OLD MASTERS

2017

SALOMON LILIAN

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Rue Verdaine 6
CH - 1204 Geneva
Switzerland
Telephone +41 22 310 5688
Fax +41 22 702 9239
E mail: salomonlilian@aol.com

Website: www.salomonlilian.com

Exhibition and research:
Spiegelgracht 5
1017 JP Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Telephone +31 20 6206307
Fax +31 20 6246018
E mail: info@salomonlilian.com

Acknowledgements

This is already our 24th year of producing an annual catalogue of Dutch and Flemish Old Master Paintings. And once again, we were able to present a very interesting collection of fresh Masterpieces.

Amongst the recent acquisitions is an important work by Gerard van Honthorst.
Although this painting is known in the literature, it hasn't been seen since the 1950s. Art historically the painting has singular significance, influencing Jan Lievens, Hendrick Ter Brugghen and Matthias Stom.

We also have a fantastic, large panel by Maerten de Vos, which was in a private collection in Italy for a long time – in a castle between Milan and Turin. We were able to export it from Italy and bring it back to where it belongs.
We also discovered an unknown painting by Karel van Mander, which comes from the famous Adanero collection in Madrid. Signed and dated 1592, it is a highly important addition to the small oeuvre of the artist.

Then we found in a French private collection a beautiful genre painting by Cornelis Bisschop. Although a minor artist, this work by Bisschop is a small masterpiece in its own right, very atmospheric, and with a beautiful light.
One can lose oneself in dreaming when looking at an atmospheric landscape by Jan Siberechts. This painter stands on his own in the Flemish landscape tradition.

We also include a recently discovered shell still life by Willem Kalf.
And finally we also show beautiful examples of smaller masters like Harmen Steenwyck, Pieter van Mol, Maerten Frans de Hulst and Cornelis Dusart.

I would like to thank Fred G. Meijer who wrote the entry on Willem Kalf and I am thankful to Pippa Mason, who wrote the entry on Jan van der Heijden. As always, I am grateful to Wendela Burgemeister and Jasper Hillegers, who conducted the entire project as well as thorough art historical research on the paintings and to Natasha Broad, who edited the entries.

Salomon Lilian
February 2017

cat. no.	
1	Cornelis Bisschop
2	Elias van den Broeck
3	Cornelis Dusart
4	Jan van der Heijden
5	Gerard van Honthorst
6	Maerten Fransz van der Hulst
7	Willem Kalf
8	Thomas de Keyser and Studio
9	Karel van Mander
10	Pieter van Mol
11	Monogrammist O.M.
12	Jan Siberechts
13	Jan Woutersz Stap
14	Harmen Steenwijck
15	Maerten de Vos
16	Thomas Willeboirts Bosschaert

cat. no. 1

Cornelis Bisschop
1630 – Dordrecht – 1674

A Young Woman Sewing

Oil on panel
62.5 x 58 cm.

Provenance:
Probably Paris, collection Alexandre-Joseph Paillet (1743-1814)[1]
Sale Paris, Alexandre-Joseph Paillet, 17 February 1774, lot 112, as 'Biscopp'[2]
Paris, collection Pierre-François Basan (1723-1797)[3]
Sale Paris, Alexandre-Joseph Paillet, 15 December 1777, lot 63, as 'Bischop'[4]
Paris, art dealer Jacques Langlier (1730?-181?)
Possibly sale Paris, Béatrix de ChoiseulStainville, Duchesse de Gramont, 10 February 1797, lot 10, as 'P. de Hooge', acquired by art dealer Jean François Saubert[5]
France, private collection

Literature:
C. Brière-Misme, 'Un petit maître hollandais: Cornelis Bisschop (1630-1674)', in: *Oud Holland* 65 (1950), pp. 24-40, 104-116, 139-151, 178-192, 227-240, pp. 227-228, note 1[6]

Copy:
oil on canvas, 53 x 45 cm., Oslo, Nasjonalgaleriet[7]

Cornelis Bisschop was born in 1630 in Dordrecht as the son of the tailor Jacob Dionysz and Anna van Beveren of Utrecht.[8] According to Arnold Houbraken (1660-1719), Bisschop studied with his fellow townsman Ferdinand Bol (1616-1680) in Amsterdam. He was back in Dordrecht by 1653, when he married Geertruyt Botland, with whom he would have twelve children between 1654 an 1672. In his time, Bisschop held an international reputation. When the French nobleman and art lover Balthasar de Monconys visited Dordrecht in 1663, Bisschop was the only artist who was paid a visit by him. This might have been due to one of Bisschop's specialties, the painting of perspectives and carved trompe l'oeil paintings (so-called 'bedriegertjes', deceivers), with which he had great success. Houbraken, who is full of praise for Bisschop, mentions a candle-lit history piece by his hand in the collection of the French king Louis XIV, and tells us that shortly before Bisschop's untimely death in 1674, he was invited by the Danish King Christian V to become Court painter. Bisschop's oeuvre covers a broad range of subjects and genres. In addition to his trompe l'oeils, he was active as a portraitist, a genre in which he was formal, but successful. In his history pieces he tends to follow his teacher Bol, while his genre work shows a distinct affinity with the work of Nicolaes Maes (1634-1693), One of Dordrecht's greatest masters during the period of Bisschop's activity.

The present, wonderfully intimate work may count as a good example. In an interior with windows on the left hand side and in the background, a





Fig. 1 Nicolaes Maes, *A Young Girl Woman*, 1655, oil on panel, 54.2 x 44.5 cm., London, Mansion House, The Harold Samuel Collection

seated young woman with a cushion on her lap is sewing. While her shoe lies on the wooden floor, she keeps her feet warm on a little stove. To her left is a chair with a lace pillow cover with bobbins, to her right a table covered with fine green brocade, a basket of linen, an open book (likely a bible) and an earthenware jug, all depicted with a natural care for material appearance. The painting belongs to a specific genre of works in which female domestic virtue is exemplified by means of activities such as preparing meals, doing needlework, spinning or making lace. Such notions of female domestic diligence were widespread in the culture of the Republic throughout the seventeenth century, and certainly not limited to art. One comes across them in songbooks, pattern books and popular literature. A pedagogical treatise of the Middelburg schoolmaster Johannes de Swaef of 1621 neatly sums up how young maidens 'must learn what belongs to housewifery / how they should be humbly submissive and loving to their husbands (if God calls them to marriage) / how they should raise their children / how they should run their household / how to make purchases / how to sew / spin / be neat and diligent / and similar things which are part of women's callings.'[9] The shoe on the floor should be viewed in this light too, as it reflects the young woman's homeliness.[10]

The thickly applied impastos in the whites, a fine sense of variation in the rendering of the different textures, and an overall solid quality all underline Bisschop's painterly skills, and reveal his close observation of the work and technique of Maes, whose depictions of similar seamstresses, apple peelers, lace makers and ladies at spinning wheels, which he painted in the mid 1650s, clearly inspired the present work. Paintings such as Maes's *Young Woman Sewing* dated 1655 in the Harold Samuel Collection (fig. 1), or his *Lacemaker* of c. 1656 in New York (fig. 2), show closely corresponding compositions, paired with a similar painterly conception and the same use of pictorial elements, such as the chair with the pillow and lace bobbins, the table with the jug, and the wall decoration 'op stok' in the background. Apparently Bisschop was able to cater to a



Fig. 2 Nicolaes Maes, *The Lacemaker*, c. 1656, oil on canvas, 45.1 x 52.7 cm, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

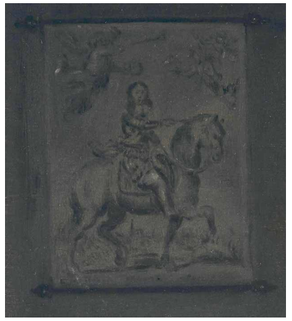


Fig. 3 Detail of cat. no. 1

market with his Maes adaptations long after the creation of Maes's originals. Bisschop's 1667 *Apple Peeler* in the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum, for instance, was modelled after Maes's *Woman Plucking a Duck* of c. 1655 in Philadelphia.[11] Although undated, the present work seems to testify to this practice as well, judging from the print hanging in the background (fig. 3). The print shows a rider on a horse with a city in the background. He holds a baton in his hands, as two heralding angels with a trumpet and a laurel wreath accompany him. Although the actual print could not be identified, the rider depicted is likely to be Stadholder William III, who returned from exile during the so-called *rampjaar* (disaster year) 1672, in which England, France and the Dioceses of Munster and Cologne all attacked the Republic.[12] This identification, then, furnishes a date around 1672, but certainly before 1674, when Bisschop passed away.

Note on the provenance

The present, recently surfaced Lilian work is another version on panel of a work on canvas in the Nasjonalgaleriet, Oslo (fig. 4) (see: Copy). The two works share the same vertical composition. In her 1950 article on Cornelis Bisschop (see: Literature), Clothilde Brière-Misme – obviously not familiar with the recently surfaced Lilian work – suggested that the vertical Oslo canvas was identical to a horizontal panel with the same subject mentioned sequentially in two Paris sale catalogues of 1774 and 1777, both bearing an attribution to Bisschop (see: Provenance). Indeed, the descriptions given in the auction catalogues fit the composition of the Oslo canvas (and likewise the Lilian panel) neatly. A copy of the 1774 auction kept in the Philadelphia Museum of Art – of which Brière-Misme was unaware – in fact proves the identification, as it contains a drawing of the auctioned work, by the French artist Gabriel de St. Aubin (1724-1780), in which we recognise the composition of the Oslo and Lilian work, be it in a horizontal format (fig. 5).[13] So far, Brière-Misme's theory is thus proven to be correct. However, the difference between the Oslo work and the work mentioned in 1774 and 1777, both in size (vertical vs. horizontal) and support (canvas vs. panel) clearly asked for an explanation. In defence of her theory, Brière-Misme maintained that – sometime between the late 18th century and 1915, when the Oslo work reappeared in its present form – the width of the original panel was drastically reduced, thus changing the format from horizontal to vertical.[14] Further, she argued, the painting was at one point transferred from the original panel support to a canvas support.

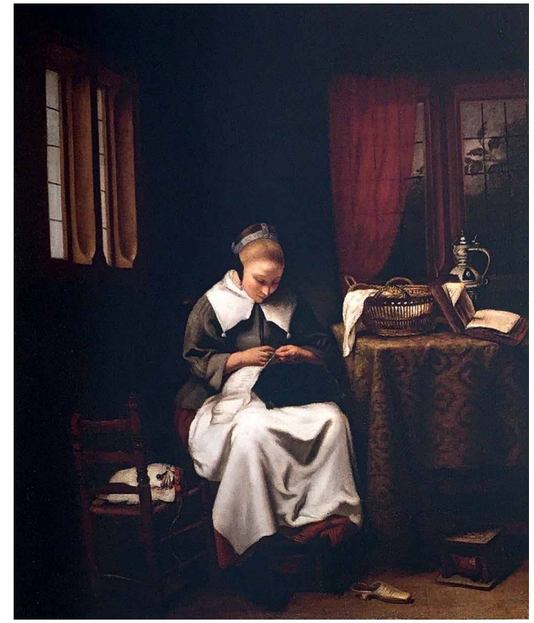
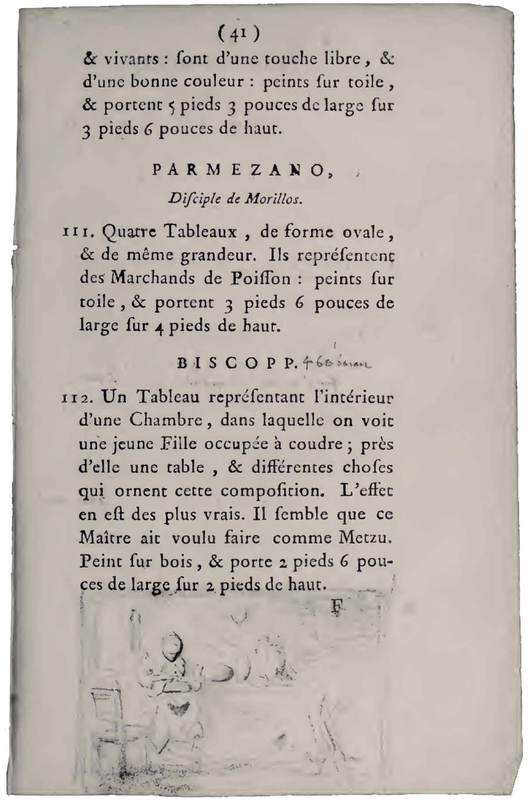


Fig. 4 Copy after Cornelis Bisschop, *A Young Woman Sewing*, oil on canvas, 53 x 45 cm., Oslo, Nasjonalgaleriet



(41)

& vivants : ſont d'une touche libre, & d'une bonne couleur : peints ſur toile, & portent 5 pieds 3 pouces de large ſur 3 pieds 6 pouces de haut.

PARMEZANO,

Diſciple de Morillos.

111. Quatre Tableaux, de forme ovale, & de même grandeur. Ils repréſentent des Marchands de Poiſſon : peints ſur toile, & portent 3 pieds 6 pouces de large ſur 4 pieds de haut.

BISCOPP. 460 francs

112. Un Tableau repréſentant l'intérieur d'une Chambre, dans laquelle on voit une jeune Fille occupée à coudre ; près d'elle une table, & différentes choſes qui ornent cette compoſition. L'effet en eſt des plus vrais. Il ſemble que ce Maître ait voulu faire comme Metzu. Peint ſur bois, & porte 2 pieds 6 pouces de large ſur 2 pieds de haut.

F

Fig. 5 Gabriel de St Aubin, Drawing of the Lilian work in the catalogue of the Alexandre-Joseph Paillet sale, Paris, 17 February 1774, p. 41, Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art

The recent surfacing of the Lilian work demands a reconsideration of Brière-Misme's theory. Considering the material at hand, the Lilian, and not the Oslo work must be considered the prime version, on two grounds. The first is its quality of painterly execution, which is objectively higher. The second is the specific nature of the present support: a vertical panel curiously consisting of three horizontal planks. This unusual support strongly points to it originally having been horizontal, thus fitting the 1774 and 1777 descriptions perfectly. The consequence of this reasoning, which identifies the Lilian, and not the Oslo work, as the cut-down original, is that the latter – mimicking the composition of the Lilian painting in its present form – would have been executed after the cutting down of the present panel, thus at the earliest after 1777, the year it was still mentioned as being horizontal.

JH

Notes

1 See the following note for comment.

2 Lugt no. 2239; Getty Provenance Index Databases (GPID, see: www.getty.edu), F-A339: 'Un Tableau représentant l'intérieur d'une Chambre, dans laquelle on voit une jeune Fille occupée à coudre; près d'elle une table, & différentes choses qui ornent cette composition. L'effet en est des plus vrais. Il semble que ce Maître ait voulu faire comme Metzu.' Oil on panel, 2 ft/6 inch x 2 ft (66 x 82 cm.), sold for 460 livres. N.B.: as in the 1777 catalogue (see note 4), the measurements in the 1774 catalogue indicate a horizontal format. On the ownership of Paillet, see: GPID, F-A339, Notes, where it is tentatively argued that Paillet owned all or at least most of the lots in this sale himself.

3 GPID, F-A339, lot 112, Buyer notes.

4 Lugt no. 2754; GPID, F-A475: 'L'intérieur d'une Chambre éclairée par une fenêtre; on y voit près d'une table, une jeune femme assise & s'occupant à coudre, & sur la table qui est couverte d'un tapis, un panier, un livre & un pot ; l'effet de jour est agréable & piquant.' Oil on panel, 23 x 29 inch (62 x 78 cm.), sold for 121 livres. N.B.: as in the 1774 catalogue (see note 2), the measurements in the 1777 catalogue indicate a horizontal format.

5 Lugt no. 5531; GPID, F-A1144: 'Un intérieur de chambre hollandoise où l'on voit une jeune femme occupée à coudre; elle est assise près d'une table, & près d'elle, une chaise sur laquelle est un coussin à dentelle.', 23 x 17 inch (= 62 x 46 cm.), sold for 200 frs. See also note 9.

6 Brière-Misme was not familiar with the present work, yet the provenance she produces of the other version in Oslo (see: Copy) will in fact relate to the present work.

7 W. Sumowski, *Gemälde der Rembrandt-Schüler,* 6 vols., Landau/Pfalz 1983-1994, 3 (1983), pp. 1962, 1966, note 88, p. 1997, repr.

8 Biography based on J. Laughman, in: P. Marijnissen et al., *De Zichtbaere Werelt : schilderkunst uit de Gouden eeuw in Hollands oudste stad*, exh. cat. Dordrecht, Dordrechts Museum 1992-1993, p. 85.

9 Quotation and translation taken from W. Franits, *Paragons of Virtue : women and domesticity in seventeenth-century Dutch art*, Cambridge 1993, pp. 21-29, p.26.

10 Franits 1993, pp. 77-79.

11 See: Dordrecht 1992-1993, cat. no. 5.

12 I am indebted to Dr. Paul Rijkens for his advice and his agreement that the rider probably depicts William III, with reference to the W on the saddle and the regal association of the trumpet and the laurel wreath. Rijkens's *Nassau on horseback : Meaning, form and function of Nassau equestrian imagery in the Netherlands since the 16th century*, diss. Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam 2015, specifically deals with this imagery. According to Rijkens, William II was hardly ever depicted on horseback, as he was unpopular. An anonymous painted portrait of William III on horseback with classical ruins in the background (image with Rijkens) depicts him similarly to the image in the present painting (mirror image), as does a painting by Gottfried Kneller (1646-1723) at Hampton Court (Royal Collection, inv. no. RCIN 403986. See also the study in the Loo Palace, inv. no. RL2257).

13 The drawing seems to miss the upper part of the composition, but judging from the other drawings by De St Aubin in the same auction catalogue, it becomes clear that the drawings remained in the margins and never intruded into the text, which explains why De St Aubin did not complete the composition. After all, these drawings were merely done in order to memorize the paintings in the sale. I thank Dr. Christopher Atkins for supplying me with a pdf of the Philadelphia copy of the 1774 auction catalogue.

14 Brière-Misme 1950, p. 227,in her explanatory model fitted in a third element, a painting mentioned in a Paris sale in 1797 (see Provenance, and note 5). She held this work to be identical to the work mentioned in 1774 and 1777. Although its height (23 inch = c. 62 cm.) corresponds with the height of the work in the earlier Paris sales, the width was now heavily reduced (17 inch = c. 46 cm.), making it a vertical format. Whereas the Oslo painting (53 x 45 cm.) fits within the measurements of this 1797 work (c. 62 x c. 46 cm.), the present work (62.5 x 58 cm.) does not. There are three options: 1) Brière-Misme is correct. The 1797 work is identical to the 1774/1777 work, the given measurements are correct and therefore the Oslo painting is indeed the painting mentioned in all three auctions. 2) The 1797 painting is identical both to the 1774/1777 work, but the given measurements are wrong (esp. concerning the width), which allows an identification with the present work. 3) The 1797 painting is not identical to the painting auctioned in 1774 and 1777. Option 1 can be virtually ruled out (see text). Option 2 seems unlikely, but acceptable (hence the decision to include the painting in the present provenance). Option 3 seems the most likely option, regardless of the – admittedly – fitting description. Paintings with this subject are not uncommon, often showing similar pictorial motifs.

cat. no. 2

Elias van den Broeck
Antwerp 1649/50 – 1708 Amsterdam

Vivat Rex – "Long live the King"

Signed on the left *Elias V. Den Broeck* and inscribed lower centre *VIVAT / REX*
Oil on canvas
56.5 x 48.5 cm.

Provenance:
Belgium, private collection

Literature:
Not published

The still life painter Elias van den Broeck moved to Amsterdam at an early age, where he was apprenticed to Cornelis Kick (1634-1681). In 1669 the artist became a pupil of Jan Davidsz de Heem (1606-1684) in Utrecht, and appears to have moved to Antwerp with him. In 1673 he became a master in the Antwerp Guild, and twelve years later, in 1685, he returned to Amsterdam. In 1700 he settled in London for a while but then moved back to Amsterdam, where he worked until his death.[1] Although born in Antwerp and a master of the guild there, the artist's style is more closely allied to the Dutch school.

This beautiful still life, within a garden architecture setting and viewed at ground level, is finely painted and warm and rich in tone, the use of orange-red highly characteristic of the artist. An arch frames the trunk of an ornamental orange tree set upon a stone dais; a nest with dark coloured eggs is precariously balanced within it. Beneath it, upon the dais, the rich colour of the orange, surrounded by blossom and Chinese orange lanterns, commands the viewer's focus, leading our eye to the engraved letters on the dais, 'vivat rex'. Light streams in from the left against the wall into the crepuscular scene. An atmosphere is created of a neglected corner of an ornamental orangery in a grand garden, into which we are allowed the privileged view of the secret life of flora and fauna that thrive there. Animating the scene is a flying grasshopper, flying beetles, a dragon fly, and a hissing lizard, all watched over by a snail sitting atop the ledge of the framing arch. The authorship of all the art-





Fig. 1 Jan Davidsz de Heem, *Vivat Oraenge*, signed with initials, lower right and inscribed VIVAT ORAENGE, oil on canvas, 63 x 49 cm.

ist's still lifes is easy to recognize because of the often nocturnal or, in this case, twilit atmosphere.[2] The artist's technique is fine and delicate, the careful rendering of leaves being most noticeable, for example, on their undersides where the veins are drawn with the minutest of detail.

Vivat Rex – Long live the King by Elias van den Broeck, the dating of which is unknown, may have been arguably made for a traditional supporter of the Protestant House of Orange. The modest viewpoint of the orange tree, tucked away in an obscure part of an orangery, and the inconspicuous quality of the inscription, evoke a secretive quality which seems to suggest resistance in the face of Catholic forces represented by William's uncle and father-in-law James II, King of England, Scotland and Wales, whilst asserting hopes of William's future Kingship. A date for the painting could therefore be suggested just preceding William's succession to the English throne in 1689. However, there is no firm evidence to support this, and the viewpoint of the still life is in keeping with the artist's forest floor still lifes. Whether it was painted to express the hope of William becoming King or as a subtle celebration of his Kingship, the flourishing orange tree symbolizes the flourishing dynasty behind the name, thriving in spite of adversity. Arguably the eggs in the nest may represent the ability of the House of Orange to nurture its Protestant subjects. Following William's triumphant invasion and defeat of King James II (unpopular with the English Protestant majority) in what became known as 'The Glorious Revolution', the British Parliament offered the crown jointly to King William III and Queen Mary II in 1689, whose reign spanned England, Scotland and Ireland.

A similar composition from a Swedish private collection, of the same size as the present painting, represents another version of the same theme, depicting flowers in a stone vase before a stone wall, instead of the orange tree. Once again the reference to the House of Orange is extremely subtle. The painting appeared in an exhibition at the National Museum in Stockholm.[3]

Approximately a couple of decades before the present work was executed, the artist's teacher, Jan Davidsz de Heem, painted his *Vivat Oraenge* (fig. 1), which since 2005 has been in the Royal collection at Paleis het Loo in Apeldoorn, the palace that was bought in 1684 by King William III. De Heem most likely painted it for a Dutch patron in circa 1667-1672, shortly before William III became a hero to his people in 1673, when he drove the invading Catholic forces of Louis XIV of France out of most of the Dutch Republic, after their invasion of the Netherlands in 1672 (known as the *rampjaar*, year of disaster). At the time the De Heem painting was executed, Elias van den Broeck was De Heem's pupil in Utrecht. The overtly triumphant note of De Heem's work, with its festoon of orange leaves in a niche, contrasts with the mood of the Lilian painting, in which the artist has adopted the theme in his own individual idiom.

WB

Notes

1 J. De Maere, M. Wabbes, *Illustrated Dictionary of 17th century Flemish Painters* 3 vols., Brussels 1994, vol. 1, p. 77.

2 See: A. Van der Willigen, F. G. Meijer, *A Dictionary of Dutch and Flemish Still-life Painters Working in Oils, 1525-1725*, Leiden 2003, p. 52.

3 See: *Nationalmusei Utställningskatalog*, no. 309; P. Grate (ed.), *Holländska Mästare I Svensk Ago*, exh. cat. Stockholm, Nationalmuseum 1967, p. 36, cat. no. 27.

cat. no. 3

Cornelis Dusart
1660 – Haarlem – 1704

A Writer

Signed and dated lower left *Corn Dusart fe*
Oil on copper
14 x 13 cm.

Provenance:
Helsingsfors, Gösta Stenman, 1932
Sale Berlin, Rudolp Lekpe (collection A.W. Sjöstrand), 21 March 1933, lot 44
Sale Stockholm, Svensk-Franska Konstgalleriet, 3 November 1955, lot 17
France, private collection

Literature:
Not published

The painter, draughtsman, and printmaker Cornelis Dusart was born in Haarlem on April 24, 1660, the son of the organist at the cathedral of St. Bavo. He became one of Adriaen van Ostade's (1610-1685) last apprentices, and is regarded as his most talented pupil. The artist's biographer Johan van Gool described Dusart in 1751 as 'one of the best pupils of the famous Adriaen van Ostade, who followed closely on the heels of his master in all things concerning the portrayal of peasant life, including pleasures both humorous and lascivious.'[1]
Dusart entered the Guild of St. Luke in Haarlem in 1679. Three years later, in 1682, he is recorded as an unmarried member of the Reformed Church in Haarlem. Ten years later he was appointed a *hoofdman* (leader) of the painter's guild. Cornelis Dusart died unmarried in 1704, and was buried in his native city. In July of that year, his art collection was auctioned in The Hague; it included a number of paintings by Adriaen van Ostade, and possibly some by Adriaen's brother Isaack van Ostade (1621-1649), which were completed by Dusart. Apparently the artist had inherited the unfinished works at the time of his master Adriaen van Ostade's death in 1685, when the latter probably bequeathed his studio estate to him, including paintings and drawings. [2] Dusart's paintings and drawings from 1679 to 1682 so closely resemble those of Adriaen van Ostade, that connoisseurs still have difficulty in distinguishing their authorship at times.
However, after 1682, Dusart developed a more distinct and personal style, inspired by the paintings of Jan Steen (1626-79), of which he owned a few.



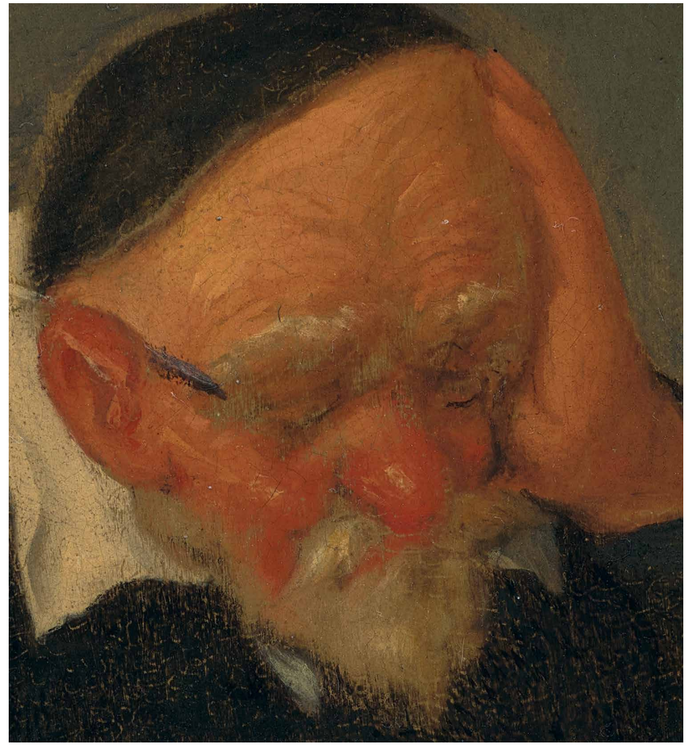
According to Abraham Bredius' *Künstler-Inventare* of 1915-22, Cornelis Dusart was in possession of four paintings by Jan Steen when he died in 1704, probably inherited from Adriaen van Ostade's studio estate.

The present, humorous little painting shows a homely looking, elderly writer, sitting sideways on his chair, head in hands, eyes shut in contemplation, or almost falling asleep.[3] With one quill pen behind his right ear, and another in his right hand, he seems to be in the process of struggling to find the right words. The gesture of head in hand seems to suggest comic despair with the creative battle. A rustic atmosphere is established by the plain background and simple furnishings of a fraying straw chair and wooden table corner, suggesting the impoverished circumstances of a writer, who appears to be living like a peasant. His large brown hat sits atop his left knee. The table next to him is covered with papers, an ink pot and a book on which the letters *Boheem.op* can be read. Cornelis Dusart's own library consisted of over 200 volumes strong.[4] Although most books in his library are indentifiable, despite the abbreviated descriptions in his probate inventory, the book in the present painting has not been identified as of yet. We know from this inventory that he read almost everything in his native language and that the books demonstrate a wide range of humanistic interests.

WB

Notes

1 J. van Gool, *De nieuwe schouburg der Nederlantsche kunstschilders en schilderessen*, 2 vols., The Hague 1750-1751, 2 (1751), p. 457.
2 M. Westermann, *The amusements of Jan Steen : comic painting in the seventeenth century*, Zwolle 1997, p. 66.
3 According to the auction catalogue of 1955, dr. Gustav Glück wrote a certificat on 21st January 1930 accompanying this painting, stating that this is a very caracteristic work by Cornelis Dusart, perfectly executed.
4 See: S. Anderson, 'The Library of Cornelis Dusart: Between Artist and Gentleman', in: *Oud Holland* 123 (2010), pp. 133-165.



Detail of cat. no. 3

cat. no. 4

Jan van der Heyden
Gorinchem 1637 – 1712 Amsterdam

A Palatial Garden, with Figures emerging from a Palace on the Right

Signed and dated lower right: *JVH 167*
Oil on panel
37.6 x 43.8 cm

Provenance:
Alexander-Louis Hersant Destouches, Paris
His sale, Paris, 21 March 1794, lot 131, for 7,200 francs (bought by Michael Vauthier on behalf of Peter Rainier)
Peter Rainier
His deceased sale, London, Christie's, 24 May 1845, for £504 to Nieuwenhuys
Baron de Varange
His deceased sale, Paris, 26 May 1852, lot 23, for 22,100 francs
Baron James de Rothschild, Paris, by 1927
Thence by inheritance to Baronne Alexandrine de Rothschild, Paris
Confiscated from the above by the ERR (Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg) after the German occupation of Paris
Inherited by the previous owner from his aunt in 2005
Sold in 2014 pursuant to a settlement agreement between the previous owner and the heirs of Alexandrine de Rothschild

Literature:
Sir Charles Eastlake, Ms diaries, Paris visit, 1860, in the Library of the National Gallery, London
Paul Lacroix, *Annuaire des Artistes et des Amateurs*, Paris, 1860, pp. 166-167, no. 20
J. Smith, *A Catalogue Raisonné .....*, vol. V, London, 1854, pp. 386-87, 392,nos. 56 and 73
E. Michel, *Great Masters of Landscape Painting*, London, 1910, pp. 199-200
C. Hofstede de Groot, *A Catalogue Raisonné.....*, vol. VIII, London, 1927, pp. 398-99, no. 230
H. Wagner, *Jan van der Heyden*, Amsterdam-Haarlem, 1971, p. 101, no. 152
Susanna Avery-Quash, "The Travel Notebooks of Sir Charles Eastlake", *The Walpole Society*, London, No. 73 (2 vols), 2011, vol. I, p. 524 "Vander Heyden – Entrance to a Palace – great part of wall and foreground in shadow – wood".



Jan van der Heyden was one of the leading architectural painters of the Dutch Golden Age. In addition to his well-known views of Amsterdam, he painted vistas of other Dutch, Belgian and German cities, country houses and estates, landscapes and a few still lifes. Despite his seemingly naturalistic style, his views are rarely topographically accurate. Even in his depictions of recognisable sites it is apparent that he regularly took liberties with the architecture, manipulating it and re-arranging it to suit his own purposes. Indeed, one can only conclude that topographical fidelity was not his primary objective, rather he strove to present an idealised vision of the world around him.

This sparkling little painting is one of Jan van der Heyden's fantasy views. The scene is set in the grounds of a grand residence under a bright blue sky. Dominating the right foreground is an imposing edifice, with a classical portico, through which an elegantly dressed lady makes her entrance, attended by footmen in red livery, one of them carrying a parasol. A gentleman standing at the foot of the steps greets her with a deferential bow, while two others stand aside, waiting their turn to be presented. The lady's arrival is also marked by two beggars, who have stationed themselves near to the wall on the right: one of them proffers his hat, hoping for a donation of alms. The portico opens onto a broad terrace that extends beneath an archway to a grove of trees beyond, above which the cupola of a substantial country house may be seen. To the left appears a formal garden which is bounded by a high wall decorated with sculpted figures in niches and vase-shaped finials. The scene is enlivened by elegant strolling figures, frolicking dogs and gardeners at work among the manicured parterres. Lolling against the wall in the left foreground is a red-liveried footman, who is chatting to another of his number, apparently unaware of his mistress's presence.

In this painting van der Heyden has given free rein to his imagination. None of the architectural motifs can be identified, but the cupola of the building that rises in the distance bears more than a passing resemblance to the Huis ten Bosch near The Hague. Van der Heyden depicted the Huis ten Bosch and its formal garden on more than one occasion, most notably in pendants in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, dating from the later 1660s[1]. He also painted several other *capricci* of formal gardens framed by grand classical architecture, of which a good example is the architectural fantasy in the National Gallery of Art, in Washington, which is dated 1670[2]. The present picture also likely dates from around this time.

Van der Heyden has brought his characteristically refined and meticulous technique to his rendering of this architectural fantasy. The fresh summer foliage is minutely described, as are the tufts of grass and clumps of weeds which have sprung up along the terrace. Similarly detailed is his delineation of the architectural elements, from the crisply carved classical mouldings down to the joints in the stonework. Yet, as Houbraken observed[3], despite his attention to detail, van der Heyden never loses sight of the overall harmony of the composition. Here, the design achieves great structural clarity through the use of strong horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines and bold contrasts of light and shade. Rays of bright sunlight falling from the right cast deep shadows obliquely across the lower right-hand corner, accentuating the linear perspective and leading the eye into the distance.

The staffage in this painting is not by Eglon van der Neer as Smith supposed[4], but more probably by the accomplished painter of figures and animals Adriaen van de Velde, with whom van der Heyden often collaborated. Theirs was an especially successful partnership, Adriaen van de Velde contributing his lively and well-characterised figures to van der Heyden's refined settings.

PM

Notes

1 See P. C. Sutton, *Jan van der Heyden*, exh. cat., New Haven and London, 2007, pp. 158-163, nos. 22 & 23, both reproduced.
2 *Ibid.*, pp. 164-67, no. 24, reproduced.
3 Arnold Houbraken, *De Groote Schouburgh* ..., 3 vols, The Hague, 1718-21, vol. 3, p. 80. Van der Heyden "painted every brick in his buildings... so precisely that one could clearly see the mortar in the joints, and yet his work did not lose in charm or appear hard if one viewed the picture as a whole from a certain distance"...
4 See literature above, Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 392, no. 73.



Detail of cat. no. 4

cat. no. 5

Gerard van Honthorst
1592 – Utrecht – 1656

A Boy Blowing on a Firebrand

Remains of a signature upper right *G . v ... . f*
Oil on canvas
75.5 x 64.5 cm.

Provenance:
Warwickshire, Coombe Abbey, collection Earls of Craven, by 1866[1]
Sale London, Christie's (collection Rt. Hon. Cornelia, Countess of Craven), 13 April 1923, lot 99, to Harris
Bath, collection Charles A. Cooke, Esq.
His sale, London, Sotheby's, 1 July 1953, lot 28, sold to Mayhem
Brussels, Gallery Leger and Sons
Brussels, private collection, since 1959

Literature:
Catalogue of the Pictures at Combe Abbey, Warwickshire, The Seat of William Earl of Craven, 1866, cat. no. 246 ('Boy Blowing a Fire Brand, G. Honthorst')
T. Cox, *Inventory and Valuation for Fire Insurances, Pictures, Drawings and Engravings in Combe Abbey*, Oxford, Bodleian Library under Craven Papers, 1916, no. 246 (as being in 'The Breakfast Staircase and Lobby at Foot. A Boy, blowing a firebrand in scarlet and brown coat and large brimmed hat: 32 x 26' (approx. 80 x 66 cm.))
J.R. Judson, *Gerrit van Honthorst : a discussion of his position in Dutch art*, The Hague 1956, p. 63, note 3
B. Nicolson, *Hendrick Terbrugghen*, The Hague 1958, p. 66, fig. 33b
J.R. Judson, *Gerrit van Honthorst : a discussion of his position in Dutch art*, The Hague 1959, p. 63, note 3, p. 227, cat. no. 161, fig. 16
B. Nicolson, 'The 'Candlelight Master': a follower of Honthorst in Rome', in: *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 9 (1960), pp. 121-164, p. 149, note 62 (1)
B. Nicolson, 'Second Thoughts about Terbrugghen', in: *The Burlington Magazine* 102 (1960), pp. 465-473, p. 466 (2)
J. Białostocki, 'Puer Sufflans Ignes', in: *Arte in Europa : scritti di storia dell'arte in onore di Edoardo Arslan*, 2 vols., Milan 1966, I, pp. 591-595, pp. 592, 594, note 12 (republished in: J. Białostocki., *The Message of Images : Studies in the History of Art*, Vienna 1988, pp. 139-144, pp. 143, 264, note 13)
H. Braun, *Gerard und Willem van Honthorst*, dissertation Göttingen 1966, pp. 157-158, no. 31
R. Klessmann et al., *Jan Lievens : Ein maler im Schatten Rembrandts*, exh. cat. Braunschweig, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum 1979, p. 50, under cat. no. 7
B. Nicolson, *The International Caravaggesque Movement*, Oxford/New York 1979, pp. 61, 225
L.J. Slatkes, review of: B. Nicolson, *The International Caravaggesque Movement*, in: *Simiolus* 12 (1981-19 82), pp. 167-183, p. 176
W. Sumowski, *Gemälde der Rembrandtschüler*, 6 vols., Landau/Pfalz 1983-1994, 3 (1983), p. 1791, under no. 1225, citing Klessmann 1979
A. Blankert, L.J. Slatkes, *Nieuw licht op de Gouden Eeuw : Hendrick ter Brugghen en tijdgenoten*, exh. cat. Utrecht, Centraal Museum, Braunschweig, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum 1986-1987, pp. 59, 308, fig. 134
B. Nicolson, L. Vertova, *Caravaggism in Europe*, 3 vols., Florence 1990, I, pp. 51, 127, III, pl. 1250
L. Federly Orr, in: J.A. Spicer et al., *Masters of light : Dutch painters in Utrecht during the Golden Age*, exh. cat. San



Francisco, California Palace of the Legion of Honor, Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, London, National Gallery 1997-1998, pp. 239-240, under cat. no. 36, fig. 1
L. Slatkes, in: J. Turner (ed.), *The Dictionary of Art*, 34 vols., New York 1996, 14, pp. 727-732, p. 729
R.J. Judson, R.E.O. Ekkart, *Gerrit van Honthorst 1592-1656*, Doornspijk 1999, pp. 15, 183-184, cat. no. 231, pl. 132
M. Neumeister, *Das Nachtstück mit Kunstlicht in der niederländischen Malerei und Graphik des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts : Iconographische und Koloristische Aspekte*, Petersberg 2003, pp. 237, 274, note 666
L. Slatkes, W. Franits, *The Paintings of Hendrick ter Brugghen 1588-1629 : Catalogue Raisonné*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia 2007, pp. 155, 166, 423, fig. 20
G. Papi, *Gherardo delle Notti : quadri bizzarrissimi e cene allegre*, exh. cat. Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi 2015, p. 150, under cat. no. 12

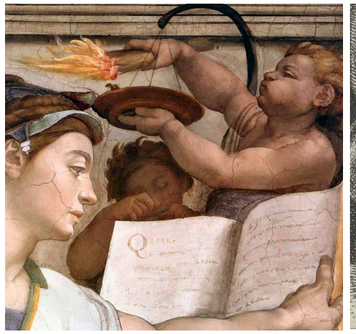


Fig. 1 Michelangelo, *The Erythrean Sibyl*, c. 1508/10, Rome, Sixtine Chapel, detail



Fig. 2 Johann Sadeler after Jacopo Bassano, *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, 1599, engraving, 217 x 292 mm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, detail



Fig. 3 El Greco, *Boy Blowing on an Ember*, 60.5 x 50. 5 cm., Naples, Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte

The son of the textile and tapestry designer Herman Gerritsz van Honthorst and his wife Maria Wilhelmsdr van der Halm, Gerard van Honthorst grew up in an artistic milieu. While his brother Herman was trained as a sculptor, Gerard himself was apprenticed to Utrecht's foremost painter Abraham Bloemaert (1566-1651). In turn, Gerard taught his younger brother Willem. In around 1610-1615 Honthorst decided to travel to Rome, where he soon received numerous commissions from prominent art collectors such as the banker Vincenzo Giustiniani and Cardinal Scipione Borghese – both former patrons of Caravaggio (1571-1610). Although Honthorst's early production leans heavily on the latter's work and on that of Caravaggio's most successful interpreter, Bartolomeo Manfredi (1582-1622), he quickly developed his own trademark adaptation of it, the Caravaggesque night scene. Honthorst's masterful *chiaroscuro*, his application and rendering of artificial light and its effects soon brought him huge success, and with it the nickname 'Gherardo delle Notti', Gerard of the Nights.

Having left Rome in the spring of 1620 with a solid reputation, Honthorst arrived in his native Utrecht in July, where his return was welcomed with a feast in his honour, attended by – among others – the scholar Arnhout van Buchell (1565-1641), his former teacher Abraham Bloemaert (1566-1651), Paulus Moreelse (1571-1638), Crispijn de Passe I (1564-1637) and many more. Honthorst married Sophia Coopmans in October of that same year. The *primus inter pares* among the Utrecht Caravaggists – the other two most important being Hendrick ter Brugghen (1588-629) and Dirck van Baburen (1594/95-1624) – Honthorst became a member of the Guild of St Luke in 1622, serving several times as its dean in the latter half of the 1620s. During these early Utrecht years, he further perfected his artificially lit night scenes, resulting in a number of critically acclaimed masterpieces, both history and genre works. The mid 1620s saw Honthorst expanding his range, as he started to adopt bright colours and cool daylight. This period also brought him the first of a long series of commissions from the House of Orange. From April to December 1628/29 Honthorst was in England, where he painted several well received – and well paid – portraits of Charles I and his family. As his international reputation grew, Honthorst's style took new directions as well. While gradually abandoning the Caravaggist style in favour of what Slatkes has called the 'insipid but financially rewarding style of courtly portraiture', Honthorst also started to produce large-scale allegorical works for huge decorative schemes. In 1637 the artist – due to his enormous success as a painter to the Court – decided to move to The Hague, where he was involved in the decoration of the palaces of Honselaersdijk and Rijswijk, and later the famous Oranjezaal at Huis ten Bosch. In 1652 Honthorst – internationally regarded as one of the most important painters of his time – retired to Utrecht, a very wealthy man.

The present work and the ancient pictorial tradition of the 'puer sufflans ignes'

The present work dates from Honthorst's early Utrecht period, just after his triumphant return from Rome, and has all the characteristics of his *chiaroscuro* Caravaggist style, which earned him his epithet 'delle notti'. From underneath a blue, wide-brimmed hat decorated with a white and red feather, a half-length figure of a young boy, dressed in a costume matching the hat, with a white ruffed blue jacket crossed with a green sash, and a scarlet cloak lined with ochre, looks waggishly at the beholder. In order to light the large candle in his right hand, the boy blows with puffed out cheeks on a firebrand that he holds in his right hand. The magnificently rendered luminous effect of the glowing firebrand on the boy's face, the sparks flying around, and the candid eye contact between the boy and the viewer create an utterly intimate, private atmosphere. The sword clamped underneath the boy's right arm adds the perfect stalwart touch to this marvellously charming, lively image.

Ever since its first appearance in art historical literature in 1956, the present work has been at the centre of the ongoing 'puer sufflans ignes' ('boy blowing on a fire') discourse, the scholarly debate about a cluster of works by a number of international artists, depicting boys or men blowing on a firebrand. It is commonly accepted that it was with the present work that Honthorst introduced the theme into the Netherlands, precipitating a creative chain reaction of adaptions, variations and emulations by his admiring colleagues.[2] The theme's origins, though, date back as far as antiquity. In his *Naturalis Historia*, book 34, Pliny the Elder (23-79 AD) informs us about the sculptor Lycius, a pupil (some even say the son) of the admired sculptor Myron (c. 480-440 BC). 'Lycius', he writes, 'made a figure representing a boy blowing a nearly extinguished fire, well worthy of his master' ('puerum sufflantem languidos ignes'), adding that he 'also made a figure of a boy burning perfumes'.[3] In the following book 35, dedicated completely to the art of painting, Pliny further mentions the Egyptian painter Antiphilus, who worked during the reign of Alexander the Great (356-323). Antiphilus had decorated among others the Schola Octaviae and the Curia Pompeii in Rome, and was considered to be the foremost rival of the famous Apelles. Descriptions of his work make clear that most of all he excelled in the rendering of light and shade. According to Pliny, 'Antiphilus is highly praised for his picture of a Boy blowing a Fire' ('puero ignem conflante') 'which illuminates an apartment handsomely furnished, and throws a light upon the features of the youth'.[4] Finally, Pliny states that the painter Philiscus painted 'a Painter's Studio, with a boy blowing the fire'.[5]

These various listings thus indicate that the theme had a certain repute in antiquity. Naturally, the painters in Renaissance Italy took great interest in these classical texts as they offered valuable information on the vanished works of their antique predecessors, and thus formed the potential basis for a kind of reversed *ekphrasis* (the verbal evocation of visual art), a visual response to these ancient written sources, which provided a stimulus for artistic competition. It was Michelangelo (1475-1564) who was the first to pick up on the *puer sufflans ignes* theme, when in the early sixteenth century he depicted a boy blowing on a fire in order to light a torch as an accompanying figure to his *Erythraean Sibyl* in the Sistine Chapel, Rome (fig. 1). Again as a secondary figure, one comes across a boy blowing on a firebrand on the *Adoration of the Shepherds* by

Jacopo Bassano (1510-1592) from Venice, widely known through Johann Sadeler's (1550-1600) 1599 print after the work (figs. 2). Credit for isolating the motif goes to El Greco (1541-1617), who had studied in Venice before leaving for Rome in around 1570. He made it the single subject in his *Boy Blowing on an Ember*, now in the Museo Capodimonte, Naples, datable to his Roman period, in around 1570/75 (fig. 3). In fact, this painting was recorded in an early inventory of the Palazzo Farnese in Rome – where El Greco resided in 1570/72 – and where Honthorst no doubt saw it. A recently discovered early prototype by Honthorst, datable to c. 1614/17, was surely done in his Roman period (fig. 4).[6] This Roman work confirms Honthorst's early predilection for the *Puer Sufflans*-subject, which offered him great opportunities, not merely because of his interest in chiaroscuro effects in general, but mostly because it was becoming a true showcase among artists for displaying one's skills in rendering chiaroscuro, and to emulate one's praiseworthy predecessors, both those from antiquity and those in more recent times.



Fig. 4 Gerard van Honthorst, *Boy Blowing on a Firebrand*, c. 1614/17, oil on canvas, 97 x 71 cm., Rome, Galleria Fabio Massimo Megna

Bringing the theme to the North and a hitherto overlooked addition to Honthorst's leading cluster

Upon his return home, Honthorst's specialty, the night scene lit by candle or fire, evidently brought him great success as it became a craze among his colleagues, and no doubt among patrons as well. It thus comes as no surprise that Honthorst decided to further explore the possibilities of the *puer sufflans* theme. One only has to compare the present work with the earlier Roman effort to see the great advance Honthorst had made. Although undoubtedly not without merit, the Roman painting lacks the cheeky excitement of the present work, and neither does it match its level of painterly execution, which by then had become Honthorst's impeccable hallmark. Whereas the present work presents the *puer sufflans* theme in its purest form, Honthorst's widely admired *Soldier and a Girl* now in Braunschweig – depicting a male and a female protagonist – elaborates further on the more explicit erotic connotations of the act of blowing on the (love) fire (fig. 5).[7] Regardless of this thematic variation the two works share a wholly similar approach in the painterly rendering of the fire and its glowing illumination of the human face, with relatively rough touches of light yellow, pink and white in the most brightly illuminated parts of the face around the mouth and the burning source itself, contrasting with smoothly shadowed cheeks (figs. 6, 7). A strikingly similar application of paint and modelling of the shadows can be seen in Honthorst's monumental *Christ Crowned with Thorns* in the Rijksmuseum, datable to the same early Utrecht period (fig. 8).[8] The face of the boy on the left, likewise illuminated by a burning torch, again shows Honthorst's fascination at this point of his career for depicting this singular light effect.

As the present *Boy Blowing on a Firebrand* is not dated – as is the case with the *Soldier with a Girl* or the *Mocking of Christ* – art historians since long have suggested dates varying between 1620 to 1624.[9] However, in this regard, one key source has been systematically overlooked. The only Honthorst scholar to mention this missing piece of the puzzle was Hermann Braun, who in his dissertation of 1966 on the Honthorst brothers remarked that in a French 1906 catalogue of Dutch and Flemish

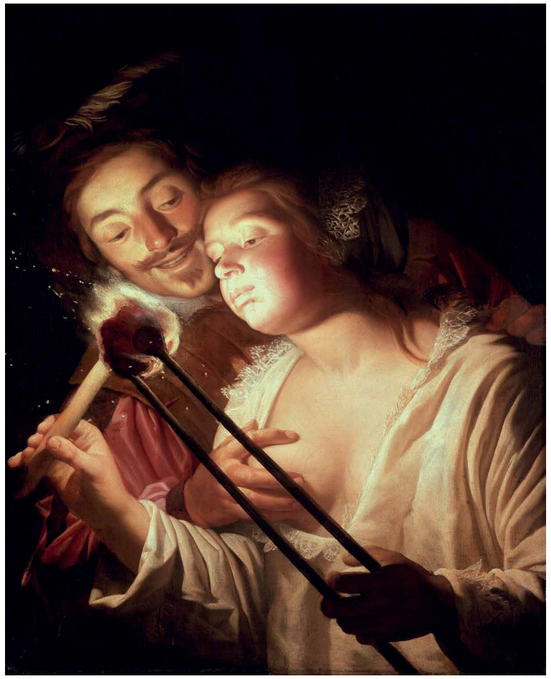


Fig. 5 Gerard van Honthorst, *A Soldier and a Girl*, oil on canvas, 82.6 x 66 cm., Braunschweig, Herzog-Anton-Ulrich-Museum



Fig. 6 Fig. 5, detail



Fig. 7 Cat. no. 5, detail

paintings in St Petersburg collections, a work by Honthorst is mentioned which at that point was part of the famous Delaroff collection, and which apparently depicted a similar boy blowing on a fire: 'Il y a encore un tableau de Honthorst dans la vaste collection Delaroff: c'est un Jeune garcon soufflant le feu, daté de 1622.'[10] Braun, who only knew the reference in the 1906 catalogue, but had never seen the Delaroff work (neither from a photo nor in real life), all too easily assumed that the present *Boy Blowing on a Firebrand* was what he called a 'eigenhändige Wiederholung', a version by Honthorst himself of the 1622 dated Delaroff work. Assuming that the Delaroff work was lost ('das verschollene original'), he let the case rest. Neither before nor after Braun's dissertation was the 'lost' Delaroff work ever considered again, either within the *puer sufflans ignes* discussion, or in the field of Honthorst scholarship. The work, though, was never lost at all. Overlooked for many years, it currently resides in the collection of the Hermitage museum in St Petersburg, where it is hidden under an erroneous attribution to Matthias Stom (1589/90-after 1649) (fig. 9). Although the work would benefit tremendously from cleaning, it is without any doubt the Delaroff Honthorst. The work entered the Hermitage collection in 1946 through a private person, it has a Delaroff provenance, and it is dated 1622.[11] Although clearly not – as

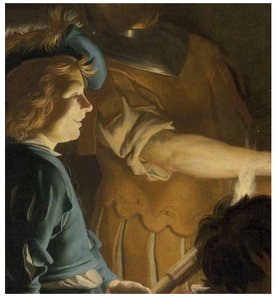


Fig. 8 Gerard van Honthorst, *The Mocking of Christ*, oil on canvas, 192.4 x 221.5 cm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, detail

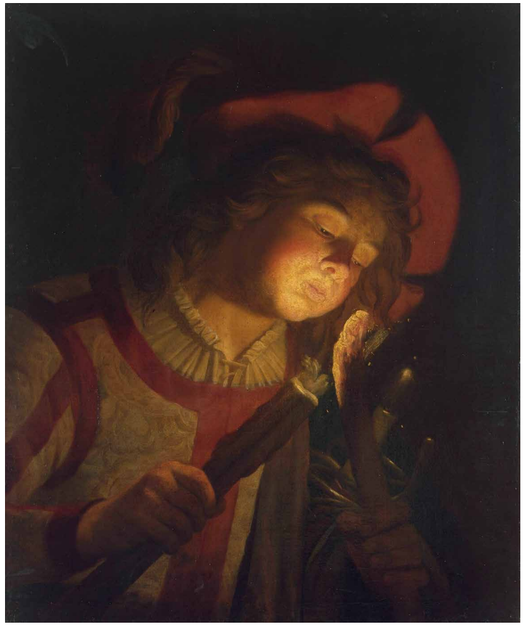


Fig. 9 Gerard van Honthorst, *A Boy Bowing on a Firebrand*, 1622, oil on canvas, 77.5 x 64 cm., St Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum

Braun assumed – a 'version' of the present painting, but an independent composition, the affinity between the two works is remarkable. Again one sees a boy – the same boy? – wearing a fanciful costume, a wide brimmed hat and carrying the same sword under his arm, blowing on a similar firebrand, concentrating on lighting a torch. As for the painting technique, the work shows exactly the same characteristics found in the other paintings (fig. 10). What's more, the two paintings turn out to be of near identical dimensions, suggesting that they might even have been conceived as pendants, possibly explaining the fact that the present work is signed, while the other work seems dated.

The theme picked up in the Netherlands and beyond

Honthorst wasn't the only northern artist who tried his hands on the subject early on. None other than Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) elaborated on the theme in his *Old Woman with a Basket of Coal*, in which a young boy blows on the coals (fig. 11). However, more than Rubens in Antwerp it was Honthorst with his single figure *puer sufflans* works in Utrecht, whose impact was felt deepest. In 1623 Hendrick ter Brugghen painted the clearly Honthorst inspired *Boy Lighting a Pipe from a Candle* in the Dobó István Värmúzeum, Eger (fig. 12).[12] Tellingly, it was the artist's first attempt to paint by an artificial light source, again underlining the sub-

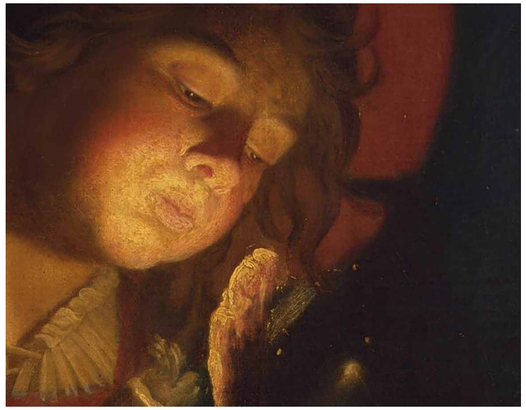


Fig. 10 Fig. 9, detail



Fig. 11 Peter Paul Rubens, *Old Woman with a Basket of Coals*, c. 1618, oil on panel, 116 x 92 cm., Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister



Fig. 12 Hendrick ter Brugghen, *Boy Lighting a Pipe from a Candle*, 1623, oil on canvas, 67.6 x 55 cm., Eger, Dobó István Värmúzeum

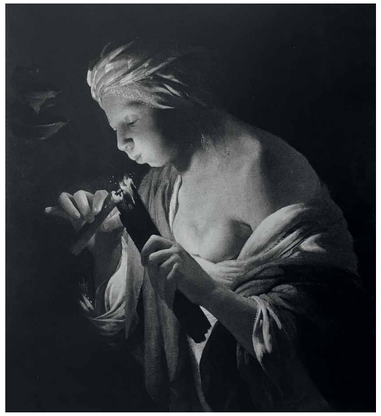


Fig. 13 Hendrick ter Brugghen, *A Girl Blowing on a Firebrand*, oil on canvas, 85 x 77 cm., present whereabouts unknown

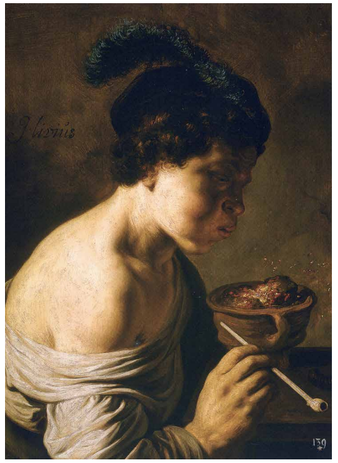


Fig. 14 Jan Lievens, *Young Man with a Pipe, Blowing on Glowing Coals*, oil on panel, 82 x 64 cm., Warsaw, Muzeum Pałacu Jana III w Wilanowie

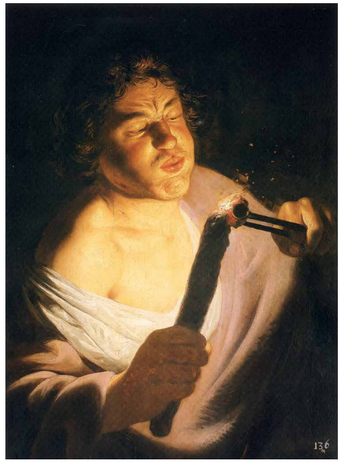


Fig. 15 Jan Lievens, *A Boy Blowing on a Coal*, oil on panel, 82 x 64 cm., Warsaw, Muzeum Pałacu Jana III w Wilanowie

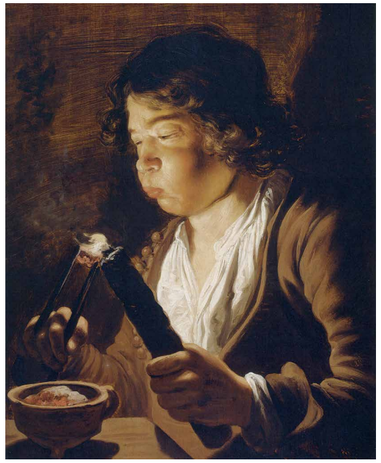


Fig. 16 Jan Lievens, *A Boy Blowing on a Coal (Fire)*, oil on panel, 83.5 x 60 cm., Kassel, Staatliche Museen Kassel, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister

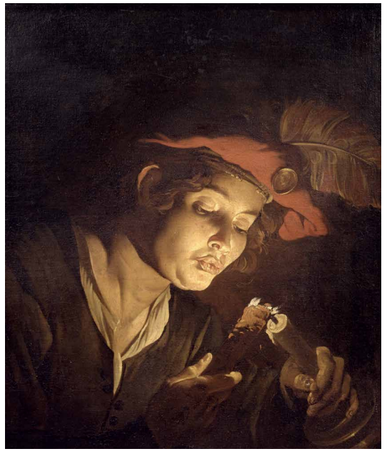


Fig. 17 Matthias Stom, *Boy Blowing on a Firebrand*, oil on canvas, 72 x 58 cm., Bergamo, Accademia Carrara di Belle Arti di Bergamo



Fig. 18 Adam de Coster, *Boy Blowing on a Firebrand*, oil on canvas, 68.5 x 51.5 cm., formerly Rome, Busiri Viki collection

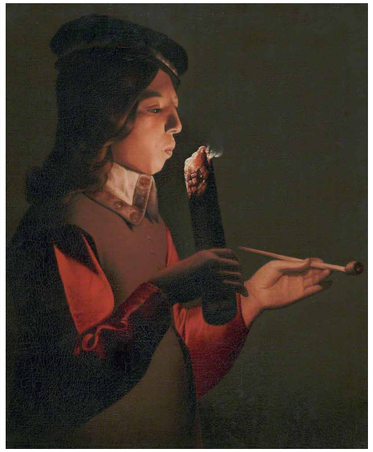


Fig. 19 Georges de la Tour, *A Boy with a Pipe Blowing on a Firebrand*, 1646, oil on canvas, 70.8 x 61.5 cm., Tokyo, Tokyo Fuji Art Museum

ject's exemplary status in showcasing an artist's mastery in the depiction such lighting effects. Ter Brugghen's adaption of Honthorst's example is further indicated by the inclusion of the sword, which the boy, depicted bust length, carries under his arm. Slightly later, Ter Brugghen again responded to Honthorst when he painted his marvellous *Girl Blowing on a Firebrand*, variously dated between 1623 and 1627 (fig. 13).[13] One painter who was arduously studying the work of the Utrecht *Caravaggisti* was the young Jan Lievens (1607-1674) from Leiden, who eagerly adopted the imagery of his older colleagues. In two pictures generally dated around 1624/25, both in Warsaw, the brazenly ambitious Lievens, only 17 years old, explicitly sought to compete with both Honthorst and Ter Brugghen. His *Young Man with a Pipe, Blowing on Glowing Coals* (fig. 14) directly relates back to Ter Brugghen's *Boy Lighting a Pipe from a Candle*, while the *Boy Blowing on a Coal* (fig. 15) fully relies on Honthorst. The fact that Lievens's two *puer sufflans* are still together, both signed with the same rare signature *J. Liviús* and both of similar size, indicates that they were probably intended as pendants of some sort, despite their relative lack of compositional cohesion.[14] In this regard, it is interesting that both of the Ter Brugghen works discussed here were once accompanied by pendant pieces as well, which supports the idea of the present work and the Hermitage work having once belonged together, too.[15] Be this as it may, Lievens surely reused Honthorst's composition for a third 'puer sufflans ignes', this time aptly representing 'fire' within the context of a series of the four elements (fig. 16).

A final Netherlandish painter to appropriate the theme directly from Honthorst was Matthias Stom who, as we have seen, was erroneously credited as the author of the Hermitage work. When we look at his *Boy Blowing on a Firebrand* in Warsaw, the faulty Hermitage attribution seems understandable, as compositionally the two works closely resemble each other (fig. 17). Clearly Stom, who specialised in night scenes, was aware of the Hermitage Honthorst, which he probably saw in Utrecht. After his departure for Italy – from where he would never return – he painted several more 'blowers' which can nowadays still be found in Italian collections,



Fig. 20 Godfried Schalcken, *Boy Blowing on a Firebrand*, oil on canvas, 75 x 73.5 cm., Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland

thus returning the originally Italian theme (revived by Michelangelo from Antiquity) to its native land.[16] In Flanders we find the theme back with another *tenebrist*, Adam de Coster (1585/86-1643), who was active in Antwerp, but who must have been thoroughly acquainted with Honthorst's work (fig. 18). In France we find the subject in the oeuvre of Georges de la Tour (1593-1652), another painter famous for his *tenebrism*, who was likely familiarised with the theme through the Utrecht Caravaggists (fig. 19). Clearly the theme had become a *must* for painters specialising in night scenes, and it is therefore hardly surprising that the most celebrated painter of night scenes in the Netherlands in the latter half of the Golden Age, Godfried Schalcken (1643-1706) also tried his luck at the subject (fig. 20). The realisation that in this long chain of artistic emulation, from antiquity onwards, the present, recently surfaced work, together with its rediscovered 'brother' painting in the Hermitage, played such an essential role, adds even more lustre to this utterly pleasurable picture.

JH

Notes

1 Although its provenance cannot be traced back further than 1866, the present painting may well have entered the collection of the earls of Craven much earlier. William, 1st Earl of Craven (1608-1697) was a British nobleman who was portrayed by Honthorst in 1642 (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, inv. no PD.117-1992; see: Judson/Ekkart 1999, cat. no. 403). In addition, Craven had a passionate relation with Elisabeth Stuart (1596-1662), a.k.a. Elisabeth of Bohemia, the Winter Queen. She and her husband Frederick V of the Palatinate (1596-1632), the Winter King, lived in The Hague since 1621, where they stood in close contact with Honthorst, who received numerous commissions from them, and taught their daughters. William Craven further supported Elisabeth's brother king Charles I (1600-1649) – who had also commissioned Honthorst – financially, and later confisquated his lands and properties. The 1866 Craven inventory mentions several works by Honthorst.

2 The term 'puer sufflans ignes' – which relates to a Latin phrase by Pliny the Elder (see below) – was introduced by Jan Białostocki in his 1966 article (see Literature), in which he first linked the group of 'blowers' to Pliny's description of works from antiquity depicting that subject.

3 Pliny the Elder (H.T. Riley, transl.), *The Natural History*, London 1855, book 34, chapter 19.

4 Pliny/Riley 1855, book 35, chapter 40.

5 Pliny/Riley 1855, book 35, chapter 40.

6 G. Papi, in: Florence 2015, cat. no. 12.

7 On the erotic overtones in the painting, see: E. de Jongh, *Tot lering en vermaak*, exh. cat. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum 1976, cat. no. 28. See further: Judson/Ekkart 1999, cat. no. 262, as c. 1622.

8 Judson/Ekkart 1999, cat. no. 60, as c. 1622.

9 Judson 1959, p. 227, cat. no. 161, as c. 1620. Nicolson 1960 (2), p. 466 as c. 1623-1624. Slatkes 1981/82, p. 176 as c. 1620.

10 Braun 1966, pp. 157-158, no. 31. For the citation, see: N.N., *Etudes sur les peintres des écoles hollandaise, flamande et néerlandaise qu'on trouve dans la collection Semenov et les autres collections publiques et privées de St-Petersbourg*, St Petersburg 1906, p. XXXVII.

11 The work is catalogued in the Hermitage under inv. no. Г Э-8556 and has been published as by Stom in 1964. See: M. Sherbatcheva, 'Картины Матиаса Стомера в Эрмитаже', in: *Bulletin du Musée de l'Ermitage* 25 (1964), pp. 23-28, p. 24, ill. See further the Hermitage Museum's website (www.hermitagemuseum.org), where the painting is also listed as by Stom (website visited February 2017).

12 See: Slatkes/Franits 2007, cat. no. A47; Utrecht/Braunschweig 1986-1987, cat. no. 13.

13 See: Slatkes/Franits 2007, cat. no. A55, where the painting is dated c. 1626-1627.

14 Rudiger Klessmann, in: Braunschweig 1979, cat. nos. 6, 7, also notices the relationship with the present work. He further wonders if the two Warsaw paintings were truly meant as pendants, expecting stronger compositional ties. The only other work with the signature Liviús is a *Simeon and the Christ Child*, currently with Salomon Lilian Gallery, Amsterdam. See: J. Hillegers, in: *Salomon Lilian Old Masters 2016*, Amsterdam 2016, cat. no. 5.

15 Slatkes/Franits 2007, cat. nos. A47 (accompanied by A48, in all probability *Smell* and *Taste*) and A57 (once accompanied by a now lost *Laughing Wag*).

16 See for instance Stom's *Man Blowing on a Firebrand*, oil on canvas, 43 x 32 cm., Palermo, Pincoteca Regia; or his *Boy Blowing on a Firebrand* in Warsaw, Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie. See: H. Pauwels, 'De schilder Matthias Stomer', in: *Gentse bijdragen tot de Kunstgeschiedenis* 14 (1953), pp. 139-192, esp. pp. 172-174, figs. 14, 15, with more examples.

cat. no. 6

Maerten Fransz van der Hulst
c. 1600 – Leiden – after 1646

Winter Landscape with Horse and Cart Crossing a Wooden Bridge

Signed lower right with monogram *M.F.V.H.*
Oil on panel (round)
24 cm.

Provenance:
Ghent, collection Dr. Schotte, 1953
Ghent, collection Dr. R. Heugebaert since 1985

Literature:
H.-U. Beck, *Künstler um Jan van Goyen : Maler und Zeichner (Jan van Goyen IV)*, Doornspijk 1991, pp. 180-181, cat. no. A49 fig. 483

Exhibited:
Ghent, Museum of Fine Arts, *Paintings from Ghent Collections*, 28 March – 31 May 1953

Maerten Fransz Van der Hulst may well have been trained in Haarlem, but was active in Leiden from about 1639 until after 1646. Van der Hulst specialized in landscapes of the four seasons as well as sea and riverscapes, often in a tonal palette consisting of mainly browns and greys. This beautiful, atmospheric little painting demonstrates that the artist was particularly close in technique to his Leiden contemporary Jan van Goyen (1596-1656), adopting the latter's characteristically loose brushstrokes. In this daringly cropped composition with a low viewpoint, two thirds of it devoted to a wintry sky, a horse-drawn cart bearing travellers is represented in the foreground, crossing a bridge on a cold winter's day. It is not clear if the river is frozen, but the artist conveys a wintry day with lowering clouds in a whitish-grey sky, white highlights on path and river suggesting the remains of snow and ice, as well as the figures appearing muffled up against the cold. On the distant horizon to the right, the contours of a windmill can be seen, while on the left cottages and a tower indicate a village. The relatively large figures in his paintings are typical of the artist. The Stedelijk Museum de Lakenhal in Leiden holds another fine example of Van der Hulst's work, *Selling Fish at the Beach*, while *Fishermen on a Wooden Bridge* can be seen in the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen in Rotterdam, though, unlike the present painting, both are unsigned. [1]

WB

1 Maerten Fransz van der Hulst, *Selling Fish at the Beach*, oil on panel, 27 x 41.2 cm., Leiden, Stedelijk Museum de Lakenhal, inv. no. S219; *Fishermen on a Wooden Bridge*, oil on panel, 32.7 x 36.4 cm., Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, inv. no. 2523 (OK).



cat. no. 7

Willem Kalf
Rotterdam 1619 – 1693 Amsterdam

Still Life of Shells and Corals, before a Lacquer Casket upon a Draped Table

Traces of signature and date, lower right: *W KAL. / ..44* (?)*
Oil on canvas48 x 42 cm.

Provenance:
Germany, private collection, until 2015

Literature:
Not published

Willem Kalf ranks among the most influential Dutch still-life painters from the seventeenth century. Many of his much sought after luxurious still lifes, particularly those from his years in Amsterdam, as well as his shell still lifes, have found a home in major museums.

This newly discovered still life of shells is an important addition to Willem Kalf's oeuvre, as will be demonstrated in this paper. Until its discovery, only five still lifes of shells by Kalf were known, two on small panels, and three on canvas, all three canvases similar in size to this newly found example. Only one of the five previously known paintings is still in private hands. This fine, hitherto unknown example fully lives up to the praise of H.E. van Gelder – the first art historian to devote a small monograph to Kalf – relating to another of Kalf's still lifes of shells, written in 1941: "If something can evoke a painter's dream of 'colour and light born from darkness' it is this stuff of fairy tales ['sprookjesgoed', i.e. the shells], carried hither from faraway lands. Wonderful in this example is the effect of the velvety texture, to which the sensitive *pointillé*, that was also applied by Vermeer, adds in such high measure."[1] In fact, van Gelder's remark applies to this painting even more aptly, given its rather cool light, almost suggesting that this collection of shells is viewed by clear moonlight.

Willem Kalf was born in Rotterdam in November 1619. It is not known who his teacher was, although the biographer Arnold Houbraken,



writing in the early eighteenth century, reported that Kalf had been a pupil of Hendrick Pot (1580-1657), a Haarlem painter of portraits and genre scenes. Even though Kalf's family had some ties with Haarlem, such an apprenticeship does not seem likely, since no trace of any influence of Pot's work can be found in Kalf's paintings. In the late 1630s, Kalf resided in The Hague for some time, but his work shows no traces of a The Hague-based manner either. Moreover, in 1638, at the age of nineteen, Kalf may already have been a fully trained artist, and in fact his early style appears to be essentially Rotterdam-based. It has been suggested that he may have been taught by the Rotterdam painter Hendrick Martensz. Sorgh (1609-1670), but firm indications for such an apprenticeship are absent. Whatever the case, Kalf's earliest known dated painting, a barn interior from 1638, appears to have been inspired by motifs featuring in paintings from the 1630s by such artists as Sorgh and Pieter de Bloot (1601-1658), who was also working in Rotterdam.[2] At some point, perhaps already by 1639, but certainly well before January 1643, Kalf moved to Paris, where he worked until 1645.[3] In Paris, the artist initially appears to have painted numerous barn and farm interiors, predominantly on small panels. Their subject was clearly inspired by what he had seen in Rotterdam, but many of the utensils he depicted were in fact French. In these little paintings, Kalf already gave rein to his passion for sparkling reflections in shiny objects, such as copper cauldrons (fig. 1). He must have been quite successful with these little paintings, in view of the large quantities he produced.[4]

At the same time, Kalf started to develop the atmospheric still lifes with costly objects that would win him international acclaim.[5] It is possible that the earliest known example – a painting which still has a rather bright background – originated in the Netherlands.[6] However, Kalf's luxury still lifes dating from the first half of the 1640s, painted in Paris, often already feature the dark backgrounds that would become his trademark. With the emergence of the painting discussed here, it can now be confirmed that Kalf's rare still lifes of shells originated in Paris as well, as will be demonstrated below.

In Paris Willem Kalf settled into the international painters' community, which included several Flemish painters, such as Jacques Fouquières (1590/91-1655/56), Peter van Boucle (active *c.*1625-1673), Nicasius Bernaerts (1620-1678), and Jean-Michel Picart (*c.*1600-1682). That Kalf was acquainted with these artists is known from a biography of the painter Philippe Vleughels (1619-1694), who was only a few months older than Kalf and who, upon his arrival in Paris in January of 1643, met Fouquières,



Fig. 1 Willem Kalf, *Interior with a Maid hurning*, oil on panel, 32 x 23,5 cm. Private collection. Photo Carla van de Puttelaar, Amsterdam

van Boucle, Bernaerts, and Kalf in an inn. Kalf was particularly friendly to him and showed him around in the city. He also introduced Vleughels to Picart, who, apart from being a painter himself, was active as an art dealer, as well as running a painting studio where he employed other artists, commissioned to produce copies. This shows that by January 1643, Kalf had already fully integrated in the Paris art scene, and must therefore have been living in the city for some time before then.

Paris in the 1640s was a hotbed for still-life painters. Van Boucle and Bernaerts, in whose company Kalf was to be found when Vleughels

arrived, specialized in still life and animals, while Picart was a painter of still lifes of fruit and flowers. Many other still-life artists were active in Paris at that time, including Lubin Baugin (1610-1663), Jacques Samuel Bernard (*c.*1615-1687), Pierre Dupuis (1610-1682), François Garnier (*c.*1600-1658/72), François Habert (active *c.* 1643-1652), Jacques Linard (*c.*1598-1645), Louise Moillon (1610-1696), René Nourisson (*c.*1610-c.1650), and Simon Renard de Saint-André (1614-1677). It may well be that Kalf also encountered the Dutch still-life painter, Willem van Aelst (1627-1683), his later competitor in Amsterdam, when van Aelst first arrived in Paris in 1645. None of these artists put up any competition for Kalf in the area of rural still lifes.

Exotic sea shells, corals and other specimens from distant oceans were a highly regarded novelty in the seventeenth century. They came into Europe as a result of the expanding worldwide trade overseas. Soon collections of sea shells and other 'sea vegetation' started to form, with collectors paying substantial sums for the most beautiful and intriguing examples. Already in 1603, the Haarlem collector Jan Govertsz. van der Aer († 1612) was portrayed by Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617) proudly showing the viewer his collection of sea shells (fig. 2). While many Calvinists considered such collections a despicable folly, shells were conversely considered as manifestations of God's creative powers, and were widely praised for their beauty and variety. Such a view is exemplified by Emmanuel Sweerts (1552-1612) who wrote in the introduction of his *Florilegium*, published in 1612: "The greatest variety one finds in so many beautiful and wonderful adornments of the little Sea worms, little Snails and little Shells [...] inimitable beauty [...] such, that it seems that God has intended to demonstrate in these his incomprehensible, artful Wisdom and Power".[7] The shells in Kalf's still lifes appear to come from all over the world, from the Pacific, the Mediterranean, and the African coasts. As such they are quite representative of the average seventeenth century sea shell collection.[8]

Through their beauty and variety of shapes and colours, in combination with their rarity and value, sea shells have also greatly inspired the visual arts. Still lifes featuring shells as the main subject remain scarce, however. Perhaps the most productive, as well as one of the earliest painters of pure shell still lifes was Balthasar van der Ast (1593/94-1657). Initially, he occasionally included clusters of sea shells in larger compositions, placing a few shells next to a vase of flowers, for example, in the manner of his teacher Ambrosius Bosschaert the Elder (1573-1621), or adding them in front of a bowl of fruit.[9] From about 1630 onwards, he painted several

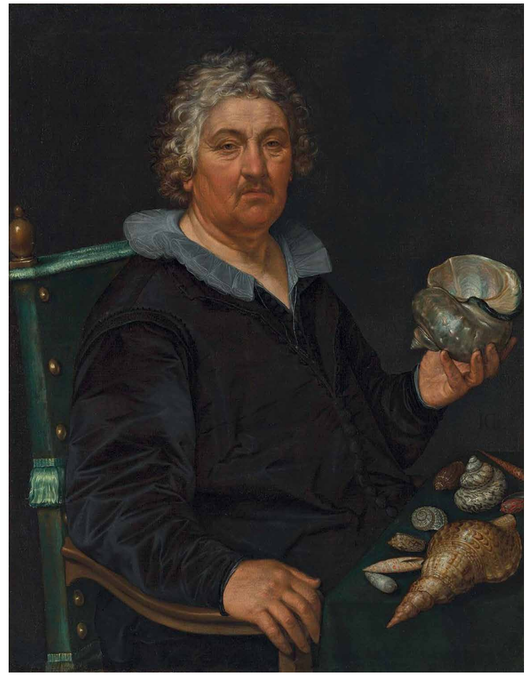


Fig. 2 Hendrick Goltzius, *Jan Govertsz. van der Aer*, signed with monogram and dated 1603, oil on canvas, 107.5 x 82.7 cm. P. & N. de Boer Foundation, on permanent loan to Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam

pure shell still lifes, usually in small formats (see fig. 3). Several artists followed suit, but not very many painted still lifes of shells alone. Among the exceptions are Abraham Susenier (1610-1666), Abraham van Calraet (1642-1722) and, notably, around the turn of the century, Adriaen Coorte (1659-1707).

It is quite possible that during his youth in Holland, Willem Kalf saw shell still lifes by van der Ast, but even if he did, such examples do not appear to have guided him particularly when he started to paint his own still lifes of shells. It is much more likely that he was inspired by examples painted in



Fig. 3 Balthasar van der Ast, *Still Life of Shells*, signed, oil on copper, 10.5 x 17.5 cm. Utrecht, Centraal Museum, on loan from the Netherlands Cultural Heritage Agency, Amersfoort, inv. no. NK 1692



Fig. 4 Jacques Linard, *Still Life of Shells*, signed and dated 1640, oil on canvas, 53,5 x 62 cm. Montreal, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 1999-149

Paris. Kalf was surely in contact with the still life painter Jacques Linard, who painted several still lifes of shells, among them an impressive example dated 1640, now in Montreal (fig. 4), while other examples date from the 1630s, one being painted as early as 1624 (or even 1621).[10] Several of the shells that appear in the example in Montreal can also be found in an unsigned still life of shells that is most reminiscent of Kalf's approach in terms of composition (fig. 5).[11] In contrast with Linard's painting from 1640 and earlier, where the shells are more or less lined up and portrayed individually, here they have been clustered in a more artistic arrangement. Also, in another one of his still lifes, Linard, in his turn, appears to borrow motifs from Kalf.[12] In any case, it is clear that Kalf and Linard would have been acquainted. Moreover, an inventory made up some time after Linard's death in 1645, shows that the artist owned eight paintings by Kalf and eight copies after works by him.

Another source of inspiration for Kalf's still lifes of shells may have been the work of the still-life painter Sébastien Stoskopff (1597-1657) who worked in Paris on and off. He regularly included shells in his still lifes, for example he painted a still life of a nautilus shell and a piece of red



Fig. 5 Attributed to Jacques Linard, *Still Life of Shells*, oil on panel, 18 x 24,5 cm. Location unknown

coral in 1643, only a few years after returning from Paris to his native city Strasbourg. Kalf's work is particularly reminiscent of that painting, also because of its dark background (fig. 6).[13]

In 1974, Lucius Grisebach included Willem Kalf's still lifes of shells as a separate group at the end of his catalogue of the artist's œuvre, being uncertain about how to date them accurately. He suggested that they might be late works, but analysis of the group in preparation of the monographic exhibition on Kalf in Rotterdam and Aachen in 2006 prompted the suggestion that they are probably relatively early works, connecting with Kalf's Paris period, both in terms of handling and of their relationship with paintings by Linard and others. With this freshly discovered still life

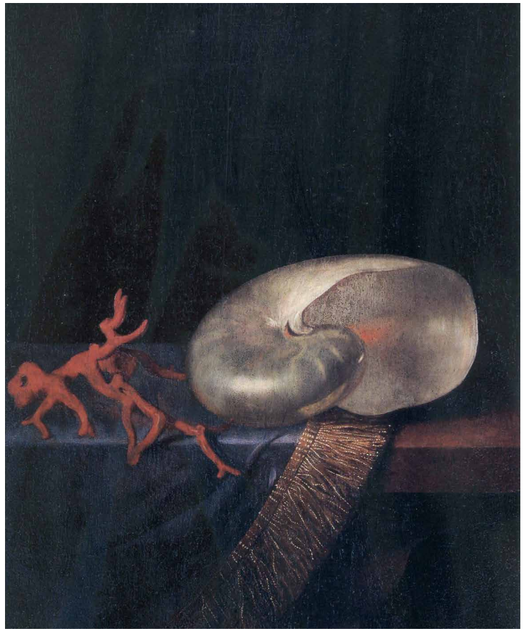


Fig. 6 Sébastien Stoskopff, *Still Life with a Nautilus Shell and Coral*, signed and dated 1643, oil on panel, 37 x 27 cm. Strasbourg, Musée de l'Œuvre Notre-Dame, inv. no. 1802

of shells by Kalf, this early date seems to be confirmed. At lower right, there are traces of a signature and date, barely visible, but the only possible transcription appears to be 'W KAL. / ..44', which indicates that Willem Kalf painted this still life before he left Paris.

In several of the rich still lifes from his Paris period, Kalf included a polished nautilus shell, and in one example he shows another large shell. And although neither of those appears in his shell still lifes, it shows his interest in this subject matter.[14] Polished examples in particular must have tickled the artist's fancy for reflections of light in shiny surfaces. From his shell still lifes, it would appear that he owned a collection of shells himself, or had access to such a collection, since several of the shells he depicted



Fig. 7 Willem Kalf, *Still Life of Shells and a Turbo ShellCcup*, signed, oil on canvas, 53.3 x 44.5 cm. Heino, Museum de Fundatie, inv. no. 2131

recur in his paintings in varying positions, such as the murex (1), the mitre shell (8), the speckled turbo shell (9), and the sea urchin (10) included in this still life.[15] In all of his shell still lifes on canvas, including this newly found example, Kalf featured a 'tree' of red coral. Probably he modeled it randomly, from memory and to accommodate the composition, since its shape differs in every painting. Another important feature in Kalf's still lifes of shells is a casket decorated with gold lacquer, probably a Japanese piece. Such objects were imported into Europe by the Dutch East India Company (VOC), but there was also a great interest in them in Paris. Indeed in 1658, Cardinal Mazarin bought two magnificent lacquer chests that had been brought to Amsterdam from Japan by the VOC in 1643.[16]

The lacquer casket depicted here is clearly the same object Kalf depicted in his still life now in the collection of Museum de Fundatie in Heino (fig. 7). It is shown from a slightly different angle, but the image of a bird upon the branch of a small tree on the side is clearly visible in both paintings. On one of the two small examples on panel in the Mauritshuis, The Hague, probably the same casket is visible, but it would appear that Kalf moved the decoration seen along the length of the casket in the present panting to the side of the casket there (fig. 8). These three paintings are the only works in Kalf's œuvre that include this casket. Kalf's other still life in the Mauritshuis, as well as the example in the Kunsthaus in Zürich (Ruzicka



Fig. 8 Willem Kalf, *Still Life of Shells*, signed, oil on panel, 25 x 33 cm. Den Haag, Koninklijk Kabinet van Schilderijen Mauritshuis, inv. no. 971



Fig. 9 Willem Kalf, *Still Life of Shells and Coral*, oil on canvas, 54 x 44 cm. Zürich, Kunsthaus (Ruzicka Stiftung), inv. no. R 52

Stiftung) (fig. 9), show a round box with a separate lid; in the first, the box contains a shell with irregular spikes, like the one in front of it; while in the second, it holds stems of red and of white coral. Perhaps the lacquer casket in this painting was also used to store the precious shells within it.

Another feature that links Kalf's shell still lifes with his Paris period, most particularly this painting and the one in Heino (fig. 7), is the curtain in the background, partly draped over the lacquer casket. Here it is blue, while in the Heino work it is a dark red. Not one of Kalf's later, Amsterdam luxury still lifes includes such a drapery, but several of the earlier examples painted in Paris do, such as the excellent example in a private collection, also from 1644 (fig. 10). The drapery in that painting also has tassels that are similar to those in the newly found shell still life.

A signature feature in Willem Kalf's later still lifes painted in Amsterdam is the heavy, fluffy oriental carpet that covers part of the table in many examples. No such carpet is found in any of Kalf's luxury still lifes painted in Paris, but three examples of his shell still lifes, including this newly discovered example, do show carpets. The one in the Zürich still life (fig. 9) already approaches those in the Amsterdam examples quite closely in texture and handling, particularly in the fringes, but the artist has not yet fully attained the mastery of rendition that is part of his claim to fame. In the Heino painting (fig. 7), however, Kalf is clearly still very much experimenting with his rendering of the oriental carpet, which suggests that it precedes the example in Zürich. The carpet in the newly found example clearly doesn't resemble the later examples so much either, but here it seems to concern a different kind of fabric, one of a silk, rather than a woollen weave, with thin, shiny fringes. Nevertheless, it may well be that this painting precedes the examples in Heino and Zürich and as such can be one of Kalf's earliest shell still lifes. In the exhibition catalogue on Kalf's work from 2006, I already concluded that the still lifes of shells may well belong to a transitory period between Kalf's Paris production and the still lifes painted in Amsterdam, where he had settled by mid 1653.

From the analysis above, we can conclude that this newly discovered still life of shells by Willem Kalf is indeed a highly important addition to the artist's œuvre, which firmly indicates that he already started to paint still lifes of shells while still working in Paris in 1644. It may well be that this is one of his earliest efforts in this area, but the result was highly successful. Whereas the shells – "this stuff of fairy tales" – once evoked Kalf's "dream of 'colour and light born from darkness'" as H.E. van Gelder put it 75 years ago, the painting, then, surely evokes every collector's dream of owning such an enigmatic piece of art.

FGM

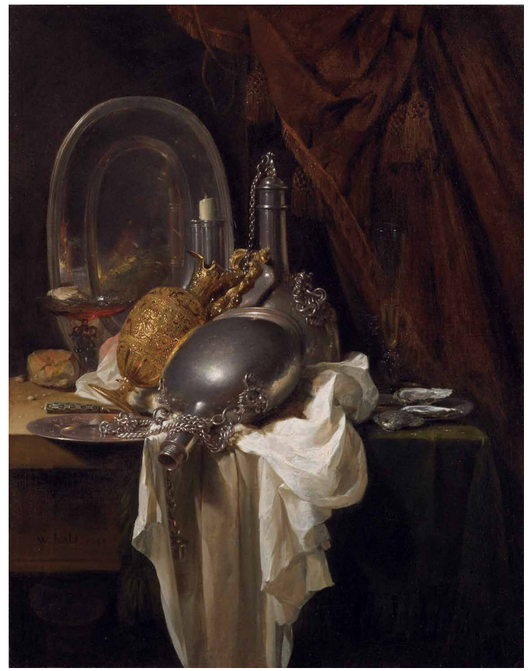


Fig. 10 Willem Kalf, *Luxury Still Life with Pewter Canteens*, signed and dated 1644, oil on canvas, 10.1 x 81 cm. Belgium, private collection



Tentative identification of the Shells and Corals

1 *Murex* (*Tenuirostrum* or *Poppei*?) Indo Pacific
2 *Vermicularia Spirata*? South Florida and Carribean
3 *Turbo* shell (polished) Pacific
4 small *Turbo* shell (polished?) Pacific
5 *Spondylus gaederopus* Mediterranean
6 large *Turbo* shell (polished)
7 *Angaria Melanacantha*? Philippines
8 *Mitra stictica* or *papalis* (mitre shell) Indo-Pacific
9 *Turbo (sarmaticus?)* West Africa
10 Sea urchin
11 *Conus Striatus*? Indo Pacific
12 *Gibbula ardens*? Mediterranean
13 Coral
14 Red Coral. Mediterranean

Notes

1 H.E. van Gelder, *W.C. Heda, A. van Beyeren, W. Kalf*, Amsterdam, 1941 (Paletseries), p. 58, writing about the example now in the Kunsthaus, Zürich (Ruzicka Stiftung), fig 9 below: "zoo iets een schildersdroom van "kleur en licht uit duisternis geboren" kan wekken, dan wel dit uit verre landen aangedragen sprookjesgoed. Prachtig is in dit geval de fluweelige factuur, waarbij het gevoelig pointillé, dat ook Vermeer toepaste, aan het effect in zoo hooge mate medewerkt." (my translation). Before Van Gelder, Ima Blok had devoted two articles to 'Willem Kalff' in *Onze Kunst*, April and May 1919, pp. 85-94 and 137-145. She did not discuss his shell still lifes, however.
2 See *Willem Kalf 1619-1693*, exh. cat. Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen / Aachen, Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum, 2006-2007, cat. no. 1, colour ill.
3 For Kalf's biography, see L. Grisebach, *Willem Kalf 1619-1693*, Berlin, 1974 and F. Lammertse and M. Szanto in exh. cat. *Willem Kalf 1619-1693* (note 2), pp. 8-22. Opinions about the date of Kalf's departure for Paris differ somewhat, but in any case it can be narrowed down to 1639-1642.
4 Grisebach (see note 3) recorded 58 examples, three of which I rejected and to which I could add another twelve in 2006, see exh. cat. *Willem Kalf 1619-1693* (note 2), pp. 160-162. Since then a few more have turned up, so the current count is around 70, and accounting for a fair number of lost examples, we may conjecture that during his years in Paris Kalf may well have painted up to a hundred such rural interiors and exteriors.
5 See exh. cat. *Willem Kalf 1619-1693* (note 2), pp. 24-27 (essay by A. Gaba-van Dongen).
6 See exh. cat. *Willem Kalf 1619-1693* (note 2), cat. no. 14, colour ill.
7 Quoted in R. van't Zelfde, 'O seldsaem dierken dat so schoon paleys bewoonet'. Exotische schelpen in de Noord- en Zuid-Nederlandse schilderkunst van de zestiende en de zeventiende eeuw', *Standplaats RKD/Standplaats Academie*, exh. cat. Delft, Stedelijk Museum Het Prinsenhof, 2001, pp. 41-76: "De grootste verscheydenheyt, speurt men in soo ontallicke vele fraeye, ene heerlicke vercierselen der Zee-wormkens, Slecksken, ende Schulpkens, [...] onnavolgbare schoonheyt, [...] sulcx dat het schijnt dat Godt in de selve heeft willen vertoonen zijne onbegrijpelicke, const-rijcke Wijsheit ende Almogentheyt" (my translation).
8 See the tentative identifications of the shells and corals at the end of this essay.
9 Compare, for instance, exh. cat. *Die Stilleben des Balthasar van der Ast (1593/94-1657)*, Aachen, Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum, 2016, cat. no. 7 (flowers in a vase, 1620) and cat. nos. 13 and 14 (two versions of a still life of fruit with shells and flowers, 1623).
10 Oil on panel, 38 x 51,7 cm, signed and dated *J Linard à Paris 1624* (or 1621), auctioned in Paris, Drouot-Audap, 17 December 1993, lot 93, colour ill. (see the on-line database RKDimages, record no. 228158). See for the various examples P. Nusbaumer, *Jacques Linard 1597-1645 : catalogue de l'oeuvre peint*, Le Pecq-sur-Seine, 2006.
11 Auctioned at Christie's, London, 24 February 1995, lot 38. See also my remarks in exh. cat. *Willem Kalf 1619-1693* (note 2), pp. 101-102, and 104 (notes 43 and 44).
12 See exh. cat. *Willem Kalf 1619-1693* (note 2), p. 12, fig 4 and cat. no. 15.
13 Among Stoskopff's still lifes that include shells is a magnificent example in the Musée du Louvre, Paris, signed with monogram, but not dated, oil on panel, 52 x 73 cm, inv. no. 1981-18.
14 See exh. cat. *Willem Kalf 1619-1693* (note 2), cat. nos. 15 and 16.
15 The numbers refer to the chart of tentative identifications of the shells and corals at the end of this essay.
16 One of which is now and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and the largest of the two was bought by the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, in 2013 (inv. no. AK-RAK-2013-3-1).

cat. no. 8

Thomas de Keyser and Studio
1596 – Amsterdam – 1667

The Tric-Trac Players

Dated on the chair *1632*
oil on panel
81 x 69.2 cm.

Provenance:
France, private collection, by inheritance

Literature:
Not published

Copy:
Attributed to Thomas de Keyser, *Soldiers Playing Tric-Trac*, oil on panel, 86 x 70 cm., sale New York, Sotheby's, 27 January 2006, lot 237. [1]

Seated at a table in a grey interior with a beautiful tiled floor, two men are playing a game of tric-trac.[2] As the one player, seen from behind, moves a piece across the board, his opponent observes his action with a faint smile. A third man, standing at the right and leaning with his left hand on the table, oversees the game as he smokes his pipe. On the other side of the table a standing dog regards the beholder. Judging from their attire – to which the painter paid careful attention – there can be little doubt that the three men are military. This seems underlined by the armour hanging from the left wall. Most notably in this regard is the standing man, who wears a feathered helmet and heavy soldier's boots. The sword he carries on his hip is accentuated by a rich blue sash fringed with gold. The player seated behind the table, too, wears a feathered hat and is dressed in a ruddy woollen overcoat with grey frogging. Still, most attention is drawn to the silvery grey, silken outfit of the man seen from behind. The satin of his jacket, its fluted sleeve, inside which a fine white material with a floral motif is revealed; the golden embroidery; the black bows; all is rendered with great accuracy and care for detail. One appreciates the folds of the contrasting fabrics, the heavy mantle, the silk stockings, the thin lace collar over the gorget and the matte felt hat. The fine red Anatolian Lotto carpet, with touches of green and blue, fully covers the table and unifies the picture.[3]





Fig. 1 Attributed to Thomas de Keyser, *Soldiers playing Tric-Trac*, oil on panel, 86 x 70 cm., sale New York, Sotheby's, 27 January 2006, lot 237

Curiously the painting is dated 1632 on the leg of the chair, although a signature could not be found. Who could be the painter of this high quality, solid, genre work? Although it only surfaced recently, another version of the painting has been known for over a century (fig. 1). This other version was last recorded at Sotheby's New York in 2006, as attributed to the Amsterdam painter Thomas de Keyser (1596-1667), best known for his refined, genre-like portraits. The Sotheby's painting is surely the version after the present work. Two points argue for this: the first is the greater quality of the present work; the second is the detail of the left foot of the man seen from the back in the present work. The painter of the copy omitted this foot. If it were the other way around, the addition of this foot would make little sense. Be this as it may, it is useful to take the copy's history into consideration. In the Rembrandt year 1906 the painting was exhibited in the rooms of Frederik Muller in Amsterdam, carrying an attribution by the young Frits Lugt to De Keyser's fellow Amsterdammer and peer Willem Cornelisz Duyster (1599 - 1635). Three years later, in 1909, J.O. Kronig attributed the painting to Thomas de Keyser. Although this attribution has prevailed (it was endorsed by, among other, Max Friedländer and Abraham Bredius)[4], photos of the work in both the Witt Library in London, and the RKD in The Hague mention Duyster's name as well. Remarkably, De Keyser expert Ann Jensen Adams does not list the painting in her 1985 dissertation on the artist, nor has she discussed it elsewhere.[5]

Considering alternatives for the attribution, the result is disappointing. Artists who worked in the field and produced related imagery include Dirck Hals (1591-1656) in Haarlem, and Duyster's friend Pieter Codde (1599-1678) in Amsterdam. Yet neither comes to mind as a likely candidate. Halfway through the 1620s Codde and Duyster were the key players in the development of the guardroom scene in Amsterdam, and in their wake a number of often Amsterdam-based painters picked up on the theme.[6] They include Pieter Quast (1605/06-1647), Pieter Potter (c. 1600-1652), Duyster's brother-in-law, Simon Kick (1603-1652), Anthonie Palamedesz (1601-1673) in Delft, and Jacob Duck (1600-1667) in Utrecht.[7] Yet again, none of these artists offers a credible alternative to De Keyser and Duyster.[8] Moreover, Simon Kick only started working as a painter in the second half of the 1630s, after returning from a journey to America.[9]

The following will therefore focus on the two traditional attributions. To be sure, Duyster and De Keyser must have known each other very well. Both were born in Amsterdam in the last years of the sixteenth century, both were arguably apprenticed to the Amsterdam portrait painter Cornelis van der Voort (1576-1624), and both lived in the same Breestraat quarter.[10] When considering subject matter, the oeuvre of Duyster clearly fits the present work best. The first artist to mine the subject of the guardroom, Duyster's work is characterised by a sophisticated, painterly approach. His scenes, painted on relatively small panels, are sometimes situated in hay-filled barns, and sometimes in a more domestic interior setting. They show soldiers in armour, with swords, wide brimmed hats and leather equipment, or dandys dressed in finely rendered satin jackets with fluted sleeves, playing cards or tric-trac. Duyster's refined, almost shadowy technique, which deliberately



Fig.2 Willem Duyster, *Tric-Trac Players*, oil on panel, 31.5 x 42.5 cm., St Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum



Fig. 3 Willem Duyster, *Two Men Playing Tric-Trac, with a Woman Scoring*, c. 1628, oil on panel, 41 x 67.6 cm., London, National Gallery

relies on the ground layers, matches his inclination for somewhat slender, pointed shapes. Two works in particular, in St Petersburg and London, both depicting tric-trac players, clearly adhere strongly to the present work, both in composition and treatment of colour (figs. 2, 3). The St Petersburg work shows an especial affinity, with the figures wearing largely coinciding outfits. The London work, now, depicts a closely matching tablecloth. However, the somewhat delicate quality of Duyster's paintings does not quite match the more sturdy technique of the present work.



Fig. 4 Thomas de Keyser (and studio?), *The Music Lesson*, c. 1632, oil on panel, 53 x 45 cm., Rouen, Musée des Beaux-Arts



Fig. 5 Thomas de Keyser, *Portrait of a Man Seated at a Desk*, oil on panel, 79 x 53 cm., Paris, Musée du Louvre



Fig. 6 Thomas de Keyser, *Portrait of a Woman Seated at a Table*, oil on panel, 79 x 52.6 cm., Berlin, Staatliche museen Preussischer Kulturbezitz, Gemäldegalerie

Subject-wise, the oeuvre of De Keyser shows seemingly little overlap with the present work, as it exists largely of portraits, and a limited number of history works. Genre works by De Keyser are controversial, as Adams lists none.[11] At least one genre painting, though, seems to undeniably originate from his studio.[12] This work, *The Music Lesson* in Rouen, depicts a man with a lute and a woman singing, seated at a table (fig. 4). Surprisingly, the man and the woman both wear the exact same clothes as a husband and wife depicted by De Keyser in two pendant portraits, now in the Louvre and the Berlin Gemäldegalerie, respectively (figs. 5, 6).[13] Moreover, the tablecloth visible in the pendant portraits wholly matches the tablecloth in the Rouen work. Since the Rouen work shows more of this tablecloth than is visible in the portraits, we must assume that the painter of the work (likely Thomas de Keyser, possibly with studio assistance) had access to the actual object. Notably, the composition of the Rouen work (of which, as with the present work, a copy exists[14]) shows strong parallels with that of the present work.



Fig. 7 Detail fig. 8, De Keyser



Fig. 8 Detail cat. no 8.



Fig. 9 Detail fig. 5, Duyster



Fig. 10 Shoes in Thomas de Keyser paintings



Fig. 11 Shoes in Willem Duyster paintings



Fig. 12 Thomas de Keyser, *Portrait of a Young Silversmith*, 1630, oil on panel, 45.4 x 53.5 cm., sale London, 8 July 2015, lot 46, detail



Fig. 13 Detail cat. no. 8



Fig. 14 Thomas de Keyser, *Portrait of an Unknown Man*, 1631, oil on panel, 82.5 x 61 cm., The Hague, Mauritshuis, detail



Fig. 15 Detail cat. no. 8



Fig. 16 Thomas de Keyser, *Portrait of a Dutch Merchant in his Studio*, 1629, oil on panel, 69 x 49 cm., sale Vienna, Dorotheum, 16 October 2007, lot 86, detail



Fig. 17 Detail fig. 2

The Berlin interior's grey appearance and the wooden door framed by volutes in the background, so typical for De Keyser, are likewise seen in the present work. Coincidentally or not, both works are dated 1632.

On a painterly level, too, there seems to be greater resonance between the present work and the oeuvre of De Keyser, that that of Duyster. Compare, for instance, the hand of the leaning soldier to the hand of the Berlin lady (figs. 7, 8), set against the hand of the similarly leaning man in Duyster's London work (fig. 9). Likewise, the rendering and shape of the grey Tric-Trac player's rounded black shoe match the shoes painted by De Keyser (fig. 10) significantly more than the shoes of Duyster's, which are painted more swiftly, are more pointed, and have a lower heel (fig. 11).[15] The back of the chair in the present painting, too, is painted in a very distinct way, which we recognise on numerous occasions in De Keyser's oeuvre (figs. 12-15).[16] Of course, a single chair cannot count as an argument in itself, but within the context of a number of other visual agents it gains significance, and it is telling that such chairs never appear – certainly not so closely – in Duyster's oeuvre. Although, lastly, it is difficult to compare a genre figure with a portrait, the Tric-Trac player in the red overcoat – in general conception, rather than in specific likeness – resembles a young man depicted by De Keyser in



Fig. 18 Willem Duyster, *Portrait of a Married Couple*, oil on panel, 64.2 x 51.5 cm., Dublin, National Gallery of Ireland, detail

1629 (figs. 15, 16). If we, on the other hand, compare this young man with Duyster's two Tric-Trac players in the Hermitage (fig. 17), we must conclude that – despite the fact that they are quite similarly positioned behind the board and carry out a similar motion – they are painted with a fainter technique.

Regarding a number of portraits by Codde, Duyster and De Keyser, Adams has remarked that: 'Willem Duyster also has been looking at De Keyser's work, or the other way around [...] These paintings are so close in composition, format, and coloring that one is tempted to suggest that the three artists were literally dipping their brushes in the same palette. At the least, they were peering over each other's shoulders.'[17] One of the paintings Adams refers to is a portrait by Duyster, now in Dublin, which repeats (or is it the other way around?) the pose of the young man in the abovementioned 1629 painting by the Keyser. Duyster conspicuously monogrammed this work on the lower leg of the chair upon which the man is seated, exactly where the present work is dated (fig. 18). The question is what that implies. Clearly, these artists were friends, neighbours, colleagues and competitors in a thriving art market, and must have eagerly studied and imitated each other's works, and keenly monitored what failed and what worked. Following the argument outlined above, the present work seems, in the end, closer to De Keyser than to Duyster. It thus seems logical to locate its origin in De Keyser's studio. De Keyser will have noticed the success that Duyster *cum suis* had with genre paintings, and tried his hand with it once or twice, closely imitating Duyster's forms and compositions, meanwhile maintaining his own artistic vocabulary. If so, he probably produced it for the market, quite possibly with the help of studio assistants.[18] We are ill informed about De Keyser's studio practice, although we know he had at least one pupil working for him, his nephew Henry Stone, from 1632 until 1638.[19] It seems implausible to credit Stone with specific works, but others, too, might have contributed to the production.

JH

Notes

1 London, Dowdeswell & Dowdeswell's Gallery (1909); sale Paris (Marczell de Nemes), 17-18 July 1912, lot 55 (Thomas de Keyser); sale Paris, Petit (Magin), 23 June 1922, lot 22 (Thomas de Keyser); sale New York, 27 January 2006, lot 237 (attributed to Thomas de Keyser). Literature / exhibited: F. Lugt, *Catalogue de l'exposition de maîtres hollandais du XVIIe siècle: organisée par Mm. Frederik Muller et Cie dans leurs galeries ... à Amsterdam*, exh. cat. Amsterdam, Frederik Muller 1906, cat. no. 34 (as Willem Cornelisz Duyster, 'Un des plus importants tableaux du maître'); J.O. Kronig, 'Thomas Hendricks de Keyser', in: *Onze Kunst* XVI (1909), pp. 75-85, 109-126, pp. 112-113, depicted (as Thomas de Keyser, with Dowdeswell & Dowdeswell's Gallery, London); A. Bredius, review of R. Oldenbourg, 'Thomas de Keysers Tätigkeit als Maler', in: *Monatshefte für Kunstwissenschaft* IV (1911), pp. 135-137, p. 136 (as Thomas de Keyser). H. von Tschudi, *Katalog aus der Sammlung des Kgl. Rates Marczell von Nemes – Budapest ausgestellten Gemälde in der kgl. Alte[n] Pinakothek München*, exh. cat. Munich, Alte Pinakothek 1911, cat. no. 19 (as Thomas de Keyser); G. von Térey, *Katalog der aus der Sammlung des Kgl. Rates Marczell von Nemes-Budapest ausgestellten Gemälde*, exh. cat. Düsseldorf, Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf 1912, cat. no. 44 (as Thomas de Keyser); Ydema 1991, p. 137 (attr. to Thomas de Keyser).

2 On Tric-Trac in Dutch seventeenth century art, see: E. de Jongh, *Tot Lering en vermaak : Betekenissen van Hollandse genrevoorstellingen uit de Gouden Eeuw*, exh. cat. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum 1976, pp. 108-111, cat. no 22 (Willem Duyster). See also E. de Jongh, G. Luijten, *Mirror of everyday life : genreprints in the Netherlands 1550-1700*, exh. cat. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum 1997, pp. 204-208, cat. no. 39 (Lucas Vorsterman after Adam de Coster).

3 The present work only surfaced recently, but the copy is listed in O. Ydema, *Carpets and their Datings in Netherlandish Paintings 1540-1700*, Zutphen 1991, p. 137, no. 107 (Lotto carpet). Ydema, unaware of the dated original, dates the copy to c. 1625/30.

4 Bredius 1911, p. 136 fiercely advocates the attribution to De Keyser, at which – he states – he himself, Friedländer and Kronig all independently arrived.

5 A.J. Adams, *The paintings of Thomas de Keyser (1596/97-1667 : a study of portraiture in seventeenth-century Amsterdam*, 4 vols., diss. Cambridge [MA] 1985.

6 See for this development E. Kolfin, *The young gentry at play : northern Netherlandish scenes of merry companies 1610-1645*, Leiden 2005, pp. 110-111; J. Rosen, *Soldiers at leisure : the guardroom scene in Dutch genre painting of the Golden Age*, Amsterdam 2010, pp. 44-50.

7 Rosen 2010, pp. 53-58. Rosen points out that Palamedes must have often visited Amsterdam, while Duck was no doubt residing there around 1628.

8 This opinion is shared by Dr. Jochai Rosen, the expert on Dutch guardroom scenes. I thank Dr Rosen for sharing his opinion with me (email November 2016).

9 Rosen 2010, pp. 122-124. Kick's first dated painting is of 1637. See also: A. Bredius, 'Iets over Pieter Codde en Willem Duyster', in: *Oud Holland* 6 (1888), pp. 187-194, p. 192.

10 Adams 1985, I, pp. 91, 213-214.

11 Adams lists only two genre paintings by De Keyser, both rejected. See: Adams 1985, cat. no. R96, R97.

12 J. Hillegers, in: D. Bakhuÿs, J. Hillegers, C. Tainturier, *Tableaux flamands et hollandais du Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen*, exh. cat. Paris, Fondation Custodia 2009-2010, pp. 95-99, cat. no. 26.

13 Adams 1985, I, pp. 189-193, II, cat. nos. 37, 38.

14 Oil on panel, 54 x 51 cm., Cologne/London, Galerie Edel (1996). See Paris 2009-20010, p. 97, fig. 25a.

15 Details De Keyser clockwise taken from *A Musician and his Daughter*, 1629, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art; *Portrait of Dirck Van Der Wissel and His Son Jacob*, 1631, Pasadena, Norton Simon Museum; *Portrait of Loef Vrederick*, 1626, The Hague, Mauritshuis; *The Music Lesson*, c. 1632, Rouen, Musée des Beaux-Arts. Details Duyster clockwise taken from *An Officer Standing*, c. 1630, The Hague, Mauritshuis; *Tric-Trac Players*, c. 1630, St Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum; *Tric-Trac Players*, c. 1625, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum; *Soldiers Fighting over Booty in a Barn*, c. 1624, London, National Gallery.

16 Other examples include, for instance, De Keyser's 1629 *Portrait of a Dutch merchant in his Studio* (here fig. 16), and his *Portrait of David Bailly* in a private collection. The same comparisons can be made for the leg of the chair in the present work, which is similar to many chair legs painted by De Keyser.

17 Adams 1985, I, p. 213.

18 The question of how the Rouen work came into existence remains fascinating, as well. Was it done for the market? Or did the couple of the Paris and Berlin pendants commission it at the same time they ordered their portraits?

19 Adams 1985, I, pp. 91-92.

cat. no. 9

Karel van Mander
Meulebeke 1548 – 1606 Amsterdam

Calvary

Monogrammed and dated lower centre *KM / 1592*
Oil on panel
75.2 x 107 cm.

Provenance:
Possibly Amsterdam, collection Jacques Razett (probably d. 1608)[1]
Possibly sale Delft, Jan Pietersz van Gils to his father-in-law Abraham van Neck, 5 March 1622, no. 1[2]
Possibly Haarlem, collection Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem (1562-1638), 20 November 1631[3]
Possibly Haarlem, death inventory Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem (1562-1638), 1 March 1639, no. 1[4]
Possibly The Hague, deceased sale Johan Chrisosthomus de Backer, 17 April 1662, lot 103[5]
Possibly Amsterdam, bankruptcy inventory (and estimation) of Gerard van Uylenburgh, March/April 1675, nos. 111 and 16[6]
Possibly sale Hamburg, C. Ulrich Toussaint, 30 March 1769, lot 2, bought for 55 Marks by Johann Benjamin Ehrenreich[7]
Spain, Adanero collection, for several generations until now

Literature:
Not published

A well-respected artist, Karel van Mander owes his everlasting fame to his life's work, the invaluable *Schilder-boeck*, published in 1604 in Haarlem, where he spent most of his artistic life.[8] He was born, though, in 1548, in the Flemish village of Meulebeke near Courtrai, where his father Cornelis van Mander was a bailiff and receiver. Cornelis and his wife Johanna van der Beke were affluent, and sent their son to Latin school in nearby Tielt. In 1565/67 Van Mander was apprenticed to the Ghent poet/painter Lucas de Heere (1534-1584), a former student of the famous Frans Floris (1519/20-1570). He finished his education with the painter Pieter Vlerick (1539-1581), who had worked in the Venice studio of Jacopo Tintoretto (1518-1594) between 1562 and 1564. In 1573 Van Mander left for Italy himself. He visited Florence (where he witnessed Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) – whose *Vite* he would later translate and elaborate upon – working on the frescos of the Duomo) and lived in Rome for three years. Among the many acquaintances that he made there, the Antwerp painter Bartholomeus Spranger (1546-1627) proved to have the most impact on him. In 1577 Van Mander returned to Flanders. Persuaded by his friend Spranger, he travelled via Vienna to contribute to the decorations for the Triumphal entry of Emperor Rudolf II. On his return home, Van Mander married a local girl named Catalina. The couple were to have ten children, of whom only Karel II (c. 1583-1623) would become a painter himself. As a result of the tumultuous rebellion against Spain, Van Mander and his wife, as Mennonites, decided to flee via Courtrai and Bruges to the North, and settled in Haarlem in 1583.



There he met his two closest artistic companions, Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617) and Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem (1562-1638), with whom he was to found the so-called Haarlem Academy in order to study 'after life'.[9] A member of the Guild of St Luke since 1584, his breakthrough came in 1586, when he participated in the decorations for the entry of the Count of Leicester that year. From then on Van Mander received numerous commissions and high praise, and was able to make a fine living for himself and his family. In 1592, the year of the present work, Van Mander bought a house on the Kleine Houtstraat, where he would live until 1603, when he retreated to Zevenbergen House north of Haarlem to write his *Schilder-boeck*. In 1604 he moved to Amsterdam, where he died on 11 September 1606.

Van Mander had many pupils, the most famous being undoubtedly Frans Hals (1582/83-1666). Van Mander's oeuvre consists of drawings, prints after his designs and paintings, little over 30 of which remain. Essentially a mannerist, his style is rooted in that of his friend Spranger, whose work he greatly admired. Yet unlike Spranger, Van Mander mostly painted works with smaller figures. In addition, he was a great admirer of the work of the greatest Dutch artist of the early sixteenth century, Lucas van Leyden (1494-1533), to whom he dedicated the lengthiest biography of a deceased Netherlandish painter in the *Schilder-boeck*. Testifying to his passion for this artist, he and Goltzius personally prevented the Leiden city council from selling Lucas's *Last Judgement* (now in the Leiden Lakenhal) to Emperor Rudolf II. As it turns out it is the present Calvary which attests to his devotion for his famous predecessor, more than any other work.

The dramatic events on the day of the Crucifixion of Christ are elaborately described in all four Gospels (Matthew 27:32-50; Mark 15: 21-37; Luke 23: 26-46; John 19: 17-29), with a few variations in detail. After Pilate had given in to the will of the crowds, Christ – followed by a large number of people, including women who mourned and wailed for him – carried his own cross (according to John) to Golgotha (or Calvary) 'which means place of the skull.' There the soldiers first offered him wine mixed with gall, but after tasting it, Christ refused it (Matthew). They then crucified him, divided his clothes by casting lots, and placed the written charge against him (INRI, Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews) above his head. To his left and right they crucified two robbers. Those who passed by shouted insults at him, along with one of the criminals crucified alongside him (Luke). The priests, too, mocked Christ. 'He saved others,' they said, 'but he can't save himself! He's



Fig. 1 Karel van Mander, *Calvary in the Snow*, signed and dated lower centre *Kvmander / 1599*, oil on panel, 67 x 117.5 cm., Belgium, private collection

the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'' From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. Then Christ cried out in a loud voice, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' After crying out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit to his Father.

Many elements of the story are seen to occur in Van Mander's painting. Its spectacular composition is dominated by the impressive, beautifully formed yellow-brown Mount Calvary, seen against the background of the brooding dark purple sky. An overwhelming number of figures spiral all around the rocky mount as they make their way up to witness the sad spectacle at the windy summit, where Mary has fainted, as the Roman soldier Longinus has just pierced the dead Christ's side with a spear. Some approach through the crevice to the left, others climb the steep winding path. At the bottom of the mount several horsemen have gathered, and soldiers roll the dice to divide Christ's clothes. To their right, the smug priests point upwards, as they mock Christ's words and destiny. Behind them, more bystanders have gathered, men, women, children, mothers with babies, dogs and even an unwilling goat. Some point their fingers, some climb trees to have a better view. Mostly we see their backs, but sometimes we glimpse a terrified stare, confusion, or pity. Van Mander cleverly distributed all of the figures over the picture plane, making optimal use of the spatial variety of his composition. A vista opens up to a panoramic view of the walls of Jerusalem and the mountains beyond it, while on the far right some of the masses retire to the city gates.

Van Mander painted the crucifixion a second time, seven years later. This so-called *Calvary in the Snow*, currently in a private collection and widely recognised as one of his best pictures, is signed and dated 1599, and depicts the dramatic moment of Christ's crucifixion situated in a snowy winter landscape (fig. 1). Looser in atmosphere, the figures – distributed over the picture in groups – are often more engaged in their own interactions than in the crucifixion behind them. The hill is less imposing, and part of the attention is redirected to the scene's unusual wintry setting. As has been rightly recognised, the picture harks back to the brilliant folio size engraving of *Calvary* by Van Mander's hero, Lucas van Leyden (fig. 2).[10] Indeed, not only did Van Mander borrow the print's general compositional structure, he also included a figure from it: the beggar in the far right of the picture.[11] Lucas's print combines an outstanding technique with a masterful distribution of figures and an incredible feeling for detail. One of a select group of five engravings of folio size (the largest paper size available at the time) by Lucas, originating between 1509 and 1519, the print belongs to the artist's most ambitious works, with which he established himself as one of the very best printmakers of his time. In fact, in his biography on Van Leyden, Van Mander voices his admiration for these particular engravings in the statement that 'his best pieces, the large sheets, such as the most outstanding *Magdalene*, the *Crucifix*, the *Ecce Homo*, the *Three Kings* and such each cost one golden guilder, or 28 stuivers.'[12] In voicing this opinion, Van Mander was preceded by his great Italian predecessor



Fig. 2 Lucas van Leyden, *Calvary*, 1517, engraving, 286 x 412 mm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574), who in his *Vite* says of Lucas's work that 'that which did more than anything else to bring renown and fame to Lucas, was a large sheet in which he represented the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ; with another wherein Pilate is showing Him to the people, saying, 'Ecce homo!' These sheets, which are large, and contain a great number of figures, are held to be excellent; as [...] likewise, one with a conversion of St. Paul.'[13]

Van Mander's adaptation of van Leyden's work is generally attributed to the last years of his career, with special reference to the 1599 *Calvary in the Snow*. It has remained unknown until now (with the emergence of the present painting) that such an adaptation had already taken place seven years earlier – and on a much more elaborate scale. Comparing the present work with Lucas's *Calvary* (note that it depicts the identical moment of Longinus piercing Christ), what immediately calls for attention is the similarity in general composition. With Calvary rising to the left, the figures are grouped around it in a circle that originates in the lower left corner and curves diagonally upwards, leading to the two horsemen in the engraving, and to the figures in the trees in the painting. The procession approaching behind the horsemen and the curve in the path they follow in the engraving find their parallel in the departing figures in the painting, their procession following a similar elliptical curve. The similarly positioned mountain in the background of both the print and the painting close off both compositions. Van Mander adapted some individual pictorial elements as well, such as the boy playing with a dog, and the mother cherishing her baby, both motifs found prominently in the foreground of Lucas's engraving. Another prominent figure in the print, that of the seated man in the foreground, seen from behind and twisting around, was even copied in its entirety by Van Mander. The figure's bright red garment, set against the dark background, is clearly meant to stand out, and thus to grasp the informed viewer's attention (figs. 3, 4).

Yet there is more to be discerned, such as the majestic form of Mount Calvary, which is not half as impressive in the *Calvary* engraving. As seen, Vasari considered three prints to have contributed most to Lucas's fame. In addition to the *Calvary*, those were the *Ecce Homo* and the *Conversion of St Paul* (fig. 5). Van Mander, too, was mesmerised by this latter print, of which he writes: 'In this same year [1509] he engraved the amazingly well composed *Conversion of Paul*, where he is blinded and led to Damascus, in which the blindness – like all the detail – is well depicted. In these, as with all his other prints, one sees many

subtle variations of faces and costumes after the old style: hats, caps and veils which for the most part differ from another, so that in Italy the great masters of our time have been able to draw much profit from his works in that they have borrowed from them and applied things in their own works, with occasional small variations. Vasari, too, speaks of this *Conversion of Paul*, and he values him in certain respects above the excellent Albert Dürer.'[14] Essential to the print's composition is the huge rocky outcrop, before which proceed a group of horsemen and soldiers. Van Mander clearly thought so highly of this 'amazingly well composed' outcrop that he decided to adapt its shape and use it for the present Mount Calvary, in front of which he likewise positioned a group of soldiers and horsemen with lances. Moreover, a closer study reveals further parallels, such as the curved tree trunk on the right hand summit of the mountain, the trees above in the background, which we also see behind Christ's cross in the painting, and the identically shaped heads of three of Lucas's horses (fig. 6). Individually, such minor references would seem trivial (and noting them far-fetched even), but within the context of Van Mander's admiration for Lucas, and the other quotations encountered in the painting, they all add to the image's emulating quality.[15] Very thought out, Van Mander adapted his final Lucas reference from the latter's famous *Ecce Homo* print, the third pillar upon which – according to Vasari – Lucas's fame rested. Van Mander praises this 'miraculous' print, of which he further remarks that it 'leaves one exceedingly astonished that such a young boy displayed so much genius and intelligence'.[16] Lucas signed his print in the left corner with his monogram 'L' and the date 1510 on a rock, next to which two young boys point towards the Saviour, who is being presented to the people (fig. 7). Van Mander, in ultimate emulation, picked up on this motif in the present work by placing his own monogram 'KM' and the date 1592 on the base of the rock, and placing two young boys beside it, similarly pointing up to the – now crucified – Saviour (fig. 8).

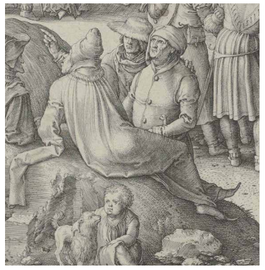


Fig. 3 Detail of fig. 2



Fig. 4 Detail of cat. no. 9



Fig. 5 Lucas van Leyden, *The Conversion of St Paul*, 1509, engraving, 283 x 418 mm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

Interestingly, Van Mander was the first to write about the practice of borrowing from other artists. Addressing young apprentice painters in his *Schilder-boeck*, he describes the concept of 'rapen', to pick up, to borrow or steal, but also a word meaning 'turnips'. Punning on this double meaning, he explains that it is surely not prohibited to borrow, as long as the turnips (rapen) are well cooked, for then they make for a nice stew.[17] However, a turnip stew was not a very sophisticated meal and, as has been noted, Van Mander's approbation did not apply to accomplished masters, for whom such practices were just not done.[18] Rethinking Van Mander's discussion of Lucas's *Conversion of St Paul*, and the Italian masters 'borrowing and applying things in their own works' from Lucas, one wonders for what reasons he failed to mention his own adaptations. Was it modesty, or even discomfort? Maybe he mostly wanted to exemplify his chauvinistic view that – in contrast to Vasari's ideas – the Italian artists followed the Dutch instead of the other way around.[19] Or did Van Mander simply consider what he did to be not at all the same as what the Italians did? For whereas the Italians borrowed 'to draw much profit from his works', Van Mander must have considered his adaptations as clear cases of honourable emulation. One of the very few instances in which Van Mander really talks about such emulation is – not surprisingly – in Lucas's biography, when he discusses the artistic rivalry between Lucas and Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), who 'tried to compete against or excel each other and that on occasion Lucas immediately engraved the same histories or other subjects which Albrecht had made and that they looked at each other's works with great admiration.'[20] In the case of the present painting, Van Mander operated in much the same fashion, choosing 'the same histories' to emulate 'in great admiration.'

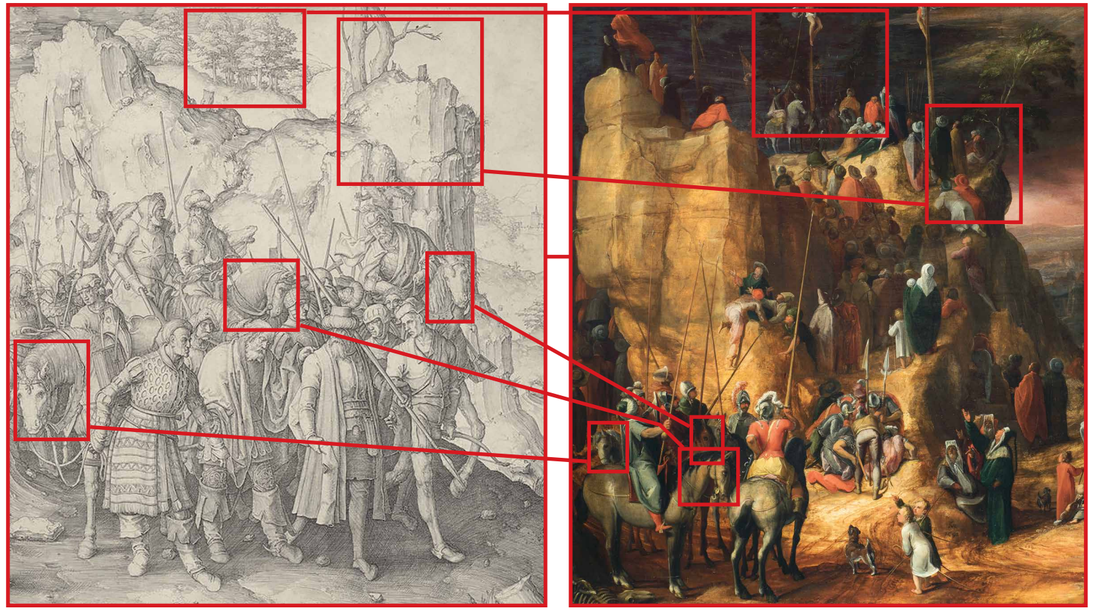


Fig. 6 Comparison between fig. 5 and cat. no.9



Fig. 7 Lucas van Leyden, *Ecce Homo*, 1510, engraving, 288 x 454 mm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, detail



Fig. 8 Detail of cat. no. 9

Van Mander was certainly not the only one who revered Van Leyden's work. Especially in the case of Goltzius, emulation of Lucas van Leyden has been well recognised – already by Van Mander himself[21] – while more recent scholarship in this field has yielded many new insights.[22] Whereas the first adaptations of Van Leyden motifs appear in Goltzius' work as early as around 1588[23], his veneration of the artist reached a



Fig. 9 Detail fig. 2



Fig. 10 Hendrick Goltzius, *Christ before Caiaphas*, 1597, engraving, 202 x 135 mm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, detail

highpoint in his 1594 Lucas-pastiche *The Adoration of the Magi*.[24] As a true missing piece of the puzzle, the present work, dated 1592, fits right in between. Returning from Italy at the end of 1591, we must assume that Goltzius witnessed the gradual genesis of the present work in the studio of his dear friend. And given the scale and importance of Van Mander's emulation of Van Leyden, one can only imagine it having been a major catalyst for Goltzius' own subsequent efforts. It is therefore exciting to observe that indeed an echo of Van Mander's emulation of Lucas can be recognised in Goltzius' work. In *Christ before Caiaphas*, part of Goltzius' 1597 Passion cycle of which Van Mander enthuses that it 'is wonderfully attractive and wholly in the style of Lucas van Leyden'[25] we – and this is surely no coincidence – come across the same Van Leyden figure that Van Mander chose to include in the present work, the seated man twisting around and seen from behind in the foreground of Van Leyden's Calvary engraving (figs. 9, 10).

Not much is known about the present painting's early provenance. Although several early records mention a *Crucifixion* by Van Mander (see Provenance, with references), one seems to be of special interest. In his will of 1631, Van Mander's great friend Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem bequeathed 'A painting being a Crucifix done by Mr. Carel van Mander' to his 'dear friend' the painter Cornelis Claesz van Wieringen (c. 1576-1633). Tellingly, it is the only painting Cornelis bequeaths to a friend (the rest is to be divided among his family), and the only painting individually described in the will. However, Van Wieringen passed before Cornelis, who finally died in 1638. From his death inventory we learn that Cornelis was as great an admirer Van Leyden's prints as his friends Van Mander and Goltzius. No less than 25 of the 77 lots of prints contain prints by Van Leyden, among them the *Crucifixion*. In the painting section, only eighteen of the 76 lots are paintings by artists other than Cornelis himself, six of which are by Van Mander.[26] Coincidentally or not, the first work listed is 'The well composed Cross by Karel Vermander', clearly the same painting mentioned in the 1633 will. Was this special painting the work discussed here? We will probably never know, but it wouldn't surprise us if it were.

JH

Notes

1 'een Cruysinghe Christi'. See: M. Leesberg, 'Karel van Mander as a painter', in: *Simiolus* 22 (1993/1994, 1/2), pp. 5-57, p. 54.
2 'A Crucifix done by Karel van Mander the Elder, valued at 200 guilders'. See A. Bredius, *Künstler-Inventare : Urkunden zur Geschichte der holländischen Kunst des XVIten, XVIIten und XVIIIten Jahrhunderts*, 7 vols, The Hague 1910-1922, 5, p. 1751.
3 Bredius 1910-1922, 7, p. 93.
4 Bredius 1910-1922, 7, p. 77.
5 A Crucifixion by Carel Vermander', 4 guilders to Bosch. Although the price seems too low for the present painting, the prices at this auction were curiously low in general. See for the sale: F.D.O. Obreen, *Archief voor Nederlandsche kunstgeschiedenis : verzameling van meerendeels onuitgegeven berichten en mededeelingen*, 7 vols., Rotterdam 1877-1890, 5 (1882-1883), pp. 293-315, p. 300.
6 F. Lammertse, J. Van der Veen, *Uylenburgh en zoon : Kunst en commercie van Rembrandt tot De Lairesse 1625-1675*, exh. cat. London, Dulwich Picture Gallery, Amsterdam, Museum het Rembrandthuis 2006, p. 298, no. 111 (inventory), p. 301, no. 16 (estimation): 'A [little] cross by Carel Vermander, costs nowadays 60 guilders'. In the inventory the painting is referred to as 'cruysie', in the estimation as 'cruysje'. The latter in particular seemingly refers to a relatively small picture. The price, then again, suggests a fair painting, yet the estimates for Uylenburgh's inventory were generally high.
7 'The Crucifixion of Christ by the old Carl Vermander on which hundreds of figures are depicted, magnificently painted on panel and well preserved.' ('Die Kreuzigung Christi von dem alten Carl Vermander worauf etliche 100 Figuren befindlich, vortreflich gemahlt auf Holz und wohl conserviret.'). 1 ft 8 in. x 3 ft 5 in. The measurements seem odd, but the description is remarkably apt. About 180 figures are to be counted in the present painting, and no other known work fits the description.
8 Biography mostly based on I. van Thiel-Stroman, in: N. Kohler (ed.), *Painting in Haarlem 1500-1850 : The collection of the Frans Hals Museum*, Ghent 2006, pp. 229-233.
9 Much has been said about this Haarlem Academy. See: J.L. McGee, *Cornelis Corneliszoon van Haarlem (1562-1638) : patrons, friends and Dutch humanists*, Nieuwkoop 1991, ch. 4; Leesberg 1993/94, pp. 23-25.
10 Leesberg 1993/1994, p. 28: 'His dependence on the greatest master of the Dutch Renaissance is most evident in his *Calvary in the snow*, dated 1599.'
11 Noted by Leesberg 1993/1994, p. 28.
12 H. Miedema, *Karel van Mander : the lives of the illustrious Netherlandish and German painters*, 5 vols., Doornspijk 1994-1999, 1 (1994), pp. 108-109, fol. 212v.
13 G. Vasari (G. Milanesi, ed.), *Le vite de' piu eccelenti pittori scultori ed architettori*, 9 vols., Florence 1875-1885, 5 (1880), p. 410. Translation taken from B. Cornelis, J.P. Filedt Kok, 'The taste for Lucas van Leyden prints', in: *Simiolus* 26 (1998), pp. 18-86, p. 29.
14 Miedema/Van Mander 1994-1999, 1 (1994), pp. 106-107, fol. 212r.
15 In addition, the dog seen in the lower left corner of the present work seems to echo the dog in the lower left corner of Lucas van Leyden's *Conversion of St Paul*.
16 Miedema/Van Mander 1994-1999, 1 (1994), pp. 106-107, fol. 212r. In 1510, Lucas was just 16 years old.
17 K. van Mander, *Het Schilder-boeck*, Haarlem 1604, *Grondt*, fol. 5r.
18 E.J. Sluijter, 'In praise of the Art of painting: On paintings by Gerrit Dou and a treatise by Philips Angel of 1642', in: idem., *Seductress of Sight : Studies in Dutch Art of the Golden Age*, Zwolle 2000, pp. 199-263, pp. 225-226;
19 In his biography on Lucas, Van Mander goes on about Vasari, who 'reckons that all the famous artists of our Netherlands must have obtained the art from Italy and must have learned it from the Italians. But he is wrong, as is the case with other matters, when he has been badly informed.' See: Miedema/Van Mander 1994-1999, 1 (1994), pp. 108-109, fol. 212v.
20 Miedema/Van Mander 1994-1999, 1 (1994), pp. 108-109, fol. 212v. See also E.J. Sluijter, 'Over "rapen" en wedijver in de Nederlandse schilderkunst van de zeventiende eeuw', in: *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 21 (2005), pp. 267-292, esp. p. 286.
21 Van Mander 1604, *Levens*, fol. 284v-285r (biography of Hendrick Goltzius).
22 See for an overview of Lucas van Leyden-emulation in the last decade of the 16th century Cornelis/Filedt Kok 1998, esp. pp. 31-32, 36-41; L. Silver, 'Marketing the Dutch Past : The Lucas van Leyden revival around 1600', in: A. Golahny et al. (eds.), *In His Milieu : Essays on Netherlandish Art in Memory of John Michael Montias*, pp. 411-422.
23 N. Ornstein, in: H. Leeflang, G. Luijten (eds.), *Hendrick Goltzius 1558-1617 : Drawings, Prints and Paintings*, exh. cat. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Toledo, The Toledo Museum of Art 2003-2004, pp. 104-105.
24 The print is part of Goltzius' so-called *Meisterstiche* series, in which he consciously emulates a number of famous predecessors. For a detailed discussion of the series, see: H. Leeflang, in: Amsterdam/New York/Toledo 2003-2004, pp. 203-215.
25 Van Mander 1604, *Levens*, fol. 285r.
26 McGee 1991, pp. 344, 352-354. Leesberg 1993/1994, p. 28, note 129.

cat. no. 10

Pieter van Mol
Antwerp 1599 – 1650 Paris

A Bearded Old Man Wearing a Skullcap

Oil on panel
51.5 x 42 cm.

Provenance:
Europe, private collection

Literature:
Not published

Copy:
Oil on paper, laid on canvas, 43.2 x 31.5 cm., sale London, Sotheby's, 30 October 2008, lot 81

Pieter van Mol, son of Cornelis van Mol and Françoise van Beyselaer, was baptized in the Antwerp cathedral on 17 November 1599.[1] Van Mol is said to have first studied with the otherwise unknown artist Seger van der Graeve, before continuing his education with Artus Wolffort (1581-1641)[2], himself a one-time assistant of Otto van Veen (1556-1629), the teacher of Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640). In 1622/23 Van Mol enrolled in the Antwerp Guild of St Luke. For the next eight years he must have worked as an independent master, yet in 1631 he decided to try his luck abroad and moved to Paris. He joined the Flemish enclave there and is recorded as living in St.-Germain-des-Prés that same year. Apparently Van Mol had great success in Paris.[3] On the occasion of his wedding in 1640 to Anna van der Burght, with whom he would have eight children, he is named 'peintre ordinaire de la Reyne', court painter to Anne of Austria, Queen of France. In 1643 he was commissioned to paint an *Adoration of the Shepherds* for the church of St Germain-des-Prés, now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Marseille; from 1645 on he was awarded the title 'Peintre du Roy', and in 1648 he was one of the founding members of the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture. He died in 1650 and was buried in the church of Saint Sulpice.



Van Mol's oeuvre covers a range of genres. In addition to imposing large-scale and small figure history works, he painted allegories, genre works, portraits and head studies. The statement made in 1883 by Antwerp city archivist Jos van den Branden that Van Mol actually studied with Rubens remains hypothetical, as the first mention of such a supposed apprenticeship dates from the later 18th century.[4] Still, taking Van Mol's extant work into consideration, it cannot escape attention that his style is deeply rooted in the Rubensian tradition. While indebted to the great archaism of his master Wolffort, the progressive trajectory of the Rubens-led counter-reformative Antwerp baroque clearly prevailed in Van Mol's work.

The Rubensian legacy in Antwerp is particularly striking in the present study of an elderly man's bust. Judging from the man's black scull cap, his black cloak draped about his shoulders, and the detail of the red dress he wears underneath, we might assume that he is a clergyman. However, one shouldn't conceive of the work as being a study for a real portrait. Rather, it is a so-called 'tronie', an anonymous head study of a typical greybeard. We can appreciate the confident rendering of the folds of the cloak and the grey collar, but the true attraction of the work lies in the face and the beard, both executed with astonishing command. The basic structure of the face is modelled directly on the ground layer with the cavities of the eye sockets and their deep shadows, the protruding eyelashes, and the quick outline of nose and cheek, all minimally applied with browns and black. The flesh is built up from a range of colours from off-white to warm pinks, with touches of grey to enhance the palpability of the old man's wrinkled skin. In typical Rubens fashion, the varied play between thick impasto highlights and cleverly left-open areas, where the thin ground completely shines through, inspires admiration for its seeming effortlessness. The deft white hairs on the man's eyebrows, and the grey-blue of his pensive eyes add to his ripened character. The beard rivals the face in its brilliance of execution. With its tonality ranging from dark grey to playful creamy whites, the beard completely convinces with its rippling swirls and curls, both bristly and soft. The result is as lively and varied as can be.

Despite frequent mentions in old inventories and auction catalogues, only a few 'tronies' by Van Mol are known of nowadays.[5] Interestingly, one of these, kept in the Louvre in Paris, depicts a young man with a mitre on his head, another instance where Van Mol chooses a clergyman as his subject for a head study.[6] In addition, Rüdiger Klessman was able to attribute a female 'tronie' in the collection of the Herzog Anton-Ulrich-Museum, painted on panel just like the present work, to Van Mol.[7] As he demonstrated, the female depicted appeared as Mary Magdalene in a large *Deposition from the Cross* by Van Mol in the National Museum of Art of Romania, Bucharest.[8] Such a correlation with Van Mol's oeuvre can, though not as literally, also be observed in the present study. One specifically comes across the figure of the old greybeard with a scull cap in a number of *Depositions*, among them the abovementioned version in Bucharest. A similar figure is positioned in the background of a *Deposition* in Reims[9], which exists in various versions, while another close example is found in Van Mol's *Deposition* in the Louvre.[10]



Fig. 1 Pieter van Mol, *Diogenes Searching for an Honest Man*, oil on canvas, 75.9 x 83.2 cm., private collection

Still, the most fruitful correspondence is found in Van Mol's *Diogenes Searching for an Honest Man* in a private collection (fig. 1), the protagonist of which bears a striking resemblance to the present greybeard. It would go too far to state with certainty that the same model posed for both works, yet one certainly detects the same artistic conception of physiognomic structure in both. Comparing Diogenes' face with that of our greybeard, one notices the same impasto highlights on the forehead, and a kindred rendering of the wrinkles. While the two heads are not entirely identically positioned, and Diogenes' lantern causes stronger shadows, the modelling of the eyes, the eyebrows and the nose is similar, including such details as the white hatchings in the eyebrows and the background immediately abutting the iris of the right eye. Considering the beard, what specifically calls for attention is both the shadow under the nose, as well as the distinctive diagonal shadow across the moustache.

Given the relative lack of dated works by Van Mol, it is hard to establish a year of execution for the present painting. The technical quality suggests the effort of an experienced, mature painter, yet the clear affinity with the Antwerp school is also to be taken into consideration. A date around 1630 therefore seems not unreasonable.

JH

Notes

1 Biography based on: M.-L. Hairs, *Dans le sillage de Rubens : Les peintres d'histoire Anversois au XVIIe siècle*, Liège 1977, pp. 227-229; B. Besnard, in: J. Turner (ed.), *The Dictionary of Art*, 34 vols., New York 1996, 21, pp. 803-804; J. Niessen, in: K. Richter (ed.), *Allgemeines Künstlerlexicon (Saur/De Gruyter)*, var. vols., Berlin/Boston 1992ff, 90 (2016), pp. 204-205.

2 Such an apprenticeship is strongly suggested by the account of the French painter Nicolas Vleughels (1668-1737). Vleughels recounts how his father Philippe once travelled to Paris in the company of someone called Wolfart, where Van Mol received both men, 'one of them being the son of his Master'. See Hairs 1977, p. 229, note 35. André Felibien, in his *Entretiens sur la vie et les ouvrages des plus excellences peintres anciens et modernes*, vol. 3, Paris 1684, p. 90 also mentions that 'Volfar' had a pupil called 'Vanmol'.

3 In older literature, Van Mol is often credited with the decoration of the chapel of the Estampes-Valençay family in the Church of Saint-Joseph-des-Carmes, Paris, in 1635. Hans Vlieghe has, however, convincingly argued that Abraham van Diepenbeeck was responsible for these decorations. See: H. Vlieghe, ''De peintures très exquises': Abraham van Diepenbeecks schilderwerk te Parijs', in: *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch* 55 (1994), pp. 269-286. See also Niessen 2016.

4 Van Mol's hypothetical apprenticeship with Rubens was first mentioned in 1779 in the catalogue of a sale, Paris, Copreaux, 8 November 1779 (Lugt. no. 3052), lot 104: 'Un beau Tableau de VanMool, Elève de Rubens'. See also: F.J. Van den Branden, *Geschiedenis der Antwerpsche schilderschool*, Antwerp 1883, pp. 765-766.

5 See, for instance: sale Paris, Paillet, Boileau, 28 January 1788 (Lugt no. 4250), lot 25: 'Le Buste d'un vieillard, vu presque de face & de proportion comme nature.'; sale Paris, Clisorius, C.P. Masson (Amman de Schwanberg), 9 December 1809, lot 76: 'Un Buste d'homme ayant le regard au ciel'.

6 Inv. no. MI 941.

7 R. Klessmann, 'Eine unbekannte Ölskizze von Pieter van Mol', in: *Niederdeutsche Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte* 38 (1999), pp. 153-158.

8 Pieter van Mol, *Deposition from the Cross*, oil on canvas, 166 x 118 cm., Bucharest, National Museum of Art of Romania.

9 Inv. no. 795.1.77. See: E. Mai, H. Vlieghe, *Von Bruegel bis Rubens : das goldene Jahrhundert der flämischen Malerei*, exh. cat. Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen, Cologne, Wallraf Richartz Museum, Vienna, Kunsthitorisches Museum Wien, cat. no. 42.1.

10 Pieter van Mol, *Deposition from the Cross*, signed, oil on canvas, 204 x 145 cm., Paris, Musée du Louvre.

cat. no. 11

Monogrammist O.M.
Northern Netherlandish, active second half seventeenth century

A Still Life with Fruit and Asparagus on a Silver Tray

Signed with monogram lower left *O.M. fe*
Oil on canvas
51.8 x 62.3 cm.

Provenance:
Germany, private collection

The present still life was painted by the monogrammist O.M., an artist whose identity unfortunately has not yet been discovered.[1] Because of the resemblance in style between the still lifes of the artist with still lifes by Willem van Aelst (1627-1683), who settled in Amsterdam in 1656 until his death in 1683, it seems highly probable that he was familiar with Van Aelst's work.

The present still life is triangular in composition, with its base formed by the draped stone table top, and its apex by the curling vine leaves. A bundle of brightly lit white asparagus dominates the composition, surrounded by grapes glistening with water drops reflecting an unseen window, two peaches, raspberries and a melon on a silver tray with a chased border. A butterfly resting on a leaf stands out brightly, like the asparagus and peach, against the dark background. The rich, blue velvet cover fringed with gold tassels covers most of the stone ledge, its curving folds echoed in the scalloped edge of the tray and curling vine leaves above. This still life is a beautiful example of an old master painting in which refined style and technical brilliance are combined.

Asparagus tends to feature in sixteenth and seventeenth-century market scenes, kitchen interiors, as well as in history paintings and allegorical paintings.[2] Painters such as Frans Snijders (1579-1657) and Adriaen van Utrecht (1599-1652), who were known for their large market scenes and kitchen interiors, often included asparagus in them.[3] Asparagus was already expensive by the seventeenth century, and so its presence suggests luxury and wealth.

The monogrammist O.M. seems to be the first artist who painted still lifes with the white asparagus in the middle of the composition, catching the light, against a dark background. However, it was Adriaen Coorte (1683-1707) who further reduced the number of motifs and isolated the subject, making the asparagus the sole theme in thirteen of his paintings.[4]

A *Still Life with Fruit*, with likely the same silver tray and attributed to Willem van Aelst, in the collection of the Kunstmuseum in Vaasa, Finland, seems to be by the same hand.[5]

WB

Notes
1 I am indebted to Dr. Fred G. Meijer, of the Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD) for confirming the attribution to the Monogrammist O.M. after first hand inspection.
2 The works of history painters usually held the highest value in the first half of the seventeenth century and still life paintings were usually worth considerably less.
3 See also: R. Steudte, *Spargel in der Kunst*, exh. cat. Nienburg, Museum Nienburg 2013.
4 W.A. Brandenburg, *Asperges in olieverf : een koninklijke groente in de zeventiende eeuw*, exh. cat. Venlo, Limburgs Museum 2005, p. 126
5 RKD, ONS, folder Van Aelst.



cat. no. 12

Jan Siberechts
Antwerp 1627 – 1703 London

A Milkmaid and Children in a Field, Cattle Grazing Beyond

Signed lower left *J. Siberechts a Anvers*
Oil on canvas
105.5 x 88.1cm.

Provenance:
United Kingdom, private collection, since at least 1930

Literature:
Not published

Jan Siberechts lived in Antwerp until 1672, the year in which he probably settled in England. Siberechts may have visited Italy prior to becoming Master of the Antwerp Guild of St. Luke in 1648 or 1649. The artist's early works reveal the influence of such Dutch Italianate landscape painters as Nicolaes Berchem (1621/2-1683) and Karel Dujardin (1626-before 1678), whom he may have met in Rome. In 1670, when George Villiers, the second Duke of Buckingham, whilst on business in the southern Netherlands, came across some of Siberechts' work, he was so enamoured by what he saw that he invited the artist to come to England and help decorate his Italianate mansion, Cliveden. This mansion was situated on the bank River Thames near the town of Windsor and which he had built six years earlier. Jan Siberechts agreed to move home to England in 1672 and became just one of the hundreds of Dutch and Flemish artists who came to Britain in the seventeenth century to ply their trade. Numerous painting commissions from the aristocracy followed. With his topographical views he stands at the beginning of the English landscape tradition.

The Flemish painter Jan Siberechts worked in the early 1660s on a number of paintings depicting Flemish rural life and the rustic life of its peasants. The present painting is a beautiful example from this period, before the Duke of Buckingham's invitation to the artist to work in England. This pastoral scene belongs to a group of works in which Siberechts synthesises landscape and genre painting, depicting the tran-





Fig. 1 Jan Siberechts, *Shepherdess*, signed and dated 1666, oil on canvas, 103.5 x 77.5 cm., St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum



Fig. 2 Jan Siberechts, *Landscape with Figures*, signed and dated 1678, oil on canvas, 79 x 112 cm., Bordeaux, Musée des Beaux-Arts

quillity of a golden summer's evening, when nature and human activity tend to come to a halt. In this group, the figures introduced into the foreground of the landscape settings are larger than hitherto, and, standing out against the brightly lit countryside, they take on paramount importance. As illustrated here, these scenes often depict peasant women going about their daily tasks, carrying produce, accompanied by their livestock. The focus here is on the girl in the foreground, a milk jug upon her head. This round jug on a girl's head is one of the artist's favoured motifs, featuring in many of his landscapes from his Antwerp period. We do not immediately notice a peasant girl seen from the back as she milks a cow, while in the right background figures are walking and riders on horseback can be seen. The bright blues, whites and reds of the figures' clothing stand out against the verdant earth colours of the background, complementing the overall harmony of the silvery-green palette of the painting.

A comparable painting is in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg (fig. 1). Here, as in many other works by the artist in the second half of the 1660s, he achieves astonishing precision in his depiction of people and objects in the foreground. Although painted in England in 1678, the present painting is closely related in style, treatment of colour, as well as in subject matter to *Landscape with Figures*, in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Bordeaux (fig. 2). Apparently Siberechts still favoured the non-commissioned subject of the landscape and the peasants with their daily activities. Although Siberechts in his early work mainly concentrated on the landscape with its pastureland, woods, countrywomen and cattle, his later work mainly consists of topographic views on country houses and their surroundings, in which the figures became less important.

WB



Detail of cat. no. 12

cat. no. 13

Jan Woutersz Stap
1599 – Amsterdam – 1663

Heraclitus and Democritus

Oil on panel
48.5 x 64 cm.

Provenance:
New York, George Wildenstein Gallery, 1952
France, private collection

Literature:
M.E. Houtzager et al., *Caravaggio en de Nederlanden*, exh. cat. Utrecht, Centraal Museum, Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten 1952, p. 43, cat. no. 63, fig. 45
A. Blankert, 'Heraclitus en Democritus: in het bijzonder in de Nederlandse kunst van de 17de eeuw', in: *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 18 (1967), pp. 31-124, p. 63, note 68, p. 99, no. 38
A. Blankert, in: idem., L. Slatkes, *Nieuw Licht op de Gouden Eeuw : Hendrick ter Brugghen en tijdgenoten*, exh. cat. Utrecht, Centraal Museum, Braunschweig, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum 1986-1987, p. 41, note 31

For a long time Jan Woutersz Stap was identified with a sixteenth century painter who became a citizen of Amsterdam in 1542. However, the discovery of a document of 1630, in which the 30 year old painter Jan Woutersz Stap testified to the delivery of a certain frame, and the discovery of the date 1636 on the signed *Notary's Office* in the Rijksmuseum (fig. 1), undisputedly made clear that Stap was a seventeenth, and not a sixteenth century painter.[1] Born in Amsterdam in July 1599, Stap was the first of at least four sons of the bricklayer Wouter Jansz and his wife Aaltje Tijssen, who wedded in 1595, both having been married previously.[2] Although documents regarding Stap's life are scarce – it is unknown, for instance, where he received his education – we do know that he married Barbara Andries in the spring of 1622, and that the couple were reformed.[3] Between 1623 and 1634 Jan and Barbara had at least five children.[4] Whereas Arthur van Schendel listed 13 paintings by Stap's hand



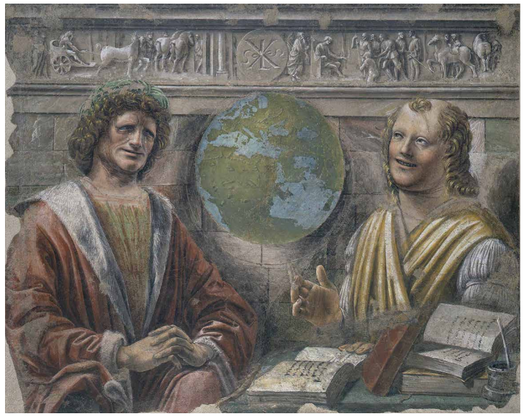


Fig. 1 Donato Bramante, *Democritus and Heraclitus*, c. 1490, fresco transferred to canvas, 102 x 127 cm., Milan, Pinacoteca Brera

in 1937, nowadays some 30 works are steadily attributable to him, only seven of which are signed. Apart from a handful of history paintings, Stap's oeuvre consists of large figure genre works, with a preference for the linked themes of *The Notary's Office* and *The Landlord's Steward*.[5] Although the painter's alleged death in 1663 was noted by the trustworthy Amsterdam archivist Nicolaas de Roever (1850-1893), the source for his assertion has not emerged as yet. Taking Stap's somewhat *retardataire* output into consideration, the initial confusion about his period of activity does not come as a surprise. Stap's style and subject matter strongly lean on the production of Flemish sixteenth century predecessors, specifically Quinten (1465/66-1530) and Jan Massys (1509-1575), as well as Marinus van Reymerswaele (c. 1490-before 1556).[6] In addition, art historians have recognised an affinity with the archaism of the Utrecht Caravaggist Hendrick ter Brugghen (1588-1629); for instance, the latter's *Pilate Washing his Hands* must have served as the example for Stap's portrayal of the same subject.[7]

The present work seems to testify to the link with Ter Brugghen, as well. Depicted are Heraclitus of Ephesus (535-475 BC), dressed in a blue cloak on the left, and Democritus of Abdera (460-370 BC) in a red jacket with a yellow shawl over his head on the right. Whereas the former looks downwards with noticeable sorrow, the latter regards us with a smile on his face. Stap's tight framing of his protagonists within the picture plane, the basic directness of his colour scheme, and the direct outward gaze of Heraclitus produce a spontaneous impact on the beholder.

The two men depicted are Greek philosophers, who curiously never lived at the same time. Still, as far back as antiquity they were staged as physical counterparts by classical historians, writers and philosophers such as Sotion (first century BC), his pupil Seneca (4 BC-65 AD) and Juvenal (c. 60-140 AD). Heraclitus is best known for his alleged expression 'panta rheï' ('everything flows') and its aphorismatic equivalent 'You can never step into the same river twice', both underlying his theory of eternal movement as the fundamental essence of things. Haughty by nature, Heraclitus is said to have had a poor opinion of human affairs. As his main biographer Diogenes of Laërtius (third century AD) notes in his *Lives and opinions of eminent philosophers*: 'at last becoming a complete misanthrope, he used to live spending his time in walking about the mountains; feeding on grasses and plants.' Because of his difficult to understand writings he was earned his epithet 'ὁ Σκοτεινός', meaning 'the dark' or 'the obscure'. He is thus known as the weeping philosopher.

Democritus, on the other hand, was of a different complexion altogether. His interest was universal, as he is said to have written on subjects as diverse as mathematics, physics, the cosmos, music and civilisation. Best remembered for his development of his teacher Leucippus's (fifth century BC) atom theory, he is often considered 'the father of modern science'. According to Diogenes of Laërtius he was an industrious and humble man: 'The chief good he asserts to be cheerfulness' by which he [Democritus] understood 'a condition according to which the soul lives calmly and steadily, being disturbed by no fear, or superstition, or other passion. He calls this state *euthymia*.' Indeed, Democritus had been presented as the laughing philosopher already in the writings of Cicero (106-40 BC).

As well as the written tradition, the pictorial tradition of the two philosophers as a duo also goes back to antiquity. Describing the decoration program of Greek gymnasia, the late antique writer Sidonius Apollinaris (c. 430-489 AD) mentions 'Heraclitus, with his eyes closed because of the weeping, and Democritus with his lips apart because of laughter.'[8] In fifteenth century Italy this ancient pictorial tradition was picked up again (probably instigated by the famous humanist philosopher Marcilio Ficino), the first remaining example being a fresco by Donato Bramante (1444-1514) from c. 1490, now transferred to canvas and kept in the



Fig. 2, 3 Hendrick ter Brugghen, *Heraclitus and Democritus*, both 1628, both oil on canvas, 85.5 x 70 cm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

Brera, Milan (fig. 1).[9] In Bramante's work we immediately recognise the iconography that was still applied essentially by Stap some 140 years later. On the left Heraclitus – represented half length, with his hands folded – is weeping, while on the right the laughing Democritus points to a globe between them. Both of the philosophers' hand gestures should be viewed as general reflections of their view on the world. Whereas Heraclitus' folded hands express sorrow and lament, Democritus' pointing gesture should be taken as a general sign of mockery.

Although the subject was occasionally depicted during the sixteenth century, it was at the beginning of the seventeenth century that it quickly gained popularity, particularly in the Netherlands, where the general idea of laughing or crying over the world – or life itself – fitted well within the local *vanitas* tradition. Late mannerist painters such as Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem (1562-1638) in Haarlem, and Cornelis Ketel (1548-1616) in Amsterdam, started the trend, but from the 1620s on we observe the philosopher duo's rising star in Utrecht, mainly with the Caravaggists, including Dirck van Baburen (1594/95-1624), Hendrick Bloemaert (1601/02-1672), Jan van Bijlert (1597/98-1671) and Johannes Moreelse (d. 1634). Most famous yet is the portrayal by the afore mentioned Hendrick ter Brugghen, who painted the duo in 1628 as a pendant pair (figs. 2, 3). These two superbly executed works, now in the Rijksmuseum, feature each philosopher individually leaning on a globe. Whereas Heraclitus leans on a terrestrial globe, Democritus rests his arm on a celestial globe

– iconography which was unique at that point. As it happens, the same celestial globe is – although somewhat simplified – depicted by Stap in the present work. There has been speculation among art historians on the significance of the different globes. Blankert's suggestion, that they refer to the writings of both philosophers on the earth and the cosmos respectively, is of interest.[10] Another possibility is that the globes refer to the temperaments. If melancholics such as Heraclitus were born under Saturn (associated with the earth), Jupiter (associated with the sky) determines the sanguine temperament of Democritus.[11] No source or tradition, however, confirms such theories, and for the moment they must therefore remain hypothetical. Moreover, neither theory offers an explanation for the presence of a single celestial globe in the present work. Given the uniqueness of Ter Brugghen's motif, Stap's equally unique adaption of it, and his borrowings from Ter Brugghen elsewhere in his oeuvre, one must assume a direct connection between the works. A dating of the present work around 1630/35 thus seems plausible.

JH

Notes

1 A. Bredius, in: *Oud Holland* 52 (1935), p. 48. See foremost the quintessential article by A. van Schendel, Jr., 'Johannes Woutersz Stap', in: *Oud Holland* 54 (1937), pp. 268-282. Apart from the 1636 work, only one other dated work by Stap is known, the unsigned *Landlord's Steward* of 1629, also in the Rijksmuseum. An inscription with the date 1614 on Stap's *Landlord's Steward* in the Schleissheim Gallery seems not to be meant as the actual date of that painting, since Stap would have only been 14 or 15 years old at that time. Therefore some reservations should be made concerning the reliability of the dates on the two Rijksmuseum works as a basis to date these paintings.

2 Amsterdam Municipal Archive (SAA), DTB 407, p. 311, 23 December 1595. Wouter Jansz had previously been married to Geerte Gerrits, Aaltje Tijssen to Arent Jansz. The couple had at least four children: Jan, baptised 22 July 1599 (SAA, DTB 38, p. 744); Mijchgiel, baptised 8 April 1601 (SAA, DTB 38, p. 873); Tijs, baptised 3 September 1606 (SAA, DTB 39, p. 103); Gerrit, baptised 6 January 1608, SAA, DTB 39, p. 141).

3 SAA, DTB 462, p. 277.

4 Maria, baptised 12 November 1623 (SAA, DTB 6, p. 64); Sara, baptised 11 October 1626 (SAA, DTB 40, p. 362); Wouter, baptised 22 February 1629 (SAA, DTB 6, p. 231); Petrus, baptised 16 February 1631 (SAA, DTB 41, p. 123); Andries, baptised 15 January 1634 (SAA, DTB 41, p. 294). At the baptism of Marija and Wouter the profession of the father is given as painter. At the baptism of Marija, Wouter and Petrus, Stap's mother Aaltje Thijssen is documented as godmother, reaffirming the validity of the identification of the painter Jan Woutersz Stap with the child baptised on 22 July 1599. This argument was first put forward by Jonathan Bikker. See J. Bikker et al., *Artists born between 1570 and 1600 (Dutch paintings of the seventeenth century in the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam 1)*, 2 vols., Amsterdam 2007, 1, pp. 359-361.

5 Van Schendel 1937, pp. 272-273 further mentions a signed and 1635 dated work by Stap in a sale, Amsterdam, Roos, 9 November.

6 See for a recent analysis: J. Hillegers, in: idem. et al., *Salomon Lilian Old Masters* 2016, pp. 60-69, cat. no. 10.

7 See: Blankert 1967, p. 99, no. 38; A. Blankert, in: Utrecht/Braunschweig 1986-1987, p. 28; Bikker 2007, p. 359. Blankert notices Stap's and Ter Brugghen's rare shared use of an identical celestial globe in their respective works with the Heraclitus and Democritus subject. Bikker also points out the close pictorial correspondence between both painters' versions of *Pilate Washing his Hands*.

8 Sidonius Apollinaris, Liber IX, epist. 9. See: Blankert 1967, p. 39.

9 One earlier 15th century depiction of the two philosophers exists, but it excludes the laughing and weeping. See: Blankert 1967, p. 33, fig. 1.

10 Blankert 1967, p. 100.

11 Blankert 1967, p. 101. See also Bikker et al 2007, 1, p. 94.



Detail of cat. no. 13

cat. no. 14

Harmen Steenwijck
Delft c. 1612 – after 1656

A Still Life with an Earthenware Jug, Game, Fish and Fruit on a Table

Signed on the table *J. Steenwyck*
Oil on panel
32.5 x 48.3 cm.

Provenance:
U.S.A, collection Cecilia and Willem Schupf
Newark [N.Y.], collection H. Blank

Literature:
Not published

Harmen Steenwijck was born in Delft, but started painting in Leiden in circa 1628, where he and his brother Pieter were taught by their uncle David Bailly (1584-1657). In 1633 the artist moved to Delft where he entered the Guild of St. Luke in 1636. He sailed with the merchant fleet to the East Indies eighteen years later in 1654-1655, and is last recorded in Delft in 1656.

Harmen Steenwijck was active in three distinct branches of still life painting. Besides his *Vanitas*- and fish still-lifes, he painted still-lifes featuring fruit, pottery and dead game. This combination is unique to the artist and defies any classification among the other branches of the genre. [1] Another feature of Steenwijck's still-lifes that sets him apart from the rest is the complete exclusion of small living creatures and insects. His paintings with dead animals represent a new manner of depicting game in still-lifes before mid-century. With his *fijnschilder* technique, he distinguished himself from the ranks of painters in the guild. The delicately painted objects are neatly arranged on a table top and rendered in soft, restrained tones. Dated works by Steenwijck are few, on which the dates range from 1644 to 1652.

In the present, very well preserved painting, every object has been meticulously rendered on a wooden table partially draped with a dark cloth. The colours are subdued, with some red and yellow accents in the string of onions, fruits in the basket and the earthenware strainer,



on which five fresh water fishes are stacked. The monochromism of the earthenware jug and the delicately arranged dead game – a plucked duck, smaller birds and a hare – contrasts with the more highly coloured fruits, string of onions, earthenware strainer and one small bird. The German stoneware jar is beautifully rendered and appears in several of his other still-lifes, in which he each time seems to freely change some details.[2] A light grey tone lends atmospheric unity to the arrangement, seen in the raking light characteristic of Steenwijck's work. The subject of the present painting gave Steenwijck the opportunity to display his abilities in rendering the cool, shimmering skin of the fish as well as the soft, subtle colour variations in the feathers of the birds. Given the meticulously painted objects the painting must rank among his early works, of which another fine example is in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, *Still Life of Fish, a Pear, Game and Kitchen Utensils*.[3] Steenwijck seemed to favour fish in his paintings until the end of his career, as we know from other versions, such as the pendant pair in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.[4]

WB

Notes

1 Scott A. Sullivan, *The Dutch Gamepiece*, Totowa 1984, p. 29.

2 See: F.G. Meijer, *The Ashmolean Museum Oxford : catalogue of the collection of paintings : the collection of Dutch and Flemish still-life paintings bequeathed by Daisy Linda Ward*, Waanders 2003, pp. 286-291. A similar jug, including the triangular shape underneath the grip, can be found on *Still-life with Fish and Gherkins*, oil on panel, 30.2 x 36.5 cm., signed and dated 1652, on permanent loan at the Stedelijk Museum Het Prinsenhof in Delft.

3 Harmen Steenwijck, *Still Life of Fish, a Pear, Game and Kitchen Utensils*, oil on panel, 23 x 30 cm., inv. no. WA1940.2.75.

4 L.M. Helmus, *Fish : still lifes by Dutch and Flemish masters 1550-1700*, exh. cat. Utrecht, Centraal Museum 2004, p. 311. Harmen van Steenwijck, *Still Life with Earthenware Jar, Fish and Fruit*, signed, oil on panel, 23 x 27 cm., inv. no. SK-A-1528; *Still Life with Fish and Fruit*, signed and dated 1652, oil on panel, 23 x 17 cm., inv. no. SK-A-1529.



Detail of cat. no. 14

cat. no. 15

Maerten de Vos
1532 – Antwerp – 1603

Allegory of the Seven Liberal Arts

Oil on panel
147 x 200 cm.

Provenance:
Berlin, collection Ulrich Jahn (1861-1900), 1893[1]
Private collection, for three generations
Turin, private collection, until now

Literature:
Not published

Exhibited:
Chicago, World's Fair: Columbian Exposition, 1893

Copies:
Oil on panel, 118 x 160 cm., El Escorial, inv. no. 941[2]
Oil on canvas, measurements unknown, Bonn, Schloss Birlinghoven

The prolific Maerten de Vos, arguably the most important artist in Antwerp between the death of Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1526/30-1569) and the rise of Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), was one of the four children of the Leiden born painter Pieter de Vos (1490-1566) and his wife Anna de Heer.[3] No doubt first taught by his father, who had himself entered the Antwerp Guild of St Luke in 1519, it is presumed that he took a further apprenticeship with Frans Floris (1519/20-1570). In around 1552 De Vos in all probability travelled to Italy, in the company of his friend Pieter Bruegel the Elder. Karel van Mander (1548-1606) states that De Vos visited Rome, Venice 'and other countries' before returning to Antwerp, where he enrolled as a master of the guild in 1558. De Vos would later serve as the guild's dean, and was also active as a member of the closely related chamber of rhetoric, De Violieren. Soon after his return, De Vos Married Joanna le Boucq, whith whom he would have eight children. While initially focusing on large figure biblical painting, De Vos started to produce drawings from 1573 onwards, often designs for prints and book illustrations, many of which were engraved and published by the best Antwerp printmakers, including Gerard de Jode (1516/17-1591) and various members of the Collaert, Sadeler, and Wierix families. To this day, about 500 drawings by De Vos survive, and an astonishing 1600 prints after his designs, securing him an ineffaceable place in art history. In part, De Vos's focus on drawing probably resulted from the religious state of affairs in Antwerp, where



the Calvinist reign after the Spanish sack of 1576 resulted in less demand for biblical paintings. While De Vos was listed as a Lutheran in 1584, he seems to have converted to Catholicism the year after, when the Spanish troops regained control over the city. In the 1590s, De Vos became Antwerp's most renowned painter of altarpieces, replacing those destroyed under Calvinist rule. In addition, he painted a limited number of fine allegories and mythological scenes. A true eclectic, De Vos's style combined the Flemish Romanism of Michiel Coxcie (1499-1592), above all that of his alleged master Frans Floris, with the more vibrant mannerism and *colorito* of Venice, where – according to Italian art biographer Carlo Ridolfi (1594-1658) – De Vos had worked in the studio of Jacopo Tintoretto (1518-1594).

The Lilian work

Exuberant in colouring and visual abundance, and measuring an impressive 2 by nearly 1.5 metres, the present work stands out as a late Mannerist masterpiece of Antwerp's sophisticated brand of humanism. Depicted here are the seven liberal arts (Latin: *artes liberales*, the free arts), the canon of intellectual skills or studies which during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance formed the traditional didactic curriculum of academies and universities. Although the liberal arts' origins can essentially be traced back as far as Plato's *Republic* (c. 380 BC), the system was codified in its definitive form in the 5th century AD by the late Roman author Martianus Capella, who, in his didactic allegorical encyclopaedia *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* ('On the marriage of Philology and Mercury'), also called *De septem disciplines* ('On the seven disciplines') of c. 420 AD, presents the seven liberal arts as Philology's bridesmaids, dedicating to each of them a separate book in which he describes their specific field of knowledge.[4] Other encyclopaedia writers, such as Boethius, author of the hugely successful *De consolatione philosophiae* ('On the consolation of philosophy') of 523 AD, adopted this classification, which contained a subdivision in two categories: the language orientated *trivium* (consisting of Grammatica, Dialectica and Rhetorica) and the number orientated *quadrivium* (consisting of Astrologia[5], Geometria, Arithmetica and Musica). The liberal arts were deemed essential to the education of a free man, in order to prepare him to take part in civic life. As such, they were opposed to the *artes mechanicae*, which were distinctly practical, and craft orientated.

In the Lilian work, the liberal arts are portrayed as female allegorical figures, all lavishly dressed, and grouped in a landscape before classical ruins. Each of the arts has her own – not always easily decipherable – attributes.



Fig. 1 Mercator globe, 1541, detail



Fig. 2 Detail of the Mercator globe on cat. no. 15

In addition, written names have been added to the individual arts. Standing at the far left is Dialectica (also known as Logica), the art of logical reasoning, argumentation and conversation, depicted with a crescent moon headband, a jay on her head and a snake wrapped around her arm. Her attributes might allude to the art of speaking (the bird[6]) and to 'Prudentia', or Wisdom (the snake[7]).[8] Dialectica makes a reasoning gesture with her hands. Seated in front of her is Geometria, wearing a vibrant orange dress. She holds a pair of dividers, with which she measures a splendid terrestrial globe showing the two Americas, no doubt indicating the universal grasp of the arts. Close inspection shows us that the object depicted is a 1541 Mercator globe produced by the famous Flemish cartographer Gerardus Mercator (1512-1594).[9] De Vos must have had this globe directly at hand, as he rendered it with great accuracy (figs. 1, 2). The globe is supported by a frog – probably meant here as a symbol for curiosity[10] – and a snake, whose circular motion seems to refer to eternity.[11] On the ground instruments such as a ruler, a square and level underline Geometria's identification with architecture and building practices, also reflected in her city wall crown. Seated alongside her is Arithmetica, the art of numbers, who is calculating on a tablet. A book by the ancient mathematician Pythagoras appropriately leans against her leg. The winged female in the centre of the composition is Astrologia, who points her crossed staff to the sky, while resting her left hand on a beautiful Mercator celestial globe of 1541.[12] She wears a crown with stars, and her breastplate is adorned with the sun and the moon. In front of her we see a sundial and a compass. To her left a male figure approaches her with a questioning gesture. This motif is, of course, fully in accordance with the liberal arts' pedagogical nature, as are the young children being taught by Musica and Grammatica in the right foreground. Whereas musical instruments – various horns, a cornet and a bagpipe – surround the lute-playing Musica, Grammatica reposes upon a pile of Latin grammar books by, among others, two late fourth century grammarians, Marus Servius Honoratus (spelled on the book as 'Serius') and Diomedes Grammaticus. Behind them Rhetorica, the art of eloquence, is the only one looking directly at the beholder. Crowned with the laurel wreath of the poet, she holds in her hands a scroll and the caduceus staff of Mercury, the divine patron of the arts, and of Rhetorica especially. Behind her to her right two male figures approach, the nearest looking up at her scroll. Judging from this man's peculiar feathered hat they can be identified as Rederijkers (members of a chamber of rhetoric), who – as other examples demonstrate – dressed in that manner (figs. 3, 4a-b).

In addition to the seven female arts, the picture also depicts two male protagonists. Approaching from the middle background, a winged fig-



Fig. 3 Maerten de Vos Salomon Lilian, detail



Fig. 4a, b Anonymous, *The Entrance of the Chamber of Rhetorics De Fonteynisten during the Rhetoricians' Festivities in Vlaardingen in 1616*, oil on panel, 34.4 x 201.5 cm., Dordrecht, Dordrechts Museum, details





Fig. 5 Maerten de Vos, *Experientia*, brown pen and wash on paper, 326 x 145 mm., Antwerp, Museum Plantin-Moretus

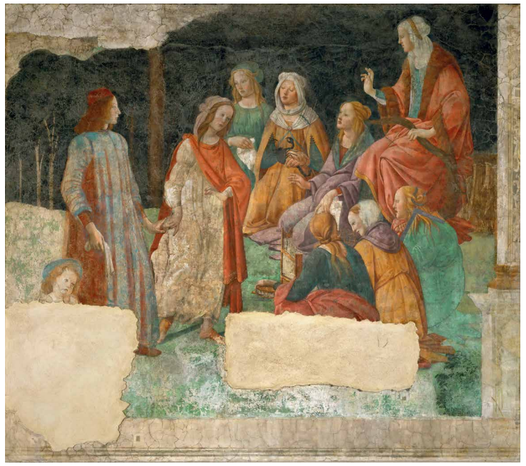


Fig. 6 Sandro Botticelli, *Lorenzo Tornabuoni Led to the Liberal Arts*, c. 1484, fresco on canvas, 237 x 269 cm., Paris, Musée du Louvre

ure with an hourglass bound to his head – in whom we recognise Father Time – guides a bearded old and barely clad man before him, whose eyes seem to reveal a certain detachment to the liberal arts. Significantly, the old man wears a laurel wreath over a turban on his head and supports himself with a stick, the steady attribute of Experientia, as seen in a drawing by Maerten de Vos (fig. 5).[13] Understanding the identity of this man, and understanding why Father Time escorts him to the liberal arts, seems key to grasping the intended narrative of the present work.

The pictorial tradition and Frans Floris

The specific imagery found in the present painting – both in terms of the appearance of the liberal arts and the scenography of the narrative – relies on a long pictorial tradition, in which the arts are always depicted as women, sometimes individually, at other times together, with ever changing attributes in diverse narrative settings. As early as the 12th century, one finds them in illuminated encyclopaedic manuscripts, in which they are depicted joining Lady Philosophy and philosophers.[14] Several painters from Renaissance Italy show the liberal arts in the company of famous scholars associated with them.[15] Others offer a more personalised narrative, such as Sandro Botticelli (1445-1510), who depicts Grammatica leading the young Florentine nobleman Lorenzo Tornabuoni to the other arts, seated in a forest and presided over by the female Philosophy (fig. 6). An illumination in a French translation of Boethius' *De consolatione philosophiae*, by the Coëtivity Master (active c. 1450-1485), shows the opposite, as Philosophy consoles Boethius by leading the liberal arts towards him (fig. 7).[16] In printed form we find the liberal arts as early as 1503, in the German humanist Gregor Reisch's influential *Margarita Philosophica*, an encyclopaedia of knowledge intended as a textbook for students. The frontispiece shows the arts together, presided over by Philosophy, joined by the four Church Fathers, Aristotle and Seneca (fig. 8). In addition, each of the book's chapters opens with a woodcut depicting an individual liberal art with her attributes. This iconography gained further popularity in the following decades with the appearance of a number of printed series of individual liberal arts with attributes, produced by Italian and German artists such as Giulio Bonasone (c. 1498-1574), Hans Sebald Beham (1500-1550), Georg Pencz (c. 1500-1550) and Virgil Solis (1514-1562).



Fig. 7 Coëtivity Master, *Philosophy Presenting the Seven Liberal Arts to Boethius*, tempera, gold leaf, and gold paint on parchment, 6 x 17 cm., Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum



Fig. 8 *Frontispiece with Philosophy Residing Over the Seven Liberal Arts*, in: G. Reisch, *Margarita Philosophica*, Strasbourg 1503

Halfway through the sixteenth century the theme could thus boast an extensive and international pictorial tradition. In all their diversity, the examples listed here share several common denominators: all positively emphasize the liberal arts' connection with education, the pursuit of knowledge, the benefactions of wisdom, the consolation of the mind, scholarship, philosophers, and ultimately philosophy itself. Moreover, some specific elements recurring in these early examples, such as the concept of joining with the liberal arts, are central to the Lilian work as well. It was at around this point in time that De Vos's presumed teacher Frans Floris introduced the theme to Netherlandish art. His contributions proved to be of vital importance to De Vos's subsequent efforts. In 1551 Floris issued a set of 10 etchings after his designs known as 'the standing liberal arts', consisting of the seven liberal arts as allegorical female figures standing in a landscape, together with Minerva, Apollo and Industria.[17] While this set shows some interesting departures from earlier examples, it is Floris's innovative second series that is of key interest here. In around 1555 the Antwerp merchant and banker Nicolaes Jongelinck commissioned Floris to produce a painted series of the seven individual liberal arts for his country house.[18] Although Jongelinck's paintings are lost, a printed series after it known as 'the seated liberal arts' executed by Cornelis Cort (1533-1578) reproduces all seven of Floris's designs (figs. 9a-g).[19] The series is more impressive in size, and more elaborate in composition and detail than any previous effort, and full of iconographical novelties. Thus we learn that Floris's example provided De Vos with the prototype for the vast majority of the motifs in the present work, including several new additions to the liberal arts' repertoire: Dialectica's bird, crescent moon and snake; Geometria's city wall crown, as well as the snake and frog supporting her globe; the man approaching Astrologia; the specific books supporting Grammatica; and the Rederijkers behind Rhetorica, who also appear – although less prominently – in Floris' composition, on a stage in the background. Since De Vos adopted all these motifs from Floris, and were not his own inventions, this should therefore remind us not to over interpret them. They were most of all readily available to him.

Floris's third take on the subject depicts the seven liberal arts grouped in a landscape (with the addition of Pictura, Sculptura and Architectura), awoken by Mercury, while the war god Mars is being led away by two of















Fig. 9a-g Cornelis Cort after Frans Floris, *The Seven Seated Liberal Arts*, 1565, engravings, 225 x 282 mm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

the four Cardinal Virtues, Prudentia and Fortitudo (fig. 10). This painting, now in Ponce, must have been executed in around 1560, since it alludes to the end of the war between Spain and France in April 1559. In fact, it has been remarked that the traits of the laurel-wreathed Mercury resemble those of Philip II of Spain, whose strivings for peace allowed the arts to flourish again.[20] Although, as seen, the depiction of the liberal arts together had various foreign precedents, the Ponce work was the first of its kind in the Netherlands, and one can thus safely assume that it served De Vos as an inspiration for the present work, just as it served other artists in theirs. [21] However, Floris's examples provide no precedent for the present work's meaning-laden duo of Father Time and the greybeard, approaching from the background.

Maerten de Vos's takes on the subject and scholarly interpretation

The subject of the seven liberal arts must have appealed to De Vos. First of all – but not necessarily chronologically speaking – De Vos produced a series of drawings of the individual liberal arts as part of a larger series of allegorical representations, now kept at the Museum Plantin Moretus in Antwerp.[22] De Vos also supplied the designs for two separate print series of the seven individual liberal arts, which were executed and published by Johann Sadeler (1550-1600) and Crispijn de Passe (1564-1637) respectively, probably during the 1570s and 1580s.[23] In addition, De Vos produced a number of closely related 'group portraits' of the liberal arts, to which the Lilian work belongs. Possibly the earliest of these is a signed



Fig. 10 Frans Floris, *The Sleeping Liberal Arts Awoken by Mercury*, c. 1560, oil on panel, 161.9 x 238.7 cm., Ponce, Museum of Arts of Ponce



Fig. 11 Maerten de Vos, *Allegory of the Seven Liberal Arts*, brown pen and wash on paper, 21.9 x 34 cm., sale London, Sotheby's, 7 July 2015, lot 32

drawing, which recently surfaced at Christie's London (fig. 11). Closely related to the present work, the drawing shows the liberal arts in a landscape, and also includes the approaching figures of Father Time and the old man with stick and laurel wreath. Another huge autograph painting, whose composition is similar to both that of the present work and of the drawing, was last recorded in a private collection in Brussels (fig. 12). In addition, two works that cannot be attributed to Maerten de Vos with certainty, but which do reproduce strikingly similar compositions, were last recorded in a private collection in Boston (fig. 13), and at an auction in New York (fig. 14). Whereas the Boston work combines the group of Father Time and the greybeard of the drawing with the liberal arts as portrayed in the Brussels painting, the New York work mostly repeats the drawing. Finally, two workshop copies after the present work are known, one in the Escorial, the other in Bonn.

Despite minor iconographical variations within this group, all clearly depict the same allegorical subject, which, one can safely conclude, enjoyed distinct popularity. Still, the subject's interpretation has proved problematic. Generally simply called *Allegory of the liberal arts*, one does come across more specific titles. In the Documentation du Louvre in Paris, the Brussels work is obscurely described as *Time Hindering the Poet from Joining the Liberal Arts*, while the RKD (Netherlands Institute for Art History) lists both the Lilian painting and the Boston work as *Allegory of the Liberal Arts and Transience*. Considering the liberal arts' exclusively positive pictorial tradition, and the essentially positive imagery of the



Fig. 12 Maerten de Vos, *Allegory of the Seven Liberal Arts*, oil on panel, 147 x 200 cm.,formerly Brussels, collection Cl. de le Court



Fig. 13 Circle of Maerten de Vos, *Allegory of the Seven Liberal Arts*, oil on canvas (?), dimensions unknown, formerly Boston, collection Frank L. Young



Fig. 14 Circle of Maerten de Vos, *Allegory of the Liberal Arts*, oil on panel, 73.5 x 106 cm., sale New York, Parke Bernet, 2 november 1979, lot 47



Fig. 15 Raphael Sadeler after Maerten de Vos, *Time Rewards Diligence and Punishes Sloth*, 1582, engraving, 152 x 181 cm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

works discussed here, these are unlikely negative titles.[24] So far, only the Brussels painting has been discussed scholarly, in Armin Zweite's 1980 monograph on De Vos.[25] Zweite, who doesn't mention either the New York or Boston work, and who was unaware of both the recently surfaced drawing and the present work (although the Escorial copy is depicted in his book), interprets the winged figure in the Brussels work – despite the hourglass on his head – as Saturn, the god of agriculture (who is iconographically related to, but not identical with Father Time) leading a zealous land labourer to the arts. He finds support for this theory in two prints after De Vos' designs, one of which depicts *Time Rewards Diligence and Punishes Sloth* (fig. 15). The print shows Father Time (not Saturn!) awarding a diligent peasant with a book, a crown and a sceptre, while a lazy peasant is about to be punished with a scourge and a stick.[26] Still, Zweite concludes that Saturn relieves the diligent land labourer of his daily hardship and leads him to the liberal arts, who bestow him with spiritual joy. He thus explicitly connects the picture with diligence, and what he describes as 'the ennoblement of land labour in the form chosen by De Vos'.[27]

An alternative reading

Given Zweite's assumption that the winged figure with the hourglass is Saturn, rather than the more correct Father Time,[28] his interpretation of the man as a land labourer is understandable in the specific case of the Brussels painting, in which we see a beardless man being led to the arts. Yet within the group the Brussels work is the exception, as the men depicted in the other works are all explicitly rendered elderly, and therefore unconvincing either as land labourers, or as representations of land labour in general. Had, moreover, these men been labourers, they would have carried Labour's steady attribute of the spade instead of Experientia's stick. For a correct understanding of the intended narrative we therefore have to reconsider the group's iconography, specifically within the cultural and intellectual context from which it originated.

During the second half of the sixteenth century Flanders was haunted by unparalleled socio-economic upheaval, violence and religious rebellion. The on-going instabilities fostered the desire among humanists for a consoling philosophy that combined imperturbability and a restraining of the passions (*apatheia*) with a positive striving for wisdom, happiness and virtue, conditioned by rationality. Such concepts neatly tied in with those of late Stoic thinkers such as Seneca and Epictetus. Not surprisingly, their works were zealously translated in Dutch (e.g. Marcus Antonius Gillis's 1564 Epictetus-translation *Hantboecxken*, 'Handbook, teaching after the way of the Stoic philosophers, how each in his own right can live peacefully'[29]) and their ideas were adapted to Christian theology, most famously through Justus Lipsius' Seneca-based dialogue *De Constantia in publicis malis* ('On constancy in times of public evil') in 1583.[30]

Within the milieu of the Rederijkers, too, these were hot topics. In fact, the central 'questie' (question) at Antwerp's legendary 1561 Landjuweel (interregional Rederijkers festival) which the participating chambers had to answer in a so-called Zinnespel (morality play), was: what incites man above all to the arts? [31] The majority of the chambers responded to this 'questie' by performing a play in which the protagonist, 'Man', finds a remedy for his vacuous nature in the positive pursuit of knowledge. In his quest Man is guided by a range of allegorical characters who either try to lure him towards the path of idleness and carnal delight, or help him make the right decisions by stimulating his desire for knowledge, wisdom and a virtuous life. Among the good characters we find Man's Nature, his Natural Intellect, his Reason and Wise Spirit. *In time* these characters direct Man towards knowledge, represented in the majority of the performances by the seven liberal arts residing in a garden (variously named Garden of the Arts, Garden of Rhetoric, Garden of Poetry, etc.). To help Man succeed in his quest, he is supported by allegorical characters such as Experience, Utility, Laudable Fame and Honour. The content of these performances clearly adheres closely to the imagery of the Lilian painting and the other works in the group. It is, therefore, very interesting to learn that the Landjuweel was organised – and its central 'questie' formulated – by the Antwerp chamber De Violieren, of which Maerten de Vos was, as mentioned earlier, a member. In fact, De Vos's direct participation in the organisation is documented, as his name features on a list of members who were to fulfil certain official obligations.[32] De Vos was thus closely involved, and the strong overlap between the content of the performances and the imagery of the group of works discussed here is therefore surely not coincidental.

In the same year, 1561, we come across similar imagery again – and likewise in De Vos' artistic circle – in a print of the so-called *Tabula Cebetis*, an allegorical depiction of human life including its temptations, as well as the righteous path and the reward in the end. Engraved by Philips Galle (1537-1612) after a design by Frans Floris, the print shows human life as a city with three concentric, walled-in terrains (fig. 16). Within the first, outer ring mankind gathers around the figure of Fortuna and indulges in reprehensible behaviour. Yet, by following Poenitentia (Punishment) and Spes (Hope), and dedicating oneself to a steadfast and virtuous life,

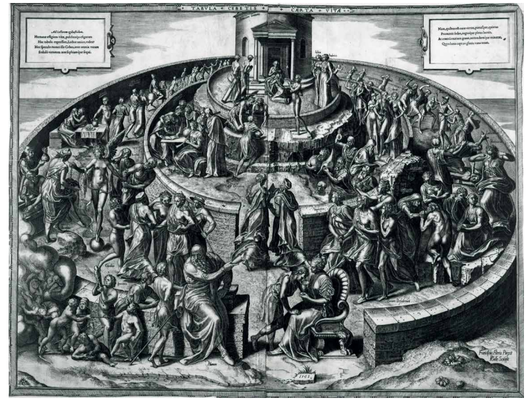


Fig. 16 Philips Galle after Frans Floris, *Tabula cebetis carta Vitae*, 1561, engraving, 455 x 595 mm., London, British Museum

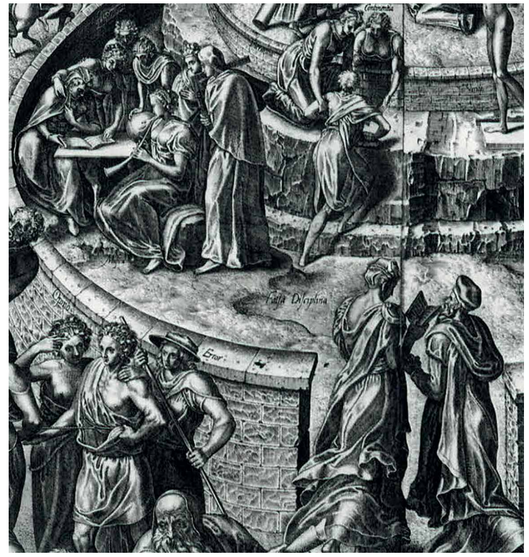


Fig. 17 Detail of fig. 16, *Man approaching the liberal arts*

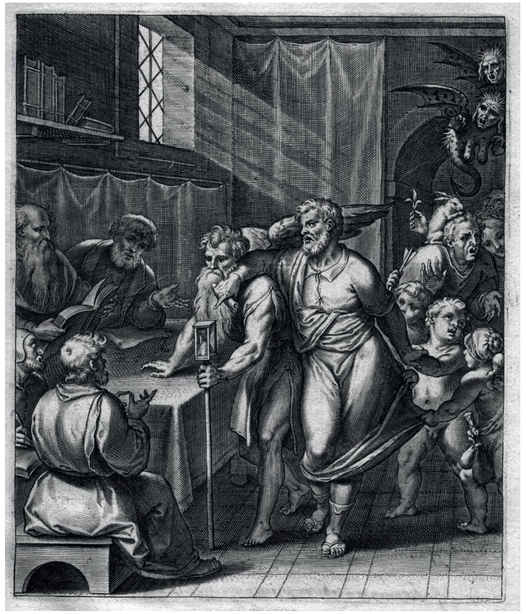


Fig. 19 Gijsbert van Veen (?) after Otto van Veen, 'Varia senectae bona', in: *Quinti Horatii Flacci Emblemata*, first published Antwerp 1607



Fig. 18 Gijsbert van Veen (?) after Otto van Veen, 'Philosophia vitae magister', in: *Quinti Horatii Flacci Emblemata*, first published Antwerp 1607

Man is allowed access to the second ring, where the seven liberal arts reside.[33] Having aged and gained experience, Man – on his way to the third ring, where Beatitudo (Blissfulness), surrounded by the Cardinal Virtues (Temperantia, Iustitia, Fortitudo and Prudentia) will crown him with a laurel wreath – arrives in the garden of the liberal arts, here seated around a table (fig. 17). Again, the scene echoes De Vos' imagery.

That we indeed have to interpret the imagery of the Lilian work and the other works in the group along these lines, is exemplified once more by two emblems in Otto van Veen's (1556-1629) neo-Stoic emblem book *Quinti Horatii Flacci emblemata*, first published in Antwerp in 1607.[34] These emblems, whose imagery overlaps significantly with that of De Vos, explicitly connect the concepts of aging and virtuous living with that of Time. The first emblem, 'Varia senectae bona' (The positive aspects of old age are multiple), shows an old bearded man seated, behind whom Father Time chases away Somnus (Sleep), Gustus (Taste), Cupid and Ludus (Play) (fig. 18). In doing so, Father Time makes way for Prudentia (Wisdom, with the mirror and the snake), Temperantia (Restraint, with bridles), and a third woman, whom he pulls forward by the arm. She and the woman behind the old man are no doubt Fortitudo (Courage) and Iustitia (Justice), the other two Cardinal Virtues, who – as seen in the *Tabula Cebetis* – join Beatitudo and thus signify the highest bliss. Behind them an upward pointing putto even brings the beatifying laurel wreath. The image's caption explains: 'Many sweetnesses of youth / Time expels just as sleep and loving / taste, and other lusts of the senses / But gives instead true joy / through restraint, Wisdom and reason / Prudence, and good judgement [...] He strengthens wisdom and weakens the body.'[35] The second emblem, 'Philosophia vitae magistra' (Philosophy is the teacher of life), shows Father Time leading a bearded man to a table with wise philosophers, while in the background various seductive characters slink off (fig. 19). The caption accompanying the image reads: 'Read the wise scriptures arduously / and ask the learned men / How you are using the time / will spend your days in peace / Of black sorrow which cuts through the heart / Of vain hope of anxious fear / Of evil lusts now freed / To truly be your own friend'.[36]

Conclusion

Returning to the Lilian work and the related works, we now understand them to depict Father Time leading a virtuous man to the garden of the liberal arts. More specifically, this old man is presented here as a philosophical character who, through persistent restraint, and by choosing reason over indulgence, in due time reaches wisdom, represented by the arts, who in turn provide the key to blissful peace. His somewhat detached stare and the hand resting on his breast seem to convey his Stoic *apatheia*. His lack of clothing would allude to this abstinent lifestyle, while his turban underlines his philosophical nature.[37] He leans on his experience (the stick), which was, as we have seen, a supporting character in the performances at the 1561 Landjuweel, referring back to the Stoic idea that man needs experience and time to obtain wisdom. Finally, the laurel wreath represents the reward for dedication to virtue: fame and honour. In neo-Stoic Christian ideology, this also signified the conquering of death, as fame – like the soul – was immortal, just as knowledge was divine. Ultimately, the virtuous acquisition of knowledge and wisdom were thus not only favourable for one's earthly reputation, but also presented an opportunity for personal devotion, a means of getting closer to God. According to this concept, the liberal arts functioned as a connection between humanity and its divine origin, and as a means of obtaining redemption.[38]

Considering the position of the Lilian work within the related group, it is difficult to constitute a chronology. Zweite stylistically dates the Brussels work to the 1590s. This does not necessarily hold true for the present work, which might predate it. As seen, the imagery itself relies strongly on cultural and intellectual developments that were already in progress around 1560, and although a steady basis for such an assumption is lacking, one might argue that the present work relates more clearly to Floris' 'Seated Liberal Arts' series, for instance in its inclusion of several flanking figures. In any case, the demand for this specific iconography was – given the many remaining variations and copies – great, although it still has to be established for whom these paintings were done.[39]

JH

Notes

1 According to a label from the collecting point in Berlin at the reverse of the panel. The label further mentions as Jahn's address Fasanenstrasse 12, Berlin.

2 See for both: A. Zweite, *Marten de Vos als Maler : Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Antwerpener Malerei in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin 1980, p. 330, cat. no. Z 16, fig. 158 (Escorial version).

3 For biographical references, see Zweite 1980, pp. 19-37.

4 A concise overview of the development of the liberal arts is given in J. Vandommele, *Als in een spiegel : Vrede, kennis en gemeenschap op het Antwerpse Landjuweel van 1561*, Hilversum 2011, pp. 202-205.

5 Astrologia is an often used variation of Astronomia. Although technically the two terms allude to different scholarly fields, they were both in use. See Vandommele 2011, p. 247.

6 According to C. Ripa (transl. D.P. Pers), *Cesare Ripa's Iconologia of Uytbeeldinghen des Verstants*, Amsterdam 1644, p. 337, not Dialectica, but Musica had a nightingale on her head 'because of the pleasurable and sweet tone of its voice'. However, one might argue that the attribute is also suitable for Dialectica. Other authors have pointed out that the magpie on Dialectica's head in Frans Floris's example was known since antiquity as an imitator of the human voice. See Vandommele 2011, p. 221. The bird in the present work is clearly a jay and not a magpie, but it seems that De Vos – rather than wilfully changing the iconography – wasn't concerned with such details.

7 Ripa/Pers 1644, p. 622 describes a defensive snake around the arm of 'Prudenza, Wijsheyt, Voorsichtigheyt', Prudence, Wisdom, Caution.

8 According to Vandommele 2011, p. 221, the crescent moon alludes to the different arguments Dialectica can make to support an opinion. Such an explanation is, however, not found with Ripa.

9 I thank Wendela Burgemeister and Dr. Peter van der Krogt for identifying and confirming the globe as the 17-inch Mercator terrestrial globe of 1541. See: P. van der Krogt, *Globi Neerlandici : the production of globes in the Low* Countries, Utrecht 1993, pp. 414-415, I.3, MER.

10 Ripa/Pers 1644, pp. 355-356.

11 Ripa/Pers 1644, p. 127, Eternità. Note that De Vos inserted a visual joke by letting the snake pass underneath the Equator.

12 I am indebted to Dr. Peter van der Krogt for identifying the celestial globe. Dr. Van der Krogt underlines the artistic freedom taken by De Vos.

13 Ripa/Pers 1644, p. 124.

14 A miniature in the *Hortus deliciarum* ('The garden of delights'), an encyclopaedic manuscript from Alsace of c. 1160, shows the liberal arts surrounding an inner circle in which the female personification of Philosophy sits enthroned, joined by Socrates and his pupil Plato. A drawing from the Salzburg region (c. 1150-1160, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library), depicts regal Philosophy presiding over the Liberal Arts. See: M. Holcomb, *Pen and parchment : drawing in the Middle Ages*, exh. cat. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 2009, cat. no. 25.

15 Giovanni dal Ponte (1376-1437) depicted the liberal arts in a double procession, joined by seven scholars (among them Aristotle, Ptolemy and Cicero) wreathed by winged putti (c. 1435, Madrid, Museo del Prado, inv. no. P02844). Other examples are by Giovanni di Ser Giovanni Guidi, 'Lo Scheggia' (1406-1486) (c. 1460, Barcelona, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya), and by Francesco Pesellino (1422-1457) (c. 1450, Birmingham (AL), Birmingham Museum of Art).

16 Boethius had written his work awaiting execution in prison, as a conversation between him and Philosophy, who consoles him by juxtaposing the transitory nature of earthly matters with the lasting superiority of things of the mind.

17 C. van de Velde, *Frans Floris (1519/20-1570) : Leven en werken*, 2 vols., Brussels 1975, I, pp. 423-425, cat. nos. P 107 -116, II, figs. 256-265.

18 Van de Velde 1975, I, pp. 239-244, cat. nos. S 93-99.

19 Van de Velde 1975, I, pp. 426-428, cat. nos. P 117-123, II, figs. 270-276.

20 Van de Velde 1975, I, pp. 262-265, cat. no. S 120, II, fig. 58.

21 A work by Lucas de Heere (1534-1584), closely related to the Ponce work, is kept in the Galleria Saubada, Turin, inv. no. 320. See: B.W. Meijer, in: D. Allart et al., *Fiamminghi a Roma 1508-1608 : kunstenaars uit de Nederlanden en het prinsbisdom Luik te Rome tijdens de renaissance*, exh. cat. Brussels, Paleis voor Schone Kunsten, Rome, Palazzo delle Esposizioni Roma 1995, pp. 226-229, cat. no. 119 (no reference to the Ponce work). In addition, Floris's 'Seated Liberal Arts' print series was combined into a painting of the seven liberal arts in an interior, now in the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten in Brussels. See: S. Bergmans, 'Le Triptyque des Sept Arts Libéraux des Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts', in: *Bulletin des Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique* 13 (1964) pp. 169-186.

22 Antwerp, Museum Plantin-Moretus, object nos. 133828-133834. See: A. Reinsch, *Die Zeichnungen des Marten de Vos : stilistische und ikonographische Untersuchungen*, diss. Eberhard-Karls-Universität, Tübingen 1967, pp. 181-185, cat. nos. 112, 9-15.

23 Several of De Vos' preparatory drawings have been preserved. See, for instance, Although the drawings and the print series clearly adhere to the iconography of the present work, they are not further dicussed here, since they, too, often hark back to the work of Frans Floris.

24 The RKD's website refers to Ripa's descriptions of: Fragilità humana; Fugacità delle grandezze & della gloria mondana; Meditatione della morte; Opera vana; Piacere vano; Vana Gloria; Vanità.

25 Zweite 1980, pp. 221-222, 302-303, cat. no. 82, fig. 102. The work adorns the cover of Zweite's book.

26 In the other print, executed by Crispijn de Passe and entitled *Diligentia et Sedultis Typus* (Diligence and Assiduity) Father Time (explicitly mentioned as such twice in the print's caption) supports a female personification of Diligence. While in the background two groups of people are seen – one practising the arts, the other doing manual labour – the print's caption reads that 'whether they apply themselves to study or to combat in the field, whether they practice the fine or the applied arts. I command them to emulate the ants, the birds and the bees, and not allow time to slip away unprofitably.' Translation taken from I.M. Veldman, 'Images of Labour and Diligence in sixteenth century Netherlandish prints: the work ethic rooted in civic morality or Protestantism?', in: *Simiolus* 21/4 (1992), pp. 227-264, p. 248.

27 Zweite 1980, p. 222: 'die Nobilitierung der Landarbeit in der von M. De Vos gewählten Form'. With 'gewählten Form' Zweite seems to address both the painting and the prints.

28 Zweite 1980, p. 221 describes the figure as Saturn, with explicit reference to his role as god of agriculture. Yet in the case of Father Time – who is actually meant here – this agricultural element is altogether absent. De Vos did depict Saturn several times in his prints, but never with an hourglass. He did, however, depict Father Time with an hourglass on numerous occasions. In addition to the aforementioned prints (of which the caption explicitly identifies the figure as Tempus, thus Father Time), the drawing, the present work and the Brussels work, reference should be made here to De Vos's *Calumny of Apelles* (oil on panel, 118.8 x 179.9 cm.) in a Luxemburg private collection, and currently on long-term loan to the Rubenshuis in Antwerp. Here we again see Father Time, completely similar to the figure in the Lilian work, explicitly in his guise as representation of time, while bringing the personification of Truth to the scene.

29 M.A. Gillis, *Hantboeckxken, leerende na der Stoischer philosophen wyse hoe elc in sinen roep gherustelyck leven sal*, Antwerp 1564.

30 See on the principle ideas of neo-Stoism in relation to Netherlandish art: B.A. Heezen-Stoll, 'Een vanitasstilleven van Jacques de Gheyn II uit 1621: afspiegeling van neostoïsche denkbeelden', in: *Oud Holland* 93 (1979), pp. 217-250, esp. pp. 221-223.

31 See for the 1561 Landjuweel Vandommele 2011. The following is largely based on his chapter 3 (Kennen) on Knowledge in relation to the theme of the festivities. For the 'questie', see p. 138: 'Dwelck den mensche, aldermeest tot consten verwect'.

32 See: D. Coigneau, E. Cockx-Indestege et al., *Uit Ionsten versaemt : Het landjuweel van 1561 te Antwerpen*, exh. cat. Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek Albert I 1994, pp. 81-83, cat. 17.7, fig. 17. Apparently, De Vos and his brother Pieter were supposed to do something – what exactly remains unclear – on Wednesday. Estimates are that around 5000 people actively participated, let alone the visitors of the festivities.

33 The figure standing next to the man is Falsa Disciplina, False Knowledge, who tests him at the gate.

34 O. van Veen, *Quinti Horatii Flacci Emblemata imaginibus in aes incisis, notisque illustrate*, Antwerp 1612 (first published 1607). The 1612 edition includes Dutch captions. See on Van Veen's book: T. Weststeijn, 'Otto Vaenius' Emblemata Horatiana and the azulejos in the monastery of São Francisco in Salvador de Bahía', in: *De zeventiende eeuw* 21 (2005), pp. 128-145, with further references. See also: A. Janssen, *Grijsaards in zwart-wit : De verbeelding van de ouderdom in de Nederlandse prentkunst (1550-1650)*, Zutphen 2007, pp. 175-178.

35 Van Veen 1612, p. 62: 'Veel soeticheden van de ieught / Den tijt verdrijft / als slaep / en 'tminnen / Den smaeck / en andre lust der sinnen / Maer gheeft in plaetse ware vreucht / Door maticheyt / verstant / en reden / Voorsichticheyt / en oordeel goet. In 'twisten hy gheen onrecht doet: 't Verstant hy sterckt / swackt hy de leden'.

36 Van Veen 1612, p. 46: 'De wijse schriften leest met vlijt / Wilt de gheleerde mannen vraghen / Hoe ghy ghebruyckende den tijt / In rust doobrenghen sult v daghen / Van swarte sorgh die 'thert doorsnijt / Van ydel' hoop' van 't anxtigh vresen / Van quade lusten wel beurijt Om recht v seluen vrient te wesen'.

37 The turban as a garment for philosophers is not unusual.

38 Vandommele 2011, pp. 184-193.

39 The theme of the seven liberal arts is often mentioned in Antwerp inventories, but unfortunately the information is too scarce to draw conclusions, let alone to identify the works discussed here. See: E. Duverger, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen uit de zeventiende eeuw*, 14 vols., Brussels 1984-2009, 14 (2009), Index on subjects, p. 333. The question remains why the man in the Brussels painting is beardless, whereas the others are all depicted bearded, signifying their age. Although the interpretation presented here surely allows for a virtuous man to go without a beard, the pictorial tradition demonstrates the subject's suitability for the inclusion of a portrait (e.g. Frans Floris' inclusion of Philip II in the Ponce work), be it of a historical person or a contemporary one, possibly a commissioner. However, archival sources make no mention of such a 'portrait historié'.

cat. no. 16

Thomas Willeboirts Bosschaert
Bergen op Zoom 1613 – 1654 Antwerp

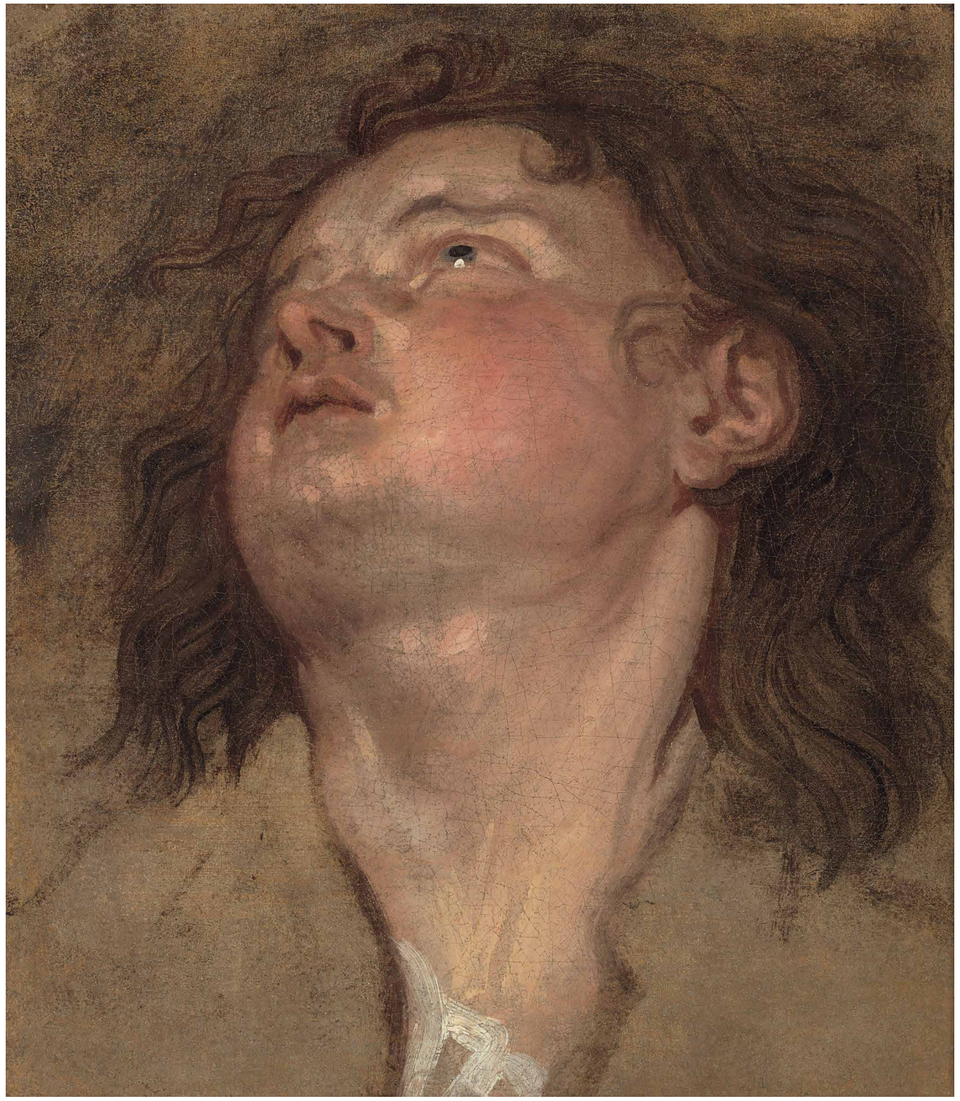
Head Study of a Young Man

Oil on canvas
37.5 x 32.5 cm.

Provenance:
France, private collectionn

Thomas Willeboirts Bosschaert was born in 1613 in Bergen op Zoom, the son of the Catholic Pieter Willeboirts Bosschaert and his wife Cornelia Thomassen.[1] His background was a wealthy one. Leaving for Antwerp in 1628, he received his education in the studio of Gerard Seghers (1591-1651). Eight years later, in 1636, he registered as a master of the Guild of St Luke, and was invited shortly thereafter by Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) to join him in his prestigious *Torre de la Parada* project for Charles IV of Spain. It was nonetheless the work of Sir Anthony van Dyck (1599-1642), from his second Antwerp period (1627-1632), which most inspired Willeboirts Bosschaert. Tellingly, the Dutch painter and art theorist Samuel van Hoogstraten (1627-1678) mentions him in his *Inleyding tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilderkonst* directly after Rubens, Van Dyck and Jacob Jordaens (1593-1678) as 'de graselijken Willeboorts' ('the gracious Willeboorts'), thus capturing at once the essence of his art. The elegant style of Willeboirts Bosschaert found great success in Antwerp. In addition, he received numerous commissions from Prince Frederick Hendrick of Orange, who saw in him a second Van Dyck. Willeboirts Bosschaert reached the high point of his career in around 1650. In 1652 an illness set in, which eventually led to the painter's death in January 1654.

If anything, the present head study of a young man twisting his head to his right as he gazes upwards displays how deeply rooted in the Antwerp school Thomas Willeboirts Bosschaerts was. As we look at the execution of the work we are immediately reminded of the famous head studies by



Rubens and Van Dyck, whose quick but virtuoso brushwork created fleeting faces on minimally prepared panels and canvases, capturing unstable movement and sketched emotions at once. These head studies often served artists in their preparation for larger history pieces with multiple figures. With its brown contours, the muted hues of pinks and brighter highlights, the colouristic range of the study discussed here particularly points towards Van Dyck's head studies during the later second Antwerp period, as well as those of the early English period. Although not so many of these are in existence nowadays, old inventories inform us that there must have been many more.[2] Comparable in this respect is Van Dyck's *Study of a Bearded Man* from around 1632 (fig. 1). Apart from the clear colouristic and stylistic affinities, it is the man's pose which demands attention, roughly similar to that of the young man in the present work. This does not, however, suggest any direct relationship between the two works. After all, Van Dyck in all probability painted his study after his arrival in England. More pertinently, it points to the immense popularity of figures looking up at an angle within the Antwerp painters' baroque idiom.



Fig. 1 Sir Anthony van Dyck, *Portrait Study of a Bearded Man*, oil on paper, laid down on canvas, 37.8 by 31.8 cm., sale New York, Sotheby's, 29 January 2015, lot 59



Fig. 2 Paulus Pontius after Peter Paul Rubens, *Study of Nine Heads* (part of Rubens' so-called *Drawing Book*, a collection of twenty prints after the master's drawings), c. 1640, engraving, 326 x 224 mm., Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, detail

We come across figures contorting their necks as they look upwards in various mediums, shapes and sizes. Particularly striking in relation to the present work is a print depicting several heads after drawings by Rubens, executed by the engraver Paulus Pontius for Rubens' so-called *Drawing Book*, a series of twenty prints first published in Antwerp by the painter-publisher Pieter van Avont (1600-1652), probably following Rubens's death in 1640. Among the nine heads on the sheet, one is that of a young adolescent with wavy long hair, seen from below as he throws his head back to gaze upwards (fig. 2). A prominent member of Antwerp's artistic community, Willeboirts Bosschaert was no doubt familiar with this print series, yet he might just as well have seen Rubens's original drawing during their collaboration on Rubens' *Torre de la Parada* project in 1636-1638. In any case, although different in some respects – the absence of the visible teeth in the print, the slightly altered perspective, and the hair falling differently – it seems improbable that the present head could have been formulated as it is without Rubens' example.

Following the path set out by his famous predecessors, Willeboirts Bosschaert made ample use of head studies, several of which survive. A spectacular *Study of a Boy's Head*, which Willeboirts Bosschaert recycled many times throughout his oeuvre, was bought in 2015 from the Salomon Lilian Gallery by the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm (fig. 3).[3] Another *Head Study*, recently attributed to Willeboirts Bosschaert by Professor Hans Vlieghe, bears a more direct relation to the present work (fig. 4).[4] Not only does the study depict a figure gazing upwards like the young man in the present work; both works display a rather similar approach towards form and brushstroke, as can be observed, for instance, in the collar of both men's garments, and in the painterly accents moulding the face. Closest, though, to the present work in both composition and execution is a third study, last recorded in a London sale in 1981 (fig. 5).[5] One recognises the same aptitude in the rendering of the facial structure, the volume of the neck and the striking foreshortening of the nose. Not surprisingly, the sale catalogue listed this *Head of a Youth* as by Van Dyck, yet the work was rightly recognised by Willeboirts Bosschaert expert Axel Heinrich as a preparatory study for the latter's *Flight into Egypt* of 1647 (fig. 6), executed for the court of Prince Frederick Hendrick of Orange.[6] Clearly, Willeboirts Bosschaert based the angel guiding the Holy Family on this swift sketch of a youth.

One wonders if, likewise, the present study might also be connectable with Willeboirts Bosschaert's existing oeuvre. Indeed, a browse through the artist's oeuvre yields an immediate result. Not entirely unexpectedly, one recognises the physiognomy of the young man in the present study – albeit in mirror image – as that of the languishing, upward gazing Christian martyr St Sebastian, as seen in a painting last recorded at auction in Vienna in 1974 (figs. 7). Sebastian – an all-time favourite of Rubens and Van Dyck amongst others – had been bound to a tree and

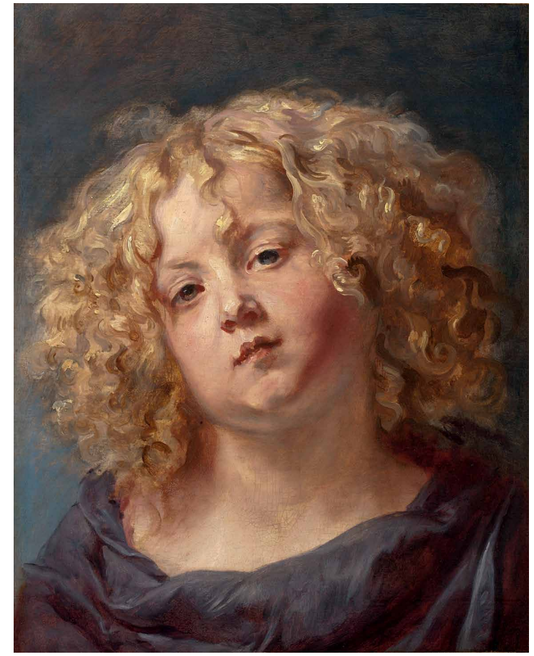


Fig. 3 Thomas Willeboirts Bosschaert, *Study of a Boy's Head*, oil on panel, 37.8 x 29 cm., Stockholm, Nationalmuseum

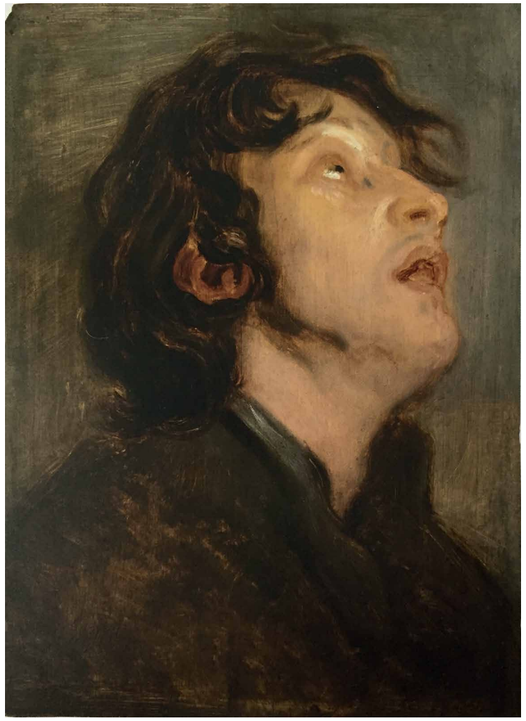


Fig. 4 Thomas Willeboirts Bosschaert, *Head Study of a Young Man*, oil on panel, 47.6 x 34.9 cm., sale London, Christie's, 9 July 2014, lot 161

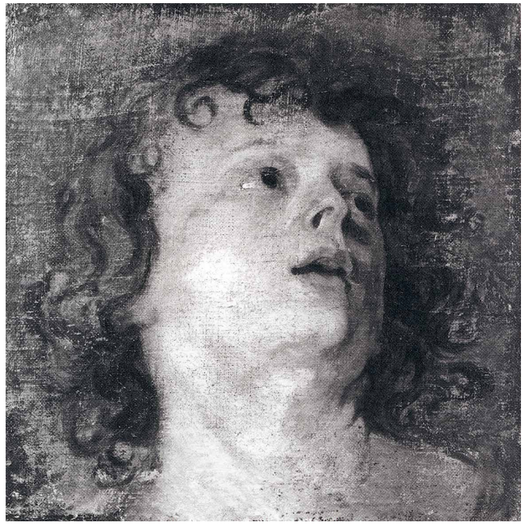


Fig. 5 Thomas Willeboirts Bosschaert, *Head of a Youth*, oil on canvas laid down on panel, 29.8 x 29.8 cm., sale London, Christie's, 30 October 1981, lot 28

shot with arrows for his convictions. The painting – one of at least three autograph versions by Willeboirts Bosschaert – shows the martyr in typical fashion, gazing upwards with suffering at his bound hands.[7] We discern in his portrayal the same despairing gaze, the same voluminous neck seen from below, the similarly sculpted mouth, the white of the left eye, and even the identically shaped, pitiful left eyebrow. While adopting the present head from Rubens's example, Willeboirts Bosschaert's angel approaching the martyr – again in mirror image – derives from Van Dyck's *Venus in the Forge of Vulcan* of c. 1630-1632, also in Potsdam, which he could have seen in Antwerp, or otherwise at the Court of the House of Orange.[8] In appropriating and emulating the style of, and the motifs in the work of the great Antwerp masters that he had known and worked with, but who had recently passed away (Rubens, as said, died in 1640, Van Dyck in 1641), Willeboirts Bosschaert honoured and prolonged their heritage in grandiose and graceful fashion. As demonstrated, the present work forms part of that achievement.

JH

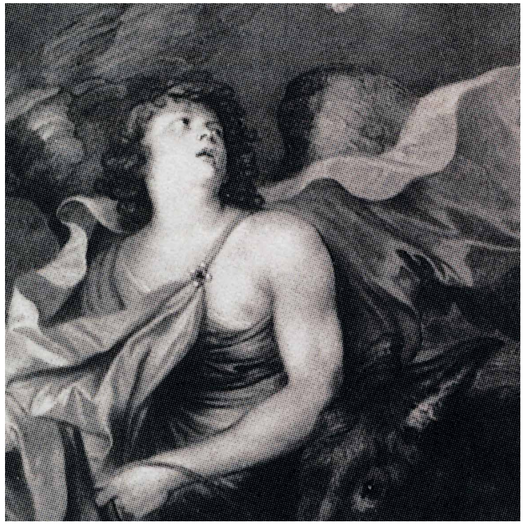


Fig. 6 Thomas Willeboirts Bosschaert, *The Flight into Egypt*, 1647,oil on canvas, 218 x 269 cm., Potsdam, Schloss Sanssouci, Bildergalerie, detail



Fig. 7 Thomas Willeboirts Bosschaert, *St Sebastian*, oil on canvas, 198 x 101 cm., sale Vienna, Dorotheum, 5 November 1974, lot 130, detail in mirror image

Notes

1 For further biographical references, see: A. Heinrich, 'Thomas Willeboirts Bosschaert', in: P. Huys Jansen (ed.), *Meesters van het zuiden : Barokschilders rondom Rubens*, exh. cat. 's-Hertogenbosch, Noordbrabants Museum 2000, pp. 119-144; A. Heinrich, *Thomas Willeboirts Bosschaert (1613/14-1654 : Ein flämischer Nachfolger Van Dycks*, Turnhout 2003, pp. 15-35.

2 See: H. Vey, in: S.J. Barnes et al., *Van Dyck : A Complete Catalogue of the Paintings*, London/New Haven 2004, p. 389, cat. no. III.198, comment: 'the Antwerp inventories are full of head studies that cannot all have been early works.' See also cat. nos. III.196, III.197.

3 See: Heinrich 2003, p. 219, cat. no. A44a; J. Hillegers, in: idem. et al., *Salomon Lilian Old Masters 2014*, pp. 86-91, cat. no. 26.

4 Attribution by Hans Vlieghe mentioned in the sale catalogue, London, Christie's, 9 July 2014, lot 161. Vlieghe compares the work with Heinrich 2003, cat. no. A42a (see our fig. 5).

5 Heinrich 2003, cat. no. A42a.

6 Heinrich 2003, cat. no. A42. The painting is mentioned in the 1647 accounts of the Stadhouder.

7 Heinrich 2003, cat. nos. A31, A31a and A31b.

8 Barnes et al. 2003, cat. no. III56, dating from Van Dyck's second Antwerp period, c. 1630-1632. The work is tentatively mentioned in 1641 in the will of Abbe Allesandro Cesare Scaglia in Antwerp, but surely in 1667 in the inventory of Noordeinde Palace in The Hague.

Colophon

Texts by:
Jasper Hillegers
Fred G. Meijer
Pippa Mason
Wendela Burgemeister

Catalogue Editor:
Natasha Broad

Design:
Annelies Mikmak

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René Gerritsen, Amsterdam

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