

A PREFACE

Imagine you are a student, consulting the website of Carleton College to learn something about art history courses in the new trimester. You are especially interested in early modern European art and you have heard Professor Alison Kettering is a well-known specialist in this field. Her courses look just great on the website, and she even explains on her Learning and Teaching Center page how she organizes her classes. Under the intriguing heading: *Quirky Facts and Ticket to the Final* she describes how “facts,” which she asks students to reveal about themselves on the first day of class, function in the group dynamics of her classes, turning classroom discussions into meaningful exchanges between students and teacher. This sounds special! And she recounts how she relies on an evaluation of the course at the end of the term, the “ticket to the final,” to give her feedback to be used in a new course.

Alas, in May 2014 the unthinkable will happen: Alison Kettering will retire, after an impressive career as a scholar and a teacher, first in the Department of Art at Swarthmore College, then, since 1982, at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. During this long period Alison worked hard; she has always been interested in new research topics, elegant and playful in her writing and teaching, as well as thoughtful and warm in the many social relations and friendships that developed in the course of her teaching and research. In addition to this, Alison was also very active for many years in administrative work at Carleton College and in national professional organizations. Finally, she has been an engaged scholar; the contributions to this Festschrift recognize her wide interest in early modern European art and art history, especially in seventeenth-century Dutch art.

Sometimes there is no such thing as a mere coincidence. This turned out to be true for Alison, my family, and me during the last thirty-three years. A series of fateful events, or meaningful coincidences, deepened our relationship and made it possible for us to be close witnesses to Alison’s work and private life during this period in a very special way. It began in the late 1970s. Alison was at the time a frequent visitor to the Print Room of the Rijksmuseum, where she was finishing part of her studies for *The Dutch Arcadia: Pastoral Art and Its Audience in the Golden Age*, a pioneering study that opened up a new field in the history of Dutch art and remains a standard work to this day. In these years, the Print Room staff was considering a publication of the entire Ter Borch Studio Estate in the Rijksmuseum, a huge, hidden treasure of over a thousand sheets and texts, which had been in the collection for one hundred years. Alison was invited in the summer of 1979 to undertake the task of describing and commenting on all of these sheets for the Rijksmuseum. That summer she was on a scholarship in Amsterdam, lodging with my sister Emilie. They invited me to come over for tea, to get acquainted, and to chat a bit about my work at the Amsterdam Historical Museum.

During the following summers, and once over the course of an entire year in the company of her husband Frederick, Alison dedicated herself to the huge Ter Borch assignment. She worked hard, “from morning until late in the evening,” according to J. W. Niemeyer, head of the Print Room at the time, while also taking Dutch courses in order to improve her reading and speaking ability. Starting in 1985, Hans Luyten, a specialist on Dutch seventeenth-century literature, also took an active and indispensable part in the work, collaborating with Alison on the many literary texts in the estate. The entire project was coordinated by Peter Schatborn. Working together over the years, Alison became close friends with them and several other members of the Print Room staff.

During the first years, Alison lived at Emilie’s house, conveniently situated quite near the Rijksmuseum. Later she moved over to my house at, what a coincidence, the Gerard Terborgstraat. In the 1980s, while Alison became more familiar with the seven members of the Ter Borch family whose work was included in the collection in the Print

Room, she also became an adopted member of the Kistemaker family, sharing our holidays on the Dutch island of Texel, as well as our birthdays and festive parties when she was in Holland. We, for our part, also got to know Frederick well during the year he stayed in the city.



Dus loeft Gesina nu die i wesen en 'er Geest
 Al hier door konst doet sien: in dees glansrijke beelden.
 Deugde, Wijsheijt, schoonheid, en Eer: hier gaaven die het meest.
 De mensche geeft Eeuwigh lof: quam sy van Jonge te Eeren.
 D'Alteheylige Maria, en Pallas vonden gade.
 Dit Overvloedigk schoon, soo haast i zyn geboren,
 Te schenken mildeljk i gaen i and're schandeflik doet:
 Op dat men in dees maaght, soe alles sien en hooren.
 Wie dan verroeght wil sijn in haer te sien en hooren:
 Moet sich verpacten, in Copen en in Corin.

Gesina ter Borch, Self-Portrait of Gesina ter Borch in a Cartouche, 1660, brush in black and various colors, some parts heightened in gold, 243 x 360 mm (inscribed with a poem by Henrik Jordis). Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. BI-1887-1463-8 (artwork in the public domain; photo provided by the Rijksmuseum)

In the poem, the author, who was Gesina's dear friend, lauds her gifts: virtue, wisdom, beauty, and honor.

The second coincidence occurred in 1982, when Alison was appointed to the Department of Art and Art History of Carleton College. This was the college where I had studied on a scholarship in 1963/64. I had always remembered this time as one of the highlights of my student years. Carleton was and is such a wonderful and academically challenging school. Being familiar with Carleton made it easier to share together what she was doing on the campus, in her classes in Boliou Hall, on her walks in the Arb. One of the highlights for both of us was a visit I paid to Carleton in 1996, when I was able to attend a couple of Alison's classes and experience at firsthand her inspiring, witty teaching.

Drawings from the Ter Borch Studio Estate in the Rijksmuseum was published in two volumes in 1988, and Alison had time to develop new activities for her students. She designed a study trip to the Netherlands and Belgium, as part of her two-term course on Netherlandish art and took numerous groups of students to these countries during the fall and winter, so that they could see and study original works of art. Several times the group was in Amsterdam on December 5, the day on which Sinterklaas is celebrated. The students and, of course, Alison would join us at Gerard Terborgstraat for a party. We would sing Sinterklaas songs in Dutch, read Sinterklaas poems to each other, open presents and nibble on the traditional sweets. This brings me to the third fateful event that drew our families together. In 1990, in the middle of the Sinterklaas excitement, we mentioned that we just had bought an old house, in fact a ruin, in Liguria. Great, some students said spontaneously, can we come and work for you this summer? It was the start of more than fifteen years of collaboration on this house. Almost

sixty Carls came over to Italy to help us. They dragged cement and sand but also undertook wonderful construction and restoration work on our house, learning firsthand from some of the old farmers who still resided in the little village how to work in the old tradition with stone, masonry, roof tiles, and woodwork. All these years Alison coordinated and selected the applicants for this “restoration” project, and she once came to visit us on the spot.

On occasion, I have also had the privilege of participating in conferences, organized by Alison and/or where she was presenting a lecture. I remember, for example, attending the conference of Historians of Netherlandish Art in Boston in October 1993, Alison’s first year as a board member of the organization. She was chair of a workshop on representations of men and women. Earlier that year both of us were invited to present a lecture at the symposium *The Public and Private in Dutch Culture of the Golden Age*, organized by the Center for Renaissance and Baroque Studies of the University of Maryland. Many of our Dutch and American colleagues were present at this interdisciplinary symposium. On another occasion she asked me to join her at the colloquium *1648: War and Peace in Europe*, held both in Münster and in Paris in 1998. This proved to be a fascinating opportunity to visit the famous room in Münster’s city hall, described in Alison’s article on Gerard Ter Borch’s painting depicting the ratification of the Peace of Münster in 1648. At these and other events, she always warmly introduced me to her colleagues and friends, something that was also very stimulating for me professionally.

It was great to meet again with some of these scholars of Netherlandish art four years ago, when HNA organized the conference *Crossing Boundaries* in Amsterdam, in cooperation with the University of Amsterdam and Codart. I remember there was an enthusiastic mingling of older and younger generations of HNA members, Codart members, and students and staff from Dutch universities and museums. In 2011 I published an article, based on a lecture presented during this conference, in the new and exciting online *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art*. From the journal’s start, in 2009, Alison has been the inspiring and stimulating editor-in-chief.

Always looking for new horizons to discover, over the years Alison has been interested in various research topics. She has widened and deepened the interdisciplinary approach that she employed in her art historical research from the start. In time, this has led to new research themes related to gender issues, group portraits and portraiture in general, history painting, country life, occupations of Dutch men and women in the Golden Age, and the artist’s workshop. Recent fields of interest include Hendrick Goltzius’s use of early forms of pastel and food in art. In many ways the pastoral theme of her dissertation and first book and the two-volume publication of the Ter Borch Estate have been fundamental for much of her later work. The writers of the articles in this Festschrift pay a tribute to Alison’s long and rich career.

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PIETER BRUEGEL'S SYMBOLIC HIGHLANDS IN THE LOWLANDS

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Pieter Bruegel the Elder, while best known for his representations of the landscapes and rustic inhabitants of his native Lowlands, did not restrict himself to these topics—in fact, most of his paintings address religious subjects, even when placing them in carefully constructed landscapes. When Bruegel represented biblical events, such as the Tower of Babel or the Conversion of Saint Paul, he placed them in meaningful settings, whether flatlands or mountains. As this article will argue, the chosen environment for many of his religious images uses the landscape to underscore and frame the spiritual message of his images and to require his viewers to inspect his pictures more carefully, evoking a mode of “spiritual seeing.”

In his 1563 painting, *The Tower of Babel*, Pieter Bruegel presents the Old Testament gathering of might and power under the despotic leadership of a king, Nimrod, the ruler figure in the lower left corner (fig. 1).¹ In Dante's *Purgatorio* (12.34–36) Nimrod epitomizes pride: “I saw Nimrod at the foot of his great labor, as if bewildered; and there looking on were the people who were proud with him in Shinar.” While the Bible text (Genesis 11:1–9) does not mention Nimrod as instigator of the Tower of Babel, he does appear in *Jewish Antiquities* (1.4), by the Roman historian Flavius Josephus; there the plan to build the tower (called the Tower of “Babylon”) is ascribed to Nimrod, a giant who as first king of the Babylonians “transformed the state of affairs into tyranny.”² The same tyrant is castigated in Saint Augustine's *City of God* as the “proud and impious founder” of Babel, again identified as Babylon (16.4).³ Babel thus is posited as the polar opposite to the eternal city of God, equated with the Christian Church, so that its divine destruction marks the early assertion of the true faith.



Figure 1. Pieter Bruegel, *The Tower of Babel*, ca. 1563, oil on panel, 114 x 155 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Inv. no. GG_1026 (artwork in the public domain)

This Babylon/Babel equation resounds as the place of ultimate sin in later prophets. Isaiah (13, 14, 21, 46–47) and Jeremiah (50–51) foretold destruction for Babylon and her king. In Revelation, sinful Babylon marks “a dwelling place of demons” (18:2), a place of incalculable riches, which will fall in final divine judgment. The merchants of Babylon will mourn her loss, “Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth!” (Rev. 18:19).

A Tower of Babel–like construction also appears behind the allegorical figure (Hooverdicheyt) in Maarten van Heemskerck’s engraving of *Pride*, within the print cycle *The Vicissitudes of Human Affairs* (fig. 2).⁴ Once more the power of a despotic Old Testament king leads him into proud construction of a doomed building and to the inevitable dissolution of society itself.



Figure 2. Cornelis Cort, after Maarten van Heemskerck, *The Triumph of Pride*, from the series *The Vicissitudes of Human Affairs*, ca. 1564, engraving, 22.5 x 29.6 cm. London, British Museum, inv. no. 1868,0208.56 (artwork in the public domain)

Significantly, in his Vienna painting Bruegel represents the tower as being constructed on the express orders of the giant Nimrod. Yet the tower’s ultimate destruction is already suggested in Bruegel’s image: this enormous, ponderous structure is a castle built on sand; already it tilts, sinking into soggy marshland (typical of the Low Countries) at the lower left, just behind the imperious Nimrod.

Bruegel’s architectural plan with its arches and buttresses clearly derives from the ancient Roman megalithic structure, the Colosseum. This allusion to the Colosseum also implies eventual ruin, even as the tower is being built. Bruegel had seen the great Flavian monument during his own visit to Rome after 1551, but he also could rely upon 1550 etchings of it by his Antwerp publisher Hieronymus Cock.⁵ Bruegel’s Colosseum reference shows how, even during its construction, the Tower of Babel contained the seeds of its own ruination, anticipating its role in the eventual cause of the loss of human harmony and linguistic unity. Moreover, identifying Babylon with the Roman Empire, an allusion implicit in the book of Revelation (17:9), was made explicit by Augustine, who called Rome a “daughter of the former Babylon” (*City of God*, 18: 22).

At the edge of the great tower Bruegel shows a busy port city, gathering ships and their imported riches like his own hometown of Antwerp, even though this setting starkly contrasts with the location in Genesis: the “plain in the land of Shinar,” distant from any large body of water. Bruegel also incorporated local technology, the marvelous foot-powered crane of the port of Antwerp, pictured upon the flank of the tower for use as a winch to raise building materials from sea-level to the heights of new construction. Thus—opposite the figure of Nimrod—Bruegel emphasizes the town and port in the lower right corner, evoking that same passage from Revelation (18:19), where merchants and shipmasters bewail the fall of Babylon and the vengeance of God against her sin and wealth. Even if Bruegel had an agenda of criticizing monarchical despotism in the giant figure of Nimrod, potentially alluding to Spanish King Philip

II, he also surely conveys anxiety about Antwerp's contemporary trade and burgeoning urban wealth by his link between shipping and the construction of the Tower of Babel.⁶

Simultaneously, Bruegel clearly refers to the contemporary Netherlands by featuring a flat expanse of land, extending to the left horizon behind and beyond the figure of Nimrod on his elevated foreground ledge. Closest to the tower at left and inside a gated city wall dwells a densely populated urban area, the other side of the port. The city has its own leisurely activities, fortifications, and church steeples, now dwarfed by the Tower of Babel. This inland sector, clearly constructed with the stepped gables and stone facades of contemporary Netherlandish architecture, sits along a river, more clearly visible beyond the walls at the left horizon. Outside the city wall one sees a characteristic windmill.

Although clearly the looming Tower of Babel dominates, Bruegel concentrated just as much skill and precision on his detailed painting of the quiet Flemish town. While this precision could partly derive from the artist's desire to showcase his abilities as a miniaturist, juxtaposing the flat, local setting with the enormous structure reminiscent of the Roman Colosseum also functions to contrast them. The headlong building activity alongside the busy port that supplies it contrasts starkly to the quaint, if dense urban setting, where the only taller buildings are churches. This contrast also pits the collective against pure individual ambition and opposes the flat, surrounding land, natural to Flanders, to the *unnatural* presence of the tower—and to the unchecked economic aspirations of Antwerp as an international port city that Bruegel associates with it. Thus does Bruegel compare his native Low Countries in their flat countryside and tranquil settlements with the bustling modern port that abets construction of the evil Tower of Babel.

Furthermore, although the tower is far from finished, its new worldview has already taken root among the people, evidenced by the Flemish country-style residences perched perilously on the ledges of its multiple stories. Workers have constructed their own homes as retreats after each workday. However, these barracks are resolutely wedged beside and between columns, merging their very fabric and, consequently, the identities of their owners into the architecture of the tower.

The tower dominates totally in Bruegel's later, smaller painted reprise, *The Tower of Babel* (fig. 3). Here the figure of Nimrod is eliminated entirely, and the colossal scale of the structure even more emphatically pierces the clouds. The tower in the Rotterdam painting stands at an even more complete stage of construction, with a full two-thirds of the structure finished. It dwarfs all who labor on the project and shadows an even wider Flemish setting.



Figure 3. Pieter Bruegel, *The Tower of Babel*, ca. 1563, oil on panel, 60 x 74.5 cm. Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, inv. no. 2443 (artwork in the public domain)

Bruegel's man-made colossus looming high above the flat countryside shows the crucial importance of landscape in conveying the spiritual message of the biblical narrative. That very flatness contrasts with the previous half-century of Netherlandish landscape tradition, established by Joachim Patinir and later Antwerp painters, which drew a clear, close association between mountain heights and elevated spirituality. This association further underscores the heretical nature of the Tower of Babel, which strives in vain to imitate the realm of the divine, to reach above the clouds toward heaven but entirely through man-made effort. In fact, although built up using bricks unloaded from large, ocean-going vessels, the structure is also carved out, shaped from the core of a massive mountain. This incredible task seeks nothing less than to reverse nature and the natural order completely, at the command of an absolutist king who sought to rival God.

Such mountainous heights at the level of the highest clouds fully define the space of Bruegel's 1567 *Conversion of Saint Paul* (fig. 4). That work presents a military force on foot and horseback within a steep alpine pass, but here the subject remains obscure at first glance. The main impression consists of spatial contrasts: the mountain pass on the left reveals a vertiginous view down to a distant, verdant seacoast, from which antlike figures ascend. They move upward, leaving sunlight at the left horizon and advance toward dark storm clouds in peaks at the upper right. At the pivot of this procession, between light and dark, several large equestrian figures occupy the lower right corner of the picture. Their bright costumes and the prominent horse rumps identify them as cavalry officers bearing the squadron banner. Behind them sits a fuller cavalry force in contemporary armor.⁷ Bruegel also included an army of foot soldiers, many still slogging up the steep hillside. This combination of military units was characteristic of sixteenth-century armies (along with the added force of modern cannon inappropriate to a biblical depiction).⁸



Figure 4. Pieter Bruegel, *The Conversion of Saint Paul*, 1567, oil on panel, 108 x 156 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. no. GG_3690 (artwork in the public domain)

An army like this would have resembled the Spanish forces brought to the Netherlands by the Duke of Alba in 1567, the same year this painting was created.⁹ Ten thousand strong, they left Spain in April of 1567, and Alba led his army northward in June on what became known as “the Spanish road,” marching across the Italian Alps through Piedmont and Savoy and into Brussels on August 22. No viewer of Bruegel's painting could have failed to associate Alba's force with both the alpine imagery and the contemporary depiction of soldiers. This military, however, intrudes as a crowded, negative force into those highland spaces normally reserved in Netherlandish landscapes for hermetic retreat and spiritual contemplation.

Bruegel's picture remains a religious subject, although the main figure must be discovered beneath the towering central evergreen trees. Clad in blue and surrounded by a tight circle of observers, foreshortened on the ground as he struggles before the horse from which he has just fallen, lies the tiny figure of Saint Paul (Acts 9: 1–8). As Saul, persecutor of Christians, the future Paul was journeying to Damascus to gather these religious heretics and convey them to Jerusalem for punishment at the hands of the high priest. According to the Gospels, a light shone on him,

and he heard the voice of Jesus as he fell to the ground. In Bruegel's painting that light, though faint, can be found above and to the left of the evergreens, subtly angled to intercept the prone figure of Saul. While his soldiers respond to his bodily accident, they fail to grasp the ultimate spiritual significance of this event. In the denouement, a temporarily blinded Saul is led on to Damascus by his men. This unfolding process closely echoes the visual experience of the viewer, who responds to the physical nature of the painted scene with wonder and appreciation, yet only later discovers the truly awe-inspiring biblical subject of conversion, camouflaged in its center.

Like the Old Testament destruction of the Tower of Babel, the New Testament conversion of Paul also involves a toppling over, a literal fall from the back of a horse, the very mark of chivalric honor, so that the scene also epitomizes the punishment of pride.¹⁰ Sudden, divine rebuke produces conversion in the name of faith—the transformation from pride to its opposite, humility, with Saul's laying-out upon the ground, became a commonplace sermon on this event.¹¹ Besides the punishing of pride, the story of the conversion of Saint Paul stresses the importance of personal recognition, even revelation, to “turn around” (the etymology of the term “con-version”) a potential persecutor so that he changes direction.

Such ideas could have proved relevant to the current local representative of perceived tyranny, Alba. But Bruegel's more general awareness of the biblical event's significance also led him to emphasize its symbolic spatial dimension, prompting him to follow Netherlandish landscape precedents in relocating this spiritual event to the mountains. Certainly distinctive is Bruegel's decision to stage Saint Paul's moment of conversion within an alpine setting. Of course, the artist had already obtained direct experience of the Alps on his round-trip journey to Italy in the early 1550s. Karel Van Mander's 1604 biography asserts that he “had swallowed all the mountains and rocks and spat them out again, after his return, on to his canvases and panels.”¹² Concerning the meaning of this choice, we recall that biblical mountains expressly denote sites for divine revelation: Mount Sinai for divine contact with the people of Israel or Mount Tabor for the Transfiguration of Christ (Matthew 17:1–8; Mark 9:2–8, Luke 9:28–36).

The spiritual nature of highland spaces was a theme continued by many writers, from Augustine to Petrarch. In the first letter of the fourth book of his *Le Familiari*, Petrarch recounts his ascent of the highest peak in Provence, Mont Ventoux, interspersed with moments of meditation on his moral shortcomings throughout his meandering journey to the top.¹³ One pictorial precedent explicitly contrasts spiritual mountains with sinful flatlands. Lucas van Leyden had previously featured another scene of discovery, his small triptych with the *Adoration of the Golden Calf* (fig. 5). Here the viewer must peer past debauching Israelites in the foreground, beyond their idolatrous rites with the Golden Calf in the middle ground, to find the divine within a hovering cloud atop Mount Sinai, speaking to the lone figure of Moses in the upper background.¹⁴ Here, too, images of pride and sensuality in the lowlands contrast with true spirituality and personal humility before the Lord by a kneeling Moses on the heights. Landscapes painted by Joachim Patinir in Antwerp after 1515 also show highlands to suggest the commonplace notion of hardship and spiritual trial in the “wilderness,” just as both literary and visual allegory traditionally associate steepness with the path of virtue, as opposed to the easier flat path of pleasure.¹⁵



Figure 5. Lucas van Leyden, *Triptych with the Adoration of the Golden Calf*, ca. 1530, oil on panel, 93.5 x 66.9 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-3841 (artwork in the public domain)

Indeed, Bruegel's *Conversion of Saint Paul* can be understood as the very inversion of his *Tower of Babel*. In the former, a vertiginous view from mountainous heights provides the perfect setting for Paul's spiritual revelation and his direct contact with the divine, as well as the subjugation of his former pride. In the latter, Nimrod's elevated view over the level worldly plains and busy seaport highlights his vainglory in substituting the man-made construction of artificial heights for the real clouds of heaven.

One religious print from Bruegel's *Large Landscapes* cycle, *Way to Emmaus* (*Euntes in Emaus*), conforms to the compositional structure of earlier Bruegel landscape drawings. Its series of levels descend from a corner elevation, punctuated by tall, spreading trees that shelter the main figures, here a trio of wanderers dressed in pilgrim costumes (fig. 6). This print offers little indication of its serious religious significance except for the title and a subtle circular halo around the head of the central figure, seen only from behind and placed between two unidentified companions in profile. Like the eventual discovery of Paul's conversion within Bruegel's alpine scene, here the viewer may not at first realize that these three figures actually enact a Gospel episode after the Resurrection (Luke 24:13–35). According to the story, two apostles traveled alongside the resurrected Jesus but failed to recognize him while they were on the road; only afterward, when they broke bread together in an inn, did they suddenly perceive his true identity, whereupon he vanished. In similar fashion, the perceptive viewer is expected to discern the true identity of these wayfarers, particularly the haloed Jesus, and to experience a revelation akin to that of his apostle companions. Here, too, the basic process of true spiritual seeing contrasts with the worldly sensations of the pilgrims on their route. When the viewer attempts to follow the pilgrims' path, two large logs block the way behind them, indicating that the route to discovery is neither clear nor easy.



Figure 6. Pieter Bruegel, *Way to Emmaus* (*Euntes in Emaus*), from the series *The Large Landscapes*, ca. 1555–56, etching and engraving, 32.5 x 43 cm. London, British Museum, inv. no. 1870,0625.652 (artwork in the public domain)

Thus prolonged visual discernment is connected to spiritual revelation. It requires insight to “see” truly. This process of thoughtful viewing has a history, especially in landscape painting, where marginal or obscure motifs challenge the viewer not to take what is seen at face value but rather to see through one's initial visual perception to discern a deeper meaning.¹⁶ Bruegel's *Emmaus* print, however, does not depend upon contrasting highlands and lowlands; rather, it establishes the potential spiritual significance of even a humble countryside setting (which Bruegel would later explore, when he situated a number of religious events in contemporary Flemish village settings, such as his 1566 *Census at Bethlehem* in Brussels).

In similar fashion, Bruegel's large 1566 painting *The Preaching of Saint John the Baptist* (fig. 7) presents a crowded human vista of a diverse population at the edge of a forest clearing, which also provides the denotation of a wilderness retreat for spiritual messages. All these listeners hear the sermon of the saint, the last prophet, and the “voice crying in the wilderness” (John 1:23; Matthew 3:1–6). This Bruegel image was later copied by both of the artist's sons, Pieter the Younger and Jan Brueghel. This vivid image of the biblical sermon by the Baptist would have had

its own topicality for Antwerp viewers in 1566, when Calvinist “hedge preachers” met large crowds outside the city limits.¹⁷ But it does not necessarily signal Bruegel’s own sympathies with Calvinism; after all, the artist was buried in a Catholic tomb in Notre-Dame de la Chapelle in Brussels and commemorated there by his son Jan, who worked for the Catholic regents of Flanders, Archdukes Albert and Isabella.



Figure 7. Pieter Bruegel, *The Preaching of Saint John the Baptist*, 1566, oil on wood, 95 x 160.5 cm. Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum, inv. no. 51.2829 (artwork in the public domain)

Dressed in simple brown robes, the Baptist stands at the top center of the expanse, a small figure immersed in the crowd. Positioned at the base of two converging tall tree trunks he faces the viewer and gestures while enveloped by a crowd of listeners, many seen from behind. Their range of responses—rapt attention, bored distraction, sleeping—resembles those of the congregation within a church space of Bruegel’s earlier print design *Faith* (1559; Amsterdam), as well as earlier representations of the subject of the Preaching Baptist by such artists as Herri met de Bles.

Closest to the viewer in the foreground sits a conventional pilgrim with a staff and hat covered with badges, including the scallop of Saint James (Santiago de Compostela), plus the X-shaped cross of Saint Anthony. Beside this pious figure sits a vagrant not known for piety: a gypsy (“Egyptian”) woman with her characteristic flat round hat.¹⁸ She and her bearded, long-haired, fortune-telling mate denote the location as the Holy Land. To the left of the foreground tree a woman with a drinking-can on her back appears with a standing figure wearing a distinctly Ottoman turban. Additionally, a pair of monks in their robes stands near the tree at the right behind a soldier. Clearly the image means to proclaim the universality of the Gospel message, addressed to both exotic and domestic audiences, committed Christians and pagans alike.¹⁹ The two gypsy figures dissolve the boundary between past and present, between hedge-preaching in the ancient Holy Land and in the Netherlands in 1566.

The painting poses a further question of discernment for the viewer—how, amidst this sea of faces, to find figure of John the Baptist or the even more obscure figure of Jesus, who, dressed in bluish robes, stands at right, just beyond the extended left arm of the Baptist. Not only is it difficult to discover these key figures within the picture, but it is nearly impossible to see the Baptism event, a diminutive scene of crowd activity in the haze at the bend of the river, just above the congregation and below the horizon. Like earlier sixteenth-century painters of this religious subject in a landscape, chiefly Joachim Patinir and Herri met de Bles, Bruegel located his spiritual message in an obscurity that challenges ordinary sense perception.

Bruegel thus asserts the invisible nature of spiritual matters by making their representation difficult to find. The work required for discovery by a discerning viewer, to provide deeper understanding of what is represented, parallels the mental process of devotional exercise by the faithful and the resulting spiritual revelation.²⁰ However, these exercises, both in visual analysis and in Christian devotion, are consistent with the diligence required from the apostles when Jesus took up his most basic form of teaching—the parable.

Understood as a comparison, parables are short fictional narratives, generally referring to something that might occur naturally but which conveys spiritual and moral meaning. Said another way, they comprise plausible stories that can be taken at face value and still make sense; but they can be further mined metaphorically for religious content in an act of spiritual discernment.

In this light, it is significant that one of Bruegel's first paintings, certainly his first extant painted landscape, represents the *Parable of the Sower* (fig. 8). That Bruegel depicted a parable in his first large-scale landscape painting suggests how much the artist considered his plausible representation of the land and the life on it as a metaphor for universal truths and as a location for spiritual revelation. The landscape layout of the *Parable of the Sower* closely accords with the earlier *Rustic Care* (*Solicitudo Rustica*) from the engraved *Large Landscapes*. Beneath a pair of slender, curving trees, the main figure, a farmer, is busy broadcasting seeds across the left foreground. A large tree stump occupies the center foreground, where stones are clearly visible in the soil. The main angle of viewing runs from the sower at the lower left corner to high mountain crests in the upper right distance, above a wide river. Here, too, the intermediate landscape shows a Flemish village, albeit one distributed upon an uncharacteristic hillside topography rather than on local flatlands. Near the center of the image stands a church steeple. Perhaps the most unusual detail is an indistinct crowd scene across the river.



Figure 8. Pieter Bruegel, *Parable of the Sower*, 1557, oil on panel, 73.7 x 102 cm. San Diego, The Putnam Foundation, Timken Art Museum (artwork in the public domain)

In conjunction with the sower the presence of the crowd unlocks the meaning of this image, indicating that Bruegel's landscape space serves as the meaningful setting for a parable but also as the basic image for all parables, whether fallow or fertile. Although the figure of Jesus cannot be recognized on the riverbank (compare the tiny scene of his baptism in the *Preaching of Saint John the Baptist*), partly owing to the painting's damaged condition, it is clear that someone is delivering a speech beside a boat. This suggests that this image represents the Sea of Galilee and the occasion of Jesus's very first parable (Matthew 13:1–23), delivered “beside the sea” to great crowds as Jesus “got into a boat and sat there, and the whole crowd stood on the beach.” (13:2)

Like all parables, this lesson emerges through homely metaphors. It uses the image of a sower, whose seeds were partly devoured by birds, partly fruitless when they fell upon stony soil or were choked by thorns, and partly successful when they found fertile soil. Brilliantly, therefore, Bruegel selected Jesus's first parable as the subject for his own inaugural landscape painting, a work that planted the seed for his own affinity with landscape. This significant choice surely indicates a parallel between painting and parable that goes beyond one simply being the subject of another.

The story's moral reveals that sermons and the word of God generally are lost on unperceptive listeners (13:13), but they work effectively with anyone “who hears the word and understands it” (13:23). Thus a parable itself is likely to be understood only by some small portion of its audience. Bruegel's message in his first painted landscape applies this same hermeneutic process to the very act of viewing. In later Bruegel pictures, the viewer's task is to discern the spiritual meaning of a subject behind its seemingly prosaic, everyday appearance. Like the small figures in the *Conversion of Saint Paul* and the *Preaching of John the Baptist*, this background gathering around Christ at the Sea of Galilee provides the necessary context for understanding this image as another religious subject, not just a landscape with incidental figures. That this is Christ's Sower, with that figure's deeper meaning, offers a potential parallel to seeing the artist himself as a fashioner of visual parables and suggests that Bruegel also hid significance in his other pictures. Recognition of that religious content, perhaps even with the force of a revelation, in a work that at first sight

seems more like the depiction of a local Flemish village or landscape remains a necessary pictorial skill for a perceptive viewer seeking to understand much in the artist's oeuvre.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This essay is dedicated to my long-time colleague and friend, who first taught us to see Dutch pastoral as a meaningful intellectual construct and has taught us all so much more since then.

Larry Silver, Farquhar Professor of Art History at the University of Pennsylvania, previously taught at Berkeley and Northwestern. A specialist in Northern European painting and graphics, he also served as President of the Historians of Netherlandish Art and the College Art Association, where he was also a founding editor of the online journal caa. reviews. His recent book publications include: Rubens, Velázquez, and the King of Spain (2014; with Aneta Georgievska-Shine); Pieter Bruegel (2011); The Essential Dürer (2011; with Jeffrey Chipps Smith); Rembrandt's Faith (2009; with Shelley Perlove); Marketing Maximilian (2008); Peasant Scenes and Landscapes (2006); and Hieronymus Bosch (2006). He organized the print exhibitions Grand Scale (2008; with Elizabeth Wyckoff) and Graven Images (1993; with Timothy Riggs).

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¹ Margaret Carroll, *Painting and Politics in Northern Europe* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2008), 75–87, with bibliography.

² Cited by Carroll, *Painting and Politics*, 211, n. 59.

³ Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (Chicago: Britannica, 1952), 425–26.

⁴ Ilja Veldman, *Maarten van Heemskerck and Dutch Humanism in the Sixteenth Century* (Maarsen: SDU, 1977), 133–41, esp. fig. 87; and Ilja Veldman, *Leerrijke reeksen van Maarten van Heemskerck*, exh. cat. (Haarlem: Frans Hals Museum, 1986), 50–51, cat. no. 6.3. Following in the train of Pride is Envy.

⁵ Timothy Riggs, “Views of Roman Ruins,” in *Hieronymus Cock: Printmaker and Publisher* (New York: Garland, 1977), 30, 129–30, 256–59, nos. 2–11; Joris van Grieken, Ger Luijten, and Jan van der Stock, eds., *Hieronymus Cock: The Renaissance in Print*, exh. cat. (Leuven: M–Museum, 2013), 90–99, cat. nos. 9–10. In addition, Maarten van Heemskerck’s visit to Rome (1532–36) generated numerous drawings of the ruins in the city, including the Colosseum, which he utilized in later prints and paintings, such as his 1553 *Self-Portrait* (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum). Arthur Di Furia, “Heemskerck’s Rome: Memory, Antiquity, and the Berlin Sketchbooks,” (PhD diss., University of Delaware, 2008); Jan Piet Filedt Kok, et al., eds., *Kunst voor de Beeldenstorm*, exh. cat. (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1986), 267–68, cat. no. 148.

⁶ Larry Silver, “Pieter Bruegel and the Capital of Capitalism,” *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 47 (1996): 125–53.

⁷ Maurice Vale, *War and Chivalry* (London: Duckworth, 1981); Maurice Keen, ed., *Medieval Warfare: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), esp. Andrew Ayton, “Arms, Armour, and Horses,” 186–208.

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⁹ Geoffrey Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road 1567–1659*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); and Geoffrey Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 115–46.

¹⁰ Ernst Dobschütz, “Die Bekehrung des Paulus,” *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft* 50 (1929): 87–111.

¹¹ Todd Richardson, “Landscaping the Soul: Pieter Bruegel’s *Conversion of St. Paul*,” in *Sacred Landscape: Landscape as Exegesis in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Denis Ribouillaut and Michel Weemans (Florence: Olschki, 2011), 51–65.

¹² Translation from Fritz Grossmann, *Pieter Bruegel: Complete Edition of the Paintings*, rev. ed. (London: Phaidon, 1966), 7.

¹³ Morris Bishop, *Petrarch and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963), 104–9.

¹⁴ Lawrence Silver, “The Sin of Moses: Comments on the Early Reformation in a Late Painting by Lucas van Leyden,” *Art Bulletin* 55 (1973): 407–9; Jan Piet Filedt Kok, *The Dance around the Golden Calf by Lucas van Leyden* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2008).

¹⁵ Reindert Leonard Falkenburg, *Joachim Patinir: Landscape as an Image of the Pilgrimage of Life*, trans. Michael Hoyle (Amsterdam, 1986), 78–82, 91–96, 101–2. This allegorical imagery already appears in Albrecht Dürer’s engraving *Hercules* (B.73), where the hero assists Virtue in her battle of lust before a *paysage moralisée*—an image of the “castle of virtue” atop a hill in the left background, in contrast to the river valley of pleasure at the right horizon.

¹⁶ Larry Silver, “God in the Details: Bosch and Judgment(s),” *Art Bulletin* 83 (2001): 626–50.

¹⁷ Peter Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots: The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 71–72, 85–88.

¹⁸ Gypsies appear in Netherlandish painting at the beginning fifteenth century (e.g., Robert Campin’s *Entombment Triptych*; London, Courtauld Institute), but also in works by a Bruegel contemporary, Cornelis van Dalem. Erwin Pokorny, “The Gypsies and Their Impact on Fifteenth-Century Western European Iconography,” in *Crossing Cultures*, ed. Jaynie Anderson (Melbourne: Miegunyah, 2009), 623–27; on Cornelis van Dalem, see Fritz Grossmann, “Cornelis van Dalem Re-Examined,” *Burlington Magazine* 96 (1954): 42–51.

¹⁹ A similar universalism with even more varied, exotic figures in costume appears in Rembrandt’s grisaille, *The Preaching of Saint John the Baptist* (ca. 1634; Berlin, Staatliche Museen); see Shelly Perlove and Larry Silver, *Rembrandt’s Faith* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2009), 264–69.

²⁰ One might compare late-medieval devotional practices and even the Spiritual Exercises of Loyola. See Kathryn Rudy, *Virtual Pilgrimages in the Convent: Imagining Jerusalem in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout; Brepols, 2011); Jeffrey Chipps Smith, *Sensuous Worship: Jesuits and the Art of the Early Catholic Reformation in Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 29–53.

HOMAGE TO GOLTZIUS: FOUR *DISGRACERS* IN ONE

Lawrence O. Goedde

The Fralin Art Museum at the University of Virginia was recently given a drawing that is immediately recognizable as an adaptation of Hendrick Goltzius's famous series of engravings, *The Four Disgracers*, of 1588. This artist apparently found in Goltzius's demonstration of artistry both an inspiration and a challenge since he or she not only set about copying the four figures but also combined them into a single composition. The result is a work that reveals a clear determination to rival the virtuosity of the original; and to some degree it succeeds, creating a work in the spirit of Goltzius himself.

The Fralin Art Museum at the University of Virginia was recently given a drawing (fig. 1) based on the work of Hendrick Goltzius that is immediately recognizable as an adaptation of Goltzius's famous series of engravings *The Four Disgracers*, of 1588 (fig. 2).¹ Displaying four figures tumbling through the air and seen from unusual angles, Goltzius's prints, which are based on designs by Cornelis Cornelisz. van Haarlem, demonstrate his artistic virtuosity in a variety of ways.² Not only are the four figures depicted with their limbs splayed out, in poses requiring the use of extreme foreshortening, but each is also carefully composed within the circular field of a tondo format, enhancing the effect of twisting motion through space. The prints display Goltzius's command of male anatomy in the convoluted poses, which on closer examination are basically the same pose seen from different angles. They also show his skill in manipulating figures in light and shade, with the first and last figures in the series tumbling into dark infernal regions full of billowing clouds of smoke and the middle two plummeting to earth in brilliant sunshine. Adding to the artifice of each image is the manipulation of the swelling and tapering engraved lines, which form concentric, interwoven nets modeling anatomy and clouds, and in the clouds especially create rippling optical effects that further animate the images. The series is a display of virtuosity that bespeaks Goltzius's intense self-consciousness of his own artistic skills and his determination to produce works that dazzle in their combination of intense visual energy with seemingly effortless control and mastery of difficulty and complexity.³



Figure 1. Anonymous, after Hendrick Goltzius, after Cornelis Cornelisz. van Haarlem, *The Four Disgracers*, pen, brown ink, and black chalk, with wash on paper, 40.01 x 45.56 cm. Charlottesville, University of Virginia, The Fralin Art Museum, Gift of the Frederick and Lucy S. Herman Foundation, inv. no. 2007.15.40 (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 2. Hendrick Goltzius, after Cornelis Cornelisz. van Haarlem, *The Four Disgracers: Icarus, Phaeton, Tantalus, and Ixion*, 1588, engraving, diameter varies from 33.0 to 33.2 cm. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1953, inv. no. 53.601.338 (3-6) (artwork in public domain)

technique.⁴ Rather, our artist adopted a much less obtrusive, yet equally virtuosic system of modeling flesh that uses parallel hatching strokes of varying degrees of darkness and proximity over passages of wash. Areas of cross-hatching are strikingly minimized, and the parallel hatchings are confined to flesh—hair is rendered mainly with the brush or fluid pen strokes. The result is a work that reveals a clear determination to rival the virtuosity of the original and to some degree succeeds in exceeding Goltzius's own contrivance, creating a grouping of great artistry, if total implausibility as a depiction of figures actually falling through space.

The response of this draftsman to Goltzius's engravings, finding in them a challenge to meet and attempt to surpass, can also be seen as an integral feature of Goltzius's own artistic achievement. The twisting poses seen from extreme angles and the knotty musculature are his responses to the virtuosic treatments of the human figure by his predecessors in Haarlem and by celebrated artists of the Italian Renaissance. Anne Lowenthal discussed a number of sources of inspiration for Goltzius's *Disgracers* that scholars have proposed.⁵ These include Konrad Oberhuber's observation of the link between two of Goltzius's sinners and the falling figures in Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert's *Allegory of Human Ambition*, an etching of 1549 after a design by Maerten van Heemskerck (fig. 3).⁶ Lowenthal noted that the resemblance of Goltzius's *Disgracers* to the earlier print is both formal and thematic, relating to prideful ambition and its downfall, a theme she found also in the writings of Coornhert. Since Coornhert was an important mentor to

The still-anonymous draftsman of the Fralin sheet apparently found in Goltzius's demonstration of artistry both an inspiration and a challenge, since he or she not only set about copying the four figures but also combined them into a single composition. Goltzius's figures are placed so that the head and an arm of each is at the edges of the group, with the legs and other arm directed toward the center of the composition in a mass of complex foreshortenings. With some effort, the legs, feet, and arms of the original sinners can be traced in the interwoven tangle of limbs, and the artist was for the most part successful in maintaining a plausible three-dimensionality to the grouping, the only exception being an unresolved form between the legs of the figure at left. The overall effect is of a huge three-dimensional pinwheel twisting through space, picking up on the character of the individual figures in Goltzius's conception. The drawing suggests a response to Goltzius' challenge not only in the composition but in its technique as well. Nowhere does the draftsman of the Fralin sheet imitate the contrived brilliance of Goltzius's engraved lines. Goltzius frequently used pen to recreate the swelling and tapering of his engraved lines, directing our attention again to his skilled manipulation of style and

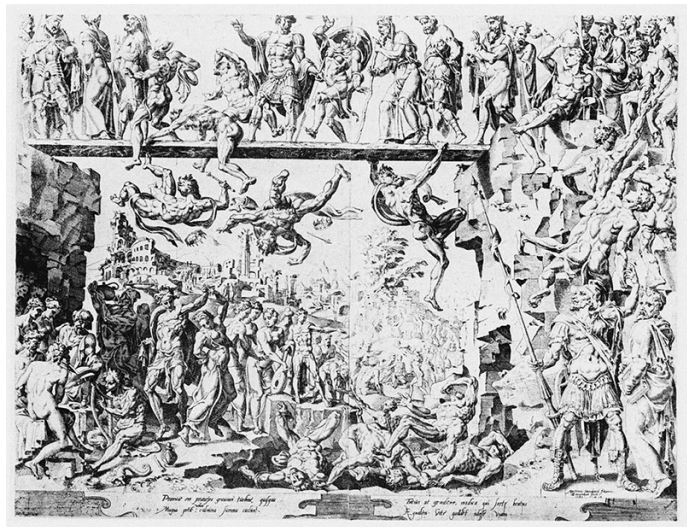


Figure 3. Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert, after Maerten van Heemskerck, *The Narrow Path of Virtue*, 1549, etching, 43.3 x 50.7 cm. Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, inv. no. L 1965/133 (PK) (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 4. Titian, *Tityus*, 1548–49, oil on canvas, 253 x 217 cm. Madrid, Museo del Prado, inv. no. 427 (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 5. Giulio Bonasone, after Michelangelo, *The Last Judgment*, etching, 62.4 x 44.5 cm. London, The British Museum (artwork in the public domain)

Goltzius, the latter's awareness of Heemskerck's strongly classicizing tumbling figures is secure.⁷ Lowenthal also discussed Jeroen Giltay's suggestion of a link between Goltzius's series and four paintings by Titian depicting mythological figures who suffered condemnation and torment (fig. 4).⁸ The series was commissioned by Mary of Hungary and delivered between 1549 and 1556 to her château near Brussels. Two of the paintings, *Tityus* and *Sisyphus*, subsequently came into the possession of Philip II of Spain and are in the Prado today. The composition of *Tityus* was definitely known to Goltzius through an engraving by Cornelis Cort. The art of Michelangelo, too, has been cited as a source of inspiration for the *Disgracers* (fig. 5).⁹ His heroically muscular nude male figures, often in twisting and sometimes falling poses, like those in the *Last Judgment*, were available to Goltzius in prints by a number of artists (among them Marcantonio Raimondi, Nicholas Beatrizet, and Giorgio Ghisi) before he saw Michelangelo's originals in Rome in 1590–91, two years after producing the *Disgracers*.

Goltzius's adaptations of the writhing, falling, or anguished poses of these admired predecessors can be seen as in effect a dialogue with and development of their achievements. Again indicating his intensely self-conscious attitude toward his own artistry, Goltzius at once echoed and invoked great models and strove to surpass them. This seems to be the case as well with the ambition and artistry evident in the Fralin Museum drawing. However less accomplished this draftsman was, his drawing reveals an artist who saw Goltzius's virtuoso artistry as a challenge to his own skills and ambitions. That this artist was responding to Goltzius's work at the level of artistry itself rather than subject matter is evident in his complete elimination of the backgrounds found in the original engravings, which contain settings and narrative allusions to each sinner's story. His concern was to manipulate Goltzius's figures into a new work of his own devising, thus demonstrating his own skill.

The function of the Herman Collection drawing nonetheless remains a puzzle. Its apparently self-aware refashioning of Goltzius's creations and its careful execution seem out of keeping with a work made as a casual exercise; yet the drawing is unsigned, and its purpose is unclear. Such a work could conceivably have served as the model for a print, but, to my knowledge, none is known, and there are no marks to indicate transfer to a plate. It could also have been a presentation drawing, a gift to someone who would appreciate its skill and would perhaps recognize both its models and the draftsman's clever recasting of his models, but there is no indication on the sheet of such a destination. A dedication or an annotation could have existed on a now-lost mount, but such speculations, while tantalizing, actually bring us no closer to divining its original audience.

Interestingly, Goltzius's *Disgracers* continue to find a response in the works of recent artists, who recreate his tumbling figures on a monumental mural scale. These include the street artist, Žilda, whose work *Liber Casus* comprises outdoor mural posters of individual *Disgracers* installed in Paris, Rennes, and Belgrade (fig. 6).¹⁰ Another contemporary artist, Baptiste Debombourg, creates monumental mural installations, including one based on *Phaeton* from the *Disgracers*, using thousands of staples applied to wood panel as his medium (fig. 7).¹¹ For both, the artifice of Goltzius's series clearly provokes, intrigues, and challenges as they adapt his imagery to new purposes. Žilda sees the



(left) Figure 6. Žilka, *Phaëton*, from *Liber Casus*. 2010, acrylic on paper, pasted on a wall. Rennes, France (reproduced with the permission of the artist). (right) Figure 7. Baptiste Debombourg, from *Aggravure*, 2007, staples on board, 2.7 x 2.5 m (reproduced with the permission of the artist)

falling figures pasted high above passersby in urban settings as destabilizing the familiar world of the streets, provoking reflection on falling as a metaphor for the necessity of risk-taking amid the general indifference and banality of ordinary life. Debombourg finds in the heroic scale of Mannerist male nudes a metaphor for societal, and especially male, violence as seen in popular super-heroes, an aggression and familiarity that he sees as echoed in the way staples are driven into board and their utter ubiquity. However differently these artists respond to the *Disgracers*, the fascinating complexity of Goltzius's convoluted, tumbling forms remains viscerally suggestive and capable of evoking an artistic response in this generation as it clearly did in the draftsman who created the Fralin's drawing.

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I would like to acknowledge the importance to me of Allison Kettering's inspired expansion of the iconographic study of Dutch art to embrace numerous literary and social dimensions of Dutch seventeenth-century culture, as well as her personal generosity and encouragement over the years.

*Larry Goedde is Professor of Art History at the University of Virginia. His publications include *Tempest and Shipwreck in Dutch and Flemish Art: Convention, Rhetoric, and Interpretation* (Penn State Press, 1989), and more recently an essay surveying Renaissance and Baroque landscape traditions in *A Companion to Renaissance and Baroque Art* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), and an online exhibition catalogue, "Traces of the Hand: Master Drawings from the Collection of Frederick and Lucy S. Herman" (<http://www.virginia.edu/artmuseum/supplemental-websites/traces/index.html>).*

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¹The Fralin Art Museum, University of Virginia. 2007.15.40. This drawing was published by Miles Chappell in *Form, Function, and Finesse: Drawings from the Frederick and Lucy S. Herman Foundation*, exh. cat. (Williamsburg, Va.: Muscarelle Museum of Art, 1983), 76. This essay incorporates research by two students in the Graduate Program in the History of Art and Architecture at Virginia, Katherine Baker and Catharine Mitchell: <http://www.virginia.edu/artmuseum/supplemental-websites/traces/traces-2007.15.40.html>

²Huigen Leeflang and Ger Luijten, *Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617): Drawings, Prints and Paintings*, exh. cat. (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2003), no. 33, 98–99; and Anne W. Lowenthal, "The Disgracers: Four Sinners in One Act," in *Essays in Northern European Art Presented to Egbert Haverkamp Begemann on His Sixtieth Birthday* (Doornspijk: Davaco, 1983), 148–53. On Cornelis's designs, see P. J. J. van Thiel, *Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem, 1562–1638: A*

Monograph and Catalogue Raisonné (Doornspijk: Davaco, 1999), nos. 139, 348; and for the prints, nos. P4, 420–22; and Julie L. McGee, *Cornelis Corneliszoon van Haarlem (1562–1638): Patrons, Friends and Dutch Humanists* (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1991), 117–26.

³Leeflang and Luijten, *Goltzius*, 82–83, 203–15, 235–42, 275–76.

⁴For example, Leeflang and Luijten, *Goltzius*, nos. 84, 85, 87.

⁵Lowenthal, “The Disgracers,” 151–53.

⁶Konrad Oberhuber, *Zwischen Renaissance und Baroque: Das Zeitalter von Bruegel und Bellange*, exh. cat. (Vienna: Albertina, 1967), no. 107, 94.

⁷Lowenthal, “The Disgracers,” 151.

⁸Jeroen Giltay, “Hemelbestormers,” *Openbaar Kunstbezit* 26 (1982): 26–29.

⁹Mario Rotili et al., *Fortuna di Michelangelo nell'incisione*, exh. cat. (Benevento: Museo del Sannio, 1964), 36–38, 106–9.

¹⁰Lubna S., “Liber Casus,” <http://liber-casus.blogspot.com/>

¹¹Bapatiste Debombourg, “Aggravure,” <http://www.baptistebombourg.com/en/works/aggravure-0>

LAIRESSE MEETS BIDLOO, OR THE CASE OF THE ABSENT ANATOMIST

Susan Donahue Kuretsky

Govert Bidloo's large anatomical treatise, the *Anatomia Humanis Corpore* (Amsterdam, 1685), with printed illustrations designed by Gerard de Lairese, demonstrates an unusual collaboration between a scientist and a major artist who specialized in classicizing history painting. Active in the theater, as was Bidloo, Lairese sought ways to dramatize these images of anatomical performance, even to the inventive strategy—seen or sensed throughout the treatise—of invoking an unseen anatomist whose delicate maneuvers parallel those of the artist himself.

Govert Bidloo's *Anatomia Humani Corporis*, published in Amsterdam in 1685 and reissued in Dutch in 1690 as *Ontleding des menschelyken lichaams*, may not be the most accurate of the anatomical treatises produced during the Age of Observation, but it is surely the most artistically powerful.¹ The product of Bidloo's collaboration with Gerard de Lairese (1640–1711), the most celebrated Amsterdam artist of the late seventeenth century, this handsome volume leads the reader through 241 pages of images and text. The first dissection illustration in the volume is a page illustrating the anatomy of the skin, which is followed by multiple views of the intricate internal structures within the head, chest, and abdomen, the male and female reproductive organs (including stages of fetal development), the fabric and organization of the muscles, and finally the body's innermost core: the skeletal bones of adults and children.

Bidloo (1649–1713), who had earned his medical degree in 1682 from the University of Franeker after studying with the great Amsterdam anatomist Frederick Ruysch, was also a playwright and poet. In 1688 he would become a lecturer in anatomy in The Hague and in the next year personal physician to the Dutch stadholder William III of Orange, a post he continued to hold after William became king of England in 1689. Lairese, dubbed the “Dutch Poussin” for his classicizing treatment of antique subjects, also had close ties to the theater as illustrator of the plays of Andries Pels, founder of an elite Amsterdam society of artists and intellectuals.² Bidloo was responsible for the dissections, the book's introduction, and its explanatory verbal texts, but the 105 prints designed by Lairese are by far the volume's dominant focus and the reason for its enduring fame.

Anatomia's title page specifies that Lairese's drawings were made directly “ad vivum delineatis,” rather than being borrowed from earlier images, and also names the artist, indicating that Bidloo refused to entrust any of the work to other draftsmen despite the magnitude of the project.³ Bidloo's instructions to his illustrator must have been crucial to the formation of these images, but later readers would complain about both the brevity of his texts and the fact that the superb artistic quality of the engravings is not matched by consistent scientific accuracy. As Lyckle de Vries has pointed out, Lairese was quite aware of his own anatomical simplifications, for in his *Grondlegginge ter Teekenkonst*, published in Amsterdam in 1701, he advised fellow painters to consult prints in an earlier, shorter treatise, published in The Hague in 1634 by Jacob van de Gracht, which had been written for both artists and doctors.⁴ If the scope of the later project encouraged these busy, successful men to work quickly, any tendency on the artist's part to summarize the profusion of detail in the many specimens before him clearly pushed him to think creatively beyond the limits of merely recording them.⁵

Indeed, these images linger in eye and mind because Lairese—a dramatist and history painter accustomed to courting audience involvement—reached far beyond the functional didactic purpose of a scientific treatise. Anatomical images tended to be static and diagrammatic until the early sixteenth century, when developments in empirical science and the spread of printed images inspired a livelier and more directly observational approach. Seeking new

ways to engage viewers in a subject likely to be distasteful to almost anyone but an anatomist, Lairese explored how all parts of a mortal's human remains, even the smallest and most fragmentary, can be seen to express the body's capacity to function as a living instrument. These images thus generate fresh reflection about the relationship between death and life, departing, with a few subtle exceptions, from the standard *vanitas* paintings of this period with their guttering candles, empty skulls, and stern reminders of mortality. In Bidloo's *Anatomia* Lairese connects his audience, in ingeniously dramatic ways, to the intricate systems within the body that give it its tenacious if transient life. At the same time he demonstrates a new and startlingly effective means of intensifying the immediacy of his illustrations by repeatedly invoking an anatomist who is never seen, yet whose active presence becomes almost palpable as one follows the course of his work.

Only in the book's frontispiece (fig. 1) does a fully embodied anatomist appear: a female personification of Anatomy enthroned within a classical setting. Elevated upon a sarcophagus, she holds a book in her left hand and a scalpel in her right; the position of the scalpel parallels the horn blown by the figure of Fame above her while drawing attention to two skeletons at the left. At the right the sculpture of a veiled putto on a base is posed like the flayed *écorché* (skinless) models used to demonstrate the body's muscular system to art students.⁶ Below the sculpture three living putti play with a dissection drawing, a skull, and a severed arm. At the lower left, pointedly overlapping one of the skeletons, an ancient Father Time with his hourglass and scythe draws aside a large curtain to reveal the scene as if it were on a stage.⁷ In addition to Bidloo's and Lairese's individual theatrical activities, the image recalls the performative aspect of the anatomist's work, which, beginning in the late sixteenth century, also involved public dissection demonstrations within theaters designed especially for that purpose.⁸ There the audience could learn more about the wonders of Creation as they were introduced to the unseeable (and never really imaginable) organic apparatuses within their own living bodies.



Figure 1. *Anatomia Enthroned with Fame and Father Time*. Frontispiece from Godefridi (Govert) Bidloo, *Anatomia Humani Corporis* (Amsterdam: Joannis à Someren, Joannis à Dyk, Henrice and Theodori Boom, 1685). Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College (artwork in the public domain). This frontispiece and all the engravings reproduced were designed by Gerard de Lairese; page size: 81.3 x 53.3 cm.

The effect of such a performance, like the performances on paper in Bidloo's *Anatomia*, must have been profound, even shocking, since the body's internal structures can only be revealed through invasion, fragmentation, and the utter ruination of the cadaver, producing an inescapable confrontation with its vulnerability and impermanence. The male and female classical nudes (figs. 2–4) that precede Bidloo's dissections serve to provide both a physical and a theological point of departure, intensifying the dramatic effect of the dissections that follow, for the flesh of these flawless figures is intact and their anatomical perfection appears timeless and imperishable.⁹ Beside the rear view of the female figure (fig. 4), a classical urn with a relief of the Expulsion from Eden conveys the idea that these idealized beings represent the original God-created state of Adam and Eve, whose fall from grace would make humanity mortal and subject to death and the bodily ruin so vividly evoked in the pages that follow.¹⁰



Figure 2. *Classical Male Figure Seen from the Front: Adam*. Plate 1 from *Anatomia Humani Corporus* (fig. 1) (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 3. *Classical Female Figure Seen from the Front: Eve*. Plate 2 from *Anatomia Humani Corporus* (fig. 1) (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 4. *Classical Female Figure Seen from the Rear: Eve*. Plate 3 from *Anatomia Humani Corporus* (fig. 1) (artwork in the public domain)

Even a selection of the visual riches contained in the *Anatomia* shows how creatively Lairese approached this project, often making innovative use of magnifying lenses.¹¹ Dissections of the skull and brain take the most prominent place with six illustrations at the start (Plates 5–10) and four at the end (Plates 89–92), beginning with two views of a the same severed head (fig. 5). Isolated within the picture space, the heads are framed by the visible plate mark within the larger expanse of the page. Here and throughout the book this difference in scale between print and page gives the images an effect of materializing dramatically within that larger visual field, while being subtly but strongly grounded by touches of shadow, as here, or by depictions of the anatomist's pegs and pins that create the illusion of specimens attached to a table.

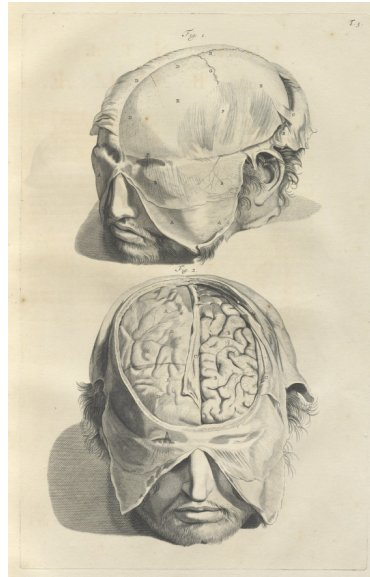


Figure 5. *Severed Head in Two Views: Dissection of the Scalp and Meninges*. Plate 5 from *Anatomia Humani Corporus* (fig. 1) (artwork in the public domain)

On this page one head is placed frontally in the foreground and the other behind it in three-quarter view, but both are seen fully and from above, as if by an anatomist at work as he successively peels away the coverings of the brain, from the scalp to the layers of the meninges, in order to prepare for dissection of the brain. In both views the slit skin, pulled down over the eyes and cheeks, gives the individualized face of what was once a young man with shaggy hair and a somber mouth the look of someone blinded—but also protected—from the procedures in progress. A subsequent page depicting the same head (fig. 6) offers a potent contrast of fullness versus emptiness, as the entire intact brain spreads its lobes like an over-ripe fruit across the foreground with the evacuated chambers of the open skull yawning behind and above it. Between them at the right is one of the many startling details in the *Anatomia* that reward close observation: the barely visible fingers of the anatomist lifting the anterior lobe of the cerebellum, which controls smell and sight, to reveal the pituitary gland beneath (fig. 7).

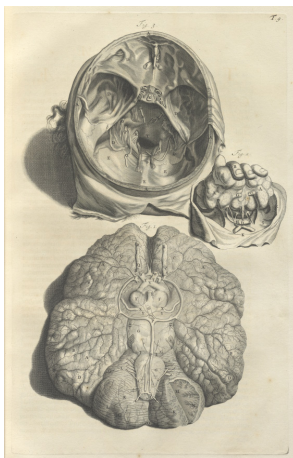


Figure 6. *The Brain and Its Evacuated Chambers*. Plate 9 from *Anatomia Humani Corporus* (fig. 1) (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 7. Detail of fig. 6, showing the anatomist's fingers lifting the cerebellum.

Within the chapter on bones near the end of the treatise, Laireesse returned to the human skull (interior and exterior) in an intensely poetic image (fig. 8). This selective, harmonious composition translates two views of the skull into reciprocal convex and concave ovals modeled by light and shadow, again seen from above. But here evocative indications of context appear, for an inkwell and pen appear at the left—or is the pen really the anatomist’s scalpel and the polished inkwell his small specimen jar? Most striking is the fact that the empty skullcap, propped against a specimen box and a sheet of music in the foreground, draws the parallel, familiar from still lifes of this period, between the transient fading sounds of music and human mortality.¹²

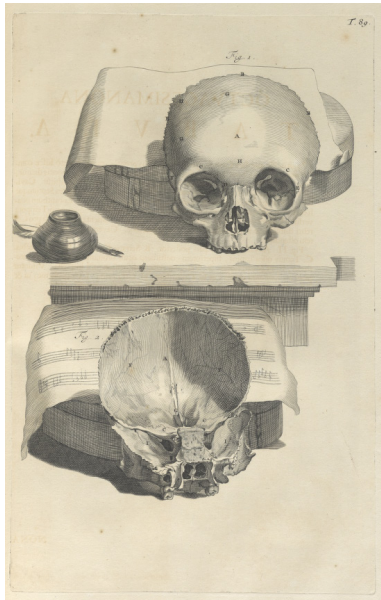


Figure 8. *Interior and Exterior of the Skull with a Sheet of Music*. Plate 89 from *Anatomia Humani Corporus* (fig. 1) (artwork in the public domain)

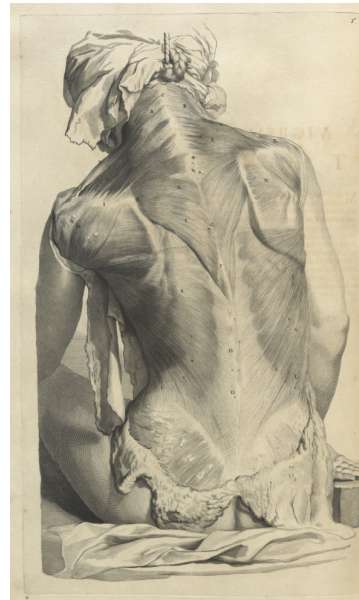


Figure 9. *The Muscle Structure of the Upper and Lower Back*. Plate 27 from *Anatomia Humani Corporus* (fig. 1) (artwork in the public domain)

In pages that illustrate the larger, fleshy parts of the human form, the artist (as translated by the printmaker) employs an animated play of line and tone to make his images appear alive, even though the figures they depict are not. This intriguing duality is especially evident in pages in the central section of the book, where the mortal descendants of Eve appear, unobtrusively braced from above or laid out upon the anatomist’s table. In Plate 27 (fig. 9), for example, the subject appears to be seated on a bed in a natural, relaxed way, leaning slightly forward as if in meditation. With her back to the viewer she displays the complex overlays of back and shoulder muscles, defined by angled, overlapping streams of fine parallel hatchings. Only gradually does the observer notice that the body is suspended by a rope, mostly hidden under the headdress, which the anatomist has positioned around the neck. Soft folds of drapery under the buttocks and around the head and hidden face, juxtaposed with the flayed skin of the figure are reminders that skin is the body’s own clothing, shed here not by the woman herself but by the unseen anatomist at work on her mortal remains. Through the visual contrast between these internal and external claddings, with their textures of soft flesh versus the tense, smooth sheath of muscle fibers, the artist emphasizes the materiality of the body—objectifying it even as he evokes the human presence of the woman as she was in life.¹³

Throughout the *Anatomia*, the reader notices how respectfully, even tenderly, Laireesse’s depictions treat the bodies of the dead, despite the violent effects of the dissection process. This sensitivity to the objects of his study and his unwillingness to see them as merely the detritus of living beings is especially evident in his illustrations of the female body and its reproductive organs, which are given unusual emphasis in this book. Notable examples are two consecutive images (figs. 10 and 11), which evoke successive moments in the process of the anatomist’s work. In both a sharply cropped view of a female torso, placed diagonally within the rectangular picture space, includes partial exposure of the breasts and pubis, with the multiple layers of skin, fat, and muscles between them folded back to expose the uterus and parts of the surrounding organs. In the first image (fig. 10), in which the pregnant uterus fills the visible expanse of the abdominal cavity, the lower part of the woman’s face can be seen at the upper left, relaxed as if in sleep. In the second (fig. 11), her face is covered by drapery, but the uterus is now opened to reveal the fanlike placenta and the unborn child within, who seems to sleep on as if still safely enclosed and protected by the mother’s body.



Figure 10. *The Uterus Within the Abdominal Cavity: Exterior View*. Plate 55 from *Anatomia Humani Corporus* (fig. 1) (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 11. *The Uterus Within the Abdominal Cavity: Interior View with Fetus*. Plate 56 from *Anatomia Humani Corporus* (fig. 1) (artwork in the public domain)

As Mimi Cazort has pointed out, Laresse controlled and confined the viewpoint in his anatomical compositions to a fixed stance with limited peripheral vision so that the illustrations are not general summations, but display “the vivid particularity of unique specimens seen at a one particular moment.”¹⁴ In other words, Laresse lets us see not only what the anatomist saw but *how* he saw it. This approach is most vividly, and by far most painfully, exhibited in the representation of an anatomized female infant (fig. 12), perhaps the unborn or stillborn child previously depicted. Laid upon a small board, propped up by an elegantly tasseled cushion or sandbag, the little corpse is held in place by ribbons that connect the umbilical cord to a metal rod projecting from the wall behind. Here the complete opening of chest and abdominal cavities displays nearly all of the internal organs, so that this tiny figure seems to bear the brunt of the anatomical excavations performed throughout the book. The dispassionate directness and unsparing specificity of the image emphasizes the anatomist’s practical tools and props, but far from depersonalizing the scene, this approach, which makes the figure appear even smaller and more vulnerable, elicits a powerful response in the viewer and—one senses—must have done so in Laresse, too. As Paule Dumaître writes: “Il dessine exactement ce qu’il a sous ses yeux, mais quelque chose de son art, malgré lui, vient voler l’atroce réalité, il donne une âme à ce qui n’a plus une âme.”¹⁵

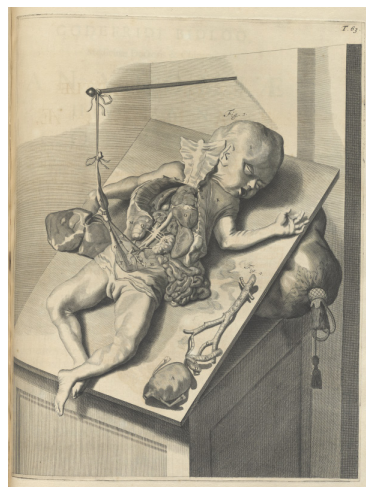


Figure 12. *An Anatomized Female Infant*. Plate 63 from *Anatomia Humani Corporus* (fig. 1) (artwork in the public domain)

This notion of a soulless cadaver being given a soul by an artist instinctively turning away from the grim reality of death raises an important question about Lairese's illustrations, which modern scholars have come to see as the product of a new Cartesian way of defining the body as a mechanical machine distinctly separated from the soul or spirit.¹⁶ Descartes's philosophical position, formulated during his residence (1628–49) in the Dutch Republic and published in 1637 in *Discourse on Method*, had profound consequences for developments in anatomical illustration. Lairese's illustrations, with their emphasis on the internal systems and workings of the body isolated from the whole, clearly belong to this new world. And yet, probably because the artist was not a scientific illustrator but a painter accustomed to using the body to evoke story and emotion, his anatomical studies often express subtle allusions to or reminders of the animating spirit of the living body (*une âme à ce qui n'a plus une âme*) even in images that most strongly objectify its materiality in death.

As these widely varied examples illustrate, Lairese's goal in his illustrations was neither to produce scientific diagrams, which are clear but fundamentally static maps of the body, nor to animate his cadavers with movement as Andreas Vesalius had done in his venerated treatise of 1543, in which skeletons and skinless models come eerily and incongruously to life, posing and gesturing within landscape settings.¹⁷ In Lairese's and Bidloo's *Anatomia* the dead remain manifestly dead, so that their lifeless state can convincingly present them as specimens on the operating table of the unseen anatomist. As one leafs slowly through these pages, examining the largest and most recognizable sections of the body or its smallest and most fractured parts, the illustrations begin to impress the viewer as the product of multiple levels of creation: foremost, to any seventeenth-century viewer, they would have been understood as representations of the work of the Creator responsible for devising the infinitely lovely and complex machinery of the body. For us today, the creative process most noticed and admired is found in the artist's powerful formal arrangements and the handling of line and tone that interpret each subject and give it visual eloquence. But always between the two is the anatomist himself, whose knowledge and sure hands performed the gestures, even before Lairese made his drawings, that could bring those inner mysteries to sight. It is not surprising that hands were given close attention in the treatise, placed in angled positions and propped and pegged as if capable of movement, to display the muscles, tendons, and bones that permit the delicate maneuvers required by artist and anatomist alike (figs. 13 and 14).



Figure 13. *Dissection of the Tendons of the Hand*. Plate 70 from *Anatomia Humani Corporis* (fig. 1) (artwork in the public domain)

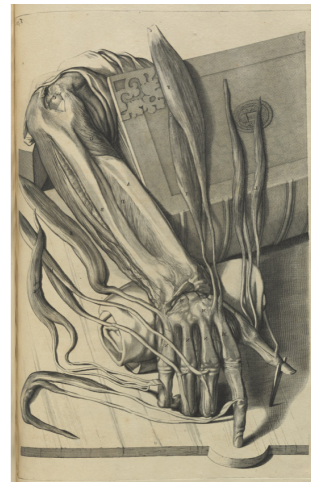


Figure 14. *Dissection of the Muscles of the Hand*. Plate 71 from *Anatomia Humani Corporis* (fig. 1) (artwork in the public domain)

At the end of the final printed page of the *Anatomia Humani Corporis*, Bidloo addresses his readers directly, bidding them farewell at the close of the journey of exploration they have taken together. His language reveals his wonder at the complexity and beauty of the human body, while the ambitious size and scope of the volume itself and the author's choice of illustrator suggest how much he hoped his work would live on, at least in the earthly realm.¹⁸

Goodbye, my reader, go on hoping with me that after that marvelous edifice (the body) and its earthen mouth (the voice) are gone, the soul will reach the everlasting House of The Creator, Most Excellent and Great, whose glory is endless throughout eternity.¹⁹

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Alison Kettering and I have shared not only an interest in Dutch art but also the joyful yet demanding mission of teaching bright, eager undergraduates. Such encounters can encourage ventures far beyond one's instructional comfort zone, allowing a professor to take a course even as she teaches it. These reflections—the product of a recent undergraduate seminar at Vassar called “Art and Science in the Age of Vermeer”—are offered in tribute to all that I've learned from Alison's deep and widely ranging intellectual explorations.

Susan Donahue Kuretsky, Professor of Art on the Sarah Gibson Blanding Chair at Vassar College, received her AB from Vassar and an MA and PhD from Harvard. Recent publications include diverse articles on Rembrandt and printmaking in the seventeenth century and the 2005 exhibition catalogue Time and Transformation in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art (Poughkeepsie, Sarasota, Louisville). She has also published a monograph on the Dutch genre painter Jacob Ochtervelt and coauthored the catalogue of Dutch paintings in the Detroit Institute of Arts.

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¹ My thanks to Ronald Patkus, Curator of Special Collections at Vassar College, for his enthusiastic response to my suggestion that the library acquire this important book. A volume in top condition from the original 1685 edition was purchased in 2011 as the library's "Millionth Book" to mark Vassar's Sesquicentennial. The entire volume, from which the illustrations for this article are taken, may be accessed at <http://digitallibrary.vassar.edu/fedora/repository/>

²In the context of this discussion, a curious aspect of Lairese's appearance deserves mention. He was apparently a person of great personal charm, even something of a lady's man, but his face (recorded in Rembrandt's eerie portrait of 1665 in the Metropolitan Museum of Art) was an anatomical curiosity, even something of a ruin, which, according to Arnold Houbraken, horrified those who met him for the first time. The cause of his sunken saddle nose, pallid skin, and protruding forehead and jaw would not be diagnosed until the late nineteenth century: congenital syphilis, which can also produce corneal clouding, perhaps the ultimate cause of the blindness that afflicted Lairese by 1690, forcing him to abandon painting and begin a second career as a lecturer on art theory. See Horton A. Johnson, "Gerard de Lairese: Genius among the Treponemes," *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 97 (June 2004): 301–3.

³The album of Lairese's wash drawings for this project is preserved in the Bibliothèque de l'Ancienne Faculté de Médecine in Paris and is thoroughly discussed in Paule Dumaitre, *La Curieuse Destinée des planches anatomiques de Gerard de Lairese, peintre en Holland* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1982). The identity of the printmaker(s) for Bidloo's volume remains uncertain. Abraham Blooteling (1640–1690), who signed the title page with its portrait of Bidloo, may have executed the other plates, but these engravings have also been attributed to Pieter van Gunst (1659–1724). Variations in style suggest that several printmakers may have worked on the project, possibly including Lairese himself, although the 117 known prints he produced between 1662 and 1688 are all etchings.

⁴Lyckle de Vries, *Gerard de Lairese: An Artist between Stage and Studio* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998), 174, refers to Lairese's *Grondlegginge ter Teekenkonst* (Amsterdam: Willem de Coup, 1701), 57, as the source for the artist's mention of van de Gracht. Cf. Jacob van de Gracht, *Anatomie der wtterlicke deelen van het Menschelick Lichaem . . . Bequaem voor Schilders, Beelthouwers, Plaet-snyders, als ook Chirurgiens* (The Hague: published by the author, 1634).

⁵K. D. Robert and J. D. Tomlinson have suggested in *The Fabric of the Body: European Traditions of Anatomical Illustration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 311, that omissions or faults in the Bidloo illustrations may have been caused by the author's inadequate supervision of the artist.

⁶The presence of anatomical materials in artists' studios of this period, such as anatomical prints and diagrams, skeletons, *écorché* models, and casts of antique sculptures of all or parts of the human body, is one of the many areas where seventeenth-century art and science met.

⁷Alain Roy points out that Father Time is a variant of the figure of *Chronos* in Lairese's etched frontispiece for his *Signorum Veterum Icones* of 1671, while *Anatomia* derives from Euterpe, goddess of music, in his *Speelstukken door David Petersen* of 1683. Alain Roy, *Gerard de Lairese 1640–1711* (Paris: Arthena, 1992), 394, 450, 479, pls. G66 and G108.

⁸See Jan C. C. Rupp, "Matters of Life and Death: The Social and Cultural Conditions of the Rise of Anatomical Theaters, with Special Reference to Seventeenth-century Holland," *History of Science* 26, part 3, no. 81 (September 1990) 263–87; and Cynthia Klestinec, "A History of Anatomy Theatres in Sixteenth-Century Padua," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 59 (2004): 375–412.

⁹This abrupt and extreme transition in the *Anatomia* recalls the rhetorical device in Greek tragedy known as *peripeteia*, in which sudden reversal of a situation sets the story and the emotional tenor of the performance on an entirely new track.

¹⁰As Joseph Koerner pointed out in his discussion of the corruptible body in Northern Renaissance art, the Latin verb *cadere* (to fall) is also the root of the word *cadaver*. Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 294.

¹¹Use of the microscope is immediately made clear in the text facing the very first dissection illustration (Plate 4), which depicts multiple details of the skin with its sheer dermal layers and minute underlying glands and follicles ("Figura I. In qua, ope Microscopii, depicta est cuticulae").

¹² Similarly in Plate 52, which illustrates the dissection of the diaphragm and esophageal muscles, a housefly has landed on the striped cloth that masks the lower part of the torso. The insect is a common *vanitas* allusion to death and decay, but here its aliveness makes this ruined fragment of a corpse seem even more dead.

¹³ This observation about Lairesse's comparison and contrast between the drapery and the sheets of flesh hanging from the body of the cadaver was explored in a seminar paper on the *Anatomia* written in 2011 by Sierra Starr (Vassar 2011), a double major in biology and studio art.

¹⁴ Mimi Cazort, Monique Kornell, and K. B. Roberts, *The Ingenious Machine of Nature: Four Centuries of Art and Anatomy* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1996), 186.

¹⁵ "He drew exactly what he saw under his eyes, but something in his art made him flee, despite himself, the awful reality and give a soul to that which no longer has a soul." Dumaitre, *La Curieuse Destinée*, 23.

¹⁶ Raphael Cuir, *The Development of the Study of Anatomy from the Renaissance to Cartesianism: DaCarpi, Vesalius, Estienne, Bidloo* (Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Melen Press, 2009), 156–79.

¹⁷ In two of the last illustrations in the treatise, however, Bidloo and Lairesse made a deliberate bow to Vesalius. Plates 87 and 88 depict animated skeletons (of dubious anatomical accuracy), gesturing dramatically toward the tombs beside them. Andreas Vesalius's *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*, published in Basel in 1543, can be studied in a modern illustrated translation by J. B. deC. M. Saunders and Charles D. O'Malley, *The Illustrations from the Works of Andreas Vesalius of Brussels* (New York: Dover, 1973).

¹⁸ Bidloo's book has indeed lived on, but ironically it was too large and expensive to sell widely to general readers, and its illustrations and texts were not considered complete or accurate enough to be suitable for scientific use. When the English anatomist William Cowper purchased the plates from Bidloo's publishers and reissued the volume with expanded texts under his own name—never mentioning Bidloo or Lairesse—one of the greatest plagiarism scandals of all time erupted. William Cowper, *The Anatomy of Humane Bodies* (Oxford: Sam Smith and Benjamin Walford, 1698).

¹⁹ "Vale, Lector, mecumque sperare perge, ut destructo mirifico atque terreo bocce aedificio, aeternam adipiscatur anima domum a Creatore Optimo Maximo, cujus gloriae, in nulle saecula fit finis." My thanks to Dr. Lily Beck for a translation that catches the subtleties of Bidloo's text.

BEYOND MATTHEW 19: THE WOMAN AT CHRIST'S FEET IN REMBRANDT'S *HUNDRED GUILDER PRINT*

Paul Crenshaw

This study proposes that our understanding of Rembrandt's *Hundred Guilder Print* has been limited by seeing it exclusively as illustrating the narrative vignettes related in the gospel passage of Matthew 19. Rather than being inspired only by this single textual source—as undeniably rich as it is—Rembrandt drew broadly on other representations, both biblical and nonscriptural, as visual inspiration for various figures and the overall compositional devices in the print. In particular, the reclining figure reaching up to touch the hem of Christ's cloak is identified as the woman with the issue of blood, found elsewhere in the gospel passages. As a small portion of a larger study, the identification serves to point to a wider understanding of the print as a path to salvation through faith, and a mode of art production and viewing that is associative rather than merely illustrative.

The persistence of the nickname of Rembrandt's *Hundred Guilder Print* is remarkable. In large part this is due to the “shock factor” of a high price tag, and even though in the absence of comparative prices or costs of living, the worth of a hundred guilders in Rembrandt's time is relatively unclear to most people today, it nonetheless seems like a lot of money. Thus the price/title bond acts as a powerful carrier of value. Unfortunately, it is not a designation that promotes any discernment or understanding of the events depicted in the scene, as is traditionally expected of most titles of works of art. When the print is given a more formal title in the modern contexts of museum exhibitions and scholarly publications, it is often called *Christ Preaching* or *Christ Healing the Sick*, or some close variant. This type of abbreviated title seems to have been common from the beginning of the print's renown. The conundrum of articulating the subject in the context of the incredible price was apparent already in the first written mention of the print, a letter dated June 9, 1654, from Joannes Myssens, a print dealer in Antwerp, to Karel van den Bosch, the bishop of Bruges. Myssens informed his client of the availability of “the rarest of prints produced by Rembrandt showing Christ healing the lepers,” before going on to indicate how much it was selling for in Amsterdam.¹

While titles that emphasize either the preaching or the healing have the advantage of being succinct, just about every modern mention of the print invariably exposes the inadequacy of such a label, because there is so much more going on. Scholars have long known that the depicted scene takes its cues from chapter 19 of the Gospel according to Matthew. In fact, this textual source was clearly recognized by Rembrandt's contemporary Hendrick F. Waterloos in a poem, which is inscribed beneath an impression in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (fig. 1). The first two quatrains of Waterloos's poem demonstrate that Rembrandt illustrated several passages directly from Matthew 19, including details such as the healing of the sick, the blessing of the children, the young man who goes away sorrowful because he cannot follow Christ's command to give away all that he owns, and the debates with the Pharisees.²



Figure 1. Rembrandt, *The Hundred Guilder Print*, ca. 1648, etching. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale (artwork in the public domain)

However, this overriding emphasis on Matthew 19 has had the effect of circumscribing scholarly interpretation and understanding of the print.³ It has largely been interpreted as a combinative illustration of various vignettes told within this one gospel chapter. This study begins to expand that overly simple illustrative model in an effort to suggest multiple forms of inspiration on Rembrandt's part, and to demonstrate that the production of the print presupposed a collecting milieu capable of a sophisticated form of viewing that is based on the principle of forming associations rather than passively accepting seemingly direct connections. Among many examples of sources for Rembrandt that emerged from beyond Matthew 19, one figure in particular, the reclining woman at Christ's feet, will be identified as the woman with the issue of blood who touched Christ's cloak and was subsequently healed. Recognizing her in this way points toward the larger theme of salvation through faith that is inherent in Matthew 19 but has heretofore not been fully examined.

The expansiveness of the subject matter in *The Hundred Guilder Print* is easily demonstrated on a broad scale by looking at Rembrandt's visual sources. While the opening two lines of Matthew 19 relate that crowds followed Christ into Judea and he healed them there, the text clearly lacks enough specificity to have led Rembrandt to the variety of people that he shows seeking Christ's aid. In many instances Rembrandt looked beyond biblical references altogether to the tradition of beggar imagery. For example, the person being carried in a wheelbarrow in a print by the Housebook Master (fig. 2) or the couple supporting each other in Cornelis Massys's *Lame Beggar Leading a Woman with a Cane to the Right* (fig. 3), both resemble figures in the crowd in the right half of Rembrandt's print. Rembrandt could also have looked to beggars within biblical subject matter. The man with paralyzed legs in Albrecht Dürer's *Peter and John at the Gate* (fig. 4) bears a resemblance to a foreground figure in *The Hundred Guilder Print*, to cite just one example. It is not necessary to find one-to-one correspondences, per se, because such scenes are ubiquitous in the visual tradition.



Figure 2. The Housebook Master, *A Beggar Carrying His Wife in a Wheelbarrow*, engraving. London, The Warburg Institute (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 3. Cornelis Massys, *Lame Beggar Leading a Woman with a Cane to the Right*, engraving. Munich, Staatliche Graphische Sammlung (artwork in the public domain).



Figure 4. Albrecht Dürer, *Peter and John at the Gate*, 1513, engraving. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts (artwork in the public domain)

When one begins looking for poses and costumes similar to those of the cluster of women closest to Christ, it is clear that Rembrandt was looking at printed images of various subjects of Christ healing, where one sees over and over again women in turbans, kneeling in prayer at his feet. For example, the supplicant woman in *Christ Healing the Daughter of Jarius* (fig. 5), an engraving by Nicolas Beatrizet, after Girolamo Muziano, is quite similar in pose and placement to the kneeling, praying woman in the center foreground of Rembrandt's print. Moreover, images of Christ and the apostles performing miracles of healing provide precedents for several aspects of Rembrandt's print that, seen in isolation, have always seemed so original. Christ offering a multivalent gesture and the combination of multiple scenes into one can be found in *Christ Healing Various Sick Persons* by an anonymous German woodcutter of the late fifteenth century (fig. 6), and Rembrandt's central positioning of the figures and the overall balance of the composition, again with multiple narrative moments woven seamlessly into a single vignette, can be seen in Philips Galle's engraving after Maerten van Heemskerck, *The Apostles Healing the Sick and Driving Out Unclean Spirits* (fig. 7). The most direct precedent for Rembrandt's balanced composition, with its transition of light and shadow, and the overarching theme of health and sickness in a large-format horizontal print was surely Marcantonio Raimondi's engraving after Raphael known as *The Plague* (fig. 8).



Figure 5. Nicolas Beatrizet, after Girolamo Muziano, *Christ Healing the Daughter of Jarius*, ca. 1587, engraving. Leiden, Museum de Lakenhal (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 6. Anonymous (German), *Christ Healing Various Sick Persons*, 15th century (modern impression from 15th-century wood block). Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 7. Philips Galle, after Maerten van Heemskerck, *The Apostles Healing the Sick and Driving Out Unclean Spirits*, engraving. Vienna, Albertina (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 8. Marcantonio Raimondi, after Raphael, *The Plague*, engraving. Vienna, Albertina (artwork in the public domain)

We have a record that, on at least one occasion, Rembrandt exchanged an impression of *The Hundred Guilder Print* for an impression of Raphael's masterpiece. This is evidenced by the inscription by Jan Pietersz Zomer, on the verso of an impression in the Amsterdam Rijksprentencabinet, in which he acknowledged a trade of these two prints and called Rembrandt "mijn speciale vriendt (my special friend)." As I have pointed out elsewhere, this was a thoughtful exchange, and even though it must have happened at a later point in Rembrandt's life, it surely points to *The Plague* as part of Rembrandt's inspiration in making his etching, since the two works are so closely related thematically and compositionally. The centrally placed principal figure of Terminus in *The Plague* matches the placement of Christ in *The Hundred Guilder Print* as a transitional marker from one life to another, pointing to a theme of judgment that is prompted by, but ultimately moves beyond, Matthew 19. Whereas Raphael depicted an ancient plague, Rembrandt depicted Christian healing and—I suggest—Christian salvation.⁴

One figure in particular in Rembrandt's print points to Marcantonio's print as a visual source and a theme of faith-healing and salvation that is not directly related to Matthew 19: the reclining woman at Christ's feet who reaches her right hand up toward him (fig. 9). A similar recumbent figure rests in the lower right of *The Plague*, but her placement and function in Rembrandt's print is markedly different. To my knowledge no art historian has ever before noted the manner in which the woman in Rembrandt's scene reaches up just so, in order to touch the tip of her finger to the hem of Christ's cloak.⁵ This is not merely a compositional device, but a gesture that points to the theme of Christ as a healer through faith and indeed identifies this woman in a particular way: she is the woman with the issue of blood.



Figure 9. Rembrandt, *The Hundred Guilder Print*, ca. 1648, etching (detail). Amsterdam, Rijksprentencabinet (artwork in the public domain)

There are many people in the gospels who are healed through faith, and some episodes, while not depicting the woman with the issue of blood, were represented in a manner that comes very close to Rembrandt's depiction of this woman. Johan I Sadeler engraved a composition after a drawing by Marten de Vos depicting the healing of the paralytic at Capernaum (Matthew 9:1–8, Mark 2:1–12, and Luke 5:17–26), with an old man on a bier being lowered from the roof into Christ's presence (fig. 10). He does not reach up to Christ, but rather Christ points down to touch the incapacitated man, declaring after seeing the faith of his companions that the man's sins are forgiven. The woman in Rembrandt's print is differentiated from depictions of other healing miracles by her astounding gesture of touching Christ. It is not the same as the intimacy of embracing him or washing his feet, as one might see in imagery of the Virgin Mary, the Magdalen, or even Christ in the house of Mary and Martha. This is a stranger in a crowd who dares to touch his cloak.



Figure 10. Johan I Sadeler, after Marten de Vos, *The Healing of the Paralytic at Capernaum*, ca. 1587, engraving. Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst (artwork in the public domain)

The story of the woman with the issue of blood is found in Matthew 9:18–26, Mark 5:21–43, and Luke 8:40–56. On the road to the house of Jarius, where Christ would also perform a miracle (see above, fig. 5), a woman who had suffered twelve years with an issue of blood heard about Jesus, then came up to him from behind and touched his cloak. “If I may touch but his garment,” she said, “I shall be whole.” Christ felt a power leave him as the woman was healed, though at first he did not know who had touched him. When the woman fell at his feet and confessed, Christ said to her “Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole.” The episode has a rich theological tradition. It has usually been the interpretation that the woman’s problem was related to menstruation, in Jewish law a state of uncleanness. The fact that she had boldly touched Christ, yet he not only forgave her but also healed her was a primary justification for allowing women into Christian churches even during times of menstruation. This contrasted starkly with Jewish dictates that saw menstruating women as impure, their blood competing with the holy blood of animal sacrifice, and barred them from entering the sacred region of the Temple in Jerusalem. Despite some tensions, authorities usually confirmed that Christian women were allowed not only to enter the church but also to continue to take the Eucharist during their periods, with no competition recognized between their blood and the sacrificial blood of Christ.⁶ Thus the subject entered the visual tradition very early in the Christian era, as seen in a sarcophagus from the Vatican Necropolis (fig. 11).

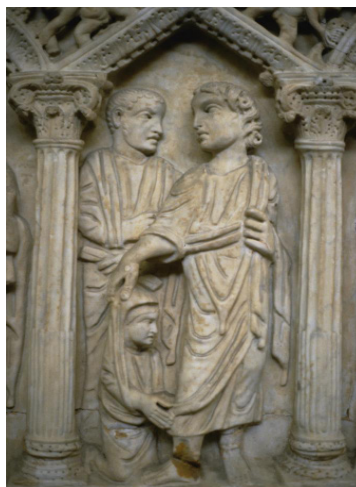


Figure 11. Anonymous (early Christian), *Sarcophagus, detail of The Woman with the Issue of Blood*, ca. 5th century CE. The Vatican, Museo Pio Cristiano (artwork in the public domain)

Significantly, the woman in Rembrandt's representation is not identified by her blood issue, which would have been not only difficult to represent (especially if it was menstrual blood) but also potentially confusing in relation to the iconography of Christ's blood and its central Eucharistic importance. Throughout the visual tradition up to the early modern period, the episode of the woman with the issue of blood is almost invariably "cleaned up" in the same way. Never was she identified by any indication of blood, but rather by her act of kneeling down and touching Christ's cloak, as in Hans Sebald Beham's *Christ Healing the Woman with the Issue of Blood* (fig. 12).



Figure 12. Sebald Beham, *Christ Healing the Woman with the Issue of Blood*, 1530, woodcut. London, British Museum (artwork in the public domain)

Rembrandt, contrary to the entire prior visual tradition, actually did attempt to identify her by the issuance of blood, at least initially. Many preparatory drawings are known for *The Hundred Guilder Print*, and three include or focus exclusively on this figure (Benesch 183, 188, and 388). It is difficult to be certain of the chronology of the drawings, but I believe the sheet in Amsterdam (Ben. 188) was the initial study, followed by Benesch 388 (in a private collection) and the sheet in Berlin (Ben. 183).⁷ The Amsterdam drawing (fig. 13) in particular gives an indication of Rembrandt's deliberations on this figure. It shows two full versions of the figure and additional redrawing of a hand and boot. Her head is rendered again on the verso. It seems clear that the full figure on the left precedes the one on the right, as the latter comes closer to the final pose of the woman in the print. Two elements of change are interesting. The first and most obvious is the position of the hands. The woman's left hand in the drawing (her right in the print) is changed from being pointed down to reaching up. Christ is not depicted in this rendering, but it is clear that at this point the intention of her reaching toward the bottom of Christ's cloak has occurred to Rembrandt. Benesch 388 (fig. 14) shows the woman reclined more diagonally in accordance with the final print, but here Rembrandt has tried to give her a supplicant pose, with both hands raised in prayer. He seems to have discarded this idea, and incorporated the praying hands into the poses of the woman whose back is turned to us and the old woman who hovers above her, casting a shadow of her hands onto Christ's tunic. By the time the Berlin drawing was made (Benesch 188, fig. 15), Rembrandt had more or less settled on the composition of the reclining woman and was working on the nuances of the group around her. The rendering on the copperplate may have been already underway by the time the Berlin drawing was carried out.



Figure 13. Rembrandt, *Study for a Woman in the Hundred Guilder Print*, ca. 1648, pen and ink with white heightening. Amsterdam, Rijksprentencabinet (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 14. Rembrandt, *Study for a Woman in the Hundred Guilder Print*, ca. 1648, pen and brown ink. Private collection (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 15. Rembrandt, *Study for a Woman in the Hundred Guilder Print*, ca. 1648, pen and brown ink. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett (artwork in the public domain)

Returning to the Amsterdam drawing (fig. 13), the woman's right hand is basically the same in both full figures and in the detail, but the position of the leg has changed. In the left rendering it is more bent at the knee and upright, and the hand is reaching toward the boot. In the right figure the leg is more outstretched and the hand merely rests beside the leg. All show a bare knee and contrast one booted foot with one bare (as does Benesch 388). In the Berlin sheet and in the print both of the woman's feet are bare. In the initial stages of rendering this figure, then, it appears that Rembrandt conveyed a greater state of dishevelment. That bedraggled appearance extends to her ample—possibly bared—breasts in the left figure of the Amsterdam sheet. But that is not all. In this initial sketch her skirt is hiked up over her knee, and while her pudendum is shaded and obscured by another pentimento of the hand, it is nonetheless clearly indicated. Her revealed body is the key detail for her identification. There is no other reason for her sexuality to be exposed in this manner within such a context; it can only be a sign of her particular distress—an inability to stop the flow of her menses. In her final appearance in *The Hundred Guilder Print*, Rembrandt, like every other artist who rendered the woman with the issue of blood before him, chose a more discreet handling and identified her by the gesture of touching Christ's cloak, rather than by her flow of blood. In the print, her hand extends up and backward slightly in space, and her fingers come to rest exactly parallel with Christ's hem at the protrusion of his toe. This gesture is a sign of her faith, her boldness, and ultimately her good fortune, that she will be counted among the healed and the saved.

By recognizing elements from the visual tradition and textual sources beyond Matthew 19, this study points to a mode of production and reception that is referential rather than merely illustrative. Indeed, it suggests larger themes that are alluded to in Matthew 19 itself, but become apparent and take on prominence only through exegesis, by constructing a more comprehensive picture culled from multiple reference points in diverse passages of the Bible and compiled from their attendant visual traditions. In the expanded form of this study, it will be shown that this multi-faceted form of production and associative manner of viewing is analogous to the exegetical form of reading expected in the production of the official Calvinist States Bible, and the path to salvation through faith will be demonstrated as the main theme of Rembrandt's print.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Alison Kettering I owe a special debt, worth far more than a hundred guilders. Without her guidance, which began at Carleton College and has continued steadily to the present, I would not have ventured into art history, nor come to appreciate the subtleties of Dutch art and the work of Rembrandt in particular. She also introduced me to gender studies as an integral aspect of art history. Lastly, she taught me to think with great breadth and even greater precision.

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¹Erik Hinterding, Ger Luijten, and Martin Royalton-Kisch, *Rembrandt the Printmaker* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 255. Curiously, the letter was originally published in 1880 but was overlooked by Rembrandt scholars for 120 years.

²Gary Schwartz, *The Rembrandt Book* (New York: Abrams, 2006), 325–27, was mainly interested in Waterloo's third quatrain, which is clearly anti-Semitic. In a forthcoming study I will suggest that the fourth quatrain is directly related to the central theme of the print: divine judgment. For an additional discussion of the relationship between Waterloo's poem and Matthew 19, see Shelley Perlove and Larry Silver, *Rembrandt's Faith: Church and Temple in the Dutch Golden Age* (University Park, Pa.: Penn State University Press, 2009), 272–74.

³Schwartz, *The Rembrandt Book*, is the only scholar to my knowledge who has suggested that thematic elements of the print extend beyond Matthew 19.

⁴I will explore this idea in greater depth in a forthcoming study in a chapter titled "Value and Judgment in Rembrandt's Hundred Guilder Print" in my book *Calumny: Four Judgments in Rembrandt's Art*, under contract with Amsterdam University Press.

⁵Interestingly, when I first discussed this project with Father Brian Shanley, O.P., president of Providence College, his immediate response upon seeing the print was to ask, "Is she touching his cloak?" This reinforced for me the profound theological significance of her gesture.

⁶See Joan R. Branham, "Bloody Women and Bloody Spaces; Menses and the Eucharist in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages," *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* 30, no. 4 (Spring 2002): 15–22.

⁷I thank Jan Leja for sharing an unpublished catalogue entry on Benesch 388. Benesch did not group this sheet among the other studies for the *Hundred Guilder Print*.

REMBRANDT'S "LITTLE SWIMMERS" IN CONTEXT

Stephanie S. Dickey

In an etching of 1651, Rembrandt depicts a group of men swimming in a forest glade. His treatment of the theme is unconventional not only in the starkly unidealized rendering of the figures but also in their mood of pensive isolation. This essay situates Rembrandt's etching within a surprisingly complex visual tradition, revealing associations with social class, masculinity, and the struggle of man against nature. Artists who contributed to this tradition included Italian and Northern masters represented in Rembrandt's print collection as well as contemporaries active in his own circle.

For the festschrift in 2011 honoring our distinguished colleague Eric Jan Sluijter, Alison Kettering contributed an insightful essay on representations of the male nude by Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669).¹ Rembrandt's female nudes have attracted critical notice since his own time,² but much less attention has been paid to depictions of the male body either in his work or in Dutch art more generally. As co-editor of the Sluijter festschrift, I had the pleasure of discussing this topic with Alison, and of puzzling together over a small etching completed by Rembrandt in 1651 (fig. 1). Modern cataloguers usually entitle it *The Bathers*, the title I will retain here, but its nickname among seventeenth-century collectors was *De zwemmetjes*, or "The Little Swimmers." Significantly, this title is first recorded in the estate inventory of the print-seller Clement de Jonghe, whose portrait Rembrandt etched in 1651, the same year as *The Bathers*.³ Rembrandt produced only a single state of the plate, but watermark evidence indicates that he reprinted it several times, occasionally (as in fig. 1) using the oriental paper he reserved for special impressions.⁴ The loose, sketchy handling of the figures and their surroundings led early cataloguers such as Gersaint and Daulby to describe the print as "lightly" or "slightly" etched.⁵ More recently, it has been suggested that Rembrandt may have captured the motif outdoors by sketching directly onto the copperplate. Descriptions of the scene as "sundrenched" imply a rationale for the open line work, but seem incongruous with the wooded setting and with the pensive mood conveyed by the hunched and isolated figures. Charles Blanc (1859) observed that one appears to be shivering.⁶

The Bathers is one of the most enigmatic etchings in Rembrandt's oeuvre, difficult to reconcile either with his academic figure studies of the 1640s or with the pleasant, pastoral themes its bucolic setting might suggest. As Kettering wrote, Rembrandt here "chose human expressiveness over observation of actual bodies" and "claimed, once again, a legitimate place for the crude and ungainly in art."⁷ She rightly observes that Rembrandt's treatment of the theme is unexpected, but the motif of male bathers turns out to be surprisingly common among his contemporaries. The present article explores this pictorial tradition in order to contextualize Rembrandt's etching and to build on Kettering's important contribution to the still-scarce literature on the male nude in Dutch art.



Figure 1. Rembrandt, *The Bathers*, 1651, etching printed with plate tone on oriental paper, 109 x 135 mm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, Rijksprentenkabinet, inv. no. RP-P-OPB-253 (artwork in the public domain)

What prompted Rembrandt, in 1651, to take up this theme? One possibility is that he found stimulating examples in his extensive collection of prints and drawings. Rembrandt's works, especially his etchings, are replete with evidence that he carefully studied prints by predecessors and contemporaries such as Dürer, Mantegna, Lucas van Leyden, and Jacques Callot.⁸ The inventory recorded at the time of his bankruptcy in 1656 contains no specific reference to bathers, but he owned prints by a number of artists who addressed this motif.

Rembrandt's incisive naturalism has been interpreted as a polemical statement against the academic tradition, yet his acquisitions as a collector suggest that he admired the work of artists, from Raphael to Guido Reni, who today are associated with the classical ideal. One of these artists, as I have discussed elsewhere, was Annibale Carracci (1560–1609).⁹ Etchings by the Bolognese master may have inspired several of Rembrandt's prints, including the sensual *Jupiter and Antiope* of 1659.¹⁰ By then, Rembrandt must have had to rely on memories of the art collection he had forfeited to satisfy his creditors in 1656. However, there is evidence that he resumed collecting as soon as he was able and that he retained a taste for Italian works on paper. On December 6, 1663, Constantijn Huygens the Younger (whose father had been one of Rembrandt's earliest supporters) wrote to his brother Christiaan asking him to visit the French collector and art dealer Everard Jabach in Paris. Constantijn wanted to find out how a landscape by Annibale in Jabach's collection "with a lot of water and small figures bathing" was related to a similar sheet in Rembrandt's collection.¹¹ The composition may be recorded in a drawing last catalogued in an English private collection in 1963 (fig. 2).¹² It seems unlikely that Rembrandt already owned this drawing by 1651 when he etched *The Bathers* and somehow managed to retain it after his bankruptcy. Nevertheless, the document shows that images of this theme were familiar in his milieu.

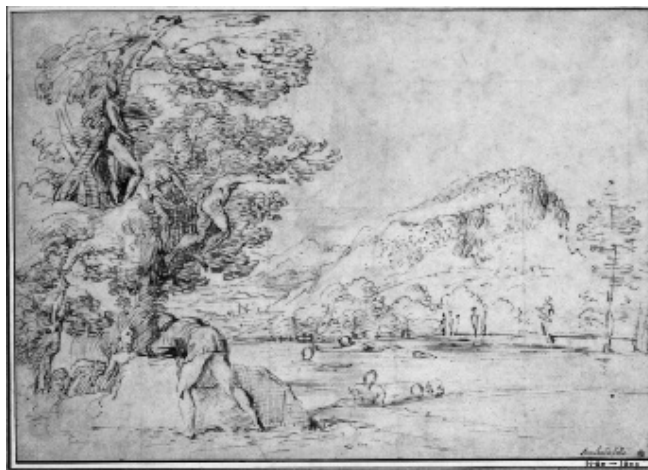


Figure 2. Annibale Carracci, *Landscape with Swimmers*, ca. 1590–1605, pen and brown ink, on laid paper, 200 x 288 mm. Current whereabouts unknown (artwork in the public domain)

Like Rembrandt and others in his circle (including the Huygens brothers), the Carracci drew outdoors from nature, and Annibale may also have recorded his swimmers from life. Yet, the subject of male bathers already had a long pictorial history. In fifteenth- and sixteenth-century paintings and prints, groups of male bathers can be found as secondary motifs in a range of subjects. Well-known Italian antecedents include several prints depicting figures from the lost cartoon for *The Battle of Cascina* by Michelangelo (1475–1564). Here we see a group of swimming soldiers who have been summoned to battle and are hastily pulling on their clothes (fig. 3). Given the international trade in prints, these images must have circulated in the Netherlands as well. Meanwhile, more familiar themes such as the Baptism of Christ were common both in Italy and the North; male bathers figure prominently in several versions by Jan van Scorel (1495–1562, fig. 4). Among Northern graphic antecedents, *The Men's Bathhouse* by Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) is perhaps the most famous and enigmatic example (fig. 5). The sexual suggestiveness of Dürer's image has led to associations with homoerotic desire. This is a recurring feature in modern interpretations of scenes in which male figures consort in the nude, especially those where no corresponding female figures are present. Artists from Dürer to Michiel Sweerts and Thomas Eakins to Paul Cezanne have not escaped the suggestion that their own proclivities are reflected in such imagery.¹³ Apart from nudity itself, common triggers for such an interpretation include erotically charged communication by touch or glance between figures and tactile description of the body that enhances its sensuous appeal. None of these features are present in Rembrandt's image: the figures are separated, even

self-absorbed, and the sketchy rendering of their unidealized bodies is more denotative than descriptive or appealing. Yet, this print shares with Dürer's a mood of dark humor that suggests deeper implications.



Figure 3. Anonymous engraver after Agostino Veneziano (after Michelangelo), "The Climbers," Figure Group Taken from Michelangelo's Battle of Cascina, engraving on laid paper, 1524, 324 x 434 mm. London, British Museum, inv. no. 1890,0415.6 (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 4. Jan van Scorel, *Baptism of Christ in the Jordan River*, ca. 1530, oil on panel, 120.5 x 156.5 cm. Haarlem, Frans Hals Museum, inv. no. I-312 (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 5. Albrecht Dürer, *The Men's Bathhouse*, 1496/97, woodcut on cream laid paper, 392 x 283 mm. Art Institute of Chicago, The Amanda S. Johnson and Marion J. Livingston Fund, inv. no. 2009.133 (artwork in the public domain)

Although the term "bather" has become ubiquitous, a distinction can in some cases be made between the hygienic act of bathing and the sport of swimming. The more common term, bathing, references a broad set of conventions for depicting the nude body in proximity to water. So-called bathers are rarely shown actually cleaning themselves. More often they are soaking in the water, disrobing, or simply in repose. In Northern as well as Italian tradition, venerable subjects such as Diana and her nymphs and the Fountain of Youth offered justification for depictions of bathers both male and female. However, neither Annibale's sketch nor Rembrandt's etching lends itself to these elevating associations. Instead, they appear to depict unguarded moments of physical recreation. Annibale's figures are explicitly engaged in swimming. Some figures are visible only as heads bobbing in the water, but one leans forward in a crawl stroke. Rembrandt's figures might more accurately be described as "recently having swum": one man in the foreground is climbing out of the water onto the riverbank, while another at far right reaches for his clothes. It is possible that they have been washing themselves outdoors, but contemporaries who referred to this print as *De zwemmetjes* understood swimming to be their activity. Either way, the print can be situated within an established tradition of genre and landscape imagery.

Michelangelo's figural group came to be appreciated more as a study in the mastery of complex poses than for its specific content, yet his soldiers are the descendants of a chivalric tradition in which swimming was one of the skills required of a well-trained knight. In this context, swimming can suggest action, bravery, and physical prowess as well as leisure. By the seventeenth century, swimming was becoming popular as a form of recreation and exercise. A number of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century instructional manuals describe strokes, such as the crawl, that are similar to those still in use today.¹⁴ For obvious reasons of decorum, swimming in public view was primarily a masculine pastime. This is one practical reason why groups of bathers depicted in genre or landscape painting are most often male.

A tradition in printmaking depicting activities associated with the months or seasons of the year came to feature swimming or bathing as a pleasure afforded by the warming weather of spring or summer. Quite often, the setting is urban, as in several etchings by Jacques Callot (1592–1635). The disposition of lively, quickly sketched figures in his study of bathers by the Ponte Vecchio in Florence, etched around 1621, has affinities with both Annibale's drawing and Rembrandt's print (fig. 6).¹⁵ And in a Dutch print from 1650, Herman Saftleven (1609–1685) depicts spring (Ver) as a time when the renewed warmth of sun and water encourages young men to wash away winter's cares along with accumulated grime (fig. 7).¹⁶ This connotation may superficially relate to Rembrandt's etching but seems incongruous with its meditative aspect.

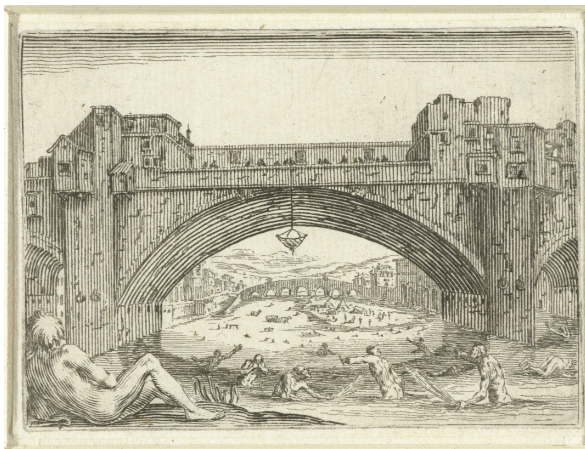


Figure 6. Jacques Callot, *Side View of the Ponte Vecchio in Florence with Men Bathing in the River*, ca. 1621, etching on laid paper, 55 x 77 mm, from *Capricci di varie figure* di Jacopo Callot. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, Rijksprentenkabinet, inv. no. RP-P-OB-21.043 (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 7. Herman Saftleven II, *Ver (Spring)*, 1650, etching on ivory laid paper, 133 x 134 mm. Art Institute of Chicago, The Wallace L. DeWolf and Joseph Brooks Fair Collections, inv. no. 1920.2415 (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 8. Pieter van Laer, *Roman Country Life*, after 1626, oil on oak panel, 55.9 x 84.3 cm. Bremen, Kunsthalle, Bequest of Johann Heinrich Albers 1856, inv. no. 69-1856/99 (artwork in the public domain)

The motif of male bathers in a contemporary setting seems first to have appeared in Dutch paintings by Pieter van Laer (1599–ca. 1642) around 1640. In a painting now in Bremen, a group of workmen have stripped to bathe near a ford, in full view of a shepherd and two travelers watching from a bridge (fig. 8).¹⁷ As in Saftleven’s etching, where men not only bathe but also urinate in public view, there is a distinctly indecorous and even lower-class character to the figures caught exposing themselves in this way. The tiny standing figure in the background of Rembrandt’s etching also seems to be “making water”). Van Laer’s bathers appear to attract ridicule from the bystanders on the bridge. Rembrandt affords his swimmers a measure of privacy by placing them in a secluded, sylvan location. Yet, the association with plebian activity may go some way toward explaining their lumpen physiques and bent postures.

In the second half of the century, male bathers became common in landscape paintings by a variety of Dutch artists. Perhaps most curious is a painting by Gabriel Metsu (1629–1667), in which the artist portrays himself as a nude hunter resting by a riverbank.¹⁸ An intriguing example that can be placed in Rembrandt’s orbit is *Landscape with the Ruins of Huis Kostverloren* (fig. 9), painted around 1660 by Jacob van Ruisdael (1628/9–1682). The picturesque castle a few miles south of Amsterdam, nicknamed *Kostverloren* (“money lost”) as early as 1525 for its continual drain on the owner’s resources, was a favorite motif for local artists, including Rembrandt, who sketched the site at least six times. Some of Rembrandt’s drawings focus on the building, while others record the surrounding terrain along the river Amstel, but none are populated with figures.¹⁹ Van Ruisdael depicts the ruined structure undergoing restoration, indicated by the ladder in the foreground leaning against a fresh coat of plaster. Several figures, possibly workmen, stand beside the tower, while in the lower right, a group of nude men bathes in the river. These, too, may be laborers, seeking respite from their hot, dusty work. In describing the painting, Pieter Biesboer detected a *vanitas* theme in the juxtaposition of these heedlessly playful figures with the crumbling ruins, but Seymour Slive observed that Van Ruisdael’s allusion to the reconstruction of the building suggests “the resuscitation of an identifiable structure, not its inevitable demise.”²⁰ The water where Rembrandt’s *zwemmertjes* take their dip is too generic to be identified with the Amstel, but it is noteworthy that his drawings of *Kostverloren* have been stylistically dated to the early 1650s, around the same time that he etched *The Bathers*.



Figure 9. Jacob van Ruisdael, *Huis Kostverloren on the Amstel*, ca. 1660–64, oil on canvas, 63 x 75.5 cm. Amsterdam Museum, inv. no. SA 38217 (artwork in the public domain)

The motif of male bathers appears in a number of works by artists in Rembrandt’s circle. A painting by Gerbrand van den Eeckhout (1621–1674), possibly dated close to Rembrandt’s etching, situates a group of men resting by a river at the foot of a tall precipice (fig. 10).²¹ Attributes of hunting, the rifle and the hound at right, confirm the association with athletic, masculine leisure. While the gun is a modern accouterment, the dramatic terrain is clearly not Dutch, and the central figure in red wears his cloak like a toga. These features lend an air of timelessness to the scene, recalling Rembrandt’s etching in its sylvan isolation. The figure climbing out of the water at left is especially close to one in the print. A similar motif is picked up in a drawing long considered to be by Rembrandt but recently assigned to Constantin Daniel van Renesse (1626–80, fig. 11),²² in which a single dripping figure dominates the foreground. His weary pose is balanced by more playful action in the background, where one man is jumping out of a boat, while another appears to be climbing back in.



Figure 10. Gerbrand van den Eeckhout, *Landscape with Men Bathing*, ca. 1650–55, oil on panel, 45.5 x 33 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-1612 (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 11. Attributed to Constantin Daniel van Renesse, *Landscape on the Amstel with Bathers*, ca. 1650–60, reed pen and brown ink with brown wash, heightened with white, on laid paper, 146 x 273 cm. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. no. KdZ5212 (Photo: bpc Berlin / Art Resource, NY) (artwork in the public domain)

These works situate Rembrandt's etching within a newly popular landscape convention. Yet none of them share its curiously dour mood. While the best explanation offered so far may be to relate it to the *vanitas* implications suggested for Van Ruisdael's painting, it is instructive to turn again to Carracese sources. A sense of drama, discomfort, and even danger characterizes several early landscape paintings populated with nude male figures from the Carracci circle. In one composition, several men, their muscular physiques and poses borrowed from Michelangelo, are swimming off a boat moored amid mountainous terrain; a clothed female figure gesturing rhetorically in the foreground suggests symbolic intent. A version attributed to Antonio Carracci (ca. 1583–1618) is now in Boston (fig. 12).²³ An even darker and more dramatic theme is the deluge described in the book of Genesis, depicted in 1616 by Antonio Carracci in a fresco for the Quirinal Palace and reprised in a canvas now in the Louvre.²⁴ The theme of struggle against the elements, and specifically the perils of swimming, also recalls the mythological story of Leander crossing the Hellespont to visit his beloved Hero. Significantly, a painting of this subject by Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) created something of a sensation in Rembrandt's milieu; this was more likely the small canvas now in the Yale University Art Gallery than the monumental version in Berlin.²⁵ Rembrandt himself owned the painting from 1637 to 1644, when he sold it for a profit to the art dealer Lodewijk van Ludick. It was later owned by Jan Six's brother Pieter and celebrated in an *ekphrasis* penned by Jan Vos in Jan Six's *album amicorum*, to which Rembrandt also contributed. Rubens's painting also inspired a variant by Joachim von Sandrart (1606–1688), recorded in a print by Renier van Persijn. And in 1651, the year Rembrandt etched *The Bathers*, Vos's poem was published in the anthology *Verscheyde Nederduytsche Gedichten*.²⁶ The dramatic tenor of these scenes far exceeds that of Rembrandt's etching, but this heroic tradition, no less than the rise of male bathers as a genre motif, should be considered as a source for his interest in the subject.

In their woodland setting, Rembrandt's swimmers are bereft not only of their clothes but of all reference to civilization. Their isolation turns a simple genre scene into a meditation on the human condition.²⁷ This does not prevent the possibility that a bit of wry humor factors into Rembrandt's treatment of these soggy characters. In closing I am tempted to speculate on what all this might have meant for the artist himself. If followers such as Eeckhout, Maes, and Renesse were taking up the subject of male bathers at about the same time or perhaps ahead of him, Rembrandt's gruff treatment may offer a subtle critique of their interpretations. It had been his practice, throughout his career, to encourage students to create independent versions of shared themes. This practice is widely evidenced in drawings and paintings of biblical narratives from his circle but also in the group of drawings and etchings from the late 1640s that show Rembrandt and his followers gathering to draw together from the male nude.²⁸ By 1651, many of his former students had established successful studios of their own, and some of them were gaining in popularity and material success just as his own market was contracting. Athletic activity has always been a source of "male bonding," and a sense of shared enjoyment enlivens most depictions of swimmers together, yet Rembrandt's pensive figures are set apart from one another. Recalling the truism that "every painter paints himself," something of the

artist's own introspection may be implicit here.



Figure 12. Attributed to Antonio Carracci, *Landscape with Bathers*, ca. 1583–1618, oil on canvas, 40.3 x 61.2 cm. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 42.490, Museum purchase with funds by exchange from Bequest of Ernest Wadsworth Longfellow, Bequest of Nathaniel T. Kidder, The Henry C. Angeli and Martha B. Angeli Collection, William Sturgis Bigelow Collection, Gift of Dr. Harold W. Dana, and funds donated by contribution (artwork in the public domain)

The motif of the female nude has come to occupy a central role in both the European pictorial tradition and its theoretical interpretation.²⁹ Yet, the male figure, too, has its own complex history. We have traced the motif of men bathing or swimming from the context of heroic and historical subjects to the popular imagery of everyday life. Most scholars of Dutch seventeenth-century art have dismissed it as a reference to the lighthearted pleasures of summer. Yet, this brief examination has uncovered deeper associations of class, sexuality, and the struggle of man against the elements. These implications cut across boundaries of time and nationality. As an intimate slice of life, Annibale Carracci's drawing (and variants of it) would have resonated with the "modern" treatment of the theme by Dutch artists. At the same time, both the Carracci and Rubens approached the theme of male swimmers with sensitivity to its more dramatic implications. It is this imbricated tradition, rich with associations, that lies behind Rembrandt's still enigmatic etching of "little swimmers" from 1651.

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¹ Alison M. Kettering, "Rembrandt and the Male Nude," in *Aemulatio: Imitation, Emulation and Invention in Netherlandish Art from 1500 to 1800; Essays in Honor of Eric Jan Sluijter*, ed. Anton W. A. Boschloo, Jacquelyn N. Coutré, Stephanie S. Dickey, and Nicolette C. Sluijter-Seiffert (Zwolle: Waanders, 2011), 248–62. The present essay complements my contribution to another festschrift, "Contentione perfectus: Drawing in the Studios of Rembrandt and Annibale Carracci," in *Rethinking Renaissance Drawings: Essays in Honor of David McTavish*, ed. Una D'Elia (Montreal: Queen's/McGill Press, forthcoming 2014).

² The most important recent study is Eric Jan Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006).

³ Although the date of *The Bathers* was originally inscribed as 1631, this is a mistake in penmanship that Rembrandt later corrected. The blunt style of the line work is consistent with his etchings of the 1650s. Charles Middleton, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Etched Work of Rembrandt van Rijn* (London, 1878), cat. no. 292, was the first to note that the date had been corrected to 1651. The new standard reference is Erik Hinterding and Jaco Rutgers, *Rembrandt van Rijn, The New Hollstein Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts 1450–1700* (Oudekerk-aan-der-IJssel: Sound and Vision Publishers, 2013), 2:190–91, no. 258, citing the reference in De Jonghe's inventory.

⁴ Hinterding and Rutgers, *Rembrandt van Rijn*, no. 258, describe three states, identifying the second and third as post-humous, and listing for the first state European paper with five different watermarks dating to Rembrandt's lifetime. Another impression on Japan paper is in London (British Museum, inv. no. F.5.145).

⁵ Edmé-François Gersaint, *Catalogue raisonné de toutes les pièces qui forment l'oeuvre de Rembrandt . . .* (Paris, 1751), no. 187; Daniel Daulby, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Works of Rembrandt, and of his Scholars, Bol, Livens [sic] and Van Vliet* (Liverpool: M'Creery, 1796), no. 187; also noted by Erik Hinterding, *Rembrandt Etchings from the Frits Lugt Collection* (Bussum: Thoth Publishers, and Paris: Fondation Custodia, 2008): 1:350.

⁶ Charles Blanc, *L'Oeuvre complet de Rembrandt* (Paris: Chez Gide, 1859–61), 1:345, no. 117, describes the figure at far right, up to his knees in water, “qui paraît grelottant.” Wilhelm Boeck, “Rechts und Links in Rembrandt's Druckgraphik,” *Wallraf-Richartz Jahrbuch* 15 (1953): 192, suggested that Rembrandt drew the scene from life. Hinterding, *Rembrandt's Etchings*, 1:349–50, offers a sanguine interpretation. Thomas Rassieur in *Rembrandt's Journey: Painter, Draughtsman, Etcher*, exh. cat., Clifford Ackley et al. (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2003), 271–71, cat. no. 184, describes the scene as “a sunny day's visit to a swimming hole” but also notes that Rembrandt's figures are “somewhat awkward and slightly melancholy.” Impressions that are cleanly wiped appear brighter than those with plate tone, like the one shown here.

⁷ Kettering, “Rembrandt and the Male Nude,” 257–58.

⁸ For a good introduction, see Bob van den Boogert and Jaap van der Veen, *Rembrandt's Treasures* (Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, 2000), with a transcription of the inventory, and their more recent exhibition catalogue, *Dat kan beter! Rembrandt en de oude meesters* (Amsterdam: Museum het Rembrandthuis, 2013).

⁹ See Dickey, “*Contentione perfectus*.” The inventory of 1656 lists an album containing prints by Annibale, Agostino, and Ludovico Carracci; the fact that Rembrandt, who probably helped with the inventory, took the trouble to mention all three artists suggests a sustained interest in their work.

¹⁰ See Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude*, 306–9.

¹¹ Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, doc. no. 1175. See, inter alia, Walter L. Strauss et al., *The Rembrandt Documents* (New York: Abaris Books, 1979), 527, doc. 1663/9; H. E. van Gelder, “De jonge Huygensen en Rembrandt,” *Oud-Holland* 73 (1958): 238–41; and Paul Crenshaw, *Rembrandt's Bankruptcy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 104–5.

¹² Pen and ink, 200 x 282 mm. Bernadette Py, *Everhard Jabach collectionneur (1618–1695): Les Dessins de l'inventaire de 1695* (Paris: Editions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2001), 77–78, no. 190 (pen and brown ink, annotated “Annibale bello,” engraved in reverse by Jean Pesne for the *Cabinet Jabach*, pl. 33C). The drawing was in the A. Paul Oppé collection, London, when included in Denis Mahon, *Mostra dei Carracci: Catalogo Critico dei Disegni*, exh. cat. (Bologna: Palazzo dell'Archiginnasio, 1956), 158–59, cat. no. 236. Van Gelder, “De jonge Huygensen,” 239, illustrates copies in the Teylers Collection, Haarlem, and the Louvre. See also Dickey, “*Contentione perfectus*.”

¹³ On Dürer, see, inter alia, Mark Meadow, “The Observant Pedestrian and Albrecht Dürer's *Promenade*,” *Art History* 15, no. 2 (June 1992): 197–222, esp. 204. The resemblance of some of the figures to the artist and his friends adds a personal connotation. On Eakins (for example, *The Swimming Hole*, Fort Worth, Amon Carter Museum), see, inter alia, Whitney Davis, “Erotic Revision in Thomas Eakins's Narratives of Male Nudity,” *Art History* 17, no. 3 (September 1994): 301–41; and Amy Werbel, *Thomas Eakins: Art, Medicine, and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007). Michiel Sweerts painted *Young Men Bathing*, Hannover, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum (cited by Kettering, “Rembrandt and the Male Nude,” 262, n. 46), while in Rome, and *Bathing Scene*, ca. 1656, Strasbourg, Musée des Beaux-Arts, after his return to Flanders; see Guido Jansen and Peter C. Sutton, et al., *Michiel Sweerts (1618–1664)*, exh. cat. (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum / Zwolle: Waanders, 2002), 130, cat. no. 18; and Fiona Healy, “Male Nudity in Netherlandish Painting of the Sixteenth- and Early Seventeenth-Centuries,” in *The Nude and the Norm in the Early Modern Low Countries*, ed. Karolien de Clippel, Katharina van Cauteren, and Katlijne van der Stighelen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 131–58, esp. 152–53.

¹⁴ The breaststroke, crawl, and other standard strokes were already in use by this time, as described in early treatises; see, for example, Nikolaus Wynmann, *Colymbetes siue de arte natandi . . .* (1538), German ed., *Der Schwimmer oder ein Zweigespräch der Schwimmkunst* (1578), edited by Hans Reichardt (Berlin: Weidmann, 1937); Everard Digby, *De arte natandi* (London, 1587), with woodcut illustrations; Nicholas Orme, *Early British Swimming 55 BC–AD 1719*,

with the *First Swimming Treatise in English, 1595* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1983); and Guy Bonhomme and Marie-Madeleine Fontaine, "L'art de nager: Conceptions humanistes et religieuses; Leur influence sur le développement de la natation du XV^{ème} au XVIII^{ème} siècle," in *Proceedings of the International Association for the History of Physical Education and Sport, 9th International Congress, Sport and Religion* (Lisbon, 1981), 135–42.

¹⁵ Jacques Callot, *View of Rome with the Ponte Vecchio* from *Capricci di varie figure di Iacopo Callot*, the series of fifty prints known as the Nancy Set; Jules Lieure, *Jacques Callot*, 8 vols. (repr., New York: Collectors Editions, 1969), no. 434. See also François Collignon after Jacques Callot, etching from *Diverse vedute designate in Fiorenza* (Lieure, *Callot*, no. 270–2[3]), ca. 1628–35. Prints like these may have been included in the album of architectural views by Callot listed as no. 255 in Rembrandt's inventory of 1656.

¹⁶ Rassieur in *Rembrandt's Journey*, 271, also mentions a print from a series of the Seasons by Romeyn de Hooghe.

¹⁷ David A. Levine and Ekkehard Mai et al., *I Bamboccianti: Niederländische Malerrebelln im Rom des Barock*, exh. cat. (Cologne: Wallraf Richartz-Museum / Milan: Electra, 1991), 188–90, cat. no. 19.1. Healy, "Male Nudity," 152, comments on the uneasy juxtaposition of nude and disrobing swimmers with fully dressed and evidently disapproving male figures in Michiel Sweerts' paintings of bathers in Strasbourg and Hannover (see note 13 above).

¹⁸ Gabriel Metsu, *Resting Hunter*, New York, private collection; Adriaan E. Waiboer, et al., *Gabriel Metsu*, exh. cat. (Dublin: National Gallery of Ireland / New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 142–45, cat. no. 35. Kettering, "Rembrandt and the Male Nude," 262, n. 46, considers Cornelis Poelenburgh's pendants of *Men Bathing* and *Women Bathing*, ca. 1650, in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, to be part of an idealizing tradition that Rembrandt explicitly rejected. For male bathers in Dutch landscape painting, see also, inter alia, Jacob van Ruisdael, *Le Coup de Soleil*, 1670s, Paris, Musée du Louvre; Philips Wouwerman, *Landscape with Bathers*, ca. 1650–55, Vaduz, Leichtenstein Collection; Willem van de Velde, *Dutch Vessels Close Inshore at Low Tide*, 1661, London, National Gallery; and Johannes Lingelbach, *Riverbank with Bathers beside an Italian City*, ca. 1650, Basel, Kunstmuseum (Levine and Mai, *Bamboccianti*, 214–16, cat. no. 21.2).

¹⁹ For example, *Ruins of Kostverloren*, pen and brown ink with wash and white bodycolor, 104 x 173 mm, Art Institute of Chicago (Otto Benesch, *The Drawings of Rembrandt* [London: Phaidon, 1973], no. 1270); *Bend in the Amstel* (with the tower of the house just visible through the trees), pen and brown ink on paper prepared with a thin brown wash, 145 x 213 mm, London, British Museum, inv. no. 1984,1110.9 (Benesch, no. 1266; and Martin Royalton-Kisch, *Catalogue of Drawings by Rembrandt and His School in the British Museum* [London: British Museum, 2010], no. 67, on-line at www.britishmuseum.org).

²⁰ Pieter Biesboer in *Jacob van Ruisdael: De revolutie van het Hollandse landschap*, exh. cat., ed. Marina Sitt and Pieter Biesboer (Haarlem: Frans Hals Museum / Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, 2002), 132–33, cat. no. 42; Seymour Slive, *Jacob van Ruisdael: Master of Landscape*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art; and London: Royal Academy / New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 106–7, cat. no. 31.

²¹ Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-1612 (Werner Sumowski, *Gemälde der Rembrandt-Schüler* [Landau and Pfalz: Pfälzische Verlagsanstalt, 1983], 2:753, no. 544, dates it to ca. 1651 and associates it with Rembrandt's etching. See also Bianca Du Mortier in Waiboer, *Metsu*, 143–44).

²² Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. no. KdZ 5212 (Benesch, *Drawings of Rembrandt*, no. 1352; attribution to Renesse by Martin Royalton-Kisch, "From Rembrandt to Renesse: Some Re-Attributed Drawings," *Burlington Magazine* 142 [March 2000]: 157–64; accepted by Holm Bevers, *Rembrandt: Die Zeichnungen im Berliner Kupferstichkabinett* [Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2006], 202–3). A jollier mood informs a painting in the Louvre attributed to Nicolaes Maes (1634–1693) or his follower Justus de Gelder, where a group of boys gleefully swims from a boat. A windmill in the right background establishes a Dutch context (Sumowski, *Gemälde*, vol. 3, no. 1363, to ca. 1656–58; Leon Krempel, *Studien zu den datierten Gemälden des Nicolaes Maes (1634–1693)* [Petersberg: Imhof, 2000], no. E-6).

²³ Antonio Carracci, *Landscape with Bathers*, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 42.490, based on a painting by Agostino Carracci of ca. 1599 in the Palazzo Pitti, Florence.

²⁴ Antonio Carracci, *The Deluge*, ca. 1615–18, Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. 230 (Massimo Pironi et al., *Antonio Carracci* [Manerba a/G Brescia: Edizioni Merigo 2007], 184–86, no. 106).

²⁵ Peter Paul Rubens, *Hero and Leander*, oil on canvas, 96 x 117 cm, New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery, and the larger version, oil on canvas, 128 x 217 cm, Berlin, Gemäldegalerie, both datable to ca. 1605.

²⁶ See Amy Golahny, “Rubens’ *Hero and Leander* and Its Poetic Progeny,” *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin* (1990): 21–37; and Stephanie S. Dickey, *Rembrandt: Portraits in Print* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2004), 113–14, with further references.

²⁷ Kettering, “Rembrandt and the Male Nude,” 258, writes that Rembrandt’s figures “are true to no formula, even his own. They are true to human experience.”

²⁸ See Kettering, “Rembrandt and the Male Nude,” passim, with further references.

²⁹ See, e.g., Kenneth Clark, *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form* (London: Murray, 1956); and Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1992). In 1718, Arnold Houbraken already called the female nude “the most glorious subject of the artist’s brush,” as cited by Sluijter, *Female Nude*, 15.

REMBRANDT'S LAUGHTER AND THE LOVE OF ART*

H. Perry Chapman

From the beginning of his career to the end, Rembrandt advertised his ability to represent not just emotions but also more enduring inner states or character traits through expressive self-portraits. This essay argues that through laughter, an unusual expression in a self-portrait, Rembrandt claimed to be an impassioned representer of the passions. To this end, it examines some of his earliest painted and etched self-portraits, his *Self-Portrait with Saskia* of about 1636, in Dresden, and the late *Self-Portrait*, in Cologne, all of which feature Rembrandt's laughing face. It concludes that Rembrandt's laughter also displays his delight in his mastery of the emotions.

Rembrandt's early supporters and critics lauded him for his naturalistic rendering of the emotions, which they called the *affecteden* (passions or motions of the mind). In 1718, in the first extensive biography of Rembrandt, Arnold Houbraken criticized Rembrandt as a breaker of rules, both artistic and social, yet the only work of art that Houbraken chose to reproduce in his entire three-volume book of biographies was a drawing of the *Supper at Emmaus* (fig. 1) that revealed Rembrandt's "close observation of the various emotions."¹ Rembrandt's former pupil Samuel van Hoogstraten, writing in 1672, characterized Rembrandt as a master at representing the "movements of the soul."² Even before Rembrandt had left Leiden, his earliest champion, Constantijn Huygens, secretary to Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik, had predicted that Rembrandt would be unsurpassed in rendering emotions. Further, in the only words of substance that he is known to have written about his art, in a letter of 1639 to Huygens, Rembrandt justified his slow production (on the *Passion Series* for Frederik Hendrik) with the claim that he was putting "die meeste ende die naetueerelste beweeghelickeijt" into his work: "in these two pictures the deepest and most lifelike emotion has been observed [and rendered]. That is also the main reason why they have been so long in my hands."³



Figure 1. Arnold Houbraken, after Rembrandt, *Supper at Emmaus*, from Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen* (Amsterdam: Arnold Houbraken, 1718–21), etching, engraving, and roulette, 16.1 x 13.3 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-P-1878-A-1060 (artwork in the public domain)

From the beginning of his career, Rembrandt advertised his ability to represent not just emotions but also more enduring inner states or character traits through expressive self-portraits.⁴ Many of his earliest painted and etched self-portraits show him engaged in the challenge of evoking his psychological presence and makeup, of portraying the "inward motions" of his mind. Rendered with a distinctive spontaneity and unidealized naturalness, these unusually casual images show the young Rembrandt both developing a stylistic vocabulary for representing a continuum

of inward states and emotions and also putting himself forward as an artist who was impassioned and gifted with a capacity to represent—and presumably to feel—the very same emotions and states of mind.

In two of these early self-portraits—*Rembrandt Laughing* of circa 1628 (fig. 2), recently acquired by the J. Paul Getty Museum, and the etching *Self-Portrait in a Cap, Laughing* of 1630 (fig. 3)—Rembrandt shows himself laughing. *Self-Portrait with Saskia* of about 1636 (see fig. 11), in Dresden, and the late *Self-Portrait* (see fig. 12), in Cologne, likewise feature Rembrandt’s laughing face. Although these later paintings differ greatly from the earliest self-portraits, they merit consideration as a group and in relation to Rembrandt’s capacity to represent emotions, specifically emotions conveyed through laughter, for laughter is an unusual expression in a self-portrait.⁵

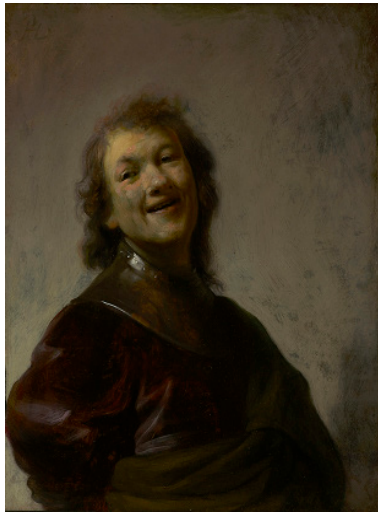


Figure 2. Rembrandt, *Rembrandt Laughing*, ca. 1628, oil on copper, 22.2 x 17.1 cm. Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. no. 2013.60 (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 3. Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait in a Cap, Laughing*, 1630, etching, 5.2 x 4.3 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-P-1961-1181 (artwork in the public domain)

The most famous reference, in Rembrandt’s time and ours, to laughter as it pertains to representing the emotions stems from Horace’s *Ars Poetica* (circa 10–8 BCE), a text that the young Rembrandt likely knew, if not from his Latin school days, then from the discourse of artists’ studios. Advising the tragic actor, Horace wrote, “As human faces laugh with those who are laughing, so they weep with those who are weeping. If you wish me to cry, you must first feel grief yourself.”⁶ A similar empathic sentiment is conveyed in Paul’s *Epistle to the Romans* 12:15: “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.” In the fifteenth century Alberti, drawing on Horace, advised the painter:

A historia will move spectators when the men painted in the picture outwardly demonstrate their own feelings as clearly as possible. Nature provides . . . that we mourn with the mourners, laugh with those who laugh, and grieve with the grief-stricken. Yet these feelings are known from movements of the body. . . . when we are happy and gay, our movements are free and pleasing in their inflexions.⁷

Rembrandt’s facial expression would have had a twofold impact on the viewer. On the one hand, it would have prompted the viewer to laugh or smile and to feel the pleasure expressed in Rembrandt’s laughing face. Further, it characterized Rembrandt as joyous and impassioned, as having a *poetische gheest* (poetic spirit) or imagination. Karel van Mander explained the emotion that laughter expressed when he wrote that to depict “gaiety or gladness of the heart . . . make the eyes half closed, the mouth somewhat open and merrily laughing.” This “gladness of the heart,” which he also called “pure amorousness,” was closely related to love and desire, and all were conveyed pictorially through laughter.⁸ Rembrandt had many reasons to be content. But in his primary and public identity as an artist, he would have taken pleasure in his art. Laughter was Rembrandt’s way of saying that he was impassioned with and driven by his desire for, or love of, art.

The idea that love gives birth to art, *liefde baart kunst* in the Dutch topos, goes back to classical antiquity. In six-

teenth-century art theory it was melded with a Christianized notion of love as the highest virtue.⁹ Drawing on Seneca, art theorists of Rembrandt's time ranked painters according to what motivated them: the lowest worked only for money; the middle ranking sought fame; and the most virtuous were driven not by self-interest but by love, meaning love of art. Samuel van Hoogstraten represented this triad on the exterior of his London *Perspective Box*. Franciscus Junius cast love of art as akin to Neoplatonic poetic furor when he described the painter as "possessed with the love of [Art] . . . (with) a blind fit of most violent and irresistible fury," which causes him to "expresse in his workes the inward motions of his most forward minde."¹⁰ Through joyous laughter Rembrandt conveys that he ranks among the painters driven by love, the gifted few with the talent and burning desire to do something that has not been accomplished before.

Rembrandt Laughing was long thought to be lost, although it was known through an engraving (fig. 4) by Lambertus Antonius Claessens (1763–1834).¹¹ Small, loosely painted on copper, and datable to circa 1628 on the basis of its monogram "RHL," it shows Rembrandt in near half-length, with his arm akimbo and his head thrown back, laughing.¹² The result is a wonderfully self-confident spontaneity, in handling and affect, that distinguishes it from Rembrandt's other early paintings of himself.¹³ As in the *Self-Portrait* in Indianapolis (fig. 5) and in Jan Lievens's *Portrait of Rembrandt* (fig. 6), Rembrandt wears a shiny gorget that alludes to his professional identity. The sheen of metal, notoriously difficult to render, had come to stand for the challenge of *reflexykonst*, of convincingly representing nature's reflections in oil-based paint. The gorget also relates to the martial imagery that alludes to artistic rivalry and the painter's fortitude in battling his adversaries. In the newly independent Dutch Republic, armor and shields—in Dutch *schild*, then thought to be the root of *schilder*, painter—were taking on patriotic meaning for artists seeking recognition for Netherlandish painting.¹⁴ Rembrandt's expression—the laughing mouth and turn of the head—signals his joyous enthusiasm for the battle of the brush.



Figure 4. Lambertus Antonius Claessens, after Rembrandt, *Rembrandt Laughing*, ca. 1829–34, etching and engraving on chine collé, 24.6 x 18.0 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-P-1888-A-13395 (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 5. Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1629, oil on panel, 44.5 x 34.3 cm. Indianapolis Museum of Art, inv. no. C10063, courtesy of The Clowes Fund (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 6. Jan Lievens, *Portrait of Rembrandt*, ca. 1628, oil on panel, 57 x 44.7 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-C-1598 (artwork in the public domain)

Traditionally, self-portraits had favored likenesses in a general state of composure; representing oneself as expressive, or by nature thoughtful, was a wholly different project. Laughter was especially unconventional. Perhaps it is for this reason that the Rembrandt Research Project does not recognize the Getty painting as a self-portrait. The rationale is that it, like Rembrandt's other early informal self-images, is an expression study, a studio exercise in which Rembrandt used "his own face to solve certain artistic problems."¹⁵ They may well be expression studies, but they are primarily images that Rembrandt used to fashion himself, characterize his art, and spread his fame. Their informality, unconventionality, and directness speak to the authenticity of Rembrandt's gift for representing emotions and states of mind. It was in these initial presentations of himself that Rembrandt first claimed to be an impassioned representor of the passions.

The complex process of self-representation involves, at once (and to varying degrees), inner-directed self-scrutiny and outer-directed self-construction. By Rembrandt's time, self-portrayal was a fully developed, multifaceted concept.

It had become associated with the idea, embodied in the topos “every painter paints himself,” that the artistic genius puts something ineffable of himself into his art.¹⁶ Indeed, self-portraits were held in such high regard that I wonder if it would have even been possible for Rembrandt to portray himself, however informally, without thinking of it as a self-portrait. After all, literary memoir—the emerging product of privacy and the study—was also in vogue. A comparably acute self-awareness is evident in Constantijn Huygens, who wrote his autobiography between 1629 and 1631,¹⁷ just when he was securing paintings by Rembrandt for the stadtholder, and just when Rembrandt was engaged in his first intense production of self-portraits.

Huygens recognized that Rembrandt was extraordinarily talented and unusually motivated. The route Rembrandt pursued initially was the most ambitious: history painting, which concerned the weightiest human subject matter and presented the greatest artistic challenges. According to Van Mander, the “passions of the soul” were the foundation of “history painting.”¹⁸ The goal Rembrandt set himself at the outset was to master representing the expressive person; he worked at developing pictorial means both to represent the momentary gestures and facial expressions of dramatic narratives and to evoke lasting, profound inner states that reveal themselves in subtle external traces. It is likely that Huygens encouraged Rembrandt’s representation of emotions. In his oft-quoted encomium of *Judas Returning the Thirty Pieces of Silver*, of circa 1629 (private collection), Huygens praised Rembrandt as having an astonishing talent for expressing “the passions of the soul” with a new, convincing truthfulness, which he achieved by observing nature (and human nature) rather than classical models. In praising Rembrandt as surpassing Lievens in the “liveliness of the passions,” Huygens set Rembrandt up as excelling in the most difficult part of art. In characterizing Rembrandt as one who “gives himself wholly over to dealing with what he wants to express from within himself,” Huygens marked Rembrandt as a master of the emotions, who was himself impassioned and driven by his love of art.¹⁹

Rembrandt’s promotion of himself as painter of the passions played out in the shadow of Huygens and in the most appropriate of biblical subjects. In the first two paintings from the *Passion Series*, which Huygens procured for Frederik Hendrik, Rembrandt assumed contrasting expressive roles. In the *Raising of the Cross* he boldly represents himself as one of Christ’s cold-blooded, emotionally detached executioners: in a guise that accords with a well-defined convention of Calvinist confessional expression, Rembrandt’s self-implication proclaims not personal guilt but humanity’s responsibility for Christ’s suffering. His lack of affect differs from his anguished, sorrowful face in the *Descent from the Cross*, where he cast himself as a compassionate bearer of the limp, broken Christ.²⁰

The *Passion Series* appears to have resulted from a competition that took place in 1630–31. Remarkably similar paintings of *Christ on the Cross*—Rembrandt’s (fig. 7) is in Le Mas d’Agenais, Lievens’s in Nancy—suggest that Huygens asked the two young Leideners to compete for the commission by making paintings based on a *Christ on the Cross* by Peter Paul Rubens, which they would have known through an engraving. Huygens must have judged Rembrandt’s anguished, suffering Christ to be the more moving of the two.



Figure 7. Rembrandt, *Christ on the Cross*, 1631, oil on canvas mounted on wood, 92.9 x 72.6 cm. Le Mas d’Agenais, Collegiate Church of Saint Vincent (artwork in the public domain)

Similarities between the expression on Christ's face in *Christ on the Cross*, which is dated 1631, and on Rembrandt's face in his etched *Self-Portrait, Open-Mouthed, as if Shouting* (fig. 8) provide insight into Rembrandt's method for representing emotions with convincing sincerity. In the etching, he shows himself crying out in distress, his mouth snarling in pain, his forehead deeply creased. It appears that Rembrandt has imagined, and acted out before a mirror, the same anguished expression that he then used on the face of Christ. *The Self-Portrait, Open-Mouthed* is one of several small etchings of himself making faces that Rembrandt created in 1630. His expression of astonished wonder in the *Self-Portrait, Wide-Eyed* (fig. 9) is much like that on the face of an amazed bystander in his etched *Raising of Lazarus*. His *Self-Portrait, Frowning* (fig. 10) conveys anger through his flattened brow, fierce glare, and leonine hair. For the *Self-Portrait in a Cap, Laughing* (see fig. 3), he glances over his shoulder to capture his toothy grin and eyes half-closed in pleasure.



Figure 8. Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait, Open-Mouthed, as if Shouting*, 1630, etching, 7.3 x 6.2 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-P-1961-979 (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 9. Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait, Wide-Eyed*, 1630, etching, 5.2 x 4.6 cm. London, British Museum, inv. no. F.6.101 (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 10. Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait, Frowning*, 1630, etching, 7.0 x 5.9 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-P-1961-978 (artwork in the public domain)

It has been suggested that Rembrandt made these etchings as studio exercises. However, these were prints, pulled in multiple impressions and intended for distribution to viewers other than himself. One way to understand these etchings is to see the young artist engaged in—and advertising himself as engaged in—a kind of seventeenth-century method acting, imagining his feelings in the mirror. In this he would have been following Horace's advice to the tragic actor.²¹ Rembrandt's contemporaries would likely have understood it in this way.

Indeed, in looking at himself in the mirror, Rembrandt may have been following Van Mander's advice to represent emotions based on experience and empirical observation. Van Mander provided a specific formula for representing gaiety or gladness of the heart, the emotion that Rembrandt demonstrates in the *Rembrandt Laughing* and the slightly later etching: "make the eyes half closed, the mouth somewhat open and merrily laughing."²² Otherwise Van Mander offered only general observations on the expressive roles of different facial features; he declined to describe specific emotions because, he maintained, artists best learn from nature how to represent feelings and states of mind. Franciscus Junius took a similarly naturalistic, experience-based approach to the passions: the artist, he wrote, "must be well acquainted . . . principally with the nature of man. . . . It sufficeth that he doe but learne by a daily observation [of] how severall passions and affections of the minde doe alter the countenance of man."²³ According to Junius, for proper invention, "our minde must first of all be moved, . . . our minde must in a manner bee transformed unto the nature of the conceived things."²⁴ Only an artist who is so moved can hope to move the spectator with his work.²⁵

Samuel van Hoogstraten, too, says that only the artist with a poetic spirit has the ability to imagine the passions in a way that will truly move the beholder. In the , Van Hoogstraten quotes Horace to illustrate that a picture "must have in it a certain moving quality [*beweeglijkheid*] that has power over those who see it . . . 'One smiles, or weeps, the viewer follows the trail: so if you want me to cry, you must cry first."²⁶ Presumably reflecting what he had learned in Rembrandt's studio, Van Hoogstraten recommends acting out emotions and studying them on one's own face: "If one wants to gain honor in this most noble part of art [the passions], one must reform oneself totally into an actor." He

goes on to say, “the same benefit can be derived from the depiction of your own passions, at best in front of a mirror, where you are simultaneously the performer and the beholder. But here a poetic spirit [*poëtische geest*] is necessary in order to imagine oneself in another’s place.”²⁷

If Rembrandt’s admirers valued his history paintings for the way they explored states of mind, presumably they could also see in his self-portraits evidence of his ability to plumb the depths of his own mind. The point of the Dutch appropriation of the Horatian dictum was that the painter, through his imagination, or *poëtische geest*, had the capacity to feel and hence represent with sincerity the emotions and mental states of his subjects. The self-portrait—not in guise, but as oneself—shifted this authenticity of emotional and intellectual presence to the likeness of the painter and, by implication, to the painter himself.

Although Rembrandt typically suggested inwardness, thoughtfulness, and even melancholy in his self-portraits, after his early self-portraits, he did not represent himself as actively or momentarily emotional, with two exceptions in which he shows himself laughing: the *Self-Portrait with Saskia* of the mid-1630s (fig. 11) and the *Self-Portrait* (fig. 12) of the early 1660s. Aside from Rembrandt’s laughing face, what these two have in common is that, in each, Rembrandt portrayed himself in a guise—to an extent they are *portraits historié*. And, in each, Rembrandt revised the original composition in ways that downplay the narrative, call into question the initial guise, and make the self-portrait more about Rembrandt.



Figure 11. Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait with Saskia*, ca. 1635/36, oil on canvas, 161 x 131 cm. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, inv. no. 1559 (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 12. Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1662, oil on canvas, 82.5 x 65 cm. Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz Museum, inv. no. WRM 2526 (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 13. Gabriel Metsu, *The Artist and His Wife Isabella de Wolff in a Tavern*, 1661, oil on panel, 36 x 31 cm. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister (artwork in the public domain)

In the *Self-Portrait with Saskia*, painted in the mid-1630s, at the height of his success as a portraitist, Rembrandt portrayed himself in elaborate quasihistorical dress, in a tavern, toasting us with a tall glass of beer, and with his wife sitting on his lap.²⁸ His guise is now usually understood as that of the Prodigal Son or as a secularized, modern-day prodigal. The setting is recognized to be a tavern on the basis of a partially visible tally board, hanging on the wall at left; a peacock pie, a luxury signifying worldliness; and the presence of a woman playing a lute who, though no longer visible, originally stood between Rembrandt and Saskia (X-rays reveal that Rembrandt painted over this figure).²⁹ Together, guise and setting would seem to cast Saskia as a whore. A precedent for the artist in the guise of the Prodigal Son is found in Van Mander’s report that Albrecht Dürer represented himself as the Prodigal Son feeding with the swine in his engraving of 1498.³⁰ Later artists who cast themselves as prodigals include Gabriel Metsu, whose *Portrait of the Artist with His Wife Isabella de Wolff in a Tavern* (fig. 13) of 1661 comes closest to Rembrandt’s painting (although Metsu appears to sit on his wife’s lap!), Jan Steen, and probably Vermeer, if the figure at left in the *Procuress* is actually Vermeer’s only self-portrait. (It is quite a coincidence that the paintings by Metsu and Vermeer are in the Dresden Gemäldegalerie, along with the *Self-Portrait with Saskia*.)

Whereas early critics interpreted the picture as a realistic portrayal of the couple’s happiness and prosperity shortly

after their marriage in 1634, early-twentieth-century critics found the notion of Rembrandt's pleasure in his own prosperity distasteful and incompatible with their vision of him as an independent, rebellious artist-genius.³¹ To them, the picture mocked proper *burgerlijk* values; if Rembrandt lived luxuriously, it was in defiance of Dutch middle-class austerity. Once the scene was identified as an episode from the parable of the Prodigal Son, however, understanding of it took on a moralizing tone.³² As a narrative of prodigality, it was interpreted (somewhat scornfully) in a personal mode as Rembrandt's and Saskia's flaunting of their newly found wealth in the face of relatives who had accused them of squandering her inheritance. More recently, it has been seen more positively, as a Protestant confessional in which Rembrandt cast himself as a kind of Everyman Prodigal Son.³³ Interpreters of the painting have been preoccupied with the question as to whether, in the absence of firm markers of the biblical pictorial tradition, any reference to the Prodigal Son would even have been recognized.

What if we dispense with the narrative and the moralizing and see *Self-Portrait with Saskia* more straightforwardly as an image of gaiety, delight, and celebration on Rembrandt's part? This is, after all, a large painting that Rembrandt probably made for himself, to hang in his home, as is suggested by the inclusion of a "conterfeyt sel van Rembrandt van Rijn en sijn huysvrouw" in the 1677 inventory of the estate of the widow of the man who had been appointed guardian of Rembrandt's son Titus after Rembrandt's insolvency.³⁴ Then we might take his enthusiasm to be for his wife Saskia, not as whore but as model and muse (replacing the usual prostitute-cum-model with a sterner, more inspiring presence); for his *poetische gheest*, his creativity and talent for imagining histories (that is helped along by Bacchus); and for his success as a painter, a painter whose joyous laughter affirms his delight in his success at and passion for his art.

During the last decade of his life, Rembrandt again represented himself laughing, with his brow raised and looking directly at the viewer, in the roughly painted *Self-Portrait* in Cologne (see fig. 12).³⁵ Of the many explanations of his laughter that have been put forward, the most likely is that he represented himself in the guise of Zeuxis, at least initially. Zeuxis was famed for his additive creation of ideal beauty (to paint Helen of Troy he gathered the six most beautiful women in town and represented the most beautiful body parts of each) and for his deceptive, illusionistic realism (he painted grapes that looked so real that birds tried to eat them). But Rembrandt was interested in neither beauty that was more perfect than Nature nor eye-fooling illusionistic naturalism. Zeuxis was also known for his death: as Pliny tells it, Zeuxis was painting a portrait of a woman who was so ugly that he laughed himself to death. X-rays tell us that Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait* originally looked more like a painting by his pupil Aert de Gelder (fig. 14), in that Rembrandt was originally holding a brush, obviously painting a portrait and laughing. By this point in his life, Rembrandt was renowned for his ugly nudes. Perhaps he was having a laugh in the face of his critics and death. Yet Rembrandt may have rethought this, as he painted out his hand and brush, although he kept his *mahlstick*.³⁶



Figure 14. Aert de Gelder, *The Artist Painting an Old Woman*, 1685, oil on canvas, 142 x 169 cm. Frankfurt, Städtisches Kunstinstitut, inv. no. 1015 (artwork in the public domain)

Finally, and most importantly, Zeuxis was renowned for his skill at representing the emotions. Karel van Mander lauded Zeuxis as unsurpassed in this regard, as did Samuel van Hoogstraten. Rembrandt in the guise of Zeuxis as master of the emotions seems reasonable. Although he laughs, perhaps there is not enough here to take him as identifying with the Zeuxis who laughed in the face of ugliness, even if Aert de Gelder—whose time in Rembrandt's

studio in the early 1660s may have coincided with the making of the Cologne *Self-Portrait* in about 1662—seems to have understood it in just that way. As in *Self-Portrait with Saskia*, where the identification with the Prodigal is only tenuous, in the Cologne *Self-Portrait* Rembrandt has eliminated identifying features, perhaps because he changed his mind about identifying with the historical figure. To borrow a phrase from Alison Kettering, “by emptying his painting[s] of standard content,” Rembrandt has left room for us to interpret it and, here, to read it on the basis of his face. What if we take Rembrandt—and Rembrandt’s face—at his word, as an elderly painter with a knowing but sincere smile, a smile that expresses his satisfaction with a long career of loving devotion to his work?

In Rembrandt’s time, the emotionally expressive face—and especially the laughing face—typically belonged in a narrative, whether of the historical or genre sort. Yet from the outset Rembrandt both detached expressive faces from narrative contexts and made them his own face. In the Getty *Rembrandt Laughing* and the expressive etchings of 1630 he created independent, self-standing works of his own expressive face to proclaim his ability to feel and represent emotions. As much as critics have wanted to reattach seemingly lost biblical meaning to some of Rembrandt’s later paintings—the *Jewish Bride* as Isaac and Rebecca, *Hendrickje Bathing* as Susanna with[out] the Elders—it may be that Rembrandt was aiming for precisely that lack of, or ambiguity of, historical reference. For a painter raised in and dedicated to history painting, emptying his works of standard content must have been a difficult and liberating accomplishment. The *Self-Portrait with Saskia* and the Cologne *Self-Portrait* become meaningful as self-portraits precisely because the narrative and historical identification have been so pushed to the background. They have become sincere and affecting self-images about Rembrandt and his pleasure in and profound love for his art. Through laughter Rembrandt displays his mastery of the emotions and his delight in that mastery.

* I started working on Rembrandt and self-portraits as an undergraduate at Swarthmore studying with Alison. This essay draws on my earlier published work on Rembrandt’s self-portraits, cited below, and on a lecture about the Getty’s *Rembrandt Laughing* that I delivered at the Kimbell Museum in Fort Worth.

H. Perry Chapman, Professor of Art History, University of Delaware, studied with Alison Kettering at Swarthmore College. She is author of Rembrandt’s Self-Portraits: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Identity and (as co-author) Jan Steen: Painter and Storyteller, as well as numerous essays on Dutch art and artistic identity. An editor of the Netherlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek and former editor-in-chief of The Art Bulletin, her work has been supported by the Guggenheim Foundation, CASVA, and NEH.

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⁵For the representation of laughter, see Noël Schiller, "Desire and Dissimulation: Laughter as an Expressive Behavior in Karel van Mander's *Den grondt der edel vrij schilder-konst* (1604)," in *The Passions*, ed. Roodenburg and Dickey, 83–107.

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⁸Schiller, "Desire and Dissimulation," 83–107.

⁹On love as the artist's motivating force, see Chapman, "Reclaiming Inner Rembrandt," 239; Joanna Woodall, "Love Is in the Air: Amor as Motivation and Message in Seventeenth-Century Netherlandish Painting," *Art History* 19 (1996): 208–64; Joanna Woodall, "Wtewael's *Perseus and Andromeda*: Looking for Love in Early Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting," in *Manifestations of Venus: Art and Sexuality*, ed. C. Arscott and K. Scott (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 39–68; and Eric Jan Sluiter, *Seductress of Sight: Studies in Dutch Art of the Golden Age* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2000), 306–21.

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¹²Ernst van de Wetering, "Rembrandt Laughing, c. 1628 – A Painting Resurfaces," *Kroniek van het Rembrandthuis* (2007): 19–40.

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¹⁴For armor and shields as attributes of the painter's studio, see Chapman, *Rembrandt's Self-Portraits*, 34–41; and Celeste Brusati, "Pictura's Excellent Trophies: Valorizing Virtuous Authorship in the Dutch Republic," in *Virtue: Virtuoso, Virtuosity in Netherlandish Art*, ed. Jan de John et al., *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 54 (2003): 61–89.

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- ³⁵Chapman, *Rembrandt's Self-Portraits*, 95, 101–4, 128; Van de Wetering, *Corpus IV*, 551–60.
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JACOBUS VREL'S DUTCH NEIGHBORHOOD SCENES

Linda Stone-Ferrier

Jacobus Vrel's mid-seventeenth-century paintings of close up street scenes pictorially engage the intimate physical parameters and ambiance of the Dutch neighborhood rather than the city, as scholars have previously suggested. Close—up renderings of the elements of a neighborhood—part of a street, a row of houses and shops, quotidian activities - signify its characteristic insularity. Each neighborhood, with its own colorful name and official organization, which required membership of all residents, sought social control as well as the shared goals of friendship, brotherhood, unity, and honor. Vrel's paintings idealistically embody and reinforce that paradigm.

Scholars have identified Jacobus Vrel's mid-seventeenth-century paintings of close-up urban views as cityscapes, townscapes, street scenes, street views, or streetscapes (figs. 1–7). However, this study posits a more specific historical framework in which to contextualize the pictures. Vrel's paintings pictorially engage the intimate physical parameters and ambiance of the Dutch neighborhood, rather than city or town, with close-up renderings of the signifiers of such small communities: part of a street, a short lane, a row of houses, shops, passersby, and quotidian activities.¹



Figure 1. Jacobus Vrel, *City View*, ca. 1654–62, oil on panel, 36 x 28 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-1592 (artwork in the public domain)

Official seventeenth-century Dutch neighborhoods occupied the liminal space between home and city, while intersecting them both. The physical constituent parts of a neighborhood included only one or two streets—or part of one side of a canal or of a long street—along with their adjacent alleys.² Dutch neighborhoods, each with its own colorful name,³ required all residents, regardless of socioeconomic position, religion, profession or trade, nationality, citizenship or immigration status, to belong to their respective long-standing neighborhood organizations (*gebuyrten*).⁴ Through numerous regulations (*buurtbrieven*) and social control, they sought the shared goals of friendship, brotherhood, and unity, as well as individual and communal honor.⁵ Administrators elected by residents oversaw *gebuyrten* meetings, upheld order and quiet, mediated among neighbors, and enforced the binding regulations, which did not warrant the intervention of civic authorities.⁶ Neighborhoods had as important a function as other social networks, such as family, church, guilds, civic guards, and so on.⁷ However, the larger districts determined by the city for the organization of the civic guards, fire fighting, and tax assessment lacked the inclusiveness and social fluidity, available even to women and immigrants, that characterized neighborhoods.⁸

The pristine and convivial appearance of Vrel's painted scenes embodies the expectations of the long-lived neighborhood organizations. Whereas archival records colorfully document the full range of petitions, offenses, and reconciliations within these communities, Vrel's scenes noticeably omit altogether even a pictorial whisper that the neighborhoods functioned anything but smoothly. Yet, as documents demonstrate, the residents dealt with many challenges to their overall goals of friendship, brotherhood, unity, and honor.

By around 1650 Vrel began to paint some of the first, if not the first, close up views of streets, alleys, houses, shops, and routine social and commercial exchange.⁹ Twelve or more extant mid-century paintings, including *City View* (fig. 1), *Street Scene* (fig. 2), *Street* (fig. 3), *Street Scene* (fig. 4), *Street Scene* (fig. 5), *Corner of a Town with a Bakery* (fig. 6), and *A Conversation in the Street* (fig. 7),¹⁰ attest to the lively market for such vibrant views.¹¹

All of the paintings focus on the exemplary appearance and atmosphere of a neighborhood's short streets, alleys, and buildings. Narrow, crisscrossing passageways define the zigzag of rows of well-kept gabled houses, which flank either side of the road. In seven of Vrel's scenes, the ground floor of the buildings includes a shop, such as for baked goods, cloth, or vegetables,¹² or an attached stall (figs. 2–6).¹³ A tiled or wooden overhang, which extends above most front doors, protects the outside goods for sale. Two of Vrel's paintings (figs. 2, 5) also include a street vendor at a doorway, who offers goods from his satchel. Shop signs project from exterior walls of the houses in six of the paintings (figs. 1–3, 5).¹⁴



Figure 2. Jacobus Vrel, *Street Scene*, ca. 1654–62, oil on panel, 41 x 34.2 cm. Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. no. 70.PB.21. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 3. Jacobus Vrel, *Street*, ca. 1650, oil on panel, 48.9 x 41.9 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art, John G. Johnson Collection, 1917, inv. no. 542. Photo: The Philadelphia Museum of Art/Art Resource, N.Y. (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 4. Jacobus Vrel, *Street Scene*, oil on oak panel, 50 x 38.5 cm. Hamburg, Kunsthalle, inv. no. 228. Photo: Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin/Hamburger Kunstalle/Art Resource, N.Y. (photographer: Elke Walford) (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 5. Jacobus Vrel, *Street Scene*, ca. 1654–62, oil on panel, 52.5 x 79 cm. Hartford, Conn., Wadsworth Atheneum, The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, inv. no. 1937.489. Photo: Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art/Art Resource, NY (artwork in the public domain)

Along the pathways, before shop fronts, and on stoops, neatly dressed figures—singly or with a companion(s)—walk, stand, or sit with relaxed, but respectable body language; attend to a shop’s outdoor display of goods; pause to chat; rest leisurely on a bench; carry a marketing pail; lean against a shop front; or casually peruse the street scene below from an open window. In two paintings (figs. 2, 6), a few chickens in the figures’ midst forage among the cobblestones. In short, the paintings convey an aura of equanimity and tranquility in which the figures occupy a neighborhood’s tidy street in prototypically prescribed ways.

Together the angled juxtaposition and overlap of the variously sized planes of color formed by the brown-red brick buildings, the white window and door sashes, the brown or black-and-white shutters, the yellow-orange tiles on shop overhangs, and the different hues of the projecting shop signs create syncopated compositional rhythms that suggest the twists and turns, nooks and crannies, and tight quarters of the site. Here and there the blue or bright red hue of the upper garments worn by some of the figures contributes an additional pop of color to the visual rhythm of the compositions. Above the buildings or peeking in-between them in all but one of Vrel’s paintings (fig. 7), blue skies streaked with bits of clouds provide the cool-color complement to the warm hues and values of the street and buildings below.

The slightly elevated angle of view of the paintings’ beholder, together with the proximity of the pictured scenes, position one as though peering onto the sites from a window or open door of a house parallel to the depicted streets. As such, the paintings’ framed picture planes function as the fictive window or doorframe through which the viewer observes the scenes. The beholder’s implied spatial position and the act of viewing find their mirrored parallel in Vrel’s half-length figures, who peer out of windows in four of the paintings (figs. 4-6)¹⁵ and over a half-open Dutch door in another scene (fig. 7).

The beholder of the paintings and the pictured half-length figures in open windows share the role of neighbors, who peruse the activity in the street. In so doing, the residents fulfill the expectation of *gebuyrten* regulations that they should watch for honorable and dishonorable behavior within the small community, which, in turn, encouraged neighbors to eavesdrop and stay aware of each other’s activities.¹⁶ Although the concept of honor functioned ideally as a means of assuring social control and stability, attempts on a daily basis to uphold one’s honor could also be subversive by pitting neighbors against each other. The particularly narrow streets in Vrel’s paintings and the pressing

proximity of the rows of houses provide ideal conditions in which to overhear conversations below, as the sound reverberated across and upward to open windows.¹⁷ However, the convivial activities and interactions in Vrel's appropriately tidy street scenes showcase the social network of honorable discourse in an ideal neighborhood.

Residents enjoyed such a strong sense of identity as insiders that they considered those streets and inhabitants outside of their own neighborhood to be strange or "other."¹⁸ Various circumstances contributed to such neighborhood insularity and identity. Residents developed well-trodden, fixed routes in which they essentially privatized aspects of the public space where they felt at home and which signaled to them their own neighborhood.¹⁹ Further, many individuals operated their trades and shops from their homes, which generally limited the need for anyone to access goods and services from outside the neighborhood.²⁰ As a result, it was not unusual to find residents who had never set foot in one or more of the other neighborhoods in the same city.²¹

Various elements in Vrel's street scenes would have signified to the viewer the characteristic insularity of neighborhood insiders. The figures who chat among themselves in nine of Vrel's paintings capture the familiarity and ease typically shared among neighborhood residents (figs. 1–5, 7).²² Their physical proximity in mostly pairs or small groups, their orientation vis-à-vis each other, their stances and gestures—collectively referred to as "proxemics"²³—determine the congenial nature of their social exchange.

The figures' face-to-face engagement, casual conversation, and body language represent actions and gestures that would have evoked in the viewer the "ritualized indications of alignment"²⁴ of the honorable neighborhood's social connections. As residents of the pictured small community, the figures take part in "anchored or pegged relations" in which there is "the establishment of a framework of mutual knowing."²⁵ Anchored or pegged relations presuppose a shared and reciprocal association acknowledged in ritual greetings or other signs between individuals.²⁶ Such connections typically stem directly from shared membership in social institutions, including the family, the workplace, and neighborhoods.²⁷ Individuals in these relationships have an awareness of the conditions under which they deem interaction of any number of kinds as expected, required, and reciprocal²⁸—an awareness understood as the bedrock of a neighborhood's regulations and ethos.

As seen in Vrel's paintings, such ritual greetings, gestures, and actions, or "tie-signs," constitute the deeds, body language and facial expression, which convey the presence of ties between individuals. Tie-signs construct a "language of



Figure 6. Jacobus Vrel, *Corner of a Town with a Bakery*, oil on panel, 35 x 28 cm. Private collection, New York. Photo: Private Collection/Giraudon/The Bridgeman Art Library (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 7. Jacobus Vrel, *A Conversation in the Street*, ca. 1654–62, oil on panel, 35.6 x 27.9 cm. Private collection. Photo: Private Collection/Johnny van Haefen, Ltd., London/The Bridgeman Art Library (artwork in the public domain)

relationships” without being “messages . . . communication or expressions” themselves.²⁹ They afford knowledge that a relationship exists and they depend on the social context in which they appear.³⁰ In this sense, the neighborhood setting in Vrel’s paintings situates the figures’ tie-signs within that social context and informs their meaning in specific ways that are different from the same tie-signs in another milieu.

The portrayed gestures of physical engagement, as well as the signified sounds of the figures’ voices implied by such tie-signs in Vrel’s paintings, would have been readily familiar to residents of neighborhoods. The voices of individuals, like the sounds of animals, had much greater prominence in seventeenth-century communities than in our machine-infused present. Human sounds, as signified in Vrel’s paintings, had the most meaningful consequence of all “temporal markers” within “the urban soundscape [which] formed a complex semiotic system . . . with its own grammar and syntax.”³¹ Owing to the lack of loud environmental sounds of more than 70 decibels (excluding barking dogs), conversations in- or outdoors assumed a particularly significant presence and resonance.³²

In addition to residents’ idiosyncratic voices, temporal markers within a neighborhood included other distinctive sounds. Vrel’s scenes depict signifiers of familiar auditory temporal markers. According to David Garrioch, those additional neighborhood sounds helped to shape “people’s sense of urban space. . . . The sighted . . . whether aware of it or not, used sound to situate themselves. A barking dog, a rooster, the rattle of shutters, a fountain or the clanging of a bucket in a nearby well were spatial markers to those who knew the neighborhood.”³³

Such shared sounds, also referred to as local “soundmarks,”³⁴ were akin to physical landmarks in their identification with a specific place. Local soundmarks specific to a neighborhood contributed to a recognizable—even predictable—environment, which helped to define its parameters. As Garrioch observed, they constituted

“spatial markers to those who knew the neighborhood. . . . Those who belonged to a particular neighborhood recognized [their] sounds and responded in ways that outsiders did not. . . . The familiar soundscape helped create a sense of belonging: it was part of the “feel” of a particular city, town or neighborhood, a key component of people’s sense of place . . . Along with the diffuse sense of belonging created by familiarity with local noises, sound created bonds between those for whom they had meaning.”³⁵

In addition to the suggested sound of the chatting figures in some of Vrel’s paintings, local or neighborhood soundmarks inferred by other elements in his scenes include, for example, the cackle of the neighborhood chickens (figs. 2, 6), the cries of the street vendor (figs. 2, 5), a bucket clanging in a well (fig. 5), and the squeaking of the shop signs buffeted in the wind (figs. 1–3, 5).³⁶ All of Vrel’s paintings infer the soundmarks of the crunch of stones underfoot on the neighborhood street, the click-clack of steps on a tile or stone stoop, and the creaking of loose shutters.

Previous scholars have disagreed as to whether elements in Vrel’s paintings suggest a specific location or whether he constructed fictive scenes. In this context, Vrel’s repeated depiction of a bakery shop, as well as his various iterations of the shop sign, a pole with suspended golden bowls, suggest that these were meaningful signifiers to him—perhaps familiar, although not necessarily replicated, from firsthand experience—and regarded as at home in a typical neighborhood. In some of the paintings, the recurring elements appear as seen from different vantage points, which implies that the compositions depict varied directional views of one small physical area.

In three paintings Vrel prominently situated the same or a similar bakery’s outdoor display of goods at what appears to be the same, or similar, fork in a street (figs. 4–6).³⁷ The repeated depiction of the relatively prominent bakery at a fork in the road suggests that the shop had specificity and, therefore, more resonance for Vrel than just that of a generic motif or a means by which he could pictorially identify with the artfulness of the baker.³⁸

In three paintings Vrel also repeated the shop sign, which one sees from different vantage points, that consists of a pole from which hang golden bowls³⁹ (figs. 2–3, 5). Vrel’s repetition of this sign—like his multiple depictions of the baker’s shop—calls attention to itself and suggests that the shop sign with suspended bowls had resonance for him in some way, including his possible familiarity with the physical prototype.

The pole with hanging bowls identifies the shop of a barber⁴⁰ or a barber-surgeon,⁴¹ who used the basins while bleeding clients to relieve a high fever and to establish equilibrium among the body's fluids.⁴² Barber-surgeons, like surgeons, were often well-to-do and highly trained professionals, whose status sometimes warranted their appointment to positions in city government.⁴³ Such esteem may explain Vrel's repetition of the barber-surgeon's shop sign, which informed the neighborhood scenes with additional respectability.

The other shop signs in six of Vrel's paintings depict "a key . . . a hand, a bird," which may be a swan, "a crescent, [and] a star"⁴⁴ (figs. 1–3, 5).⁴⁵ Such imagery appeared on actual seventeenth-century shop signs but often did not correspond in any way to the particular type of trade or business practiced at a given location.⁴⁶ Instead, such signs functioned as shop advertisements and as directional indicators in lieu of house and building numbers, which had yet to be adopted as a system to designate addresses.⁴⁷

In the early modern period, shop signs as well as house signs, such as gable stones (*gevelsteen*), played a significant role in reinforcing identity and unity within neighborhoods. The significance of that role calls further attention to the shop signs in Vrel's paintings. Even though actual shop-sign imagery typically did not reference the trade practiced or the goods sold in respective businesses, residents of the neighborhoods in which the shop signs appeared shared a familiarity with their imagery that excluded outsiders, who would have found the signage inexplicable.⁴⁸ According to Garrioch, the imagery on neighborhood shop signs functioned for residents "to distinguish insiders from the outsiders. . . . A ready grasp of these landmarks—particularly if the name was not written on the sign—marked off those who belonged from those who did not. . . . In this sense [shop signs] were impenetrable to the outsider, part of the common neighborhood knowledge which defined and bound the local community."⁴⁹ A viewer of Vrel's paintings would have recognized in the depicted shop signs an additional pictorial signifier of a neighborhood and its sense of insular, shared community.

More specifically, the significance and value of shop signs lay in two roles. First, according to Garrioch, they functioned as "landmarks of local history" in that they "spoke of the background, personality, and the local standing of the shopkeeper or house owner, even of the family who possessed the property. . . . To someone who had grown up in the vicinity, old signs were familiar faces, reminders of the people who had lived behind them; and newer [shop signs] told of new arrivals."⁵⁰ Additionally, shop signs provided residents of a neighborhood "significant landmarks of the local topography, not for finding one's way, but to structure and describe the urban environment."⁵¹

The sign on the bakers' shops in two paintings (figs. 4 and 5) that reads "this house is t[o rent]"⁵² would also have been a commonplace sight in neighborhoods. Owing to waves of immigration, the significant population increase in the Northern Netherlands resulted in numerous individuals and families who rented a room, an attic, a cellar, or an entire house. Neighborhoods regarded renters, just as much as homeowners, as members of their *gebuurten*, who participated fully in the life of the small communities.⁵³

Vrel's paintings signify the status quo of a model neighborhood of insiders by virtue of what they exclude as much as what they depict. Although *gebuurten* regulations and documented violations by residents attest to the enduring problem of dirty streets and unkempt house fronts,⁵⁴ Vrel's scenes consistently present clean roads and facades. His paintings also exclude any evidence of the high population density and resulting cacophony of noise in Dutch neighborhoods, where immigrants flocked in great numbers. Similarly, although neighborhoods offered the natural forum for rowdy disagreements among residents, notably no verbal or physical altercation plays out in Vrel's scenes. His paintings lack any suggestion of the obstacles facing someone who actually walked on a neighborhood street or alley. As a result, Vrel's paintings visually fortified and helped shape the prescribed values of the Dutch neighborhood, which reverberated in the viewers' entangled experiences and memories of such lived as well as painted scenes.

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With great respect, this essay is dedicated to Alison McNeil Kettering, whose publications have contributed significantly to our field as exemplary models of scholarly excellence.

Linda Stone-Ferrier, Professor and Chair of the Art History Department at the University of Kansas, has published on Rembrandt, landscapes, and genre imagery in *The Art Bulletin*, *Art History*, and elsewhere, including in the exhibition catalogue *Gabriel Metsu* (Dublin: National Gallery of Ireland; Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum; and Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art). Her current book project examines the neighborhood in seventeenth-century Dutch art and culture.

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¹ I am preparing a book-length study entitled *The Neighborhood in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art and Culture*.

² Herman Roodenburg, “Naar een etnografie van de vroegmoderne stad: de ‘gebuyrten’ in Leiden en Den Haag,” in *Cultuur en maatschappij in Nederland 1500–1850: Een historisch-antropologisch perspectief*, ed. Peter te Boekhorst, Peter Burke, and Willem Frijhoff (Meppel and Heerlen: Boom and Open Universiteit, 1992), 224. Gabrielle Dorren, “Communities within the Community: Aspects of Neighbourhood in Seventeenth-Century Haarlem,” *Urban History* 25, no. 2 (August 1998): 180.

³ Roodenburg, “Naar een etnografie,” 221, 224, 229, 234, 239. Dorren, “Communities,” 180, 183. Llewellyn Bogaers, “Geleund over de onderdeur: Doorkijkes in het Utrechtse buurtleven van de vroege middeleeuwen tot in de zeventiende eeuw,” *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 112 (1997): 336.

⁴ Roodenburg, “Naar een etnografie,” 221, 224. Dorren, “Communities within the Community,” 177. Bogaers, “Geleund over de onderdeur,” 349, 357, 359. Catherina Lis and Hugo Soly, “Neighborhood Social Change in Western European Cities,” *International Review of Social History* 38 (1993): 7.

⁵ Roodenburg, “Naar een etnografie,” 233, 239.

⁶ Roodenburg, “Naar een etnografie,” 224, 234. Bogaers, “Geleund over de onderdeur,” 340–42, 348.

⁷ Bogaers, “Geleund over de onderdeur,” 346.

⁸ Roodenburg, “Naar een etnografie,” 222–24. Historians, sociologists, and social psychologists employ the terms “social control” and “social networks” referenced in this paragraph. Scholars speak of early modern neighborhoods in terms of the “theory of social control,” “social consciousness and collective identity,” and “social exchange.” Neighborhoods constituted “a social network” and a “safety net” contingent upon reciprocity and a community of solidarity. Peter Spierenburg, “Social Control and History: An Introduction,” in *Social Control in Europe 1500–1800*, ed. Herman Roodenburg and Peter Spierenburg (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2004), 2–3, 5ff. Lis and Soly, “Neighborhood Social Change,” 3, 8–9, 11–12, 15, 30.

⁹ Although no documents identify Vrel’s hometown or professional trajectory, scholars liken his subject matter and style to that of Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675) in Delft and Claes (Nicolaes) Fransz. Hals (1628–1686) in Haarlem.

¹⁰ See also: *Street Scene with a Couple in Conversation*, oil on panel, private collection, New York (Yahoo images: <http://uk.images.search.yahoo.com/images/view>); *Street Scene with Six Figures*, oil on panel, 36 x 27.5 cm, private collection, New York (Carry van Lakerveld, ed., *Opkomst en bloei van het Noordnederlandse stadsgezicht in de zeventiende eeuw*, exh. cat. [Amsterdam: Historisch Museum/Stadsdrukkerij, and Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1977], 238–39, cat. no. 132); *Street Scene with Two Figures Walking Away*, oil on panel, 36.3 x 27.8 cm, private collection, New York (Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie, illustration 3653); *Street Scene: The Key*, medium and dimensions unknown, C. Roelofsz., Amsterdam (Elizabeth Honig, “Looking in(to) Jacob Vrel,” *Yale Journal of Criticism* 3, no. 1 [1989]: 57, fig. 1); and *Street Scene with a Gateway* (Douwes Fine Art, London). Elizabeth Honig observed that the latter painting includes the only figure peering out of a window in Vrel’s oeuvre, who cannot be identified as a baker. Honig, “Looking in(to) Jacob Vrel,” 48 (not illus.). “[*The Street Scene* in Hamburg; fig. 4 here] also exists in a variant (Jerusalem, Israel Museum) and a replica. . . . There are also possibly autograph copies of . . . *The Street Scene with Two Figures Walking Away*.” Honig, “Looking in(to) Jacob Vrel,” 44, 53, n. 7 (not illus.).

¹¹ Honig, “Looking in(to) Jacob Vrel,” 39–40, 53, n. 7.

¹² Honig, “Looking in(to) Jacob Vrel,” 43.

¹³ See also *Street Scene with Six Figures* and *Street Scene: The Key* (note 10 above).

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ See also *Street Scene with a Gateway* (note 10 above). Honig proposed that the half-length figures in windows—mostly bakers—are “surrogate[s] . . . for the artist himself.” Honig, “Looking in(to) Jacob Vrel,” 46. I expand the surrogacy to include all beholders of the paintings.

¹⁶ Dorren, “Communities within the Community,” 178.

¹⁷ “People could hear others talking some distance away, especially from the upper stories. Neighbors conversed across the street and quarreled noisily.” David Garrioch, “Sounds of the City: The Soundscape of Early Modern European Towns,” *Urban History* 30, no. 1 (2003): 8.

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- ¹⁹ Roodenburg, “Naar een etnografie,” 232, 233, n. 47. Lyn Lofland, *A World of Strangers: Order and Action in Urban Public Space* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 118. Howard Hallman, *Neighbourhoods: Their Place in Urban Life*, Sage Library of Social Research 154 (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1984), 47–48.
- ²⁰ Roodenburg, “Naar een etnografie,” 232.
- ²¹ Roodenburg, “Naar een etnografie,” 232 n. 45.
- ²² See also *Street Scene with a Couple in Conversation*; *Street Scene with Six Figures*; and *Street Scene with Two Figures Walking Away* (note 10 above).
- ²³ Quentin Stevens, *The Ludic City: Exploring the Potential of Public Spaces* (London and New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2007), 54.
- ²⁴ Erving Goffman, *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order* (New York: Basic Books, 1971), 225, 235, 237.
- ²⁵ Goffman, *Relations in Public*, 189.
- ²⁶ Goffman, *Relations in Public*, 205, 210.
- ²⁷ Goffman, *Relations in Public*, 205.
- ²⁸ Goffman, *Relations in Public*, 190.
- ²⁹ Goffman, *Relations in Public*, 195, 225, 237.
- ³⁰ Goffman, *Relations in Public*, 194, 197.
- ³¹ Garrioch, “Sounds of the City,” 10, 14, 20, 25.
- ³² Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 58. Garrioch, “Sounds of the City,” 8, n. 7.
- ³³ Garrioch, “Sounds of the City,” 14.
- ³⁴ Barry Truax, *Acoustic Communication* (Norwood, N. J.: Ablex Publishing, 1984), 76–77.
- ³⁵ Garrioch, “Sounds of the City,” 14 n. 41, 15. Truax, *Acoustic Communication*, 76–77. Smith, *Acoustic World*, 46–48.
- ³⁶ See also *Street Scene with Six Figures* and *Street Scene: The Key* (note 10 above).
- ³⁷ A smaller bakery also appears in the Getty painting (fig. 2).
- ³⁸ See note 15.
- ³⁹ Honig, “Looking in(to) Jacob Vrel,” 43.
- ⁴⁰ Lakerveld, *Opkomst en bloei van het Noordnederlandse stadsgezicht*, 236, cat. no. 131.
- ⁴¹ Bryant Lillywhite, *London Signs: A Reference Book of London Signs from Earliest Times to about Mid-Nineteenth Century* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1972), 23–24. Peter R. Christoph, “Barber-Surgeons in New Netherland and Early New York,” in *Explorers, Fortunes and Love Letters*, ed. Martha Dickinson Shattuck (Albany, N.Y.: New

Netherland Institute, 2009), 59.

⁴² Christoph, “Barber-Surgeons,” 59–60, 69.

⁴³ Christoph, “Barber-Surgeons,” 64–66.

⁴⁴ Honig, “Looking in(to) Jacob Vrel,” 43.

⁴⁵ See also *Street Scene with Six Figures* and *Street Scene: The Key* (note 10 above).

⁴⁶ The imagery on shop signs for taverns and inns usually offered the exception to this generalization because they drew travelers who passed through neighborhoods unfamiliar to them. However, the signs for inns and taverns also constituted meaningful local landmarks for neighborhood residents. David Garrioch, “House Names, Shop Signs and Social Organisation in Western European Cities 1500–1900,” *Urban History* 21 (1994): 24, 46.

⁴⁷ Garrioch, “House Names,” 22.

⁴⁸ Garrioch, “House Names,” 35, 39.

⁴⁹ Garrioch, “House Names,” 36.

⁵⁰ Garrioch, “House Names,” 36.

⁵¹ Garrioch, “House Names,” 36.

⁵² Fig. 4: *dit huis te verhuren*; Fig. 5: *dit huys is thr. Lakerveld, Opkomst en bloei van het Nooornederlandse stadsgezicht*, 236, cat. no. 131. Honig, “Looking in(to) Jacob Vrel,” 50.

⁵³ Roodenburg, “Naar een etnografie,” 224. Neighborhoods in The Hague, Leiden, and Haarlem, for example, required renters to make a financial contribution to the *gebuyrten*; however, the Utrecht neighborhood *Onder de Snippevlucht* (“Under the snipe’s flight”) eventually did not. Bogaers, “Geleund over de onderdeur,” 349, 357, 359.

⁵⁴ Roodenburg, “Naar een etnografie,” 239, n. 67. Bogaers, “Geleund over de onderdeur,” 340.

ODD MAN OUT: NICOLAES ELIASZ PICKENOY AND AMSTERDAM HISTORY PAINTING IN THE 1630s AND 1640s

Eric Jan Sluijter

The author examines the few known history paintings by Nicolaes Elias Pickenoy, portrait painter of the Amsterdam elite. These paintings would have been exceptional commissions, the religious ones probably for the Lutheran church. Pickenoy turned for support to late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century prints, but he transformed the borrowed compositions and motifs into paintings that deviated sharply from the styles that were fashionable in Amsterdam of the 1630s and 1640s. The paintings (of which the *Diana and Actaeon* had been attributed to Caesar van Everdingen and is here securely identified as a work by Pickenoy) demonstrate a self-consciously “academic” manner at the moment that Rembrandt’s dominance was at its peak.

The styles that developed in Amsterdam history painting in the 1630s and 1640s were of a stunning variety. Beginning in the early 1630s, when the market for paintings was hugely expanding, a group of highly talented and aspiring young artists started their careers in Amsterdam; in this rapidly changing market each of them had to secure his own place and make a living. To those young men the situation must have felt comparable to Karel van Mander’s description of circumstances in Rome in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century; a time, Van Mander stated, when prospering and art-loving patrons gave rise to a “positive battle [among painters] to be the fastest runner, while a burning diligence was fired, jealousy began to move its black wings in secrecy, and everyone did his best to win the highest price.”¹

In 1630 Bartholomeus Breenbergh returned from Rome and began to depict mostly biblical scenes in his novel type of Italianate landscapes. In 1633 Rembrandt and Jacob Backer settled in Amsterdam, both having instant success with their portraits, but simultaneously making ambitious and highly innovative history paintings. The young Govert Flinck came to Amsterdam around the same time and started as an independent painter in 1635, after having learned Rembrandt’s successful style, “because Rembrandt’s manner was so generally praised at that time that everything had to be done along that line if one wanted to please the world,”² as Arnold Houbraken would later affirm. Joachim von Sandrart arrived in Amsterdam in 1637 and soon managed to receive important commissions for portraits and history paintings from the upper echelons of society (until his departure in 1645), using a bright “Italian” manner as different as possible from Rembrandt’s. Salomon Koninck started his career sometime in the 1630s as well, while in the first years of the 1640s Ferdinand Bol, Gerbrand van den Eeckhout, and Jan Victors appeared on the scene, all of them developing their own recognizably different variations on the manner of Rembrandt.

When these young men came rushing in, a group of older painters was still successfully working away, many of whom achieved the peak of their production in the 1630s and 1640s: Nicolaes Moyaert, who kept to the same “Lastman-lite” manner during his whole life; Adriaen van Nieulandt, who worked from around 1610 into the 1650s in a style that barely changed and still showed characteristics of late Mannerism, and Isaac Isaacs, who had studied with Rubens in the early 1620s and was the first to introduce in Amsterdam a type of painting that depended on Rubens’s example. Apart from those painters there were a few outsiders, specialists in other fields, who now and then made surprisingly original history paintings: in particular, Pieter Codde, specialist in merry companies, and the portrait painters Thomas de Keyser and Nicolaes Eliasz Pickenoy.

No one has ever paid much attention to the few history paintings by Pickenoy's hand, though they are of an evident quality and striking exceptionality in many respects. Since Alison Kettering, with her groundbreaking book of 1983, *The Dutch Arcadia*, magisterially gave new life to a fascinating category of Dutch painting that had been passed over by art history, it seems appropriate to present her with a short exploration of this unfamiliar, but surprising corner of history painting in Amsterdam's Golden Age. In so doing, I will demonstrate that a self-consciously "academic" manner never died in Amsterdam history painting, even at the height of Rembrandt's success.

Portraitist of the Amsterdam Elite

Born in Amsterdam, Pickenoy (1588–1650/56), like so many artists of his generation, was of Southern Netherlandish descent. His parents were both from Antwerp and lived in the Warmoesstraat behind the Oude Kerk.³

It is not known who his teacher was; a likely candidate is the most successful portrait painter of an older generation, Cornelis van der Voort. Pickenoy might have had some training in depicting histories through making copies in Van der Voort's workshop after works by such painters as Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem and Pieter Lastman; this must have been a current practice there.⁴ Pickenoy became the favorite portraitist of the regent elite—no other artist painted so many militia and regent pieces as he did. His earliest dated portrait stems from 1617, but the high point of his career was in the 1630s, when he painted numerous portraits, among them the impressive full-lengths of the most powerful man of Amsterdam, Cornelis de Graeff, and his wife, Catharina Hooft (1636).⁵ In 1637 he bought the large house on the corner of the Anthoniebreestraat and the Anthoniesluis, where Hendrick Uylenburgh had resided since 1625 and which was originally the house and workshop of Cornelis van der Voort. As S. A. C. Dudok van Heel concluded, this house, which was situated next to the house that Rembrandt would buy in 1639, must have functioned for about thirty years as a workshop for the production of portraits.⁶ For six years Pickenoy was Rembrandt's neighbour, but in 1645 he sold the house for 9,000 guilders; in 1647 he is mentioned as living on the Singel.⁷ It was in the 1630s and early 1640s that he also painted a few monumental history paintings. As was the case with the history paintings of his colleague Thomas de Keyser, his works in this category would have been special commissions.

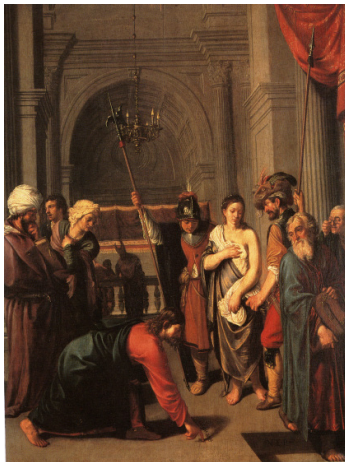


Figure 1. Nicolaes Elias Pickenoy, *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, ca. 1630–35, oil on panel, 70 x 53 cm. Utrecht, Museum Catharijneconvent, inv. no. RMCC S14 (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 2. Nicolaes Elias Pickenoy, *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, oil on canvas, 148 x 201 cm (originally ca. 280 cm high). Aachen, Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum, inv. no. 141 (lost in WW II) (artwork in the public domain)

Lutheran Commissions: Surprisingly Innovative with the Support of Old Prints

We know that Pickenoy's most important still extant history painting, *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, now in the Catharijneconvent (Utrecht), was originally in the possession of the Old Lutheran Church in Amsterdam (fig. 1).⁸ There also existed a much larger version of the same composition, formerly in Aachen but lost in World War II (fig. 2). Of the latter painting only a reproduction exists in a cut down version—it must originally have measured about 280 x 201 cm. When compared with the original composition—the Utrecht painting—one may conclude that it was cropped approximately 130 cm at the top. It seems likely that both paintings were commissioned when the Old Lutheran Church was built (the church was finished in 1633).⁹ Paul Dirkse argued convincingly that Pickenoy must have had contacts with prominent Lutherans. In particular, a certain Henrick van Tweeënhuizen, who donated a substantial sum for the building of the Lutheran Church, might have played a role

in this commission.¹⁰ It is possible that the small painting hung in one of the two meeting chambers of the church. According to Dirkse the subject was of specific interest for Lutherans, because it exemplifies Luther's notion of mercy, which was fundamentally different from that of the Catholic Church¹¹ (and from that of the Calvinists as well, as Dudok van Heel remarked).¹²

Dirkse pointed out that Pickenoy borrowed the composition as a whole, as well as specific motifs—such as the pose of the woman at the left, the bearded man with a book at the right border, and the two soldiers (especially the one half turning around)—from a woodcut by Maarten van Heemskerck (fig. 3).¹³ For the classicist architectural background, an arch with a view into a barrel vaulted chapel fronted by a temple curtain, Dirkse suggested as a possible model an engraving by Hieronymus Wierix after Maarten de Vos. Pickenoy must also, however, have consulted a print by Jan Baptist Barbé after De Vos (fig. 4).¹⁴ From this work he took the attitude of the adulterous woman herself, as well as an old man holding his glasses while peering at Christ writing on the floor (at the right in Pickenoy's painting). De Vos had obviously based his composition on Van Heemskerck's woodcut, and it is clear that Pickenoy studied both compositionally related prints when he executed this commission.



Figure 3. Maarten van Heemskerck, *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, woodcut, 23.5 x 19 cm (Hollstein, no. 372) (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 4. Jan Baptist Barbé after Maarten de Vos, *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, engraving, 18.0 x 21.5 cm (Hollstein, no. 302) (artwork in the public domain)

The resulting painting, however, is highly original and was very unusual in Amsterdam of the 1630s. Nothing recalls Lastman, Moyaert, or the then highly fashionable Rembrandt, nor any other Amsterdam painter at that time. Pickenoy used the severe classicist architecture of gray natural stone, constructed with a precise perspective, to create a well-organized, surveyable stage for the carefully outlined figures. He transformed the restless figures of Van Heemskerck and the Mannerist ones of De Vos into static, classically proportioned figures that act with a minimum of movement and gestures and are situated in two well-balanced groups. Simple but well-painted drapery emphasizes the verticality and the tranquil composure of the group. A strong light comes from the left, causing the figure of Christ to cast a heavy shadow on the floor. The figure types recall in some respects—the specific style of the turbans, the extravagantly feathered hat of the soldier, the old man with the glasses—figures by Hendrick ter Brugghen, but they act within a totally different kind of ambiance.¹⁵ When it was placed in the Old (then brand new) Lutheran Church in the mid-1630s (assuming that this was indeed the case), the large version, in which Pickenoy blew up the figures to a life-size format and strengthened the impression of symmetry by adding a woman at the left, must have been perceived as something strikingly different from what one was used to at that moment.

Rembrandt's painting of 1644 of the same subject underlines the divergence of views on how to make a history painting (fig. 5). The author of a curious pamphlet on painting and architecture published in 1628, the unknown artist Jacques de Ville, would have been very satisfied with Pickenoy's painting. De Ville's main point was that painters should be able to make a geometrically constructed architectural setting as a stage for their correctly proportioned and well-drawn figures—without any display of a specific *handeling*.¹⁶ De Ville fulminated against painters who considered a specific manner of painting more important than correct drawing and whose art was, in his view, without

any foundation (*sonder fondament*), by which he meant that they did not place their figures in a clearly constructed space. Such artists know nothing about correct perspective and proportions, he claimed. They only paint “two or three figures, grouped together and painted closely from life with stopped light” (*gestopt licht*, by which he means the suggestion of three-dimensional space by spotlighting figures against a dark background), “so that one sees a lot of brownishness.”¹⁷



Figure 5. Rembrandt, *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, 1644, oil on panel, 83.8 x 65.4 cm. London, The National Gallery, inv. no. 45 (artwork in the public domain)

The thrust of De Ville’s criticism would have concerned, first of all, followers of Caravaggio, but Rembrandt’s work also contained everything that De Ville abhorred. For example, in Rembrandt’s *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, linear perspective does not play a role in the construction of the huge and mysterious temple space; it is suggested through the magnificent interplay of light, shadow, and color, through *schikschaduw* (shadows to arrange one’s *ordonnance*), through *houding* (the subtle shifting of color and tone to create a suggestion of space), and through a very specific manner of painting, employing *kenlijkheid* (relief in the paint texture in the parts of the composition on which the eye focuses) and more thinly applied paint in the figures as they recede.¹⁸ The proportions of the figures’ anatomy are certainly not according to the rules De Ville would have favored, but close to the viewer’s world of experience. In light of De Ville’s criticism, we might consider Pickenoy’s painting to be representative of a conservatism that simultaneously heralded a new alternative to the more current, and at that moment more fashionable, “from life” ideology.¹⁹



Figure 6. Nicolaes Elias Pickenoy, *Last Judgment*, oil on canvas, 158 x 254 cm. Cádiz, Museo de Belles Artes, inv. no. CE 20039 (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 7. Nicolaes Elias Pickenoy, *Last Judgment*, oil on panel, 91.5 x 90 cm. Sale, Phillips, London, July 10, 1990, no. 57 (artwork in the public domain)

One wonders whether Pickenoy's two paintings of the *Last Judgment* were made for the same Lutheran church as well. As is the case with the *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, there exist two versions of this work, a large one, measuring 158 x 254 cm, and a much smaller one of 91.5 x 90 cm (figs. 6 and 7).²⁰ That Joris van Schooten had painted a *Last Judgment* for a Lutheran church in Leiden (where the painting is still in situ), combined with the fact that this was not a very popular subject among the Dutch in the seventeenth century, makes this a plausible assumption. In 1742 a *Last Judgment* by Pickenoy was sold for 30 guilders.²¹ Did the church dispose of the painting at some point because of changes in the interior of the building—for example, when a new organ was installed in 1690?²² (Or was it because all those tumbling nudes were too distracting for the devout community?)

The composition follows the traditional arrangement, for which Pickenoy undoubtedly had a good look at late sixteenth-century prints of the *Last Judgment*. However, unlike the *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*, the *Amorous Gods*, and the *Diana and Actaeon* to be discussed below, I did not come across a print that clearly supplied most of the motifs. It comes closest to a print after Crispijn van den Broeck (fig. 8),²³ where we find in the foreground a similar man with a shroud on his head, a man seen from the back at the left, and above him a woman with raised arms. The central position of the angel with two companions at both sides blowing the trumpets of doom is unusual; they take the position of Christ, who has become a tiny figure appearing in a blaze of light. With great competence Pickenoy updated the sixteenth-century disposition by using a low viewpoint and modeling the solid figures with strong contrasts in light and shadow. Simultaneously, he carefully observed from life the anatomy of the male bodies, while the smoothly painted, robust female bodies are drawn with taut contours. We do not know anything about its reception, but this painting must have been an exceptional presence in Amsterdam of the 1630s, and one would expect that it made a great impression.



Figure 8. Anonymous after Crispijn van den Broeck, *Last Judgment*, engraving, 31.5 x 23.0 cm (Hollstein, no. 143) (artwork in the public domain)

Even Erotically Charged Nudes

As unexpected as the other two works is a life-size nude amorous couple with, in the background, a banquet of the gods (fig. 9). In this case an engraving by Jacob Matham of circa 1600–1605 (Matham's own invention) was the direct starting point for the general composition, as well as for many specific details (fig. 10). Not only the amorous couple but also many of the merry-making gods in the background (they certainly are Olympian gods; we can recognize Mercury, Ceres, and Jupiter) and the music-making Muses in the middle ground are very similar. The subject is as unclear as in Matham's engraving; in both pictures the love-making couple remained unspecified.²⁴ Pickenoy put a rose in the woman's hand, which reminds the viewer immediately of Venus. The man, however, seems to be too

young to be Mars.



Figure 9. Nicolaes Eliasz Pickenoy, *Amorous Couple and Banquet of the Gods*, oil on canvas, 150 x 110 cm. London, Colnaghi, 1992 (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 10. Jacob Matham, *Amorous Couple and Banquet of the Gods*, engraving, 22.9 x 17.5 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (Holstein, no. 216; Bartsch, no. 21) (artwork in the public domain)

Pickenoy transformed Matham's stylized couple into painted figures with a convincing lifelikeness—altering the posture of the love-making woman, placing her more upright with one leg slung over her lover's knee, as if taking the initiative of actively kissing the young male god.²⁵ This change enhances the erotic charge of the subject, which was already emphatically present in the print by Matham. Pickenoy also changed the print's long-legged Mannerist-type Venus: she has become a broad shouldered and quite sturdy, but classically proportioned, woman. The man sits in exactly the same pose as in Matham's print, but his body has become very different: the shape and detailing of his back, thigh, and foot demonstrates that Pickenoy obviously studied a life model to get things right. By elaborating on the borrowed motif of the basket with fruit in the foreground, Pickenoy demonstrated that he was a competent still-life painter as well.

From several texts we know that not everybody considered such nudes to be an acceptable subject for paintings. In this case we can even point to a poem written by hand under this print by Matham (probably penned shortly after the engraving was made): "Tell me, what is the use of such a lascivious print? / Is it meant to present this randy lust as an example? / This should be far from us; God loves virtue; knock over this print / Do not follow these gods, but God the All-highest."²⁶ Such moralistic lines of poetry echo the conventional condemnations in religious circles.²⁷ Obviously, there were many art lovers who greatly enjoyed such subjects; they had been produced in considerable numbers in paintings and prints between about 1590 and the 1620s and would again become popular in painting around 1650. Pickenoy's work, which was probably painted in the 1630s or early 1640s, is exceptional not only because of its large format but also because of its blatant sexuality and its smooth, colorful style. It seems to be a harbinger of the nudes by Jacob van Loo, whose amorous couple of the early 1650s in the Rijksmuseum looks like a follow up (albeit on a much smaller format) of this painting.²⁸

As a matter of fact, the *Amorous Couple* and the *Last Judgment* were not Pickenoy's only paintings with nudes, since he portrayed a "Bath of Diana with Actaeon" as well, which was sold at a sale in 1743.²⁹ This must be the striking painting that, tellingly, was attributed to the much younger painter Caesar van Everdingen, but for which also the names of Jacob van Campen, Carel van Savoyen, and Cornelis Holsteyn have been proposed (fig. 11).³⁰ The unusual measurements mentioned in the eighteenth-century sale fit this oblong panel, and we recognize the same type of sturdy, smoothly painted female bodies seen in the *Amorous Couple*. More than any other artist who depicted this popular subject, Pickenoy kept close to a well-known print from the *Metamorphoses* series by Antonio Tempesta (fig. 12),³¹ which is in accordance with his method of working. However, he placed the women in mirror image, but kept the figure of Actaeon striding in the same direction, so that the latter is fleeing instead of turning toward Diana. A comparison of this work, which would have been painted in the late 1630s or early 1640s, with two paintings of the

same subject by David Colijns (1639 and 1641, respectively) (fig. 13),³² an Amsterdam painter of quite modest talent, and with Rembrandt's spectacular painting of *Diana and Actaeon and Callisto* of 1634 (fig. 14), not only demonstrates how artists of extremely diverse capacities painted the same subject but also the huge variety of styles extant at that time. All of them employed motifs from one or more prints of this popular subject—Rembrandt creatively marshaling motifs from a whole range of prints he had stored in his mind when devising his brilliant composition,³³ Pickenoy employing one print for support, and Colijns “rapend” wherever it suited him; the results could not be more different.



Figure 11. Nicolaes Elias Pickenoy, *Diana and Actaeon*, oil on panel, 61 x 122 cm. Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, inv. no. 55.045 (as Caesar van Everdingen) (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 12. Antonio Tempesta, *Diana and Actaeon*, etching, 9.7 x 11.5 cm (From: *Metamorphoseon sive transformationum Ovidii libri XV* [Antwerp: P. de Jode, 1606], no. 25) (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 13. David Colijns, *Diana and Her Nymphs Surprised by Actaeon*, 1641, oil on canvas, 99 x 131 cm. Whereabouts unknown (coll. Baron Reedts-Thott, 1914, Gauno) (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 14. Rembrandt, *Diana and Actaeon and Callisto*, 1634, oil on canvas, 73.5 x 93.5 cm. Anholt, Museum Wasserburg, Collection Fürst zu Salm-Salm, inv. no. 391 (artwork in the public domain)

One of Many Divergent Styles in Amsterdam in the 1630s and 1640s

With the few history paintings that he produced, Pickenoy demonstrated that he was a remarkably capable painter of histories who did not follow any other history painter of that time, but, on the contrary, added significantly to the strikingly wide range of different styles evident in the 1630s. Although he leaned heavily on prints to support him in the few cases when he had to devise the composition of a history painting, the result was truly divergent from what others did. For him, this practice does not seem to have been a matter of conscious creative imitation of earlier examples, as it was for Rembrandt, but of needing help in a field with which he was not very familiar. Taking as points of

departure late sixteenth- or early seventeenth-century prints, he simplified the compositions and changed the shapes of the bodies into sturdy, classically proportioned figures, very unlike Rembrandt's bodies, the silhouettes of which follow the fashion in contemporary dress. To this he added details which show, in the case of the male bodies, that he, like Rembrandt, studied from life models. Pickenoy, however, stylized these models with clear and taut outlines and smoothly painted surfaces; the quite heavy contrasts between light and shade were used to give them a powerful relief. Thus he managed to create a style that was simultaneously conservative while pointing to new directions. Unlike Adriaen van Nieulandt, who lived at the opposite side of the same street and was, apart from Rembrandt, the only one who depicted nudes in this period, Pickenoy did not get stuck in a limp and half-heartedly updated version of late Mannerist history painting, nor did he follow Lastman's or Rembrandt's style. When looking at his paintings we realize that "academic" trends, which would return in full force in the 1650s with artists of a younger generation, never vanished, not even in the 1630s and 1640s, when Rembrandt's highly innovative and temporarily fashionable manner was dominant.

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¹ Karel van Mander, “Het Leven der Doorluchtighe Nederlandtsche en Hooghduytsche Schilders,” in *Het Schilder-Boeck* (Haarlem: Paschier van Wesbusch, 1603–4), fol. 190v. After this passage follow his accounts of the Carracci, Caravaggio, etc.

² Arnold Houbraken, *De Grootte Schouburgh der Nederlantsche Konstschilders en Schilderessen* (The Hague: J. Swart, C. Boucquet, and M. Gaillard, 1753), 2:20–21.

³ His father’s profession is recorded as “wapensteensnijder,” a cutter of coats of arms in (precious) stone. The translation in the catalogue of the Rijksmuseum as “armorial stonemason” seems to me wrong (Jonathan Bikker et al., *Dutch Paintings of the Seventeenth Century in the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Vol. 1, Artists Born between 1570 and 1600* [Amsterdam and New Haven: Nieuw Amsterdam and Yale University Press, 2007], 304). For biographical information, see S. A. C. Dudok van Heel, “De schilder Nicolaes Eliasz Pickenoy (1588–1650/56) en zijn familie,” in *Liber Amico-*

rum Jhr. Mr. C.C. van Valkenburg, ed. C. P. Briët and N. Plomp (The Hague: Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie, 1985), 152–60; and J. Six, “Nicolaes Elias Pickenoy,” *Oud Holland* 4 (1886): 81–108.

⁴ We find, for example, a considerable number of copies after Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem and also copies after Lastman and Gerrit van Honthorst in the 1625 sale of paintings that Van der Voort possessed at his death. Six, “Pickenoy,” 84; and N. de Roever, “Drie Amsterdamse schilders: Pieter Isaaksz, Abraham Vinck, Cornelis van der Voort,” *Oud Holland* 3 (1885): 196–202. Orlers records that Bailly made many copies in Van der Voort’s workshop: J. J. Orlers, *Beschrijvinge der stad Leyden* (Delft and Leiden: Andries Jansz Cloeting and Abraham Commelijn, 1641), 371.

⁵ Berlin, Staatliche Museum, Gemäldegalerie, inv. nos. 753A and 753B. Cf. Rudi Ekkart in *Hollanders in beeld: Portretten uit de Gouden Eeuw*, exh. cat., ed. Rudi Ekkart and Quentin Buvelot (The Hague: Mauritshuis and London: National Gallery, 2007), 176–77.

⁶ Dudok van Heel, “Pickenoy”; also S. A. C. Dudok van Heel, *De jonge Rembrandt onder tijdgenoten* (PhD thesis, Radboud Universiteit, Nijmegen) (Rotterdam: Veenman Publishers, 2006), 74–75, 81, 199.

⁷ Dudok van Heel, “Pickenoy,” 153.

⁸ This painting was published in an article by Paul Dirkse in 1985 and later reproduced in Paul Dirkse, “Een luthers bijbelstuk door Nicolaes Elias Pickenoy,” in *Begijnen, pastoors en predikanten: Religie en kunst in de Gouden Eeuw* (Leiden: Primavera Pers, 2001), 34–38. Also see: Robert Schillemans, *Bijbelschilderkunst rond Rembrandt* (Utrecht: Kwadraat, 1989), 97–99; and Dudok van Heel, *De jonge Rembrandt*, 584–86.

⁹ Dudok van Heel, who does not have any doubt that Pickenoy received this commission when the church was being built, notes that the painting was not mentioned in Wagenaar’s city description of 1765, but records that by that time drastic changes had taken place in the interior, such as the construction of an organ at the west side of the church (see below, note 21). Dudok van Heel, *De jonge Rembrandt*, 393, n. 53.

¹⁰ Dirkse, “Een luthers bijbelstuk,” 38. This Hendrick van Tweënhuizen was the son of the wealthy Lambert van Tweehuysen whom Pickenoy portrayed in 1617; moreover Hendrick was the plaintiff in a case in which the Lutheran pastor Casparus Pfeiffer testified that a *Crucifixion* painted by Nicolaes Elias belonged to the plaintiff. The same Pfeiffer delivered the inaugural address for the church. Briels concluded from this document that the Pickenoy family was Lutheran (Jan Briels, *Vlaamse schilder en de dageraad van de Hollandse Gouden Eeuw, 1585–1630, Met biografieën als bijlage* [Antwerp: Mercatorfonds, 1997], 368), but that is too rash. Nothing in the document warrants such a conclusion. About the Tweehuysen family, see the entry by Jasper Hillegers on the painter Helmich Twenhuisen in Jasper Hillegers et al., *Salomon Lilian: Old Masters 2013* (Amsterdam and Geneva: Salomon Lilian, 2013), 74–76).

¹¹ Dirkse, “Een luthers bijbelstuk,” 37

¹² Dudok van Heel, *De jonge Rembrandt*, 384–86.

¹³ Ilja Veldman, *Maarten van Heemskerck. The New Hollstein, Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts 1450–1700* (Rotterdam: Sound & Vision, 1993), 77, no. 372.

¹⁴ Christiaan Schuckman, *Maarten de Vos*, in vol. 44, part 1, F. W. H. Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts ca. 1450–1700* (Roosendaal: Koninklijke van Poll, 1996), 79–80, no. 302.

¹⁵ For the earlier attribution, see the reproductions in the files (BD/0540-ONS/Historie 1) at the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie (RKD) in The Hague; beneath a reproduction of the painting in Aachen Frits Lugt wrote that this might be another painter with the name Nicolaes Elias, since he could not see a connection with his known works. He also wrote: “reminds of Ter Brugghen.”

¹⁶ Jacques de Ville, *T’samen-spreekinghe: Betreffende de Architecture ende Schilder-konst* (Gouda: Pieter Rammaseyn, 1628), in particular 7–13. For De Ville’s criticism, see the extensive discussion in Eric Jan Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 209–11. The pamphlet contains a dialogue between an architect-painter, a carpenter, and a “bad painter.” It advocates primarily that a good painter should also be an architect and a painter of correct architectural perspectives. However, the vehement remarks on painters who are considered unfit (but successful) makes it particularly interesting.

¹⁷ De Ville, *T'samen-spreekinghe*, 7.

¹⁸ For the terms *schikschaduw* and *kenlijk* (both used by Rembrandt's pupil Van Hoogstraten), see Ernst van de Wetering, *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 59, 126–28; and Ernst van de Wetering, *Rembrandt: The Painter at Work* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1997), 182–84. For *houding*, see Van de Wetering, *Rembrandt*, 150, 255–57; and in particular, Paul Taylor, “The Concept of *Houding* in Dutch Art Theory,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 55 (1992): 210–32. The most beautiful description is that of Sandrart; see Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude*, 214–15.

¹⁹ The different opinions must have been discussed vehemently at that time. See Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude*, chap. 6.

²⁰ There is another composition of the *Last Judgment*, existing in two versions, the one 103 x 106 cm (Pau, Musée des Beaux-Arts); the other 103 x 102.5 cm (New York, Jack Kilgore), neither of which is signed or monogrammed. I am not entirely sure about the correctness of the attribution.

²¹ Six, “Pickenoy,” 88; G. Hoet and P. Terwesten, *Catalogus of naamlijst van schilderijen met dezelve pryzen* (The Hague: Johannes Gaillard, 1752–70), 2:7.

²² The first organ was placed in 1658 at the opposite side of the pulpit. In 1690 a new organ was built, which was placed behind (above) the pulpit (J. L. J. Meiners in *The Lutheranen in Amsterdam [1588-1900]*, ed. J. Happee, J. L. J. Meinders, and M. Mostert [Hilversum: Verloren, 1988], 52). A change like that might have caused the selling of paintings.

²³ Ursula Mielke, *Crispijn van den Broeck*, The New Hollstein, Dutch and Flemish Ethings, Engravings and Woodcuts 1450–1700 (Rotterdam: Sound & Vision, 2011), 153, no. 143.

²⁴ The painting was called *Paris and Oenone* when it was with the art dealer Colnaghi in London. There are, however, no specific motifs referring to that subject (such as writing names in the tree), while the banquet of the gods in the background (without a reference to the marriage of Peleus and Thetis) makes that even more unlikely.

²⁵ About the “slung leg” motif, which would have been read as a reference to copulation, see Leo Steinberg, “The Metaphors of Love and Birth in Michelangelo’s Pietas,” in *Studies in Erotic Art*, ed. Theodore Bowie et al. (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 241–45; also Erna Kok, “Een liefdespaar onthuld: Jacob Adriaensz Backer’s zogenaamde ‘David en Bathseba’ opnieuw geïdentificeerd als ‘Isaak en Rebekka,’” *Oud Holland* 124 (2011): 128.

²⁶ “Segh mij wat nut kan doen dees geijle prent der goden? / Ist om haar dert’le lust te houden voor geboden? / T’sij ver God mint de deugt werp dan dees prent omveer; / Volght dese goden niet maar God den Opper Heer.”

²⁷ For seventeenth-century discussions concerning the depiction of the nude, see Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude*, chap. 4.

²⁸ Jacob van Loo, *Amorous Couple*, oil on canvas 47 x 37.5 cm. Amsterdam, Rijkmuseum, inv. no. A2116.

²⁹ Six, “Pickenoy,” 83; Hoet and Terwesten, *Catalogus of Naamlijst*, 2:120. The size is given as 1 foot 11 inches by 3 feet 11 inches. In the same sale a *Raising of Lazarus* by Pickenoy is also listed.

³⁰ Julius Held attributed the painting in 1983 to Van Everdingen (note in RKD files, see above note 14). In the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., it is attributed to Van Everdingen. See Eric Jan Sluijter, *De ‘heydensche fabulen’ in de schilderkunst van de Gouden Eeuw: Schilderijen met verhalende onderwerpen uit de klassieke mythologie in de Noordelijke Nederlanden, circa 1590–1670* (Leiden: Primavera, 2000), 81, 111, 258, fig. 274 (as anonymous [Van Everdingen?]; Jacob van Campen mentioned as a possibility); Paul Huys Janssen, *Caesar van Everdingen 1616/17–1678* (Doornspijk: Davaco, 2002), 138–39, no. R 9 (attribution to Van Everdingen rejected; Karel van Savoyen mentioned as a possibility). Earlier in the twentieth century the painting was even attributed to Pieter Lastman (K. Freise, *Pieter Lastman, sein Leben und seine Kunst* (Leipzig: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1911), no. P 79; it was sold as such at a sale in New York, February 4/5, 1931, no. 78. There also exists a copy (1946, with art dealer R. Robert, Nice) that was attributed to Cornelis Holsteyn.

³¹ About the many late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century prints of this subject and paintings related to those

prints, see Sluijter, *De "heydensche fabulen,"* 26–28, 50–52, 59–61, 81–82; also Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude*, 174–88.

³² About David Colijns, see the excellent Jasper Hillegers, “Grondig afgericht in all de zwaerste deelen der vrye Schilderkunst: David Colijns (1581/62–1665)” (MA thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2010), 72–73, 76–78, cat. nos. A 6 and A 10. The painting dated 1639 sold at Bonhams & Butterfields, June 17, 2005, 18, lot 23. In 1914, the 1641 painting was in the collection H. A. H. Baron Reedts-Thott, Denmark.

³³ Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude*, 179–85.

ART LOVERS, *PICTURA*, AND MASCULINE VIRTUE IN THE *KONSTKAMER*

Lisa Rosenthal

Depictions of rooms full of art constitute a distinct genre that arose and flourished in Antwerp in the early decades of the seventeenth century. These pictures idealize art collecting as an interlocking structure of social, political, intellectual, and spiritual ideals—qualities that inform the ideal citizen—while they also mobilize sexual and economic discourses that indicate the difficulties of controlling potentially destructive desires. Focusing on works from the studio of Frans Francken the Younger, this essay investigates the gendered force of these discourses and proposes that the masculine virtue constructed in gallery pictures relies upon the mastery of dangers coded as feminine.

Depictions of rooms full of art, or *konstkamer* images, constitute a distinct genre that arose and flourished in Antwerp in early decades of the seventeenth century. A growing body of scholarship has delineated multiple frameworks for understanding these paintings' appeal and efficacy for their audiences. They have been seen in relation to the rapid growth of art collecting in Antwerp, and the new forms of status associated with it, and to the rise of global as well as local art marketplaces. Additionally, the genre has been understood as intersecting with the hermeneutics of the cabinet of curiosity as a theater of universal knowledge and as promoting the formation of Neostoic, Catholic, and *burgerlijke* virtues among Antwerp's elites.¹ *Konstkamer* pictures ally the nobility of the arts with viewers' elevated capacity for discernment by depicting the enactment of connoisseurship as a new and valued skill for men of learning. Yet, even as these pictures idealize art collecting as an interlocking structure of social, political, and spiritual ideals—qualities that inform the ideal male citizen—they also mobilize sexual and economic discourses that intimate the difficulties of controlling potentially destructive desires. Focusing on works produced by the studio of Frans Francken the Younger, this essay investigates the gendered force of these discourses and proposes that the masculine virtue constructed in gallery pictures relies upon the mastery of dangers coded as feminine. Most prominent among these are the threats of sensory pleasures and appetites.²

Pictura's Delights and Dangers

The *Archdukes Albert and Isabella in a Collector's Cabinet*, ca. 1621–32 (Walters Art Museum, Baltimore) is an especially sumptuous example of this genre (fig. 1).³ It is a collaborative work in which the hands of at least two artists have been discerned, Jan Brueghel the Elder and one or more of the artists who worked in the studio of Frans Francken the Younger, where many such *konstkamer* pictures were produced between 1600 and 1625.⁴ At its center we see Isabella of Spain seated on a chair, while beside her stands her husband, Albert, with whom she jointly ruled the Habsburg Spanish Netherlands. Paintings crowd the walls. Works of sculpture, antiquities, and musical instruments share the space with a globe, maps, and exotic warm-water shells. The table by the windows at left displays an early version of the barometer, a device renowned in the seventeenth century as a perpetual motion machine. This fictional assemblage conveys a set of themes and allegorical motifs promoting the virtues of the arts and the legitimacy of knowledge gained through the sensory apprehension of the world.



Figure 1. Hieronymous Francken II and Jan Brueghel the Elder, Archdukes Albert and Isabella in a Collector's Cabinet, ca. 1621–32, oil on panel, 94 x 123.3 cm. Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, inv. no. 37.2010 (Photo © The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore) (artwork in the public domain)

In keeping with the genre's conventions, elegantly dressed figures admire and appear to discuss the objects on view, enacting the important social dimension of art collecting that allowed discerning viewers to share their knowledge and good taste.⁵ In the early 1600s, art lovers—*liefhebbers der schilderijen*—occupied a newly established category in the Antwerp painters' St. Luke's Guild. In *konstkamer* pictures, art lovers execute the forms of civility that were becoming increasingly important across the Netherlands as greater wealth necessitated finer representations of social distinction. These figures enact the humanistic values of the pan-European Republic of Letters, while also displaying a specifically local civic identity: many of the gallery pictures produced in Antwerp feature locally produced artwork.

In the Walters painting, this civic theme is conveyed with special force. The sculpted figures over the doorway represent Mercury and Minerva, who were often invoked together in the seventeenth-century defense of painting as a liberal art that can persuade and instruct its viewers.⁶ Here the two gods flank the personification of Antwerp's river, the Scheldt, asserting the city's fame as a flourishing center of the arts. The works of art filling the space recall the styles and genres practiced by a broad range of local artists.

The largest of the depicted paintings, centrally placed above the back sideboard, is an allegory in the style of Otto van Veen, the Antwerp humanist painter and publisher of learned emblems, praised in his own time as *pictor doctus* (fig. 2). It represents *Pictura Rescued by Wisdom and Fame from Ignorance*. *Pictura*, recognizable by the mask of *imitatio* on her right shoulder, is gently supported by the winged Fame on the right. Behind her, a helmeted Minerva decisively subdues the sprawling figure of Ignorance whose attribute is his long ass's ears. Ignorance's counterparts can be found in another image displayed in this painted collection. Propped diagonally against a chair, this painting commands our special attention as the only one that interrupts the otherwise strict rectilinearity of the composition (fig. 3). Here, an ass-eared figure and his animal-headed companions destroy paintings and musical instruments. This scene of violent iconoclasm stands in opposition to the *liefhebbers'* discerning appreciation of painting as a noble and virtuous instrument of knowledge and Catholic piety.

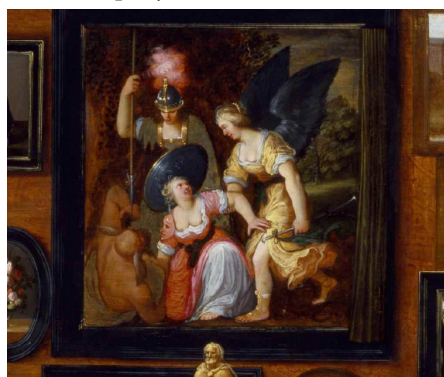


Figure 2. Detail of fig. 1



Figure 3. Detail of fig. 1

But even as the virtues of art and art lovers can be rendered as mutually supportive, paintings of art collections also betray anxieties about art as a desirable object of commerce and a source of sensory delight, against which its virtues must be continually asserted.⁷ Ignorance and iconoclasm are the enemies of art, but those who defend art's values need also be wary of its allure. In the Walters picture, these dangers are alluded to in the three paintings at the left of the back wall, noteworthy as the only works representing *historia*, or narrative pictures (fig. 4). Their inclusion here ascribes to *konstkamer* pictures the elevating intellectual functions associated with *historia* in Renaissance academic art theory. This group begins on the far left with a night scene depicting Judith and Holofernes. In the seventeenth century Judith was a multivalent figure, well represented in literary and visual traditions. Her image could incline toward that of a masculine virago who abandoned her femininity when she wielded a sword and murdered a man, or she could be portrayed as a beautiful seductress who vanquished Holofernes not so much with her strength and cunning, as with her womanly wiles.⁸ That Judith's triumph over the leader of the Assyrian army was an effect of her beauty is underscored here by the placement of the Judith image next to one of Diana and Acteon in the style of the Antwerp artist Hendrick van Balen.⁹ Both Holofernes and Acteon fatally succumbed to feminine beauty, thereby demonstrating the weakness of men made subject to the disordering power of sensory appetites.



Figure 4. Detail of fig. 1

In the world of the educated humanists who were the audience for such pictures, the most familiar defense against the dangers of indulging the senses and allowing oneself to be ruled by the passions was the notion of self-mastery developed by Justus Lipsius, the preeminent Neostoic scholar who had strong connections to Antwerp's elites.¹⁰ It is in this light that we might understand the resonance of the third *historia*, an image of Abraham and Isaac. Here both father and son are exemplars of male adherence to divine and paternal law and the requirements of duty: the son who obeys his father, and the father who obeys the command of God. Abraham's self-command, his ability to quell his passion in order to fulfill his duty, is what spares him in the end from the need to enact the awful deed. If the Judith and Diana pictures denote the dangers to men of sensory indulgence, then the Abraham and Isaac image asserts that

overcoming the emotions has enduring necessity as a condition of masculine authority.

Taken together, as the composition encourages the viewer to do, these three subjects elaborate upon the specific conditions under which the rescue of *Pictura* can be secured. The love of art must not be fed by an unfettered lust for beauty. Instead, the desirable body of *Pictura*, must remain allied with the armored body of Wisdom, as depicted in the painting above the sideboard. In rendering *Pictura* as a partially undraped figure, these artists mobilize the well-established Renaissance trope of female beauty as a sign for Art, while also implicitly positing the ideal *liefhebber* as a desirous male. Art's powers, both pleasurable and dangerous, are coded as feminine, while the viewer's necessary self-mastery is promoted as an inherently masculine virtue.

Delilah and the Lure of Lucre

Over the course of the seventeenth century the allure of *Pictura* was increasingly understood to include not only the dangers of beauty as a spur to destructive sensory appetites but also the morally fraught enticements of the marketplace. Antwerp saw the emergence of an increasingly moneyed and politically powerful “commercial elite,” who contributed crucially to the booming sale of artworks, especially from around 1600 to 1650.¹¹ Owning a fine house and adorning it with an art collection were among the means by which men like the spice merchant Cornelis van der Geest and the city burgomaster Nicolaas Rockox established their civic stature. Both of these men's celebrated art collections were in turn commemorated in *konstkamer* pictures: Willem van Haecht's *Gallery of Cornelis van der Geest*, ca. 1628 (Antwerp, Rubenshuis), and Frans Francken II's *Large Salon in the House of Nicolaas Rockox*, ca. 1630–35 (Munich, Alte Pinakothek).

Francken's *Rockox* picture (fig. 5) depicts a banquet in a room that includes several works known to have been in the Rockox collection. The view through the doorway on the left offers a glimpse of the *Doubting Thomas* triptych (ca. 1614) that Rockox commissioned from Rubens, which in fact was displayed not in the patron's home, but in the family chapel in the Church of the Minorites. The largest, centrally placed image is another Rubens picture that Rockox owned, the *Samson and Delilah* (ca. 1609–10, London, National Gallery of Art), which we know was positioned as a chimneypiece in Rockox's home. On the right of the chimney is a variant by Marinus van Reymerswaele of *The Moneylender and His Wife* by the preeminent sixteenth-century Antwerp artist Quentin Metsys. The *Virgin and Christ* diptych directly below represents a Metsys that was in the Rockox collection. This grouping invites us to see Rubens, Antwerp's most celebrated artist of the seventeenth century, as the inheritor of Metsys's renown in the sixteenth century.¹²



Figure 5. Frans Francken II, *Large Salon in the House of Nicolaas Rockox*, ca. 1630–35, oil on panel, 62.3 x 96.5 cm. Munich, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Alte Pinakothek, inv. no. 858 (Photo: Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz/Art Resource, New York) (artwork in the public domain)

This diachronic scheme coexists with the allegory of the senses that is enacted by the fashionable couples as they drink, dine, and make music and is further developed by the paintings arrayed behind them.¹³ The *Doubting Thomas* affirms vision and touch as the means of apprehending spiritual truths, in contrast to the *Moneylender* that shows these senses directed to material rather than spiritual aims.¹⁴ The *Samson and Delilah* would also have resonated richly with the theme of the senses and sensory appetites, while recalling Lipsius's formulation of lust as a "womanish vice."¹⁵ Samson's desires unman him and lead to his defeat, while Delilah, figured as a prostitute accompanied by her elderly procuress, is ruled by her combined appetite for sex and money.¹⁶ The central Old Testament scene of greed and veniality functions as an antitype to the scene of civil sociability enacted before it, legitimating by contrast the licit enjoyment of food, drink, music, and works of art in the sanctified space of the home. Antithesis, like that exemplified by the *liefhebbers* who view the depiction of iconoclasm, is one organizing rhetorical structure in this image.

But Francken's scene of feasting also stands in dialogue with a broader array of contemporary images engaging the theme of the five senses. On one hand, works like David Teniers the Younger's *Prodigal Son*, ca. 1640 (Minneapolis Institute of Arts) (fig. 6), combine the allegory of the senses with the biblical narrative of riotous living for which the wayward youth will later repent.¹⁷ On the other hand, Francken's picture also alludes to the representation of the five senses in the celebrated series of paintings made for Albert and Isabella by Peter Paul Rubens and Jan Brueghel. Francken's painting specifically domesticates this theme and lodges it within the burger class. The *Sense of Sight* in this series depicts a richly appointed art cabinet in which vision is celebrated as the instrument of knowledge, faith, and learned forms of delight.¹⁸ Viewing the Francken Rockox painting in relation to the Teniers *Prodigal Son* and the Rubens/Brueghel *Sight* shows how its antithetical structure, proposing civility and veniality as opposites, intersects with a structure of difference by degree. The work posits its scene of merrymaking in an unstable position along a continuum that extends from "low" (tavern and bordello) to "high" (courtly) spaces of sensual delight and material consumption.



Figure 6. David Teniers the Younger, *The Prodigal Son*, ca. 1640, oil on copper, 57.15 x 77.47 cm. Minneapolis Institute of Arts, inv. no. 45.8, The William Hood Dunwoody Fund (artwork in the public domain)

This rhetorically fluid representation of the senses effectively assisted the construction of masculinity among the Antwerp elite. The "aristocratization" of Antwerp's merchant elite over the course of the seventeenth century is a phenomenon well noted by historians. Men whose wealth had allowed them to retire from commercial enterprise increasingly sought patents of nobility, and those still in the marketplace sought the trappings of an aristocratic way of life. Conspicuous consumption was an instrument of social distinction: living like a noble could be a first step toward obtaining the patent (Rockox, who came from an affluent, though not noble family, was knighted one year after he married Adriana Perez, the daughter of a wealthy merchant). Second, it could function as an index of credit-worthiness. As the historian Peter Mathias has stated, "if access to credit was the first rule for success in business, then credit-worthiness was the means to this essential end."¹⁹ Credit-worthiness was built upon personal trust and personal reputation in a context of high business risk where institutional procedures and safeguards were weak. In a society in which status was founded increasingly upon mercantile wealth, living well could serve as an indication of fiscal solvency and acumen. Flemish painting had functioned to promote both social standing and entrepreneurial trustworthiness in a tradition extending back to the fifteenth century. Jan van Eyck's portrait of the textile merchant

Giovanni Arnolfini and his wife, for example, affiliates the businessman with the judicious display of luxury in order to help establish and uphold his reputation.²⁰

The Francken painting's theme of appetite and material consumption hence overlaps with strategies for the display and performance of credit-worthiness. The ideal of masculinity that it proposes is of an upright man who will not be laid low by his lust and who will balance his pursuit of profit with the aims of faith. His position within a world of sociability demonstrates the trust accorded him by others—a quality essential to conducting trade—while his sensory enjoyment of fine food, drink, and music, as well as works of art emulates the forms of noble, gracious living. The Rockox picture, in this reading, proposes that masculine virtue is not a state of absolute difference from veniality and vice but is achieved as a matter of degree, requiring balance and discernment in acts of cultural and sensory consumption.

Fortuna: Mastering Risk

Balance is also at stake in another Francken *konstkamer* picture, one that stresses both the production and consumption of works of art. Francken's *Painter's Cabinet* (Getxo, Spain, private collection) depicts an artist at work at his easel painting an image of *Fortuna*, who poses before him, fully nude, improbably balancing on a ball (fig. 7).²¹ The figure of *Fortuna* and her close correlate, Opportunity, attracted particular interest in Antwerp in the early seventeenth century, as painters, including Rubens, associated the struggle to contain and “fix” these allegorical figures with the power of art. The artist who masters *Fortuna* by transforming her into an image performs constancy, a key Neostoic virtue, described by Lipsius as the capacity to resist base desires and appetites so as to be ruled instead by reason and faith.²² In this *Painter's Cabinet*, as in the Rockox picture, the overarching theme is elaborated in the pictures on display. The mantel picture on the left depicts Croesus and Solon, a story drawn from Herodotus and Plutarch, in which the wise man Solon rebuked King Croesus for mistaking his wealth for happiness. At the center of the back wall, flanked by images of the Crucifixion and the Adoration of the Magi, a large painting of the Death of Seneca invokes the guiding philosopher of Neostoicism.



Figure 7. Frans Francken II, *The Painter's Cabinet*, ca. 1623, oil on panel, 54 x 69 cm. Private collection, Getxo, Spain (artwork in the public domain)

Taken together these depicted pictures contrast the value of wealth with spiritual and philosophical insight. More specifically, they invite us to see the artist positioned directly below them as guided in his labors not by greed but by faith and reason. However, signs of wealth reappear in the pile of gold and jewels displayed upon the table. This sumptuous display of goods stands in dynamic tension with those that Solon gestures toward: material luxury might designate *vanitas*, but here in the painter's studio it also invites our admiration, positively denoting art's marketplace value as an indicator of its virtue. The picture praises the artist's capacity to control *Fortuna*'s inconstancy by producing works of lasting worth. With the inclusion of the aristocratic couple who appear to be patrons or clients, Francken depicts the multiple productive activities of the studio: not only is it a workshop that trains the next generation of artists (indicated by the pupil studiously at work in the foreground) thus perpetuating the fertile system, it is also a site where laudable goods of value are made and sold.

Francken draws here upon a well-established Renaissance tradition whereby the man of *virtù* strives to tame and master *Fortuna*'s inconstancy. In an engraving attributed to the studio of Marcantonio Raimondi, *Fortuna*, again balancing upon balls and holding a rudder, another one of her attributes, is seized by a man who flogs her into submission (fig. 8). The image recalls Machiavelli's assertion in *The Prince* (1513) that "Fortune is a woman and it is necessary in order to keep her under, to cuff and maul her."²³ In Francken's painting *Fortuna* confirms that the *burgerlijke* ideal must be won against female forces, that men, including the artist and his client, need to control. *Fortuna* in this context resonates not only with Neostoic morals but also with mercantile desires to overcome the unpredictable elements of risky ventures.



Figure 8. Marcantonio Raimondi, Heroic Man Combatting Fortuna, ca. 1500–1520, engraving, 1.43 x 1.33 cm (artwork in the public domain)

Conclusion

The rise of a capital economy of surplus in the early modern Southern and Northern Netherlands necessitated new attitudes: expenditure on goods, even, or perhaps especially on luxury goods, kept the economy running. But all of this was fueled by the troublesome and difficult to control passion of desire.²⁴ In Antwerp paintings had become a key commodity; pictures of art lovers consuming them thus performed a particularly complex kind of cultural work. On the one hand, gallery pictures could signify the robust health of Antwerp's most lucrative kind of trade; on the other hand, such pictures needed to quell anxieties that their seductions could stoke unbridled and destructive appetites. In *konstkamer* paintings it is not only the sensory appetites that must be mastered, guarded against and brought into a careful and judicious balance but also the enticements of risky, heedless behaviors in the marketplace, itself conceived of in this period as a seductress.

Threatened by the lure of excess expenditure, or the sterility of miserly withholding, masculine virtue emerges in the works discussed here as a dynamic and unstable quality expressed through overlapping motifs of sexual and economic expenditure or restraint. Samson's calamitous, lustful dissipation stands in contrast to the licit consumption of fine goods enacted by the couples in the Rockox painting; the intimation of sterile hoarding in the van Reymer-swael *Moneylender* contrasts with coin circulating in the marketplace as a sign of painting's praiseworthy value in the *Painter's Cabinet*. As *Pictura*'s value was increasingly linked to its place in a thriving local economy, its virtue, and the virtue of art lovers, required the support of an increasingly subtle and elastic set of arguments. While *konstkamer* pictures aim to smoothly match representation, possession, knowledge, and virtue, they do so not as a settled and triumphant claim but as a difficult and fraught ideal toward which the exemplary man—the Catholic, citizen, merchant, and lover of painting—must strive.

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Figure 1. Hieronymous Francken II and Jan Brueghel the Elder, *Archdukes Albert and Isabella in a Collector's Cabinet*, ca. 1621–32, oil on panel, 94 x 123.3 cm. Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, inv. no. 37.2010 (Photo © The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore) (artwork in the public domain)

Figure 2. Detail of fig. 1

Figure 3. Detail of fig. 1

Figure 4. Detail of fig. 1

Figure 5. Frans Francken II, *Large Salon in the House of Nicolaas Rockox*, ca. 1630–35, oil on panel, 62.3 x 96.5 cm. Munich, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Alte Pinakothek, inv. no. 858 (Photo: Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz/Art Resource, New York) (artwork in the public domain)

Figure 6. David Teniers the Younger, *The Prodigal Son*, ca. 1640, oil on copper, 57.15 x 77.47 cm. Minneapolis Institute of Arts, inv. no. 45.8, The William Hood Dunwoody Fund (artwork in the public domain)

Figure 7. Frans Francken II, *The Painter's Cabinet*, ca. 1623, oil on panel, 54 x 69 cm. Private collection, Getxo, Spain (artwork in the public domain)

Figure 8. Marcantonio Raimondi, *Heroic Man Combatting Fortuna*, ca. 1500–1520, engraving, 1.43 x 1.33 cm (artwork in the public domain)

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¹ An earlier version of this essay appears in *Gender Matters: Discourses of Violence in Early Modern Literature and the Arts*, ed. Mara Wade (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2014), 331–48. Relevant literature includes S. Speth-Holterhoff, *Les Peintres flamands de cabinets d’amateurs au dix-septième siècle* (Brussels: Elsevier, 1957); Zirka Filipczak, *Picturing Art in Antwerp, 1550–1700* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987); Matías Díaz Padrón and Mercedes Royo-Villanova, eds., *David Teniers, Jan Brueghel y los Gabinetes de Pinturas*, exh. cat. (Madrid: Museo del Prado, 1992); Victor Stoichita, *The Self-Aware Image: An Insight in Early Modern Meta-Painting* trans. Anne-Marie Glasheen (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Elizabeth Honig, *Painting and the Market in Early Modern Antwerp* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998); and “Picturing Collections in Early

Modern Europe,” special issue, *Intellectual History Review* 20, no. 1 (2010).

² Alison Kettering has investigated the construction of masculinity in relation to threats of the feminine in Dutch portraiture. See her “Gentlemen in Satin: Masculine Ideals in Later Seventeenth-Century Dutch Portraiture,” *Art Journal* 56, no. 2 (1997): 41–47.

³ See Mary Smith Podles, “Virtue and Vice: Paintings and Sculpture in Two Pictures from the Walters Collection,” *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 41 (1983): 29–44.

⁴ Podles follows Speth-Holterhoff in attributing the work to Hieronymous Francken II, Frans Francken II, and Jan Brueghel I. Eric Zafran, *Fifty Master Paintings from the Walters Art Gallery* (Baltimore: Walters Art Gallery, 1988) names Jan Brueghel and Adriaen Stalbemt as the artists. The current Walters attribution is to Jan Brueghel and Hieronymous Francken II. See also Ursula Härting, *Frans Francken der Jüngere (1581–1642)* (Freren: Luca Verlag, 1989) and Ursula Härtumg, “*Doctrina et Pietas*: Über Frühe Galeriebilder,” *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten te Antwerpen* (1993): 95–133.

⁵ See Honig, *Painting and the Market*, chapter 6, and Frances Gage, “‘Some Stirring or Changing of Place’: Vision, Judgement and Mobility in Pictures of Galleries,” *Intellectual History Review* 20, no. 1 (2010): 123–45.

⁶ On the Hermathena, see Thomas Da Costa Kaufmann, “The Eloquent Artist: Towards an Understanding of the Stylistics of Painting at the Court of Rudolph II,” *Leids Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 1 (1982): 119–48; and Elizabeth McGrath, “Rubens’s Musathena,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 50 (1987): 233–45.

⁷ This argument extends and builds upon ideas first developed in Lisa Rosenthal, “Venus’s Milk and the Temptations of Allegory in Otto van Veen’s *Allegory of Temptation*,” in *Early Modern Visual Allegory*, ed. Cristelle Baskins and Lisa Rosenthal (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 219–42.

⁸ On Judith, see Kevin Brine, Elena Ciletti, and Henricke Lähnemann, eds., *The Sword of Judith* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2010), available online: www.openbookpublishers.com/reader/28; and Elena Ciletti, “Patriarchal Ideology in the Renaissance Iconography of Judith,” in *Refiguring Woman: Perspectives on Gender and the Italian Renaissance*, ed. Marilyn Migiel and Juliana Schiesari (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991): 35–70. Rubens’s now lost *Great Judith*, ca. 1609, known from the surviving engraving by Cornelius Galle, established the seductive Judith as a familiar type in Antwerp.

⁹ On the Acteon myth in late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Northern art, see Eric Jan Sluijter, *De “Heydensche Fabulen” in de Schilderkunst van de Gouden Eeuw* (Leiden: Primavera Pers, 2000).

¹⁰ Jason Saunders, *Justus Lipsius: The Philosophy of Renaissance Stoicism* (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1955); Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, trans. David McLintock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); M. Laureys et al., eds., *The World of Justus Lipsius: A Contribution towards His Intellectual Biography; Proceedings of a Colloquium Held under the Auspices of the Belgian Historical Institute in Rome*, Bulletin de l’Institut Historique Belge de Rome 68 (1998); Mark Morford, *Stoics and Neostoics: Rubens and the Circle of Lipsius* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

¹¹ Bert Timmermans, “The Elite as Collectors and Middlemen in the Antwerp Art World of the Seventeenth Century,” in *Munuscula Amicorum: Contributions on Rubens and His Colleagues in Honour of Hans Vlieghe*, 2 vols., ed. Katlijne van der Stighelen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 2:343–62.

¹² This artist’s name has several variant spellings: Metsys, Massys, and Matsys. For an excellent account of his importance to the artistic culture of seventeenth-century Antwerp, see Maria-Isabel Pousão-Smith, “Quinten Matsys and Seventeenth-Century Antwerp: An Artist and His Uses,” *Jaarboek Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp* (2001): 137–87 (on the *Moneychanger and His Wife*, 175ff).

¹³ See Konrad Renger and Claudia Denk, *Flämische Malerei des Barock in der Alten Pinakothek* (Munich: Pinakothek-DuMont, 2002), 202–5, cat. no. 858.

¹⁴ See Barbara Haeger, “Rubens’ Rockox Triptych: Sight, Mediation, and the Justification of Images,” *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 55 (2004): 116–53.

¹⁵ Justus Lipsius, *Six Bookes of Politics or Ciuil Doctrine*, trans. William Jones (London, 1594), book IV, chapter XII.

¹⁶ Aneta Georgievska-Shine, “Rubens and the Tropes of Deceit in *Samson and Delilah*,” *Word and Image: A Journal of Verbal/Visual Enquiry* 23, no. 4 (2007): 460–73; Christopher Brown, *Rubens: Samson and Delilah* (London: National Gallery, 1983); and Madlyn Kahr, “Delilah,” in *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary Garrard (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 118–45.

¹⁷ See Margaret Klinge, ed., *David Teniers the Younger: Paintings, Drawings*, exh. cat. (Antwerp: Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, 1991), cat. no. 7.

¹⁸ See Díaz Padrón and Royo-Villanova, *Gabinetes de Pinturas*, 112–25, cat. no. 9.

¹⁹ Peter Mathais, “Strategies for Reducing Risk by Entrepreneurs in the Early Modern Period,” in *Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurship in the Early Modern Times*, ed. C. Lesger and L. Noordegraaf (Den Haag: Stichting Hollandse Historische Reeks, 1995), 5–24.

²⁰ See Margaret Carroll, “‘In the Name of God and Profit’: Jan van Eyck’s *Arnolfini Portrait*,” *Representations* 44 (1993): 96–132.

²¹ See Díaz Padrón and Royo-Villanova, *Gabinetes de Pinturas*, 192–94, cat. no. 24.

²² Justus Lipsius, *Two Bookes of Constancie*, trans. Sir John Stradling (London, 1594) reprint ed. Rudolph Kirk (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1939). On Rubens and the figure of Opportunity, see Lisa Rosenthal, *Gender, Politics and Allegory in the Art of Rubens* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), especially chapter five. For the interpretation of Francken’s *Painter’s Cabinet* as an allegory of constancy, see Carmen Ripollés, “Death, Femininity, and the Art of Painting in Frans Francken’s *The Painter’s Studio*,” in *Gender Matters: Discourses of Violence in Early Modern Literature and the Arts*, ed. Mara Wade (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2014), 309–29. Frans Francken the Younger’s most fully elaborated image of Fortune is the *Allegory of Fortune*, ca. 1615–20, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

²³ Translation from Hannah Pitkin, *Fortune Is a Woman: Gender and Politics in the Thought of Niccolò Machiavelli* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984).

²⁴ On market pictures in relation to the shifts in Antwerp’s economy from the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries, and concomitant shifts in attitudes, see Honig, *Painting and the Market*, chapter 4. On art in the Dutch Republic as a vehicle for negotiating anxieties about the economy as a dangerous seductress, see Ann Jensen Adams, “Money and the Regulation of Desire: The Prostitute and the Marketplace in Seventeenth-Century Holland,” in *Renaissance Culture and the Everyday*, ed. Patricia Fumerton and Simon Hunt (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 229–53.

HEROINES AND TRIUMPHS: VISUAL EXEMPLARS, FAMILY POLITICS, AND GENDER IDEOLOGY IN BAROQUE ROME

Katherine M. Poole-Jones

A 1639 inventory of the Palazzo Sacchetti in Rome reveals the display of four large paintings in the apartment of the family matriarch: Pietro da Cortona's *The Sacrifice of Polyxena*, *The Rape of the Sabines*, and *The Triumph of Bacchus*, and a copy after Nicolas Poussin's *The Triumph of Flora*. The imagery and placement of these artworks raises crucial and as yet unexplored issues of reception and ideological function. One must consider how a Baroque female viewer, differently from her male counterparts, might have understood these paintings, which I will situate within the tradition of didactic domestic imagery produced in early modern Italy.

A room-by-room inventory of the Palazzo Sacchetti in Rome, dating from 1639, reveals the presence of four large easel paintings in the *sala* (entry room) of the apartment of the family matriarch, generally accepted to be Cassandra Ricasoli-Ruccellai.¹ The Sacchetti was a family with prominent Florentine roots, but during the second half of the sixteenth century, Giovanni Battista Sacchetti (1540–1620) resettled his clan in Rome, and it was the second youngest of his sons, Matteo (1593–1659), who married Cassandra in 1637.² The four paintings, three by Pietro da Cortona, *The Rape of the Sabines* (fig. 1), *The Sacrifice of Polyxena* (fig. 2), and *The Triumph of Bacchus* (fig. 3), and a copy after Nicolas Poussin's *The Triumph of Flora* (fig. 4), are widely acknowledged to have been commissioned or acquired by the eldest of Giovanni Battista's sons, Marcello (1586–1629), an avid collector and key figure in the intellectual circle of Pope Urban VIII.³



Fig. 1. Pietro da Cortona, *The Rape of the Sabines*, ca. 1629–30, oil on canvas, 280.5 x 426 cm. Rome, Musei Capitolini, inv. no. PC 137 (artwork in the public domain)



Fig. 2. Pietro da Cortona, *The Sacrifice of Polyxena*, ca. 1623–24, oil on canvas, 273 x 419 cm. Rome, Musei v, inv. no. PC 143 (artwork in the public domain)



Fig. 3. Pietro da Cortona, *The Triumph of Bacchus*, ca. 1624–25, oil on canvas, 144 x 207 cm. Rome, Musei Capitolini, inv. no. PC 58 (artwork in the public domain)



Fig. 4. Copy after Nicolas Poussin, *The Triumph of Flora*, ca. 1628, oil on canvas, 165 x 241 cm. Rome, Musei Capitolini, inv. no. PC 247 (artwork in the public domain)

However, the 1639 inventory raises crucial and as yet unexplored issues of reception and ideological function with regard to these four works, as by this date, Marcello had died, and the paintings had gained not only a new location and a new audience but also a new function and an iconographic potency not necessarily envisioned by the original patron. The presence of the paintings “nella sala dell'appartamento della Signora”⁴ suggests a smaller, more private audience than the one that had been envisioned prior to the publication of the inventory in 1991. The majority of scholars, most prominently Donald Posner, assumed not only a more public audience for these paintings but also one that was largely male, and whose members would have been more likely to view the female subjects of the paintings as titillating and “aimed to thrill.”⁵

Instead, the placement of the four works in the *sala* of Signora Sacchetti's apartment guaranteed a predominantly

female audience, as contemporary accounts indicate that, for the most part, women in Baroque Rome were removed from public life. They were encouraged to spend a majority of their time confined to their homes, an environment in which the separation of men and women was rigidly maintained as well.⁶ Drawing on previous studies that employ the interpretive lens of reception theory wed with feminist concerns over how gender shapes the viewing experience, I will consider how a Baroque female spectator, differently from her male counterparts, might have understood these paintings, all of which depict subjects ideally suited for a female audience, providing models of exemplary womanhood, wifely duty, and maternal fecundity.⁷ The location and arrangement of these paintings in 1639 demands that they be examined within the larger history of didactic domestic imagery produced for and consumed by women during the early modern period.

In his early seventeenth-century treatise, *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, Giulio Mancini stressed the power of painting to shape and mold its viewers. He advised art patrons and collectors that when decorating their *palazzi* “discrimination should be used not only in placement, but also in what sort of person should be shown the paintings. Those who see them should be differentiated as to disposition and temperament, age, sex, usage, and the way of life one desires to maintain, augment, diminish, correct, or change for the opposite.”⁸ Mancini clearly was attuned to issues of reception, acknowledging the didactic power of art and the importance of selecting work that would best suit its primary viewer and achieve those instructional ends. Mancini’s ideas were very influential among his contemporaries, specifically patrons of the arts, and his ideas were well known in Rome due to his role as papal physician, a position that allowed him access to the various members of the intellectual and courtly circle surrounding Urban VIII, which included the Sacchetti brothers.⁹

This strongly held belief in the capacity of art to influence its viewers is echoed by Renaissance marriage manuals, two of the most influential being Francesco Barbaro’s *De Re Uxoriam* (1415) and Leon Battista Alberti’s *Della Famiglia* (ca. 1433–34). The majority of these widely circulated manuals positioned women as pliable, weak, and in need of constant moral guidance, and like Mancini’s treatise, many advocated the use of images to reinforce the ideal behavior a woman should aspire to in order to be considered a good wife and mother.¹⁰ Rudolph Bell’s 1999 encyclopedic investigation of these advice manuals confirmed the extent to which the texts prescribed a restrictive ideal of wifely behavior, with the virtues of silence, chastity, subservience, and sacrifice constantly stressed. A simple formula for a happy and harmonious marriage was repeated endlessly in manual after manual. The husband commanded and a model wife complied; she was advised to be an “obedient, speechless, reproductive extension of her husband.”¹¹

Given this fervent conviction that a woman’s behavior must be shaped and guided, coupled with faith in art’s influence over its viewers, it comes as no surprise that in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italy, it became a common practice to decorate the apartments of patrician women with elaborately painted furniture and objects designed to morally edify their female audience. Two of the most common domestic objects gifted to brides and wives were *cassoni* (wedding chests) and *deschi da parto* (birth trays), and while both were practical, they also functioned didactically, visually reinforcing societal expectations of ideal behavior and attributes through their imagery.

Cassoni frequently featured narratives derived from classical antiquity, the Old Testament, and even contemporary writers like Boccaccio that centered on heroines considered worthy of emulation, their actions evoking the virtuous qualities to which a Renaissance woman should aspire.¹² The imagery on *deschi da parto* was often more pointedly domestic in nature, specifically focusing on pregnancy and childbirth, so as to “encourage her to fulfill her societally prescribed maternal role.”¹³ Jacqueline Musacchio has discussed at length the early modern belief in sympathetic magic and how certain images and objects were believed to possess a mediating force, allowing a woman a certain level of control over pregnancy, encouraging conception, and protecting her from the risks of childbirth. As a result, fifteenth- and sixteenth-century birth trays are populated by pudgy, naked infant boys who serve not only as fertility symbols but who also visualize the fervent hope that the tray would “inspire” the woman who possessed it to give birth to a prized male heir.¹⁴

Following their placement in the apartment of the family matriarch, the Sacchetti canvases became heirs to this long-standing tradition of domestic decoration designed to edify its female audience. Given the strength of the existing visual and literary traditions, it seems unlikely that the choice of artworks for Signora Sacchetti’s *sala* was incidental. As illustrated by Mancini and others, specific subjects were considered appropriate and desirable for the decoration of an apartment of a patrician wife in Baroque Rome. Thus further evaluation of these four themes—the

rape of the Sabine women, the sacrifice of Polyxena, and the triumphs of Bacchus and Flora—and the message(s) they conveyed to a seventeenth-century female audience, is warranted.

The rape of the Sabines was a popular subject for domestic decoration in early modern Italy, featured on numerous *cassoni*, due to its connections to the origins and rituals of marriage.¹⁵ In order to secure wives for his soldiers and consequently to ensure his city's survival, Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome, invited the Sabines to participate in a celebration. On Romulus's signal, the Roman men seized the Sabine women, the precise moment depicted by Cortona.¹⁶ Both Marcantonio Altieri and Baldassare Castiglione, two widely read writers of the sixteenth century who explicitly connected contemporary marriage ceremonies to the rape of the Sabines, praised the Sabine women as exemplars for their role in uniting, strengthening, and populating Rome.¹⁷



Fig. 1. Pietro da Cortona, *The Rape of the Sabines*, ca. 1629–30, oil on canvas, 280.5 x 426 cm. Rome, Musei Capitolini, inv. no. PC 137 (artwork in the public domain)

In her investigation of fifteenth-century Italian images of the Sabines, Musacchio focused on the childbearing aspect of the myth more explicitly than previous scholars, emphasizing not only how the narrative highlights the importance of procreation in ensuring the continuation of family lineage but also the role childbirth plays in contributing to the greater civic good.¹⁸ Musacchio's contention is that during the early modern period the legendary history served "to reinforce a woman's own perception of her identity as wife and mother,"¹⁹ thus making Cortona's *Sabines* ideally suited for placement in the apartment of Signora Sacchetti.

In contrast to the rape of the Sabines, the sacrifice of Polyxena was an infrequently represented narrative in early modern art. However, the details of Polyxena's life and death were widely known in the seventeenth century through a variety of classical, medieval, and Renaissance sources. Following the Trojan War, Pyrrhus, the son of the Greek hero Achilles, sacrificed Polyxena, the daughter of the king and queen of Troy, Priam and Hecuba, in order to appease his father's ghost and to allow the Greeks to sail home.²⁰

Ovid recounted the death of Polyxena in his *Metamorphoses*, highlighting her unwavering courage and chastity,²¹ and Polyxena is also one of the notable women featured in Boccaccio's *Concerning Famous Women*, praised for her fortitude and "sublime spirit."²² She is portrayed as an exemplary figure who bravely faced her cruel fate, a heroine ideally suited for domestic decoration. And yet, Posner (rightly) described Cortona's heroine as "a pathetic, meek Polyxena who goes dutifully to the slaughter."²³ Indeed, with her pleading expression and exposed breast, Cortona's heroine appears to be a passive and sexualized woman resigned to her fate, one who neither fights for her release nor protests her innocence, distancing her from the fearless heroine described by Ovid and Boccaccio. Thus, while at first glance Cortona's Polyxena may not appear to be worthy of emulation, a closer look reveals that she exemplifies the courageous heroine type familiar to, and preferred by, a seventeenth-century Italian audience.

Polyxena's compliance with this ideal female Baroque (stereo)type is illustrated by her close iconographic relationship to her fellow sisters in heroism as they were presented in seventeenth-century Italian art. For example, Posner noted

that Polyxena's upturned face and exposed breast, as well as her submissive and resigned demeanor, mirror a number of Guido Reni's classical heroines, notably *Lucretia* and *Cleopatra*.²⁴ Cortona's depiction of Polyxena also conforms to the same female behavioral model advocated by countless marriage manuals. She possesses virtues that were nonthreatening to the established social order, she is neither self-assertive nor independent but passively accepting of her fate. This type of vulnerable and obedient woman fit comfortably within the scope of appropriate female behavior as determined by seventeenth-century culture at large, and though not originally intended for Signora Sacchetti, Polyxena was a heroine ideally suited for female viewership.²⁵



Fig. 2. Pietro da Cortona, *The Sacrifice of Polyxena*, ca. 1623–24, oil on canvas, 273 x 419 cm. Rome, Musei v, inv. no. PC 143 (artwork in the public domain)

Also germane to my discussion of Cortona's painting and its reception by Signora Sacchetti is a romantic plot twist involving Polyxena and Achilles that was advanced in various versions of the legend, most notably in *The Trojan Women*, a tragedy by the Roman writer Seneca that was well-known in the seventeenth-century. Seneca was one of the first classical authors to propose that Achilles intended for Polyxena to become his wife, a narrative element that (partially) justified the heroine's brutal sacrifice, as the impending marriage in the afterlife connected her surrender and death to wifely obedience.²⁶ As Achilles's dutiful bride, Polyxena's actions parallel those of the Sabines, women who, while remaining loyal to their fathers and brothers, obey their husbands above all. The placement of the two paintings in Signora Sacchetti's apartment illustrates not only their perceived capability to morally edify, but the pairing also offers the opportunity to consider just how closely these subjects were linked by contemporary ideas concerning appropriate behavior for patrician women.²⁷

Like the legends of the Sabines and Polyxena, the subjects of the two other paintings in the *sala*, the triumphs of Flora and Bacchus, had their origins in antiquity. Triumphs, originally staged as grand public processions honoring victorious Roman generals, were revived in Renaissance and Baroque Italy to celebrate rulers and heads of state. The theme of the triumph was also explored in art and literature, and it was considered appropriate for domestic decoration, as two of most common triumphs, those of love and chastity, glorified marriage and its virtues. Triumphs were common on *cassoni*, and appeared on *deschi da parto* as well.²⁸

In Cortona's *The Triumph of Bacchus*, the god of wine appears as a nearly nude youth perched atop a triumphal cart, accompanied by his female devotees, the maenads, as well as a group of satyrs and the drunken Silenus. By depicting Bacchus as a child, Cortona downplayed any sexual or erotic overtones associated with the god, placing a more pointed visual emphasis on his gift of the grape, and by extension bountiful production, giving the painting a harvest-oriented focus.

Flora, the subject of the second Sacchetti triumph, is surrounded by putti, river gods, dancing women, and other mythological figures who have been "touched by her power."²⁹ As recounted by Ovid in his calendar-poem the *Fasti*, this power includes the ability to facilitate conception. Juno, queen of the gods, found herself pregnant with the god

Mars after Flora touched a flower to her bosom.³⁰ Additionally, Ovid described Flora's pursuit by the west wind Zephyr and her simultaneous transformation upon capture from the nymph Chloris into both the goddess of springtime and his bride, thereby linking her to marriage as well as fertility and maternity.³¹



Fig. 3. Pietro da Cortona, *The Triumph of Bacchus*, ca. 1624–25, oil on canvas, 144 x 207 cm. Rome, Musei Capitolini, inv. no. PC 58 (artwork in the public domain)



Fig. 4. Copy after Nicolas Poussin, *The Triumph of Flora*, ca. 1628, oil on canvas. 165 x 241 cm. Rome, Musei Capitolini, inv. no. PC 247 (artwork in the public domain)

Thus, both triumphs celebrate fecundity and abundance, not only through their central protagonists, but also through additional imagery that reinforces this focus. The female *repoussoir* figure in the right foreground of *The Triumph of Bacchus* bares her breasts, highlighting the source of her nurturing and maternal power. The similarly placed female river god in *The Triumph of Flora* reclines with an overturned urn wedged between her legs, an emphatic assertion of the locus of her generative power. Additionally, the cavorting putti in the *Flora* and the cherubic and playful baby satyrs who devour grapes and gambol in the wine vats of the *Bacchus* are similar to the frolicking baby boys found on *deschi da parto*.

This focus on fertility and bounty was not atypical for depictions of Bacchus and Flora in the early modern period, owing to their seasonal identities. Bacchus embodied the autumn harvest, and Flora the blossoms of spring.³² Serenidipitously, the iconography also evokes the appropriate behavior and duties of a seventeenth-century wife, making

the images ideally suited for their “new” role as decoration for the apartment of the family matriarch, a woman whose main “job” was to procreate. Like the nymph Chloris, who blossomed into the goddess Flora through her amorous union with Zephyr, the Sacchetti family must have hoped that Cassandra (and her womb) would “blossom” upon her union with Matteo. The two were married in 1637, but the birth of their first child, Giovanni Battista, did not occur until two years later in 1639. The importance of the birth of a boy to carry on the family name cannot be overstated. Giovanni Francesco, the youngest Sacchetti brother and the designated secular head of the household after the death of Marcello in 1629, had himself died childless earlier in 1637. Upon Giovanni Francesco’s death, Matteo inherited his brother’s familial responsibilities, including an ever-increasing pressure to produce the next generation of Sacchetti heirs.³³ The fate of the Sacchetti lineage rested squarely on Cassandra’s shoulders.

In focusing on the 1639 inventory of the Palazzo Sacchetti and its revelation concerning the placement of *The Rape of the Sabines*, *The Sacrifice of Polyxena*, *The Triumph of Bacchus*, and *The Triumph of Flora* in the sala of the Sacchetti family matriarch, I have proposed a new way to interpret these paintings, one that situates these heroines and triumphs within the larger history of didactic imagery and literature used in the service of family politics and gender ideology during the early modern period. Seventeenth-century society believed strongly that images had the power to shape and mold, and thus Cassandra Sacchetti was presented with subjects that I believe are linked by their perceived capability to morally edify, reinforce wifely obedience, and encourage fertility. Images were mirrors used by women to compare and adjust their behavior,³⁴ and the placement of these paintings in Signora Sacchetti’s apartment converted them into visual advice manuals, ones that she would “read” every day in the hopes that they would help transform her into an exemplary wife and mother.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For Alison, who, in a “Women in Art” course over twenty years ago (!), helped open my eyes to a way of practicing our discipline that was fiercely and unapologetically feminist, an approach that continues to inform both my scholarship and my teaching. During my four years at Carleton College, Alison helped me to realize that art history was to be my life’s work, as well as my enduring passion. She taught me what it means to be a great teacher and mentor, and I am grateful for her continued presence in my life and proud and honored to call her my colleague and friend.

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1. Pietro da Cortona, *The Rape of the Sabines*, ca. 1629–30, oil on canvas, 280.5 x 426 cm. Rome, Musei Capitolini, inv. no. PC 137 (artwork in the public domain)

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¹Jörg Martin Merz, *Pietro da Cortona: Der Aufstieg zum führenden Maler im barocken Rom* (Tübingen: Ernst Was-muth Verlag, 1991), 96. Although questions remain concerning the precise location of each of the four paintings within the *sala*, they were the sole monumental works of art in the room. For the complete 1639 inventory, which was first published by Merz, see 293–95.

²For Sacchetti genealogy, see Merz, *Pietro da Cortona*, 78–79, and Irene Fosi, *All'ombra dei Barberini: Fedeltà e servizio nella Roma barocca* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1997), 242.

³Marcello Sacchetti was Cortona's first prominent patron, as well as a supporter of Poussin during the French artist's early years in Rome. For Sacchetti patronage, see Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters: A Study in the Relations Between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980), 38–41; and Merz, *Pietro da Cortona*, 80–103.

⁴*Ibid.*, 294.

⁵Donald Posner, "Pietro da Cortona, Pittoni, and the Plight of Polyxena," *Art Bulletin* 73, no. 3 (September 1991): 405.

⁶Patricia Waddy, *Seventeenth-Century Roman Palaces: Use and the Art of the Plan* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: The MIT Press, 1990), 25–29.

⁷My interest in issues of audience, reception, viewership, and the way that gender impacted each of these during the early modern period has been influenced by such scholars as Mary Garrard, Lilian Zirpolo, and Paola Tinagli (all cited later in this essay), but I owe the biggest debt to the dedicatee of this volume, Alison Kettering, whose "Ter Borch's Ladies in Satin," *Art History* 16 (1993): 95–124, first introduced me to the concept of a "gender-differentiated

response” to art.

⁸ Giulio Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, ed. Adriana Marucchi and Luigi Salerno, (Rome: Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, 1956–57), 1:141–42; translation provided by Robert Enggass and Jonathan Brown, *Italian and Spanish Art 1600–1750: Sources and Documents* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 36.

⁹ Enggass and Brown, *Italian and Spanish Art*, 33.

¹⁰ Paola Tinagli, *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, Identity* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 21–26. See also Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Merry E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Mary Rogers and Paola Tinagli, *Women in Italy, 1350–1650: Ideals and Realities* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2005), esp. 12–25. Although the validity of the ideas concerning women and the prescriptions for ideal behavior proposed by these manuals were certainly challenged in some circles by the seventeenth century, they were still widely accepted. Mary Garrard illustrates their persistence in *Artemisia Gentileschi: The Image of the Female Hero in Italian Baroque Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), specifically 141–79.

¹¹ Rudolf Bell, *How to Do It: Guides to Good Living for Renaissance Italians* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 228. “Chapter 6: Marital Relations,” 220–78, offers an in-depth summary of what these manuals encouraged in terms of ideal wifely behavior.

¹² Chapter One, “Women, Men and Society: Painted Marriage Furniture,” 21–46, in Tinagli, *Women in Italian Renaissance Art*, provides a succinct overview of *cassoni*, their sources, subjects, function, and ideological meaning. Tinagli relies on a number of prominent *cassoni* scholars, including Paul Schubring’s seminal study of 1915, as well as more contemporary writings by Ellen Callman and Brucia Witthoff. Additional key texts include: Cristelle L. Baskins, *Cassone Painting, Humanism, and Gender in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Graham Hughes, *Renaissance Cassoni: Masterpieces of Early Italian Art; Painted Marriage Chests 1400–1550* (London: Art Books International, 1997); and most recently, Andrea Bayer, ed., *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008).

¹³ Jacqueline Musacchio, “Imaginative Conceptions in Renaissance Italy,” in *Picturing Women in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, ed. Geraldine A. Johnson and Sara F. Matthews Grieco (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 59.

¹⁴ Jacqueline Musacchio, *The Art and Ritual of Childbirth in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999) is the essential source for *deschi da parto* and other objects related to the pregnancy and childbirth.

¹⁵ Tinagli, *Women in Italian Renaissance Art*, 30–31. See also Baskins, *Cassone Painting*, 103–27, on the use of the Sabine narrative in the service of contemporary family politics and gender ideology in the Renaissance. In fact, Merz, *Pietro da Cortona*, 96, suggests that Cortona’s *Sabines* was commissioned for the wedding of youngest Sacchetti son, Giovanni Francesco (1595–1637), to Beatrice Tassoni Estense in 1631.

¹⁶ Jacqueline Musacchio, “The Rape of the Sabine Women on Quattrocento Marriage-Panels,” in *Marriage in Italy, 1300–1650*, ed. Trevor Dean and K. J. P. Lowe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 67–68; Plutarch’s Life of Romulus in his *Lives* and Livy’s *The Rise of Rome* were two classical sources frequently consulted when depicting the Sabines.

¹⁷ Musacchio, “Sabines,” 79.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 81–82.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 82.

²⁰ Posner, “Polyxena,” 399–402. Posner cites Euripides’s tragic drama, *Hecuba*, as Cortona’s likely literary source (p.

404).

²¹ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Mary M. Innes (London: Penguin Books, 1955), 297–98.

²² Giovanni Boccaccio, *Concerning Famous Women*, trans. Guido A. Guarino (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1963), 67. Polyxena is also briefly discussed by Christine de Pizan, who calls attention to Polyxena's beauty and her "stable and constant heart"; *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. Earl Jeffrey Richards (New York: Persea Books, 1982), 203–4.

²³ Posner, "Polyxena," 404.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 404–5.

²⁵ Concerning the difficulties examples of female heroism posed during the early modern period, see Garrard, Chapter 2, "Historical Feminism and Female Iconography," in *Artemisia Gentileschi*, esp. 147–49. Actively courageous and assertive heroines were, of course, depicted in Italian Baroque art, mostly notably by Artemisia Gentileschi and Elisabetta Sirani, but theirs are exceptions to the rule.

²⁶ Posner, "Polyxena," 407; see Seneca, "Troades," in *Tragedies*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. F. J. Miller (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953), 138–39, 202–3.

²⁷ Jane Costello was the first scholar to note these "kindred subjects," exemplars of feminine fortitude and virtue that were "matched" by Cortona, much like heroines on *cassoni* chests; Costello, "The Twelve Pictures 'Ordered by Velasquez' and the Trial of Valguarnera," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13 (1950): 245–46.

²⁸ James Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2007), 320–21; see also Hughes, *Renaissance Cassoni*, 100–102, 142–43; and Musacchio, *Art and Ritual of Childbirth*, 67, 69, 73, 76–77.

²⁹ Thomas Worthen, "Poussin's Paintings of Flora," *Art Bulletin* 61, no. 4 (December 1979): 575.

³⁰ Ovid, *Fasti*, ed. and trans. James George Frazer (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931), 276–79. Juno's discussion with Flora largely revolves around issues of conception, from the goddess's concern over her potential barrenness to her fear that her maternal power is no longer needed in light of the "birth" of Minerva, in which the goddess sprang fully formed from the head of Zeus.

³¹ *Ibid.* 274–77.

³² Julius Held, "Flora, Goddess and Courtesan," in *De Artibus Opuscula XL: Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky*, ed. Millard Meiss (New York: New York University Press, 1961), 205.

³³ Cassandra Sacchetti would give birth to six more children over the next eleven years of her marriage, two boys and four girls; Fosi, *All'ombra dei Barberini*, 242.

³⁴ Tinagli, *Women in Italian Renaissance Art*, 29.

IMPERIAL MATERIALS: SITE AND CITATION IN LEONE AND POMPEO LEONI'S *CHARLES V AND FUROR*

Wendy Sepponen

This essay will investigate how *Charles V and Furor* and the larger commission to which it belongs by the Milanese sculptors Leone Leoni (ca. 1509–1590) and his son Pompeo Leoni (ca. 1533–1608) functioned as material instantiations of the Hapsburg's imperial presence. These sculptures embodied the empire's geographic scope through their citations of imperial metallurgical industries and material cultures, positioned the Hapsburgs at the intersection of military might and artistic savvy through the adaptation of contemporary classicizing visual languages in bronze, and alluded to the legitimacy of the family's past, present, and future by continuing the visual strategies for maintaining their power enacted by previous Hapsburg generations.

In an undated letter addressed to Ferrante Gonzaga, Leone Leoni wrote to the Milanese governor with a proposal for an equestrian monument to Charles V to be placed in a public square in Milan.¹ After describing the characteristics and limitations of painting, the artist expanded on the virtues of sculpture. “Conversely sculpture can be seen and touched from all sides, knowing the surfaces and planes and curves, and said sculpture does not lessen with age, and even more so with sculptures made in metal.”² In order to convince the governor to advocate for such a prestigious commission, Leone stressed the efficacy of sculpture, and bronze in particular, to function as a lasting and indelible reminder of the emperor's presence and military successes within Milan's visual landscape. His contention that the medium is so much more effective in its eternal, material, and three-dimensional qualities compared to painting strengthens his argument, while also demonstrating his participation in the burgeoning *paragone* debates.³ Leone positioned bronze sculpture as the ideal medium with which to communicate the qualities of permanence, legacy, and memory. These sculptural effects dovetailed with the visual strategies established by Charles V, which adapted the priorities of earlier Hapsburg generations to highlight the family's military acumen and dynastic lineage. Since the Hapsburgs had to carefully negotiate their own ambitions with the Imperial Diet, they emphasized through their artistic patronage the permanence and simultaneous presence of various generations of rulers and the family and the empire's military strength to assert continued imperial legitimacy and fortitude.⁴

While the equestrian commission so fervently pursued by Leone never came to fruition, it led to commissions for eleven sculpted portraits, currently in the Museo del Prado, through which the Leoni were able to negotiate complex imperial and artistic networks.⁵ It was in 1549, after an invitation to Charles's court in Brussels, that the father, with his son, received the commission to carve and cast portraits of the then-current generations of Hapsburg royalty.⁶ These portraits would go on to accrue an astounding itinerary. The Leoni returned to Milan to execute the sculptures, and after six years of labor they transported the still unfinished portraits from Milan to Brussels.⁷ Pompeo then accompanied the sculptures on the last leg of their journey to Madrid, where he established his own workshop and finished the eleven sculptures over the next several years, with the aid of Spanish craftsmen and sculptors.

Adhering to the Hapsburgs' wishes and displaying the sculptural qualities promised in his earlier letter, the portraits, none more so than *Charles V and Furor* (fig. 1), made by both Leone and Pompeo, communicate a sense of the diverse dominions and riches of their empire, the character of the familial dynasty that led to its breadth, and the military campaigns that maintained and expanded those borders. This paper will study ways in which the sculptural output of the Leoni workshops furthered Hapsburg identities and ambitions throughout sixteenth-century Europe. The multiple sites of production, wide circulation, and varied forms of *Charles V and Furor* functioned as material

instantiations of the family's imperial presence. The sculpture group embodied the empire's geographic scope through its citations of imperial metallurgical industries and material cultures, positioned the Hapsburgs at the intersection of military might and artistic savvy through the adaptation of contemporary classicizing visual languages in bronze, and alluded to the legitimacy of the family's past, present, and future by continuing visual strategies for maintaining their power enacted by previous Hapsburg generations.



Figure 1. Leone and Pompeo Leoni, *Charles V and Furor*, ca. 1550–64, bronze, 251 x 143 x 130 cm, 825 kg. Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, inv. no. E00273 (artwork in the public domain; photo: © Museo Nacional del Prado / Art Resource, NY)

As objects that carry traces of their collaborative production, the eleven Prado portraits reflect the changing political and artistic relationships between the various regions of the Hapsburg empire. The Hapsburgs consolidated their European domains throughout the sixteenth century, battling against France for Italian territories in the south and against Protestant forces for spiritual righteousness farther north. The sculptures traversed the better part of their western European holdings, circulating between Milan, Brussels, and Madrid. Since the eleven sculptures arrived in Madrid in 1556 still unfinished, the portraits' production relied on partnerships between Italian and Spanish workshops and artists. In the case of the bronze standing portrait of Empress Isabel (fig. 2), Charles V's wife and Philip's mother, Pompeo employed two Spanish silversmiths, Felipe Jusarte and Micael Méndez, to complete the details of the figure's dress in his workshop, including the brocade on the exposed underskirt and the hem that runs along the edge of the overskirt.⁸ Whether this was due to the Spanish-specific fashion featured in Isabel's dress (she is clothed in the style popular in the 1530s when she died), or to the overwhelming amount of work that remained to be done on the portraits, Pompeo's transplanted Italian workshop had to expand to employ craftspeople from both Italy and Spain. As such, the Prado portraits reflect the power of the Hapsburg court to attract artists from increasingly diverse regions of their imperial holdings.



Figure 2. Leone and Pompeo Leoni, *Empress Isabel*, ca. 1550–55, bronze, 177 x 84 x 93 cm, 388 kg. Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, inv. no. E00274 (artwork in the public domain; photo: © Museo Nacional del Prado / Art Resource, NY)

The commission also spoke to a specific type of cultural cross-pollination that was facilitated by the ever-widening avenues of exchange within the empire. In the case of the Leoni, their movements through Hapsburg lands reflected not just the family's ability to pluck the best and brightest from the farthest corners of their empire, but it also indicated certain ambitions behind their artistic patronage. The Hapsburgs had the money to patronize experts in the most contemporary visual languages (such as modernizing classical forms), the understanding to appropriate those languages for sculpted bodies of the imperial family, and the power to spread those visual modes to all aspects and regions of their artistic programming.

Among the eleven extant works at the Prado, the *Charles V and Furor* best exemplifies how these sculptures functioned as embodiments of Hapsburg imperial rule and the regional and cultural connections it allowed. Scholars have assessed the sculpture group in terms of the iconographic and formal resonances between the contemporary emperor and his classical Roman counterparts, Caesar Augustus in particular: Charles's stance and armor, the inscription around the base, which refers to the figure as "Emperor Caesar Charles V Augustus,"⁹ as well as the reference to Virgil's *Aeneid* in the choice of subject matter,¹⁰ collectively imbue the current Holy Roman Emperor and Catholic monarch with the political prestige and artistic currency of the peace-achieving Roman emperors of yore.¹¹

The work constructs a classicized yet still highly modern identity for Charles V. In addition to the textual and visual alignments with Augustus's and Virgil's enduring reputations that function to highlight peace's triumph over war, Leoni thematized the parallels between the sculpture's metallurgical mode of production and the metal weaponry that provided the military means by which Charles maintained a tenuous balance between peace and war. Charles stands on and over a figure of Furor, within Virgil's metaphor a personification of war and within the contemporary context a more pointed reference to battles against Protestant forces. Furor, in its contorted pose, holds a lit torch, whose fire threatens to set alight and melt the pile of weapons to which he is chained.¹² His bronze chains fall over the edge of the sculpture's base, and the space between the viewer and the forms is further punctured by Furor's constricted limbs and a mass of military wares, including arrows, an axe, a trumpet, a sword, a club, a shield, and a helmet, whose placement along the edge is made even more precarious by the force of Furor's foot. The sculpture communicates the emperor's victory over Furor and, by extension, the emperor's political and religious enemies. But as the weaponry is not yet melted or melting, Charles remains liminally poised between peace and battle. He stands ready to take up arms—some of which are decorated with the Hapsburg symbol of an eagle's head—should the need arise once again. The sculpture group foregrounds the paradoxical strategy of maintaining peace, or rather an uncontested rule, through the threat of easily mobilized violent suppression.

The sculpture signals Charles's actual, and not just represented, access to military industries. Leone conflated the bronze sculpture and the instruments of war through their shared production processes and sites: the bronze iterations of the various weapons were cast using metallurgical methods similar to those employed for the functional instruments they represent. The same is true of Charles's armor. In addition to its evocation of the emperor's classical aspirations, the armor encompasses the crucial interrelation between material, method, and site. Like the pile of weapons that remain at his disposal, the armor worn by the cast *Charles V* underscores the access to Milan's prolific military industries afforded him by his imperial control over Lombardy. Charles's literal access to Milan's foundries, armorers, and general metallurgical prowess is articulated in the sculpture's most distinctive trait—its removable armor (fig. 3).



Figure 3. Leone and Pompeo Leoni, *Charles V and Furor* (armor removed), ca. 1550–64, bronze, 251 x 143 x 130 cm. Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, inv. no. E00273 (artwork in the public domain; photo: © Museo Nacional del Prado / Art Resource, NY)

Milan's reputation for expert metalwork had been cultivated for decades, starting most famously in 1482 with Leonardo da Vinci's ambitious but uncompleted attempts to cast a colossal bronze equestrian monument to Duke Francesco Sforza. By the time Charles's military forces finally consolidated their hold over Lombardy in 1535, and Leone began his work at the imperial mint in 1542, the Milanese armor industry was on the rise.¹³ In his 1540 metallurgical treatise *De la Pirotechnia*, Vannoccio Biringuccio praised the larger territory of Milan for its high-quality steel and the "great quantity" of brass that was "worked and colored" in Milan.¹⁴ The positive perception of Milanese metals was aided greatly by the refined, intricate, and technically complex steel ceremonial armor produced by the famous Negrolì family, who worked for the political elite throughout Europe and produced a number of pieces for Charles V.¹⁵ In addition to the desirability of Milan's luxury armor industry, it was also a crucial provider of armor for Hapsburg forces in Spain.¹⁶ Sixteenth-century Italian armorers had turned away from using bronze,¹⁷ though the metallurgical prowess required to forge steel and to cast bronze were at the time considered closely related to one another under the general rubric of the "Fire Arts."¹⁸ The metalworking processes used in forges and foundries were perceived as related at theoretical and practical levels vis-à-vis the crucial role fire played in both methods and across a diverse range of materials and objects. It was against this backdrop that Leone designed and cast *Charles V and Furor* with its armor, embodying the sculptor's artistic ingenuity and reputation within Milan's metallurgical traditions and asserting the emperor's desired message of his political reach, military might, and cultural savvy.

While *Charles V and Furor* exhibits the emperor's personal achievements and goals, the larger commission for eleven or more other works continued a rich history of sculpted portraiture within the Hapsburg visual tradition. A greater understanding of the Prado portraits can be gained by considering the Hapsburgs' long-standing patronage of large-scale portrait statues. In their genre, format, and materials, the Leoni's sculptures served as visual indicators of the continuity between Hapsburg rulers, past, present, and future. Although the exact relationships between specific portraits within the larger Brussels commission remain unknown, the sculptures memorialize still-living family members in similar formats and materials (e.g., standing life-size bronzes) and in so doing draw connections between the generations and imperial sites and holdings. For example, Prince Philip's title as king of England, a status achieved through his marriage to Mary Tudor, is proclaimed on the base of the standing bronze statue of Philip (fig. 4), thereby linking the empire's expanding claims to the other legitimate rulers and landholders of the family.



Figure 4. Leone and Pompeo Leoni. *Philip II*, ca. 1551–55, bronze, 171 x 72 x 46 cm, 321 kg. Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, inv. no. E00272 (artwork in the public domain; photo: © Museo Nacional del Prado / Art Resource, NY)

Sculptural assertions as to the continuity between ruling generations and interfamilial support had an early precedent in the council chamber in the Palace of Liberty in Bruges, which features an ornate oak chimneypiece with a large central portrait of Charles V (fig. 5).¹⁹ To his left stand reliefs of his maternal grandparents, Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella of Castile, whose marriage unified the lands that became Charles's Spanish kingdom. To his right are life-size representations of his paternal grandparents, Mary, Duchess of Burgundy, and her husband, Maximilian I, the rulers who passed down the Low Countries and the Holy Roman Empire to the young Charles. These disparate lands, presided over by the individuals depicted, were joined through the marriages of these couples and ultimately unified in the person of Charles. Unlike the Leoni sculptures, the Bruges chimneypiece reasserts the presence of generations since deceased, a tactic employed to fantastic effect in a monument erected to Maximilian I in Innsbruck, Austria (fig. 6).²⁰ Attended by twenty-four life-size bronze portraits of Hapsburg ancestors, his impressive cenotaph set the standard for future Hapsburg sculpted portraits. The statues effectively blur fact and fiction, the visual display underscoring the family's putative unbroken lineage and, by extension, their political legitimacy. Owing to complications behind the inheritances of titles and lands, the rightfulness of Maximilian's rule was frequently contested. The ensemble of sculptural representations was thus able to achieve a fictive impression of consolidated power that was impossible in Maximilian's political reality. The sculptures moreover fossilized this imperial message in the bronze bodies that stand perpetually in adoration and support of the emperor and his rule.



Figure 5. Guyot de Beaugrant (sculptor) and Lancelot Blondeel (design), *Chimneypiece with Statuettes of Hapsburg Rulers*, ca. 1528–31, oak. Bruges, Brugse Vrije (Palace of Liberty) (artwork in the public domain; photo: © Lukas - Art in Flanders VZW, photo Hugo Maertens)



Figure 6. Gilg Sesselschreiber, Stefan Godl, and Leonard Magt, *Monument to Maximilian I*, ca. 1502–84, various media and dimensions. Innsbruck, Austria, Hofkirche (artwork in the public domain; Photo: © Alexander Haiden)

Charles's decision to preserve this tradition of life-size portraiture in bronze within the 1549 Brussels commission goes far beyond the aping of an earlier patron's choices. The visual evocation of his political predecessor unquestionably affected the interpretation of the large-scale portraits; the Leoni, however, managed to enhance this association with imperial connections particular to Charles. It was under Charles that Lombardy and its formidable militaristic and metallurgical industries came under the Holy Roman Empire's dominion, and it was Charles who persistently waged wars in defense of the Catholic faith, as indicated in *Charles V and Furor*, and the inclusion of the Order of the Golden Fleece in the portraits of Charles and Philip. The sculptures were cast and carved in arguably the two most enduring and exclusive artistic materials. The works' travels exposed the ambitious project to diverse court audiences throughout major Western European imperial centers. By depicting the members of the family in similar sizes and materials, the Prado portraits conflate the individual personalities of the sitters into a series of figures that are both of the present and lasting, while also mobilizing precisely those attributes that distinguish the contemporary generations from their predecessors. The Leoni's work for the Hapsburgs made the most of the cultural contingency of materials, capitalizing on Milan's material cultural reputation, while also involving workshops and craftspeople from throughout the empire. For decades, large-scale sculpture, particularly in bronze, married the subjects of such portraits to geographically distant imperial sites and temporally removed imperial ancestors, thereby rendering the immaterially remote materially present.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The impact on me of Alison Kettering's mentorship reaches far beyond the confines of this essay offered in commemoration of her pedagogy at Carleton College. It is no coincidence that the present study's geographic scope, and the direction of the larger dissertation project from which it has been plucked, mirrors Alison's teaching so closely, having been implicitly shaped by her courses on early modern Spain, Italy, and the Low Countries. My thanks are also owed to Dawn Odell and the anonymous reader for their incisive suggestions and to the University of Michigan's Jean Monnet Fellowship for supporting primary research undertaken in preparation for this essay. But most of all, thank you, Alison for helping me to balance my curiosity with the discipline and direction that has stood me in good stead for so many years.

Wendy Sepponen is writing a dissertation on the Leoni and the relationship between Italian and Spanish sculptural and metallurgical traditions under the auspices of the History of Art Department at the University of Michigan. A recipient of the University of London's Institute for Historical Research Mellon Dissertation Fellowship, she obtained her bachelor's degree at Carleton College under the expert guidance of Alison Kettering, followed by a master's from the University of Toronto.

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Figure 1. Leone and Pompeo Leoni, *Charles V and Furor*, ca. 1550–64, bronze, 251 x 143 x 130 cm, 825 kg. Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, inv. no. E00273 (artwork in the public domain; photo: © Museo Nacional del Prado / Art Resource, NY)

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¹ Although the letter is undated and located toward the end of the *cartela*, near a letter dated April 15, 1585, I agree with Amadio Ronchini's placement of the letter between late 1546 and early 1549, most likely during 1548.

² "Come per lo contrario la scoltura da tutte le bande si bede et si tocca le superficie e piane e tonde et detta scoltura non può venir meno per molte età, et tanto maggiormente, essendo le sculture fatte in metallo." Archivio di Stato di Parma, Epistolario Scelto 23, 18 (Leone Aretino) f. 32 (undated). The letter was first transcribed in Amadio Ronchini,

“Leone Leoni,” *Atti e Memorie delle R. R. deputazioni di Storia Patria, per le provincie Modenesi e Parmensi* 3 (1865): 24–25 (letter IV). This transcription was later translated into French by Eugène Plon, *Les Maîtres italiens au service de la maison d’Autriche: Leone Leoni, sculpteur de Charles-Quint, et Pompeo Leoni, sculpteur de Philippe II* (Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit, 1887), 37–38.

³The *paragone* debates, which encouraged artists and theorists to discuss the relative virtues and vices of painting and sculpture, illuminate the contemporary rhetoric and terminology for the two art forms; they shared a common goal in elevating these crafts to the level of the other liberal arts. For a compendium of primary documents on the *paragone*, see Paola Barocchi, *Scritti d’arte del Cinquecento* (Milano: R. Ricciardi, 1971), 1:475–707.

⁴Although the Hapsburgs were an imperial dynasty, the family’s rulers nevertheless relied on the bureaucratic body of the Imperial Diet, composed of the various states within the empire.

⁵These sculptures are: the life-size bronze sculpture group *Charles V and Furor* (inv. no. E00273), three life-size bronze standing sculptures of Philip II (inv. no. E00272), Maria of Hungary (inv. no. E00263), and Empress Isabel (inv. no. E00274), two life-size marble standing sculptures of Charles V (inv. no. E00267) and Empress Isabel (inv. no. E00260), two marble reliefs of Charles V (inv. no. E00291) and Empress Isabel (inv. no. E00269), two marble busts of Charles V (inv. no. E00264) and Maria of Hungary (inv. no. E00262), and a bronze bust of Charles V (inv. no. E00271).

⁶While still at court on Sept. 8, 1549, Leone reported to Ferrante Gonzaga that Maria of Hungary wanted him to make ten standing figures in metal (“dieci statue pedestri in metallo,” Archivio di Stato di Parma-Epistolario Scelto 23, 18 f. 9), although it is not possible to reconstruct which of the extant works, if any, were considered part of such a series. The discrepancies between the documentation and extant sculptures render a total and coherent narrative of the commission extremely challenging; while it is not the purpose of this paper to parse out these historical tangles, it is worth noting that the specific backdrop of *Charles V and Furor*—who commissioned it, for what location, and for what purpose—is complex and difficult to bring into focus.

⁷Leone notified cultural minister Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle on August 14, 1555, of his travel plans and the reported the state of each sculpture. Real Biblioteca, Cartas italianas al Obispo de Arrás [1555] II/2271 f. 98-99. Also in Plon, *Les Maîtres italiens*, 370 (letter 39).

⁸Archivo Histórico de Protocolos 384, CCXLIIr. The contract for the extra work on *Empress Isabel’s* dress has been quoted in Walter Cupperi, “Leo faciebat; ‘Leo et Pompeius facerunt’: Autorialità multipla e transculturalità nei ritratti leoniani del Prado,” in *Leone and Pompeo Leoni: Actas del Congreso Internacional*, ed. Stephan F. Schröder (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2012), 84, n. 72.

⁹“CAESARIS VIR/TUTE DOMITUS FUROR.” The base is also signed: “1564 / LEO. P. POMP. F. ARET. F.”

¹⁰Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.293–96: “dirae ferro et compagibus artis / claudentur Belli portae; Furor impius intus/saeva sedens super arma et centum vinctus aënis / post tergum nodis fremet horridus ore cruento.” Translated as “Tight locks of iron / Will close War’s grim gates. Inside, godless Furor, / Drooling blood on a heap of brutal weapons, / Will roar against the chains that pinion him.” Translation from Sarah Ruden, trans., *The Aeneid of Virgil* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 9.

¹¹See Michael Mezzatesta, “Imperial Themes in the Sculpture of Leone Leoni” (PhD diss., New York University, 1980), 1–69; the catalogue entry “Carlos V y el Furor” in *Los Leoni (1509–1608): Escultores del Renacimiento italiano al servicio de la corte de España* (Madrid: Museo del Prado, 1994), 102–9; and most recently Jennifer Liston, “The Performance of Empire: Leone Leoni’s Charles V Subduing Fury,” *Visual Resources* 28, no. 1 (March 2012): 24–42.

¹²Michael Cole, “Under the Sign of Vulcan,” in *Bronze: The Power of Life and Death* (Leeds: Henry Moore Institute, 2005), 44–47.

¹³Although the area remained contested, with skirmishes breaking out between Spanish and French forces after 1535, this year marked the beginning of otherwise uninterrupted control over the territory that lasted until the early

eighteenth century. See Antonio Álvarez-Ossorio Alvariño, “The State of Milan and Spanish Monarchy,” in *Spain in Italy: Politics, Society, and Religion 1500–1700*, ed. Thomas Dandeleit and John Marino (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 106; and Cesare Mozzarelli, “Introduzione storica,” in *Grandezza e splendori della Lombardia spagnola, 1535- 1701*, ed. Claudio Nasso and Serena Parini (Milan: Skira, 2002), 25–27; and in the same volume Gianvittorio Signorotto, “Milano e la monarchia cattolica Spagnoli e lombardi al governo dello Stato,” 37–45.

¹⁴ Vanoccio Biringuccio, *De la Pirotechnia* (Venice, 1540), 1:19v–20r; also discussed in Cole, “Under the Sign of Vulcan,” 42.

¹⁵ Álvaro Soler del Campo, “Armors as Works of Art and the Image of Power,” in *The Art of Power: Royal Armor and Portraits from Imperial Spain* (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la Acción Cultural Exterior, 2009), 75–93; and Stuart W. Pyhrr and José-A. Godoy, eds., *Heroic Armor of the Italian Renaissance: Filippo Negrolì and His Contemporaries* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998).

¹⁶ After a preliminary search, a number of documents at the Archivo General de Simancas confirm that Milan remained an attractive armor industry, as armor was shipped from Milan to Spain for decades. See Archivo General de Simancas, Consejo de Estado legajo 520 (f. 75), legajo 1330 (f. 117, 131, 132).

¹⁷ Alan Williams, *The Knight and the Blast Furnace: A History of the Metallurgy of Armour in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 203.

¹⁸ The ninth book of Biringuccio’s *De la Pirotechnia* signals a step away from the exceptional detail that characterizes the eight preceding books with its title “On the practice of further exercises in fire.” He proceeds to treat topics as varied as alchemy, blacksmithing, goldsmithing, and work in copper under the shared umbrella of the “operations and power of fire.” Biringuccio, *De la Pirotechnia*, 122v.

¹⁹ Gert von der Osten and Horst Vey, *Painting and Sculpture in Germany and the Netherlands: 1500 to 1600* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1969), 240–41.

²⁰ For the long history of the commission as well as its genealogical importance, see Larry Silver, *Marketing Maximilian: The Visual Ideology of a Holy Roman Emperor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 63–76; and Osten and Vey, *Painting and Sculpture*, 43–46, 253–54.

SPECTACULARLY SMALL: JACQUES CALLOT AT THE MEDICI COURT

Nina Eugenia Serebrennikov

In his short twelve-year reign, the Grand Duke of Tuscany Cosimo II de' Medici sponsored numerous public spectacles for the entertainment of his subjects. To commemorate these events Jacques Callot developed considerable skill in rendering throngs of spectators admiring that princely largesse. The apogee of this lexicon of spectacle was Callot's Fair at Impruneta. Dedicating it to the grand duke, he depicted well over a thousand figures engaged in nearly as many separate activities. But there would be no place for the large writ small in seventeenth-century academic theory; it was a taste and skill that was virtually extinguished with the death of Cosimo II and Callot.

In the second volume of Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* the young Marcel recounts his first experience of the theater. He accompanies his grandmother to a matinee performance of Racine's *Phèdre* starring the renowned actress Berma, whom the boy idolizes,

I told my grandmother that I could not see very well; she handed me her glasses. Only, when one believes in the reality of a thing, making it visible by artificial means is not quite the same as feeling that it is close at hand. I thought now that it was no longer Berma at whom I was looking, but her image in a magnifying glass. I put the glasses down, but then possibly the image that my eye received of her, diminished by distance, was no more exact; which of the two Bermas was the real?¹

The issue of which version to believe—that seen by the naked eye, or that seen through a lens—rises repeatedly in the history of optics. Certainly one of the better-known instances is the case of Galileo Galilei's seemingly heretical assertion in his 1609 *Sidereus nuncius* that when the moon was observed through his telescope it was clear that the surface is not perfectly smooth. Instead, like the earth, it is covered with jagged mountains and deep craters.² Galileo dedicated that text as well as the telescope with which he had made his discoveries to the Grand Duke of Tuscany Cosimo II de' Medici, who was known to be both a generous and discerning patron. His gifts were rewarded. In the spring of 1610 Galileo applied for and was appointed to the position of chief mathematician and philosopher of the Medici court.³ That appointment, I believe, sparked a surprising rivalry.

In the tradition of his powerful ancestors, Cosimo II was also an active patron of the visual arts. No doubt in part because his indomitable mother, Christine de Lorraine, was French, the duke looked upon Northern European artists with favor. It was he who sent emissaries not once, but twice, to Rome to purchase Adam Elsheimer's small, multipaneled altarpiece *The Finding and Exaltation of the True Cross*. It was almost certainly he who commissioned Cornelis van Poelenburgh to copy Elsheimer's nine-centimeter-high copper panels of *Holy Figures* onto plates just a fraction larger. And it was he who in 1614 provided a studio in the Uffizi for a young artist from Lorraine, Jacques Callot, in order to execute engravings of the life of his father, Grand Duke Ferdinand I. In the seven years that he spent at Cosimo II's court Callot etched numerous festivities that the grand duke commissioned for his subjects in Florence. Through his repeated rendering of vast, celebratory audiences on small sheets of paper, Callot developed an

unsurpassed skill in the depiction of the miniscule, a skill much appreciated by his patron. In a city whose artists had inspired Leon Battista's *De pictura*, and where Giorgio Vasari had established his Accademia del Disegno, there existed another pictorial lexicon, which might be called the vocabulary of polemical spectacle. It was from this perspective that Callot would issue his own optical challenge to the Italian astronomer and mathematician.

Little is certain about Callot's early years. Born in 1592 in Nancy to a family ennobled by Duke Charles III, he would have been familiar with princely spectacles from an early age, as his father had been appointed court herald. André Félibien and Filippo Baldinucci agree that the young Callot was a precocious draftsman, but they differ in their accounts of his arrival in Rome, where sometime between 1608 and 1611 he entered the workshop of a successful engraver and print publisher from Troyes, Philippe Thomassin.⁴ Amid his early works for Thomassin is a series of reproductive engravings of the paintings and statuary found in Saint Peter's and San Paolo Fuori le Mura. Each print is approximately eleven centimeters high, which suggests that they were intended for a larger plate, where they might have surrounded some text, views of the two churches, or perhaps a map of Rome. At this point Callot was still an inexperienced draftsman, so it is unlikely that he was the one who converted the large altarpieces and sculpture to drawings that would serve as models for the engravings.⁵ In all probability he seized this opportunity to better understand the task of reproductive printmaking. One can imagine the young artist from Lorraine bringing the model drawing of, for example, Michelangelo's *Pietà* to Saint Peter's in order to compare it with the original sculpture, working out the scale of reduction and registering the omissions in the smaller format.⁶ This would have been his first exposure, albeit a somewhat mechanical one, to an issue that would preoccupy him throughout his career: how to produce the monumental in miniature.

Baldinucci reports that Callot, recognizing his own lack of skill in the graphic media, left Rome for Florence to attend an informal academy run by Cosimo II's court architect, stage designer and engineer, Giulio Parigi; an academy where Euclid, mechanics, perspective, and civil and military architecture were taught.⁷ Parigi's early etchings display the fusion of perspective, topography, and military might that seems to have been characteristic of the curriculum, which attracted, again according to Baldinucci, scores of noblemen in military service.⁸ In that academy Callot would also have become acquainted with Parigi's assistant Remigio Cantagallina, who was, as Félibien records, very skilled in making both large and small compositions.⁹ Similarly, Baldinucci recounts that Parigi, upon noticing how skilled Callot was in depicting small figures, but in an affected and extravagant style, urged him to study nature to improve his drawings.¹⁰ In fact, Callot would spend the remainder of his productive years sketching miniature figures from life, such as the nine-centimeter-high drawing of a snake charmer, which he later included among the crowds in his etchings (fig. 1).



Figure 1. Jacques Callot, Snake Charmer, n.d., red chalk on paper, 8.8 x 8.4 cm. Florence, Gabinetto disegni e stampe degli Uffizi, inv. no. 2505 (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by Polo Museale Fiorentino)

Under Parigi's tutelage Callot was also introduced to the extravagant and polemical realm of ceremonial stage design, so favored by the Medici. Parigi was an impresario in the tradition of Bernardo Buontalenti, whose post at the Medici court he had inherited on the latter's death in June of 1608, scarcely four months before Cosimo II was to marry the Hapsburg archduchess Maria Maddalena. It had fallen to Parigi to hurriedly design the stage scenery and decorations for the occasion. The highlight of the four-week-long celebration took place on October 25, when Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger's pastoral play *Il Giudizio di Paride* was performed in the Teatro Medicio in the Uffizi. It was

not, however, the familiar story of Paris's choice of the most beautiful goddess that the storied guests were anxious to see. Of considerably more interest to the audience were six elaborate *intermezzi*, or allegorical tableaux, that were interspersed between the acts. Over the years these *intermezzi* had become the principal entertainment, at the expense of the narrative action that characterized the plays. Each included music, singing, and dancing and each traditionally required a separate and richly decorated setting.¹¹

The six *intermezzi* are Parigi's most widely known stage designs, primarily because the etchings he and Cantagallina made after them were widely circulated throughout the courts of Europe. By far the most elaborate of the six was the last one, *The Temple of Peace*, etched by Parigi himself (fig. 2). A spectacular fusion of richly costumed singers, dancers, and musicians who seemingly appeared magically from above and below with the aid of trap doors and cloud machines, the *intermezzo* exemplified the polemical nature of Parigi's stage design. In the etching the stage is framed by six *periaktoi*, or revolving prisms, each of which depict two colossal columns, with their entablatures forming orthogonals that are continued by the barrel-vaulted arches painted on the backdrop. In front of the vanishing point Peace sits on a throne, surrounded by a large cloud that envelops twelve personified Blessings singing and playing musical instruments. Amphitrite and Proserpina are shown below the stage in front of subterranean caverns. Surrounding Peace are four chariots, borne by colored clouds, bearing Neptune, Cybele, Bellona, and Pluto. Still higher in the heavens the Assembly of the Gods emerges, flanked by twelve Gentle Breezes dancing on their suspended clouds. In his report on the performance to the Duke of Mantua, the courtier Gabriele Bertazzuolo marveled that nine stage machines operated simultaneously in order to display an estimated three hundred performers on stage. After an epithalamium to Cosimo and Maddalena, the four-hour spectacle concluded with everyone on stage singing and dancing. According to all reports, the entire audience was entranced by this panegyric to the glory of the grand duke and his new bride.¹²



Figure 2. Giulio Parigi, *The Temple of Peace*, 1608, etching, 19.7 x 26.7 cm (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by the British Museum)

Callot proved himself to be an apt pupil of this copious vocabulary of spectacle. For the 1616 carnival season Cosimo II commissioned a festival that included a mock equestrian battle performed in the Piazza Santa Croce. Parigi designed the production, and Callot executed the four etchings that accompanied the souvenir program. The plot of the *War of Love* revolved around the rivalry between the king of the Asians and the king of the Africans for the beautiful Indian queen Lucinda. It was a resplendent cast: the king of the Asians, who arrived in a chariot pulled by elephants, was played by the grand duke himself, and his younger brother Don Lorenzo, drawn by camels, took the role of the king of the Africans. In one of his etchings Callot depicted the entry of the two chariots, Cosimo on the left and his brother on the right (fig. 3). Legions of soldiers march in formation behind them. The oval stands are packed with the duke's subjects. In the center two *zanni*, or comic buffoons, dance for their own king, who sports a paper crown and is accompanied by his court musician. A dog lunges in excitement at the buttocks of one of the dancers. To the right the driver of a cart raises his whip over two rearing horses, as one of his

passengers vomits over the side. Behind him one man urinates under the stands, while another defecates. Assuredly Cosimo and his court would have enjoyed the indecorous carnivalesque antics while simultaneously admiring the ceremonial rituals within the arena.¹³



Figure 3. Jacques Callot, *The Entry of the Chariots from The War of Love*, 1616, etching, 22.7 x 30.3 cm (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by the British Museum)

Callot was to probe the relationship between the spectacle and the observer in a number of compositions. His 1619 etching *The Fan* seems at first to be a witty riposte (fig. 4). Cosimo had decreed the Feast of San Jacopo would be commemorated that year by a mock naval battle on the Arno. The victors were to steal an offering meant for Vulcan, thereby incurring the god's wrath, which would be demonstrated by a spectacular fusillade of fireworks.¹⁴ Callot's etching was executed and printed before the celebration, and five hundred impressions were pasted to a backing to produce actual fans, which were handed out to the ladies as souvenirs. Accordingly he depicted the occasion within an appropriately shaped grotesque cartouche. Twelve well-dressed spectators with their backs to us are arrayed along the lower margin. Beyond them crowds gather along the banks of the Arno and along the two bridges, the Ponte Santa Trinità and the Ponte alla Carraia. Callot's principal manipulations were designed to accommodate the admiring crowds. He eliminated buildings from the southern bank of the Arno that would have blocked the view, leaving a wide expanse for a horde of spectators. The throngs on the two bridges and the far bank are miniscule, giving the impression that the river is far wider than is actually the case. Similarly, the diminutive Duomo and Campanile appear very distant. The vista has become vast. As one commentator noted, it is as if we are looking through the wrong end of a telescope.¹⁵ And indeed, Callot depicts one onlooker at the left of the cartouche peering through that instrument. On the opposite side another waves one of Callot's fans.¹⁶



Figure 4. Jacques Callot, *The Fan*, 1619, etching with engraving, 23.1 x 30.6 cm (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)

A decade had passed since Galileo had presented to Cosimo II the telescope with which he had discovered what he named the Medicean stars and dedicated his *Sidereus nuncius* to the grand duke. Much has been written about the contentious reception of that small text, but it is Galileo's friend, the artist Lodovico Cigoli, whose comments are most useful in this context. Cigoli had read a copy of a letter that the mathematicians of the Jesuit Collegio Romano had written in March of 1611 in response to a request that they confirm Galileo's observations. By and large they endorsed his discoveries: "The great inequality of the Moon cannot be denied. But it appears to Father Clavius [the senior mathematician and follower of Ptolemy] more probable that the surface is not uneven, but rather that the lunar body has denser and rarer parts, as are the ordinary spots seen with the natural sight."¹⁷ Cigoli responded in a letter to Galileo,

I was most astonished by the opinion of Father Clavius about the Moon: that he doubts its unevenness because it appears to him more probable that it is not of uniform density. Now, I have thought and thought about this, and I find nothing to say in his defense except that, be he as great as he wants, a mathematician without disegno is not only a mediocre mathematician, but also a man without eyes.¹⁸

It is precisely those two modes of knowledge that Callot depicts on either side of his cartouche—the philosopher and mathematician viewing the combatants through his telescope on the left, and the master of *disegno* waving his fan on the right. And while the philosopher's telescope makes distant objects such as the moon or sunspots appear close by, the artist here places nearby monuments as if they were very distant. As the young Marcel would wonder, who is to be believed?¹⁹

Callot was to produce one more magisterial etching for the duke, one that I believe can be considered a response to the challenge he invokes in *The Fan*. A year or so before the publication of that etching Cosimo II had invited the painter Filippo Napoletano to his court and, in September of 1618, commissioned him to execute a painting, *The Fair at Impruneta*. Sometime in the next three years Napoletano painted a two-meter-wide canvas, which was to hang in the grand duke's apartments (fig. 5). The Tuscan town of Impruneta was, and still is, the site of an annual celebration on the Feast Day of Saint Luke, October 18. On that day a miraculous image of the Virgin, said to be by the hand of Saint Luke, is transported through the town in a procession in order to protect the population from the plague and worse disasters and then returned to the Basilica Santa Maria. Napoletano shows the procession just leaving the church, about to make its rounds. In the piazza in front of the church he painted hundreds of revelers, including at the lower right, the grand duke himself, who has arrived to observe the antics of his subjects. Resplendent in red, he gestures toward his wife, Maria Maddalena. Or is he pointing with amusement at the bucking horse that is trampling a display of the terra-cotta pottery that Impruneta is famous for? Callot must have noticed such details, for a comparison of the painting with his own etching of the same subject uncovers too many similarities to be coincidental (fig. 6). Art historians disagree as to whether Napoletano's colossal rendition preceded or was executed at the same time as Callot's contribution. In either case, however, I think it would be fair to surmise that in Callot's mind this would have been a highly charged competition.²⁰



Figure 5. Filippo Napoletano, *The Fair at Impruneta*, ca. 1620, oil on canvas, 114.5 x 205 cm Florence, Pitti Palace, inv. no. 776 (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by Polo Museale Fiorentino)



Figure 6. Jacques Callot, *The Fair at Impruneta*, 1620, etching, 42.4 x 67 cm (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)

The etching of *The Fair at Impruneta* is universally hailed as Callot's preeminent achievement. Over two hundred drawings of single figures and small groups have survived. It is worth noting that the last of his known preparatory drawings, the one traced with a stylus, is not actually a precise rendering of what he would etch. Once the drawing had been transferred, Callot worked directly on the plate, adding figure after figure and reaching, according to the late-nineteenth-century print cataloger Gottfried Kinkel, a remarkable total of 1,138 men, women, and children.²¹ Here he makes use of every dramatic sleight of hand that Parigi had taught him. Both the painting and the etching depict the church in the center background, with an outbuilding to the left, and place a multistoried shop on the left margin. Callot closes off the right margin with a large tree and lines up the trees behind it like stage wings, so that the crowd is encompassed by the piazza instead of spilling across it. At the lower right he replaced Napoletano's portrait of Cosimo with a trestle stage. On it the snake charmer of the red chalk drawing gesticulates broadly next to a quack doctor. He seems to point to the area where Napoletano had depicted pottery crushed to shards by a bucking horse; Callot instead shows a fallen horse, with spilled wares on the ground, as his owner pulls the reins to help the animal right itself. Below the trestle stage a soldier with his back to us urinates. In the opposite corner Callot depicts customers inspecting a display of terra-cotta. A drunken brawl erupts underneath a canopy. At the far left a crowd gathers around a merchant strung up on the scaffold for cheating his customers by altering the apparent weight of his goods.²² In the right background another crowd gathers around eight dancers, four men and four women. Three young men climb a ladder for a better view. In the distance the procession enters the church, suggesting it is late in the festive day, and the autumnal Tuscan sun will soon be casting long shadows on the revelers in the piazza.

This was Callot's virtuoso performance, his *paragone* demonstrating what etching could accomplish. No painting, certainly not Filippo Napoletano's, rendered so many individual figures from every rung of society, engaged in so many different activities, from the charitable to the avaricious, from the comic to the cruel. On the Feast of the Assumption, March 25, 1620—and the first day of the new year, as it was then celebrated—the master of *piccole figure* proffered *The Fair at Impruneta* to its dedicatee, the grand duke.²³ Little by little, perhaps in successive evenings while his health was failing, as his eyes traveled from group to group, Cosimo would have garnered the variety of experiences and human vicissitudes that his subjects enacted at the fair. Callot is undoubtedly the master of the large writ small. And, from that perspective, I think the *paragone* was directed not merely at Napoletano but at Galileo as well.

Of all the courtiers who surrounded the grand duke, Galileo was by far the most renowned. Like a mythological figure, he had an attribute, the telescope, and he took great pains to keep it associated only with himself. Upon the publication of his discoveries in the *Sidereus nuncius*, "Italian dukes, German princes, the queen of France, the Holy Roman Emperor [and], half the cardinals in Rome wrote to Galileo asking for one of the instruments that made the celestial wonders visible," as Richard S. Westfall has noted.²⁴ Better than most, Galileo knew the value of a coveted gift sent to a powerful personage, and he obliged repeatedly. A decade later he had not found reason to alter that strategy.

In May of 1618, for instance, he sent Cosimo II's brother-in-law, Archduke Leopold of Austria, three telescopes, one to observe the heavens, the second, smaller one to observe phenomena here on earth, and a third, even smaller one, to wear on the head. Of the last he wrote, "I beg you to keep it secret as much as you can, on account of some interests of mine."²⁵

But in his etching Callot may have outmaneuvered Galileo. One fact is virtually certain: Cosimo would have needed a strong magnifying glass to sort out distant figures such as the three bishops that head the festival procession, or the onlookers that encircle the prisoner tied to a stake at the far left.²⁶ The grand duke may or may not have made the association—that instead of peering through a lens to study previously unseen bodies in the infinite ether, he was using his glass to examine each and every one of his infinitesimal subjects as if they were on stage. *The Fair at Impruneta* is the rustic counterpart to Parigi's *Temple of Peace* of two decades earlier. This is a lexicon—of multitudes, of festivity both decorous and indecorous, of variety—that Cosimo II de' Medici had enjoyed repeatedly as a paean to his dynasty. Galileo's gifts, the Medician stars, or the pocked surface of the moon, might well have appeared stubbornly mute in comparison.

The death of Cosimo II less than a year later marked the end of an era of fertile patronage. The grand duke's taste for both lavish spectacle and the exquisite miniature was not sustained by his widow, Maria Maddalena, and her mother-in-law, Dowager Duchess Christine. Shortly thereafter Callot reluctantly returned to Lorraine, settling in Nancy, where eventually he joined the court of Duke Charles IV. Although there he would virtually replicate his plate of *The Fair at Impruneta*, in effect he was looking through the wrong end of the telescope. The heyday of *copia* had been sixteenth-century Northern Europe, when Erasmus published his manual on copious expression *De duplici copia verborum ac rerum*, which went through more than 150 printings in that century, when Rabelais drafted the endless enumerations found in his *Gargantua*, and when Pieter Bruegel the Elder painted the *Procession to Calvary*. Copious variety may have reached its apogee in Callot's etching, but shortly thereafter the depiction of vast numbers of varied figures in miniature lost its persuasive power. There would be little room in seventeenth-century academic theory for the depiction of a far-flung panoply of the vagaries of human experience. Even those who were eventually to rebel against the strictures of the academies never explored its possibilities. It was a taste and a skill that was virtually extinguished with the death of Cosimo II de' Medici and Jacques Callot.

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¹ Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff (New York: Random House, 1934), 1:345.

² Reporting on his discovery of spots on the surface of the moon through his telescope, Galileo wrote, "By oft-repeated observations of them we have been led to the conclusion that we certainly see the surface of the Moon to be not smooth, even, and perfectly spherical, as the great crowd of philosophers have believed about this and other heavenly bodies, but on the contrary, to be uneven, rough and crowded with depressions and bulges." See his *Sidereus nuncius* or *The Sidereal Messenger*, trans. Albert van Helden (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 40.

³ Maurice A. Finocchiaro, ed. and trans., *The Galileo Affair: A Documentary History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 298

⁴ Félibien's entire text and Baldinucci's abbreviated biography are both reproduced in *Jacques Callot, 1592–1635*, exh. cat., ed. Paulette Choné (Nancy: Musée historique lorrain, 1992), 84–89. Baldinucci's text is translated into French. For the most recent bibliography on Callot, see Dena M. Woodall and Diane Wolfthall, *Princes and Paupers: The Art of Jacques Callot*, exh. cat. (Houston and New Haven: The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and Yale University Press, 2013), 139–43.

⁵ Stéphane Loire, "Les Tableaux de Rome gravés par Jacques Callot: Leurs sources et leur context," in *Jacques Callot (1592–1635): Actes du colloque organisé par le Service culturel du musée du Louvre et la ville de Nancy*, ed. Daniel Ternois (Paris: Musée du Louvre, 1993), 100.

⁶ Illustrated in Jacques Callot, exh. cat. (Nancy), 135, cat. 8.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 88–89.

⁸ See, for example his 1606 etching of military maneuvers in the courtyard of the Pitti Palace, illustrated in Annamaria Negro Spina, *Giulio Parigi e gli incisori della sua cherchia* (Naples: Società Editrice Napoletana, 1983), fig. 1.

⁹ Jacques Callot, exh. cat. (Nancy), 85.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 89.

¹¹ Some indication of the social and political role these magnificent spectacles played is evoked by Sebastiano Serlio in his discussion of satiric stage scenery: "the more such things cost, the more they are esteemed, for they are things which stately and great persons doe, which are enemies to niggardlinesse. This have I seene in some Scenes made by Ieronimo Genga, for the pleasure and delight of his lord and patron Francisco Maria, Duke of Urbin: wherein I saw so great liberalitie used by the Prince, and so good a conceit in the workeman, and so good art and proportion in things therein represented, as ever I saw in all my life before. Oh good Lord, what magnificence was there to be seene . . . but I leave all these things to the discretion and consideration of the iudicious workeman; which shall make all such things as their pattrons serve them, which they must worke after their owne devises, and never take care what it shall cost": Serlio, *The Five Books of Architecture: An Unabridged Reprint of the English Edition of 1611* (New York: Dover Publications, 1982), fol. 26r.

The description of the Medici celebrations by the German architect and onetime student of Parigi's Joseph Furttenbach was less generous. Rather than seeing them as an expression of the duke's liberality, he bridled at the cost: "Sometime as many as seven changes of scene are built at no little expense. Especially in Italy no expense is spared. It is well known that there as much as a half ton of gold has been spent for a play that would have only one performance

at a princely celebration of marriage and would be seen only by the great lords present”: *Mannhafter Kunst-Spiegel* (Ulm, 1663), as translated by George R. Kernodle, in *The Renaissance Stage: Documents of Serlio, Sabbattini and Furtentbach*, ed. Bernard Hewitt (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1958), 203.

¹² A. M. Nagler, *Theatre Festivals of the Medici, 1539–1637* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 109–11; and Arthur R. Blumenthal, *Giulio Parigi’s Stage Designs: Florence and the Early Baroque Spectacle* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1986), 144–48. Nagler depends primarily on Camillo Rinuccini’s official description of the 1608 festivities, which was published the same year, while Blumenthal relies mainly on the etchings by Parigi and Cantagallina.

¹³ It was a juxtaposition of subject matter that was not unusual at Cosimo II’s court. In *Jacques Callot*, exh. cat. (Nancy), 190–91, Daniel Ternois points out that the accompanying text written by Andrea Salvadori, *Guerra d’Amore Festa del Serenissimo Gran Duca di Toscana Cosimo II*, includes comparable contrasts. Similarly, Mario Biagioli refers to what he calls Galileo’s occasional Rabelaisian literary style, which he sees as an “antidote to an overworked courtly sprezzatura which edged over into pedantry.” See Biagioli, *Galileo, Courtier: The Practice of Science in the Culture of Absolutism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 115.

¹⁴ Jeffrey Blanchard, “Theater,” in *Jacques Callot: Prints and Related Drawings*, exh. cat., H. Diane Russell et al. (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1975), 70.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁶ As Blanchard pointed out, this male figure is often mistaken for a woman (*Ibid.*, 82, n. 56). Given the fine clothing the men are wearing, it would have been indecorous for women of the same class to straddle the cartouche.

¹⁷ As quoted in Sara Elizabeth Booth and Albert van Helden, “The Virgin and the Telescope: The Moons of Cigoli and Galileo,” *Science in Context* 13 (2000): 471. See also Eileen Reeves, *Painting the Heavens: Art and Science in the Age of Galileo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 151; and James M. Lattis, *Between Copernicus and Galileo: Christoph Clavius and the Collapse of Ptolemaic Cosmology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 190–93.

¹⁸ “Ora io ci ò pensato et ripensato, nè ci trovo altro ripiegho in sua difesa, se non che un matematico, si grande quanto si vole, trovandosi senza disegno, sia non solo un mezzo matematico, ma ancho uno huomo senza ochi.” I use the translation in Booth and Van Helden, “The Virgin and the Telescope,” 473.

¹⁹ The rhetorical nature of the juxtaposition is emphasized by the gesture of extending the fan, formally analogous to holding up the telescope. One doesn’t, after all, fan a distant vista. Galileo may not have appreciated the analogy, however. In their article “Representing the Heavens: Galileo and Visual Astronomy,” *ISIS* 83 (1992): 192–217, Mary G. Winkler and Albert van Helden argue persuasively that after 1613 Galileo sought to distance himself from his earlier naturalistic representations of the heavens, which they suggest would have labeled him as an artisan. As Mario Biagioli pointed out: “Actually Galileo succeeded in obtaining the status of a nobleman at court because—on top of the title of ‘Philosopher’—he managed to be included in the category of *Gentilhuomini senza provisione* (people of patrician status who had full access to court but were not paid as court workers) rather than in the category of *Artisti, architettori et altri manifattori* (in which we find artists, craftsmen, engineers, architects, teachers of mathematics, and geographers).” See Biagioli, “Galileo’s System of Patronage,” *History of Science* 28 (1990): 41.

²⁰ Baldinucci reported that Napoletano gave Callot a drawing, of which there is now no trace, of the fair at Impruneta. See Marco Chiarini, *Teodoro Filippo di Liagno detto Filippo Napoletano, 1589–1629: Vita e opera* (Florence: Centro Di, 2007), 497.

²¹ *Jacques Callot*, exh. cat. (Nancy), 242.

²² Sheila McTighe, *The Imaginary Everyday: Genre Painting and Prints in Italy and France, 1580–1670* (New York: The Bownes Library, 2007), 299.

²³ *Jacques Callot*, exh. cat. (Nancy), 70.

²⁴ Richard S. Westfall, “Science and Patronage: Galileo and the Telescope,” *ISIS* 76 (1985): 20.

²⁵ Finocchiaro, *The Galileo Affair*, 198–99.

²⁶ McTighe, *The Imaginary Everyday*, 295, notes that “It has been suggested that the tiny scale and the multiplicity of Callot’s figures was a deliberate call for viewing them through a magnifying lens,” but she does not document the suggestion.

BITTERSWEET: SUGAR, SLAVERY, AND SCIENCE IN DUTCH SURINAME

Elizabeth Sutton

Pictures of sugar production in the Dutch colony of Suriname are well suited to shed light on the role images played in the parallel rise of empirical science, industrial technology, and modern capitalism. The accumulation of goods paralleled a desire to accumulate knowledge and to catalogue, organize, and visualize the world. This included possessing knowledge in imagery, as well as human and natural resources. This essay argues that representations of sugar production in eighteenth-century paintings and prints emphasized the potential for production and the systematization of mechanized production by picturing mills and labor as capital.

Pictures of sugar production in the Dutch colony of Suriname are well suited to shed light on the role images played in the parallel rise of empirical science, industrial technology, and modern capitalism.¹ Images were important to legitimating and privileging these domains in Western society. The efficiency considered necessary for maximal profit necessitated close attention to the science of agriculture and the processing of raw materials, in addition to the exploitation of labor. The accumulation of goods paralleled a desire to accumulate knowledge and to catalogue, organize, and visualize the world. Scientific rationalism and positivism corresponded with mercantile imperatives to create an epistemology that privileged knowledge about the natural world in order to control its resources. Prints of sugar production from the seventeenth century provided a prototype of representation that emphasized botanical description and practical diagrams of necessary apparatuses. This focus on the means of production was continued and condensed into representations of productive capacity and mechanical efficiency in later eighteenth-century images.

Although the paintings and prints of Suriname plantation life are ostensibly realistic descriptions from life, they do not show the reality of slave labor on plantations, as Elmer Kolfin, Rebecca Parker Brienen, and others have noted.² Rather, the paintings—which form a rare group of images by Dutch artist Dirk Valkenburg—depict the landscape as capital: on it are the resources to be used. Valkenburg's paintings follow from the descriptive drawings he made of Jonas Witsen's plantations between 1706 and 1708. These drawings, like the paintings, focus on the buildings and machines that are at once the capital necessary for, and emblematic of, a productive plantation. Similarly, prints from eighteenth-century accounts present labor as capital and the built environment as part of an efficient system of mechanized production. In both media, the focus is on an empirical description of the elements of modern capitalist production. Paintings and prints provide an inventory of nature built upon, owned, and controlled. In images, the sugar mill became a metonym for the efficient and productive plantation as a whole.

Since the turn of the seventeenth century, the Dutch had wanted a piece of the sugar trade that was then dominated by the Portuguese.³ The conquests of northeast Brazil and parts of West Africa by the West India Company (WIC) between 1636 and 1644 catalyzed Dutch involvement in the production, in addition to their previous role in the transport, of sugar. When the WIC lost control of northeast Brazil in 1654, the company refocused its attention to the Caribbean. Zeelander Abraham Crijnssen captured the colony of Suriname from the English in 1667, and it was officially exchanged for New Netherland (New York) in 1674. Between 1682 and 1795 the colony of Suriname was governed by the chartered Society of Suriname. The Society was mostly owned by the Amsterdam family Van Aerssen van Sommelsdijk, although the WIC retained some shares. Like Brazil, Suriname was a plantation economy.⁴

Throughout the period of the Dutch Republic's rise as an economic power in the early modern world system,⁵ sugar syrup, or crystals (*kandij*), brought from the Caribbean and Indonesia was baked into cones or blocks in the bakeries (*suikerbakerij*) located across its provinces. By 1662, there were over fifty refineries in Amsterdam, and more in other port cities.⁶ At that time, the Republic provided more than half of the refined sugar consumed in Europe.⁷ By 1752 there were 152 refineries in the Republic, processing over 35 millions pounds of imported raw sugar; 139 of the refineries were in Holland. The increase in production made sugar a commodity that was within reach for a wider range of consumers than it had ever been before. Correspondingly, the total value of sugar in the Republic in 1770 was more than six times that of the total value of cheese there.⁸

In the Dutch Republic, the interest in and value of sugar meant that its cultivation and processing were frequent subjects for printed imagery published in news broadsides, multisheet wall maps, and books, particularly after the WIC's successful (albeit short-lived) colonization of northeast Brazil.⁹ Scientific information concerning when to plant, when to harvest, how to process raw cane, and other important visual cues necessary to make production efficient and profitable were clarified in images. These were preceded by visual and rhetorical narratives highlighting the profit potential of sugar. Since the Dutch first learned how to process sugar from the Portuguese planters in Brazil, agricultural and production details were of utmost importance and frequently copied.

Human labor was part of these images in the beginning, all but disappearing when production truly soared. Alison Kettering pointed out in her 2007 article "Men at Work, or Keeping One's Nose to the Grindstone" that artists in the Dutch Republic produced more images of labor than anywhere else in early modern Europe, but the few images of slaves laboring on sugar plantations in the colonies does not parse with the virtuous ideals of work imagery that focused on Europeans.¹⁰ Early images had emphasized the virtue of work to protect against sloth, and, increasingly, links were made between diligence and prosperity in contemporary literature and printed imagery. Correspondingly, in 1632 Caspar Barlaeus suggested that knowledge of moral and natural philosophy were necessary for the "wise merchant" (*mercator sapiens*); he even made mercantile pursuits virtuous and a duty, pursuant to the citizen's active role in the commonwealth.¹¹ However, by the nineteenth century, as Kettering recognized in Van Gogh's paintings, the images of a "worker integrated into society and justly compensated for his work" had broken down.¹² In fact, for plantation workers, such circumstances had broken down at least by the eighteenth century. Thus was the result of modern industrial capitalism previewed in eighteenth-century Dutch images of Suriname.



Figure 1. Joan Blaeu, *Paranambucæ pars Borealis*, in *Le Grande Atlas*, vol. XII. Amsterdam, Joan Blaeu, 1667. Copy of same in *Rerum per octennium in Brasilia*, Amsterdam: J. Blaeu, 1647, hand-colored engraving, 53.3 x 40.6 cm. (artwork in the public domain)

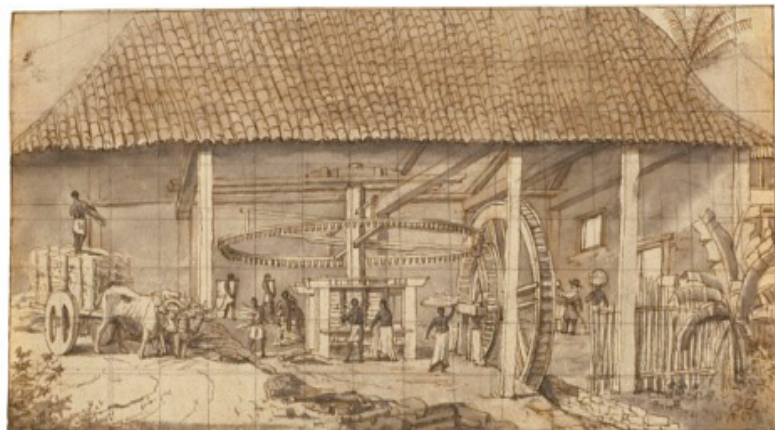


Figure 2. Frans Post, *Hydro-powered Sugarmill in Brazil*, brown ben, brown and gray wash, black chalk. 143 x 282 mm. Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Belgium. Inv. # 4060 / 2888

Sugar production had been pictured and described in print from the beginning of Dutch involvement in the enterprise. Since the conquest of Pernambuco in Brazil in 1630 and the arrival of Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen in 1637, images and information on production were printed for European consumption, most notably in Barlaeus's *Rerum per octennium in Brasilia* (1647) and Willem Piso and Georg Marcgraf's *Historia Naturalis Brasiliae* (1648). Both were projects completed under the patronage of Johan Maurits. Perhaps best known are the images of colonial sugar production by Frans Post, based on his time in Brazil (1637–43) as an artist-in-residence for Johan Maurits. As governor of Dutch Brazil from 1636 to 1644, Johan Maurits commissioned artists and scientists to catalogue the land and its resources.¹³

Post provided the sketch that decorated the map of Pernambuco in the *Rerum per octennium in Brasilia* (*History of Eight Years in Brazil*) (fig. 1). Published by Joan Blaeu as part of Barlaeus's folio documenting and praising Johan Maurits's governorship, Post's vignette is also part of Blaeu's multisheet wall map of Brazil. The map shows the hydro-powered sugar mill in a vignette used to clarify the purpose of the Dutch in Pernambuco: sugar (fig. 2). The picture emphasizes the mill, relegating the human labor to small, seemingly insignificant components of the whole operation. To the left, African slaves lead ox-carts filled with already-cut cane to the mill. The road leading to the mill shows a Portuguese woman being carried to the plantation by her slaves, led by what must be the plantation's owner. Behind the mill their two-story plantation house can be seen. There, more slaves raise their hands to greet the homecoming of the owners. This image provides a view of the sugar operations that sanitizes and mitigates the awful reality of the forced labor necessary to run the mills; viewers are distanced physically and emotionally from the labor.¹⁴ Instead the vignette emphasizes the efficiency and harmony of the plantation, with the mill as its center.

In Piso's natural history, the process of sugar production is described and pictured in a sequence of woodcuts (fig. 3). The first illustration shows an ox-powered mill. Africans drive the cattle and press the cane, while two Dutch men oversee their labor. In the eighteenth century, these Dutch figures, and indeed, most humans, will be eradicated from such scenes of production, and the central subject becomes the mill-as-machine. The scenes with Africans at first seem benign: generally, they are not shown working, but rather dancing or resting, often in scenes separate from the mill. However, underlying the surface is the reality that these were slaves, and that these are depictions of human capital, with the potential for work (fig. 3).

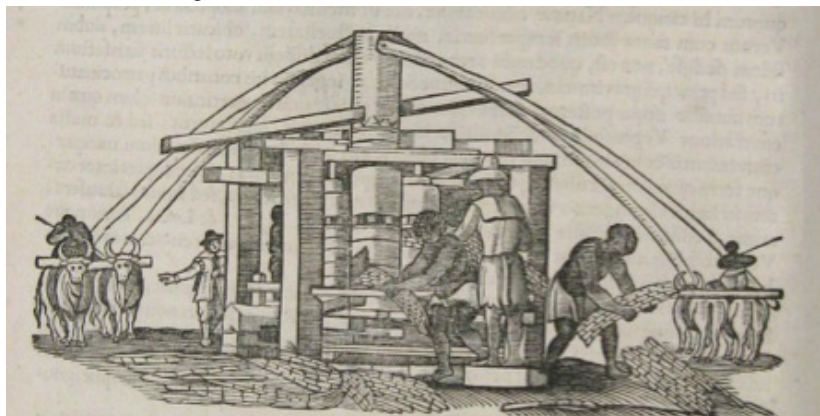


Figure 3. *Ox-Driven Sugarmill in Brazil*, woodcut illustration, p. 108 from Willem Piso *Historia Naturalis Brasiliae* (Amsterdam, 1648). (artwork in the public domain)

Later accounts of Brazil by Dutch travelers and those from Suriname perpetuated the “objective” description of the mechanics of sugar production, focusing on the machine and efficiency, only mentioning slaves as a necessary part of the whole systematic process.¹⁵ The type of mill typically used on sugar plantations had three cylinders. The central cylinder, driven by water or animal, rotated in the opposite direction from the outside cylinders. The cylinders pressed the sugar cane to extract the juice, which was then boiled into syrup in kettles over extremely hot fires in the *ketelhuis*. Laborers were needed to cut the cane and feed the pieces between the rollers, as shown in both Post's and Piso's pictures. Both tasks were difficult, and the latter was extremely dangerous, with a risk of losing limbs and life. In the *Rerum per octennium in Brasilia*, Barlaeus seems to have viewed enslaving Africans as unavoidable—at least, unavoidable in order to be efficient and generate a profit from sugar—although he acknowledged the difficulty of the labor. He wrote that “Negroes, who must be bought, are needed to do the work in the sugar mills and the fields. No matter how physically strong our people are, once transferred here they cannot tolerate this labor.”¹⁶

Like the images of Brazil, images of Suriname plantations created in the eighteenth century were meant to be descriptive information sources as well as encomia to their patrons, who prized the first-hand accounts.¹⁷ They implicitly impart a narrative of ownership that privileges a rational, mechanized system of production. In 1706, Dirk Valkenburg was commissioned by Jonas Witsen to create visual representations of his three plantations in Suriname.¹⁸ Valkenburg was asked to catalogue the rich natural resources owned by Witsen, and he focused his Surinamese paintings on still lifes and landscapes. Sketches extant in the Rijksmuseum show Valkenburg's preference for the edifices of Witsen's plantations, rather than the laborers. Indeed, Valkenburg seems to inventory the buildings as evidence of the productive capacity of Witsen's land. In the drawing here, he depicted the mill and cookhouse, *dram* house (4) and slave house (5) from the riverside (fig. 4). Only two small figures, distinguishable as a female and child, are shown. Similarly, Valkenburg's painting of one of Witsen's plantations from around 1707 shows a reed hut in the middle ground (fig. 5). In the distance, Dutch-style brick buildings with gabled roofs and windows—the plantation house or processing facilities—provide a contrast to the huts. Five figures crouch in the foreground near the hut. Bundled reeds appear in the left foreground among growing reeds and palm trees. This is a landscape full of productive capacity and consumable resources, tamed and ready for cultivation and colonization.



Figure 4. Dirk Valkenburg, *View of a Mill and Cook-house on a Plantation in Surinam*, 1708. Pen and pencil on paper, 19.6 x 34.1 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. RP-T-1905-103. (artwork in the public domain.)



Figure 5. Dirk Valkenburg, *Plantation in Surinam*, c. 1707. Oil on canvas, 52.5 x 45.4 cm (20.7 x 17.9 in). SK-A-4075. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 6. Dirk Valkenburg, *Slave Dance*, 1706-1708. Oil on canvas, 58 x 46.5 cm. National Gallery of Denmark, Copenhagen Inv.# KMS376

Valkenburg's contemporaneous *Slave Dance* shows enslaved Africans gathered for dance and ritual, pointedly *not* working Witsen's fields (fig. 6). They form a semicircle in front of a stick-and-grass hut. In the far distance are the yellow-brick Dutch buildings. Rebecca Brienen has convincingly argued that Valkenburg's stylized depiction of the Africans' bodies and their glossy surfaces served to objectify them and allowed the paintings—and the slaves depicted—to become both commodities and empirically described wonders fit for inclusion in the collection of Witsen.¹⁹ Like the drawings of the plantation buildings, the paintings show an inventory of Witsen's capital, and thereby, his capacity for production. In his paintings and drawings, Valkenburg recorded Witsen's land and its resources, both natural and human. The domiciles and activities of the people depicted are, like the land on which they stand, owned by the planter. His presence is indicated only by the sturdy Dutch architecture in the background, which serves as a reminder of his possession and control. He possesses not only the pictures but their content in reality. Perhaps by showing slaves with their huts, the images could also have served as evidence for how well he cared for his property—an important rhetorical point in the justification of slavery.



Figure 7. Plate 2 from J.D. Herlein, *Beschryvinge Van De Volk-Plantinge Zuriname* (LeeuwardMeindert Injema, 1718). (artwork in the public domain)

In prints, the focus shifts from these plantation views of capital to the specifics of efficient mechanical sugar production. J. D. Herlein's *Beschryvinge Van De Volk-Plantinge Zuriname* (*Description of the Plantations of Suriname*) of 1718 was one of the first printed Dutch books describing Suriname.²⁰ The account is based on the author's time in Suriname in the first decade of the eighteenth century. He dedicated the volume to the directors of the Society of Suriname, with special praise given to former governor of the colony Paul van Veen. In keeping with the privileging of rationalism and positivism, Herlein notes in the dedication that organization and clarity are an important aspect of his work. He writes—albeit not very clearly or concisely—that he aspires to present an uncomplicated description of his observations, with the main points brought together efficiently.²¹ The engravings that accompany his account follow this desired rationality and tidiness. In the plate showing the sugar mill, the mill complex is displayed as a diagram devoid of any human operators (fig. 7). Like Valkenburg, Herlein labeled each building depicted: The foremost building presents the sugar-processing facilities, including the mill (B), the boiling room (*stook-huis*, C), and storehouse (*magazijn*, D). Directly behind the mill lies the planter's house (A); in the distance, on the left side of the horizon, squat the Africans' huts (*neger huisjes*, E).



Figure 8. Plate 3 from J.D. Herlein, *Beschryvinge Van De Volk-Plantinge Zuriname* (Leeuwarden: Meindert Injema, 1718). (artwork in the public domain)

In addition to this plate, Herlein's description includes four other engravings and a map. In the third plate, a male and female African slave (*neger and negerinne*) rest among sugar cane. The nearly nude male stands with a shovel in one hand, and cut cane and a machete in the other hand (fig. 8). He looks passively at the cane. The woman is bare-breasted, adorned only with beads and a knee-length skirt. She reclines against a tree with her right hand on her thigh, her left hand resting on a basket of fruit. Although both individuals hold symbols of their work (the shovel, machete, cane, and basket of fruit), neither is actually shown working.²² Here, as in Valkenburg's drawings and paintings, the subject implies the capacity for work, rather than production itself. That is represented by the machine, shown in a separate plate.

About fifty years later, a member of Suriname's Council of Criminal Justice, Thomas Pistorius, published the *Korte en zakelyke beschryvinge van de colonie van Suriname* (*Short and True Description of the Colony of Suriname*) (1763), which was written both for the plantation owners and merchants back in Amsterdam. The importance placed on efficiency of production here extended to the publisher's thrifty use of copperplate—two plates contain five separate scenes. In plate three, the scene on the top left shows slaves cutting and transporting cane (fig. 9). A black overseer in the middle holds up a whip. To the right is the hydro-powered mill. Africans here also carry cane from the field and unload it from the little pirogue in the channel. The slaves' figures are homogenous. They are hardly more than bodies, parts in a system, necessary to cut and transport the cane to the mill. The fourth plate details the sugar-processing facilities with a diagram of the water mill and a depiction of the boiler room. Strikingly, it does not show the dangerous tasks assigned to the slaves: to press the cane between the rollers, stir the boiling hot syrup, and separate the *dram* (fig. 10). Like Herlein, Pistorius describes aspects of production but does not describe its possible harm—not even as a potential cost in the loss of a slave (although the expense of keeping slaves was recounted in both texts).



Figure 9. Plate 3 from Thomas Pistorius, *Korte En Zakelyke Beschryvinge Van De Colonie Van Suriname* (Amsterdam: Theodorus Crajenschot, 1763). (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 10. Plate 10 from Thomas Pistorius, *Korte En Zakelyke Beschryvinge Van De Colonie Van Suriname* (Amsterdam: Theodorus Crajenschot, 1763). (artwork in the public domain)

In contrast, French physician and abolitionist Philip Fermin's *Description generale . . . de la colonie de Surinam* (*Nieuwe algemeene beschryving van de colonie van Suriname*), published in Amsterdam in French in 1769, and in Dutch in 1770, does indicate the potential for harm:

The Negroes need to be on their guard to keep their fingers from coming too close to the rollers, for accidents have happened . . . particularly at night, since the Negroes lack sleep and are assaulted by the heavy work, which they did by day . . . [O]n the table of the mill there is a sharp machete ready, in case the Negro, in his state, should be caught between the rollers whereby they can chop off his arm, in order to spare his life, for . . . so great is the pulling force, particularly in the water mills, whose racing motion cannot be stopped.²³

Still, it is the mechanization of sugar processing that is shown in two separate engravings that depict water- and beast-powered mills (figs. 11 and 12). The water mill has no humans present; the beast-powered mill includes Africans moving cane and guiding the horses. Underlying the repetitive focus on machine, slaves, and land in these images is the glorification of rationality and technology, a systematic mode of production. Clarifying what the images suggest, in 1765, the Englishman Samuel Martin wrote that “a plantation ought to be considered as a well-constructed machine, compounded by various wheels, turning different ways, and yet all contributing to the great end proposal.”²⁴ Presumably, the “proposal” was profit.

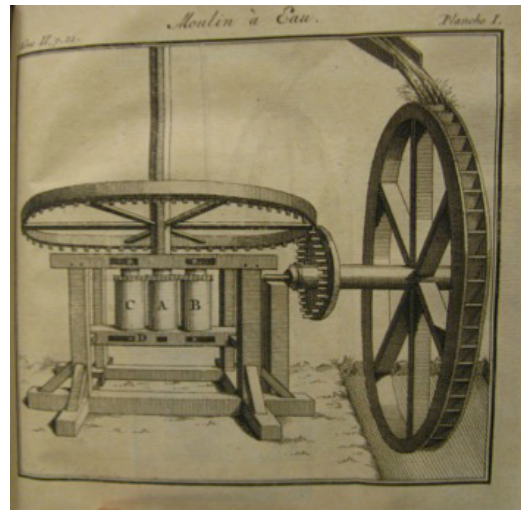


Figure 11. Plate 1 from Philip Fermin, *Description generale, historique, géographique et physique de la colonie de Surinam ... / par Philippe Fermin, docteur en medecine.* (Amsterdam: E. van Harrevelt, 1769). (artwork in the public domain)



Figure 12. Plate 2 from Philip Fermin, *Description generale, historique, géographique et physique de la colonie de Surinam* (Amsterdam: E. van Harrevelt, 1769). (artwork in the public domain)

During the five decades between Valkenburg’s time in Suriname and that of Pistorius, the demographics there began to shift dramatically. In 1667 there were twenty-three plantations; in 1780, 450.²⁵ Around 1700, some 700 people of European origin were living in Paramaribo and the plantations along the Suriname, Commewijn, and Cottica Rivers, while 8,500 enslaved Africans worked the sugar plantations. The number of the latter increased six fold by the end of the eighteenth century, when more than 60,000 enslaved Africans were producing sugar, as well as coffee, chocolate, cotton, and timber.²⁶ Also significant was the increasing absenteeism of plantation owners.²⁷ By the end of the eighteenth century, most plantations were run by men without families, working under contract for the owner in the Netherlands. The prints and paintings discussed above provided the plantation owners in Holland information,

and significantly, they also reinforced their sense of power and legitimacy through depictions of “objective,” rational, mechanized systems of production.

That images have been used to claim truth and objectivity in the scenes portrayed, even while denying or veiling alternative realities is a phenomenon as pertinent today as in the eighteenth century. The images of Surinam discussed here were meant to present a veristic pictorial description of the colony, but these corporate views of property—land, buildings, machines, slaves—served instead to sanitize both the elites’ accumulation of capital and the system by which they obtained the components of that capital.

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¹ "Modern" capitalism implies a relatively free exchange of goods in markets, the separation of business activity from household activity, sophisticated bookkeeping methods, and the rational organization of work, where profit is pursued systematically, as is the maximization of profit. Stephen Kalberg, "Introduction to the Translation," in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2001), xvii–xviii.

² See Elmer Kolfin, *Van de slavenzweep en de muze* (Leiden: KITLV, 1997); Rebecca Parker Brienen, "Embodying Race and Pleasure: Dirk Valkenburg's Slave Dance," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek: Body and Embodiment in Netherlandish Art*, ed. Ann-Sophie Lehman and Herman Roodenburg (Zwolle: Waanders, 2008), 242–64; and Jean Michiel Massing, "From Dutch Brazil to the West Indies: The Paper Image of the Ideal Sugar Plantation," in *Fragments: Architecture and the Unfinished; Essays Presented to Robin Middleton*, ed. Barry Bergdall and Werner Oechslin (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 275–88. The emphasis on the process and the machine, rather than the slaves' manual labor is discussed specifically by Kolfin, *Van de slavenzweep*, 37–38.

³ For more on the Dutch role in the sugar trade and its representation, see especially Julie Hochstrasser, *Still Life and Trade in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 187–204.

⁴ Suriname was initially administered by the States of Zeeland, then the WIC, and after 1682, the Chartered Society of Suriname (Geocroyeerde Societeit van Suriname). The Society came into existence after the city of Amsterdam and Cornelis van Aerssen van Sommelsdijk each purchased a third of the territory, leaving one-third to the WIC, to whom the States of Zeeland had sold Suriname to for 260,000 florins. R. A. J. van Lier, *Frontier Society: A Social Analysis of the History of Suriname*, trans. Maria J. L. van Yperen (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), 19.

⁵ See especially, Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System II: Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy 1600–1750* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

⁶ Jonathan Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade 1585–1740* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 265; Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500–1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 326.

⁷ De Vries and Van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy*, 465–66.

⁸ De Vries and Van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy*, 327–29; 480.

⁹ Massing, "From Dutch Brazil to the West Indies", 277–81; see also Kolfin, *Van de slavenzweep*, 29–30.

¹⁰ Alison McNeil Kettering, "Men at Work, or Keeping One's Nose to the Grindstone," *Art Bulletin* 89, no. 4 (2007): 694.

¹¹ Barlaeus affirmed burghers' aspirations to wealth gained by trade within a neo-Stoic framework. For a summary of the address in English, see D. K. W. van Miert, *Humanism in an Age of Science: The Amsterdam Athenaeum in the Golden Age, 1632–1704*, *Studies in Intellectual History* 179 (Boston: Brill, 2009), 225–28.

¹² Kettering, “Men at Work,” 709–10.

¹³ For more on Johan Maurits, see especially P. J. P. Whitehead, *A Portrait of Dutch 17th Century Brazil*, (Amsterdam/Oxford/New York: North Holland Publishing, 1989) and Ernst van den Boogaart, H. R. Hoetink, and P. J. P. Whitehead, eds., *Johan Maurits Van Nassau-Siegen 1604–1679: A Humanist Prince in Europe and Brazil* (The Hague: Johan Maurits van Nassau Stichting, 1979).

¹⁴ Hochstrasser notes that Post’s drawing and his later paintings are visually and emotionally distanced from the sugar processing. Hochstrasser, *Still Life and Trade*, 195–96.

¹⁵ On Joan Nieuhof’s 1682 description of Brazil, see Hochstrasser, *Still Life and Trade*, 191–92.

¹⁶ “They tolerate hard labor very well, and need little in the way of food. Born as though destined to endure natural hardships and the miseries of slavery, they are traded for large sums of money.” Caspar van Baerle, *The History of Brazil under the Governorship of Count Johan Maurits of Nassau 1635–1644*, trans. Blanche T. van Berckel-Ebeling Koning (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011), 63, 124.

¹⁷ Maria Sibylla Merian contemporaneously inventoried nature by documenting insects of Suriname in the *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium*, published with help from Cornelis van Aerssen van Sommelsdijck in 1705.

¹⁸ Brienens, “Embodying Race and Pleasure,” 242–64; A. van Schendel, “Een Stille Plantage in Suriname, door Dirck Valkenburg, 1707,” *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 11, no. 3 (1963): 80–86, and C. P. van Eeghen, “Dirk Valkenburg, Boekhouder, Schrijver, Kunstschilder voor Jonas Witsen,” *Oud Holland* 61 (1946): 58–69.

¹⁹ Brienens, “Embodying Race and Pleasure,” 242–64.

²⁰ Others include Adriaen van Berkel’s *Amerikaansche voyagien, behelzende een reis na Rio de Berbice . . .*, from 1695. Berkel’s account of Suriname was largely copied from the English author George Warren’s *An Impartial Description of Suriname upon the continent of Guinea in America*, from 1667, and includes no engravings pertaining to Suriname, sugar, or slavery.

²¹ “U. Ed. Hebben niet te zien op een Historiaale stijl of Romansche schets, dewijl door verdeeltheden van veranderende Materien alleen hebbe gememorieert, en beknoptelijk alles in zijn zamen-hang en Hooft-delen gebracht. . . Dies zo veel doenelijk, zonder megeling van bastartwoorden, voortgevaeren . . .” J. D. Herlein, *Beschryvinge van de volk-plantinge Zuriname* (Leeuwarden: Meindert Injema, 1718).

²² The contrast of “labor and leisure” had many precedents, as both Brienens and Elmer Kolfin have shown. Brienens, “Embodying Race and Pleasure,” 248–51; Kolfin, *Van de slavenzweep*, 33–38.

²³ “de moeten wel op hunne hoede zijn, van met de vingers niet te dicht bij de rollen te komen; want het zou onmogelijk zijn, iemand, die zulk een ongeluk overkwam, te behouden, gelijk me meer dan eens gezien heeft, inzonderheid bij nacht, als de Negers van den slaap overvallen worden, door het zware werk, welk zij bij dag gedaan hebben. Om diergelijk ongevallen, gedeeltelijk, voor te komen, is het volstrekt noodzaakelijk, altijd op de tafel van den Molen een bloote en scherpe sabel gereed te hebben, ten einde de Neger, die naast den geenen staat, welke tussen de rollen mocht gevat zijn, hem terstont den arm af kan hakken, om hem in het leven te sparen; want het is, mijns bedunkens, beter een lid te verliezen, dan geheel en al tussen de rollen te geraken, het wel onfeilbaar gebeuren zoude; zo groot is derzelve trekkende kracht, vooral in de water molens, wier beweging zo ras niet tegen gehouden kan worden, als van de andere molens, gelijk men ligtelijk kan denken.” Philip Fermin, *Nieuwe algemeene beschryving van de colonie van Suriname*, book II, 20–22.

²⁴ Quoted in Massing, “From Dutch Brazil to the West Indies,” 276.

²⁵ Cornelis Goslinga, *A Short History of the Netherlands Antilles and Surinam* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1979), 100.

²⁶ Goslinga, *A Short History*, 100.

²⁷ Van Lier, *Frontier Society*, 54–58.

THE BONES IN BANDA: VISION, ART AND MEMORY IN MALUKU

Julie Berger Hochstrasser

In the seventeenth century, the Banda Islands in Maluku, then known as the Spice Islands, were the only known source for true nutmeg. The Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, or VOC) sought control of this lucrative trade with brutal military force. This paper explores the role of visual culture in the collective memory of the Dutch presence, from VOC coins still turning up in the fields to the fort that still towers over Neira Town. Even when recent Muslim-Christian violence left the Dutch Reformed Church a burned-out ruin, the seventeenth-century gravestones paving the floor survived to remind the inhabitants of the bones in Banda.

By all accounts, the past hangs heavy in Banda (fig. 1)¹. That was my own forceful first impression when I visited this remote island in eastern Indonesia in 2006, but since then I have found it echoed again and again in the reactions of others. In *Banda: A Journey through Indonesia's Fabled Isles of Fire and Spice*, Nigel Simmonds writes:



Figure 1. Benteng Belgica, Banda Neira, Banda Islands, Maluku, 2006. Unless otherwise noted, all the following photographs and videos were taken by the author on the island of Banda Neira, Banda Islands, Maluku, in 2006.

The volcano [fig. 2] is by far the most obvious of Banda's attractions, although perhaps not the most intriguing. That accolade must go to the town of Neira [fig. 3], where the past is thrust into the consciousness of the first-time visitor with all the force of a tropical typhoon. Here, amid a confusing mix of peoples, cultures and religions, Banda's past is placed on exhibit for leisurely inspection: European mansions, mighty forts, ancient coins, and solid-cast cannons [fig. 4] compete with tropical languor, curving mosques, and smiling inhabitants. It is as if the Creator has somehow confused time with place, setting the wrong backdrop to the wrong soil, culminating in a charming, incongruous mix of East and West that has survived the centuries. In today's modern, bustling Asia, isolated little Banda stands alone as the last true record of Europe's deep involvement in the South-east Asian region.²



Figure 2. The Gunung Api volcano.



Figure 3. Neira Town.



Figure 4. Cannons at Hotel Maulana.



Figure 5. Interior of the former dwelling of Governor-General Jan Pietersz Coen

The author is unequivocal: Europe's past still lives in Banda's present. And how is this? The mute witness is all around: the material remains of colonization—mansions, forts, coins, cannons—are visible and pervasive presences. What is the impact of Dutch visual culture in this place, in terms both art historical and human? A deep reply resonates in this haunting imprint, the long memory sustained by the abiding presence of this visual culture among the people of Banda.

Maria Dermoût captured it yet more poetically, in her haunting novel of colonial Maluku, *The Ten Thousand Things*.

On a sunny spot between the small trees—when it gets warm there's such a strong smell of spices there . . . In one of those silent ruined rooms, with a real Dutch sash window and a deep window sill . . . [fig. 5] On a stretch of beach under the planes, where the little waves of the surf flow out: three waves, one behind the other—behind the other—behind the other . . . What could it be?

The remembrance of a human being, of something that happened, can remain in a place, tangible almost—perhaps there is someone left who knows of it and thinks about it sometimes.³

And a few pages further on:

There was a net of roads and paths and tracks and stairs hewn in the mountains [fig. 6] leading to large and small villages: of Christians, of Mohammedans; the old communities under the mystic numbers Nine and Five (Nine and Five do not tolerate each other at all). In between, here and there, a “garden,” a decrepit little fort, a small old church with seventeenth-century Dutch armorial shields, a gaudily painted wooden mosque beside its tall minaret, a large carved tombstone over a forgotten grave—In Everlasting Remembrance—everlasting is so long!⁴



Figure 6. Spices drying, Pulau Run.

this handful of tiny islands (fig. 8)—then the world’s only source for the coveted fine spices of mace and nutmeg—were the intense focus of international competition for a wildly lucrative European market. Ousting the Portuguese, the Dutch struggled for monopoly with a notorious ruthlessness toward the indigenous population, in a prolonged rivalry with the English.

Dermoût is writing about the island of Ambon—but the description applies as well to Banda Neira, many miles still farther east in Maluku, the island that was home to the oldest European settlement in the East. She, too, enumerates those enduring remainders—fort, church, tombstone, even the deep sill on a “real Dutch sash window”—precisely the material (and thus also visual) markers of Dutch presence in these places, that do indeed conjure memory. Dermoût, once more:

Here it was different again: with no foothold anywhere, no certainty—nothing more than a question? A perhaps? . . . Who was standing on the beach then, staring over the three little waves of the surf? And over the bay? At what?

A silence like an answer, a silence of both resignation and expectation; a past and not past.”⁵

Past and not past. The durability of these visual remains, their lasting presence, which has earned them this quality—these are the artistic legacy that was left to the Bandanese in the wake of the Dutch departure. So it is that influence, that presence—or, what Richard Leppert called, in reference to India’s British colonials, “present absence”—that is the real topic of this essay.⁶

For my point of departure here is, appropriately, a visual memory of my own: it is 2006, and I am standing on the island of Banda Neira, in the burned-out ruins of the church in the center of town (fig. 7). I am here in search of what survives of art and visual culture from the VOC days, when



Figure 7. Dutch Reformed Church.

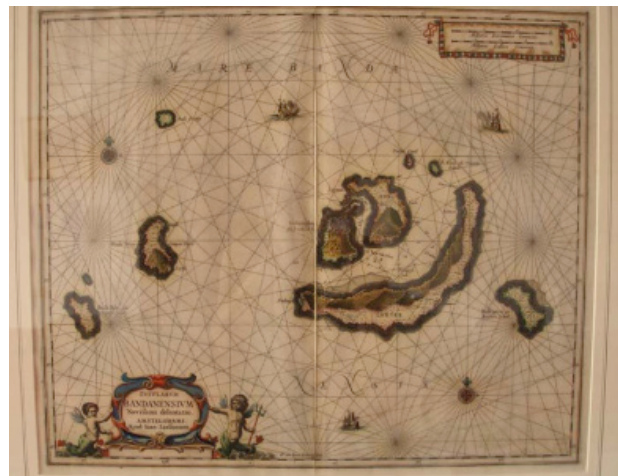


Figure 8. Johannes Janssonius (1582–1664), *Insularum Bandanesium novissima delineatio*, engraving, 442 x 530 mm. From *Atlas Major*, Volume V (Amsterdam, 1657).

The first church, built of stone on this site in the 1600s, was the pride of Neira Town; in the seventeenth century, services were held there in Dutch in the morning and Malay in the afternoon. By François Valentijn’s account, here already was an icon of Dutch visual culture in this distant outpost: he reported that it was “very spacious inside, beautifully light, and provisioned with various pews, as well as a good pulpit, and from the outside it well resembles a native Dutch house with a native Dutch façade” (*glykt, van buiten aan te zien, wel een vaderlands huis met een vader-*

landzen voorgevel).⁷ Like so much else in this restless terrain, it suffered repeated devastation by earthquakes and the intermittent eruptions of the still-active volcano Gunung Api, but it was just as repeatedly restored. Valentijn noted that already in the seventeenth century it had been badly damaged by a quake, but repaired in 1688 so services could be held there again—this only to be destroyed by another in the 1800s, and rebuilt again.⁸ Just since my visit in 2006, the church has been rebuilt once more—but we'll get back to that.

For I arrived in 2006 to discover that, in the wake of the Muslim-Christian violence that swept in from Ambon between 1998 and 2002, all that survived within the blackened shell of the structure were the massive granite stones still paving the floor.⁹ They mark the graves of Dutch officials and *perkeniers* of former centuries, their epitaphs graven in the stone beneath heraldic crests (fig. 9) or ominous skulls-and-crossbones (fig. 10), or—that ubiquitous motif throughout the company's far-flung reaches—the monogram insignia of the VOC (fig. 11).¹⁰



Figure 9. Gravestone on floor of Dutch Reformed Church.



Figure 10. Gravestone on floor of Dutch Reformed Church.



Figure 11. VOC logo in pavement inside Dutch Reformed Church.

So here is one bit of visual culture that has lasted through it all—the earthquakes, the volcanoes, the fighting, the slaughter. Yet my memory is more about the children: Ambonese Christian refugees who had taken shelter here in the churchyard since their own homes were likewise put to the torch during the outbreak (fig. 12).¹¹ Their laundry was strung about the charred walls; their mothers quietly retreated upon my arrival, but the children slowly gathered around me, curious as anywhere, as I inspected the gravestones set into the church floor. The gentleman who had walked with me to the church sent a boy to find a broom so we could sweep the thick deposits of dirt and ash away from the carved inscriptions (fig. 13: video). Shy at first, the kids caught on quickly to the sweeping game, and pitched in with some glee. I eventually managed a few murky photographs (better by far are my shots of the children) and distributed some rupiah as thanks to our young assistants.



Figure 12. Ambonese refugees living in ruins of Dutch Reformed Church.



Figure 13. Video: Sweeping the ashes off the graves inside Dutch Reformed Church.

The exchange was poignant in many ways, layered as it was with the blights of the poverty and religious strife that were more recent legacies of this place. What lingered with me most was the memory of the children, living in those burnt-out ruins, and sweeping away dirt and ash to reveal these centuries-old remains. It was a potent metaphor for my experiences in Banda but also for theirs—for the presence of this “art” in the lives of the people of this place. Pierre Nora’s conception of “lieux de memoire” is useful here, exploring the ways that “space” influences a national or collective memory, for the very presence of so many Dutch remains is a statement in itself about their influence in Banda—but here it is a complex palimpsest indeed.¹²

Naturally, the most durable remains are architectural, and by far the most durable of these are the forts—though even they have sometimes come and gone. Towering over Neira today at the top of Tabaleku Hill, commanding a grand and sweeping view of the surrounding islands is Benteng [Fort] Belgica (see fig. 1). Built in 1611 by Pieter Both, first governor-general of the Bandas, but rebuilt and expanded several times during the Dutch occupation, today it has been restored to its original size, renovated in 1991 Banda’s then-Rajah Des Alwi and the Yayasan Warisan dan Budaya Banda (Foundation for Banda Cultural Heritage).¹³

The first fort the Dutch had built on Neira (fig. 14) has *not* been restored, and perhaps its history explains why. In 1599, when Vice Admiral Jacob van Heemskerck made the first Dutch landfall in Banda, he rented two houses on shore that the ships’ carpenters remodeled to serve as trading posts.¹⁴ The nutmeg marketed back in Holland brought 320 times what he had paid for it, and the Dutch went after the Spice Islands in earnest. Steven van der Hagen returned in 1600 and built a fort and factory in Hitu on the island of Ambon to signal Dutch ambitions for trade and territory. In 1605, he seized Ambon Fort from the Portuguese, then loaded timbers taken from a Portuguese church, and sailed for Banda to build a factory there.¹⁵



Figure 14. Ruins of Fort Nassau.

On April 25, 1609, Admiral Verhoeven landed 750 soldiers on Neira to start construction on the coast facing the island of Lonthor; after abortive attempts on an unstable site, they shifted operations to massive stone foundations that had been abandoned by the Portuguese nearly a century earlier.¹⁶ Things took a fateful turn on May 22 when Verhoeven was ambushed and murdered by a group of Bandanese freedom fighters.¹⁷ Simon Janszoon Hoen, elected to replace him and understandably now anxious, rushed the work on the defenses, and by August 1609 Fort Nassau was nearing completion.¹⁸ A young junior merchant who escaped what the Dutch then referred to as the “vile Bandanese treachery of 1609” was to remember it long after: Jan Pieterszoon Coen would return as governor-general in 1621 and on May 8 order forty-four Bandanese *orang kaya* (village chiefs or elders) decapitated and quartered at Fort Nassau.¹⁹

Just across the strait, the high ridge that forms Banda Besar (Lonthor Island) was dominated by the fortress Hollandia, which Valentijn simply described as “very old,” finding it mentioned in the oldest writings of the secretary of Banda, which begin in 1619.²⁰ The 260 stone steps built from the shore to reach its commanding heights still remain

(fig.15), but Fort Hollandia, already dilapidated in 1724 according to Valentijn's report, was destroyed by earthquake in 1743 and never restored—again, perhaps with good reason, for this site, too, recalls an ignominious past, as headquarters for Coen's dire strategy to depopulate the islands by shipping the Bandanese off to Batavia; hundreds died of exposure, starvation, and disease, or leapt to their deaths from the sheer sea cliffs (fig. 16). A few escaped to English protection on the smaller islands of Ai and Run, but in the end Coen had massacred, enslaved, or banished some 90 percent of the population: of some fifteen thousand souls, fewer than a thousand survived; the islands were repopulated by Dutch planters and their Asian slaves.²¹



Figure 15. Steps to the summit of Lonthor Island (Banda Besar) and the site of Fort Hollandia.



Figure 16. Neira Town from atop Lonthor Island.

Already in 1609, the English Captain Keeling described Banda as “a collectious nation of many people compound-ed.”²² But the decimation of the population in the 1620s gave Banda a dubious distinction: virtually no genuinely autochthonous population survives today. Anthropologist Phillip Winn argues that this makes space and place still more crucial in the definition of personal identity for the Bandanese.²³ And if, as Winn contends, diversity is a metric for the importance of space and place to human identity, Banda's is thus important indeed; this in turn further compounds the significance of the conspicuous Dutch presences within that space.

Notwithstanding their grim past, however, such monuments can also take on gentler functions. Today Fort Hollandia's verdant overgrown site serves as a playground for children.²⁴ Likewise, the massive walls of “Fort Revenge” on Pulau Ai (fig. 17) now play a more peaceful role for the island's inhabitants, sheltering a small plantation of nutmeg trees within their circumference (fig. 18), while the crumbling surfaces of their wide expanse have gardens planted atop them.²⁵



Figure 17. Ruins of Fort Revenge, Pulau Ai.



Figure 18. Nutmeg trees growing inside the ruins of Fort Revenge, Pulau Ai.

Furthermore, the fame these islands enjoyed as such a coveted target for global trade remains a point of pride for local inhabitants: on the still more remote island of Run, only a few stones remain from the English fortifications that Coen had dismantled when he took over—yet a local resident could still recount to me with obvious pleasure how the Dutch traded away Manhattan to secure Run in the Treaty of Breda (fig. 19: video).²⁶



Figure 20. Former residence of Governor-General Jan Pietersz Coen.

Interview with Djamin Karnudu, Pulau Run,
Maluku, Indonesia, 2006 (scroll over to open)

Figure 19. Video: Interview with Djamin Karnudu, Pulau Run.

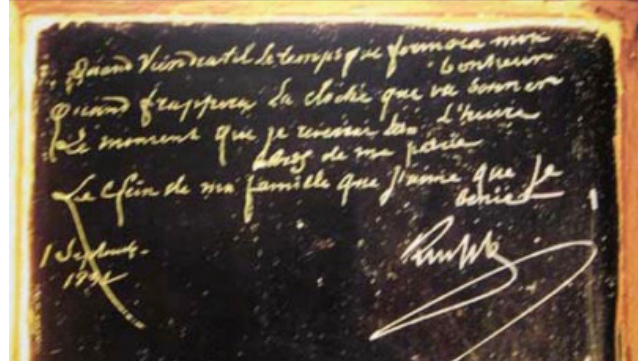


Figure 21. Text etched in the window of the Coen mansion (see figs. 5 and 20).

But locals also retain vivid awareness of the way the past can haunt a place. The VOC mansion (fig. 20), built in 1611 by the first controller of the VOC, stands empty, too; is it because it was later occupied by Governor-General Coen? Or because locals say the front room is haunted—*Kamar spok*? In a pane of a window looking out on the Zonnegat strait, an inscription has been etched [fig. 21]:

Quand reviendra t'il le Temps qui formera mon Bonheur?
Quand frappera la cloche qui va sonner l'heure,
Le Moment que je reverai les bords de ma Patrie,
Le Sein de ma famille que j'aime et que je benis?

When will come the time that will form my happiness?
When will the bell strike the hour,
The moment I will see again the shores of my country,
The bosom of my family that I love and bless?

—Charles Rumpley, September 1, 1831²⁷

Haunting words, indeed, but more so because the story goes that the young officer scratched them into the glass with his diamond ring, then hung himself from the chandelier. The legend is refuted by other reports that the inscription was made by a thirty-five-year-old resident named Rutger Martens Schwabbing, who did not die until April 12, 1832.²⁸ But the point, again, is the power of this place within the collective imagination as a *lieu de memoire*—inhabited at the very least by history, if not literally by its ghosts. Inhabited, sadly, too (at least as of 2006), by more Ambonese refugees, in the courtyard behind the mansion, since the place had been abandoned by everyone else (fig. 22).



Figure 22. Christian refugee sleeping in the courtyard of the Coen mansion.

If architectural remains provide the most prominent visual presence on the land, exerting persistent influence within the indigenous psyche, a steady flow of more fleeting objects of material and visual culture has also had its impact (fig. 23). For the history of Banda is studded throughout with these more portable goods; after all, from the start, the story of the Dutch in these islands was all about trade.²⁹ In time the notorious excesses of the *perkeniers* gave rise to splendid mansions built and rebuilt in Neira Town: “spacious structures with floors of polished marble or brightly colored tiles (brought in as ballast), crystal chandeliers, elegant European style furnishings, and much display of fine mirrors in gilt frames, massive tables and chairs of highly polished, beautifully grained wood.”³⁰ Their lavish trappings have mostly vanished, though shells of these once grand homes still line the streets of the Old Town.

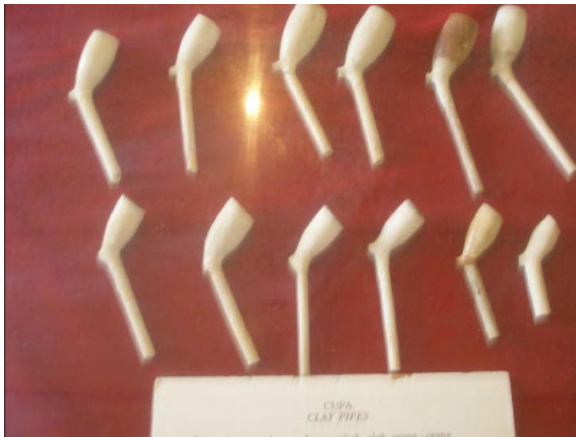


Figure 23. Dutch clay pipes, 17th century, Rumah Budaya museum.



Figure 24. *Martavans*, Rumah Budaya museum.

Des Alwi, then rajah of Banda (now deceased), made his ancestral home on Banda Neira into a museum, Rumah Budaya, which is filled with memorabilia of the island’s long history; the place is as steeped in the past as it is in the Dutch role within it. Here are ancient *martavans*, the massive clay jars that transported water, oil, palm wine, and salted foods for long voyages (fig. 24); they came from Pegu (Myanmar, formerly Burma), where the Dutch had settled in 1625 (in Arakan) and where the VOC had had offices since 1635 (in the coastal towns of Syriam and Ava).³¹ Moldering in a glass case is a pistol from Heemskerck’s first contact with Neira in 1599, and Portuguese helmets still worn by dancers in the Cakalele performance that ritually reenacts Coen’s massacre of Banda. Along with ornately carved colonial furniture, there is even a Victrola (from a later time) that still plays—as Des happily demonstrated for me. There are scores of coins stamped with the VOC monogram, and the bar-style currency that could flexibly be hacked off to the required weight to complete a transaction. And the instinct for trade lives on: while I was there a girl brought in a jarful of coins that her uncle had found in his field, and Des pulled out his book to identify and appraise them (fig. 25). He picked out some and paid her; later at dinner, hosting a visiting German dive ship, he offered an assortment for sale to a wealthy tourist, who bought a few (fig. 26).



Figure 25. Des Alwi at Rumah Budaya identifying VOC coins found on Banda Neira.



Figure 26. VOC coins found on Banda Neira.

Other kinds of relics continue to resurface as well—artifacts that testify to the diversity of the art and visual culture that accumulated in this nexus of trade. One day a knock at my door back at the hotel brought a request from a vacationing Australian businessman; he had heard I was an art historian and could I please take a look at these plates a young man was offering him for sale? The boy said they'd been in the possession of his grandmother for years: four hefty platters, all with a dull gray surface suggesting age and long submersion. One looked decidedly Chinese, with the delicate overall floral decoration typical of eighteenth-century Qing Dynasty blue and white ware (fig. 27).³² Another bore a repeated motif surrounding the rim that could be a stylized interpretation of the *bismallah* (بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ), the Arabic phrase meaning “in the name of God” (fig. 28).³³ A third was painted with motifs more local to the islands—a drum and a bird of paradise (fig. 29)—while the last roughly imitated some patterns and the red and blue colors of Japanese Ko-Imari, except that the vase of flowers in its center was more reminiscent of the multicolored variety of Delftware (fig. 30).³⁴ The disparity of the pieces bore witness to the profoundly mixed population of these islands, and to the commerce that had so long intersected here—Arab, Chinese, Japanese, inter-island trade, and throughout, the Dutch intercessions. In 1868 A. W. A. Ludeking had reported that even the head-hunting tribes on Ceram were aficionados of these exotic treasures (as later related by E. M. Beekman): “For the Alfurs, porcelain plates represented wealth and were greatly desired. They especially coveted *kena patu* [large plates] from the days of the seventeenth-century Dutch Trading Company, or VOC, which were usually Delft blue.”³⁵



Figure 27. Ceramic plate offered for private sale on Banda Neira (diameter approximately 19 inches, origin possibly China, late 18th-century Qing Dynasty).



Figure 28. Ceramic plate offered for private sale on Banda Neira (diameter approximately 18 inches, origin possibly China, but produced for the Arab market).



Figure 29. Ceramic plate offered for private sale on Banda Neira (diameter approximately 18 inches, origin possibly 20th century, Banda Islands).



Figure 30. Ceramic plate offered for sale on Banda Neira (diameter approximately 18 inches, origin possibly Dutch, 19th century; rim patterns roughly imitate Japanese Ko-Imari ware).

So, to reflect: if these colonial remains are repositories of memory, what kind of memory is it? It is more complicated than it might at first seem: as evidenced in architecture and artifacts which, while connected to events that are undeniably grim, are yet held in fonder regard by some—the very complication becoming in certain ways even useful.

Of course, it is the distinct province of things visual to accommodate just this kind of ambiguity, these multiple valencies of complex signification. And so they restore the fort, and rebuild the church yet again, this time in the wake of contemporary conflict (fig. 31).³⁶

Can we consider Banda as *pars pro toto* for Indonesia as a whole? Yes and no.³⁷ On one hand, certainly, remnants of Dutch visual culture are to be found all throughout Indonesia, where the *longue durée* of colonial presence has colored life and art in so many ways. But I would argue that in Banda the sheer psychological impact of these presences is particularly intense, comprising in fact the chief register of Dutch aesthetic influence—whether massive and looming, like the physical occupation of place that Benteng Belgica commands, in an imposing demonstration of Foucault’s contention that space is power—or lesser, but myriad, like Dermout’s ten thousand things.³⁸ Why? In the sprawling, teeming metropolis that Jakarta has become, modern development crowds around these remains (fig. 32); the past hangs heavier in Banda because history has turned away from this place. When the English occupied Banda in the 1790s, they shipped choice seedlings off to Ceylon, Bencoolen (now Bengkulu), and Penang.³⁹ Still earlier, Pierre Poivre had transported Moluccan seed and seedlings to the French colonies; they did especially well in Zanzibar and Madagascar.⁴⁰ In the mid-nineteenth century, even the Dutch and local planters began growing spices in Celebes, Java, and Sumatra—but already by 1800 it had become clear that Banda’s monopoly on the precious spice was at an end. And even though Grenada’s “long nutmegs,” which now supply most of the American and European market, lack the pungency of Banda’s original “round nutmeg” cultivar, the local Moluccan economy has been largely starved out of the world market by a huge Rotterdam cartel that suppresses prices below survival wages.⁴¹

The intrusion of modernity that has transfigured Jakarta, engulfing its history in a postmodern cacophony, is only a whisper on these quiet islands (fig. 33). The *pelni* (ferry) arrives every other Tuesday, outbound toward the Kei islands beyond, and stops back every other Thursday to collect passengers for the overnight voyage back to Ambon.⁴² Sometimes a plane lands on Banda Neira—but, as it was explained to me, the runway is short, and “then comes the sea and then comes the volcano,”—so if the wind is blowing the wrong way when the plane approaches, it must turn tail, fly the hour back to Ambon, and wait another week to try again. And that’s when weekly flights are even scheduled, since last I heard when I was headed there, the plane had tipped over and no flights were going at all.⁴³

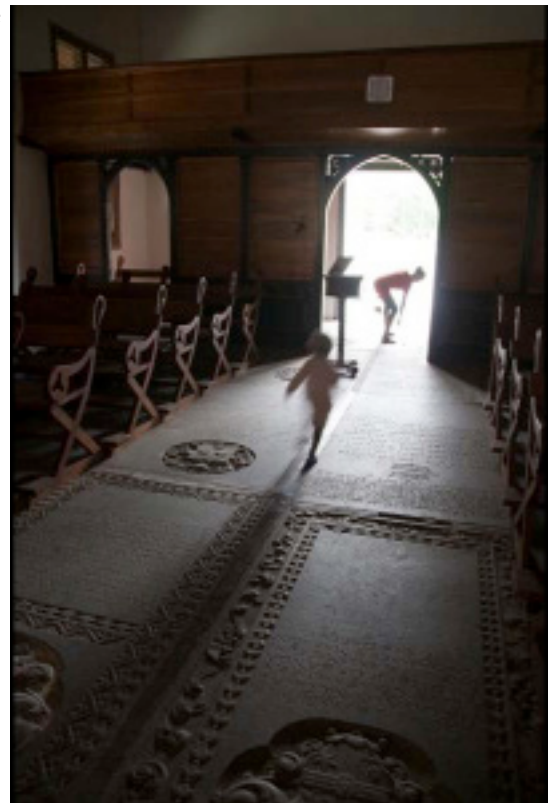


Figure 31. Restored interior of Dutch Reformed Church, 2009 (photo courtesy of Doug Meilke).



Figure 32. Maritime Museum (formerly VOC godowns) visible at right, Jakarta, Java, Indonesia, 2006.



Figure 33. View of Gunung Api from Pulau Ai

On March 28, 2009, Karel Albert Ralahu, the governor of Maluku, announced a new campaign to stimulate tourism for the province of Maluku—and as elsewhere in the postcolonial world, the restoration and preservation of Dutch remains hold promise for that effort; still, for now, these tiny islands remain a distant outpost of the global village.⁴⁴ As in the seventeenth century, a boy paddles a long, low, dugout *perahu* silently across the shining sea (fig. 34); now as then, the granite monuments pave the church floor. Ever so slowly, their carvings are wearing smoother, some gradually effaced along with the particular memories they were conceived to protect (fig. 35). But for the children inhabiting that space as refugees from Ambon’s twentieth-century violence, the skull and crossbones graven in stone bespoke mortality as clearly as ever, watching still over the bones in Banda.⁴⁵



Figure 34. Perahu crossing from Banda Neira to Lonthor, Banda Islands, Maluku, 2006.



Figure 35. Interior of Dutch Reformed Church, 2006.

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I feel tremendously fortunate that as an undergraduate at Swarthmore College, I chanced to have Alison Kettering as my professor of Baroque art. In addition to inspiring my career in art history in the first place, Alison’s support over the years has made it a joy. Just as she was Svetlana Alpers’s first PhD, I was Alison’s first student to go to Berkeley and also complete my PhD with Svetlana. Alison has been a great inspiration, not only for the rigor of her scholarship but also for the warmth of her humanity, which permeates her work and her professional relationships alike.

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¹ Banda, or the Banda Islands, form part of the Maluku Islands (also known as the Moluccas), a large archipelago in eastern Indonesia. Historically Chinese and Europeans called them the Spice Islands, often referring specifically to Banda. Today Maluku is also the name of the province in which the Bandas are located. Banda Neira is one of the Banda Islands

² Nigel Simmonds in Willard A. Hanna, *Banda: A Journey Through Indonesia’s Fabled Isles of Fire and Spice*, ed. Nigel Simmonds (Banda: Yayasan Warisan dan Budaya Banda, 1997), 20. For an exhaustive catalogue of early literature on the Moluccas, see W. Ruinen and A. B. Tutein Nolthenius, eds., *Overzicht van de Literatuur betreffende de Molukken*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Molukken-Instituut, 1928–35).

³ Maria Dermoût, *The Ten Thousand Things: A Novel*, trans. Hans Koning (1958; repr., Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1983), 4. (Originally published in Dutch: *De Tienduizend Dingen*, 1955).

⁴ Dermoût, *Ten Thousand Things*, 10.

⁵ Dermoût, *Ten Thousand Things* 4. Dermoût was born on a sugar plantation near Pekalongan in central Java in 1888; at twelve she was sent to Holland for schooling, returning to Java in 1905 and marrying a colonial official the following year. For nearly thirty years (with the exception of three years of medical furlough) she lived in various parts of the Indies, mostly in Java and the Moluccas, as her husband was transferred regularly, finally returning to Holland only in 1933. Then in her mid-forties, Dermoût had lived nearly half her life in the tropics but never returned again. See E. M. Beekman, “Afterword,” in Dermoût, *Ten Thousand Things*, 271–73.

⁶ See Richard Leppert, “Music, Domestic Life and Cultural Chauvinism: Images of British Subjects at Home in India,” in *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance, and Reception*, ed. Richard Leppert and Susan McClary (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 80.

⁷ François Valentijn, *Oud en nieuw Oost-Indiën* (Dordrecht and Amsterdam: Joannes van Braam, 1724–26), 3:4: “De Hollandsche Kerk staat naast een Gabba Gabba loots, die tusschen de zelve, en ‘t huis van den opperkoopman, plagt te staan. Zy wiert in ‘t pas gemelde jaar, alzo zy door de aardbeving nog zeer geschouden, en niet bequaam tot het waarnemen van den dienst was, zoo verre weder in staat gebragt, dat, dar men bevoorens in die loots ‘smorgens Duits, en ‘smiddags Maleits, plagt te prediken, men dat in ‘t jaar 1688 weer in deze steene Kerk begon te doen. Zy is van binnen vraai ruim, moi licht, en van verscheide gestoeltens, gelyk ook van een goeden predikstoel, voorzien, en glykt, van buiten aan te zien, wel een vaderlands huis met een vaderlandzen voorgevel.” (The Dutch Church stands next to a Gabba Gabba loots, which used to stand between it and the house of the head merchant. In the aforemen-

tioned year, as it was still badly damaged by the earthquake, and not suitable for conducting the service, it was once again restored to the state that, where they had previously used to preach Dutch in the mornings and Malay in the afternoons in the *loots*, in the year 1688 they again resumed doing this in the stone church. It is very spacious inside, beautifully light, and provisioned with various pews, as well as a good pulpit, and from the outside it well resembles a native Dutch house with a native Dutch façade).

⁸ Willard A. Hanna recorded that it was rebuilt in 1852, while the plaque on the front wall dedicates a cornerstone laid in 1873. Hanna's research was originally published in *Indonesian Banda: Colonialism and Its Aftermath in the Nutmeg Islands* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1978), though the text is reproduced, combined with commentary from Nigel Simmonds, in the beautifully illustrated 1997 edition cited in note 1; page numbers here will be cited from the latter volume.

⁹ The truly tragic events of April 21, 1999, were reported by Rick van den Broeke in "Tragedy on the Banda Islands," <http://members.upc.nl/rvandenbroeke/waling.htm#01>, accessed December 14, 2009. Due to tensions on Ambon and Ceram, about four thousand Ambonese were moved to Banda, where further violence erupted. A group of rioters burned the church on Neira; the interior of the historic church on Pulau Ai was also demolished; and five members of the Van den Broeke family were murdered: Tie (widow of Wim, the "last perkenier" of the historic plantation Groot Waling), her sister, her daughter-in-law, and two granddaughters, age eight and nine. On the early history of Islamization in Banda and Muslim-Christian violence, see Peter V. Lape, "Political Dynamics and Religious Change in the Late Pre-colonial Banda Islands, Eastern Indonesia," *World Archaeology* 32, no. 1 (June 2000): 138–55.

¹⁰ On the earlier *perkeniers* (owners and operators of the spice plantations, or *perks*), see Vincent Loth, "Pioneers and Perkeniers in the Banda Islands in the 17th Century," *Cakalele* 6 (1995): 13–35.

¹¹ On Ambon, too, when I passed through en route to Banda in 2006, the large church opposite the Museum Siwa Lima had been burned to the ground, and the road from the airport into town was still studded with the burned-out homes of families who had fled to Banda.

¹² Pierre Nora, *Space*, vol. 2 of *Rethinking France*, trans. directed by David P. Jordan (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006), xi. Nora's project on *lieux de memoire* is so enormous that two different approaches have been taken to organizing the material, which appears in two different collected publications; this particular volume on space has the most direct connection with the literal sense of *lieux* as it applies here.

¹³ In fact, some critics feel they over-renovated, stirring in too much concrete in their zeal. See Hanna, *Banda*, 105.

¹⁴ Hanna, *Banda*, 39.

¹⁵ Hanna, *Banda*, 43.

¹⁶ Verhoeven wasted considerable time on a site where the ground turned out to be too unstable, before transferring his efforts to the site of the old Portuguese foundation. Hanna, *Banda*, 57.

¹⁷ Hanna, *Banda*, 60–61, 63.

¹⁸ This by Hanna's word, though Valentijn comments of both Nassau and Belgica, "Wanneer of door wie die gebouwt zyn, blykt my nergens klaar." (When or by whom they were built, has never been clear to me). Valentijn, *Oud en nieuw Oost-Indiën*, 3:2.

¹⁹ Hanna, *Banda*, 84.

²⁰ Valentijn, *Oud en nieuw Oost-Indiën*, 3:7: "Vesting Hollandia: Deze vesting, is vry oud, aangezien zy in de oudste schriften der Secretary van Banda, die in 't jaar 1619 beginnen, al bekend was, zonder dat daar eenigzins bleek, wanneer, of door wie, zy gebouwt is, alleenlyk ziet man, dat zy, te vooren Lonthoir genaamt, de naam van Hollandia in 't jaar 1628 van den Heer Landvoogt Pieter Vlak gekregen heeft. Zy is oud en vervallen, hoewel van eenig geschut verzien, doch van zeer weinig belang." (This fortress is very old, considering it was already known in the oldest writings

of the Secretary of Banda, which begin in the year 1619, without it appearing anywhere at all when or by whom it was built. One only sees that, previously named Lonthoir, it got the name of Hollandia in the year 1628 from the Governor-General Pieter Vlak. It is old and dilapidated, though not from any artillery fire, but rather from lack of care). In contrast, Hanna writes that Coen began construction of Fort Hollandia (formerly Fort Lonthoir) in 1621 and that it was probably completed in 1642 (Hanna, *Banda*, 80).

²¹ Hanna, *Indonesian Banda*; Lape, "Political Dynamics," 139, referencing Hanna, *Banda* (1997); and Loth, "Pioneers and Perkeniers." See also Vincent Loth, "Armed Incidents and Unpaid Bills: Anglo-Dutch Rivalry in the Banda Islands in the Seventeenth Century," *Modern Asian Studies* 29, no. 4 (1995): 705–40.

²² S. Purchas and R. Hakluyt, *Purchas his pilgrims. In five books* (London: printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1625), 710, quoted in Lape, "Political Dynamics," 149. Historical documents are punctuated throughout with references to resident Turks, Persians, Bengalese, Gujeratis, Chinese, Japanese, Malays, Javanese, Macassarese, and people from the other Maluku islands of Seram, Ambon, Kei, Ternate, Tidore, and Aru. See Lape, "Political Dynamics," 149, referencing Hanna, *Indonesian Banda*; and Purchas and Hakluyt, *Purchas his pilgrims*. See also T. Pires and F. Rodrigues, *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires, an account of the East, from the Red Sea to Japan, written in Malacca and India in 1512–1515, and The book of Francisco Rodrigues, rutter of a voyage in the Red Sea, nautical rules, almanac and maps, written and drawn in the East before 1515*, trans. Armando Cortesao, Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society, 2nd Series, Part 1, Nos. 89–90 (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1944); J. Villiers, "Trade and Society in the Banda Islands in the Sixteenth Century," *Modern Asian Studies* 15 (1981): 723–50; and J. Villiers, "The Cash Crop Economy and State Formation in the Spice Islands in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," in *The Southeast Asian Port and Polity: Rise and Demise*, ed. J. Kathirithamby-Wells and J. Villiers, (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1990), 83–105.

²³ Winn's research engages the same keen awareness of the power of space and place in the lives of people as this study seeks to invoke. Phillip Winn, "Graves, Groves, and Gardens: Place and Identity in Central Maluku, Indonesia," *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 2, no. 1 (2001): 21–44. See also Phillip Winn, "Banda is the Blessed Land: Sacred Practice and Identity in the Banda Islands, Maluku," *Antropologi Indonesia* 57 (1998): 71–80. Other anthropologists, too, have linked these notions in local area studies: "Space" and, more recently, "place" have drawn much attention from anthropologists working in Southeast Asia." Gregory Forth, *Place and Space in Eastern Indonesia*, Occasional Paper No. 16 (University of Kent at Canterbury: Centre of South-East Asian Studies, 1991).

²⁴ Hanna, *Banda*, 83–84; 110.

²⁵ The Dutch seized Fort Revenge from the English; Valentijn, *Oud en nieuw Oost-Indiën*, 3:28: "In 't Noorden heeft het een regelmatig kasteel, Revenge genaamt, om reddten, die wy by de verovering van dit Eiland zullen geven. . . . Door wie of wanneer dit gebouwt is, blykt al mede, niet, maar wel, dat het er al voor 't jaar 1619 nevens Nassau, en 't andere Kasteel, geweest is." (In the North it [the island of Ai] has an orderly castle, named Revenge, for the reason that we should give by the capture of this island. . . . By whom or when this was built, also has not been found, but it is well known that it was already before the year 1619, along with Nassau, and the other castle). Hanna's observations regarding Dutch attitudes register the complexity of the history as well: he maintained that only Revenge (on Ai) and Hollandia (on Lonthor) "ever symbolized victory" for the Dutch, yet their memories of Fort Revenge were as disquieting as those of Nassau and Belgica, and Hollandia reminded them of Coen's deeds, "which the early 19th century could not condone." Hanna, *Banda*, 110.

²⁶ Run had been England's very first colony, authorized by Queen Elizabeth; when the Dutch seized it they allowed the English to stay on the tiny (really tiny!!) neighboring island of Neijalakka. In June 1665, Run formally reverted to the English; Hanna recorded that in 1667 they had traded it back to the Dutch (*Banda*, 85, 97). Wim Frijhoff has called this last a common misconception, specifying it was not technically a trade (in conversation, during the conference "Going Dutch: Holland in America, 1609–2009," University of Denver, March 2005).

²⁷ Transcribed and translated in Hanna, *Banda*, 20.

²⁸ Compare for example http://www.indonesiatraveling.com/Indonesia%20Travelling%20by%20Sea/pages_moluccas/

banda_islands.htm, accessed December 14, 2009.

²⁹ Notes on Vice Admiral Jacob van Heemskerck's earliest barter, from the first Dutch visit in 1599, record disputes over moldy mace and decayed nutmegs, mildewed textiles, broken mirrors, and rusty knives; upon his departure Heemskerck promised the elders a heavily ornamented clock, "such decoration not to include, however, any representation of the human figure," in accordance with Muslim strictures—though he never returned, nor is there any mention of such an object being delivered. Regional traders brought batiks from Java, calicoes from India, Chinese porcelain, metal wares, medicines, and potions. Hanna, *Banda*, 36, 38, 42.

³⁰ Hanna, *Banda*, 101.

³¹ *Martavans* originally got their name from the ancient port of Martaban in southern Myanmar (formerly Pegu, later Burma), where they were produced as early as the fourteenth century. Historical reports by Lintschoten (1598) and Pierre de Laval (1610) mentioned the manufacture of *martaban* jars at Martaban. See Sumarah Adhyatman and Abu Ridho, *Martavans in Indonesia/Tempayan Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Himpunan Keramik Indonesia, 1984), and Sumarah Adhyatman, *Burmese Ceramics* (Ceramic Society of Indonesia, 1985). Volker confirmed that the *martaban* jars were nearly all shipped from Pegu and most probably were indeed Burmese and not Chinese (T. Volker, *Porcelain and the Dutch East India Company, as Recorded in the Dagh-registers of Batavia Castle, Those of Hirado and Deshima, and Other Contemporary Papers, 1602–1682* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971], 221).

³² Such decoration is typical of the Qing Dynasty (1655–1912), from the time of the Emperor Kang-xi (1662–1722). But Chinese wares had already come to Banda long before the Dutch arrived. Lape, "Political Dynamics," 149, cited Chinese ceramics in early Bandanese archaeological sites as proof that long-distance traders reached Banda by the ninth century: he found a fragment of Chinese pottery in layers dated between 560 and 770 and Song dynasty (960–1279) ceramics and coins in sites dated before 1250. Archaeological sites dating to the sixteenth century contain considerable amounts of glazed ceramics, primarily from the Guangdong and Fujian provinces of China, as well as smaller amounts of Vietnamese and Thai ceramics.

³³ The central motif could be made up of the *bismallah* as well; as the first part of the phrase that opens most of the verses of the Quran, these letters appear frequently throughout Arabic arts, often freely interpreted in this way. My thanks to my colleague Björn Anderson at the University of Iowa for sharing his expertise on this matter. The spiral designs surrounding the center circle are reminiscent of a Chinese cloud pattern, suggesting a Chinese craftsman who may have been only imitating the Arabic letters for an Arabic market—a common occurrence in the production of Chinese export porcelain.

³⁴ Ko-Imari, or old Imari, was produced in Hizen until the end of the Edo Period (1603–1868). These artifacts are consistent with Lape's overall conclusion that "the archaeological and documentary evidence generally support the idea that Banda was a place of trade and contact with people from both the local region and further away." Lape, "Political Dynamics," 144.

³⁵ E. M. Beekman, "Afterword," in Dermoût, *Ten Thousand Things*, 251 (also 249, where he indicates that the Alfurs, especially on Ceram, were head-hunters), citing E. W. A. Ludeking, "Schets van de Residentie Amboina," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Indië* 15, nos. 1–2, [ser. 3, vol. 3] (1868): 65.

³⁶ My thanks to professional photographer Doug Meikle, who kindly provided me with this 2009 update.

³⁷ In remarking about Dermoût's use of literature on Maluku, E. M. Beekman observed: "Though the smallest of the greater Sunda Islands, Java has always been the most densely populated, with about two-thirds of all Indonesians living there. In many ways a history of Indonesia is, first and foremost, the history of Java. But in some ways Java's prominence is misleading because it belies the great diversity of this island realm. For instance, the destination of the first Europeans who sailed to Southeast Asia was not Java but the Moluccas." E. M. Beekman, "About the Series," in Dermoût, *Ten Thousand Things*, 306.

³⁸ See "Space, Knowledge, and Power," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 239–56. Interest in the relationships between space and identity have been widespread throughout other disciplines

³⁸ See “Space, Knowledge, and Power,” in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 239–56. Interest in the relationships between space and identity have been widespread throughout other disciplines as well; see Erica Carter, James Donald, and Judith Squires, ed., *Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1993).

³⁹ Hanna, Banda, 106.

⁴⁰ Hanna, Banda, 107. For the debate as to whether or not Poivre’s nutmeg was actually genuine, see E. C. Spary, “Of Nutmegs and Botanists: The Colonial Cultivation of Botanical Identity,” in *Colonial Botany: Science, Commerce, and Politics in the Early Modern World*, ed. Londa Schiebinger and Claudia Swan (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 2005), 187–203.

⁴¹ See Charles Corn, *The Scents of Eden* (New York: Kodansha America, 1998), and Charles Corn, “A Taste of Adventure: The History of Spices Is the History of Trade: Kerala, India, and the Molucca Islands, Indonesia,” *The Economist* 349 (1998): 51–55; republished as “The Spice Trade: A History of Adventure: Kerala, India, and the Molucca Islands, Indonesia,” *The Encyclopedia of Spices*, <http://www.theepicentre.com/Spices/spicetrd.html>, accessed December 14, 2009.

⁴² At least, that was the case at the time of my 2006 journey there, when I arrived and departed by way of that ferry. Schedules may have changed since.

⁴³ As of an email communication from Tamalia Alisjahbana prior to my departure in 2006.

⁴⁴ The governor’s announcement, “MALUKU BECOMING AWARE OF TOURISM,” was centered at Pantai Pasir Putih (white sandy beach) of the village Allang on Ambon Island. See <http://malukutourism.com/>, accessed December 12, 2009. Renovating Benteng Belgica and rebuilding the Neira church were certainly part of this effort. In 2006, Des Alwi also expressed interest in making the VOC mansion into a boutique hotel, though kamar spok might yet prevail there.

⁴⁵ The inscription reads “GEDENKT TE STERVEN” (think on [remember] your death).