.

Apparently Bartsius made a painting (now lost) of *Moses Tramples the Crown of Pharaoh*, signed and dated 1636, seen and described at length by Cornelis Hofstede de Groot.⁶⁸ The staffage included 'a long-bearded king in a gold-embroidered garment, a blond boy, a female fortune teller, a man of Jewish appearance entirely in red and with a pointed red cap on his head, a dwarf with a goatee, a soldier, a black man with a parasol, the queen with raised index finger making a listening gesture, two women talking to one another.'⁶⁹ Although he judged it as 'rather weak art, more or less reminiscent of his brother-in-law Pieter Potter', some of the figures as described by Hofstede de Groot remind us of personages seen in *Samson and Delilah*. Interestingly Willem de Poorter also painted a version of *Moses Tramples the Crown of Pharaoh*.⁷⁰ At several junctures, obvious links between the work of Willem Bartsius and Willem de Poorter have been pointed out, but the circumstances of their relationship are puzzling. First active in Leiden until 1630, De Poorter seems to have worked continuously in Haarlem between 1630 and 1645.⁷¹ Did the artists meet in Leiden in the late 1620s or did Bartsius, on his way from Alkmaar to Amsterdam, make a detour to visit Haarlem for a while? Further research will hopefully lead to more reliable results.

A last signed work in the category of Old Testament scenes is the *Death of the Levite's Concubine*, dated 1638 (fig. 6).⁷² This rather obscure story derived from Judges (19:15-28) was rendered mainly in Rembrandt's circle.⁷³ Bartsius depicts the moment when the Levite finds his concubine lying in front of the house. The old peasant who offered them lodging for the night sits in a pensive mood on the doorstep. In contrast, the Levite throws his hands up and recoils in horror at the realisation that his concubine is dead. This exemplifies the artist's interest in *staetveranderinge* (the Dutch translation of the Greek term *peripeteia*) as he depicts the moment of transition from one mood into its opposite. As Blankert observed, art theorists placed great value on 'the depiction of a person at the instant in which he is moved by powerful, conflicting feelings'.⁷⁴ Apparently Bartsius was very much aware of this requirement and this connects him with Rembrandt and his pupils who painted numerous representations in which *peripeteia* was the central feature.⁷⁵ Characteristic of Bartsius is the emphasis



6
 Willem Bartsius, *Death of the Levite's Concubine*, signed and dated 1638, oil on canvas, 100,5 x 110 cm. St Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum, inv. no. GE-3384. Photograph © The State Hermitage Museum.

on all the figures' hands, the Levite's feathered turban and the naturalistic rendering of folded drapery and other kinds of material. As in *Abraham Pleading with Sarah on Behalf of Hagar* (fig. 2), the scene takes place in front of the door of a house overgrown with dense foliage, but here the painting extends on the left to reveal a view of buildings in ruin.⁷⁶

A painting that relates closely to the above work is *Jacob Shown Joseph's Blood-Stained Cloak*.⁷⁷ Painted on a relatively small canvas, it represents the Hebrew patriarch Jacob and his wife Rachel recoiling at the sight of the cloak of Joseph smeared with blood, brought to them by Joseph's brothers (Gen. 37). The figures are positioned on the left-hand side in front of a dilapidated, overgrown building, while the right half of the picture shows an extensive landscape under a clouded sky. Features recalling the *Death of the Levite's Concubine* include the setting, the architectural structures in the background and the emotional involvement of the three actors 'on stage'. Jacob turns his head away from the gruesome sight of the bloodied coat and stretches out his left arm as if to push it aside. His right hand clutches his chest in a theatrical manner, indicating his heartache. The shock of the moment is also registered in the crouching figure of Rachel who demonstratively wipes away her tears with a cloth. In both works



the manner of execution is characterised by attention to fine detail, especially in the strongly illuminated areas. The painting is also closely related to *Abraham Pleading with Sarah on Behalf of Hagar* in terms of the figures' appearance. The bearded Jacob who wears the distinctive knotted shawl around his stomach clearly resembles Abraham. The little boy walking up the steps of the platform almost looks like a replica of Isaac, dressed in the same three-quarter pants and loose white shirt that billows out beneath his waistcoat. The expressive quality, however, is stronger here as the personages bare their emotions in more dramatic fashion. All of these similarities support the attribution of *Jacob Shown Joseph's Blood-Stained Cloak* to Willem Bartsius.

The realisation of the close connection between Bartsius and De Poorter discussed above prompted Sumowski to attribute a number of paintings previously considered to be by the hand of Willem de Poorter to Willem Bartsius. Some of these attributions, however, prove to be unfounded, while others are questionable. For example, Sumowski identified another version of *Samson and Delilah* as a work by Bartsius.⁷⁸ It closely resembles the painting in Zurich, but the composition is reversed. Even though the lack of a good reproduction prevents proper comparison, there are obvious inconsistencies that undermine an attribution to Bartsius. The painting of *The Finding of Moses*, previously ascribed to Gerbrand van den Eeckhout and Aert de Gelder, is another case in point (fig. 7).⁷⁹ Sumowski believed Bartsius to be its maker, despite the fact that he found it to be very strongly influenced by Willem de Poorter's painting of *Saint Paul and Saint Barnabas at Lystra* of 1636.⁸⁰ Hofstede de Groot, who saw the painting, recorded Bartsius's full signature without first name in big capital letters halfway to the right. On the other hand he observed that, apart from its much neglected state, the picture was not very 'fraai', with a pale landscape, and totally different from his other work.⁸¹ The reservations expressed by both Sumowski and Hofstede de Groot cast an attribution to Bartsius in serious doubt. Since the painting bears no stylistic resemblance to his other signed works, it makes sense not to accept it as a creation of Bartsius. The same argument applies to another version of *The Finding of Moses* which was recently auctioned.⁸² Other works that have incorrectly been attributed to



Willem Bartsius are *Jacob's Dream*,⁸³ the painting of *The Amalekiter King Agag Killed by the Prophet Samuel*⁸⁴ and *Kneeling Wailing Woman*, which is probably a fragment of a larger composition and whose subject has not yet been clarified.⁸⁵

The painting of *Esther's Banquet* was also incorrectly identified by Sumowski as a work by Willem Bartsius (fig. 8).⁸⁶ Contrary to Sumowski's claim,⁸⁷ the figural types are largely unfamiliar, as are most of the still-life objects. Despite the high finish and brilliant colouring also seen in *Samson and Delilah*, the posture of Haman is too awkward and the crisp handling of materials is lacking. Overall the manner of execution is incongruent with his style. Another representation of the Old Testament-figure of Esther, tentatively attributed to Jacob de Wet and then believed to be by the hand of Willem Bartsius, is the large canvas of *Esther's Toilette* (fig. 9).⁸⁸ Thematically it fits well into his *oeuvre*. Esther is represented in a large interior in the company of five women, with another person standing in the archway in the background. The mood is calm and relaxed: Esther sits in a regal pose on a chair, her feet resting on a large cushion, while two maidservants attend to her toilette. A tasselled parasol is held above her head by a black servant standing behind her. Esther whose outfit is exuberantly rich with embroidery, tassels, buttons, gems and jewels, bears some resemblance to Delilah in *Samson and Delilah*. Seated with knees parted, the emphasis lies on her beautiful face, elegantly poised hands and rich attire. According to Slaviček, this work also shows a definite relationship with *The Choice of Hercules* (fig. 12).⁸⁹ Although these observations would seem to support the attribution to Willem Bartsius,⁹⁰ there are a number of incongruent elements that contradict it: the still life of bowls and vessels on a table at the extreme right, the 'platform' slippers lying abandoned in the bottom right corner and above all the disproportionately small lapdog sitting on the right tip of the cushion. The figures on the left-hand side strike inelegant, meaningless poses. Moreover, the execution reveals a notably hard quality and lacks the subtlety seen in Bartsius's other paintings. Therefore it makes sense not to accept the picture of *Esther's Toilette* as a work by Bartsius.

Anonymous, *Esther's Toilette*, oil on canvas, 118 x 156 cm. Aachen, Private Collection. Photograph RKD.

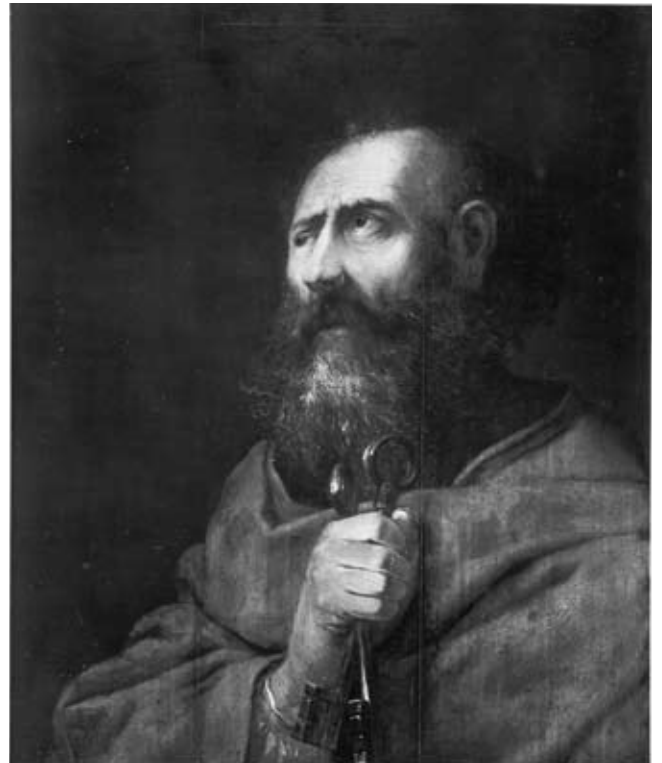


Scenes from the New Testament

Resembling the format of a portrait but belonging to the field of history painting are the busts of *St Paul*⁹¹ (fig. 10) and *St Peter* (fig. 11).⁹² St Paul who has a long beard



10
Willem Bartsius, *St Paul*, signed top right: BARTIV F, oil on panel, 69,5 x 59,5 cm. Utrecht, Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent, inv. StCC s 35. Photograph © Museum Catharijneconvent, Utrecht.



11
Willem Bartsius, *St Peter*, oil on panel, 69,5 x 59,5 cm. Utrecht, Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent, inv. StCC s 36. Photograph © Museum Catharijneconvent, Utrecht.

and wears a blue cloak, is turned to the right and looks at the viewer, holding his attribute – the sword with which he was executed – in front of his chest. The light falling in from the left accentuates the roughness of his beard and the furriness of his brown cap with its burning red lining. St Peter is portrayed as a bearded, vigorous old man wrapped in a yellow cloak. Turned to the left, he looks upwards and holds up two keys, his special attribute, in his forcefully modelled right hand. As the only representations of New Testament themes, the busts are exceptional in Bartsius's *oeuvre*.⁹³ Conceived as pendants, the paintings are devotional images representing the joint founders of the Christian Church, Peter symbolising the original Jewish element, Paul the gentile. Paul Dirkse has argued that Bartsius's choice of a Catholic theme was probably related to the publication of Vondel's first Catholic drama *Peter en Pauwel* in 1641.⁹⁴ However, accepting that Bartsius died in or shortly after 1639, he could not have known this publication nor could he have painted the pendants at such a late date. I would rather suggest that Bartsius simply accepted a commission to paint the pair for a Catholic patron, irrespective of his own religious convictions.



¹²
 Willem Bartsius, *The Choice of Hercules*, oil on canvas, 156 x 169 cm. Prague, Národní Gallery, inv. no. DO 4276. Photograph © National Gallery in Prague 2005.

Scenes from mythology and contemporary literature

Mythology is another thematic field explored by Bartsius as demonstrated by *The Choice of Hercules* (fig. 12).⁹⁵ This large canvas, however, does not merely represent the classical moralising story of Hercules at the crossroads recorded by Xenophon (*Memorabilia* II, 1, 22). As Slavíček argued, it is a typical example of the *portrait historié*, showing the members of an Amsterdam family dressed up as the heroes in the story of Hercules. The man who sports the ‘characteristic twisted moustache of the Amsterdam citizen’ plays the role of Hercules who rejects Voluptas, while his wife is cast in the role of Virtue. Voluptas is seated next to a ‘still life of sensual pleasure’ including an engraving of the nude Abundantia to which Voluptas points significantly.⁹⁶ The choice between good and bad is also symbolised by the capital letter Y seen on the rocks between the figures and by the putto who crowns both protagonists with laurel wreaths.⁹⁷

The authorship of *The Choice of Hercules* has been the topic of some controversy. While previously attributed to Jacob de Wet, then to Jan Victors, also Gerrit Willemisz. Horst and more recently to Willem de Poorter, it can firmly be argued that Bartsius created this work.⁹⁸ As pointed out by Sumowski, the figure of Virtue is very similar to the angel in *Elijah Visited by the Angel* (fig. 3). In both works, the figures are placed against a dark rock formation with billowing clouds in the background. The tiny figure of the lute player seen in the background of *The Choice of Hercules* is derived from the *Lute Player* in Wiesbaden (fig. 15).⁹⁹ The facial types correspond to those of the *Lute Player* and *Samson and Delilah* (fig. 4).¹⁰⁰ The same fine qualities that characterise *Samson and Delilah* are detectable here, especially in the elegant postures of the figures and in the execution of anatomical details, costumes and accessories.¹⁰¹ The still life in the bottom right corner also includes Bartsius’s favourite props, the feathered turban and parasol. Volker Manuth has argued that the composition shows

¹³
Willem Bartsius, *Ceres Riding her Snake Chariot*, oil on canvas, 80 x 99 cm. Present location unknown. Photograph RKD.





a link with a representation of the same subject by Pieter Potter which is known through an engraving of Pieter Nolpe.¹⁰² This relationship further supports an attribution to Bartsius who probably painted this family portrait conceived as an allegory when living in Amsterdam in or after 1636.

Another scene from Greek mythology is *Ceres Riding her Snake Chariot* (fig. 13).¹⁰³ Ovid (*Met.* V, 642-644) writes about Ceres, the goddess of agriculture who, searching for her daughter Proserpine, rides her snake chariot and holds aloft a torch. Personifying the earth's abundance, Ceres sits aloof on her chariot against an impenetrably dark background, her posture and facial expression devoid of any emotion. She is merely posing gracefully in a classicising outfit with jewels in her hair and a crown of ears of corn adorning her head, while a veil flutters lightly in the wind behind her. Her dress with the wide sleeves strung tight at the wrists recalls the outfit of the angel in *Elijah Visited by the Angel* (fig. 3). She also resembles Delilah in *Samson and Delilah* (fig. 4) in the delicate facial features, the carefully poised hands, the tactile quality of the drapery folds and the shawl knotted around the stomach. The elaborately decorated chariot further reveals Bartsius's artistry in the detailed execution of beautiful accessories.¹⁰⁴

Bartsius also made a 'portrait of a woman on horseback to whom a shepherd

offers a dish'.¹⁰⁵ The painting is known only from a description by Kramm which starts off as follows: 'In the foreground of a rocky wooded landscape is a respectable woman seated on a beautifully bridled white horse; a shepherd offers her a drinking dish...' (my translation).¹⁰⁶ Wurzbach thought it to be a representation of Erminia of Tasso¹⁰⁷ but Sumowski recorded this painting as *Granida and Daifilo*.¹⁰⁸ Derived not from mythology but from contemporary literature, it represents a scene from the Dutch pastoral play *Granida* (1605) by Pieter Hooft. Signed and dated 1638, this painting and the *Death of the Levite's Concubine*, discussed above, are the two last dated works by Willem Bartsius.

A last work in the category of mythology and contemporary literature is the *Interior with Sitting Woman and Standing Officer* (fig. 14).¹⁰⁹ Like the previously discussed painting, this work can be construed as a representation of a scene from a play.¹¹⁰ Positioned on the left, the standing officer seems tense and pays no attention to the woman seated on the right whose covered head and praying hands characterise her as a devout woman. On a table separating the two figures lies a book. The setting and the protagonists' outfits are rather sober and the panel is relatively small for Bartsius. Given the fact that both figures have their eyes fixed on something happening to the left, it is possible that the format was originally horizontal and that the panel extended to the left. Previously acknowledged as a work by Willem de Poorter, the attribution to Bartsius by Sumowski and Meijer would appear to be correct. The actors display life-like qualities, their delicately rendered faces and hands betraying the artist's strength of observation. The frizzy execution of the officer's hair is another of Bartsius's trademarks. The costumes are painted with his usual attention to detail. The officer in particular wears certain items that strike a familiar note. His hat resembles the headgear of the Philistine with his hands raised in *Samson and Delilah* (fig. 4), while the knotted scarf around his neck re-occurs in the *Lute Player* (fig. 15) and *A Young Man in a Plumed Hat Playing a Theorbo-Lute* (fig. 16) which will be discussed next.

Allegories

The *Lute Player* in Wiesbaden, signed and dated 1633, represents a young man in a fanciful costume playing the lute (fig. 15).¹¹¹ Looking straight at the viewer, he stands with his left foot forward in a plain interior. To the left, on a table draped with a dark blue cloth, some books, a piece of paper and a chain are displayed. The inscription on the piece of paper includes the words 'Vanitas Vanitatis', hence the lute player can be interpreted as a personification of transitoriness.¹¹² Noteworthy here is the sensitive rendition not only of the face and hair, but especially of the hands which betrays an absolute mastery of the brush. The execution of the costume testifies to the artist's skill in textural differentiation, from the black beret decorated with jewels and a feather, the metal studded gorget, the thin scarf wrapped around his neck to the satin sleeve cut in slits. The cape draped over the right shoulder is finished with a red velvet border and heavy gold embroidery. The striped breeches and the long leather boots with tips pointing upwards enhance the impression of a theatrical performance. It is interesting to note that Pieter Potter painted a very similar version of a lute player on a small scale, signed and dated 1636.¹¹³ This confirms the ongoing competition between the two artists after Bartsius joined Potter in Amsterdam in 1636.

A variation of the theme of the *Lute Player* is the painting of *A Young Man in a Plumed Hat Playing a Theorbo-Lute* (fig. 16).¹¹⁴ It represents a young man sitting and playing his instrument against a dark brown neutral background. He wears a hat topped with two large plumes, a white shirt with wide sleeves tied at the wrists, a green coat, plain brown pants and leather boots. Although his attire is more modest,

15
Willem Bartsius, *The Lute Player*,
signed and dated bottom right:
W. BARTSIVS. f. 1633, oil on
canvas, 91,5 x 68 cm. Wiesbaden,
Gemäldegalerie, inv.no. M 805.
Photograph © Museum Wiesbaden.



the metal studded gorget and the thin scarf knotted around his neck connect him closely to the *Lute Player*. On a cloth spread out on the floor at his feet, a still life consisting of opened and closed books, pieces of paper – the title of the top sheet reads ‘Vanitas Vanitatis’ – and a skull functions as a reference to *Vanitas*. This places the picture in the same allegorical category as the *Lute Player*. The artist’s mastery of *fijnschilderen* can be observed in the musical instrument, the details of the clothing and the still-life motifs. The naturalistic rendering of the face and of the hands playing the instrument and the delicate handling of folding cloth and leather further justify its attribution to Bartsius.

Far more explicit in its symbolism is the painting of *Vanitas* in Geneva (fig. 17).¹¹⁵ Since 1950 believed to be by the hand of Willem de Poorter, it has justly been recognised by Meijer as a work of Bartsius’s.¹¹⁶ The painting represents a young woman



sitting in three-quarter view. Staring at the viewer, she is placed in an interior in front of a brown curtain drawn to the right-hand side. With her left foot placed on a book, she places her left hand on a skull which rests on her knee while holding a spoon with a bubble in her right hand.¹¹⁷ She wears a loosely fitting white dress tied beneath her breasts with a belt – similar to the angel in *Elijah Visited by the Angel* (fig. 3) – and a heavy gold-coloured cloak draped over her shoulders. Her rich attire is complemented by jewellery consisting of a crown, strings of pearls and a large brooch. On a draped table behind her, expensive items are assembled such as an opened jewellery box, an ornamental piece of silverware and nautilus cup as well as the familiar shawl ending in tassels. A large still life on the tiled floor fills the bottom right corner. It comprises a globe, books, playing cards, a fallen glass, a violin, flute and lute, a pipe, dice, an overturned hourglass and the metal flask with a chain first seen in *Abraham Pleading with Sarah on Behalf of Hagar* (fig. 2). Another assortment of objects related to warfare is vaguely discernable in the background on the left. Surrounded by a multitude of objects symbolising the vanity and brevity of human life, the young woman evidently personifies *Vanitas*. The soft roundedness of her face, the elegance of her pose, the convincing realism of the draperies and objects of different textures all reveal the skilful hand of Bartsius.

Sumowski attributed another *Vanitas Allegory* to Bartsius on the basis of a perceived relationship with *Esther's Banquet*.¹¹⁸ Since the latter work is not by Bartsius, and the stylistic characteristics of the *Vanitas Allegory* itself also clearly deny the authorship of

17
Willem Bartsius, *Vanitas*, oil on
canvas, 86,7 x 77,7 cm. Geneva,
Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, inv. Basz.
14. Photograph © Musée d'Art et
d'Histoire, Geneva.



Bartsius, this attribution cannot be sustained. The execution of the standing figure is too awkward, the face and hand are too coarse and the assortment of vessels and other still life elements displayed all over the floor and table is largely unfamiliar.¹¹⁹

Portraits and *tronies*

In 1634, Bartsius completed the group portrait of the *Officers and Standard Bearers of the Oude Schutterij of Alkmaar* (fig. 18).¹²⁰ It represents fourteen officers of the *Oude* or *St Joris Doelen* during a meeting.¹²¹ Huys Janssen argued that, because Bartsius's experience was limited to simple compositions involving only a few figures, he must have sought inspiration from the militia meeting completed by Frans Hals the previous year.¹²² There is, however, no direct evidence that Bartsius actually knew that group portrait. His own composition lacks balance and unity. The figures are separated into two groups by the standard bearer who stands in the middle. The group on the right consists of six men gathered around a table on which some documents are displayed, including a map which carries the date. This map, showing a fortress, serves as a symbol of the sitters' military function.¹²³ The group of men idly posing on the left consists of six officers, three of them standing and the other three seated. While the individual faces and the men's attire show Bartsius's mastery of



18
 Willem Bartsius, *Officers and Standard Bearers of the Oude Schutterij of Alkmaar*, dated middle right on map: A° 1634, oil on canvas, 198,2 x 385,7 cm. Alkmaar, Stedelijk Museum, inv. no. 20726. Photographer Berend Ulrich. © Stedelijk Museum Alkmaar.

characterisation and attention to detail, several figures are awkwardly proportioned and their heads do not seem to fit comfortably on their bodies. The least successful figure is the man seated to the left of the flag bearer. His head is too large, he has no left shoulder, his left arm is unnaturally twisted and his chest is severely flattened. Despite these compositional and proportional failures, much attention has been spent on meticulous details of clothing and accessories. All the men in the portrait have beards and moustaches and are decked out in their finest black or light brown clothes with red or blue sashes and various types of white collars.¹²⁴ Some wear armour and display their sword or hold a wineglass in an elegantly poised hand. Clearly, Bartsius proved himself once again as a master in facial characterisation and textural variation, but only in small individual sections. The fact that he was not particularly successful in putting the pieces together, may be attributed to lack of experience in painting complex compositions or, if he relied on the assistance of his pupil Abraham Meyndertsz, to a lack of co-ordination. Nevertheless his clients were pleased considering the fact that Bartsius received f 225- for the painting and f 90- for the ebony frame which is still in place.¹²⁵

Also in 1634 Bartsius painted a portrait of a cavalier in full length which appears to be lost.¹²⁶ Two *tronies* on small scale have survived. The one of a *Gentleman Holding a Tankard* (fig. 19) is signed W.BARSIV.¹²⁷ The sitter looks smilingly at the viewer and holds up a closed tankard in his right hand. He wears a white collar with laced border, a cape draped from his left shoulder over his right arm and a fur-lined hat which brings to mind the painting of *St Paul*. The other *tronie* is an octagonal panel representing a *Young Man with Flute* (fig. 20).¹²⁸ Attributed to Bartsius by Bode, this image of the bust of a young man holding a flute in his left hand is indeed characterised by features typical of his work. Looking straight at the viewer with a smile on his face, the sitter has that frizzy-looking hair topped by a plumed hat comparable to the one worn by the standard bearer in the *Officers and Standard Bearers of the Oude Schutterij of Alkmaar*.¹²⁹ The eyes, the hair, the hat, the knotted scarf around the neck, the decorated outfit as well as the theme of music playing relate this panel very closely to the *Lute Player* in Wiesbaden. Since the young man's attribute is a flute and the other gentleman is holding a tankard, these panels could perhaps be interpreted as



19
 Willem Bartsius, *Gentleman Holding a Tankard*, signed: W. BARSIV, oil on panel, 17 x 13,5 cm. Present location unknown. Photograph courtesy of Sotheby's.



20
 Willem Bartsius, *Young Man with Flute*, oil on panel, 10 x 10 cm (octagon). Present location unknown. Photograph RKD.

allegories of hearing and taste respectively. As far as we can tell, however, they were not conceived as part of a series of the five senses. What these portraits and *tronies* again reveal about Bartsius is his mastery of individual characterisation and love of robust realism.

Concluding remarks

Willem Bartsius left a relatively small *oeuvre* consisting of history paintings, *tronies* and portraits, produced in a time span of eight years. Although we learn from archival sources that he also painted landscapes (four listed), his main interest must have been history painting, totalling sixteen known works. Within this category, Old Testament scenes were apparently his favourite themes with a total of seven works (of which two are missing today). Mythology and contemporary literature provided the subject matter of four works (one missing or lost). Three New Testament scenes (one missing or lost) and three allegories complete the section of history painting. The category of portraits comprises only four works (one missing or lost), two of which are *tronies* that could possibly qualify as allegories. Although a certain amount of overlapping between the categories occurs, it was as a history painter that Bartsius distinguished himself.

His preference for history painting can be explained from various perspectives. In art theoretical circles, history painting was considered the ultimate achievement for an artist. Painting portraits from life, even the notable genre of the militia portrait,

was seen as a subject of secondary importance.¹³⁰ From an economic point of view, history paintings were also more costly, ensuring a larger income.¹³¹ A related factor which may have guided Bartsius's choice is the popularity of and preference for histories among buyers. A study of probate inventories of Delft and Amsterdam shows that, during the decade 1630-1639, when Bartsius was artistically active, collectors favoured histories, followed by landscapes and portraits¹³² – incidentally, the three subjects painted by Bartsius. It could thus be argued that he pursued history painting driven by prestige and financial gain: such works were most esteemed, expensive and sought after.

His paintings show that he was an accomplished history painter, notable for his competent execution and individual vision. He paid due attention to the proper proportions of and appropriate poses for his figures, the invention and arrangement of his compositions and the depiction of human emotion – all the aspects that Karel van Mander had discussed in the various chapters of *Het Schilder-Boeck*.¹³³ Bartsius dressed his figures in rich costumes and painted them in vivid colours. He made his historical personages play their parts in an elegant and rather theatrical manner, caught in a bright 'spotlight' like actors on a stage. In his portraits, the sitters show a robust realism and are recognisable as contemporaries of the artist. Another characteristic feature of Bartsius's is his passion for *fijnschilderkunst*, seen in the minutely detailed rendering of textile fabric, metal and other details of still life. This impulse towards realism and love of detail places Bartsius's work squarely within the typical tradition of Dutch art of the period.

Thematically, Bartsius's pictures are closely related to the types of paintings that were produced by Rembrandt and his followers in Amsterdam. The market for biblical and allegorical scenes was restricted and essentially monopolised by Rembrandt and his workshop which turned out high quality history paintings in large numbers.¹³⁴ Considering this strong competition in Amsterdam, it is conceivable that Bartsius, like many professional artists, was forced to supplement his income by means of another occupation.¹³⁵ Moreover, because he painted on rather large formats and employed a painstaking technique, his production rate must have been slow. Not only were his works rare, they were probably also expensive, affordable to only a select number of rich patrons. In view of Bartsius's low output, Kramm suggested that he probably painted for pleasure.¹³⁶ Yet all evidence suggests that he was dedicated to his painting career which ended abruptly with his untimely death.

There are still many questions and mysteries surrounding Willem Bartsius and his *oeuvre*. This article aims to be a starting point for further research, not only on Bartsius but also on other Dutch artists from his circle.

NOTES

¹ Willem Bartsius, *River Landscape with Castle*, signed and dated: BARTIVS f. / 1657, pen and brush in brown, traces of pencil, 13 x 18,8 cm. Cologne, Wällraf-Richartz-Museum, inv. no. 1964/13. Museum catalogue 1967, p. 121; catalogue *Niederländische Zeichnungen* 1983, no. 101 ill. Drs Erik P. Löffler of the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie (Netherlands Institute for Art History, in The Hague, hereafter abbreviated as RKD) confirms the reading of the date as 1657.

² I acknowledge the assistance of Jan de Bruin of the Westfries Archief in Hoorn and Willem Blok of the Noord-Hollands Archief in Haarlem.

³ John Brozius, personal communication. I wish to express my sincere thanks to art historian John Brozius of Hoorn for his most generous assistance with the retrieval of archival evidence.

⁴ R.E.O. Ekkart, *Portret van Enkhuizen in de gouden eeuw*, Zwolle and Enkhuizen 1990, pp. 92-93. P. Huys Janssen, S. de Vries and M.R. de Vrij, *De zestiende- en zeventiende-eeuwse schilderijen van het Stedelijk Museum Alkmaar*, Zwolle 1997, p. 106.

⁵ Enkhuizen, Stadsarchief, DTB 43 (31 March 1598): 'docter pouwels pietersz woonende in S Jans straet ende freek meijnerts wonende op die brestraet het 3 bodt. getrouw van palde [abbreviation of the name of the minister] de xxxi dach marti anno [?] viii [1598].'

⁶ The witness was Pieter Bartsz. (J. Brozius, personal communication).

⁷ See A. Würzbach, *Niederländisches Künstler-Lexikon*, Vienna and Leipzig 1906, vol. 1, p. 61; U. Thieme and F. Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, Leipzig 1908, vol. 2, p. 585; E. Bénézit, *Dictionnaire critique et documentaire des peintres, sculpteurs, dessinateurs et graveurs*, Librairie Gründ 1976, vol. 1, p. 476; B. Fredericksen, 'Recent gifts of paintings. Willem Bartsius, Expulsion of Hagar', *The J. Paul Getty Museum Journal* 3 (1976), p. 119; W. Bernt, *Die Niederländischen Maler und Zeichner des 17. Jahrhunderts*, München 1979, vol. 1, p. 17; S. Trauzeddel, *Allgemeines Künstler-Lexikon*, München and Leipzig

1993, vol. 7, p. 315.

⁸ Bénézit 1976 (note 7), p. 476.

⁹ See Würzbach 1906 (note 7), p. 61; Thieme and Becker 1908 (note 7), p. 585; Bénézit 1976 (note 7), p. 476; Fredericksen 1976 (note 7), p. 119; Bernt 1979 (note 7), p. 17.

¹⁰ Amsterdam, Stadsarchief, arch. 5075, inv. no. 843/1211. On 8 July 1636, Pieter Potter, aged 36, and Willem Bartsius, aged 24, residing in Amsterdam, made a declaration at the request of Pieter van Dam concerning the gold leather factory of Maerten van den Heuvel. See also A. Bredius, 'Pieter Symonsz. Potter. Glaseschrijver, ooc schilder', *Oud Holland* 2 (1893), pp. 37-38.

¹¹ These deeds are kept in the Schepenregister in Enkhuizen, Oud Rechterlijk Archief 4886 (21 sept. 1626). (J. Brozius, personal communication)

¹² Enkhuizen, Oud Rechterlijk Archief 4886 (21 sept. 1626): 'frederickgen meijnertsdr weduwe wijlen mr. pouwels bartsz sa: geassist[eer]t met haer in desen gecoozen voocht eij[ssere]sse contra Roeloff hendricxsz linnenwever ged[aachd]e' in case of payment of '73 gulden 15 stuivers over verschenen custingpenn[ingen]' i.e. mortgage on a piece of land or 'van een plaets Erff's'. The contract was drawn up in 1624.

¹³ Enkhuizen, Oud Rechterlijk Archief 4886 (21 sept. 1626): '... contra Arent Jansz mr. huijstimmerman' for f 87-10 for 'custingpenningen van een plaets erff's'. He had to pay yet f 73-15 for his second payment and f 13-15 for his third payment due in May. The contract dated from 1624.

¹⁴ Enkhuizen, Oud Rechterlijk Archief 4886 (21 sept. 1626): '... contra Jan Crijnsz Mr. huijstimmerman' who had to pay f 83-15 which was the third payment due in May also 'van een plaets Erff's'. The contract also dated from 1624.

¹⁵ Enkhuizen, Oud Rechterlijk Archief 4886 (4 juni 1627), fol 175: 'frederickje meijnerts wed.e pouwels barts' contra Jan Slob. She demanded payment of f 26 'van verschenen huijshuijpr op mej 1627'.

¹⁶ Enkhuizen, Oud Rechterlijk Archief 4886 (21 augustus 1627), fol 123(v): 'frederickje meijnerts wed.e pouwels barts' assisted by a

guardian demanded from Lambert Kistemaker payment of f 33-15, three quarters of the annual house rent.

¹⁷ Ekkart 1990 (note 4), pp. 7, 11.

¹⁸ Document drawn up on 1 December 1635 by Notary W. Cluyt, Amsterdam, at the request of Pieter Potter (Bredius 1893 [note 10], pp. 36-37). This document also places the date of death of Frederickje Meynertsdr Semeyns before December 1635.

¹⁹ Document drawn up on 25 May 1636 by Notary W. Cluyt, Amsterdam, at the request of Pieter Potter (Bredius 1893 [note 10], pp. 36-37).

²⁰ Bredius 1893 (note 10), p. 39.

²¹ H. Miedema, *Archiefbescheiden van het St. Lukasgilde te Haarlem 1497-1798*, 2 vols, Alphen aan den Rijn 1980; M.E.W. Goosens, *Schilders en de markt: Haarlem 1605-1635*, Leiden 2001. I thank Michiel Franken for drawing my attention to these publications.

²² Fredericksen 1976 (note 7), p. 119.

²³ Bredius 1897 (note 10), pp. 38, 45. This comment raises speculation about Pieter Potter having joined Willem Bartsius in Alkmaar.

²⁴ Bredius 1897 (note 10), pp. 36, 38; Fredericksen 1976 (note 7), p. 119. Bredius (1893 [note 10], p. 37) states that Pieter Potter was registered in the Album Studiosorum of Leiden on 11 November 1630, commenting that many painters, including Rembrandt and Jan Steen, registered as students in Leiden to escape taxation and militia service.

²⁵ A. Waiboer, 'The early years of Gabriel Metsu', *The Burlington Magazine* 167 (February 2005), p. 81.

²⁶ Huys Janssen, De Vries and De Vrij 1997 (note 4), p. 106. His registration appears in the 'Naamlijst der Gildebroeders van St. Lucas Gildt' (Alkmaar, Regionaal Archief, Schildersgilde no. 30). I thank Juliette van Seters, curator, Stedelijk Museum Alkmaar, for sharing this information (email 19 April 2005).

²⁷ D.O. Obreen, *Obreen Archief. Archief voor Nederlandsche Kunstgeschiedenis*, Rotterdam 1879-

1880, vol. 2, p. 41; Wurzbach 1906 (note 7), p. 61; Thieme and Becker 1908 (note 7), p. 585; Bénézit 1976 (note 7), p. 476; Huys Janssen, De Vries and De Vrij 1997 (note 4), p. 106.

²⁸ Willem Bartsius, *Officers and Standard Bearers of the Oude Schutterij of Alkmaar*, dated middle right on map: A° 1634, oil on canvas, 198,2 x 385,7 cm. Alkmaar, Stedelijk Museum, inv. no. 20726. Formerly Alkmaar, the 'Oude' or 'Sint Jorisdoelen'; in 1804 transferred to the City Hall; in Stedelijk Museum Alkmaar since 1873. Thieme and Becker 1908 (note 7), p. 585; A. Wurzbach, *Niederländisches Künstler-Lexikon*, Vienna and Leipzig 1911, vol. 3, p. 18; Museum cat. 1932, no. 2, with list of sitters; Bénézit 1976 (note 7), p. 476; Bernt 1979 (note 7), p. 17; W. Sumowski, *Gemälde der Rembrandt-Schüler*, 6 vols, Landau 1989, vol. 6, pp. 3690, 3767, cat. no. 2184; Trauzeddel 1993 (note 7), p. 315; Huys Janssen, De Vries and De Vrij 1997 (note 4), p. 107.

²⁹ According to Juliette van Seters (curator, Stedelijk Museum Alkmaar, email 19 April 2005), the attribution of the present work to Bartsius is based on notes of the 18th-century historian Simon Eikelenberg of Alkmaar which are located in Alkmaar, Regionaal Archief (CA, no.13). The original material (including the commission) on which these notes are based has, however, been lost.

³⁰ See note 18.

³¹ See note 19. In this request, Pieter Potter declares that 'some weeks ago, he wrote to his brother-in-law Willem Bartsius (presently residing in the city) whether he would accept the inheritance of his deceased mother'. The phrase 'presently residing' seems to imply that Willem Bartsius was not yet living in Amsterdam at the time of writing of the previous request dated 1 December 1635.

³² On 11 April 1639, Willem Bartsius requested a declaration about the gold leather factory of Jacob van Ipen. Pieter Potter was one of three participants in this gold leather factory located on the 'Weespat' in Amsterdam. In the document drawn up by Notary B.J. Verbeeck, it is stated that Pieter Potter usually ran the shop of the gold leather factory on the Weespat, 'daer de vergulde roemer uythangt', and the one on the Amstel. Pieter van Dam was also one of the supervisors. (Bredius 1897 [note

10], p. 39; RKD, Archival Notes A. Bredius, Amsterdam, p. 27A)

³³ Waiboer 2005 (note 25), p. 90.

³⁴ If, however, the signature and date on the drawing are authentic, Erik Löffler and Fred Meijer suggest that it is the work of an unknown draughtsman named Bartius, possibly a family member of Willem Bartsius.

³⁵ Wurzbach 1906 (note 7), p. 61; Bernt 1979 (note 7), p. 17; Trauzeddel 1993 (note 7), p. 315.

³⁶ Bernt 1979 (note 7), p. 17.

³⁷ Fredericksen 1976 (note 7), p. 119.

³⁸ Trauzeddel 1993 (note 7), p. 315. There is mention in a will, drawn up in Amsterdam on 10 March 1658, of two drawings by Willem Bartsius, described as old *tronies* in black frames. Another drawing of two women in pen and brown ink was auctioned on 8 March 1824 (auction Roelofs, Amsterdam [De Vries, ... Roos], 8-03-1824, no. 7) (RKD, fiches Hofstede de Groot).

³⁹ Thieme and Becker 1908 (note 7), p. 585; Bénézit 1976 (note 7), p. 476; Bernt 1979 (note 7), p. 17; Trauzeddel 1993 (note 7), p. 315.

⁴⁰ Wurzbach 1906 (note 7), p. 61.

⁴¹ The inventory of the estate of Frederickje Meijnerdsdr Semeyns which was drawn up by Pieter Potter in 1635, included 'een landschapje van BAISIUS' (a small landscape by Bartsius) valued at f 6-0-0. (Bredius 1893 [note 10], p. 37)

⁴² The inventory of Paulyntje van Beusecom was drawn up in Amsterdam on 20 May 1639 by Notary Bareman. It mentions 'een lantschap van Bartsius, bestaende principaelyck in een groote boom'. (RKD, Archival Notes A. Bredius, inv. 1639)

⁴³ RKD, fiches Hofstede de Groot.

⁴⁴ Leiden 1674 – Inventory of Sara de Witte, widow of Pieter Davids, includes 'een groot lantschap door Bartius'. (RKD, Archival Notes A. Bredius, inv. 1674)

⁴⁵ Willem Bartsius, *Abraham Pleading with Sarah on Behalf of Hagar*, signed and dated bottom right: W. BARTSIUS fet. / 1631, oil on canvas, 106 x 88,9 cm. Zurich, Private Collection. Formerly Central Picture Galleries,

New York; sold to William P. Garred (Onowa, Iowa) in 1971; donated by William P. Garred in 1971 to The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles (inv. no. 71.PA.70); auction Amsterdam (Sotheby's), 8-05-2007, no. 56. Exh. cat. *Baroque Masters from the J. Paul Getty Museum*, Northridge (California State University) 1973, cat. no. 1; Fredericksen 1976 (note 7), pp. 118-124; P.C. Sutton, *Dutch Art in America*, Grand Rapids, Michigan and Kampen 1986, p. 138; W. Sumowski, *Gemälde der Rembrandt-Schüler*, 6 vols, Landau 1983-1994, vol. 4, pp. 2386, 2388 (note 14), 2395. The photograph (fig. 2) shows the painting after restoration in 2008.

⁴⁶ The cut runs along the vertical line formed by vine branches covering the wall of the building. Just beneath Sarah's sleeve the canvas was cut horizontally to the left-hand side, leaving the bottom part with the little boy next to the low brick wall unchanged. As observed by Fredericksen (1976 [note 7], pp. 119-120), it seems probable that the entire upper left corner of the canvas 'belonged to the original composition but has come from some other part of it, probably from further to the left'.

⁴⁷ Fredericksen 1976 (note 7), p. 120. He then suggests that the theme is *The Blind Tobit and Anna* but, realising that it does not correspond to the usual depictions of the story, concludes that 'we have here some other less obvious subject which has yet to be recognized'.

⁴⁸ Fredericksen (1976 [note 7], p.120) mentions that 'under the cloud in the sky in the upper left corner, there is a small and crudely painted angel blowing a trumpet [which] has been painted out and is known only from an earlier cleaning.' This angel was probably painted at the time when the canvas was cut and has no bearing on the original conception.

⁴⁹ Other works representing similar scenes set out of doors such as *Death of the Levite's Concubine* and *Jacob Shown Joseph's Blood-Stained Cloak* also incorporate a view into a distant background with buildings.

⁵⁰ A. Blankert et al. *Gods, saints & heroes: Dutch painting in the age of Rembrandt*, Washington 1980, p. 26.

⁵¹ Sumowski 1983 (note 45), vol. 4, p. 2386.

⁵² Fredericksen (1976 [note 7],

p. 119) did, however, remark that 'compared to the works of the Leyden painters, our picture is unusual. It is on canvas and is fairly large, certainly larger than most works by Potter, Dou or Rembrandt done at that time'.

⁵³ Pieter Potter, *The Expulsion of Hagar*, signed and dated 1628. Collection of Jos. De Kuyper in Rotterdam (Bredius 1893 [note 10], p. 42). I was unable to trace it for comparative purposes. Potter's 1643 version in the Amalienstift in Dessau (inv. no. 462), painted on canvas, 103 x 87 cm, signed 'P.Potter, f. 1643' (photo at RKD) bears no resemblance to Bartsius's composition.

⁵⁴ See note 44.

⁵⁵ Willem Bartsius, *Sacrifice of Manoah*, signed on a stone of the altar in the middle: Baartsius F., oil on canvas, 60 x 72,5 cm. Location unknown. Auction London (Christie's), 4-07-1927, no. 128; sale of Ernst Museum, Budapest, 27-04-1931, no. 20. RKD, fiches Hofstede de Groot; The J. Paul Getty Museum, Central file report, 3 March 2005: Curatorial note. This painting is also incorrectly referred to as *Abraham Dismissing Sarah*, by Bénézit (1976 (note 7), p. 476). See also Fredericksen (1976 [note 7], p. 123, note 54) who correctly stated that the *Sacrifice of Manoah* and the painting of *Abraham Pleading with Sarah on Behalf of Hagar* are not identical.

⁵⁶ See, for example, the two versions of *The Sacrifice of Manoah* by Pieter Lastman in A. Tümpel and P. Schatborn, *Pieter Lastman, leermeester van Rembrandt – the man who taught Rembrandt*, Zwolle and Amsterdam 1991, pp. 120-121, cat. no. 18; pp. 128-129, cat. no. 21.

⁵⁷ Willem Bartsius, *Elijah Visited by the Angel*, oil on canvas, 112 x 86 cm. Location unknown. Formerly art dealer Goudstikker, Amsterdam (as Ferdinand Bol); Reichskanzlei Berlin. I. Linnik, *Holländische Bilder des 17. Jahrhunderts und Zuschreibungsfragen*, Leningrad 1980, p. 132, fig 181; A. Blankert, *Ferdinand Bol (1616-1680) Rembrandt's pupil*, Doornspijk 1982, p. 164, R 17; Sumowski 1983 (note 45), vol. 4, pp. 2386, 2388 (note 15), 2396. Although Sumowski and Blankert record its location as with the Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst in The Hague (now the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage in Amsterdam), I was informed that it never was part of that collection (email Yuri

van der Linden, 26 July 2007). The present whereabouts of this work are unknown.

⁵⁸ *Elijah Visited by the Angel*, oil on panel, 48 x 35 cm. Location unknown. Formerly Collection Baron Uexkuell; purchased in June 1946 by Fritz Schleif, Berlin; purchased by Dr Joachim Lange-Wuhlisch, Berlin-Dahlem; auction Harms, Berlin, 8-5-1947; purchased by Victor Huchel for Major Parker, Berlin; auction New York (Parke-Bernet Galleries), 22-11-1963, no. 60; purchased by A. Brown; auction New York (Sotheby's), 5-4-1990, no. 222 ill.

⁵⁹ Willem Bartsius, *Samson and Delilah*, signed and dated bottom right: W.P. BARCIUS 163(2?), oil on panel, 66,4 x 86,7 cm. Zurich, Private Collection. Formerly Amsterdam, Collection Willem Six (Würzbach 1906 [note 5], p. 61); auction Amsterdam, 12-5-1734, no. 234 (RKD, fiches Hofstede de Groot), bought by F. Hekman (G. Hoet, *Catalogus of Naamblyst van Schilderyen ...*, The Hague 1752, vol. 1, p. 421); possibly D.G. van der Burgh van Kronenburg sale, Loenen, 6-9-1824, no. 6 (as W.P. Barcius 1632) (RKD, fiches Hofstede de Groot), bought by Van den Bergh; Paris, F. Kleinberger, 1905 (as Gerard Dou); Paris, Collection Charley (as Willem de Poorter); Zurich, Collection Hans Klenk, c. 1968 (as Nikolaus Knüpfer). Hoet 1752, vol. 1, p. 421, no. 234; C. Kramm, *De levens en werken der Hollandsche en Vlaamsche kunstschilders, beeldhouwers, graveurs en bouwmeesters, van den vroegsten tot op onzen tijd*, Amsterdam 1857, vol. 1, p. 56; Exh. cat. *Werke alter Meister aus Privatbesitz*, Mainz (Kunstgeschichtliches Institut der Johannes Gutenberg-Universität) 1968, cat. no. 47 (as Nicolas Knüpfer); R. Hamann-MacLean, *Werke alter Meister aus Privatbesitz. Kleine Schriften der Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst*, Mainz 1969, p. 11 (as Willem de Poorter); J. Kusnetzow, *Oud Holland* 88 (1974), p. 169; Wissman, *Seventeenth Century Dutch and Flemish Paintings from the Collection of Hans Klenk*, Schenectady-Amherst-Williamstown 1977, pp. 20-22, no. 8 (as Willem de Poorter); Linnik 1980 (note 57), p. 132, plate 182; Sumowski 1983 (note 45), vol. 4, pp. 2386, 2388 (note 9), 2390.

⁶⁰ Willem L. van de Watering, expertise 24-5-1991. I am grateful to the owner of the painting for providing me with all the relevant documentation.

⁶¹ Sumowski, letter dated 24-11-1992.

⁶² Van de Watering (expertise 24-5-1991) signalled an old photograph of the painting with this false signature and date. The photograph, dating from about 1905, is filed at the RKD (Braun negative, no. 89115C).

⁶³ RKD, fiches Hofstede de Groot. Although the last digit of the date now looks more like a seven, it is possible that Hofstede de Groot read the date correctly as 1632.

⁶⁴ Kusnetzow 1974 (note 59), p. 169.

⁶⁵ Willem de Poorter, *Samson and Delilah*, signed: W.D.P., oil on panel, 50 x 62 cm. Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum, cat. 1931, no. 820 A (Sumowski 1983 [note 45], vol. 4, cat. no. 1602). Sumowski 1983 (note 45), vol. 4, p. 2386.

⁶⁶ Van de Watering, expertise 24-5-1991.

⁶⁷ Willem Bartsius, *The Lute Player*, signed and dated bottom right: W. BARTSIUS. f. 1633, oil on canvas, 91,5 x 68 cm. Wiesbaden, Gemäldegalerie, inv.no. M 805. Formerly Berlin, Collection James Simon (Thieme and Becker 1908 [note 7], p. 585); acquired by the museum in 1962 (C. Weiler, *Die Gemäldegalerie des Wiesbadener Museums*, Hanau 1968, p. 23, plate 5). RKD, fiches Hofstede de Groot (exhibition Berlin 1883); Würzbach 1906 (note 7), p. 61; Thieme and Becker 1908 (note 7), p. 585; Weiler 1968, p. 23; Bénézit 1976 (note 7), p. 476 (Berlin - erroneously records the instrument as a flute); Bernt 1979 (note 7), p. 17, plate 60; Sumowski 1983 (note 45), vol. 4, pp. 2386, 2388 (note 17); Sumowski 1989 (note 28), vol. 6, pp. 3690, 3766, cat. no. 2183; Trauzeddel 1993 (note 7), p. 315.

⁶⁸ Willem Bartsius, *Moses Tramples the Crown of Pharaoh*, signed and dated on the right: W BARTSIUS 1636, oil on panel, 54 x 65,5 cm. Location unknown. RKD, fiche Hofstede de Groot, dated October 1925.

⁶⁹ RKD, fiche Hofstede de Groot, dated October 1925.

⁷⁰ Attributed to Willem de Poorter, *Moses Tramples the Crown of Pharaoh*, oil on canvas, 94,5 x 97 cm. Zurich, Private Collection. Formerly auction Cologne (Lempertz), 13-11-1937, no. 20 (with title *Esther before Ahasverus*);

- auction Cologne (Lempertz), 7-05-1941, no. 239; Mainz, Collection Hans Klenk.
- ⁷¹ RKD-artists database, Willem de Poorter. Available at: <http://www.rkd.nl/rkddb/detail.aspx> (record no. 64259). I thank Adriaan Waiboer for his useful comments and suggestions (email, 9 October 2006).
- ⁷² Willem Bartsius, *Death of the Levite's Concubine*, signed and dated 1638, oil on canvas, 100,5 x 110 cm. St Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum. Formerly Petrograd, Collection P.P. Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky, 1915. Linnik 1980 (note 57), fig 184; Sumowski 1983 (note 45), vol. 4, pp. 2386, 2388 (note 13); V. Manuth in: *Mercury* 6 (1987), p. 16. Sumowski (1983 [note 45], vol. 4, p. 2386) entitles the painting *The Levite in Gibe'a Finds his Dead Keb Woman*.
- ⁷³ Jansen in A. Blankert *et al*, *The impact of a genius: Rembrandt, his pupils and followers in the seventeenth century*, Amsterdam 1983, p. 220.
- ⁷⁴ Blankert *et al* 1980 (note 50), p. 26.
- ⁷⁵ Blankert *et al* 1980 (note 50), p. 26.
- ⁷⁶ This would confirm the suggestion that a large part of *Abraham Pleading with Sarah on Behalf of Hagar* was cut off on the left.
- ⁷⁷ Willem Bartsius, *Jacob Shown Joseph's Blood-Stained Cloak*, oil on canvas, 48 x 64 cm. Collection Earl of Wemyss, Gosford House, inv. no. G.425 (as Dutch School or circle of Pieter de Grebber). Catalogue Amisfield 1771 (78); Hofstede de Groot in: *Oud Holland* 1893:221 (as unknown Dutch 1650); Linnik 1980 (note 57), fig. 180; Sumowski 1983 (note 45), vol. 4, pp. 2386, 2388 (note 12). Permission to publish a reproduction of the painting was refused by the owner.
- ⁷⁸ *Samson and Delilah*, oil on panel, 34,5 x 48,5 cm. Great Neck, Collection N. and H. Weisgall. Exh. cat. *The Collecting Muse*, Sacramento 1975, no. 46 (as L. Bramer); Sumowski 1983 (note 45), vol. 4, pp. 2387, 2388 (note 20), 2393.
- ⁷⁹ *The Finding of Moses*, oil on canvas, 50 x 84 cm (?). Location unknown. Auction Cornelia Countess of Craven, London, 13-4-1923, no. 69. Bénézit 1976 (note 7), p. 476; Sumowski 1989 (note 28), vol. 6, pp. 3690, 3765, cat. no. 2182.
- ⁸⁰ Sumowski 1989 (note 28), vol. 6, p. 3690. Willem de Poorter, *Saint Paul and Saint Barnabas at Lystra*, signed and dated: POORTER: 1636, oil on panel, 55 x 82 cm. Amsterdam/Rijswijk, Instituut Collectie Nederland, inv. no. 2786. Blankert *et al* 1980 (note 50), pp. 158-159, cat. no. 33.
- ⁸¹ RKD, fiche Hofstede de Groot, dated 13-4-1923. He commented that it is 'totally different' from the painting of *Moses Tramples the Crown of Pharaoh* (see note 68).
- ⁸² *The Finding of Moses*, oil on panel, 78 x 59 cm. Location unknown. Formerly Private Collection, Switzerland; auction Zurich (Gallerie Koller), 21-09-2007, no. 3049, ill.; auction Zurich (Gallerie Koller), 18-03-2008, no. 3059, ill. Attribution suggested by Sumowski.
- ⁸³ *Jacob's Dream*, oil on panel, 63,5 x 48,2 cm. Milwaukee, Prof. L. Parker. Formerly Sir Upton Greville-Smythe; M. Welti, auction Luzern (Fischer), 26-06-1954, no. 2263 (as Bol, *Tobias and the Angel*); auction Luzern (Fischer), 25-11-1972, no. 2465 (as Bol, *Isaac's Dream*). See Sumowski 1983 (note 45), vol. 4, pp. 2386, 2388 (note 16), 2397 ill. I am grateful to Michiel Franken and Willem van de Watering for their suggestions.
- ⁸⁴ *The Amalekiter King Agag Killed by the Prophet Samuel*, support and measurements not mentioned. Private Collection. Sumowski 1989 (note 28), vol. 6, p. 3578 ill.
- ⁸⁵ *Kneeling Wailing Woman*, oil on canvas, measurements unknown. Location unknown. Sumowski 1989 (note 28), vol. 6, pp. 3690, 3764, cat. no. 2181.
- ⁸⁶ *Esther's Banquet*, oil on canvas, 88 x 112 cm. Location unknown. Formerly London, art dealer A. Reyre; Dieren, art dealer D. Katz (1940); Amsterdam, art dealer J. Goudstikker; auction H. Hahn, Frankfurt-am-Main, 6/7-3-1941, no. 47 (attributed to S. Koninck); The Hague, art dealer Vermeulen; auction Luzern (Fischer), 20/23-05-1980, no. 366 (as Ph. Koninck); auction Luzern (Fischer), 19-06-1997, no. 2019. Sumowski 1983 (note 45), vol. 4, pp. 2387, 2388 (note 19), 2392. I thank Fred Meijer for drawing my attention to errors in Sumowski's attribution.
- ⁸⁷ Sumowski (1983 [note 45], vol. 4, p. 2387) bases his opinion on the reoccurrence of the drapery folds, ornaments, figural types, still-life elements, the turban with fancy heron bush and lastly the metal round vessel seen in both *Abraham Pleading with Sarah on Behalf of Hagar* and *Elijah Visited by the Angel*.
- ⁸⁸ *Esther's Toilette*, oil on canvas, 118 x 156 cm. Aachen, Private Collection. L. Slaviček, *Barocke Bilderlust. Holländische und flämische Gemälde der ehemaligen Sammlung Nostitz aus der Prager Nationalgalerie*, Braunschweig 1994, p. 30.
- ⁸⁹ Willem Bartsius, *The Choice of Hercules*, oil on canvas, 156 x 169 cm. Prague, Národní Gallery, inv. no. DO 4276. Formerly Collection Nostitz (cat. 1905, no. 229, as Jan Victors); Wurzbach 1910, p. 789 (as Jan Victors); Sumowski 1983 (note 45), vol. 4, pp. 2386, 2388 (note 10), 2391; Slaviček 1994 (note 88), p. 30.
- ⁹⁰ Willem van de Watering (personal communication 30 August 2006) supports the attribution to Willem Bartsius.
- ⁹¹ Willem Bartsius, *St Paul*, signed top right: BARTIV F., oil on panel, 69,5 x 59,5 cm. Utrecht, Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent, inv. StCC s 35. Auction Josua van Belle, Rotterdam, 1730; Amsterdam, Moses and Aaron Church; Provinciaal der Franciscanen, Utrecht; since 1990 on loan to Utrecht, Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent. Wurzbach 1906 (note 7), p. 61; RKD, fiche Hofstede de Groot, dated May 1927; P.D. van Heel and P.B. Knipping, *Van schuilkerk tot zuilkerk: Geschiedenis van de Mozes en Aäronskerk te Amsterdam*, Amsterdam 1941, pp. 284-285, fig 89; P.P.W.M. Dirkse, 'Paulus en Petrus door Willem Bartsius', *Catharijnebrief* 35 (1991), pp. 2-3.
- ⁹² Willem Bartsius, *St Peter*, oil on panel, 69,5 x 59,5 cm. Utrecht, Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent, inv. StCC s 36. Formerly Amsterdam, Moses and Aaron Church; Provinciaal der Franciscanen, Utrecht; since 1990 on loan to Utrecht, Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent. Van Heel and Knipping 1941 (note 91), pp. 284-285, fig 88; Dirkse 1991 (note 91), pp. 2-3.
- ⁹³ Mention must be made of a third New Testament representation,

namely a *Holy Family* (support and measurements unknown, location unknown), recorded by Kramm (1857 [note 59], p. 56) and Wurzbach (1906 [note 7], p. 61) as executed in the manner of Rembrandt. No trace of this painting remains.

⁹⁴ Dirkse 1991 (note 91), pp. 2-3. Dirkse also mentions the possibility that Bartsius was motivated to make these unusual representations by a very personal family relationship – the names Peter and Paul appear very frequently in the family Bartsius/Potter – but rejects it as too bold an assumption.

⁹⁵ See note 89. For a detailed discussion of this work, see Slaviček 1994 (note 88), p. 30.

⁹⁶ Erwin Panofsky quoted in Slaviček 1994 (note 88), p. 30.

⁹⁷ Slaviček 1994 (note 88), p. 30.

⁹⁸ Slaviček 1994 (note 88), p. 30.

⁹⁹ Sumowski 1983 (note 45), vol. 4, p. 2386. See also Slaviček 1994 (note 88), p. 30.

¹⁰⁰ One may assume that the sitters would gladly agree to a certain degree of idealisation of their features given the chosen theme.

¹⁰¹ Special mention must be made of Virtue raising her right hand and pointing a finger like Delilah in *Samson and Delilah* and the angel in *Elijah Visited by the Angel*.

¹⁰² Sumowski 1983 (note 45), vol. 4, p. 2389 (note 39). The engraving by Pieter Nolpe is illustrated in Knipping (1939, vol. I, p. 101, fig 63) and Hollstein (vol. XIV, p. 170). Slaviček (1994 [note 88], p. 30) takes this a step further and maintains that Bartsius used the lost painting of Pieter Potter as model for the execution and composition of the portrait, but in a mocking manner.

¹⁰³ Willem Bartsius, *Ceres Riding her Snake Chariot*, oil on canvas, 80 x 99 cm. Location unknown. Formerly auction Glerum, The Hague, 27-11-1989, no. 1 (attributed to Willem Bartsius by Fred Meijer, titled *Persephone*); Paris, Collection Peter Silverman. Sumowski 1989 (note 28), vol. 6, pp. 3690, 3763, cat. no. 2180.

¹⁰⁴ Fred Meijer correctly attributed this work to Bartsius in 1989. Sumowski (1989 [note 28], vol. 6, p. 3690) accepted it on the basis of perceived relationships with

Samson and Delilah and *The Choice of Hercules*.

¹⁰⁵ Willem Bartsius, *Granida and Daifilo*, signed and dated: BARTZIUS A° 1638, oil on canvas, height 92, width 113 'duim Ned'. Location unknown. Auction E. P. Cremer Jr., Middelburg, 17-5-1847; sold to Keizer (F. Lugt, *Répertoire des catalogues de ventes 1846-1860*, The Hague 1953, no. 18635; note that the year of sale is incorrectly recorded by Kramm as 1837). Kramm 1857 (note 59), vol. 1, p. 56; RKD, fiches Hofstede de Groot; Wurzbach 1906 (note 7), p. 61; Bénézit 1976 (note 7), p. 476; Sumowski 1983 (note 45), vol. 4, p. 2388 (note 18); Trauzeddel 1993 (note 7), p. 315 (as Museum, Middelburg).

¹⁰⁶ 'Op den voorgrond van een rotsachtig boomrijk landschap, bevindt zich eene aanzienlijke dame, op een prachtig getoomd wit paard gezeten, wie door een herder eene drinkschaal wordt aangeboden ...' (Kramm 1857 (note 59), vol. 1, p. 56).

¹⁰⁷ Wurzbach 1906 (note 7), p. 61.

¹⁰⁸ Sumowski 1983 (note 45), vol. 4, p. 2388 (note 18).

¹⁰⁹ Willem Bartsius, *Interior with Sitting Woman and Standing Officer*, oil on panel, 60 x 48,5 cm. Location unknown. Formerly Vienna, Collection Ladislaus Bloch; auction Amsterdam, 14-11-1905, no. 14 (as Gerard Dou); auction London (Sotheby's), 15-06-1983, no. 104 (as Willem de Poorter); auction Zurich (Galerie Koller), 24-03-2006. Sumowski 1983 (note 45), vol. 4, p. 2388 (note 18).

¹¹⁰ I thank Volker Manuth for pointing this out, but I have not succeeded in identifying the source of this painting.

¹¹¹ See note 67.

¹¹² Sumowski 1989 (note 28), vol. 6, p. 3690.

¹¹³ Pieter Potter, *The Lute Player*, signed and dated bottom right: P. Potter f. a. 1636, oil on panel, 49 x 38 cm. Location unknown. Formerly Collection Countess Bonham-Carter; auction London (Sotheby's), 20-2-1974, no. 82 (ill).

¹¹⁴ Willem Bartsius, *A Young Man in a Plumed Hat Playing a Theorbo-Lute*, oil on canvas, 112,5 x 106 cm. Private Collection. Formerly Collection Duke of

Northumberland; auction London (Sotheby's), 26-03-1952, no. 135 (as Le Valentin); London, Collection Peter Wilson, 1952; auction Countess of Roseberry, London (Sotheby's), 24-03-1976, no. 97 (ill) (as Hendrick Gerritsz Pot); with Faustus Galleries, London, 1976, from whom purchased by the present owner (as Gysbert van der Kuyl); with Beddington & Blackman, London, 2002/2003. Exh. cat. *Caravaggisten*, Antwerp 1952, suppl. cat. 2, no. 56 A (as Dutch School seventeenth century). First suggested by Peter Sutton, the attribution to Bartsius was confirmed by Fred Meijer of the RKD (letter dated 7 November 2002).

¹¹⁵ Willem Bartsius, *Vanitas*, oil on canvas, 86,7 x 77,7 cm. Geneva, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, inv. Basz. 14. Formerly Paris, Collection Jules Porgès, until 1921; Vienna, Collection A. Tritsch, 1921-1929; auction Berlin, P. Cassirer and H. Helbing, 5-12-1929, lot 45; Geneva, Collection Lucien Baszanger, before 1945-1967; permanent depot, 1967. Exh. cat. *Maitres anciens hollandais, collection Galerie Baszanger, Genève, Neuchâtel* 1945, p. 8, cat. no. 14; *Journal des Arts*, January 1946 (ill); L. Réau, *Les Maitres de la collection Baszanger*, Geneva 1950, pp. 61, 111, cat. no. 78; Exh. cat. *Vijftig werken uit de collectie Baszanger te Geneva*, Delft 1953, p. 15, cat. no. 33; Exh. cat. *Cent tableaux de la collection Baszanger*, Geneva, 1954, p. 28, cat. no. 62; J.W. von Moltke, *Govert Flinck, 1615-1660*, Amsterdam 1965, p. 231, cat. no. 34; *Musée d'art et d'histoire. Guides illustrés. 2. Peinture et sculpture*, Geneva 1968, p. 22; C. Lapaire, *Fondation Lucien Baszanger. Peinture flamande et hollandaise. Le regard d'un mécène*, Geneva 1989, pp. 72-75.

¹¹⁶ In 1929, the painting was attributed to Govaert Flinck, but J.W. von Moltke rejected this idea, following the suggestion of Kurt Bauch that the picture was the work of the German painter Wolfgang Heimbach. In 1950 Louis Réau attributed the *Vanitas* painting to Willem de Poorter. I thank Frédéric Elsig for sharing this information with me (email 7 March 2008) and Fred Meijer for bringing this work to my attention.

¹¹⁷ According to Frédéric Elsig, an intimidated collector had the skull overpainted with a book (eliminated between 1929 and 1945), transforming the figure into a representation of Minerva.

¹¹⁸ *Vanitas Allegory*, oil on panel, 49 x 33 cm. Location unknown. Auction London (Sotheby's), 8-04-1987, no. 176 (as Willem de Poorter). Sumowski 1983 (note 45), vol. 4, pp. 2387, 2388 (note 21), 2394.

¹¹⁹ For the same reasons I reject the attribution to Bartsius of the following work: *An Interior, with a Seated Man Wearing a Turban and Clutching a Skull, Surrounded by an Open Chest and a Table Cluttered with Pewter Vessels*, panel, 54 x 43,8 cm. Auction London (Phillips), 8-12-1992, no. 198.

¹²⁰ See note 28.

¹²¹ The sitters are identified as Adriaen Cornelisz Schagen, Willem Willemsz Kessel or Kissel (captains), Pieter Adriaansz Pauw and Dr Adriaen Bijman (lieutenants), Adriaen Cornelisz Seylemaecker (provost), Cornelis van Molenvliet (lieutenant of the provost), Jan Cornelisz Steenhuy, Willem Pietersz Raaphorst (standard bearers), Jan Pietersz Bijlevelt, Cornelis Jacobsz Groet, Meynert van Duyn, Claes Buyk, Antoni Vladeracken and Cornelis Jansz Bijl (midshipmen). (RKD, fiches Hofstede de Groot, Stedelijk Mus. Alkmaar, 1932; Huys Janssen, De Vries and De Vrij 1997 (note 4), p. 107)

¹²² Frans Hals, *Meeting of Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers of the Cluveniers*, 1633, oil on canvas, 207 x 337 cm. Haarlem, Frans Hals Museum, inv.no. 112 (Huys Janssen, De Vries and De Vrij 1997 [note 4], p. 107).

¹²³ According to Huys Janssen, De Vries and De Vrij (1997 [note 4], p. 107), the militia men portrayed by Bartsius had indeed distinguished themselves in this respect, because in 1629 they had gone to the garrison-town of Nijmegen to replace the professional military men stationed there. Perhaps the militia piece was commissioned also on the occasion of this military action.

¹²⁴ For more details, see Huys Janssen, De Vries and De Vrij 1997 (note 4), p. 107.

¹²⁵ Alkmaar, Regionaal Archief (CA, no.13).

¹²⁶ Willem Bartsius, *Portrait of a Cavalier*, monogrammed and dated: W. B. F. 1634, support unknown, 114 x 85 cm. Location unknown. Formerly Collection Jung. Exhibited in Mainz in 1887 as Willem Buytewech. Wurzbach 1906 (note 7), p. 61; Thieme and Becker 1908 (note 7), p. 585; RKD, fiches Hofstede de Groot.

¹²⁷ Willem Bartsius, *Gentleman Holding a Tankard*, signed: W. BARSIV, oil on panel, 17 x 13,5 cm. Location unknown. Auction R. Peltzer e.a., Amsterdam, 26-5-1914; auction Amsterdam (Sotheby's), 16-11-1994, no. 121. RKD, fiche Hofstede de Groot, dated 26-5-1914.

¹²⁸ Willem Bartsius, *Young Man with Flute*, oil on panel, 10 x 10 cm (octagon). Location unknown. Formerly Berlin, Collection Gruner; auction W. Gumprecht, Berlin, 21-3-1918, no. 48.

Attribution by W. Bode, *Studien zur Geschichte der Holländischen Malerei*, Braunschweig 1883, p. 173; RKD, fiche Hofstede de Groot, dated 21-3-1918.

¹²⁹ This could identify him as an officer. It is not certain whether the painting seen by Hofstede de Groot at the auction Foucart (Valenciennes, 12-10-1898) is the same. He describes it as a bust of a young officer with locked hair, wearing a red cap with feathers and with a stick in his hand.

¹³⁰ Blankert *et al* 1980 (note 50), pp. 15, 18-19.

¹³¹ M. North, *Art and commerce in the Dutch Golden Age*, translated by C. Hill, New Haven and London 1997, p. 99.

¹³² North 1997 (note 130), p. 109, Tables 5 and 6. It is important to note here that, according to information based on inventories from Amsterdam – where Bartsius was probably residing – two-thirds of the pictures recorded during the 1630s were painted by contemporary artists (North 1997 [note 130], p. 113).

¹³³ Blankert *et al* 1980 (note 50), p. 17.

¹³⁴ Waiboer 2005 (note 25), p. 90.

¹³⁵ For example, his brother-in-law Pieter Potter was involved in the gold leather factory on the 'Weespat' (see note 32).

¹³⁶ Kramm 1857 (note 59), vol. 1, p. 56.

APPENDIX

This appendix lists all known works by or confidently attributed to Willem Bartsius. They are grouped according to subject matter. Within each genre, the signed and/or dated pictures are listed in chronological order. Each unsigned work is inserted after that particular painting to which it is most closely related in terms of composition and execution. Paintings known only from descriptions in the literature are included in square brackets as lost or missing works.

1 HISTORY PAINTING

1.1 Old Testament

Abraham Pleading with Sarah on Behalf of Hagar, signed and dated: W.BARTSIUS fec. / 1631. (fig. 2)

Elijah Visited by the Angel (fig. 3)

[*Sacrifice of Manoah*, signed: Baartsius F.] (lost/missing)

Samson and Delilah, signed and dated: W.P BARCIUS 163(2?) (figs 4, 5)

[*Moses Tramples the Crown of Pharaoh*, signed and dated 1636] (lost/missing)

Death of the Levite's Concubine, signed and dated 1638 (fig. 6)

Jacob Shown Joseph's Blood-Stained Cloak

1.2 New Testament

St Paul, signed: BARTIV F. (fig. 10)

St Peter (fig. 11)

[*Holy Family*] (lost/missing)

1.3 Mythology and contemporary literature

[*Granida and Daifilo*, signed and dated 1638] (lost/missing)

The Choice of Hercules (fig. 12)

Ceres Riding her Snake Chariot (fig. 13)

Interior with Sitting Woman and Standing Officer (fig. 14)

1.4 Allegories

Lute Player, signed and dated: W. BARTSIVS. f. 1633 (fig. 15)

A Young Man in a Plumed Hat Playing a Theorbo-Lute (fig. 16)

Vanitas (fig. 16)

2 PORTRAITS/TRONIES

Officers and Standard Bearers of the Oude Schutterij of Alkmaar, dated 1634 (fig. 18)

[*A cavalier*, monogrammed and dated: W. B. F. 1634] (lost/missing)

Gentleman Holding a Tankard, signed: W. BARSIV(S) (fig. 19)

Young Man with Flute (fig. 20)

3 LANDSCAPES

[Lost or missing painted landscapes:

'een landschap van BAISIUS' (inventory of Frederickje Meijnerdsr Semeyns, 1635)

'een lantschap van Bartsius, bestaende principaelyck in een groote boom' (inventory of Paulyntje van Beusecom, 20 May 1639)

'een strandingh van Willem Bartsius' (inventory of Willem van Campen, 10 October 1661)

'een groot lantschap door Bartius' (inventory of Sara de Witte, 1674)]