

# Picturing Processions: The Intersection of Art and Ritual in Seventeenth-century Dutch Visual Culture

By  
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Submitted to the graduate degree program in Art History and the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy.

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Picturing Processions: The Intersection of Art and Ritual in  
Seventeenth-century Dutch Visual Culture

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Date Approved: November 17, 2017

## Abstract

This study examines representations of religious and secular processions produced in the seventeenth-century Northern Netherlands. Scholars have long regarded representations of early modern processions as valuable sources of knowledge about the rich traditions of European festival culture and urban ceremony. While the literature on this topic is immense, images of processions produced in the seventeenth-century Northern Netherlands have received comparatively limited scholarly analysis. One of the reasons for this gap in the literature has to do with the prevailing perception that Dutch processions, particularly those of a religious nature, ceased to be meaningful following the adoption of Calvinism and the rise of secular authorities. This dissertation seeks to revise this misconception through a series of case studies that collectively represent the diverse and varied roles performed by processional images and the broad range of contexts in which they appeared.

Chapter 1 examines Adriaen van Nieulandt's large-scale painting of a leper procession, which initially had limited viewership in a board room of the Amsterdam Leprozenhuis, but ultimately reached a wide audience through the international dissemination of reproductions in multiple histories of the city. I argue that the painting memorialized a storied, yet defunct ritual and, in doing so, inscribed the values of community, civic charity and tolerance within Amsterdam's cultural memory.

Chapter 2 investigates Caspar Barlaeus's *Medicea hospes*, a lavishly illustrated book produced to honor the 1638 visit to Amsterdam of Marie de' Médici, Queen Regent of France. Intended for an elite European audience, the text featured a series of etched and engraved images depicting the Queen's ritual procession through the city as well as the *tableaux vivants* and water spectacles staged in her honor. I suggest that Barlaeus and the Amsterdam city council

capitalized on Marie's ritual entry and its subsequent representation in the *Medicea hospes* as opportunities to aggrandize and disseminate the city's reputation at home and abroad.

Chapter 3 considers paintings and prints of religious processions designed for an open, middle-class market. Often intimate in scale, these images demonstrate an ongoing interest in and demand for depictions of processional subjects, which civic and ecclesiastical bodies routinely subjected to legislation. I focus on scenes of parades held on Twelfth Night and Shrovetide, the two processional rituals most often depicted by Dutch artists, and argue that viewers desired such images for their pictorialization of communal identity and the concomitant cultural values they espoused.

Chapter 4 examines Hendrick van der Burch's unusual painting of the graduation procession of a doctoral candidate at Leiden University. The subject of such an institutional rite of passage, I suggest, would have appealed to residents of the surrounding university neighborhood as a familiar, seasonal marker of celebration and as a symbolic representation of the intersection between academic ritual and the local community. Collectively, the four chapters assert the changing roles, yet continued relevance of Dutch processional images within an increasingly secular, urban and culturally pluriform society.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the many individuals and institutions whose support made this dissertation possible and enriched my life in countless ways. The Kress Foundation Department of Art History at the University of Kansas assisted with my degree progress through teaching assistantships, academic awards and research funding. During 2013–14, the Judith Harris Murphy Fellowship afforded me a year-long break from teaching in order to focus on my writing. That same year, an award from the Graduate School at the University of Kansas partially funded a trip to the Netherlands where I conducted the majority of my primary source research. I am also thankful to Columbia University and the Nederlandse Taalunie for sponsoring my participation in courses in modern Dutch and early modern paleography. Taught with expertise and good humor by Dr. Frans Blom and Wijnie de Groot, these courses provided essential skills and research tools that facilitated the completion of this project.

While traveling abroad, the professional staff at numerous libraries, museums and archives provided assistance and/or offered meaningful suggestions with regards to my research. In particular, I would like to thank Dr. Friso Lammertse at the Museum Boijmans van Beunigen and Dr. Norbert Middelkoop at the Amsterdam Museum for generously sharing their time and deep knowledge of seventeenth-century Dutch art.

Additional thanks are due to the wonderful faculty in the art history department at the University of Kansas for guiding my intellectual and professional development, and for creating a stimulating academic environment. My deepest appreciation must go to my advisor, Dr. Linda Stone-Ferrier, for her unflagging support of my project, as well as professional and personal endeavors. Over many lengthy, long-distance phone calls, she patiently talked through

interpretive arguments with me and acted as a sounding board and continual source of motivation. This study is in many ways indebted to the stimulating ideas put forth in her research on Dutch genre imagery. She continues to inspire me as a model of scholarly excellence and as an exceptional teacher, mentor and friend.

I am also grateful to the other outstanding professors with whom I have had the privilege of working: to Dr. Sally Cornelison for introducing me to and encouraging my inquiry into the field of ritual studies; to Dr. Marni Kessler for imparting a critical understanding of the rich theories and methodologies of the discipline of art history; to Dr. Diane Fourny for sharing her teaching expertise, travel savviness and companionship; to Dr. Catherine Scallen for professional guidance and encouragement; and to Dr. Barbara Haeger, who first inspired my love of Dutch art as an undergraduate.

While taking coursework and writing this dissertation, I was fortunate to be part of a welcoming and supportive group of graduate students, including Jennifer Friess; Denise Giannino; Emily Kenagy; Chaz Kirchoff; Christa Kuebel; Morgan Philippi; Rebecca Rolph; Lindsey Wainwright; Loren Whittaker; and Tyler York. I am especially grateful to Jen, Denise and Loren, whose friendship means more to me than words can adequately express.

At home, I received the full support of my loving family and friends. In particular, my parents, Laura and Rich, have since my childhood exemplified dedication and what it means to see something through; my in-laws, Abbie and Dave, expressed their appreciation for my pursuits and offered joyful companionship during my travels; and my sister, Loren, offered her love, affection and comedic relief whenever I needed it. I owe the deepest gratitude to my husband and staunchest advocate, Reed. Thank you for your love and patience, your tireless encouragement, and for your interest in and support of my passions. Finally, to my son, Simon:

your endless curiosity and infectious belly laughs served as a daily source of motivation. I dedicate this dissertation to you.

M. C. B.

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## Introduction

Processions richly diverse in function, size and decorum punctuated the daily life of late medieval and early modern European societies. These ritualistic events involved a wide spectrum of the populace, took place in both urban centers and rural villages, and were staged for a variety of purposes, including most typically the recognition of political leaders or victories, the commemoration of religious holidays, the promotion of guild activities and the celebration of rites of passage. Not surprisingly, European artists working in a range of media found engaging subjects in the colorful spectacle of processions and the changing face of their performance as they wended their way along designated routes.

This study examines seventeenth-century Dutch representations of secular and religious processions, a diverse subset of genre imagery for which a strong market existed. I broadly define a procession as the collective movement of a group of people in the same direction with a symbolic purpose. They can be large-scale affairs involving many participants, extensive choreography and planning, simple rituals enacted by a handful of individuals, or something in between. By adopting such an expansive conception of processions, I address the numerous and disparate contexts in which Dutch artists represented this ritualized performance mode and the ways in which it permeated and gave structure to seventeenth-century life.

Contemporary writers used a variety of words to describe processions, including “*processie*,” “*optocht*,” “*stoet*” and “*ommegank*.” Each of these terms has Middle Dutch origins and thus dates to the period 1250–1550. Dictionaries of the era define “*processie*”<sup>1</sup> as a religious

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<sup>1</sup> *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche taal* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1882–1998), 12, pt. 2: 4261–65.

procession, while “*optocht*”<sup>2</sup> and “*stoet*”<sup>3</sup> were invoked in secular contexts. Frequently, however, writers did not subscribe to such strict definitions.<sup>4</sup> The word “*ommegang*” (literally “go-round”), for example, designated both ecclesiastical and civic processional traditions, and was also used in the general sense of walking around or ambling about.<sup>5</sup> In many instances, sources simply described the processional activity with generic terms, such as “*lopen*” (“to walk”) or “*rijden*” (“to ride”).<sup>6</sup> In the case studies presented in this dissertation, I make every effort to avoid semantic confusion by identifying the type of procession depicted and characterizing its origins, form and associated customs.

Representations of processions have not been studied in depth or breadth by scholars of Northern Netherlandish art, particularly in comparison to the art historical literature devoted to Southern Netherlandish processional traditions.<sup>7</sup> The limited scholarship on this topic may

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<sup>2</sup> *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche taal*, 11: 1293–94.

<sup>3</sup> *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche taal*, 15: 1780–81.

<sup>4</sup> The term “*processie*” could also be used in a more general sense in the context of a celebration. See the discussion in *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche taal*, 12, pt. 2: 4263.

<sup>5</sup> *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche taal*, 10: 222–26.

<sup>6</sup> Caspar Commelin, for example, noted the lepers on Copper Monday “met sleden, pijpen en trommels door de stadt reeden” (“rode through the city with sleds, pipes and drums”) in his history of Amsterdam. Caspar Commelin, *Beschryvinge van Amsterdam...: Desselfs eerste overspronk uyt den huysse der heeren van Aemstel en Aemstellant; Met een verhaal van haar leven en dappere Krijgsdaden; Amsterdams' kleyne beginselen, oudheyt, bemuring, en verscheyde vergrootingen...* (Waasberge, 1693), 559.

<sup>7</sup> For processional traditions in the Southern Netherlands, see Andrew Brown, *Civic Ceremony and Religion in Medieval Bruges c. 1300–1520* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Stijn Bussels, *Spectacle, Rhetoric and Power: The Triumphal Entry of Prince Philip of Spain Into Antwerp* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012); Veronika Joukes, “Processies en ommegangen in Antwerpen in de 17de eeuw” (Ph.D. diss., Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 1990); John Landwehr, *Splendid Ceremonies: State Entries and Royal Funerals in the Low Countries, 1515–1791* (Leiden: A. W. Sijthoff, 1971); Mark Meadow, “‘Met Geschickter Ordenen.’ The Rhetoric of Place in Philip II’s 1549 Antwerp ‘Blijde Incompst,’” *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 57 (January 1, 1999): 1–11; Mark Meadow, “Ritual and Civic Identity in Philip II’s 1549 Antwerp Blijde Incompst,” *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 49 (1998): 37–68; Emily J. Peters, “Den Gheheelen Loop Des Weerelts (The Whole Course of the World): Printed Processions and the Theater of Identity in Antwerp During the Dutch Revolt” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2005); Emily J. Peters, “Printing Ritual: The Performance of Community in Christopher Plantin’s La Joyeuse and Magnifique Entrée de Monseigneur Francoys...d’Anjou\*,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (2008): 370–413; B. A. M.

suggest that processions were less culturally relevant in the Dutch Republic than in other European centers. On the contrary, while it should be acknowledged that the United Provinces rarely staged civic entries or liturgical events of the same magnitude or with the same frequency as their continental neighbors, processions indeed performed meaningful roles in a broad range of social contexts.<sup>8</sup> Such rituals were orchestrated by numerous civic groups, including guilds, charities, *rederijker* ensembles (amateur theater groups) and *schutterijen* (militia companies); they commemorated visits by members of the House of Orange and foreign sovereigns; they honored the traditional observance of saints' days and other religious holidays; and they united families and neighbors on the occasion of marriage, funerals and other rites of passage. The images examined in this study evince the varied and diverse types of processional rituals pictured by Dutch artists and the broad range of purposes for which such images were intended, including those produced to honor public commissions, those for private consumption, and those designed for both elite and middle-class audiences.

Several reasons may account for the relative absence of literature that treats Dutch processional imagery. First, broad scholarly interest in the subject of processional pictures has focused almost exclusively on courtly and aristocratic festival culture in early modern Europe, which included ceremonial events such as processions, pageants, fireworks, theatrical displays

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Ramakers, *Spelen en figuren: Toneelkunst en processiecultuur in oudenaarde tussen Middeleeuwen en moderne tijd* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996); Hugo Soly, "Plechtige intochten in de steden van de Zuidelijke Nederlanden tijdens de overgang van Middeleeuwen naar nieuwe tijd: Communicatie, propaganda, spektakel," *Tijdschrift Voor Geschiedenis* 97 (1984): 341–61; Margit Thøfner, *A Common Art: Urban Ceremonial in Antwerp and Brussels During and After the Dutch Revolt* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2007); Mark Todd Trowbridge, "Art and Ommegangen: Paintings, Processions, and Dramas in the Late-Medieval Low Countries" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2000).

<sup>8</sup> Peter Davidson, "Festivals in the Netherlands," in *Europa Triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in Early Modern Europe*, ed. J. R. Mulryne, Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, and Margaret Schewing, vol. 2 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 469–70. Davidson describes the festival culture in the Northern Netherlands as relatively modest, particularly in comparison to the elaborate and costly events staged in southern Europe.

and other mythological or purely imaginary conceits. Many such occasions were chronicled in elaborate festival books, which provide fascinating visual and textual records.<sup>9</sup> In the Northern Netherlands, however, the strongly decentralized government and the relative lack of visibility of the House of Orange outside of The Hague meant that public festivities were rarely staged on the scale seen elsewhere in Europe. To understand the significance of processions and their representations in the Dutch Republic, we have to examine other contexts in which processional rituals occurred.

Second, the gap in scholarship may also be attributed to the prevailing narrative that processions, especially those rooted in Catholicism, ceased to exist in the Northern Netherlands following the adoption of Calvinism as the official, state-sanctioned religion and the rise of secular authorities.<sup>10</sup> However, the pictorial evidence, contemporary written accounts, the numerous and repeated proscriptions against certain public parades, and the ongoing criticisms of Catholic customs by Dutch Reformed theologians suggest that processions of all types continued to be staged with varying degrees of frequency throughout the seventeenth century. Though not impervious to the legislation enacted against them, some religious processional traditions adapted to the demands of the dominant Protestant religious order. Twelfth Night parades, for example, appear to have evolved from large-scale, public events into family-oriented customs celebrated in local neighborhoods. Ironically, the contested nature of certain processions may have made them more appealing subjects to both artists and patrons.

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<sup>9</sup> For an overview of early modern European festival books, see Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, “The Early Modern Festival Book: Form and Function,” in *Europa Triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in Early Modern Europe*, ed. J. R. Mulryne and Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 3–17.

<sup>10</sup> In *Nederlandsche volkskunde* (1930), the most frequently-cited survey of the Catholic calendar of feast days, Jos Schrijnen suggests that such holidays were all but extinct in the seventeenth century. Jos Schrijnen, *Nederlandsche volkskunde* (Zutphen: Thieme, 1930), 196.

This study seeks to create a broader picture of the possible functions of and meanings encoded in early modern Dutch processional imagery by identifying the kinds of processions artists depicted, situating those images in relation to their other European counterparts, and analyzing the significant interpretive questions that they raise. What, for example, motivated a patron to commission or, more often, purchase on the open market a depiction of a procession? What roles did actual processions serve and how did representations of those events function? How were processions and their depictions engaged in political, economic and/or social aims?

The images analyzed in this study prompt an investigation of the potential corollaries and differences between a representation of a procession and the event itself. Is a depiction capable of enacting or evoking the ritual to which it refers? Is it possible for an image to summon the ephemera—the sights, the sounds and the smells—of what it purports to represent, and if so, to what end? If processions themselves could construct and reinforce social values and communal identities, could representations of those ritualized events accomplish the same task? Furthermore, how were depictions of processional traditions mediated by artists and patrons? In what ways did actual experiences and descriptions of comparable performances shape processional imagery? These questions will explore the complex intersections between art and processions examined in this dissertation.

### **Interpretive Framework**

I approach this study with the underlying premise that the diverse processions depicted by Dutch artists are representations of ritual. I am not suggesting that artists merely transcribed rites enacted in the early modern period, because to do so would flatten the imagery and deny an artist's individual agency and artistic license. Rather, I mean that when artists depicted

processions, they engaged in the act of representing a particular and historically circumscribed type of socialized behavior in which participants performed the shared symbols of a culture.

Processions constituted a form of public expression, and as such they communicated deeply held beliefs, codified and reinforced communal identities, and charted societal evolution and change.<sup>11</sup> They were staged for a variety of purposes and could be endlessly adapted through variations in the designated route, the participating individuals, their costumes, accessories and/or musical accompaniment. Frequently, they employed repetitive and/or standardized formats.

As visual spectacles, processions conveyed their meaning by way of literal movement through time and geographic space. Though fleeting, the performative action created cohesion and/or the impression of unity amongst members of a group by virtue of its integrated choreography and by orienting participants and spectators within a larger system of shared values.<sup>12</sup> Depictions of such rituals often capture the forward momentum and linear progression of a particular group, and they distinguish the individuals who actively participate from those who passively look on. To represent a procession, then, is to give tangible form to an ephemeral performance while activating a network of visual relationships between the depicted performers, their audience and the viewer.

The individual case studies examined in this dissertation draw on ritual theory, a mode of inquiry rooted in anthropology and sociology, as well as the relevant scholarship of historians of art, politics, religion and socioeconomics in order to examine Dutch processional imagery within

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<sup>11</sup> Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 2–5. For further discussion of the characteristics of ritual activity, see Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 138–64.

<sup>12</sup> Kathleen Ashley, “Introduction: The Moving Subjects of Processional Performance,” in *Moving Subjects: Processional Performance in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Kathleen Ashley and Wim Hüskén (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), 12–15.

its larger social and historical contexts. The research for this dissertation thus looks to a substantial body of anthropological, sociological and historical scholarship that explores ritualistic behavior and its imaging in late medieval and early modern Europe.

The benchmark for most scholars of ritual theory lies in the distinction between the sacred and the profane as outlined by Émile Durkheim in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912).<sup>13</sup> Durkheim argued that rituals function as “rules of conduct” that guide how people act in the presence of sacred objects and spaces.<sup>14</sup> By bringing together a group of individuals, he reasoned, religious rites and ceremonies project an image of the sacred that visualizes the structure of the community and arouses feelings of “effervescence” that cause people to experience something larger than themselves.<sup>15</sup> Durkheim thus asserted that religion serves essentially a social function and that related rituals are the means by which shared social life is articulated and legitimated.

Many other scholars of ritual have embraced Durkheim’s theory of religious ceremony as an instrument of collective solidarity and extended his framework to secular contexts. The social anthropologist Max Gluckman characterized ritual as a broad spectrum of formalized social action that not only reflects the structure and arrangement of a particular group, but also creates opportunities to challenge the existing order. Gluckman criticized Durkheim’s theory of ritual as a model of social cohesion for failing to account for the inevitable conflict within any

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<sup>13</sup> Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. J. W. Swain (New York: Free Press, 1965).

<sup>14</sup> Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms*, 52–56.

<sup>15</sup> Steven Lukes, *Émile Durkheim: His Life and Work: A Historical and Critical Study* (New York: Penguin, 1977), 471. Durkheim argued that ritual strengthens “the bonds attaching the individual to the society of which he is a member.”

community.<sup>16</sup> “Every social system,” he contended, “is a field of tension, full of ambivalence, of cooperation and contrasting struggle.”<sup>17</sup>

Victor Turner, a symbolic anthropologist, built upon the theories of Durkheim and Gluckman, but argued that rituals are “social dramas” through which a society continually redefines itself.<sup>18</sup> He focused particularly on the transition stage of ritual, that is, after commencement but before completion, as a period of liminality, which he termed *communitas*. According to Turner, in the transition stage participants exist outside the boundaries of everyday hierarchies, which fosters intense feelings of community. Rituals, he posited, do not simply ease social conflicts, but rather “dramatize” the inequities of daily life to allow for the release of tension and to give form to the dominant values uniting a particular group.<sup>19</sup>

Clifford Geertz ascribed similar importance to ritual as a vehicle of sociocultural change. A symbolic anthropologist like Turner, Geertz contended that rituals respond to social structures rather than merely reflecting them, and thus both are in a continual process of redefinition. Rituals, he suggested, constitute a system of symbols and values that act as a “model of” a group’s idealized worldview and a “model for” its adaption or renewal.<sup>20</sup> He ultimately

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<sup>16</sup> Max Gluckman, *Essays On the Ritual of Social Relations* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963), 20–24.

<sup>17</sup> Max Gluckman, *Order and Rebellion in Tribal Africa* (New York: Free Press, 1963), 127.

<sup>18</sup> Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors; Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974), 23–35.

<sup>19</sup> Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1969), 97. Turner viewed rituals as orchestrations of structural order and antistructural *communitas*. “For individuals and groups, social life is a type of dialectical process that involves successive experience of high and low, *communitas* and structure, homogeneity and differentiation, equality and inequality ... the opposites, as it were, constitute each other and are mutually indispensable.”

<sup>20</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 114.



contended that rituals enable a group's ethos and lived experiences to affect and influence each other—to shape the social order rather than merely describe it.<sup>21</sup>

More recently, the religious studies scholar Catherine Bell approached the performance of ritual as the integration of cultural ideas and social disposition, or the point at which the two—thought and action—converge. Her interpretation concentrated specifically on the practice of ritual and the strategies employed by ritual actors to define, maintain or temper their social and cultural environments.<sup>22</sup> Bell argued that rituals must be analyzed within the “full spectrum of ways of acting within any given culture, not as some a priori category of action totally independent of other forms of action.”<sup>23</sup> In doing so, she jettisoned a universal definition of ritual and emphasized what people do and how they do it—in particular, how the movement of the body through a specially constructed space simultaneously prescribes and experiences the beliefs and/or values of a particular rite or ceremony.<sup>24</sup> Bell's more embracing view of ritual, which privileges action and practice, proves especially instructive for the examination of processional imagery presented here, for artists' depictions pictorialize and likewise hone focus on the collective movement of a group through space and time.

### **Previous Scholarship on Early Modern Processional Imagery**

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<sup>21</sup> Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 112. “In a ritual, the world as lived and the world as imagined, fused under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms, turns out to be the same world.”

<sup>22</sup> Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 74. Ritualization, according to Bell, should be regarded as “a matter of variously culturally specific strategies for setting off some activities from others, for creating and privileging a qualitative distinction between the ‘sacred’ and the ‘profane’ and for ascribing such distinctions to realities thought to transcend the powers of human actors.”

<sup>23</sup> Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 81.

<sup>24</sup> Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 81–83.

In addition to studies of ritual, my examination of Dutch processional imagery builds upon a substantial body of literature on early modern festivities and their representations, though nearly all focus on art and ritual produced outside the Dutch Republic. D. P. Snoep's volume on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Northern Netherlandish triumphal entries provides the most extensive previous examination of Dutch depictions of any type of procession.<sup>25</sup> The text offers a brief historical overview of the various civic entries that occurred throughout the Northern Netherlands between approximately 1580 and 1690, but provides relatively little interpretive analysis of the accompanying images. In separate publications, H. Rodney Nevitt investigated depictions of the triumphal entry into Amsterdam of Marie de' Médici of France and Jochem Becker discussed the triumphal entry in the same city of Mary Stuart of England.<sup>26</sup> Both authors viewed the respective processions they examined as strategic agents of political diplomacy.

Scholarship on representations of late medieval and early modern processions staged elsewhere in Europe focuses on those events with political or ecclesiastical bases for which visual and literary records survive.<sup>27</sup> Such processions include the grand theatrical displays staged to honor heads of state, military commanders and foreign dignitaries, and the highly scripted, large-scale religious processions that occurred across most of Europe. Edward Muir, for

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<sup>25</sup> D. P. Snoep, *Praal en propaganda: Triumfalia in de Noordelijke Nederlanden in de 16de en 17de eeuw* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Canaletto, 1975).

<sup>26</sup> H. Rodney Nevitt, *Maria de' Medici Enters Amsterdam, 1638: Prints by Pieter Nolpe*, brochure accompanying exhibition (East Lansing, MI: Kresge Art Museum, 1995); Jochem Becker, "The Princess of Orange's Welcome into Amsterdam in 1660," in *Europa Triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in Early Modern Europe*, ed. J. R. Mulryne, Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, and Margaret Schewing (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 575–83.

<sup>27</sup> Several volumes have made important contributions to the study of early modern festivals and pageantry. See J. R. Mulryne, Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, and Margaret Schewing, eds., *Europa Triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in Early Modern Europe*, 2 vols. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004); Barbara Wisch and Susan Scott Munshower, *"All the World's a Stage": Art and Pageantry in the Renaissance and Baroque* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University, 1990); Roy C. Strong, *Splendor at Court: Renaissance Spectacle and the Theater of Power* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973).

example, one of the first art historians to investigate festival culture through the lens of ritual, extensively studied the patterns of civic pageantry in Renaissance Venice. He viewed depictions of ceremonies staged by the *scuole grandi* (confraternities) and the events themselves as persuasive political propaganda capable of camouflaging unseemly realities in the service of larger beliefs or ideologies.<sup>28</sup> In a later publication, Muir focused specifically on the performative aspects of early modern processions and their ability to blur the distinction between participants and spectators. The audience, he explained, both views and is viewed by those individuals participating in the procession. The ritual experience thus creates “ritual-specific ways of seeing” that activates variable meanings for a procession and those who witness it.<sup>29</sup>

Larry Silver also considered the political potency of processional imagery through an examination of two large-scale print ensembles executed around 1515 by Albrecht Dürer under the supervision of Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I. According to Silver, *Triumphal Procession* and the *Arch of Honor* served a carefully devised campaign of what we today call “public relations” or “image politics” in order to ensure the emperor’s fame and control.<sup>30</sup> The iconography of the *Triumphal Procession*, in particular, would have appealed to a wide German audience of influential electors and lords, whose favor the emperor sought to curry.<sup>31</sup> In a later study, Silver argued that Dürer’s *Triumphal Procession* became an enduring model for Northern European prints and spurred the development of multi-sheet processional friezes. Such print

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<sup>28</sup> Edward Muir, “Images of Power: Art and Pageantry in Renaissance Venice,” *The American Historical Review* 84, no. 1 (1979): 50–52.

<sup>29</sup> Edward Muir, “The Eye of the Procession: Renaissance Ways of Seeing,” in *Ceremonial Culture in Pre-Modern Europe*, ed. Nicholas Howe (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2007), 129–54. Muir cautioned that one cannot affix a single meaning to a specific ritual performance.

<sup>30</sup> Larry Silver, “Paper Pageants: The Triumph of Emperor Maximilian I,” in *“All the World’s a Stage”*: *Art and Pageantry in the Renaissance and Baroque*, ed. Barbara Wisch and Susan Scott Munshower (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 1990), 293.

<sup>31</sup> Silver, “Paper Pageants,” 293–300.

series, according to the author, provided affordable means for social elites to reinforce constellations of power and authority.<sup>32</sup>

In contrast to studies by Silver, scholarship on Burgundian public ritual by Peter Arnade shifted focus away from the court and aristocrats to the roles of townspeople, who prepared and financed many urban festivities and ceremonies. Arnade claimed that processions and civic celebrations functioned less as a tool for social solidarity, as some ritual theorists have claimed, as they did a “cultural strategy through which citizens claimed legitimacy and maneuvered for concrete political concessions.”<sup>33</sup> Public ritual, he argued, served an important function: it provided desired opportunities for a city to garner prestige and negotiate power.<sup>34</sup> Mark Meadow similarly affirmed the importance of civic ritual in bolstering the rights and privileges of ordinary people. Through an examination of the preparation and iconography of Philip II’s 1549 Joyous Entry into Antwerp, he contended that the event represented a chance for the city to bargain over status and the authority of the prince over his subjects.<sup>35</sup>

More recently, Margit Thøfner interpreted sixteenth-century *ommegangen* (devotional processions) in Antwerp and Brussels as “collective acts of self-portraiture” that visualized and commemorated an entire polity. In keeping with earlier scholarship, she claimed that such processions served as vehicles for political propaganda fashioned to confer, maintain and

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<sup>32</sup> Larry Silver, “Triumphs and Travesties: Printed Processions of the Sixteenth Century,” in *Grand Scale: Monumental Prints in the Age of Dürer and Titian*, exh. cat., ed. Larry Silver and Elizabeth Wyckoff (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 22–26. For another study of processional series-format prints, see Peters, “Den Gheheelen Loop Des Weerelts.”

<sup>33</sup> Peter Arnade, “City, State, and Public Ritual in the Late-Medieval Burgundian Netherlands,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39, no. 2 (April 1, 1997): 308.

<sup>34</sup> Arnade, “City, State, and Public Ritual,” 307–10.

<sup>35</sup> Meadow, “Ritual and Civic Identity in Philip II’s 1549 Antwerp Blijde Incompst,” 40–42.

sometimes challenge political legitimacy.<sup>36</sup> Thøfner, however, placed particular emphasis on the performance of processions and the agency of common citizens. City officials, as well as painters, sculptors and architects, she claimed, orchestrated urban pageantry in order to bridge re-established Hapsburg authority and a strong local civic identity.<sup>37</sup>

Processional imagery related to vernacular traditions and local customs lack comparable scholarly examination.<sup>38</sup> A central focus of this dissertation will be to expand upon the existing literature by investigating the full range of sociocultural contexts in which processions were staged and examining the varied and changing roles they came to assume in seventeenth-century Dutch life.

## Structure and Organization

Thematic in its conception, this study consists of four chapters organized according to the types of processions depicted by Dutch artists. In each chapter, I situate the images within the changing role of actual processions, make critical and interpretive distinctions between the representation of a procession and the procession itself, and consider how such images articulated the continued cultural relevance of processions for seventeenth-century Dutch

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<sup>36</sup> Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 12; See also Trowbridge, “Art and Ommegangen.”

<sup>37</sup> Thøfner, *A Common Art*, 20–21.

<sup>38</sup> A small body of recent scholarship on Italian marriage and funeral processions and their depictions provides a welcome exception. See Cristelle Louise Baskins, ed., *The Triumph of Marriage: Painted Cassoni of the Renaissance*, exh. cat. (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum; Gutenberg Periscope Publishing Limited, 2008); Andrea Bayer, *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy*, exh. cat. (New York; New Haven: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Yale University Press, 2008); Philippa Jackson, “Pomp or Piety? The Funeral of Pandolfo Petrucci,” *Renaissance Studies* 20, no. 2 (2006): 240–52; Jacqueline Marie Mussacio, *Art, Marriage, and Family in the Florentine Renaissance Palace* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Brucia Witthoft, “Marriage Rituals and Marriage Chests in Quattrocento Florence,” *Artibus et Historiae* 3, no. 5 (2008): 43–59. See also James D. Stokes, “Processional Entertainments in Villages and Small Towns,” in *Moving Subjects: Processional Performance in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Kathleen Ashley and Wim Hüsken (Atlanta: Rodopi, 2001), 239–57.

society. I also explore the ways in which depictions of processions and the events themselves evolved or adapted in the wake of the Dutch Revolt (1568–1648), the adoption of Calvinism as the official, state-sanctioned religion and the rise of the Dutch middle class.

This examination of Dutch processional imagery is not comprehensive, but rather provides representative examples of the highly variable secular and religious parades, rites and ceremonies pictured by Dutch artists. Chapter 1 investigates Adriaen van Nieulandt's monumental painting of a charitable procession that depicts residents of Amsterdam's Leproenhuis (Leper House) as they process through the city while collecting alms. At the behest of the administrators of the Leproenhuis, Van Nieulandt executed the painting in 1633, nearly thirty years after the annual procession ceased to be staged. Through close analysis of the image, archival evidence and a consideration of ongoing seventeenth-century Dutch debates concerning the distribution of charity, I make two interpretive arguments. First, the picture commemorates the Leproenhuis' longstanding efforts to stimulate public philanthropy and evokes the values of community, civic charity and tolerance. Second, the painting exemplifies a deep engagement with the role of ritual in mediating conflicting attitudes towards the infirm and destitute, and the rights of civic institutions to conduct their own affairs, poor relief included. Van Nieulandt's painting, I argue, honors the institution for which it was designed and concretizes the tradition of the leper procession in Amsterdam's cultural memory.

Chapter 2 analyzes a richly illustrated festival book by the Dutch author Caspar Barlaeus produced to commemorate the four days of celebrations held in Amsterdam to honor the 1638 visit of Marie de Médicis, Queen Regent of France. The volume features seventeen etchings, including a portrait of Marie, seven views of processions and related festivities, and nine allegorical prints of the *tableaux vivants* staged for the occasion. Through a consideration of

Barlaeus's prose in tandem with close readings of the illustrations in the text, this chapter suggests that the images depart from the pictorial conventions of European ceremonial books. Instead, they engage native artistic traditions to evoke peace and prosperity in a distinctly Dutch idiom. The rituals honoring the Queen and their subsequent representation, I suggest, served in two ways as a political vehicle for the Amsterdam *vroedschap* (city council). The members wished to influence foreign policy in favor of a truce with Spain and they also asserted the city's economic and cultural preeminence both at home and abroad.

Chapter 3 examines prints and paintings of contemporary religious processions, with a particular focus on those staged for the holidays of Twelfth Night and Shrovetide. Highly esteemed artists such as Rembrandt, Jan Steen and Adriaen van de Venne, as well as lesser-known artists, produced images of these joyful and widely celebrated occasions for a middle-class market. Often intimate in scale and subject, they register the persistence of an officially banned Catholic tradition in the Northern Netherlands and visually reinforce the local communal and neighborhood ties that such traditions encouraged. I consider these pictures in the context of pressure from the States General and from the Dutch Reformed Church to reduce the scale of such public processions and to move the festivities indoors. A central contention of this chapter is that the representation of such processions could function as a rhetorical strategy for the modeling of social values. In the wake of evolving religious traditions, such imagery evoked variable meanings for an increasingly pluriform Dutch society.

Chapter 4 investigates an unusual seventeenth-century painting of a commonplace secular ritual, the graduation procession of a doctoral candidate at Leiden University. Between 1656 and 1659, Hendrick van der Burch painted the notable rite of passage while he lived across from the esteemed institution located on the Rapenburg canal. This chapter situates Van der Burch's

painting in relation to earlier and contemporary Dutch depictions of the university, as well as educational pursuits more broadly, and argues that the artist eschewed existing pictorial conventions. Instead, he capitalized on emerging trends in Dutch genre imagery, specifically the combination of topographic street views with scenes from daily life. In doing so, I contend, Van der Burch adopted his perspective as a resident of the depicted neighborhood to represent the commencement procession in a manifestly local and vernacular sensibility. The familiarity of the depicted tradition and its location on the Rapenburg would have resonated with neighborhood residents as a seasonal marker of celebration and a symbol of the intersection between academic ritual and the wider community. This chapter considers the value of familiar processions for actual spectators of such rituals and the potential market for Van der Burch's picture. The discussion thus forms a foil to earlier chapters that focused on processional imagery that placed greater emphasis on the active participants in a procession.

Ultimately, this study demonstrates that seventeenth-century Dutch artists responded to a steady demand for depictions of processions, which in turn, stimulated the market for them. The imagery articulated the continued relevance of actual processions in a range of secular and religious contexts. As performances, processions enacted certain shared cultural symbols and framed participants and bystanders within a structured visual, auditory and spatial experience, which unfolded over time. Representations of such rituals, I aim to show, perpetuated the fusion of long-lived communal performances with the changing rhythms of sensory ephemera, and served a multitude of political, social, religious and secular ends.



## Chapter 1

### **Representation and Ritual in Adriaen van Nieulandt's *Procession of Lepers on Copper Monday, 1633: Extolling Civic Virtues***

Adriaen II van Nieulandt's densely populated view of Amsterdam's Dam Square, titled *The Procession of Lepers on Copper Monday* (fig. 1.1), emanates a robust and lively energy even against the nondescript gallery wall in which it hangs in the Amsterdam Museum. This monumental painting over ten feet wide and nearly seven feet tall occupies pride of place at this institution, just as it did in the Amsterdam Leprozenhuis (Leper House) nearly three centuries ago. Van Nieulandt executed the painting in 1633 at the behest of the administrators of the Leprozenhuis to commemorate the annual lepers' procession on Koppermaandag (Copper Monday), a traditional feast day held the Monday after the first Sunday following Epiphany (January 6). On this day and the following Tuesday, the residents of the Leprozenhuis, accompanied by members of the Houtzagersgilde (Sawyer's Guild), were permitted to escape their normally sequestered existence and parade through the city of Amsterdam to collect alms.<sup>1</sup> This procession continued at regular intervals throughout the sixteenth century until the year 1604, when the Amsterdam burgomasters banned the event because of the enormous crowds it attracted and the unruly disturbances that ensued.<sup>2</sup> Curiously, it was not until twenty-nine years

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<sup>1</sup> Craft guilds were frequently involved in charitable activities in their cities. They participated in processions staged by both religious and secular authorities and collected donations for the indigent population. After the 1578 Alteration, for example, the Amsterdam city council ordered the guilds to set up collection boxes for the needy. The funds for these boxes came from money previously allocated for maintaining the guild altar and religious celebrations. See Alfons K. L. Thijs, "Religion and Social Structure: Religious Rituals in Pre-Industrial Trade Associations in the Low Countries," in *Craft Guilds in the Early Modern Low Countries: Work, Power, and Representation*, ed. Maarten Park et al. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 164.

<sup>2</sup> Norbert Middelkoop and Gusta Reichwein, *De oude meesters van de stad Amsterdam: Schilderijen tot 1800* (Bussum: THOTH, 2008), 71–72; Johannes ter Gouw, *De volksvermaken* (Haarlem: Bohn, 1871), 120–22.

after the procession's prohibition that any artist would produce a representation of this significant communal ritual.

The painting's unusual subject and its appearance in 1633 prompt several questions that have yet to be addressed: What motivated the Leprozenhuis regents to commission an image of the then-obsolete leper procession? Was it simply to commemorate a past tradition for the benefit of posterity? Or did the procession have continuing and/or renewed relevance for the Amsterdam community? What role had the actual procession served and could Van Nieulandt's painting have performed a similar function? How did the public view lepers and other recipients of poor relief in 1633?

This chapter elucidates these questions and strives to show how *The Procession of Lepers* represents a previously contested communal ritual in a manner that honored the institution for which it was designed while also negotiating conflicting societal attitudes towards the poor and the distribution of charity at the time of the painting's commission. Whether the clergy or lay organizations should preside over philanthropic institutions, an issue which had persisted since the Dutch Revolt, proved central to the ongoing dispute between the Dutch Reformed Church and its most vocal dissenters, the Remonstrants.<sup>3</sup> By situating the procession in the Dam, Amsterdam's municipal and economic center, and placing visual emphasis on the communal bestowal of charity, Van Nieulandt and the regents who commissioned the painting made a case for civic, as opposed to religious, authority and the right of local governments to conduct their own affairs, poor relief included. Furthermore, by virtue of the painting's scale and perspective, the artist evoked an idealized experience of the leper procession and therefore affixed the bygone

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<sup>3</sup> For debates concerning the oversight of charitable institutions, see Sheila Muller, "Jan Steen's Burger of Delft and His Daughter: A Painting and Politics in Seventeenth-Century Holland," *Art History* 12, no. 3 (1989): 270–73.

event and its attendant values of community, civic charity and tolerance within Amsterdam's cultural memory. These exact values, as well as the privileges of local sovereignty, were fiercely debated with renewed intensity by Remonstrant supporters in the late 1620s and early 1630s.

The chapter begins with a close analysis of the picture and its previous interpretations by art historians, followed by an examination of pictorial precedents and related imagery, which attest to the painting's unique qualities within an historical context. Next, a consideration of the Leprozenhuis regents' possible motivations for commissioning the picture accounts for its exceptional subject and unusual combination of imagery, particularly the inclusion of numerous civic motifs. This section also situates the painting in relation to the Remonstrant–Counter-Remonstrant debate in order to argue that the painting offered a subtle show of support for the rights of local government and the importance of civic virtues.

The analyses that follow augment this interpretation: First, they reveal the ritual strategies of the leper procession and its subsequent portrayal, with particular attention paid to the role of Van Nieulandt's highly mediated representation of the ritual in mitigating social divisions and fortifying municipal support. Second, they investigate the variable seventeenth-century attitudes and mostly negative beliefs towards leprosy and poor relief, as well as their manifestations (or conspicuous absence) in Van Nieulandt's painting. As demonstrated by this discussion, the choice to portray the lepers in a positive light and without the markers of their disease would have cohered with the Leprozenhuis regents' efforts to stimulate civic philanthropy while simultaneously commemorating their institution. By way of conclusion, the final section explores further the implications of the regents' attempt to revitalize the tradition of the leper procession in visual form. An examination of the repeated imaging of *The Procession of Lepers*, as well as its description in numerous later Amsterdam city histories, underscores the

significance ascribed to Van Nieulandt's painting in preserving that ritual within Amsterdam's cultural memory.

### ***The Procession of Lepers in History and Art History***

*The Procession of Lepers* depicts the spirited leper parade wending its way around Amsterdam's Dam Square among buildings, crowds and a lively market. The lepers can be easily identified by their round hats, embellished with white ribbons, and the clappers they hold in their hands to warn of their approach. Along with their attendants and the members of the sawyers' guild, they pass the ships moored in the Damrak, march behind the square Waag (weigh house) decorated with Amsterdam's coat of arms, and continue alongside the old Stadhuis (city hall) and the adjacent Tribunal before arriving in the bustling city center. Some lepers proceed on foot while others sit in groups of three in horse-drawn sleighs, each of which contains a man, woman and child. The female figures hold collection plates in their laps to accept the alms generously offered by passersby.

The ceremonial focus of the picture can be found in the lower left corner, where a drummer wearing an emerald sash marks time. Immediately behind him, a sawyer proudly carries the emblem of the Houtzagersgilde, the *Janneman*,<sup>4</sup> which consists of an elaborately festooned staff topped with mechanized dolls surrounded by a fruit-laden wreath. Four dancing figures encircle the central doll representing a sawyer, which grasps one end of a saw that moved when operated by means of a pulley and cord.<sup>5</sup> A representation of an actual sawyer at the far

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<sup>4</sup> *Janneman* is a Middle Dutch word meaning man or the male name Jan. In reference to the Houtzagersgilde emblem, the word should be understood as a general term for "every man."

<sup>5</sup> The *Janneman*, with its lush greenery in full fruit, was related to the maypole. Both were associated with fertility and the coming of spring. See J. H. Kruizinga, "Herinneringen aan Koppermaandag," *De vriend des huizes: Tijdschrift voor het volk* 66, no. 1 (1950): 15; Linda Stone-Ferrier, *Dutch Prints of Daily Life*:

left of the composition forms a visual parallel to the emblem. Standing with his right arm akimbo, he holds a bundle of branches and carries the tools of his trade: an axe hangs at his waist and he grasps a pole saw or possibly a cant hook with his left hand.<sup>6</sup> Respectable burghers and their children greet the procession with enthusiasm while the Leprozenhuis *binnenmoeders* (house mothers) extend collection plates draped in white cloth.

Van Nieulandt's portrayal of this festive occasion presents Amsterdam as a thriving metropolis that visually manifests the economic ascendancy the city had experienced by the time of the painting's commission in 1633.<sup>7</sup> A flurry of activity surrounds the Weigh House, where all imported goods over fifty pounds were measured before they were subsequently sold. Merchants load sacks of grain onto enormous scales while other tradespeople, including a butter seller, a faucet and ladle dealer, and a ratcatcher ply their wares in the crowded center. The action continues unabated in the margins of the painting. To the right, a cluster of people gathers to listen to a quacksalver offer to perform gall- and kidney-stone surgeries.<sup>8</sup> Below them, in the lower right corner, a group of city officials clad in black- and red-striped uniforms—the official colors of Amsterdam—marches with a poster advertising a lottery for the benefit of the

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*Mirrors of Life or Masks of Morals?*, exh. cat. (Lawrence, KS: Spencer Museum of Art, 1983), 120.

<sup>6</sup> Cant hooks, also called peaveys, were used for moving logs. Norbert Middelkoop suggested that the figure could be a broom-maker rather than a sawyer. Broom-makers may have had possible ties to the Houtzagersgilde. Middelkoop, e-mail message to author, April 7, 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Arthur Wheelock, "Worthy to Behold: The Dutch City and Its Image in the Seventeenth Century," in *Dutch Cityscapes of the Golden Age*, exh. cat., ed. Ariane van Suchtelen and Arthur Wheelock (Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, 2008), 20. By the beginning of the Twelve Year's Truce in 1609, Amsterdam had established its reputation as an international trading center. The city's increased prosperity coincided with a surge in the population, which necessitated physical expansion and many new buildings.

<sup>8</sup> Quacks generally lacked professional status because they were not permitted to join the local guilds. For a fee, they were granted permission by the local government to practice for a prescribed period of time. They frequently specialized in hernia, cataract and gallbladder surgery. See Carol Jean Fresia, "Quacksalvers and Barber-Surgeons: Images of Medical Practitioners in 17th-Century Dutch Genre Painting" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1991), 180.

municipal *dolhuis* (madhouse). Amidst the clamor and commotion, justice prevails, as demonstrated by the sheriff, who, dressed in a fur overcoat, strides in front of the Tribunal while an apprehended criminal trails behind. Such inclusions impart a sense of vibrancy to the painting and the perception that all vocations and members of all social classes flourish in this community under the watchful eye of the city magistracy.

This remarkably detailed painting commemorates a tradition held on Koppermaandag, a feast day celebrated widely in the Northern Netherlands and elsewhere in Europe beginning in the late Middle Ages and continuing, in various forms, as late as the twentieth century.<sup>9</sup> Despite disparate accounts of the holiday's origins and the significance of its name, it is generally accepted that the feast day stems from a pagan past, when various festivities were staged around the winter solstice between late December and early January.<sup>10</sup> The name may possibly be related to the observances that accompanied the celebration, as the root word *kopper* can mean a feast in Dutch and *kopperen* refers to drinking, dining and merrymaking.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> After about 1700, Koppermaandag became closely associated with the printing trade in the Northern and Southern Netherlands. Printers would often distribute festive broadsheets, usually featuring a rhyme or song lyrics and/or an illustration, in honor of the occasion. A large collection of these prints is housed in the library of the Universiteit van Amsterdam. See Johan de Zoete and Martien Versteeg, *Koppermaandagprenten: Verkenning van een Nederlandse grafische traditie*, exh. cat. (Amsterdam: KVB, 1991), 17.

<sup>10</sup> Zoete and Versteeg, *Koppermaandagprenten*, 14–15; Gouw, *De volksvermaken*, 120–21; Willem van de Poll, *Nederlandsche volksfeesten* (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1871), 22. In England, the holiday was referred to as Handsele Day (a handsele is a small New Year's gift) or Plough Monday, from the tradition of pulling a decorated plough through the town. In the Southern Netherlands, the term Egyptian Monday was used because of the processions staged that recalled the Flight into Egypt. Blauer Montag (Blue Monday) was celebrated in Germany, though this day also applies to other occasions free from work.

<sup>11</sup> Poll, *Nederlandsche volksfeesten*, 22–25; Zoete and Versteeg, *Koppermaandagprenten*, 14–15. Many other possibilities have been offered to explain the origins of the name Koppermaandag. Some etymologists have suggested that the word comes from *coppel*, or pair, because the story of the Marriage at Cana was traditionally read in January. Koppermaandag thus became a traditional day for couples to marry. Alternatively, *copper* could refer to cup-setting, a tool for reducing blood pressure similar to blood-letting. The holiday was the traditional feast day of the barber-surgeons who practiced this procedure.

Van Nieulandt's painting captures an air of revelry customary for this joyous holiday. The few surviving records of Copper Monday festivities describe them as exuberant occasions full of singing and dancing that periodically led to unruly behavior. An Utrecht chronicle from 1456, for example, explains that "*verloore Maandagh* ("Lost Monday") was passed "*in veel vreugde en dertelheit*" ("with much merriment and playfulness"); there was begging, mainly for food and drink which people enjoyed in the evening, and "*veele ongebondenheden*" ("much licentiousness").<sup>12</sup>

Individual customs associated with Copper Monday differed slightly from one location to the next. In Vlieland, boys and girls processed from house to house while singing and proffering gifts of eggs, fish, breads and meats. Residents of Gelderland played games such as *haringtrekken* (herring-pulling), a contest whereby participants attempted to bite off the head of a herring suspended by a rope while riding on horseback.<sup>13</sup> In Amsterdam, the holiday marked the annual lepers' parade and served as a feast day for the craft guilds, including the sawyers, millers and masons. As pictured by Van Nieulandt, members of these guilds customarily joined the leper procession. The event afforded them the opportunity to demonstrate their philanthropic largesse and make a collective public appearance, thereby enhancing the group's prestige and social status.<sup>14</sup>

Other towns also staged processions on behalf of their leper populations,<sup>15</sup> though numerous Amsterdam city histories suggest that the event there proved most popular and

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<sup>12</sup> Zoete and Versteeg, *Koppermaandagprenten*, 18.

<sup>13</sup> Kruizinga, "Herinneringen aan Koppermaandag," 12; David Hartsema, *Koppermaandag* (Bedum: Profiel, 1989), 2; Zoete and Versteeg, *Koppermaandagprenten*, 18.

<sup>14</sup> See footnote 1.

<sup>15</sup> S. J. Gudlaugsson, "Wat heeft Pieter Bruegel met zijn 'bedelaars' bedoeld?," *Kunsthistorische Mededelingen van het Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie* 3/4 (1947): 33.

garnered the greatest degree of prestige.<sup>16</sup> Such texts described prolonged festivities lasting two days or more: On Monday, they reported, the Leprozenhuis residents and guild members processed “*met sleeden, pijpen en trommels*” (with sleighs, pipes and drums) as they collected alms through the Oude Zijde (Old Side), the area east of the Amstel River and the location of the Leprozenhuis, before concluding with a meal in the Gasthuis (hospital).<sup>17</sup> The following day, they traversed the section west of the Amstel known as the Nieuwe Zijde (New Side) and dined at the Weeshuis (Orphanage).<sup>18</sup> Van Nieulandt depicted the lepers and guild members as they paraded through the Dam, the city’s civic and ceremonial center, located in the Nieuwe Zijde.

No textual descriptions of the exact route survive, and thus we cannot say whether the artist’s representation of the procession corresponds with the actual event. The setting in the Dam could have been requested by the patrons or invented by the artist. As will be argued, the choice to portray the leper procession in the Dam bestowed significance on the occasion—the only time during the calendar year when the residents were permitted to leave the confines of the leper house—and visually emphasized the importance of civic virtues and the role of Amsterdam authorities in assuring public welfare.

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<sup>16</sup> Caspar Commelin, *Beschryvinge van Amsterdam...: Desselfs eerste overspronk uyt den huyse der heeren van Aemstel en Aemstellant; Met een verhaal van haar leven en dappere Krijgsdaden; Amsterdams’ kleyne beginselen, oudheyt, bemuring, en verscheyde vergrootingen...* (Waasberge, 1693), 559; Tobias van Domselaer, *Beschryvinge van Amsterdam: Haar eerste oorspronk uyt den huyse der heeren van Aemstel en Aemstellant, met een verhaal van haar leven en dappere krijgsdaden... Tot dezen tegenwoordigen jare 1665...* (Marcus Willemsz. Doornick, 1665), 225; Jan Wagenaar, *Amsterdam, in zyne opkomst, aanwas, geschiedenissen, voorregten, koophandel, gebouwen, kerkenstaat, schoolen, schutterye, gilden en regeeringe, beschreeven* (Amsterdam, 1760), 312–13.

<sup>17</sup> Commelin, *Beschryvinge van Amsterdam...*, 559.

<sup>18</sup> Commelin, *Beschryvinge van Amsterdam...*, 559; Pieter Scheltema, *Aemstel’s oudheid of gedenkwaardigheden van Amsterdam*, vol. 5 (Amsterdam, 1863), 40–44; Gouw, *De volksvermaken*, 122; Kruizinga, “Herinneringen aan Koppermaandag,” 15; B. de Ridder, “Van leprozenhuis tot proveniershuis,” *Ons Amsterdam* (1952), 106.



Previous interpretations of *The Procession of Lepers* have focused primarily on identifying and describing the painting's numerous anecdotal details or have singled out certain motifs for historical analysis.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the work invites such attention by virtue of its enormous scale, which permitted the artist to portray people, architecture and objects with an exacting intricacy. In the earliest analysis of the painting, Pieter Scheltema proposed that Van Nieulandt represented a specific event, the annual leper procession held on 13 January 1592.<sup>20</sup> He determined this date from the inclusion of the Dolhuis lottery poster in the lower right corner, as city officials held a drawing benefiting that institution in August of 1592 and began advertising it as early as the spring of the previous year.<sup>21</sup> Scheltema further identified several figures within the composition on the basis of this dating scheme, including the sheriff William van der Does (in front of the Tribunal), the town councilmen Laurens Jacobsz. Reael and Jan Kornelisz. Verhee (the figures wearing black and red, white and blue sashes in the lower right), and the painter Van Nieulandt (dressed in a "violet jerkin" to the left of the center foreground).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> A handful of historical studies, exhibition essays and museum catalogs include Van Nieulandt's *The Procession of Lepers on Copper Monday*. Scheltema, *Aemstel's oudheid*, 5: 40–44; Gouw, *De volksvermaken*, 122; Albert Blankert and Rob Ruurs, *Amsterdams Historisch Museum: Schilderijen daterend van voor 1800: Voorlopige catalogus* (Amsterdam: Amsterdams Historisch Museum, 1979), 71–72; Fresia, "Quacksalvers and Barber-Surgeons," 200–204; Jane E. Kromm, "The Early Modern Lottery in the Netherlands: Charity as Festival and Parody," in *Parody and Festivity in Early Modern Art*, ed. David R. Smith (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 51–61; Kruizinga, "Herinneringen aan Koppermaandag," 15; Middelkoop and Reichwein, *De oude meesters van de stad Amsterdam*, 96–97; Michiel Jonker, "Public or Private Portraits: Group Portraits of Amsterdam Regents and Regentesses," in *The Public and Private in Dutch Culture of the Golden Age*, ed. Arthur Wheelock and Adele Seeff (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2000), 210–12.

<sup>20</sup> J. ter Gouw also suggested a date of 1592 following Scheltema's publication just eight years before. Scheltema, *Aemstel's oudheid*, 5: 35; Gouw, *De volksvermaken*, 122.

<sup>21</sup> Scheltema, *Aemstel's oudheid*, 5: 35; Norbert Middelkoop, "Gillis Coignet and the Amsterdam Lottery of 1592: Locating an Extraordinary Night Scene," *Journal of the Historians of Netherlandish Art* 2, no. 1–2 (2010): 1–8.

<sup>22</sup> Scheltema, *Aemstel's oudheid*, 5: 41–42.

However, these identifications and Scheltema's interpretation that the painting depicts precisely the 1592 procession have not been universally accepted.

In the most recent catalog of the Amsterdam Museum, Norbert Middelkoop avoided assigning a specific date to the procession, and alternatively proposed that it could depict the annual event any time between 1590 and 1604. He further cautioned against relying on the banderole at the top of the canvas, which reads "*Jaarlykse Ommegank der Leproozen, op Coppertiesmaandag Opgehouden in 't Jaar 1604 (Yearly Procession of Lepers held in the Year 1604)*," as restorers likely added this motif in the eighteenth century.<sup>23</sup> Focusing instead on the 1633 execution date, Middelkoop understood the painting as a retrospective view of a "procession of yesteryear."<sup>24</sup> Similarly, in an essay on group portraits of Amsterdam regents, Michiel Jonker observed the time lapse between the last year the parade occurred and the creation of Van Nieulandt's painting. He posited that the canvas might best be thought of as a "remembered historical document" that contributed to the prestige of the Leprozenhuis as did the other paintings and decorations that adorned its interior.<sup>25</sup> Such a contention, however, does not address how strikingly different *The Procession of Lepers* is from the subjects typically commissioned by charitable institutions, which I will discuss below.

Carol Jane Fresia offered the most comprehensive treatment of Van Nieulandt's painting in her study on images of quacks and barber-surgeons in Dutch genre painting. Fresia interpreted

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<sup>23</sup> Middelkoop suggests on the basis of style that the banderole and the angels supporting it were inherited from a restoration between 1735 and 1740. Middelkoop and Reichwein, *De oude meesters van de stad Amsterdam*, 96–97.

<sup>24</sup> Middelkoop and Reichwein, *De oude meesters van de stad Amsterdam*, 96–97.

<sup>25</sup> Between 1624 and 1675, eight group portraits of the Leprozenhuis regents were completed, including six paintings and two drawings. Ferdinand Bol painted a biblical history in 1661 for the institution. In 1675, Gerard de Lairesse created ceiling decorations, a sketch of which is reproduced by Jonker. Jonker, "Public or Private Portraits: Group Portraits of Amsterdam Regents and Regentesses," 210–212.

the artist's work "less as an illustration of a specific occurrence than a commemoration of a larger civic campaign for the care of the sick."<sup>26</sup> She argued that Van Nieulandt employed compositional devices to affect a comparison between the leper procession and the smaller-scale parade advertising the lottery. These emblems of charity, Fresia suggested, served to emphasize the virtues of compassion and inclusion, and specifically, the role of the Leprozenhuis in breaking down traditional social barriers for the betterment of public health. She further viewed the charlatan doctor as a visual parallel to the lepers, for both were marginalized within mainstream society.<sup>27</sup> My argument builds upon previous analyses of *The Procession of Lepers* yet offers an alternative focus by addressing the painting's appearance in 1633, the particular circumstances in which Van Nieulandt created the painting, and the regents' possible motivations for commissioning the picture.

### **Pictorial Precedents and Motivations for Commissioning *The Procession of Lepers***

The regents' decision to commission a painting representing a defunct ritual proved highly unusual for several reasons beyond the twenty-nine year time lapse between Van Nieulandt's execution of the work and the last year the procession was held. *The Procession of Lepers* had no visual precedents, a fact that is quite striking given the frequency with which the Amsterdam parade was staged and the audiences it purportedly drew. Only a handful of representations of lepers' processions in any pictorial context were previously produced and only by a select number of artists: Pieter Bruegel the Elder included a procession of lepers in the center background of *The Battle Between Carnival and Lent*, painted in 1559 (fig. 1.2). The same

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<sup>26</sup> Fresia, "Quacksalvers and Barber-Surgeons," 202.

<sup>27</sup> Fresia, "Quacksalvers and Barber-Surgeons," 202–8.

artist produced a picture in 1568 of a small procession of five cripples wearing foxtails, a marker of leprosy, accompanied by a woman with a begging bowl (fig. 1.3).<sup>28</sup> Additionally, Pieter Aertsen and Marten van Cleef executed images of small-scale leper parades in 1568 and 1579, respectively, which share compositional similarities with Bruegel's *Beggars*.<sup>29</sup> Other than Van Nieulandt's picture, the only depictions of leper processions that survive from the seventeenth century are Claes Jansz. Visscher's 1608 etching, which depicts a humble group collecting alms in the countryside (fig. 1.4), and Joost Cornelisz. Droochsloot's painting of 1625, which similarly features a leper parade on Copper Monday (fig. 1.5). However, none of these examples portrays a procession of lepers with the specificity of place evident in Van Nieulandt's canvas. Furthermore, the earlier images render the festivity on a significantly smaller scale with fewer figures and far less attention to detail. *The Procession of Lepers* stands in stark contrast by virtue of its large size, elaborate setting and intricate representation of the leper parade.

Van Nieulandt's painting thus emerges as a fascinating anomaly with idiosyncrasies that should be understood in relation to the regents and institution responsible for its commission. *The Procession of Lepers* departs significantly from the types of works previously commissioned by the Leprozenhuis and charitable organizations in general, though they share a few notable themes. Typically, the boards of philanthropic institutions enjoined artists to produce group portraits of their members or allegorical images of the Works of Mercy. The latter subject was

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<sup>28</sup> Exactly what Bruegel's *Beggars* represents has been the subject of much scholarly debate. S. J. Gudlaugsson first proposed that the painting depicts a Copper Monday celebration based on the inclusion of the woman who carries a plate for the collecting of alms and the paper crowns that several of the beggars wear. These crowns were frequently worn during the celebrations of Epiphany and Shrovetide. Larry Silver echoes this view in his survey of sixteenth-century Flemish genre painting. Gudlaugsson, "Wat heeft Pieter Bruegel met zijn 'bedelaars' bedoeld?," 33–35; Larry Silver, *Peasant Scenes and Landscapes: The Rise of Pictorial Genres in the Antwerp Art Market* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 103–6.

<sup>29</sup> One painting of a leper procession by Pieter Aertsen and two by Marten van Cleef were identified and published by S. J. Gudlaugsson in 1947. The three paintings had recently been offered at auction. See Gudlaugsson, "Wat heeft Pieter Bruegel met zijn 'bedelaars' bedoeld?," 32–35.

inspired by Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount, when Christ identified the righteous as those who feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, shelter the homeless, clothe the needy, care for the sick, visit the prisoner and bury the poor. Images portraying these seven acts became popular amongst poor relief organizations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as the subjects offered a devotional context for almsgiving and provided a moral exemplar to the administrators who oversaw the care and distribution of poor relief.<sup>30</sup>

Joost Cornelisz. Droochsloot's *The Seven Works of Mercy* (fig. 1.6), produced in 1618 for the St. Barbara and St. Lawrence Gasthuis in Utrecht, serves as a typical example which also provides a useful contrast to Van Nieulandt's canvas in terms of subject and theme. Against the backdrop of a neighborhood street, the artist depicted the city officials responsible for administering charity as they attend to the needy in ways that correspond to the seven acts extrapolated from Christ's sermon. A sculptured frieze above the entrance to the Gasthuis on the left illustrates the parable of the Good Samaritan and provides an interpretation of the contemporary image of fellowship in the foreground.<sup>31</sup> The artist placed the visual focus on the acts of almsgiving, much like Van Nieulandt would do a little over a decade later. Both paintings affirm the virtue of charity and visually persuade the viewer of its importance within the greater urban landscape. Yet whereas Droochsloot derived the subject from scripture, Van Nieulandt evoked a regularly-occurring event from Amsterdam's recent past.

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<sup>30</sup> Sheila D. Muller, *Charity in the Dutch Republic: Pictures of Rich and Poor for Charitable Institutions* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1985), 73. The most well-known images of the Works of Mercy include a group of five panels formerly attributed to Werner van den Valckert that were produced for the Amsterdam College of Aalmoezeniers, 1626–29 (Amsterdam Museum, Amsterdam) and Jan de Bray's *The Works of Mercy*, 1663 (Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem), executed for the Heilige Geest Gasthuis in Haarlem.

<sup>31</sup> Muller, *Charity in the Dutch Republic*, 93–94.

Group portraits for charitable institutions, unlike the Works of Mercy, placed greater emphasis on the management and oversight of such organizations than on the distribution of charity. Originating around 1617, the subject continued to be a favored choice for the decoration of almshouses throughout the seventeenth century.<sup>32</sup> Such paintings were paid for by the governors themselves and typically hung in the boardrooms of their institutions. They most often represented the sitters seated at a table and occupied with papers, coins and other signs of their business acumen. Such accessories demonstrated the regents' experience and capability in financial matters, a necessary requirement for their appointment, along with citizenship, personal wealth and a high social station.<sup>33</sup>

The conventions of this type of portraiture, plainly visible in two works executed in 1624 by Werner Jacobsz. van de Valckert for the Leprozenhuis, reveal an interest in commemoration shared by *The Procession of Lepers*, though their subjects differ entirely. *The Regents of the Leprozenhuis* (fig. 1.7) depicts the four male governors and their servant conducting the institution's affairs in front of a stately architectural setting. A sculpted stone frieze in the background portrays scenes illustrating the Works of Mercy and the parable of Dives and Lazarus, an appropriate subject given the latter's role as the patron saint of lepers and beggars.<sup>34</sup> *The Regentesses of the Leprozenhuis* (fig. 1.8), though not intended to be viewed as a pendant

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<sup>32</sup> Cornelis de Voort painted the first group portrait of regents of a charitable institution in 1617 for the administration of the *Sint-Peters of Binnengasthuis*. Muller, *Charity in the Dutch Republic*, 12–13.

<sup>33</sup> Regents were typically appointed for life unless they opted to retire. The position was often used as a stepping-stone to positions on the town council or other government roles. B. Haak and Amsterdams Historisch Museum, *Regenten en regentessen, overliden en chirurgijns: Amsterdamse groepsportretten van 1600 tot 1835*, exh. cat. (Amsterdam: Amsterdams Historisch Museum, 1972), 53; Marijke Carasso-Kok and Amsterdams Historisch Museum, *Amsterdam historisch: Een stadsgeschiedenis aan de hand van de collectie van het Amsterdams Historisch Museum* (Bussum: Fibula-Van Dishoeck, 1975), 121–22; Muller, *Charity in the Dutch Republic*, 10–13.

<sup>34</sup> Muller, *Charity in the Dutch Republic*, 17.

(for it hung in a separate boardroom), features a similar composition and scenes from the same parable. While their servant stands to the side, the three female governors convene around a table and appear to tally the institution's expenses. Their sober expressions and incisive gestures mirror those of their male counterparts and suggest the dedication and seriousness of purpose they bring to their office. Such portraits paid tribute to the regents' good works and perhaps justified the position of privilege they enjoyed.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, because at least some institutions permitted public viewership, they contributed to the prominence and reputation of the board and organization in general.<sup>36</sup>

Van Nieulandt's *The Procession of Lepers* similarly honored the efforts of the Leprozenhuis administrators by portraying a widely celebrated event closely associated with the institution and perhaps also by including their portraits in the foreground near the head of the procession. A handful of figures bear individual features and clothing befitting the regent class.<sup>37</sup> However, the Leprozenhuis archives do not describe these possible portrait inclusions nor do they give any indication why the administrators may have departed from more typical pictorial types.

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<sup>35</sup> Muller offers an extended interpretation of Van den Valckert's paintings for the Leprozenhuis and this mode of portraiture in general. The first chapter of her book, *Charity in the Dutch Republic: Pictures of Rich and Poor for Charitable Institutions*, makes the argument that group portraits employ the iconography of the Active Life, a humanist conception that emphasized virtue and responsibility for the Christian welfare of society. Muller, *Charity in the Dutch Republic*, 17–19.

<sup>36</sup> Jonker observed that Bartholomeus van der Helst's 1650 portrait of the regents and regentesses of the Spinhuis portrays visitors watching the residents spinning from behind a gate. He further noted that the Amsterdam town hall was open to the public and that the Surgeons' Guild could be visited for a fee. The thorough descriptions of charitable institutions in city histories and travelers' accounts also suggest that the interiors of these buildings may have been toured. Jonker, "Public or Private Portraits: Group Portraits of Amsterdam Regents and Regentesses," 214.

<sup>37</sup> Middelkoop suggested that some of the figures in the foreground may be portraits. Middelkoop and Reichwein, *De oude meesters van de stad Amsterdam*, 96–97.

Assuming typical patterns of commission, the board of the Leprozenhuis would have stipulated the subject of the leper procession and likely offered informative details concerning its customs, participants and route from which Van Nieulandt may have drawn. At least one of the administrators, a man by the name of Siewerd Sem, could have witnessed the procession for nearly two decades (1586–1604) of his forty-six year tenure (1586–1632) and relayed his personal experiences of the event.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, Van Nieulandt himself may have had memories of the procession from which he could have drawn. The artist’s parents left Antwerp for Amsterdam in 1592, when Adriaen was two years old. The family settled on the Plijsteeg, a short street right off the Dam.<sup>39</sup> It is quite possible that the young painter witnessed the leper procession as it traversed his neighborhood.

Despite the absence of documentation concerning the commission, I suggest several possibilities concerning the regents’ motivations for requesting the painting may nevertheless be ventured. The board could have been prompted to enlist Van Nieulandt to paint *The Procession of Lepers* on the occasion of one or more of their members’ impending retirement. As observed by Sheila Muller, changes in leadership typically spurred the creation of new paintings amongst charitable organizations.<sup>40</sup> I suggest that the board may have wanted to mark Siewerd Sem’s forty-six-year tenure—the longest of any administrator in the institution’s history—with a sizable commission. The timing of his retirement in 1632 coincides with Van Nieulandt’s

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<sup>38</sup> Register houdende de namen en wapens van de regenten, Archief van het Sint Jorishof, Leprozenhuis en Oude Mannen- en Vrouwengasthuis, Stadsarchief, Amsterdam, Netherlands (Archief 369, nr. 4.2.5.1, ff. 320).

<sup>39</sup> Eric Jan Sluijter, “Career Choices of Migrant Artists Between Amsterdam and Antwerp: The Van Nieulandt Brothers,” *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 31 (2015): 103–4, 104n11. Adriaen van Nieulandt I took his citizenship oath in 1594. His family is recorded in a house on the Plijsteeg named *Inde Gulde Cnop*.

<sup>40</sup> Muller, *Charity in the Dutch Republic*, 13–14.



completion of the painting the following year.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, given that Werner van den Valckert had painted a group portrait of Sem and the other regents of the Leprozenhuis less than a decade before, a subject from their own history may have been preferred. A painting of the leper procession would have been a particularly fitting tribute and perhaps evoked a fond memory for Sem.

The regents may additionally have desired to compete with a prominent commission, which differed significantly in subject, from another charitable organization in Amsterdam. Between 1625 and 1630, the regents of the Aalmoezeniers (College of Almoners) ordered a series of five paintings on panel representing the charitable works performed by their institution, which also corresponded to traditional depictions of the Works of Mercy (figs. 1.9–13). The five scenes include the governors distributing bread, registering paupers and orphans, making a housecall, looking after inmates and passing out clothing. The series would have been a major commission for the College, which had only been founded in 1613 with the help of the Leprozenhuis.<sup>42</sup> The paintings were formerly attributed to Werner van den Valckert, though recent scholarship has suggested on the basis of style that they were executed by David Vinckboons, a Flemish émigré; a member of his circle; or an artist working in the style of Adriaen van de Venne.<sup>43</sup> If Vinckboons executed the series, Van Nieulandt may have wished to rival him with *The Procession of Lepers*, as the two artists lived and worked in close proximity

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<sup>41</sup> Sem would have been alive to witness the completion of *The Procession of Lepers* and its installation in the Leprozenhuis. The archives of the Oude Kerk record his burial on 30 January 1635. DTB 1045, p. 68–9, Archief van de burgerlijke stand: Doop-, trouw- en begraafboeken van Amsterdam, Stadsarchief, Amsterdam, Netherlands (Archief NL–SAA–11012681)

<sup>42</sup> The *Leprozenhuis* was one of several institutions that helped found the College of Aalmoezeniers by loaning the institution a sum of 23,000 guilders. I. H. van Eeghen, “Het Leprozenhuis te Amsterdam,” *Maandblad Amstelodamun* 42 (1935): 86.

<sup>43</sup> Middelkoop and Reichwein, *De oude meesters van de stad Amsterdam*, 86.

to each other. Both resided on the Sint-Anthonisbreestraat, an artists' quarter where many Flemish émigrés settled, and the location of the Guild Hall of St. Luke after 1619.<sup>44</sup> The Leprozenhuis, located between the Sint-Antonisbreestraat and the Houtgracht, was also nearby.<sup>45</sup>

I propose that a further possible motivation behind the 1633 commission may have been the Leprozenhuis regents' desire to allude to the longevity of their philanthropy and the venerable reputation of their institution through the representation of a longstanding, ritualized tradition. In light of ongoing debates about whether poor relief should fall under the purview of municipal or religious authorities, members of the board may have wished to make a visual statement about their collective service as a civic institution as well as affirm through their choice of subject their ability to administer their own affairs successfully.<sup>46</sup> *The Procession of Lepers* makes a case for the municipal governance of Amsterdam's charitable networks through the painting's setting and compositional strategies. By picturing the procession from the south side of the Dam, Van Nieulandt prominently juxtaposed the procession with symbols of civic government such as the Town Hall and the Tribunal, while the steeple of the Nieuwe Kerk (New Church), in contrast, emerges from the background at a far remove from the parade action. Moreover, the bustling market, the numerous ships moored in the Damrak and the populated

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<sup>44</sup> Adraien van Nieulandt owned a house on Sint-Antonisbreestraat between 1614 and 1651. S. A. C. Dudok van Heel, "The Birth of an Artist's Quarter: Pieter Issacsz's Amsterdam Years," in *Pieter Issacsz: Court Painter, Art Dealer, and Spy*, exh. cat., ed. Badeloch Noldus and Juliette Roding (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 79; Abraham Bredius and Otto Hirschmann, *Künstler-inventare; Urkunden zur geschichte der Holländischen kunst des XVIten, XVIIten und XVIIIten jahrhunderts*, vol. 1 (Den Haag: M. Nijhoff, 1915), 171; J. G. C. A. Briels, *Vlaamse schilders en de dageraad van Hollands gouden eeuw, 1585–1630: Met biografieën als bijlage* (Antwerpen: Mercatorfonds, 1997), 364–65.

<sup>45</sup> H. Brugmans, *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam: Bloeitijd, 1621/1697*, vol. 3 (Utrecht: Het Spectrum, 1973), 300.

<sup>46</sup> This argument builds on Sheila Muller's contention that the first regent group portraits in Amsterdam may be read as an expression of autonomy and a pictorial response to the disputes over which authorities would be responsible for the distribution of poor relief. She couched this discussion within the religious and political controversy between the Remonstrants and Contra-Remonstrants. Muller, "Jan Steen's Burgher of Delft and His Daughter," 270–73.

square give the impression that Amsterdam thrives under the authority of local government and the regent class that constituted it.<sup>47</sup> Accordingly, the painting subtly persuades the viewer that civic leaders would also best manage the city's extensive system of philanthropy.

The visual emphasis Van Nieulandt placed on the Houtzagersgilde further reinforces an agenda in favor of the civic oversight of poor relief. As respected representatives of the urban community, the guild members' participation in the leper procession promoted solidarity among citizens and conferred prestige upon the procession. Though a relatively young organization, the Houtzagersgilde had risen to a position of prominence by the last decade of the sixteenth century as Amsterdam had embarked upon extensive building projects that created a demand for wood and the skills of the hand-sawyers.<sup>48</sup> The guild's presence thus legitimated the lepers' solicitation of alms and contributed to the festive spirit of the procession. Even more importantly, the participation by the Houtzagersgilde stimulated the communal bestowal of charity and support of the city's poor and infirm amongst the broader population. Trade organizations were encouraged and, in some cases, expected, to take up social causes. During the 1580s, the Amsterdam *vroedschap* (town council) ordered several guilds to establish insurance funds for indigent members using money previously reserved for the guild altar, religious rituals and other

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<sup>47</sup> Amsterdam's government consisted of four burgomasters, nine alderman and a city council of thirty-six members. Council members, who were drawn from the prominent burgher class, were elected and appointed for life. Willem Frijhoff et al., *1650: Hard-Won Unity* (Assen; Basingstoke: Royal Van Gorcum; Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 195.

<sup>48</sup> Vibeke Kingma suggests that the importance of the Houtzagersgilde can be inferred by the increase in wages that hand-sawyers experienced after 1590, which grew faster than those in any other sector. Vibeke Kingma, "De betekenis van de uitvindingen van Cornelis Corneliszoon van Uitgeest voor de Nederlandse nijverheid," in *Cornelis Corneliszoon van Uitgeest, uitvinder aan de basis van de gouden eeuw*, exh. cat., ed. Hans Bonke and Wladimir Dobber (Zutphen: Walberg Pers, 2004), 133; Konrad Ottenheim and Krista de Jonge, "Civic Prestige: Building the City 1580–1700," in *Unity and Disunity: Architectural Relations Between the Southern and Northern Low Countries*, ed. Konrad Ottenheim and Krista de Jonge (Brepols: Turnhout, 2007), 225–36.

celebrations.<sup>49</sup> These prescriptions signified one of the first attempts by civic authorities to expand their involvement into the allocation of poor relief.

Disputes concerning the distribution of charity by the church versus civic authorities originated as part of a larger schism between ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church and the so-called Remonstrants (also known as Arminians), a faction of Calvinism led by the theologian Jacobus Arminius. The Remonstrants called for freedom of religion and the supremacy of the States over the Church, and thus an ecclesiastical divide quickly took on political overtones. Many of the educated and wealthy members of the regent class sided with Arminius and his followers. In 1618 and 1619, the States-General assembled a national synod in Dordrecht, which after much deliberation, affirmed that the Dutch Reformed Church would remain the only public religious institution.<sup>50</sup> Over one hundred Remonstrant pastors were dismissed from their ministerial positions and excommunicated, and eighty were banished from the entire United Provinces. Even though they were permitted to return from exile in 1625, bitterness between the Remonstrants and leaders of the Dutch Reformed Church continued well into the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Some guilds continued the tradition of performing charitable acts on the feast day of their patron saint even after the loss of their religious affiliation following the 1578 adoption of Calvinism as the official, state-sanctioned religion. The Dordrecht hawkers' guild, for example, distributed bread on the feast day of St. Nicholas (December 6) until 1679. Thijs, "Religion and Social Structure," 161–65. For a discussion of mutual aid in the guild system, see Sandra Bos, "A Tradition of Giving and Receiving: Mutual Aid within the Guild System," in *Craft Guilds in the Early Modern Low Countries: Work, Power, and Representation*, ed. Maarten Roy Prak et al. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 174–93.

<sup>50</sup> William van Doodewaard, "Remonstrants, Contra-Remonstrants and the Synod of Dort (1618–1619): The Religious History of the Early Dutch Republic," *Canadian Journal of Netherlandic Studies* 18 (2007): 146–57; Charles Parker, "The Pillars of a New Community: Conflicts and Cooperation Over Poor Relief in Post-Reformation Holland," in *Serving the Urban Community: The Rise of Public Facilities in the Low Countries*, ed. Manon van der Heijden (Amsterdam: Askant, 2009), 161–63; J. L. Price, *Culture and Society in the Dutch Republic During the 17th Century* (New York: Scribner, 1974), 31–32.

<sup>51</sup> Charles Parker, "To the Attentive, Nonpartisan Reader: The Appeal to History and National Identity in the Religious Disputes of the Seventeenth-Century Netherlands," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 28, no. 1 (1997): 57–58.

The ongoing religious polemic in Amsterdam possibly influenced the Leprozenhuis regents' choice of subject when they enlisted Van Nieulandt to paint *The Procession of Lepers*. Between 1627 and 1631, several popular disturbances between the Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants (Dutch Reformed Church) erupted in Amsterdam that left the city unstable and brought both religious perspectives back under public scrutiny. On multiple occasions, the orthodox Dutch Reformed preacher Adriaen Smout incited the populace to disrupt Remonstrant prayer gatherings by rioting, which eventually impelled the mainly Remonstrant burgomasters to request support from Stadholder Frederik Hendrik.<sup>52</sup> A surge in the number of religiously-themed political pamphlets around 1630 also contributed to the renewed intensity of Remonstrant–Counter-Remonstrant hostility. Simon Episcopius's 1627 Remonstrant treatise *Vrye godesdienst (Freedom of Religion)*, which argued for the unrestricted freedom of religious practice for all Churches and individuals, ranked among the best-sellers.<sup>53</sup> Several of Episcopius's colleagues, such as Johannes Uytenbogaert and Paschier de Fijne, published similar doctrines of toleration.<sup>54</sup> The appearance of these texts coincided with the return of many exiled Remonstrants to Amsterdam and the inauguration of the city's first Church of the Remonstrant Brotherhood in September 1630. In the years immediately following, Remonstrantism became increasingly visible within civic life, even though debates for and against it continued to be

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<sup>52</sup> On 13 and 14 April 1626, a mob destroyed a house used for Remonstrant prayer services in response to Adriaen Smout's encouragement. Another riot occurred on 8 March 1628, shortly after the Remonstrants came to dominate Amsterdam politics after the February election of that year. When the burgomasters replaced the former Counter-Remonstrant militia captain with a Remonstrant, the agitated militia made a formal petition for his removal. Burgomasters requested that Stadholder Frederik Hendrik send troops to restore peace. Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477–1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 495–501.

<sup>53</sup> Gerrit Voogt, "Remonstrant–Counter-Remonstrant Debates: Crafting a Principled Defense of Toleration after the Synod of Dordrecht (1619–1650)," *Church History and Religious Culture* 89, no. 4 (2009): 508.

<sup>54</sup> Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 501–11.

waged, in part because the regent class helped to promote the acceptance of Remonstrant ideas.<sup>55</sup> The execution of *The Procession of Lepers* in 1633 would have thus made a timely statement on the importance of tolerance and inclusion, signified by the lepers, among the most marginalized members of society. The painting visualized a model of municipal fellowship and charity and perhaps also offered a show of solidarity among members of regent circles in support of the Remonstrant cause. As will be shown, Van Nieulandt realized this model by drawing on the ritual strategies of the leper procession itself and the civic virtues it embodied.

### **Representing Ritual in Van Nieulandt's *The Procession of Lepers***

*The Procession of Lepers* offered a ritualized paradigm of municipal charitable giving in support of the sick and the needy in an idealized form and without the range of sensory stimuli—positive and negative—that would have been afforded by viewing the parade in person. That does not mean that the painting offered an inferior experience or existed as a mere shadow of its referent. On the contrary, through various pictorial strategies, Van Nieulandt presented the ideologies orchestrated by the procession differently and perhaps more clearly than had the actual event.

When the citizens of Amsterdam gathered to witness the procession on Koppermaandag, they enacted a ritual designed to encourage almsgiving and to bring a normally segregated segment of the population into the city's communal fold. As such, the procession must have represented a highpoint in the calendar year for the residents of the Leprozenhuis. Riding in sleighs and accompanied by music would have provided a marked contrast to the sobering aspects of the lepers' daily lives. More importantly, within this highly charged, specially

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<sup>55</sup> Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 511–12.

demarcated atmosphere of festive celebration, the procession would have had the potential to afford a powerful experience and affirmation of community for both participants and spectators alike. Bringing together normally segregated social groups would have created the experience of civic unity, even if only temporarily, in the face of the frictions of everyday life and social organization.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, as a visual spectacle, the procession would have conveyed an impression of harmony through its symbolic choreography. By literally moving together through space and time, dressed similarly against the backdrop of pomp and circumstance, the procession participants exemplified a vision of fellowship and good will.<sup>57</sup> Van Nieulandt would subsequently capture this impression of solidarity by representing nearly eighty parade participants, the guild members who accompany the lepers, and the large crowd gathered to witness the event.

Such a perception of civic communal support, even a fleeting one, would have been important for the residents of Amsterdam. In addition to the unrest created by the Remonstrant–Counter-Remonstrant debates, the city had experienced major demographic shifts after the Dutch Revolt that profoundly challenged its social fabric, especially in terms of its charitable needs. Between 1570 and 1600, the population doubled in size from an estimated 30,000 inhabitants to 60,000 inhabitants. By 1622, the population reached an estimated 105,000. Most of the growth resulted from massive immigration from the Southern Netherlands, Germany and the eastern

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<sup>56</sup> Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. J. W. Swain (London: Allen & Unwin, 1915); Max Gluckman, *Essays On the Ritual of Social Relations* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963); Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1969).

<sup>57</sup> Clifford Geertz introduced the notion that rituals are cultural performances that function as models. They present “enactments, materializations, realizations...[they are] not only models of what they believe but also models *for* [sic] the believing of it. In these plastic dramas men attain their faith as they portray it.” See Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 112–14.

provinces of the Republic.<sup>58</sup> Consequently, the city witnessed an influx of new cultural traditions, religions and languages, as well as a significant increase in the number of urban poor. In the first half of the seventeenth century, an estimated 10–12 percent of Amsterdam households received supplemental support at least during the winter months to overcome food shortages.<sup>59</sup>

Given these circumstances, the importance of philanthropy could not have been underestimated and Amsterdam's civic charitable institutions developed an increasingly important role. The Koppermaandag celebration constituted one of the few sanctioned occasions for begging, a behavior which under any other circumstances was both contested and subjected to frequent legislation.<sup>60</sup> That the lepers solicited donations collectively during the Koppermaandag procession and under the authority of the Leprozenhuis regents would have legitimated their position and request. Certainly, the experience of viewing the procession would have appealed to spectators' social conscience and exerted a subtle pressure to give generously. By fostering a sense of social responsibility, the procession oriented participants and bystanders within a larger system of civic values—in this case, community, civic charity and tolerance—and by doing so, materialized a supportive and inclusive vision of that society.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 328–30.

<sup>59</sup> Jan de Vries and A. M. van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500–1815* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 659. Immigrants suffered significantly worse circumstances than the native Dutch. During the seventeenth century, nearly 90% of beggars apprehended in an average year in Amsterdam were foreign.

<sup>60</sup> In 1598, the city of Amsterdam developed a program to regulate begging. The burgomasters mandated that *opsienders* (inspectors), supervised by the *schout* (sheriff), would patrol the streets and arrest all beggars without written permission to beg. Furthermore, the inspectors ensured that those begging were in honest need of charity, that they used alms wisely and that they did not beg on Sundays or other holy days. Anyone found guilty of inappropriate begging was subject to a whipping or placement in the stocks. See Charles H. Parker, *The Reformation of Community: Social Welfare and Calvinist Charity in Holland, 1572–1620* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 83.

<sup>61</sup> Catherine Bell posited that ritual is never passive and that it always “does” something. She theorized that ritualization “is a matter of variously culturally specific strategies for setting some activities off from others, for creating and privileging a qualitative distinction between the ‘sacred’ and the ‘profane’ and for



Van Nieulandt similarly inscribes the viewer within this system of civic values in his representation of the procession by evoking the experience of the festive occasion. Both in its level of detail and its substantial size—indeed, its human proportions—*The Procession of Lepers* impresses and envelops anyone standing before it, effectively instilling a sense of inclusion within the ritual action of the parade. The artist’s meticulous rendering of people, architecture and objects and his attention to differences in materials, textures and the effects of light all work to entice the viewer and beseech his or her senses of sight and sound. In doing so, the artist summoned the sensory perceptions engaged when witnessing or participating in the actual event.<sup>62</sup>

However, Van Nieulandt’s depiction of the leper procession simultaneously grants the viewer a privileged position as a result of the slightly elevated viewpoint, which creates both separation and distance. This ideal viewing angle permits one to observe the strong diagonal formed by the parade participants, which works to organize the composition, but also carefully hones the focus on the lepers and the acts of almsgiving taking place in the foreground. The artist further engages our attention by including a handful of figures that meet our gaze with poignant stares. Van Nieulandt thus inscribes the viewer within a position of careful balance: we feel as though we are parade participants by virtue of the painting’s scale and degree of naturalism, and also privileged witnesses as a consequence of the aerial perspective. This representational strategy creates an opportunity for *The Procession of Lepers* to instill its ritual aims more effectively than by emphasizing a single viewpoint. Like the parade itself, Van Nieulandt’s

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ascribing such distinctions to realities thought to transcend the powers of human actors.” See Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 74.

<sup>62</sup> For a discussion of the sensory aspects of public ritual, see Ronald L. Grimes, *Beginnings in Ritual Studies*, 3rd ed. (Waterloo, Canada, 2013), 35–50.

painting appeals to the spectator's social conscience by representing the disadvantaged and destitute absorbed into the civic group and then modeling the charitable behavior that stands to benefit them.

Whether or not the Koppermaandag procession successfully stimulated the support of the civic community remains unknown and certainly the parade's prohibition by the Amsterdam burgomasters suggests that it ceased to be meaningful at least for some citizens. Like any ritual, the actual procession had the potential to become devalued, or simply to change over time. Uniting disparate socioeconomic groups may ironically have undermined the parade's ritual goals, as spectators' potentially conflicting attitudes towards lepers and the poor could have thwarted any vision of collectivity.<sup>63</sup>

That same potential for failure decreased dramatically in Van Nieulandt's representation of the parade. The painter offered an idealized version of events inscribed by his own artistic agency and mediated by the passage of time between the last procession and the painting's commission. His depiction of the jovial celebration lacks any visual evidence of the chaos and drunken disorderliness cited by the Amsterdam officials as reason for the event's official prohibition. Through the air of festivity and the bustling portrayal of merchants, patrons and other observers, the painting instead presents a conspicuous kind of visual propaganda that persuades the viewer of the social and economic value of civic charitable giving. Exemplary citizens dutifully offer alms to the Leprozenhuis *biddenmoeders* while children gleefully observe the parade. Even the lepers appear curiously healthy and betray little, if any, evidence of their debilitating disease. By ennobling both the parade participants and the spectators, the painting

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<sup>63</sup> For the potential of rituals to fail, see Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 210–22; Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 16–36; Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 4; Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 142–60.

serves a commemorative function rather than a historical record. It acts as a kind of memorial, extolling the virtues of civic community, charity and tolerance in perpetuity on the walls of the Leprozenhuis, while simultaneously alluding to the institution's esteemed history in Amsterdam. The regents of the Leprozenhuis would have likely appreciated such a favorable view, not only because it cast a positive light on their administration, but also because it offered a vision of a healthy public and civic concord in the face of highly variable seventeenth-century attitudes towards leprosy and poor relief.

### **Leprosy and Its Social Contexts**

By picturing the community's welcome reception of the lepers, *The Procession of Lepers* contradicted the unpleasant reality that those suffering from leprosy constituted an extremely stigmatized group in the early modern period in the Dutch Republic and elsewhere in Europe. The decision to commission the painting perhaps reflected an interest on the part of the Leprozenhuis regents in promoting the tolerance and inclusion of this segment of the population. Until 1873, leprosy persisted as a frightening medical enigma, at which point the Norwegian physician Gerhard Armauer Hansen discovered that it was caused by a chronic bacterial infection.<sup>64</sup> The disease instilled widespread fear and engendered diverse and often conflicting responses amongst early modern medical practitioners, theologians and the lay population. Those suffering from leprosy were perceived as a threat to community welfare and thus physically distanced from society. They typically faced confinement in a hut or compound on the periphery of urban areas and, from about the twelfth century onward, were quarantined in special houses

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<sup>64</sup> Luke E. Demaitre, *Leprosy in Premodern Medicine: A Malady of the Whole Body* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), vii. G. Armauer Hansen discovered the cause of leprosy, the organism *Mycobacterium leprae*. Today the condition is classified as Hansen's Disease.

known as leprosaria. City officials also required lepers to carry rattles or clappers, a handheld wooden tool (fig. 1.14) that signaled a warning to passersby by producing a “clapping” sound, and/or to wear clothing that distinguished them from the healthy public.<sup>65</sup> Van Nieulandt included these markers of the disease in *The Procession of Lepers*. A handful of figures brandish small clappers, and others wear broad-brimmed hats with white bands.

Leprosy prompted such intense response for several reasons: First, the condition caused severe disfigurement and the visible rotting of the body. Those afflicted with it suffered from wasted limbs, lesions, open wounds, contorted facial features and a distinctive, foul smell. Depending on the advancement of the disease, the leper’s appearance produced tremendous fear among members of the viewing public, which, in turn, incited legislation aimed at controlling the infected population.<sup>66</sup> Perhaps with these perceptions in mind, Van Nieulandt eschewed such a frightening characterization of the lepers, preferring instead to represent them without any signs of their disease.

Second, medieval and early modern physicians had very little understanding of the causes or transmission of leprosy, and thus a deep-seated fear of contagion and its ability to be inherited developed.<sup>67</sup> Early attempts at diagnosis argued that a humoral imbalance, specifically an

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<sup>65</sup> Saul Nathaniel Brody, *The Disease of the Soul: Leprosy in Medieval Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974), 60–69; Christine M. Boeckl, *Images of Leprosy: Disease, Religion, and Politics in European Art* (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2011), 38–39; Peter Richards, *The Medieval Leper and His Northern Heirs* (Cambridge; Totowa, NJ: D. S. Brewer; Rowman and Littlefield, 1977), 67–68; Susan Zimmerman, “Leprosy in the Medieval Imaginary,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38, no. 3 (2008): 560.

<sup>66</sup> Legislation concerning lepers varied between regions, though certain laws had more far reaching effects. In 1179, for example, the Third Lateran Council declared that lepers should be segregated from society and that their removal should be marked by appropriate ceremony. See Richards, *The Medieval Leper and His Northern Heirs*, 64.

<sup>67</sup> Contagion was believed to occur through physical touching, the breath and sexual intercourse. Some food and drink was suspected, as well as overeating, menstruation, excessive sleep and excessive activity. See Demaitre, *Leprosy in Premodern Medicine*, 133–38; Richards, *The Medieval Leper and His Northern Heirs*,

overabundance of black bile, caused the disease. This misunderstanding persisted well into the eighteenth century, at which point medical practitioners began employing a more empirical approach to pathology.<sup>68</sup> Still, prior to the twentieth century, no effective treatments for leprosy existed<sup>69</sup> and segregation and limited palliative care remained the only unfortunate solutions to manage and contain its spread.<sup>70</sup>

A conflation of medical and theological opinions regarding the disease likely further perpetuated misconceptions. That biblical scripture offered utterly conflicting views of lepers only compounded the confusion and caused Christians both to embrace and castigate them. On the one hand, the Church sought to cast lepers in a positive light—as people sanctified by God, singled out to endure their Purgatory on earth. The Church linked them with two figures known as Lazarus from the Gospels: Jesus resurrected the first, the ailing brother of Mary and Martha, after a period of four days (John 11:1–44). The second, a fictitious invalid, ascended into heaven after facing rejection from the wealthy Dives as he lay destitute and covered with sores (Luke 16:19–31). These figures became fused in popular belief and the composite Lazarus grew to be a highly venerated saint frequently associated with leprosaria (hence why they were often called Lazar Houses). From this association sprang the belief that leprosy constituted a sacred malady and demonstration of sympathy and compassion towards the leper should be an essential act of

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48; Zimmerman, “Leprosy in the Medieval Imaginary,” 560.

<sup>68</sup> For more on the medieval beliefs concerning the causes of leprosy, see Demaitre, *Leprosy in Premodern Medicine*, 104–31.

<sup>69</sup> Demaitre, *Leprosy in Premodern Medicine*, 258–77. Despite the lack of effective treatment options, a whole host of remedies were attempted, such as bloodletting, laxatives, medicinal emetics, baths, rubs, ointments and even ingesting gold filings.

<sup>70</sup> Brody, *The Disease of the Soul*, 73.

Christian charity.<sup>71</sup> Van Nieulandt's representation of the lepers as the deserving recipients of poor relief drew from and further promoted this positive conception of the disease.

On the other hand, a deeply negative discourse that looked to the Old Testament presented the leper as unclean and sinful, and the disease as evidence of leprous individuals' profound moral abasement.<sup>72</sup> The following passage from Leviticus leaves little question about the leper's position and the threat he/she posed to social stability: "Now whosoever shall be defiled with the leprosy, and is separated by the judgment of the priest, shall have his clothes hanging loose, his head bare, his mouth covered with a cloth, and he shall cry out that he is defiled and unclean. All the time that he is a leper and unclean, he shall dwell alone without the camp."<sup>73</sup> The ecclesiastical community then extended this view of leprosy to include any kind of ethical deficiency. Theologians spoke of a "moral leprosy" that equated physical disease with transgressions against the Church, such as pride, avarice and sexual impurity. An excerpt from a homily written in 1170 by the French bishop, Maurice of Sully, succinctly describes this disturbing mindset:

The leper signifies sinners, and leprosy the sins ... the great damnable sins, such as fornication, adultery, usury, robbery, theft, gluttony, drunkenness, and all those sins by which a man is damned and sure to lose the love of God and his friends ... Through leprosy a man is cut off from the company of people, and through deadly sins a man is cut off from the company of God and the Holy Church, for he who dies in deadly sin is cut off from the company of God and his angels.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Brody, *The Disease of the Soul*, 107; Demaitre, *Leprosy in Premodern Medicine*, 81–82; Zimmerman, "Leprosy in the Medieval Imaginary," 561.

<sup>72</sup> Brody, *The Disease of the Soul*, 107–33. Numerous Old Testament figures suffer the moral consequences of leprosy. Uzziah, one of the kings of Judah, for example, became infected with leprosy after usurping the role of a priest.

<sup>73</sup> Leviticus 13: 44–46.

<sup>74</sup> Brody, *The Disease of the Soul*, 136–37.

Lepers were similarly excoriated in art, literature and popular vernacular.<sup>75</sup> An anonymous sixteenth-century Netherlandish print (fig. 1.15), which presents the leper as the archetype of evil, complete with skin erupted in a scaly rash, claw-shaped appendages and festering wounds, serves as a notable contrast to Van Nieulant's conception of the Leprozenhuis inmates. The figure holds a clapper in his right hand and sits before a begging bowl filled with a few coins. The cloth across his forehead, which bears a pilgrim's badge—a sign of religious devotion—is easily overlooked in comparison with the ominous viper emerging from an egg and the cauldron of flames in the middleground. The caption beneath the image reads simply "*Je suy le pour diable* (I am the poor devil)." Such imagery manifests the profound fear incited by leprosy and also evinces the stigmatization faced by infected individuals. Whether harshly branded as in this print or revered as a sign of God's grace, leprosy embodied a deadly affront to early modern well-being that caused communities across Europe to marginalize their leper populations and force them to the outskirts of society.

*The Procession of Lepers* should be considered within this context, and more specifically, in relation to Amsterdam, as the range of perceptions and ambivalent beliefs about leprosy would have affected both the selection of the subject and how the painting was viewed. The incidence of the disease in the Netherlands reached its peak in the second half of the fifteenth century and numbers began to dwindle thereafter.<sup>76</sup> In 1614, the historian Johannes Issac Pontanus reported that only forty-two lepers occupied the Amsterdam Leprozenhuis.<sup>77</sup> That number continued to

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<sup>75</sup> Brody devotes the fourth chapter of his book to the appearance and treatment of leprosy in late medieval and early modern literature. Brody, *The Disease of the Soul*, 147–98.

<sup>76</sup> Gerard Nicolaas Adriaan Ketting, *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van de lepra in Nederland...* (The Hague: Mouton, 1922), 12.

<sup>77</sup> Johannes Isacius Pontanus, *Historische beschrijvinghe der seer wijt beroemde coopstadt Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Indocum Hondium, 1974), 112.

fall over the course of the seventeenth century and by 1662, Melchior Fokkens observed that the Amsterdam leper house cared for few or no inmates infected with leprosy.<sup>78</sup> This information may not be entirely accurate, for in 1675, the Leprozenhuis regents made requests for tax exemption that listed thirty-six lepers with official papers proving their illness, which suggests that there were more lepers in Amsterdam than previously assumed.<sup>79</sup> In any case, despite the waning incidence of leprosy, the disease remained a legitimate concern and apprehension and fear about its real and perceived effects persisted quite vividly in the early modern imaginary.<sup>80</sup>

Such concern and fear are reflected in the numerous ordinances passed in the Netherlands aimed at controlling the activities of leprous individuals, most of which pertained to the procurement of alms. In 1531, for example, Emperor Charles V signed a law that all beggars within Hapsburg territories must be true lepers as opposed to healthy rogues attempting to collect charity by means of deceit. Professional begging by so-called “sturdy beggars” evidently proved a serious problem. In 1547, the Emperor declared that every leprous person must carry a certificate of examination.<sup>81</sup> Prince Maurits echoed similar sentiments in an order of 1586 that proclaimed all lepers were required to show proof of their illness and citizenship, and he further

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<sup>78</sup> Melchior Fokkens, *Beschrijvinge der wijdt-vermaarde koop-stadt Amstelredam, van hare eerste beginzelen, oude voor-rechten, en verscheyde vergrootingen; Haar oude en nieuwe gebouwen, heerlijken aanwas, in 400 jaren, en, haar tegenwoordigen stant...* (Amsterdam: M. W. Doornick, 1662), 273–74.

<sup>79</sup> Van Eeghen, “Het Leprozenhuis te Amsterdam,” 85.

<sup>80</sup> Brody, *The Disease of the Soul*, 190. Saul Nathaniel Brody argues that leprosy remained a powerful literary image even after the disease ceased to be prevalent. He suggests that “even if audiences were not familiar with leprosy and had no direct experience with it, the medieval idea of the disease stayed alive.” The association between morality and leprosy, in particular, continued into the twentieth century.

<sup>81</sup> Lucinda Kate Reinold, “The Representation of the Beggar as Rogue in Dutch Seventeenth-Century Art” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1980), 20.



stipulated that they must identify themselves visibly with a badge or clapper and a hat with a white band.<sup>82</sup>

These anti-“sturdy-begging” laws demonstrate a growing concern about the number of legitimate urban poor and the responsibility of communities to provide care and support for them. They also register conflicting attitudes towards the beggar, which arose partly because of nascent Protestant ideologies that viewed idleness as criminal. Both Martin Luther and John Calvin emphasized in their teachings the social and religious value of labor and economic productivity. They also harshly criticized indolence and denounced giving alms indiscriminately to able-bodied people.<sup>83</sup> The perception that certain beggars attempted to bamboozle the unsuspecting public and cheat the honest poor of their proper share of charity further fueled the negative connotations ascribed to begging in general.

Unfavorable depictions of beggars in a range of media appeared as legislation concerning the practice of soliciting charity by “sturdy-beggars” increased, which Van Nieulandt contradicted in his approbative view of the lepers soliciting alms. Indeed, the “sturdy-beggar” became a point of fascination and a veritable topos in Dutch art and literature. A series of so-called moralizing “beggar books” known as the *Liber vagatorum*, for example, described up to twenty-eight kinds of false beggars with a lengthy discussion of their appearance and individual behaviors.<sup>84</sup> Variations of the *Liber vagatorum* were published well into the seventeenth century.

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<sup>82</sup> Ketting, *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van de lepra in Nederland...*, 26.

<sup>83</sup> Reinold, “The Representation of the Beggar,” 25.

<sup>84</sup> Reinold, “The Representation of the Beggar,” 50–53. The first *Liber vagatorum* was published anonymously at the end of the fifteenth century, though later editions were issued well into the seventeenth century. *Der fielen rabouwen, bedelaren (Ofte der schalcken) vocabulaer* is a well-known Dutch edition published in Antwerp in 1563 and again in Haarlem in 1613.

Martin Luther provided the introduction to one of the best known and most often reproduced editions, first published in 1528.<sup>85</sup>

Following the conventions established by such moralizing texts, artists also contributed to the visual representation of duplicitous beggars in popular discourse, and therefore influenced how these figures were viewed more broadly. Jan van de Velde II's series *De spigel ofte toneel der ijdelheyd ende ongebondenheyd onser eeuwe* (*The Mirror of Theater Idleness and Dissoluteness of Our Century*), published by Claes Jansz. Visscher in the same year (1633) Van Nieulandt executed *The Procession of Lepers*, presents a series of half-length rogues appended with moralizing inscriptions similar to those appearing in contemporary emblem books. *Beggar with Moneybox and Rattle* (fig. 1.16) depicts a man turned to the right, his lips slightly parted as if speaking, as he holds the attributes of a leper—a clapper and a collection box. Beneath him appears an epigram that reveals his spurious motives: that he, in good health, intends to use these signs of destitution to steal people's money. The decision to represent the false beggar as leprous conflates the disease with deception and those suffering from it with amorality. Consequently, Van de Velde tacitly conveys the deeply embedded prejudices faced by this segment of the population, even after the incidence of leprosy had begun to dwindle and the lepers' parade had been terminated.

Further examples of negative artistic conceptions of the leper/beggar may be found in the work of Adriaen van de Venne. Several of the artist's grisailles similarly feature adverse glosses on the urban poor and depict figures brandishing lepers' clappers or staggering about on crutches and wooden legs. Mariët Westermann has argued that images such as Van de Venne's *Wretched*

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<sup>85</sup> Martin Luther and John Camden Hotten, *The Book of Vagabonds and Beggars; with a Vocabulary of Their Language* (London: J.C. Hotten, 1860).

*Are the Legs that Must Bear the Burden of Poverty* from c. 1630–1640 (fig. 1.17), or *All Crooked Indulge* from 1633 (fig. 1.18), visually signify a threat to community and the disruption of social order through the depiction of disease or disability. According to Westermann, “abject infirmity is the measure of their social unfitness; their disability, whether actual or feigned, is both index and result of all manner of social abuses, including senseless violence and penniless joy.”<sup>86</sup> This interpretation reveals how when coupled with poverty, any kind of sickness—and especially leprosy—could be regarded in the early modern period as both a physical disease and a social ill.

Many renderings of leprous beggars, however, offer no readily apparent interpretation or commentary and therefore remain ambiguous in their meaning. Prints by Pieter Jansz. Quast (fig. 1.19) and Rembrandt van Rijn (fig. 1.20), for example, portray humble, beleaguered-looking figures in tattered clothing, much like Van Nieulandt’s lepers, who also wear patches on their simple frocks. Both Rembrandt’s and Quast’s figures demonstrate their infirmity through their hunched posture, walking staffs and clappers, though no indication is given as to whether their disease should be regarded positively or with the biting wit of Jan van de Velde II and some of his contemporaries. While some scholars have chosen to read Christian empathy in these images, representations of beggars likely generated multiple and often conflicting responses depending on a particular individual’s charitable disposition.<sup>87</sup> Van Nieulandt’s *The Procession of Lepers* may have similarly incited a complex amalgam of both positive and negative reception,

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<sup>86</sup> Mariët Westermann, “Bodily Infirmity as Social Disease: The Art of Adriaen van de Venne,” in *In Sickness and in Health: Disease as Metaphor in Art and Popular Wisdom*, ed. Laurinda S. Dixon (Cranbury, NJ: Rosemont Publishing & Printing Corp., 2004), 51.

<sup>87</sup> Several scholars have inferred that Rembrandt’s beggars, in particular, portray the virtue of Christian charity and encourage sympathy and compassion. See Robert Baldwin, “‘On Earth We Are Beggars, as Christ Himself Was’: The Protestant Background of Rembrandt’s Imagery of Poverty, Disability, and Begging,” *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift* 54, no. 4 (1985): 122–35; Julius S. Held, “A Rembrandt ‘Theme,’” *Artibus et Historiae* 5, no. 10 (1984): 21–34; Susan Stratton, “Rembrandt’s Beggars: Satire and Sympathy,” *Print Collector’s Newsletter* 17, no. 3 (1986): 71–81.

notwithstanding the artist's attempts to persuade us of the lepers' righteousness and one's civic imperative to bestow charity. While highly regarded for their advanced system of poor relief, Dutch citizens still displayed a broad range of attitudes towards the sick and underprivileged among them. Accordingly, a painting promoting the tolerance and inclusion of those afflicted with leprosy, in particular, would have proved a highly appropriate and honorable choice of decoration for the Leprozenhuis walls.

### **Approaches to Poor Relief in Amsterdam and the Case for Its Civic Administration**

The Leprozenhuis regents' decision to commission *The Procession of Lepers* should not be regarded as entirely altruistic, as the painting also reflects positively on the venerable institution and the administrators' collective service to public welfare. As I argued previously, the board may have wished to make a visual statement in support of their governance and the continuation of municipal, rather than religious, control over charitable institutions. While the Dutch Republic boasted an extensive charitable network and contributed more social provisions per year than anywhere else in Europe, the manner in which aid was distributed would become extremely divisive.<sup>88</sup> Such conflicts, though highly relevant to an understanding of the *Procession of Lepers*, generally do not appear in the writings of seventeenth-century observers. Instead, travelers to the Netherlands—and even modern scholars—have offered an oversimplified view that charitable giving constituted a fundamental part of the Dutch national character.<sup>89</sup> During a trip in 1673, for example, Sir William Temple noted “Charity seems to be

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<sup>88</sup> Lex Heerma van Voss and Marco H. D. van Leeuwen, “Charity in the Dutch Republic: An Introduction,” *Continuity and Change* 27, no. 2 (2012): 176.

<sup>89</sup> Numerous seventeenth-century travelers to the Netherlands remarked upon the philanthropic tendencies of the Dutch and modern scholars have followed suit. Simon Schama has argued that seventeenth-century Dutch culture was characterized by a tension, or an “embarrassment of riches,” between the pursuit of

very National among them, though it be regulated by Orders of the Country, and not usually mov'd by the common Objects of Compassions. But it is seen in the admirable Provisions that are made out of it for all sorts of Persons that can want, or ought to be kept, in a Government.”<sup>90</sup>

Numerous other writers in the seventeenth century and later ventured similar observations in travelogues, diaries and letters. What they emphasized with regard to Dutch charity varies, though an overwhelming impression of admiration for the Republic's philanthropic largesse emerges.<sup>91</sup> Writers remained remarkably silent about the exclusionary practices of some institutions under whose purview social provisioning fell (religious charities administered only to their own members and municipal organizations cared only for their own citizens).

The Dutch nevertheless ascribed great significance to the virtue of charity, which Van Nieulandt sought to capture in *The Procession of Lepers*. This valuation developed out of a combination of Christian ethics and the need to maintain the public order by managing the indigent population.<sup>92</sup> The Christian church taught that supporting the needy constituted a sacred task to be shared by all. Urging congregations to give generously, the clergy frequently cited a passage from the Gospel of Luke: “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not

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capital gain and a Protestant sense of shame over the accumulation of wealth. He suggested that charitable giving by prosperous burghers was a means of justifying their economic prosperity and a way of bringing the disenfranchised into the cultural fold. See Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (New York: Knopf, 1987), 576–82.

<sup>90</sup> William Temple, *Observations upon the United Provinces of The Netherlands* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 170–71.

<sup>91</sup> An excellent source for travelers' accounts is Kees van Strien, *Touring the Low Countries: Accounts of British Travellers, 1660–1720* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998). In the introduction, Van Strien observes that many travelers looked to published guidebooks such as *Beschryvingh der Neder-landen* (1660–62) when penning their own descriptions; as a result, many repeat the same anecdotes or describe similar sites and customs.

<sup>92</sup> Charles H. Parker, “Calvinism and Poor Relief in Reformation Holland,” in *Reformation of Charity: The Secular and the Religious in Early Modern Poor Relief* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 109.

old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”<sup>93</sup> Religious leaders also referred to scripture to emphasize the importance of the communal character of charity. In particular, they looked to Christ’s sermon in the Gospel of Matthew (the scripture from which the seven “works of mercy” were drawn) to make the case that philanthropy benefited both the rich and the poor.<sup>94</sup>

Within this Christian framework, city magistrates reiterated that almsgiving must be viewed as a civic responsibility as well as a moral duty. The burgomaster Cornelis Pietersz. Hooft concisely captured this call to service when he advised the Amsterdam regents “we should do justly for the widows, orphans, poor and rich, foreigners and familiar, without distinction because we are the fathers of the burghers.”<sup>95</sup> Hooft and other civic leaders likely felt motivated to encourage this kind of giving because of increasing levels of poverty in Amsterdam. Several natural disasters, repeated outbreaks of plague, immigration, and restrictive guild regulations, among other factors, all contributed to the number of urban poor struggling to live in the city.<sup>96</sup> Charity, so it was argued, not only served to support the destitute, but also mitigated the effects of poverty on society at large.

The extensive network of religious and secular poor relief in Amsterdam employed several strategies to respond to the growing needs of the indigent population, including the

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<sup>93</sup> Luke: 32–34.

<sup>94</sup> A. H. Bredero, *Christenheid en Christendom in de Middeleeuwen: Over de verhouding van godsdienst, kerk en samenleving* (Kampen: Kok Agora, 1986), 277; Parker, *The Reformation of Community*, 44–45.

<sup>95</sup> Cited in Parker, *The Reformation of Community*, 83.

<sup>96</sup> Muller, *Charity in the Dutch Republic*, 73–74. An early-arriving winter in 1596 contributed to the number of unemployed in Amsterdam, as well as a spike in the number of abandoned children.

establishment of religious charitable agencies, almshouses and civic welfare organizations. This complex approach to serving the needy would eventually create dissension between the Dutch Reformed Church and the State in the wake of the Remonstrant–Counter-Remonstrant debates. Since at least the fourteenth century, the various religious denominations had organized philanthropy at the parish level, meaning that local churches administered aid to the impoverished members of their own congregations. In Amsterdam, the Calvinist or Dutch Reformed Church, the Catholic Church, the Lutherans, the Ashkenazi Jews, the Sephardic Jews and numerous smaller groups such as the Anabaptists, all had their own relief agencies, supervised by laity known as Heilige Geestmeesters (Holy Ghost Masters) or Huiszittende Meesters (Masters of the Residing Poor).<sup>97</sup> Such groups organized door-to-door collections, solicited donations at church services or synagogues, and placed collection boxes at popular inns or busy intersections so that individuals could donate anonymously.<sup>98</sup>

Almshouses, of which the Leprozenhuis is an example, provided more extensive care to house the sick, the aged and the orphaned, and, in some cases, to provide temporary shelter to travelers. Members of the urban patriciate frequently established and maintained such institutions, though guilds, clergy, and/or religious orders also founded and staffed them. Of all the different types of charitable institutions, almshouses enjoyed the greatest degree of social

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<sup>97</sup> Marco H. D. van Leeuwen, “Giving in Early Modern History: Philanthropy in Amsterdam in the Golden Age,” *Continuity and Change* 27, no. 2 (2012): 301.

<sup>98</sup> The Englishman William Carr describes this network of collection boxes: “[the charities of Amsterdam are] so Extraor|dinary that they surpas al other Cittyes in the World, for they are dayly & houerly giving to the poore, Every House in *Amsterdam* hath a Box hanging in a Chaine on which is written *Think on the Poore*, so that when any merchant sels Goods they com|monly conclude no bargain, but more or less is put in the *Poores Box*; These Boxes art Lockt up by the *Deacons*, who once a quarter goe round the Citty & take the Money out of the Boxes. Then twice a week there are men belonging to the Hospitals that goe round the Citty & ring a bell at every House to Know what the Master or mistris of the House will give to the Box, who Generally give not less.” William Carr, *Remarks of the Government of Severall Parts of Germanie, Denmark, Sweedland, Hamburg, Lubeck and Hansiactique Sic Townes, But More Particularly of the United Provinces, With Some Few Directions, How to Travell In the States Dominions...* (Amsterdam, 1688), 32–33.

prestige and served as a point of civic pride and a source of rivalry between cities. Visitors to the Netherlands often singled them out for special mention and historians described them at length in town chronicles.<sup>99</sup> They varied in shape and size, though most consisted of rooms organized around a central courtyard, a chapel dedicated to the spiritual needs of the inmates and at least one meeting room for the board of regents or other administrators responsible for conducting the affairs of the organization. Such arrangements permitted the care of a fixed number of needy residents while also creating an opportunity for prominent citizens to act in a leadership capacity. Serving as a regent of a charitable institution constituted the principle means by which an individual could aspire to a role in municipal government.<sup>100</sup>

However, given the limited space in almshouses, other poor relief agencies developed to care for the remaining destitute members of the population. Amsterdam's most important civic poor relief institution, the College of Aalmoezeniers, served as a veritable welfare catchall, seeking to provide essential assistance to the "deserving poor, sick, afflicted and old persons, young children and adolescents, and other people brutishly wretched and destitute, who could not and would not survive without help."<sup>101</sup> The municipal government established the College in 1613 in conjunction with the *Grote ordinantie tot weringe van bedelarij* (*The Great Ordinance for the Resistance of Begging*), which outlawed all forms of begging, even by the deserving poor. As a result, the College's role became even more significant as soliciting alms was now a criminal offense without exception.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 356.

<sup>100</sup> Parker, *The Reformation of Community*, 49–51.

<sup>101</sup> Cited in Muller, *Charity in the Dutch Republic*, 76.

<sup>102</sup> Muller, *Charity in the Dutch Republic*, 75–77.



Notably, the government of Amsterdam had always restricted all forms of social provision by both religious and secular institutions to *poorters* (citizens), despite P. C. Hooft's entreaty to award assistance indiscriminately.<sup>103</sup> Recipients of charity had to furnish verification of their status as citizens or demonstrate proof of residence for a period of at least three consecutive years. Not surprisingly, this stipulation left a large number of foreign immigrants without support.<sup>104</sup> It also meant that whether or not an impoverished individual received aid essentially denoted a judgment regarding his or her status within society. Thus, the Christian virtues of community and charity, so extolled by religious and civic leaders, represented ideals more than any semblance of reality. The system of poor relief ultimately served as an instrument of social control that provided assistance only to those deemed deserving.<sup>105</sup>

*The Procession of Lepers* avoids any references to the discriminatory policies of charitable institutions, instead emphasizing the efforts of the Leprozenhuis to model inclusionary behavior by embracing the city's leper population. The painting therefore represents an extremely idealized vision of charitable giving in accordance with the painting's commemorative function. However, when viewed in relation to the complicated history of poor relief in Amsterdam and the disputes concerning the distribution of charity by religious or municipal bodies, *The Procession of Lepers* may also be read as an assertion of civic authority. A perceived threat by religious leaders to the municipal oversight of poor relief not only challenged the Leprozenhuis regents' position of prestige, but also would have left many more of the destitute

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<sup>103</sup> Frijhoff et al., *1650*, 185–86. Citizenship, known as *poorterschap*, conferred the right to live in a city with certain privileges and obligations. Only a citizen could join a guild, run for political office and make claims on municipal services in the event of a death. Citizenship also obliged one to defend the city by joining a civic guard or militia. In order to become a citizen, one had to be born to citizen parents or marry a citizen. In some cases, citizenship could be gifted by the city magistracy or purchased.

<sup>104</sup> Muller, *Charity in the Dutch Republic*, 76–77.

<sup>105</sup> Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 358.

without recourse to aid. Within this context, Van Nieulandt's choice to juxtapose the leper procession against the backdrop of the city's most important municipal buildings and with numerous civic motifs, such as the Amsterdam coat of arms, signifies a subtle but ever-present statement of support for the members of the city's regent class and their efforts to assure public welfare. In doing so, *The Procession of Lepers* appropriates the past tradition of the ritualized procession for contemporary purposes while also honoring the longevity of the Leprozenhuis regents' philanthropy.

### **The Afterlife of *The Procession of Lepers on Copper Monday*—Ritual Preservation and Cultural Memory**

Though the annual leper procession in Amsterdam ceased to be held after 1604, the Leprozenhuis regents ensured the ritual's continued legacy by commissioning Van Nieulandt to paint *The Procession of Lepers*. That legacy would come to have much greater import than the regents could have anticipated, for the painting was widely disseminated at the end of seventeenth century and later in the form of engravings that were subsequently published in city histories. Historians writing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries described *The Procession of Lepers* at length and reproduced illustrations of it within their texts. One version (fig. 1.21), attributed to Simon Fokke, first appeared in Caspar Commelin's history of Amsterdam in 1693 and was later reused in the 1729 description of the city by Isaïc Le Long.<sup>106</sup> The artist clearly based the image on Van Nieulandt's composition, though he reoriented the setting and emphasized the act of almsgiving to an even greater degree by focusing the attention on a stately-dressed burgher who proffers money to a Leprozenhuis *biddenmoeder* in the center

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<sup>106</sup> Commelin, *Beschryvinge van Amsterdam...*, 559; Isaac Le Long, *Historische beschryvinge van de Reformatie der stad Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Johannes van Septeren, 1729), 520.

foreground. A second version by Fokke (fig. 1.22), which appeared in Jan Wagenaar's history published in the second half of the eighteenth century, reproduced *The Procession of Lepers* much more closely.<sup>107</sup>

The publication of both prints and the careful attention paid to capturing the details of the original scene, which the texts also described, underscores the significance ascribed to documenting the tradition of the leper procession and the role the painting had come to serve in the formation of Amsterdam's cultural memory.<sup>108</sup> City histories, described by Eddy Verbaan as repositories of cultural memory, offered an idealized vision of a community's self-image in order to promote a positive reputation amongst its own citizens and foreigners.<sup>109</sup> They commonly include elaborate descriptions of buildings and institutions, lists recording the city administration, biographies of famous men, a chronology of major historical events, discussions of urban trade and, notably, important artistic achievements.<sup>110</sup> The illustration of *The Procession of Lepers* in multiple histories of Amsterdam therefore suggests that the painting signified a valuable aspect of civic identity, which the citizens of that city (and the authors) wished to reinforce and encourage. Though the painting and its subsequent reproductions could never preserve the obsolete leper parade in its ritual form, they claimed the capacity to

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<sup>107</sup> Wagenaar, *Amsterdam*, 311.

<sup>108</sup> The term cultural memory is used widely in the field of Memory Studies. Jan Assmann coined the term to describe "that body of reusable texts, images and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose "cultivation" serves to stabilize and convey that society's self-image." Assmann's theory is rooted in the work of French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs. In *La Mémoire Collective* (1925), Halbwachs introduced the term "collective memory" to describe the symbols and practices employed by members of a society to construct versions of a shared past. See Jan Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," trans. John Czaplicka, *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 132; Maurice Halbwachs, *La Mémoire Collective* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968); Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

<sup>109</sup> Eddy Verbaan, "Cornucopian Paradises: Recent City Histories in Historical Perspective," *Dutch Crossing* 27, no. 2 (2003): 291.

<sup>110</sup> Verbaan, "Cornucopian Paradises," 291. Verbaan has argued that city descriptions were intended mainly for the citizens themselves.

reconstruct it and assert its value from a contemporary frame of reference. In 1633, in the midst of political and religious strife, and an exigent need to meet the needs of the urban poor, *The Procession of Lepers* summoned the past in order to make a case for the civic virtues of community, charity and tolerance in the present. The repeated imaging of the painting in city histories long after its execution by Van Nieulandt not only asserted the continued relevance of the leper parade for the citizens of Amsterdam, but also instilled its ritual aims within the city's evolving cultural memory.

## Chapter 2

### Procession, Pride and Politics in the *Medicea hospes*: A Dutch Festival Book for a French Queen

On 1 September 1638, Marie de Médicis (1575–1642), exiled French regent and mother of Louis XIII, entered Amsterdam through the Haarlemmerpoort in the company of Amalia van Solms, Princess of Orange. There the Amsterdam burgomasters received the Queen Mother with four days of honorary celebrations, which included a ritual procession through the city marked by two temporary triumphal arches, a grand banquet in the Oost-Indisch Huis (Dutch East India Company House) and a series of *tableaux vivants* staged on an artificial island on the Rokin. Never before had a foreign dignitary to the Dutch Republic been greeted with such sumptuous pageantry and theatrical display.<sup>1</sup> The festive occasion spurred the creation of numerous commemorative images and two textual descriptions, the most significant of which was Caspar Barlaeus's *Medicea hospes sive description publicae gratulationis, qua Serenissimam, Augustissimamque Reginam, Mariam de Medicis, excepit Senatus Populuswue Amstelodamsis* (Description of the Joyous Entry and Public Rejoicing, which the most Serene and August Queen Maria de Médicis received from the Burgomasters and People of Amsterdam).<sup>2</sup> The sumptuous publication marked the first time a Dutch city produced a festival book for any occasion and thus represented the Northern Netherlands's foray into a rich tradition of European ceremonial books.

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<sup>1</sup> D. P. Snoep, *Praal en propaganda: Triumfalia in de Noordelijke Nederlanden in de 16de en 17de eeuw* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Canaletto, 1975), 39–41.

<sup>2</sup> Caspar Barlaeus, *Medicea hospes, sive descriptio publicae gratulationis, qua reginam Mariam de Medicis excepit senatus populusque Amstelodamensis* (Amstelodami: Johannis & Cornелиi, 1638); Jean Puget de la Serre, *Histoire de l'entrée de la Reyne Mère du Roy Très-Chrétien, dans les Provinces Unies des Pays-Bas...* (Londre: Thomason, 1639). Jean Puget de la Serre likely based his text on the *Medicea hospes*. Peter Nolpe also executed an independent series of seven images of the Queen Mother's processional entry after drawings by Jan Martszen de Jonge.

The Amsterdam *vroedschap* (town council) paid Barlaeus, a distinguished professor of philosophy at the Athenaeum Illustre, 1,000 florins to pen the description in the months immediately following the entry. Johannis and Cornelis Blaeu then published the text in a lavishly illustrated, sixty-two-page volume, first in Latin (1638) and subsequently in French (1638) and Dutch editions (1639).<sup>3</sup> The fact that the original Latin text was quickly translated suggests that, from the start, the book was intended for a broad audience.<sup>4</sup> It featured seventeen etchings by Pieter Nolpe and Salomon Savery, including a portrait of Marie de Médicis after a painting by Gerard Honthorst (fig. 2.1); seven views of the celebrations in and around Amsterdam after drawings by Jan Martzen de Jonge and Simon de Vlieger (figs. 2. 2–3, 2.5, 2.7, 2.15–17); and nine allegorical prints of the *tableaux vivants* presented to the Queen Mother during her stay (figs. 2.4, 2.6, 2.8–14). Most surviving copies were printed on paper. However, in at least one example, the etchings were printed on vellum and inserted into the manuscript, and thus contributed to the book’s opulent appearance through both the subjects they depicted and their costly medium.<sup>5</sup>

The limited previous scholarship on the *Medicea hospes* has not addressed the volume comprehensively, but rather has focused on either the text and/or a selection of the images. In a 1973 study of Dutch triumphal entries, D. P. Snoep described the preparations for Marie de Médicis’s visit and the details of the entry itself. He also briefly discussed Barlaeus’s text, the allegorical prints and the possible sources from which the author and artists drew, but offered little critical interpretation of the book. In his conclusion he compared the *Medicea hospes* to a

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<sup>3</sup> The Dutch edition was translated by Joost van den Vondel.

<sup>4</sup> Snoep, *Praal en propaganda*, 41–42.

<sup>5</sup> The copy of the *Medicea hospes* in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston contains images printed on vellum.

panegyric, one devoted equally to Marie's virtues and the city of Amsterdam. By placing the Queen Mother and Amsterdam on equal footing, Snoep suggested, the *Medicea hospes* departed from conventional triumph literature that exhibited deference to the visiting ruler. The book ostensibly also served to aggrandize and promote Amsterdam, a point further underscored by the curious absence of any mention of Stadholder Frederik Hendrik, who supported the Queen's visit and encouraged Dutch cities to welcome her. While never explicitly stated, Snoep implied that Barlaeus's omission of the stadholder may be understood as part of the professor's attempt to intensify focus on the illustriousness of Amsterdam.<sup>6</sup>

Subsequently, in 1995, H. Rodney Nevitt examined Nolpe's nine allegorical etchings of the *tableaux vivants* in a short essay that accompanied an exhibition of those images.<sup>7</sup> Citing Barlaeus's descriptions of these theatrical displays, Nevitt suggested that the iconography of the allegorical etchings revolves around a theme of peace. He focused on one image in particular, *Marie de Médicis as Berencynthia in Her Chariot* (fig. 2.6), to make this argument. The print depicts Marie seated in a chariot and accompanied by her five children, including King Louis XIII of France, Queen Elizabeth of Spain and Queen Henrietta Maria of England. The Maid of Amsterdam and Mercury, god of commerce, greet her from aboard a small ship. Nevitt interpreted the image in light of Barlaeus's prose, which suggested that Marie represented an appropriate symbol of harmony and concord among warring nations as the mother of three European crowned monarchs. Similarly, Barlaeus contended, Amsterdam served as an arbiter of unity as the nexus of a trade network that facilitated peaceful commerce across Europe.<sup>8</sup> Nevitt,

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<sup>6</sup> Snoep, *Praal en propaganda*, 63–64.

<sup>7</sup> Nevitt, *Maria de' Medici Enters Amsterdam, 1638: Prints by Pieter Nolpe* (East Lansing, MI: Kresge Art Museum, 1995), unpaginated.

<sup>8</sup> Nevitt, *Maria de' Medici Enters Amsterdam*, unpaginated.

however, viewed this image and the other allegorical etchings in isolation from the scenes of Amsterdam included in the *Medicea hospes* and asserted without substantiation that the theme of peace pervades the entire text.

Nevitt also argued that Barlaeus's text and images may be understood within the context of the ongoing war between the Northern Netherlands and Spain and the internal debates among citizens of Amsterdam concerning truce negotiations. The governing class of Amsterdam regents, who largely belonged to the Remonstrant faction of the Dutch Reformed Church, favored peace with Spain, as many of the regents were invested economically in European land-based trade routes then suffering as a result of wartime tariffs. On the other hand, the Counter-Remonstrants, many of whom had shares in the Dutch East and West India Companies, adopted a pro-war stance as the tension with Spain benefitted the Companies' colonial expansion. At the time of Marie's entry, Nevitt observed, popular sentiment favored a truce with Spain and three of the four burgomasters who commissioned the book supported peace initiatives.<sup>9</sup> I suggest that a theme of peace does indeed pervade the *Medicea hospes*, as Nevitt posited, but that this theme should also be understood within the context of urban rivalries and competing political alliances within the Dutch Republic.

This chapter thus seeks to build upon Snoep's and Nevitt's interpretations, but will expand the focus to include the processional imagery and the views of Amsterdam that scholars have yet to address, and which are integral to understanding the meaning of the *Medicea hospes*. First, I argue that while the etchings draw on a rich tradition of ceremonial books produced in Europe, they depart from the rhetorical conventions of this genre and instead engage native landscape and cityscape traditions to evoke peace and prosperity in a Dutch idiom. Moreover,

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<sup>9</sup> Nevitt, *Maria de' Medici Enters Amsterdam*, unpaginated.



through the representation of specific, recognizable buildings in Amsterdam, such as the Oost-Indisch Huis, the Waag (Weigh House) and the Stadhuis (Town Hall), several of the etchings assume the characteristics of celebratory town descriptions, also known as chorographies.<sup>10</sup> Collectively, the images commemorate and emphasize visually the city of Amsterdam to a greater degree than the Queen Mother, a sentiment supported by Barlaeus's text. I then situate the visual and textual aggrandizement of Amsterdam within the context of urban rivalries and the political framework of the 1630s, a time when the Amsterdam *vroedschap* desperately attempted to influence foreign policy in favor of a truce with Spain, as well as assert the city's economic and cultural preeminence. The *Medicea hospes*, I will argue, represented the municipal government's efforts to define Amsterdam as a formidable economic and political power both within the Dutch Republic and to the outside world. The ritual entry of the Queen Mother and its representation in the text and illustrations affirmed a positive image of the city and also served as a political vehicle for the *vroedschap*'s continued peace efforts.

### **The Circumstances of Marie de Médicis's Entry into Amsterdam**

Prior to her arrival in Amsterdam in 1638, Marie de Médicis had been living in the Spanish Netherlands in self-imposed exile for nearly seven years.<sup>11</sup> She left France for Brussels in 1631, after a decade of political and personal turmoil in the wake of King Henri IV's

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<sup>10</sup> Snoep, *Praal en propaganda*, 64. While Snoep noted this comparison, he did not analyze the *Medicea hospes* in relation to the content of chorographies, their historiographical conventions, nor their methodologies, as I will do here.

<sup>11</sup> Toby Osborne, "A Queen Mother in Exile: Maria de Médicis in the Spanish Netherlands and England, 1631–41," in *Monarchy and Exile: The Politics of Legitimacy from Marie de Médicis to Wilhelm II*, ed. Philip Mansel and Torsten Riotte (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 17–18. Marie de Médicis was born on April 26, 1575 in Florence to Francesco I, Grand Duke of Tuscany and Johanna of Austria, daughter of Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand I. In 1600, she married Henri IV of France and gave birth to her eldest son, the future Louis XIII, the following year. For a comprehensive biography of Marie de Médicis, see Jean-François Dubost, *Marie de Médicis: La Reine Dévoilée* (Paris: Payot, 2009).

assassination and her brief tenure as queen regent between 1610 and 1617. During her regency, France remained at peace and enjoyed relative economic stability, though the Queen Mother faced growing hostility from the aristocracy and harsh criticism from the Estates-General, which desired increasing authority of its own. In 1617, at the age of sixteen, Louis seized power and ordered the execution of Marie's top advisor, Concino Concini. He then sent his mother into exile at the Château de Blois.<sup>12</sup> For a brief period in the 1620s, Marie moved back to Paris upon Louis's invitation and joined the Royal Council; however, her return proved short-lived. Tensions between mother and son became increasingly pronounced, particularly because of Marie's hostility towards and distrust of Cardinal Richelieu, the king's chief minister. After a failed attempt to oust Richelieu from office in November 1630, Marie quietly left France and never returned, despite repeated efforts at reconciliation.<sup>13</sup>

During her years in exile, the Queen Mother traveled with an entourage of staff, which included several stewards and her historiographer, Jean Puget de la Serre; a medical team comprised of two physicians, a surgeon and an apothecary; a confessor and an almoner; as well as two lieutenants, twelve bodyguards and other soldiers. Moreover, she was joined by hundreds of followers: ladies-in-waiting, opponents of Cardinal Richelieu and various adventure-seekers.<sup>14</sup> The entire community of exiles depended largely on the generosity of their hosts for financial support, as Louis refused to reinstate Marie's personal resources unless she agreed to retire to her native Florence. This undue burden placed strain on the cities that received her and bred

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<sup>12</sup> Margaret D. Carroll, "Womanliness as Masquerade: The Case of Marie de' Médicis," in *Paintings and Politics in Northern Europe: Van Eyck, Bruegel, Rubens, and Their Contemporaries* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 104.

<sup>13</sup> Osborne, "A Queen Mother in Exile," 17–18.

<sup>14</sup> Osborne, "A Queen Mother in Exile," 25. The Queen Mother's retinue gradually diminished in number over time; however, when she crossed the English Channel in 1638, she was still joined by an impressive group of six coaches, seventy horses and 160 people.

resentment between France and the governor of the Spanish Netherlands, Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand of Austria. Eventually, increasing pressure to stop supporting the Queen Mother forced her to move on.<sup>15</sup>

Marie traveled north from Brussels to the Dutch Republic after having negotiated a diplomatic agreement with Frederik Hendrik, Prince of Orange and Stadholder of Holland. The Dutch leader agreed to encourage Louis to reconcile with the Queen Mother. In exchange, Marie facilitated a marriage between Frederik's son, Willem II, and one of the daughters of Charles I and Henrietta Maria of England, who were Marie's son-in-law and youngest daughter. This exchange of favors proved quite contentious. Frederik's decision to receive the Queen Mother incensed members of the Staten-Generaal (the Dutch representative assembly), who cared little about the Prince's aspirations for a royal bloodline, feared complicating relations with France and begrudged the enormous cost of her stay.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, Louis XIII was angered that Frederik received Marie without his consent. When in October 1638 Frederik dispatched a Dutch agent by the name of Johan de Knuyt to arbitrate an agreement between the king and his mother, Louis refused to accept Dutch intervention and reiterated that he would provide financial support to his mother only if she retreated to Florence.<sup>17</sup>

Such trying political circumstances beg the question why the Amsterdam burgomasters would agree to honor the Queen Mother's visit with such effusive pageantry. Nothing in the archival record gives indication of the burgomasters' motivations. According to Snoep, that they intended to demonstrate a show of support for Frederik Hendrik is unlikely, for at the time of Marie's entry, the city and the Stadholder were publicly at odds with one another as a result of

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<sup>15</sup> Snoep, *Praal en propaganda*, 40.

<sup>16</sup> Nevitt, *Maria de' Medici Enters Amsterdam*, unpaginated; Snoep, *Praal en propaganda*, 41.

<sup>17</sup> Osborne, "A Queen Mother in Exile," 25; Snoep, *Praal en propaganda*, 41.

his pro-war stance.<sup>18</sup> Instead, I argue that the Queen Mother's reception in Amsterdam may be read as an assertion of civic clout on the part of the *vroedschap*. The entry represented an exceptional opportunity for Amsterdam to portray itself to a foreign sovereign as an effective and commanding world power, both in terms of the city's recent growth and urban development, and because of the tremendous economic success it experienced as the center of a vast mercantile empire. The visit also provided Amsterdam the chance to defend its position of primacy within the Dutch Republic, as well as rival other European metropolises such as Venice, Paris and Antwerp, which staged similar ritual ceremonial, but with greater extravagance and frequency.<sup>19</sup> Relative to their foreign counterparts, the regents of Amsterdam had only recently ascended to positions of social prestige, but desired to compete with the aristocratic lifestyles and cultural models of the European nobility.<sup>20</sup> Thus by presenting the city to the Queen Mother in a favorable light during the entry itself and shortly thereafter in Barlaeus's text, the burgomasters claimed a position of preeminence for Amsterdam. At the same time, they reinforced their arguments in favor of peace with Spain in a platform designed for both domestic and international audiences.

### **The Production and Form of the *Medicea hospes***

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<sup>18</sup> Snoep, *Praal en propaganda*, 63–64.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Davidson, "Festivals in the Netherlands," in *Europa Triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in Early Modern Europe*, ed. J. R. Mulryne, Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, and Margaret Schewing, vol. 2 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 470; J. R. Mulryne and Elizabeth Goldring, *Court Festivals of the European Renaissance: Art, Politics, and Performance* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002); J. R. Mulryne, Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, and Margaret Schewing, eds., *Europa Triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in Early Modern Europe*, 2 vols. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004).

<sup>20</sup> Willem Frijhoff et al., *1650: Hard-Won Unity* (Assen; Basingstoke: Royal Van Gorcum; Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 71–72. France, especially, served as a cultural model for the Dutch elite and more broadly for the European aristocracy.

The city magistrates strove to present a favorable image of Amsterdam to the Queen Mother by enlisting some of the city's most celebrated writers and scholars, including Caspar Barlaeus, the playwright Samuel Coster, the lawyer Johan Victorijn and the famed poet Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft.<sup>21</sup> Though the exact roles they played remains uncertain, the involvement of such distinguished academics conveys the significance the *vroedscap* attributed to the occasion. Complete with illustrations, the text cost over 8,000 guilders to produce.<sup>22</sup> That editions in Latin, Dutch and French were issued suggests that the publishers, Johannis and Cornelis Blaeuw, hoped to reach a broad, international audience. While little is known about the French edition, the Blaeuws disseminated the Latin and Dutch texts widely. Barlaeus also spoke repeatedly of the *Medicea hospes* in his letters. In February 1639, for example, he sent a corrected copy of the text to Constantijn Huygens, famed poet and secretary to the Prince of Orange.<sup>23</sup> Several extant copies also bear inscriptions from Barlaeus.<sup>24</sup>

As only scant correspondence survives that discusses the preparations for the entry itself, the *Medicea hospes* serves as the most complete record of all the events and performances orchestrated in honor of the Queen Mother.<sup>25</sup> The text, however, is most certainly a highly idealized account of Marie's visit, which expresses the particular point of view of the Amsterdam *vroedscap*. Barlaeus's consistent praise of the foreign sovereign, as well as the city,

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<sup>21</sup> Frijhoff et al., 1650, 440; Snoep, *Praal en propaganda*, 63.

<sup>22</sup> Snoep, *Praal en propaganda*, 167, footnote 33.

<sup>23</sup> Snoep, *Praal en propaganda*, 42.

<sup>24</sup> The Rijksmuseum Research Library owns two copies of the *Medicea hospes* written in Latin and one in Dutch. Both of the Latin copies are inscribed by Barlaeus—one to the theological professor Simon Episcopius and the other to Theodoro Buningio.

<sup>25</sup> Snoep, *Praal en propaganda*, 63. Snoep cites a letter of 22 August 1638 in which Hooft corresponded with Barlaeus about their plans for the entry.

disguises any of the negative discourse surrounding the Queen's entry and her soured relationship with Louis XIII.

According to Barlaeus, a fleet of yachts met Marie and her cortege, accompanied by Amalia, on the outskirts of Amsterdam on 1 September. A mounted guard captained by Cornelis van Davelaer escorted the royal guest to the Haarlemmerpoort, where twenty militia companies greeted her with the sounds of gunfire and canons as church bells tolled across the city. The former burgomaster Andries Bicker then formally welcomed her. He joined Peter Reael and Jacob Bicker, who represented the citizens of Amsterdam, and Cornelis Bloom, who expressed in a short speech the joy with which the public received such an illustrious guest.<sup>26</sup>

Upon entering the city gate, Marie processed between the mounted guard and rows of militiamen along the Nieuwendijk until she reached a triumphal arch erected temporarily for the occasion. The arch's attic story featured a *tableau vivant* of Marie's wedding to Henri IV, wherein actors dramatized verse written by Barlaeus against painted backdrops. From there, the procession crossed under the arch and entered the Dam, the judicial and economic center of Amsterdam and the location of the Stadhuis, Waag, and Tribunaal (Tribunal).<sup>27</sup> Next they traversed the Warmoestraat, a street known for silks and luxury goods,<sup>28</sup> turned right at the Niezel, and headed southwest down the Oudezijds Voorburgwal, past the Oude Kerk (Old Church), to the Oude Doelenstraat. At the Varkenssluis (a bridge), Marie encountered a second

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<sup>26</sup> Barlaeus, *Medicea hospes*, 9–13; Geoffrey Cotterell, *Amsterdam: The Life of a City* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), 137; F. J. Dubiez, "Maria de Medicis: Het bezoek aan Amsterdam in Augustus 1638," *Ons Amsterdam* 9 (1958): 267–68.

<sup>27</sup> Barlaeus, *Medicea hospes*, 13–22; Cotterell, *Amsterdam*, 138; Dubiez, "Maria de Medicis," 268–69.

<sup>28</sup> Clé Lesger, "Urban Planning, Urban Improvement, and the Retail Landscape in Amsterdam, 1600–1850," in *The Landscape of Consumption: Shopping Streets and Cultures in Western Europe, 1600–1900*, ed. Jan Hein Furnée and Clé Lesger (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 112.

temporary triumphal arch, which displayed the *tableau vivant* of her as Berecynthia, mother of the gods. After listening to the accompanying oration, the procession concluded at the Prinsenhof (the prince's residence for distinguished guests), where the Queen Mother retired for the evening after being warmly welcomed by the four current Amsterdam burgomasters, Pieter Hasselaer, Abraham Boom, Antoni Oetgens van Waveren and Albert Conrad Burg.<sup>29</sup>

Festive celebrations continued over the next three days. On 2 September, the burgomasters accompanied the Queen Mother on a tour of the city with stops made at the Westerkerk (Western Church), the West-Indischhuis (Dutch West India Company headquarters), the Waag and the Beurs (Exchange). The tour culminated in a lavish feast at the Oost-Indisch Huis where, in honor of the occasion, the Company dressed the walls of the banqueting hall in costly imported fabrics, pictures from China and Japan, and foreign weapons, including spears, axes and shields. They also presented Marie with a display of exotic spices such as pepper, nutmeg and cinnamon, and a lofty address by the officers described the far-flung corners of the world to which the Company traveled.<sup>30</sup>

The following afternoon, on 3 September, the city hosted a series of water spectacles on the Rokin, a part of the Amstel River that terminated at the Dam. From aboard a small ship, Marie witnessed seven *tableau vivants* staged on two sides of a temporary, artificial island that had been erected the evening before. First, she observed the marriage of her parents, Francesco de' Medici and Joanna of Austria, followed by Emperor Maximilian I's bestowal of the imperial crown to the city of Amsterdam. Five other performances chronicled the history of France during Henri III's and Henri IV's reigns, with emphasis on the Queen Mother's role in restoring peace

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<sup>29</sup> Barlaeus, *Medicea hospes*, 22–27; Cotterell, *Amsterdam*, 138; Dubiez, “Maria de Medicis,” 269–71; Frijhoff et al., *1650*, 195.

<sup>30</sup> Barlaeus, *Medicea hospes*, 29–34.

following the Wars of Religion in France. Afterwards, the festivities adopted a more lighthearted tone when ten sailors dressed in red and white competed in a playful joust. The afternoon concluded with a short trip through the Anthonissluis (a lock) to the IJ, the bay forming the city's northeastern border, where the Queen Mother could appreciate a mock battle and a panoramic view of Amsterdam. She rested the next day and left the city for Haarlem the following morning, accompanied by the militiamen with great fanfare.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to describing these events in thorough, chronological detail, the *Medicea hospes* reproduced the various orations and verse delivered to the Queen Mother during her stay. The volume distinguished between these disparate literary registers by indenting the poetry and setting it in italic type, and by using quotations to demarcate the speeches. Illustrations of the festivities in and around Amsterdam, as well as the allegorical *tableaux vivants* performed for Marie, were interwoven with the text so that the reader could behold the sights as they had been presented to the foreign sovereign. Such depictions appear in close juxtaposition with the text (typically on the following page) in an apparent attempt to simulate the experience of the entry as it unfolded. Notably, the viewer does not encounter the images from the perspective of the Queen Mother, but through varying points of view that alternate between distant landscape and urban vistas, close-ups of the city and the temporary architecture erected in honor of the occasion, and focused representations of the staged performances that Marie witnessed.<sup>32</sup> Such shifts in perspective present a comprehensive and favorable picture of Amsterdam that hones greater focus on the city and the festivities it staged than on the Queen.

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<sup>31</sup> Barlaeus, *Medicea hospes*, 39–53; Cotterell, *Amsterdam*, 139; Dubiez, “Maria de Medicis,” 271–72.

<sup>32</sup> My thanks to Anne D. Hedeman for this observation.



The first representation of the entry encountered by the reader, *Procession with Marie de' Médicis Along the Haarlemmerweg* (fig. 2.2), presents a sweeping, foldout panorama of the Dutch terrain between Amsterdam and Haarlem. Etched by Salomon Savery after Claes Moeyaert, it depicts Marie and her entourage traveling by carriage and on horseback as they make their way from Haarlem to Amsterdam alongside the newly constructed *trekvaart* (barge canal) linking the cities.<sup>33</sup> The procession cuts across the landscape in a gradual diagonal, emphasizing the impressive size of Marie's cortege rather than specific individuals. Most of the composition gives way to an expansive sky. A milkmaid, several figures and a handful of cows populate the foreground, and in the distance, the distinctive profile of Haarlem's St. Bavo Church is visible on the horizon.

A densely urban view of the arrival of the procession in Amsterdam at the triumphal gate at Vijgendam (fig. 2.3) follows. Executed by Savery after Jan Martszen de Jonge, it pictures Marie in the lower right corner as she looks out from a carriage pulled by a team of horses. Hundreds of figures line the streets to greet her and dozens more peer out from windows and rooftops. The militia companies, neatly arranged in rows with their weapons held at attention, face the procession as it moves under a temporary triumphal arch topped by Amsterdam's former coat of arms, which features a cog ship.<sup>34</sup> The etching portrays the arch as a fully three-dimensional structure, though it likely consisted of a flat façade painted with *trompe l'oeil*

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<sup>33</sup> Julie Berger Hochstrasser, "Inroads in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Landscape Painting," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 48 (1997): 202–6. During the mid-seventeenth century, an extensive system of canals called *trekvaarten* were developed to transport people between cities on horse-drawn barges, or *trekschuiten*. By the 1670s, they extended to nearly every city in the Netherlands. The *trekvaart* between Amsterdam and Haarlem was completed in 1632.

<sup>34</sup> "Geschiedenis van het wapen van Amsterdam," *Amsterdam.nl*, accessed March 10, 2016, <https://www.amsterdam.nl/toerisme-vrije-tijd/over-amsterdam/geschiedenis-wapen/>.

architectural elements.<sup>35</sup> Curtains parted to either side of an elevated stage reveal the actors dramatizing the marriage of the Queen Mother and Henri IV. A print after the performance, etched by Pieter Nolpe after a drawing by Moeyaert, appears several pages later (fig. 2.4).<sup>36</sup>

The next image in the *Medicea hospes* represents the arrival of the procession at the Varkenssluis, where the second arch had been temporarily constructed (fig. 2.5). Savery based the etching on a drawing by Martszen de Jonge that portrays Marie seated in a carriage with a fan clasped in hand, surrounded by the militia companies which escorted her. The arch of honor, embellished with Amsterdam's heraldry, forms a theatrical backdrop to the procession while simultaneously showcasing the performers from the upper story, who enact the allegory of the Queen Mother as Berencynthia. Many of the figures in the foreground direct their gazes upward to witness the dramatic *tableau*.

An etching depicting a close-up of the performance (fig. 2.6) follows immediately thereafter and thus provides the reader a chance to study the actors and iconography. At the top of the composition, a banner bearing Virgil's phrase "*laeta devm partv*" (rejoicing in her progeny of gods) refers to the Queen's role in mothering three crowned monarchs. Barlaeus claims that like gods on earth, they will unite the countries of war-torn Europe. Similarly, the city of Amsterdam will unify Europe through commercial enterprise.<sup>37</sup> The inclusion of Mercury and

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<sup>35</sup> Snoep, *Praal en propaganda*, 51. The *koggeschip* (cargo ship), a sailing ship used for trading between Hanseatic towns, featured prominently on Amsterdam's medieval coat of arms. The current heraldry evolved over several centuries. In 1489, Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I granted the city the right to include the imperial crown. The lions flanking the three Saint Andrew's crosses were added in the sixteenth century.

<sup>36</sup> For a fuller discussion of the iconography of Pieter Nolpe's allegorical etchings, see Nevitt, *Maria de' Medici Enters Amsterdam*, unpaginated.

<sup>37</sup> Kaspar van Baerle, *Blyde inkomst der allerdoorluchtigste koninginne, Maria de Medicis, t' Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Johan en Cornelis Blaeu, 1639), 2–4; Nevitt, *Maria de' Medici Enters Amsterdam, 1638*, unpaginated. Barlaeus makes a series of comparisons between Marie de Médicis and the city of Amsterdam: "De Koningin is door het huwelijck van den onverwinnelijcksten Koning, Henrick de Groote,

personifications of the four continents, which allude to the distant trading posts of Amsterdam's mercantile empire, reinforce the etching's visual propaganda.

The ensuing illustrations visualize the series of water performances staged on the Rokin. Overnight, two theaters re-purposed from the upper stories of the triumphal arches were erected back to back on a floating barge across from the Oude Turfmarkt (old peat market).<sup>38</sup> *Arrival at the Floating Theater on the Rokin* (fig. 2.7), etched by Savery after Simon de Vlieger, depicts the Queen Mother in the center foreground in a small boat partially covered by a canopy, along with members of her retinue, the Amsterdam burgomasters and the *schout* (sheriff). To the right, the Maid of Amsterdam and Mercury, preceded by Neptune on a petite, shell-shaped craft, welcome Marie from a small vessel. Hundreds of spectators line the quays in the background and watch as the royal visitor witnesses the second of seven *tableaux vivants* staged in her honor—a reenactment of Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I granting Amsterdam the imperial crown. In 1489, the emperor had bestowed upon the city the right to include the crown in its coat of arms in recognition of the city's financial support during the Hook and Cod Wars (approximately 1350–1490). Savery's decision to illustrate this particular performance, though only partially visible, may have been an indirect reference to the installation of the imperial crown on top of the tower

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hoogh beroemt geowrden. De Stadt is wijd vermaert door het onverbreeckelijck verbond van hare nabuurige bondgenooten. De Koningin, een Moeder der maghtighste Koningen in Europe, heeft Vorsten en Vorstinnen, over uitsteekende Rijcken, ter wereld gebroght. De Stadt brengt die zelve Rijcken door koopen en verkoopen van haere koopmanschappen winst aen, en treckt 'er weder winst af. De Koningin munt uit door de ry van haer naemhaftigh en vermaert geslacht: De Stadt door den toeloop van allerhande volcken. De Koningin is by den volcke ontzaghlijck door haere Majesteit: De Stadt treckt yeder een binnen en buitens lands tot zich, door hoop van winst. De Koningin kan verscheide landen en Rijcken, by den haeren beheerscht, aenwijzen, waer heenen de koopman dagelijcx vaert. Onze Stadt kan vlooten en schepen uitleveren, waer mede de koopman derwaert heenen zeilt..."

<sup>38</sup> Snoep, *Praal en propaganda*, 54. See also footnote 35.

of the Westerkerk that same year.<sup>39</sup> The crown's prominent display in Amsterdam and in the *Medicea hospes* alluded to the city's illustrious past and continued financial stability.

Following this etching, the reader could examine the five remaining *tableaux* presented on the water to the Queen (figs. 2.10–14), which portrayed the wars of religion during the reign of Henri III and the restoration of peace under Henri IV, Marie's late husband. *The Lamentation of France's Disaster* (fig. 2.10) depicts a snake-haired crone, identified by Barlaeus as "the envy of princes," as she drives a stake engulfed in flames into a globe labeled Gallia (France). To the left, the fruits of peace represented by Bacchus, Ceres and Flora, cower in fear while to the right, Justice (who holds a sword and scales) and Peace (who carries an olive branch) fall to the ground in defeat. Venus extends her arms in an expression of grief and Hercules, in the lower right corner, sits subdued, unable to take action. The Queen Mother as the personification of France appears disconsolate to the left of the destroyed Gallia.<sup>40</sup>

In the second *tableau* on the water (fig. 2.11), Marie, pictured to the right, casts her gaze skyward as she begs Jupiter and Juno for help in restoring Gallia. Minerva answers her plea in the third scene (fig. 2.12): visible at the far left, she directs Henri IV, in the guise of Hercules, to repair the war-torn Gallia while the gods oversee the action from a bank of clouds. Hercules then secures both halves of the globe with the aid of a chisel and hammer before bearing the restored Gallia on his shoulders with support from Mars and Minerva (figs. 2.13–14). The imagery thus suggests that with the Queen Mother's help and the assistance of the gods, Henri successfully repaired the deep sectarian divisions that had plagued France for over four decades (1562–98). The personification of Henri IV as Hercules, the archetype of virtue, draws from French

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<sup>39</sup> Snoep, *Praal en propaganda*, 64.

<sup>40</sup> Nevitt, *Maria de' Medici Enters Amsterdam*, unpaginated.

precedents, which frequently represented the king in this guise both during his reign and after his death.<sup>41</sup> Marie's representation as a harbinger of peace, while less common, is likely indebted to Peter Paul Rubens' monumental, twenty-four panel cycle depicting the Queen's life and greatest accomplishments.<sup>42</sup> This equation of Marie with harmony and concord, while certainly aggrandized, also corresponds with the iconography of the other *tableaux* presented to Marie during the course of her visit.

The remaining etchings in the *Medicea hospes*, which depict the jovial entertainments and water spectacles staged in the Queen's honor, dramatically contrast with the sobriety and gravitas of the preceding allegorical imagery. In *Jousting Boats on the Rokin Near the Oude Turfmarkt* (fig. 2.15), Savery depicts a lighthearted competition between two jousters on a long, narrow vessel just to the left of the center of the composition. From both land and water, thousands of onlookers watch with anticipation the climactic moment in which one of the contenders loses his footing. The artist diminishes the Queen's role—barely visible, she appears seated beneath a canopy in a boat in the center foreground—and instead renders the buildings facing the Oude Turfmarkt and the Rokin with exacting intricacy and detail. This pictorial emphasis suggests that the city of Amsterdam, rather than the Queen or the joust (a relatively small detail in the overall composition), is the ostensible subject of the etching.

*Mock Battle on the IJ* (fig. 2.16) and the *Departure of the Queen on the Dam* (fig. 2.17) similarly describe significant civic buildings and sights with painstaking specificity and also

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<sup>41</sup> Nevitt, *Maria de' Medici Enters Amsterdam*, unpaginated.

<sup>42</sup> Nevitt, *Maria de' Medici Enters Amsterdam*, unpaginated; Sara Galetti, "Rubens's Life of Marie de' Medici: Dissimulation and the Politics of Art in Early Seventeenth-Century France," *Renaissance Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (2014): 907–8. Nevitt makes the observation that Moeyaert was influenced by Rubens's famous cycle of paintings known as *The Life of Marie de' Médicis* (1622–25) created for the Luxembourg palace and that he quoted specific figures from the cycle. However, no copies of the paintings were circulated during the Queen Mother's lifetime and printed copies after drawings by Jean-Baptiste and Jean-Marc Nattier were not published until 1710. Moeyaert could have known about the series only through textual descriptions.

feature prominently Amsterdam's heraldry. Savery etched the mock battle after a drawing by De Vlieger in the form of an extra-large, foldout panorama, the second of two in the volume.

Hundreds of onlookers observe over a dozen ships in full sail, some of which are enveloped in clouds of cannon smoke. The artist juxtaposes the action against a profile view of Amsterdam that emphasizes the city's expansive, flat terrain dotted by the towers of important civic and religious structures. From left to right, the distinctive silhouettes of the Zuiderkerk (Southern Church), the Oude Kerk, the Beurs, the Nieuwe Kerk (New Church), the Jan Roodenpoortstoren (Jan Rooden Gate Tower), the Haringpakkerstoren (Herring Packer's Tower), the Westerkerk, the West-Indischhuis and the Noorderkerk (Northern Church) appear against the horizon. The long, horizontal view presents the reader of the *Medicea hospes* with a portrait of the city, one that evokes its tremendous economic success by depicting its expansiveness, its monumental buildings and sizable harbor. Furthermore, Amsterdam's old and new coats of arms, which appear at the top of the composition, allude to the city's history and longevity by evoking the passage of time.

In *Departure of the Queen on the Dam* (fig. 2.17), etched by Savery after Martszen de Jonge, recognizable sights such as the Tribunaal, the Stadhuis and the square-shaped Waag similarly call attention to Amsterdam's civic and economic prestige. The buildings frame the Queen Mother's carriage, which, seen from behind, makes its way to the city ramparts. Marie exits Amsterdam just as she arrived, in the company of the militia troops while figures bow in respect or regard her with fascination and curiosity. The artist cleverly positions the viewer at street level so that he/she also bids the Queen farewell as the carriage pulls away. This pictorial strategy reinforces the perception of an eyewitness experience of the procession and serves as a fitting conclusion to the text.

## The *Medicea hospes* and the Tradition of the Joyous Entry Book

Through the commission of the *Medicea hospes*, Barlaeus and the Amsterdam *vroedschap* participated in a well-established tradition of festival books published to honor significant events in European civic, political and religious life.<sup>43</sup> Beginning in 1475 and with frequency after 1550, cities and courts produced such texts to commemorate royal investitures, the arrival of foreign dignitaries, liturgical celebrations, military victories, and wedding and funeral ceremonies.<sup>44</sup> Frequently, these ritualized occasions involved actual movement through civic centers or urban spaces heavily invested with symbolic meaning. Processions and other ceremonies thus inscribed social order onto that space through their ritual demarcation of boundaries, authorities and civic groups. In doing so, such events served as a chance for the city to define itself politically and culturally to a visiting sovereign, to the outside world and/or for the benefit of its own citizens. Peter Arnade has suggested that joyous entries—and by extension, I would add the texts and images produced as part of their commemoration—provided an opportunity for civic engagement and bargaining over status and power between a city and its sovereign.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Davidson, “Festivals in the Netherlands,” 469; John Landwehr, *Splendid Ceremonies: State Entries and Royal Funerals in the Low Countries, 1515–1791* (Leiden: A. W. Sijthoff, 1971), 69. Two pamphlets without illustrations were published to honor the entries of Charles V and the Earl of Leicester in 1540 and 1586, respectively.

<sup>44</sup> Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, “The Early Modern Festival Book: Form and Function,” in *Europa Triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in Early Modern Europe*, ed. J. R. Mulryne and Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, vol. 2 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 6.

<sup>45</sup> Peter Arnade, “City, State, and Public Ritual in the Late-Medieval Burgundian Netherlands,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39, no. 2 (April 1, 1997): 300–318; Peter Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996). Arnade explores Burgundian ritual in light of relations between rulers and townspeople. He argues that public ceremonies were “part of a broad effort to solve the intractable problems of difference, competition, and legitimacy raised by the historical antagonisms between cities and state” (308). He ultimately contends that public ritual did not have a single meaning for rulers or communities, but instead served as a cultural strategy through which participants claimed legitimacy and maneuvered for concrete political concessions. This interpretation, which considers entries to be politicized ritual ceremonies capable of effecting change and

Public ceremonies and the festival books produced in their honor typically followed established patterns. The *Medicea hospes* employed many standard features of the festival book genre, but it also departed from conventions of form and content in significant ways, most notably in the illustrations. With the exception of Pieter Nolpe, who worked only on the *Medicea hospes*'s allegorical imagery, the artists who collaborated on the project—Jan Martszen de Jonge, Claes Moeyaert, Salomon Savery and Simon de Vlieger—exercised a decidedly native Dutch pictorial vocabulary. I suggest that these artistic choices, which were rooted in Dutch landscape and cityscape imagery, as well as chorographical traditions, drew on native peace *topoi* and provided a specific and recognizable context for Marie de Médicis's entry often missing from the illustrations of other European festival books. Furthermore, these native pictorial and literary traditions more effectively evoked the civic ritual signifiers of the processional entry by reinforcing the local setting and underscoring the celebratory accolades bestowed upon Amsterdam in Barlaeus's prose.

The discussion that follows here first characterizes the triumphal entry and the festival book genre with respect to their origins, purpose and form. I then consider the ways in which Marie's visit and the *Medicea hospes* conformed to and departed from established patterns in order to demonstrate the artistic context in which Barlaeus asserted his political ideology in favor of peace and a desire for Amsterdam's increased civic clout and prestige.

The first festival books appeared in the latter part of the fifteenth century, though they commemorated ceremonial rituals inherited from the Middle Ages and classical Rome. The royal or joyous entry (*blijde inkomst*), the type most frequently recorded in texts, developed from the traditions of the antique triumph and medieval religious dramas rooted in the Christian liturgical

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communicating ideologies and beliefs, forms the underlying theoretical basis for my analysis of the Queen Mother's entry and the *Medicea hospes*.



calendar, such as Corpus Christi plays or Passion cycles.<sup>46</sup> Customarily, sovereigns or members of the royal family would process through a city under their purview along a prescribed route wherein they met important dignitaries and were presented with *tableaux vivants*, triumphal arches and other celebratory spectacles.<sup>47</sup> The route usually encompassed major religious, economic and civic sites with a focus on the city's center. Thus while the ostensible purpose of the entry was to express reverence for the visiting ruler, the event also presented an opportunity for the city to communicate its needs and ambitions while simultaneously exhibiting proudly its urban development and municipal resources. Certainly Marie de Médicis's entry into Amsterdam provided ample occasions to aggrandize both ruler and city. In the *Medicea hospes*, Barlaeus compares Marie's reception in Amsterdam to Athens' recognition of kings and princes; Egypt's welcoming of Cleopatra; Rome's celebrations for Agrippina; and conquered Tyre's support of Alexander the Great.<sup>48</sup>

Joyous entries also served several other purposes. They provided an affirmation of civic identity through the physical movement of distinguished guests, participants and spectators within municipal spaces.<sup>49</sup> The ceremonial route represented the city's collective vision of its

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<sup>46</sup> For the classical origins of royal entry, see Margaret M. McGowan, "The Renaissance Triumph and Its Classical Heritage," in *Court Festivals of the European Renaissance: Art, Politics, and Performance*, ed. J. R. Mulryne and Elizabeth Goldring (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002), 26–28; Roy C. Strong, *Splendor at Court: Renaissance Spectacle and the Theater of Power* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973), 21–36; Gordon Kipling, *Enter the King: Theatre, Liturgy, and Ritual in the Medieval Civic Triumph* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 6–21.

<sup>47</sup> George R. Kernodle, "Renaissance Artists in the Service of the People: Political Tableaux and Street Theater in France, Flanders, and England," *Art Bulletin* 25, no. 1 (1943): 59–64; Roy C. Strong, *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals, 1450–1650* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 6–7.

<sup>48</sup> Baerle, *Blyde inkomst der allerdoorluchtighste koninginne, Maria de Medicis, t' Amsterdam*, 8. "Zoo ontving eertijds Athenen zijn Koningen en Vorsten; Egypten Kleopatra; Rome Agrippine; en het veroverde Tyrus den Grooten Alexander."

<sup>49</sup> Emily J. Peters, "Printing Ritual: The Performance of Community in Christopher Plantin's La Joyeuse & Magnifique Entrée de Monseigneur Francoys ... d'Anjou\*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (June 2008): 408.

most eminent institutions and natural resources. Through the action of the procession—what Margit Thøfner has called “a formalized and socialized act of civic self-representation”—participants ascribed even greater communal value on already symbolically laden buildings and spaces.<sup>50</sup>

The visit of a sovereign further represented a considerable community investment of personnel because various civic groups were necessary for the entry’s staging and execution. As argued independently by social anthropologists Max Gluckman and Clifford Geertz, the broad participation of the community in civic processions in general served to reinforce boundaries and power relationships, both between the citizens of a city and its visiting ruler, and among the citizens themselves.<sup>51</sup> Viewed in this context, civic processions functioned in an essentially conservative manner designed to uphold the existing social order.<sup>52</sup>

In some instances, particularly in the Southern Netherlands, the joyous entry carried a specific political meaning in addition to the recognition of a visiting ruler or dignitary. It more importantly signified the ritual legitimation of a social contract between a ruler and his/her subjects: in exchange for protecting the rights and privileges historically granted to the city, the citizens vowed their allegiance and fealty. The entry therefore provided a context for the city to

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<sup>50</sup> Margit Thøfner, *A Common Art: Urban Ceremonial in Antwerp and Brussels During and After the Dutch Revolt* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2007), 14.

<sup>51</sup> Max Gluckman, *Order and Rebellion in Tribal Africa* (New York: Free Press, 1963), 127; Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 112. Gluckman characterized rituals as a broad spectrum of formalized activities that reflect the structure and arrangement of the group, but also create opportunities to challenge the existing order. Geertz similarly argued that rituals may enable changes to the balance of power within a particular group.

<sup>52</sup> For the display and negotiation of power in northern European civic rituals, see Arnade, “City, State, and Public Ritual in the Late-Medieval Burgundian Netherlands,” 308; Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 238; Emily J. Peters, “Den Gheheelen Loop Des Weerelts (The Whole Course of the World): Printed Processions and the Theater of Identity in Antwerp During the Dutch Revolt” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2005), 139.

model the virtues its own ruler was expected to exemplify, such as fortitude and temperance.<sup>53</sup> *Tableaux vivants* and triumphal arches proved instrumental in disseminating these political messages, for they were often used as vehicles to express the ideal symbiotic relationship between a city and its leader.<sup>54</sup> Of course, when Marie entered Amsterdam, the mutual obligations between ruler and city would not have applied, as the Queen Mother had no seigniorial authority in the Northern Netherlands (nor, for that matter, in France). However, as I will show, Barlaeus and the *vroedschap* capitalized on the opportunity provided by Marie's entry to present their own civic political agenda to domestic and international audiences.

In addition to joyous entries themselves, commemorative books served as another potential vehicle to disseminate political propaganda directed at a ruler and/or visiting dignitary on behalf of a city. The majority of entry books consisted of pages of unillustrated text that described the celebrations and/or listed names of those in attendance, the order of a procession and the floats that accompanied it. While purporting to record a factual chronicle of events, the books invariably presented the particular point of view of the individual or body which commissioned them.<sup>55</sup> The *Medicea hospes* proved to be no different in this respect, as the book clearly reflects positively on Amsterdam, its citizens and the *vroedschap*.

However, with regard to its illustrations, I propose that the *Medicea hospes* departed dramatically from the traditions of the festival book genre. The publication deviated from

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<sup>53</sup> For a survey of the Joyous Entry in the Southern Netherlands, see Hugo Soly, "Plechtige intochten in de steden van de Zuidelijke Nederlanden tijdens de Overgang van Middeleeuwen naar Nieuwe Tijd: Communicatie, propaganda, spektakel," *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 97 (1984): 343–48.

<sup>54</sup> Stijn Bussels, "Making the Most of Theatre and Painting: The Power of *Tableaux Vivants* in Joyous Entries from Southern Netherlands, 1458–1635," *Art History* 33, no. 2 (2010): 237. Bussels observed that from the second half of the sixteenth century, triumphal arches assumed a more important role in Joyous Entries and the use of *tableaux vivants* declined.

<sup>55</sup> Watanabe-O'Kelly, "The Early Modern Festival Book: Form and Function," 6–9.

convention in terms of the number of images included, the native pictorial idiom in which the Queen Mother's visit was portrayed and the visual emphasis accorded the city of Amsterdam. In contrast, most festival books featured few, if any, illustrations. When images were included, they typically conformed to a well-established set of pictorial practices. The majority of artists eschewed topographical views, depictions of militia companies, guild members and other onlookers, preferring instead to represent isolated triumphal arches and pageant carts against a blank ground. This strategy, which in effect imposed an ideal point of view disembodied from the city or spectators, appeared consistently in European festival books from 1515 onward.<sup>56</sup> Margit Thøfner observed that the conventional isolation of pageant forms might be understood as the “perfected version of the actual experience” of the sovereign and privileged local dignitaries, who comprised the primary audience for this book.<sup>57</sup>

Two engravings from Christopher Plantin's lavishly illustrated folio commemorating the 1582 entry into Antwerp of Hercule François de Valois, Duke of Anjou, serve as exempla of the practice of pictorial isolation.<sup>58</sup> The *Maid of Antwerp Wagon* (fig. 2.18) depicts one of several decorated carts presented to the Duke of Anjou along his processional route from which the Maid of Antwerp, seated beneath a canopy and surrounded by personifications, invited him to enter the city's gate.<sup>59</sup> The engraver of this image, probably Pieter van de Borcht, represented the

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<sup>56</sup> William McClung, “A Place for a Time: The Architecture of Festivals and Theatres,” in *Architecture and Its Image: Four Centuries of Architectural Representation*, ed. Eve Blau and Edward Kaufman (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), 88–92; Margit Thøfner, “Marrying the City, Mothering the Country: Gender and Visual Conventions in Johannes Bochius's Account of the Joyous Entry of the Archduke Albert and the Infanta Isabella into Antwerp,” *Oxford Art Journal* 22, no. 1 (1999): 7.

<sup>57</sup> Thøfner, “Marrying the City, Mothering the Country,” 9.

<sup>58</sup> These images appear in *La joyeuse & magnifique Entrée de Monseigneur Francoys: Fils de France, et frere unique du roy, par la grace de Dieu, Duc de Brabant, d'Anjou, Alençon, Berri, etc, en sa tres-renommée Ville d'Anvers*, published in Antwerp in April 1582.

<sup>59</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of this festival book, see Emily J. Peters, “Printing Ritual: The Performance of Community in Christopher Plantin's *La Joyeuse and Magnifique Entrée de Monseigneur*

cart from the side, as a spectator might witness it from a stationary position as it moved through the city. Nevertheless, I argue that the absence of a setting removes the view from the realm of the audience's possible experiences and thus counters any semblance of an eyewitness perspective. Similarly, the *Tableau of the Goudbloem Chamber* (fig. 2.19) isolates the subject, a *tableau vivant* of Old Testament figures set in a theater, against a plain field of white. The stage is shown from the front, without any of the distractions that would have accompanied the actual entry.

The artists who contributed to the *Medicea hospes* rejected the isolation convention entirely, instead attributing equal if not more weight to the environs of Amsterdam as Marie and her retinue. This pictorial approach honed focus on and simultaneously ennobled the city. Although several precedents for this format existed, they were rare, even within the context of the earlier books in which they appeared. For example, in the text produced for the Duke of Anjou's entry in 1582, only three of twenty illustrations featured views of Antwerp. The first plate depicted the royal procession as it approached the city; a second pictured the arrival at the city gate; and the last represented the celebrations in the Grote Markt (Great Market Square) (figs. 2.20–22).

A further example may be found in Johannes Bochius's 1602 volume dedicated to the joyous entry of the Spanish Archduke Albert and the Infanta Isabella into Antwerp, which similarly included views of the city among its twenty-eight plates. However, as most of the other images conform to common practice, the few urban settings prove the exception rather than the rule.<sup>60</sup> Four images featured representations of the festivities in specific locations in Antwerp

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Francoys...d'Anjou\*,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (2008): 370–413.

<sup>60</sup> Johannes Bochius, *Historica narratio profectionis et inaugurationis serenissimorum Belgii Principum Alberti et Isabellae, Austriae Archiducum, et eorum optatissimi in Belgium Adventus...* (Antwerp:

such as the Keizerspoort (city gate), the Meirbrug (the central thoroughfare of Antwerp), and the Grote Markt (figs. 2.23–26), and several others depicted theater and wagon cars in generalized Flemish settings. Despite these unusual inclusions and the publication’s status as a highly prestigious, widely disseminated commission—consisting of more than 500 folios and published in 775 copies—the volume did not alter permanently the patterns of the established Antwerp festival book genre.<sup>61</sup> A later, equally important commemorative text executed in honor of the Spanish Cardinal Infant Ferdinand’s 1642 entry into Antwerp returned to the long-lived visual convention of isolating festival forms from their surroundings against a blank ground.<sup>62</sup> Thus, within the context of the tradition of European commemorative books, the illustrations in the *Medica hospes* represented a striking anomaly in comparison with both earlier and later publications.

### **The Reinterpretation of the Joyous Entry Book in a Dutch Context**

By picturing Marie de Médicis’s entry and the festivities staged to welcome her within specific, identifiable sites in Amsterdam, the artists who contributed to the *Medicea hospes* drew upon newly evolved, Dutch artistic and literary conventions rather than the previously standardized patterns of festival books. Specifically, they looked to Dutch cityscape and landscape traditions in paintings and prints, as well as Dutch choreographical conventions, in order to evoke peace and prosperity using a native pictorial vocabulary. In doing so, the *Medicea*

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Ex Officina Plantiniana, 1602).

<sup>61</sup> Thøfner, “Marrying the City, Mothering the Country,” 7–10.

<sup>62</sup> Jean Gaspard Gevaerts, *Pompa introitus honori serenissimi Principis Ferdinandi Austriaci Hispaniarum Infantis...* (Antwerp: Theodor van Thulden, 1642).

*hospes* offered a nuanced expression of the *vroedschap*'s deeply held beliefs about their feelings of civic loyalty and pride, and, therefore, the need for a truce with Spain.

Depictions of the entry set within Amsterdam and the surrounding environs were unprecedented in detail and quantity, and employed atypical perspectives of the city in comparison with illustrations in entry books in general. Earlier rare urban views, such as *The Magistrate of Antwerp Greets Albert and Isabella*, 1602 (fig. 2.23), utilized an elevated or aerial perspective that allowed for a comprehensive city panorama, but which was disconnected from the actual human experience of the event. In contrast, the scenes of Amsterdam in the *Medicea hospes* generally feature a centrally placed horizon line and a low perspective, which enables the viewer to encounter the city from near the ground or street level. I suggest that this vantage point has a democratizing effect, for it places the viewer in the position of the citizen-spectator, rather than the idealized position of the visiting sovereign, as is typical in general of other festival books. The use of strategically-placed *repoussoir* figures in the *Medicea hospes* further enhances the perception of spectatorship. In *The Arrival of Marie de Médicis at the Triumphal Gate at Vijgendam* (fig. 2.3), for example, Savery's depiction in the left foreground of several militiamen and children seen from the rear inscribes the viewer into the ritual action of the procession through the figures' position and their physical proximity to the picture plane. As viewers, we feel encouraged to peer over their shoulders to witness the arrival of the Queen as she passes by in her carriage. The experience of holding the *Medicea hospes* in one's hands and carefully perusing the images over time would have only heightened this sensation and effectively channeled the experience of an eyewitness. The positions of the foreground figures with backs turned engage the viewer directly and therefore the image more effectively elicits feelings of

pride, allegiance or admiration for those with a sympathetic disposition toward and connection to Amsterdam.

The representations of Marie's entry into Amsterdam also differ from their precedents in festival books by virtue of their inclusion of numerous highly specific and easily recognizable civic locales and the surrounding landscape. By drawing from native pictorial traditions, which employ conventional *topoi* and evoke pride of urban and rural place, such views suggest the success and primacy of Amsterdam. *The Procession of Marie de Médicis on the Haarlemmerweg* (fig. 2.2), for example, derives from the well-established Dutch landscape tradition.<sup>63</sup>

Beginning in the early seventeenth century, Northern Netherlandish printmakers and painters depicted local scenery more than any European artists before them. In a seemingly infinite number of paintings and prints, they represented the Republic's predominantly flat terrain, which included glens, dunes and rivers; fields and woods punctuated by cottages and windmills; and orderly canals criss-crossing the countryside. Many of these views were based on sketches drawn from life (*naer 't leven*) and included depictions of specific town gates or prominent landmarks. Catherine Levesque has suggested that artists embraced such imagery because it celebrated a "fruitful peace" and asserted stability, continuity and prosperity following

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<sup>63</sup> For an overview of Dutch landscapes, see David Freedberg, *Dutch Landscape Prints of the Seventeenth Century* (London: British Museum Publications, 1980); Huigen Leeftang, "Dutch Landscape: The Urban View, Haarlem and Its Environs in Literature and Art, 15th–17th Century," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 48 (1997): 52–115; Peter C. Sutton, *Masters of 17th-Century Dutch Landscape Painting*, exh. cat. (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1987); Walter Liedtke, "Pride in Perspective: The Dutch Townscape," *Connoisseur* 200, no. 806 (1979): 264–73; Arthur Wheelock, "Worthy to Behold: The Dutch City and Its Image in the Seventeenth Century," in *Dutch Cityscapes of the Golden Age*, exh. cat., ed. Ariane van Suchtelen and Arthur Wheelock (Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, 2008), 14–33.



diplomatic negotiations that resulted in the Twelve Year's Truce (1609–21) between the Republic and Spain.<sup>64</sup>

Saloman Savery includes many of the motifs common to the Dutch landscape genre in his depiction of Marie and her cortege as they process from Haarlem to Amsterdam. Though in one sense a “history picture,” more than half of the composition is subsumed by the landscape’s expansive sky. The fore- and middle grounds are populated with a milkmaid and cattle, a windmill, several humble cottages and a distinctly recognizable site—the Church of St. Bavo in Haarlem. Such native peace *topoi*, Levesque observed, embody a shared history and communal values, such as a strong work ethic, and further serve as a reminder of the unity necessary to achieve peace.<sup>65</sup> I suggest that the inclusion of such imagery in the *Medicea hospes* thus parallels closely with Barlaeus’s prose, as well as the peace iconography of the allegorical prints.

Other representations of the festivities welcoming the Queen Mother are more firmly grounded in the Dutch cityscape or townscape genre, a pictorial tradition distinct from landscapes that gained increasing popularity in the first half of the seventeenth century.<sup>66</sup> Cityscapes may have evolved from contemporary cartographic conventions. They encompass a variety of types, including bird’s-eye perspectives that depict streets, canals and buildings with exacting intricacy; city profiles, which characterized the urban skyline, seen from a distance; and

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<sup>64</sup> Catherine Levesque, “Landscape, Politics, and the Prosperous Peace,” *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 48 (1997): 222–23.

<sup>65</sup> Levesque, “Landscape, Politics, and the Prosperous Peace,” 252–53.

<sup>66</sup> Boudewijn Bakker, “‘Portraits’ and ‘Perspectives’: Townscape Painting in Seventeenth-Century Holland,” in *Dutch Cityscapes of the Golden Age*, exh. cat., ed. Ariane van Suchtelen and Arthur Wheelock (Zwolle: Waanders, 2008), 34–35. Though city views were produced as early as the beginning of the fifteenth century, the subject did not become common until the early seventeenth century and only reached maturity after 1650. The Dutch term *stadgezicht* (townscape) did not appear in art historical literature until the early nineteenth century, and then only to describe paintings by Jan van der Heyden and Gerrit Berckheyde. Contemporary inventories list terms such as *conterfeitsel* (portrait), *afbeelding* (portrayal), *afbeeldsel* (likeness) and *perspectief* (perspective) to refer to such views.

street scenes that visualize a particular building, neighborhood, civic or religious space.<sup>67</sup> Walter Liedtke has argued that such views should be read as expressions of allegiance and civic pride that found appeal amongst a population intensely affected by years of revolutionary war and their ultimate independence. He asserted that feelings of loyalty and patriotic sentiment explain the proliferation of painting and prints that celebrate a city's distinctive appearance and its social and historical attributes.<sup>68</sup>

The etchings of Marie's entry into Amsterdam evoked similar connotations of civic pride by calling attention to Amsterdam's physical character and economic success. In order to present a comprehensive picture of the city, the artists who contributed to the *Medicea hospes* drew from multiple print and painted cityscape types, including the expansive profile view and representations of specific urban scenes. Profiles were generally the most common of the city views, especially for representations of Amsterdam.<sup>69</sup> Artists working in this format depicted the urban skyline in an elongated form from a low vantage point, very often from the water. Such images typically included a decorative title, the city's coat of arms or seals, and frequently individual buildings labeled with a legend.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, printed cityscapes commonly included extensive text that described and extolled historically significant civic landmarks and

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<sup>67</sup> Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 119–67. Alpers pioneered the argument that the proliferation of seventeenth-century Dutch landscapes and cityscapes grew out of the sixteenth-century cartographic tradition.

<sup>68</sup> Liedtke, "Pride in Perspective: The Dutch Townscape," 269.

<sup>69</sup> Boudewijn Bakker, "Het imago van de stad: Zelfportret als propaganda," in *Het aanzien van Amsterdam: Panorama's, plattegronden en profielen uit de gouden eeuw*, exh. cat., ed. Boudewijn Bakker and Erik Schmitz (Bussum: Thoth, 2007), 56. Bakker has argued that the especially high number of portraits of Amsterdam may be attributed to the city's strong cartographic traditions and developed infrastructure, and the desire to document the changing city, which expanded four times during the course of the seventeenth century.

<sup>70</sup> Boudewijn Bakker, "De stad in beeld: Het stadsporet als genre in de beeldende kunst," in *Het aanzien van Amsterdam: Panorama's, plattegronden en profielen uit de gouden eeuw*, exh. cat., ed. Boudewijn Bakker and Erik Schmitz (Bussum: Thoth, 2007), 10–21; Bakker, "Het imago van de stad," 57; Wheelock, "Worthy to Behold," 15–17.

commercially vital buildings and markets. Thus, while having the distinct disadvantage of showing only one side of a city, profiles could nevertheless provide documentary information about growth and urban development. Pieter van der Keere's monumental profile of Amsterdam, for example, reflected the recent western expansion of the harbor (fig. 2.27). The original composition, produced in 1614, consisted of four sheets, but the artist added a fifth several years later that captured the city more accurately. The entire panorama exceeded 2.5 meters in length.<sup>71</sup>

Savery's *Mock Battle on the IJ* appropriated the basic form of the city profile as exemplified by Van der Keere's expansive print. The artist prominently placed Amsterdam's old and new coats of arms at the top of the composition to identify the richly described city below. Though not labeled, a native of Amsterdam would have been able to recognize specific buildings through their distinctive towers, relationships to one another and position relative to the harbor. For visitors to the city, the image offered a comprehensive overview of an unfamiliar place. Savery's profile therefore provided a meaningful spatial context for the mock battle staged in Marie's honor, which additionally functioned like a topographical map.

The urban views featured in the *Medicea hospes* similarly drew from the established conventions of the cityscape genre by depicting the events of the Queen Mother's entry within their specific locations in Amsterdam. Artists who specialized in cityscapes frequently combined representations of historically significant civic events and highly naturalistic views of the locale in which they occurred. As a result, the two (history and topography) mutually reinforced each other.<sup>72</sup> For example, notable occasions, such as a visit from Prince Maurits (fig. 2.28), or

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<sup>71</sup> Jaap Evert Abrahamse, "De ruimtelijke ontwikkeling van Amsterdam in de zeventiende eeuw en de opkomst van de stedenbouw als wetenschap," in *Het aanzien van Amsterdam: Panorama's, plattegronden en profielen uit de gouden eeuw*, exh. cat., ed. Boudewijn Bakker and Erik Schmitz (Bussum: Thoth, 2007), 25.

<sup>72</sup> Bakker, "'Portraits' and 'Perspectives,'" 39–42. It was not until the mid-seventeenth century that artists began exploring a city's architecture as an independent theme in paintings and prints. Hans Vredemen

recurring civic ceremonies, like the annual lepers' procession in Amsterdam (fig. 1.1), offered artists the opportunity to ascribe particular values, be they social, religious or political, to the city by virtue of the event represented and the accurate depiction of architecture and public spaces. Often artists painted such views in a rectangular composition with the buildings parallel to the picture plane, thus permitting the city to act as a theatrical backdrop for a particular historical event.<sup>73</sup>

Pieter Saenredam's *The Town Hall of Haarlem with the Entry of Prince Maurits to Replace the Governors in 1618* (fig. 2.28) illustrates such a pictorial convention, which also appears in the *Medicea hospes*. Set against Haarlem's massive town hall, Prince Maurits and his troops enter on horseback in the lower right foreground. A group of officials welcome the Prince from the wooden scaffolding in front of the Tribunal, and, on the left, dozens of cavalrymen fire a canon in celebration. The picture both alludes to a significant political event in Haarlem—when Maurits deposed the city of Remonstrant leaders following the Synod of Dordt—and presents a faithful depiction of buildings and public space, particularly the town hall.<sup>74</sup> The artist's interest in visual description thus emphasizes key emblems of Haarlem's civic identity and simultaneously calls to mind the political and religious disputes that prompted Maurits' arrival.

Savery's etchings of Marie's entry similarly affirm Amsterdam's civic identity—one associated with urbanity, expansion and trade—through pictorial emphasis on key sites within the city. *Jousting Boats on the Rokin Near the Oude Turfmarkt* (fig. 2.15), for example,

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de Vries's architectural perspectives of Antwerp from 1560 are a notable exception.

<sup>73</sup> Bakker, "'Portraits' and 'Perspectives,'" 39–40.

<sup>74</sup> Ariane van Suchtelen and Arthur K. Wheelock, *Dutch Cityscapes of the Golden Age*, exh. cat. (The Hague; Washington; Zwolle: Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis; National Gallery of Art; Waanders, 2008), 166–68.

evocatively portrays the low-lying market on the banks of the Rokin where peat was sold, behind which the tower of the Beurs rises amongst other precisely rendered structures. Identifiable significant buildings appear again in the *Departure of the Queen Mother on the Dam* (fig. 2.17). Here Savery depicted Marie not beyond the city walls, on her way back to Haarlem, but as she exited Amsterdam's most important civic space and the center of political and economic life. The artist represented the Queen's carriage slowly making its way through the crowded square between the Tribunal and the adjacent Stadhuis on the left, and the Waag bearing Amsterdam's coat of arms on the right. The specificity with which Savery portrayed these buildings heightens the documentary function of the image and the choice of perspective—the street-level view—orients the observer to the Dam on a human scale, thereby making the representation even more engaging. In combination with the six other scenes of festivities in the *Medicea hospes*, the etching offers a selective portrait of Amsterdam that provides glimpses of the city's most prestigious buildings and public spaces. These idealized representations ennoble the city and allude to the peace and prosperity enjoyed by its citizens, thus forming a visual complement to the textual accolades bestowed by Barlaeus.

The assertion of civic pride evident in the text and images of the *Medicea hospes* parallels and may draw from rhetorical conventions found in early modern Dutch literature dedicated to praising the heritage and physical character of a city or region. Such writing includes both poetry and prose, and especially city histories, or chorographies. These commemorative texts constituted a well-established literary tradition that owed its origins to antique verse and medieval travel literature, wherein pilgrims described their arduous journeys en route to distant holy sites.<sup>75</sup> The texts were designed with the foreign traveler in mind, but

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<sup>75</sup> Eco Haitsma Mulier, "Descriptions of Dutch Towns in the 17th-Century Province of Holland," in *The Public and Private in Dutch Culture of the Golden Age* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2000), 24;

also for the benefit of the citizens of the places described. As argued Eddy Verbaan, through their descriptions and praise, authors offered a community a positive self-image in order to promote its reputation amongst its own citizens and foreigners.<sup>76</sup>

Chorographies, specifically, were frequently commissioned by municipal governments to establish and disseminate a unified narrative of a civic past.<sup>77</sup> By establishing a documented history of a city's origins, its organization, and religious and economic life, they contributed to the formation of a collective urban identity. That identity could then be conscripted by civic leaders in support of their political agendas and in diplomatic relationships with other cities, both domestic and international. For example, Samuel Ampzing's text in praise of Haarlem, *Beschryvinge ende lof der stad Haerlem in Holland* (1628), attempted to cast the city favorably and compete with Amsterdam through a discussion of Haarlem's role in the Dutch Revolt and support of the House of Orange.<sup>78</sup>

I propose that Barlaeus incorporated many of the rhetorical conventions common to city histories in the *Medicea hospes* even though the latter was written in the context of the Queen

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Wheelock, "Worthy to Behold," 19.

<sup>76</sup> Eddy Verbaan, "Cornucopian Paradises: Recent City Histories in Historical Perspective," *Dutch Crossing* 27, no. 2 (2003): 291.

<sup>77</sup> Aleida Assmann, "Four Formats of Memory: From Individual to Collective Constructions of the Past," in *Cultural Memory and Historical Consciousness in the German-Speaking World Since 1500: Papers from the Conference "The Fragile Tradition,"* ed. Christian Emden and David Midgley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 25–26; Raingard Esser, *The Politics of Memory: The Writing of Partition in the Seventeenth-Century Low Countries* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), 14. Raingard Esser has analyzed the chorographical genre in terms of Aleida Assman's concept of political memory. Political memory, according to Assmann, refers to "institutionalized, top-down memory, passed on from generation to generation, as opposed to memory based on personal experiences. Civic bodies and social groups "make" memory rather "have" it, and they do so with the aid of rituals, ceremonies, monuments, commemorative texts, and other symbols."

<sup>78</sup> Esser, *Politics of Memory*, 110; Raingard Esser, "Political Change and Urban Memory: Amsterdam Remembers Her Past," *Dutch Crossing* 25, no. 1 (2001): 96; Henk van Nierop, "How to Honor One's City: Samuel Ampzing's Vision of Haarlem," *Theoretische Geschiedenis* 20 (1993): 268–82.

Mother's entry, as opposed to a comprehensive city description. Barlaeus's promotion and aggrandizement of Amsterdam firmly linked the *Medicea hospes* with the chorographical tradition and he further drew from the literary genre in both form and subject. The professor would have been familiar with chorographies through his humanist education and professional background, but also because he penned a series of poems in that tradition in 1628 titled *Urbrium praecipuarum Hollandiae encomia* (In Praise of the Foremost Cities in Holland).<sup>79</sup> The verses devoted to Amsterdam emphasize the city's growing population and increasing economic success as a center of world trade:

This capacious city, powerful in her wealth, surpassing in her structures,  
vanquishes hatred with power, and crimes with law.  
Growing with new citizens, her boundaries never stand in place,  
but with walls ever further expanded a guest goes forth.  
Should you turn her soil over, she would be entirely woodland. Where she was founded,  
the pine recently stood in a northern clime.  
Whatever human ingenuity in its cunning devises  
or nurturing nature bears from her own bosom  
This city will give it, and preparing commerce for the entire world,  
she now loves to buy and sell her whole self.  
She brings forth this wealth, drives it onward. Thus are profits amassed.  
How powerful are fraud, fate, skill, sea, land, she learns.  
The Siberian, Arab, Persian, Moor, Jew, what each of these  
brings here, and what takes away with him, the Indian has.  
While the world comes to this city and she herself roams the world,  
she will be a city not fixed in place, but a rover of the earth.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Caspar Barlaeus, *Poemata* (Lug. Batavorum: Ex Officina Godefridi Basson, 1628).

<sup>80</sup> Barlaeus, *Poemata*, 407. English translation by Michael Woo. "Urbs spaciosa, potens opibus, tectisque superba./ Viribus invidiam, crimina lege domat./ Civibus aucta novis, nunquam stat finibus iisdem,/ Latius expansis moenibus hospes abit./ Invertas, sit tota nemus. quo condita fundo est,/ Nuper Hyperboreo pinus in orbe fuit./ Quicquid mortalis fingit solertia curae./ Vel natura suo parturit alma sinu,/ Illa dabit, totoque parans commercia mundo/ Nunc emere, & totam vendere semet amat./ Has adfert, has trudit opes. sic lucra parantur./ Quid valeat fraus, sors, ars, mare, terra, docet./ Moschus, Arabs, Persae, Maurus, Iudaeus, uterque/ Quod ferat huc, rursusque auferat, Indus habet./ Hanc dum mundus adit, mundumque haec ipsa pererrat,/ Non urbs fixa loco, sed vagus orbis erit."

Barlaeus would later echo similar sentiments in the *Medicea hospes*. However, he probably found chorographies more directly influential.<sup>81</sup> Beginning in 1611 with Johannes Isaicius Pontanus's volume on Amsterdam, over fifty town and regional descriptions of the Netherlands were published in the seventeenth century.<sup>82</sup> Often an increase in the publication of chorographies corresponded with political changes and/or significant events in urban history. Pontanus's chronicle of Amsterdam, for example, coincided with the Twelve Year's Truce between the Republic and Spain and thus emphasized the fruits of peace enjoyed by the city.

The content of town descriptions generally followed a formulaic pattern, though the sequence in which information was presented varied by author. Chorographic writers typically began by describing a city's origins and its political and natural history, and then characterized the community's relationship to the surrounding countryside and neighboring villages. Barlaeus opened his introduction in much the same way: for several pages, he expounded upon Amsterdam's political framework and the city's connections to the Queen Mother's imperial ancestors.<sup>83</sup>

Typically, city histories then surveyed the town's growth, fortifications and important landmarks, such as prominent town gates, followed by a discussion of the layout of the city and its streets and canals. Publishers often included one or more aerial views of the city to complement this description. Subsequently, writers noted important buildings, such as the town

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<sup>81</sup> Johannes Isacius Pontanus, *Historische beschrijvinghe der seer wijt beroemde coop-stadt Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, 1968). This text was published first in Latin and in a Dutch version shortly thereafter, in 1614.

<sup>82</sup> Esser, *Politics of Memory*, 4. Chorographies developed first in Italy in the fifteenth century and were popularized in the Low Countries by the 1557 publication of Ludovico Guicciardini's *Descrittione di tutti I Paesi Bassi* (*Description of the Low Countries*). The Italian merchant-scholar wrote the text first in Italian, though it was subsequently published in numerous editions in multiple languages, and thus inspired the production of similar works.

<sup>83</sup> Barlaeus, *Medicea hospes*, 1–5.



hall, various churches and charitable institutions, and made observations about the principal forms of industry and trade in which the city engaged.<sup>84</sup> Certain buildings received special attention through added illustrations. Pontanus's text, for example, included engravings of the Weeshuis (Orphanage), the Oude Mannenhuis (almshouse for elderly men), the Tuchthuis (house of correction), the Waag and the Beurs among its forty-seven engravings.

The *Medicea hospes* paralleled the typical format of the city history by noting in the text the buildings that lined the Queen Mother's processional route; describing specific institutions she visited, such as the Oost-Indischhuis; commemorating numerous buildings and locales with illustrations; and by providing a panoramic view of the city. Barlaeus also identified in his prose prominent citizens of Amsterdam, such as the burgomasters and the *schout*, just as city histories included lists of magistrates and eminent citizens.

The *Medicea hospes* further corresponded closely with Pontanus's *Historische beschrijvinge*, specifically, through its emphasis on Amsterdam's economy.<sup>85</sup> Pontanus devoted an entire section of his book—over 150 pages—to a chronicle of the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie's (Dutch East India Company's) overseas trading voyages to Nova Zembla and the Far East.<sup>86</sup> This section was also sumptuously illustrated with engravings depicting native people and customs, local flora and fauna, and Dutch military encampments. Similarly, Barlaeus focused on Amsterdam's commercial success in his prose, particularly in his discussion of

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<sup>84</sup> Esser, "Political Change and Urban Memory," 92–93; Mulier, "Descriptions of Dutch Towns in the 17th-Century Province of Holland," 26–27.

<sup>85</sup> That the two scholars traveled in the same elite academic circles further supports this connection. Pontanus, a professor at Harderwijk, first attended the Grammar School in Amsterdam, then studied medicine, and like Barlaeus, completed a dissertation in philosophy at the University of Leiden. See Esser, *Politics of Memory*, 80. The two also corresponded on at least one occasion. Shortly after Marie's entry, in January 1639, Barlaeus sent Pontanus notification of the publication of a revised Dutch version of the *Medicea hospes*. See Snoep, *Praal and propaganda*, 82.

<sup>86</sup> Esser, *Politics of Memory*, 38.

Marie's visit to the Oost-Indisch Huis, and also in comparisons between her and the city. In his preface, for example, Barlaeus alleged that the Queen Mother's bestowal of "several Kings and Queens upon the very illustrious kingdoms of Europe" was equivalent to Amsterdam's powerful trading networks with those kingdoms:

The Queen, having been married to the great Henri, has acquired an immortal renown for such an illustrious marriage. The City is renowned for the inviolable confederation of commerce that it maintains with all the cities and provinces of the earth. The Queen, mother of the most powerful Kings of Europe, has bestowed several Kings and Queens upon very illustrious kingdoms. This City, by the buying and selling of diverse merchandise, takes many commodities to those Kingdoms, and receives from them many also.<sup>87</sup>

The passage makes clear Barlaeus's desire to forge Amsterdam's civic identity with its commercial success, thereby claiming its status as the foremost city in Holland. The etchings included in the *Medicea hospes* further reinforce such propaganda through the repeated inclusions of Mercury, the god of commerce, who accompanies the Maid of Amsterdam, and the multiple representations that characterize the city as a thriving metropolis with a bustling port. Barlaeus expressed these sentiments by adapting the tradition of the triumphal entry book to a new Dutch idiom, one that looked to native artistic and literary traditions to make a case for Amsterdam's esteemed political and economic position, while simultaneously honoring the city's illustrious guest.

### **The *Medicea hospes* in the Context of Urban Rivalries and Pro-Peace Sentiment**

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<sup>87</sup> "De Koningin is door het huwelijk van den onverwinnelijcksten Koning, Henrick de Groote, hoogh beroemt geworden. De Stadt is wijd vermaert door het onverbreeckelijck verbond van hare nabuurige bondgenooten. De Koningin, een Moeder der maghtighste Koningin in Europe, heeft Vorsten en Vorstinnen, over uitsteekende Rijcken, ter wereld gebroght. De Stadt brengt die zelve Rijcken door koopen en verkoopen van haere koopmanschappen winst aen, en treckt 'er weder winst af." Baerle, *Blyde inkomst der allerdoorluchtighste koninginne, Maria de Medicis, t' Amsterdam*, 2. English translation quoted in Nevitt, *Maria de' Medici Enters Amsterdam*, unpaginated.

I suggest that Barlaeus's desire to laud and further elevate Amsterdam's status through the *Medicea hospes* may also be understood within the larger context of contemporary urban rivalries and the city's desire to gain increased political clout, thereby advancing the burgomasters' agenda in favor of peace. While the city boasted a preeminent position within the Dutch Republic, it competed economically, politically and culturally with neighboring Dutch towns, such as Leiden, the seat of the first university in the Netherlands; Dordrecht, which was older and claimed a port connected to the North Sea; and Haarlem, revered as a center of industry, especially for the production and refinement of linen.<sup>88</sup>

Similarly, Amsterdam's achievements in urban development and municipal planning, as well as the expansion of the city's intellectual resources, served as tremendous points of civic pride. By referring to them, Barlaeus contributed to Amsterdam's reputation as the foremost city in the Dutch Republic and helped to further her political aims. Since the 1611 publication of Pontanus's description of Amsterdam, the city had embarked on an extensive and impressive building boom. The *Medicea hospes* proved to be an ideal platform for portraying the recent celebrated changes to the city. In 1613, for example, construction began on the famous ring of canals (*grachten gordel*) that surrounds the city center on the western border and which was extended south and east in the early 1620s. Two new churches, the Noorderkerk and the Westerkerk, were also erected in the 1620s. In the following decade, the architect Jacob van Campen expanded the civic orphanage (1633), designed a new city gate, known as the Heiligewegspoort (1637), and built the first municipal theater (1637).<sup>89</sup> Amsterdam additionally

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<sup>88</sup> Esser, *Politics of Memory*, 29.

<sup>89</sup> Konrad Ottenheim and Krista de Jonge, "Civic Prestige: Building the City 1580–1700," in *Unity and Disunity: Architectural Relations Between the Southern and Northern Low Countries*, ed. Konrad Ottenheim and Krista de Jonge (Brepols: Turnhout, 2007), 225–36; Konrad Ottenheim, "Amsterdam 1700: Urban Space and Public Buildings," in *Circa 1700: Architecture in Europe and the Americas*, ed. Henry A

continued to develop as a center of learning: a permanent anatomical theater was established in 1619 and the Atheneum Illustre, where Barlaeus held a professorship, was founded in 1631.<sup>90</sup>

The Queen Mother's ritual entry into Amsterdam in 1638 and the publication of the *Medicea hospes* in the same year could not have been more timely for the political self-interests of the city. In the 1630s, the Amsterdam *vroedschap* found itself in a defensive position after the Staten-Generaal thwarted the city council's repeated attempts to influence foreign policy by promoting a truce with Spain. The prolonged political battle between Amsterdam and rival Dutch cities over whether or not to accept Spanish proposals for peace—known as the Groete Saeck (Great Issue)—had persisted for over a decade, beginning in 1621 with the end of the Twelve Year's Truce.<sup>91</sup> The clash came to a head in April 1634 when the Staten-Generaal signed an alliance with France against Spain in exchange for financial and military assistance, effectively continuing the war effort and dealing another blow to Amsterdam's support of peace initiatives.<sup>92</sup> Within this context, the Queen Mother's 1638 entry represented a vital opportunity for the city to re-state its position in favor of a permanent truce and vie for increased political authority within the Staten-Generaal.

Rodney Nevitt postulated that internal conflict among the citizens of Amsterdam prompted the iconography of peace present in the allegorical imagery of the *Medicea hospes*. Tension over the Groete Saeck existed among rival political parties in Amsterdam. Members of

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Millon (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 120–27.

<sup>90</sup> Karel Davids, "Amsterdam as a Center of Learning in the Dutch Golden Age, 1580–1700," in *Urban Achievement in Early Modern Europe: Golden Ages in Antwerp, Amsterdam, and London*, ed. Patrick O'Brien (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 318.

<sup>91</sup> Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477–1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 41–44.

<sup>92</sup> Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic and the Hispanic World, 1606–1661* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1982), 301–4.

the truce party, known as the Trevissten, largely drew from the governing class of regents and tended to belong to the Remonstrant wing of the Dutch Reformed Church. The war party, on the other hand, expressed predominantly Counter-Remonstrant sympathies.

However, by the time of the Queen Mother's entry, widespread popular sentiment prevailed in Amsterdam that favored a truce with Spain and three of the four burgomasters who commissioned the *Medicea hospes* supported peace initiatives.<sup>93</sup> These political leanings underscore the fact that debate over the Groete Saecke within Amsterdam had become less divisive of an issue by the late 1630s, a point which undermines Nevitt's analysis that the allegorical imagery in the *Medicea hospes* addressed political issues contested only among Amsterdammers.

Instead, I suggest that the theme of peace and economic prosperity that pervades the *Medicea hospes*—in the text, allegorical imagery *and* the views of Amsterdam—is best understood in relation to factional political alliances among cities in the province of Holland. Throughout the 1630s, the Counter-Remonstrants maintained control in Leiden and Haarlem—two of Amsterdam's principal rivals—as well as in Alkmaar, Gouda, Enkhuizen, Brielle and Schoonhoven. In contrast, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Delft and Dordrecht increasingly became Remonstrant strongholds in the 1630s. These staunch divisions among cities prevented the Trevissten from making any significant political gains in their goals of peace, a fact further complicated by Frederik Hendrik's professed support in 1633 of the war party.<sup>94</sup>

Ultimately, a combination of religious, economic and civic rivalries stood in the way of a unanimous Dutch response to Spain's proposals for peace. Though ostensibly split along

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<sup>93</sup> Nevitt, *Maria De' Medici Enters Amsterdam*, unpaginated.

<sup>94</sup> Jonathan Israel, "Frederik Henry and the Dutch Political Factions," *The English Historical Review* 98, no. 386 (1983): 8–9.

religious lines, the basis for the disagreements between the two groups of Holland towns had more to do with economic competition and the conflicting sets of interests among them.<sup>95</sup> The industrial towns of Leiden, Haarlem and Delft continually urged an embargo on wool and other raw materials from the Spanish Netherlands so as not to compete with domestic products; meanwhile, Amsterdam and Rotterdam ardently opposed such action because as trading towns, they benefited from international imports. Amsterdam's efforts to influence Dutch military strategy through criticism of the financial costs of war thus failed to sway the position of rival Dutch cities.<sup>96</sup>

Accordingly, when Marie de Médicis professed a desire in 1638 to visit Amsterdam, the city's *vroedschap* seized upon the opportunity to assert themselves by receiving the Queen and ignoring the wishes of the federated Staten-Generaal, which never wanted to play host.<sup>97</sup> Amsterdam's ritualized reception of the Queen Mother and Barlaeus's subsequent publication of the *Medicea hospes* provided a platform for the expression of the city's prolonged peace efforts and desire for greater political clout. By drawing on both native Dutch artistic and literary traditions, Barlaeus commemorated Amsterdam and evoked the harmony and prosperity enjoyed by the city. This theme of peace, which characterizes not only the allegorical imagery, as Nevitt observed, but also the urban views of Amsterdam, reiterated the dominant politicized civic agenda to end the war and extolled the economic predominance—the fruits of peace—

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<sup>95</sup> Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 63–66.

<sup>96</sup> Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 63–66.

<sup>97</sup> My argument that the Queen Mother's ritual entry and the *Medicea hospes* were designed as an assertion of political clout is indebted to Catherine Bell's conception of ritual as a strategy for the construction of power relationships. Bell argued that rituals empower those who control or regulate them and that they strategically visualize relationships of authority—they “hierarchize, subordinate, integrate, define, and obscure [power]” (216). Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 204–18.

maintained by the city since the early seventeenth century. The pictorial vocabulary and text of the *Medicea hospes*, therefore, asserted that Amsterdam's economic ascendancy deserved to be matched by her political prominence and influence, a message intended for rival Dutch cities as well as international competitors who may have owned a copy of the text. Though a truce with Spain would not be reached until 1648 when the Treaty of Münster was signed, Amsterdam martialled civic ritual and the *Medicea hospes* to shape political ideologies and their support in her expanded orbit of influence in a form not previously seen in the Dutch Republic.

### Chapter 3

#### The Rhetoric of Religious Rituals: Representations of Processions in an Increasingly Secular Context

Numerous seventeenth-century Dutch artists produced spirited depictions of the celebrations that accompanied traditionally Catholic holidays, such as Twelfth Night (or Epiphany), Shrovetide (or Carnival), Pentecost and the feast of St. Nicholas. Following the Reformation, these joyful occasions during the liturgical year were widely embraced, albeit on a smaller scale and in a privatized form. Such changes developed in response to the vociferous criticisms of strict Reformed theologians, who objected to the pagan origins of many feast days and the drunkenness and debauchery with which they were associated. Unsurprisingly then, artists depicted the informal, loosely organized customs associated with religious holidays, such as small parades of celebrants and raucous indoor feasts, and never represented the large-scale processions and performances which had ceased to exist in the Dutch Republic.<sup>1</sup>

The shifts in the expression of religious celebrations seemingly did not deter artists, but rather encouraged greater output and variation in subject. Twelfth Night and Shrovetide, in particular, afforded artists the opportunity to engage with long-standing pictorial and cultural traditions through representations of the small-scale processions still held on these holidays. Depictions of Twelfth Night and Shrovetide significantly outnumber representations of other religious holidays wherein processions occurred and were executed by a greater diversity of painters and printmakers. In contrast, comparably few artists rendered a relatively small number

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<sup>1</sup> F. H. de Klerk, “Zestiende-eeuwse processies in Goes,” in *Rond de Kerk in Zeeland*, edited by A. Wiggers (Delft: Eburon, 1991), 83–93. Using Goes as a case study, De Klerk argues that towns continued to stage religious processions after the Reformation, but such rituals were treated less reverently than in the past.



of the parades that accompanied Pentecost,<sup>2</sup> Easter<sup>3</sup> and various saints' days.<sup>4</sup> The limited production of images of those holidays suggests they were less popular or perhaps suffered more from the influence of Protestant reform. Notably, many such images revive sixteenth-century formulas or adopt a deliberately archaizing style that alludes to the pre-Reformation period in which such traditions persisted.<sup>5</sup>

The following chapter examines the ways in which depictions of Twelfth Night and Shrovetide, in particular, articulated their continued relevance in an increasingly secularized society. Central to my argument is the notion that representations of processions could function as a rhetorical strategy—as a persuasive performance—for the modeling of specific concepts

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<sup>2</sup> Jan Steen executed four paintings of Pentecost processions, including *The May Queen*, 1648–51 (Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia); *The Little Alms Collector*, 1633 (Musée du Petit Palais, Paris); and *The Whitsun Bride*, 1626–79 (Private Collection). See Karel Braun, *Jan Steen: Alle tot nu toe bekende schilderijen van Jan Steen* (Rotterdam: Lekturama, 1983). Several followers of Steen also produced depictions of Pentecost parades, such as Richard Brakenburg, *The May Queen*, 1660 (Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest) and Cornelis Dusart, *The May Queen*, c. 1690 (British Museum, London). Pentecost was traditionally honored with a procession of children wearing flowers and singing special holiday songs. A “Pentecostal bride,” wearing white, led the parade and carried a small cup to collect coins from passersby. For traditions related to this holiday, see Jos Schrijnen, *Nederlandsche volkskunde* (Zutphen: Thieme, 1930), 227–29; Gilles Schotel, *Het oud-Hollandsche huisgezin der 17de eeuw* (Haarlem: A. C. Kruseman, 1868), 204–8; Johannes ter Gouw, *De volksvermaken* (Haarlem: Bohn, 1871), 221–23.

<sup>3</sup> Depictions of fatted ox processions include Philips Wouwermans, *Parade with an Easter Ox*, 1650–55 (Musée du Louvre, Paris); Salomon van Ruysdael (attributed to), *Travelers by an Inn with a Maypole and a Parade of a Prize Ox*, 1664 (Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest); Jan Victors, *Village Square with Decorated Easter Ox*, 1634–74 (Private Collection); Abraham van Calraet, *Parade with Decorated Easter Ox in a Village*, 1657–1722 (Private Collection); Matthijs Schoevaerdts, *Village View with an Easter Ox Parade*, 1682–1702 (Private Collection). In the sixteenth century, butchers' guilds organized processions wherein a fatted ox was paraded through the town square on Shrove Tuesday, the last day before the Lenten period of fasting. For this tradition, see Patrick Ramade, “Wouwermans: La foire aux cheveux de Valkenburg,” *Musée des Beaux Arts l'oeuvre du mois* 4 (1980), 5–7.

<sup>4</sup> Joost Cornelis Droochsloot's *Village in Winter with Procession in Honor of St. Valentine*, 1622 (Private Collection) is a rare example of a seventeenth-century Northern Netherlandish depiction of a saint's feast day.

<sup>5</sup> For the imitation and emulation of sixteenth-century subjects and styles, see Mariët Westermann, *The Amusements of Jan Steen: Comic Painting in the Seventeenth Century* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1997), 200–17; Larry Silver, “The Importance of Being Bruegel: The Posthumous Survival of the Art of Pieter Bruegel the Elder,” in *Pieter Bruegel the Elder: Drawings and Prints* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003), 67–86.

and/or social values. In the first half of the chapter, I discuss pictures of Twelfth Night processions in the context of moral literacy and the family; and in the second, I analyze Adriaen van de Venne's treatment of the Shrovetide procession in light of the Erasmian tradition of the comic mode.

### **Part I: Images of Twelfth Night Processions**

Seventeenth-century Dutch artists portrayed Twelfth Night, a popular feast observed across Northern Europe on the eve of Epiphany (6 January), more than any other holiday and with several variations. The most commonly represented scene—widely known thanks to the many finely painted versions by Jan Steen and the Flemish artist Jacob Jordaens—pictures a boisterous merry company gathered around a table. The revelers joyfully hail their so-called king, identifiable by the paper crown he proudly wears.

Another group of Twelfth Night images focuses upon the outdoor festivities that accompanied the feast: the procession of “star-singers” who carry an illuminated star-shaped lantern and sing carols to passersby and at the doors of their neighbors. Such processions, while depicted less often, deserve recognition as an independent pictorial theme with which artists such as Jan van de Velde II, Rembrandt and Cornelis Dusart, among others, engaged over the course of the seventeenth century, and most often in print form. Images of “star-singer” processions appeared with greater frequency after the polemic tracts criticizing the celebration of certain religious holidays waned. I suggest that the interest in and demand for such images lay in the desire on the part of some Dutch viewers to preserve longstanding religious traditions, widely embraced in the seventeenth century in a secular context, and to affirm visually the importance of community, family and moral education—concepts the actual procession sought to instill.

## Twelfth Night Origins and Traditions

In the seventeenth-century Northern Netherlands, Twelfth Night remained a beloved custom and multi-confessional feast day observed by members of all social classes despite proscriptions against it by strict Reformed theologians.<sup>6</sup> The holiday, which evolved from a combination of pagan and medieval Christian practices, included a procession of celebrants, a large meal enjoyed amongst family and friends, and games and other merriment.<sup>7</sup> In the Latin Church, Twelfth Night was known as the Feast of Epiphany (Driekoningen). The day marked the Magi's arrival in Bethlehem to adore the Christ Child twelve days after his presumed birth on 25 December, as recorded in Matthew 2: 1–12. Beginning in the eleventh century, mystery plays performed across Europe commemorated this feast day with a solemn procession wherein three kings, richly clad on horseback and bearing gold, frankincense and myrrh, paraded through the city streets before dismounting to offer their gifts to the Christmas manger on the church altar.<sup>8</sup> A slight variation born from the same religious scripture took place entirely within the church: worshippers or priests staged a play wherein men dressed as the Magi followed an illuminated

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<sup>6</sup> Anke A. van Wagenberg-ter Hoeven, "The Celebration of Twelfth Night in Netherlandish Art," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 22, no. 1/2 (January 1, 1993): 92–95. Catholics, Lutherans and Anglicans recognized Twelfth Night as an official holiday, though it appears to have been observed by a large swatch of the population, including Calvinists and the religiously unaffiliated.

<sup>7</sup> C. Catharina van de Graft, *Nederlandse volksgebruiken bij hoogtijdagen* (Utrecht: Spectrum, 1978), 36. The period from December to early January coincided with the winter feast of Saturnalia, an ancient Roman custom honoring the deity of agriculture, and the Germanic Yuletide, which celebrated the winter solstice.

<sup>8</sup> Wagenberg-ter Hoeven, "The Celebration of Twelfth Night," 86. Popular devotion to the three kings spread throughout Europe in the twelfth century. Their relics were believed to be housed in Cologne, which grew to be a major pilgrimage destination.

star in search of the newborn Christ. The earliest known recorded instance of such a performance in the Northern Netherlands took place in Utrecht in the first half of the thirteenth century.<sup>9</sup>

Over time the customs associated with Twelfth Night gradually moved to a secular setting, in part influenced by chambers of rhetoric that performed Epiphany plays on carts pulled through city streets, but more importantly because the church officially banned the celebration of the holiday following the Reformation. The 1574 provincial Synod of Dordrecht proclaimed that Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and the Feast of the Ascension should be the only official holy days observed other than Sundays. However, the States of Holland and Zeeland refused to uphold the rules of the Synod and instead left precise legislation up to individual towns or regions, which did, in fact, prohibit the public expression of certain religious observances. In 1583, for example, the city of Amsterdam condemned rhetoricians' Epiphany plays. In 1616, Utrecht banned costumed parades wherein participants collected gifts door to door.<sup>10</sup> Shortly thereafter, in 1625 and again in 1638, Dordrecht forbade parading on Epiphany while playing the *rommelpot*, wearing white shirts and singing.<sup>11</sup> Such legislation did not persecute an individual for his/her beliefs, but rather proscribed the right to act on or demonstrate them in civic spaces.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, Reformed ministers continued to object to public and private celebrations of Twelfth Night, which often included excess food and drink, dancing and various customs with

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<sup>9</sup> Van Wagenberg-ter Hoeven, "The Celebration of Twelfth Night," 86.

<sup>10</sup> Van Wagenberg-ter Hoeven, "The Celebration of Twelfth Night," 67.

<sup>11</sup> Anke A. van Wagenburg-ter Hoeven, *Het Driekoningenfeest: De uitbeelding van een populair thema in de beeldende kunst van de zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: P. J. Meertens-Instituut, 1997), 60.

<sup>12</sup> For an analysis of religious toleration in the Dutch Republic and laws concerning Catholics, see Christine Kooi, *Calvinists and Catholics during Holland's Golden Age: Heretics and Idolaters* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 91–97.

pagan origins.”<sup>13</sup> The Leiden clergyman Caspar Coolhaes delivered one of the most scathing critiques in a 1607 pamphlet: after disparaging the holiday as the “first Bacchus feast of the year,” he lampooned the “gorging and tipping which, with all the unwarranted joy, frivolity and foolish gossip this engendered, lasted until midnight, indeed often until daylight” and dismissed the feast as “the fruit of false preaching about the three kings which they [the celebrants] had listened to that morning.”<sup>14</sup>

However, despite the aspersions of Coolhaes and others, the laws banning various elements of Twelfth Night festivities often went unheeded, including by the ruling class.<sup>15</sup> The schoolteacher David Beck, for example, recorded in a journal entry of 5 January 1624 that Prince Frederick Hendrik celebrated Twelfth Night with his court and several distinguished guests.<sup>16</sup> Several decades later, in January 1662, the *Hollandtze Mercurius* (a newspaper) noted that William III of Orange took part in a Twelfth Night feast in The Hague in which he was elected king.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, throughout the seventeenth century, rhetoricians performed short plays on

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<sup>13</sup> Van de Graft, *Nederlandse volksgebruiken*, 55; Van Wagenburg-ter Hoeven, *Het Driekoningenfeest*, 64–65.

<sup>14</sup> Caspar Coolahes, *Christelycke ende stichtelycke vermaningen...* (Amsterdam), 1607. Quoted in Van Wagenburg-ter Hoeven, “The Celebration of Twelfth Night,” 94n127. “Sy maken wt desen dage haer eerste Bachusfeest van het jaer; want bijna geen huys en is, ofte men verkiestet daer eenen coninck. Die coninck moet oock een coninin hebben; daer moeten ooc dienaere van den coninck ende de coninginne zijn, canseliers, raetscheren, kocke ende kockenjongens. Deze also vercoosen synde, gaetet op een vreeten ende suypen aen, bedryven alle onnutte ende sotte clapperijen tot der middernacht toe, ja altermale de geheele nacht over tot den morgen toe. Dit is de vrucht die se ontfangen hebben wt haerder valscher leerer predicatiën, die sy van den dry coninghen smorghens gedaen hebben.”

<sup>15</sup> Laws banning certain elements of Twelfth Night celebrations span the seventeenth century, which suggests that the holiday continued to be observed. Moreover, laws are occasionally repeated, such as in the case of the Dordrecht ban that forbade star-singing, issued in 1625 and again in 1638.

<sup>16</sup> David Beck, *Spiegel van mijn leven: Een Haags dagboek uit 1624*, ed. Sv. E. Veldhuijzen (Hilversum: Verloren, 1993), 29. “S. Excell[ent]ie hadde des Avonts een treffelyck bancket ende ballet, hebbende hare Mal[jestei]ten de Co[ning] ende de Coninginne, de hertog van Saxen Weymaer, Prins hendrick, de jonge Lantgraf van hessen met alle de grootste heeren ende Ambass[adeu]rs als oock de voorneemste Edele Jonckvrouwen te gast, kiesende den Cooning ende hielen ten dege (op zyn Roomsche) drie Coonigen-Avont.”

<sup>17</sup> Van Wagenburg-ter Hoeven, *Het Driekoningenfeest*, 63n115.

Twelfth Night and during other traditionally Catholic feasts, such as Shrovetide.<sup>18</sup> Although limited, the extant documentation suggests that the holiday continued to be observed and gained increasing importance as a semi-private celebration within the home and on neighborhood streets, rather than in the church or civic centers.

In observance of the holiday, family and friends shared a feast presided over by a specially crowned king-for-a-day, whose title was awarded by drawing lots or by having the good fortune of discovering a small figurine or bean baked into a cake for the occasion (hence the title “The Bean King” often given to depictions of the celebration).<sup>19</sup> If lots were to be drawn, celebrants purchased a print known as a *koningsbrief* (“king’s letter”) to facilitate the selection process. Sold in the streets, such prints usually featured a paper crown and small images paired with rhymes or captions listing the office each person had to fulfill on Twelfth Night. Participants cut up the individual characters and after drawing lots, pinned the little bits of paper on their clothing or hat so that all members of the party could be properly identified.<sup>20</sup> Alternatively, if the king assumed his station by means of the bean cake, he would designate a queen and assign members of the court, all of whom promptly honored their sovereign by raising their glasses and merrily shouting “the king drinks!”<sup>21</sup>

Meanwhile—and more importantly in terms of the discussion here—carolers processed outside from house to house carrying a star-shaped lantern on a pole while beating drums and

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<sup>18</sup> Herman Roodenburg, *Onder censuur: De kerkelijke tucht in de Gereformeerde Gemeente van Amsterdam, 1578–1700* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1990), 329; Van Wagenberg-ter Hoeven, “The Celebration of Twelfth Night,” 67.

<sup>19</sup> Van de Graft, *Nederlandse volksgebruiken*, 31.

<sup>20</sup> Martin Royalton Kisch, “The King’s Crown: A Popular Print for Epiphany,” *Print Quarterly* 1 (1984): 44; Anke A. van Wagenberg-ter Hoeven, “King’s Letter Prints and Paper Crowns,” *Print Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (2007): 383.

<sup>21</sup> Van de Graft, *Nederlandse volksgebruiken*, 31–33. “De koning drinkt!”

singing special Twelfth Night songs. This festive ritual, a symbolic performance of the Magi's journey to Bethlehem in search of the Christ Child, conferred order and legitimacy upon the celebration by anchoring it in religious tradition. The practice of processing within one's neighborhood likely derived from the rhetoricians' plays, performed on carts pulled through the streets, or from choristers training to become clergymen as they sang from door to door. Like the choir members, the star-singers usually wore white, as pictured in some representations of the holiday.<sup>22</sup> But by the seventeenth century, common folk embraced the tradition of the star-singer procession, which gained increasing importance as a celebration of children. Youngsters actively participated and received little sweetmeats or a few coins in appreciation for their carols.<sup>23</sup>

The celebration of Twelfth Night also represented an important occasion for almsgiving. Families frequently distributed small monetary gifts to the indigent, and city councils and religious institutions offered charitable gifts of clothing, food and wine. In some locales, households set aside the first three slices of the bean cake for needy star-singers at the door.<sup>24</sup> The holiday thus evolved into a mostly secular observance that honored family and community relationships. The star-singer procession manifested the communal bonds quite directly by virtue of celebrants' physical presence within their homes, on each other's doorsteps and in shared neighborhood streets.

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<sup>22</sup> Van de Graft, *Nederlandse volksgebruiken*, 34–35; Van Wagenberg-ter Hoeven, “The Celebration of Twelfth Night,” 67–68.

<sup>23</sup> Sweetmeats, made and sold by apothecaries, included marzipan, sugar hearts and candied fruits such as raisins or currants. On Epiphany, *olie-koecken*, deep-fried dough balls filled with apple, raisins and almond were popular and remain so today (though now called *olliebollen*). *Duivekaters*, lemon-flavored breads in various shapes, were also common during holidays and frequently dispensed to the poor. See Donna R. Barnes and Peter G. Rose, *Childhood Pleasures: Dutch Children in the Seventeenth Century* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2012), 23–24.

<sup>24</sup> Van Wagenberg-ter Hoeven, “The Celebration of Twelfth Night,” 68.

### **Pictorial Precedents: Twelfth Night Processions in Seasonal and Calendar Imagery**

Representations of star carolers who move as a small group from house to house or stand at a threshold, usually in an urban environment, originated in sixteenth-century seasonal and calendar imagery. However, around 1630, Dutch depictions of the Twelfth Night procession emerged as a distinct pictorial theme independent of any larger metaphysical construct. At that time, the painters and printmakers who took up this subject honed the compositional focus on the star-singer procession and reduced the number of competing visual elements. Artists emphasized the carolers, the act of singing and the intimate neighborhood streets in which such processions took place. Before further examining the images from c. 1630 and later, a discussion of seasonal and calendar representations that include Twelfth Night processions will elucidate the changes to representations of the theme.

Jacob Matham's engraving *Winter* from 1621 (fig. 3.1) serves as a fitting first example of Dutch images that embed multiple Twelfth Night processions amidst episodes of characteristic seasonal festivity. The artist represented an evening street scene illuminated by a starry sky and crescent moon. Dozens of men, women and children crisscross the composition, marching in small parades while playing instruments. These processions assume the print's organizing motif among representations of general winter frivolity, such as merry cavorting on the frozen canal. At the far right, a cluster of carolers sings before an open door, one of whom carries a star-shaped lantern, the telltale sign of a Twelfth Night procession and symbol of the Star of Bethlehem, which guided the Magi in their search for the Messiah. Such lanterns, usually made from paper and illuminated by candlelight, were attached to a long pole with a rope that could be pulled between verses to turn the star. Traditionally, the individual anointed as the "Bean King"—identifiable here by the paper crown he wears—was awarded the privilege of carrying



the star.<sup>25</sup> The children gather around this beacon with their arms clasped behind their backs as they perform for the family standing at the threshold. At the left of the group, a peddler offers prints of Twelfth Night crowns for sale. These festive adornments typically consisted of a band of simple woodcuts depicting the Virgin and Child or the Three Magi, such as the seventeenth-century example published by Martin Royalton Kisch (fig. 3.2).<sup>26</sup> Occasionally, deep reds, blues and greens embellished the crowns, which could be glued to gilded pasteboard after they were cut out.<sup>27</sup>

Beyond the group of carolers at the right, several more processions wind their way through Matham's composition. In the right middle ground, a group of fashionably-dressed figures follows behind a torch-bearer and in the center, nearly a dozen revelers, one of whom carries a star-shaped lantern, crosses the canal bridge while they remain linked shoulder to shoulder. The left foreground features a Shrovetide parade, discussed in greater detail below, that forms a visual parallel to the Twelfth Night procession in the right middle ground. The additional winter holiday parade, along with the ice skaters and horse-drawn sleigh depicted in the center, deepen the artist's encyclopedic characterization of winter entertainments.

The myriad seasonal activities represented by Matham require the viewer's close examination before the subject can be fully understood. Within the larger seasonal framework, details such as the paper crowns and star-shaped lanterns firmly identify the Twelfth Night processions. The holiday's familiar signifiers engage the viewer and evoke recollected ritual

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<sup>25</sup> Schrijnen, *Nederlandsche volkskunde*, 142.

<sup>26</sup> Kisch, "The King's Crown," 44. Only a handful of paper crowns survive from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as they were intended to be used as ephemeral decorations.

<sup>27</sup> Van de Graft, *Nederlandse volksgebruiken*, 31.

experiences and the attendant sights, smells and sounds associated with the winter months.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, by virtue of the small scale of the print's many details, the artist enjoins the beholder to process visually around and through the composition, much like the depicted Epiphany and Shrovetide parades themselves.<sup>29</sup> Matham thus cleverly inscribes the viewer into the ritual action of the procession—the sensory experience of time lapsed and space progressed amongst a crowd of celebrants—that would have been familiar to a contemporary audience.

Calendar pages and almanacs that depict the star-singing procession in order to signify the month of January evidence the longevity of the custom in the Northern Netherlands.<sup>30</sup> A broad audience recognized the subjects rooted in the cyclical nature of the seasons, as such imagery drew upon a culture's shared history and summoned memories of past experiences. Adriaen Collaert's engraving *Januari* from 1578–82 (fig. 3.3), for example, utilizes a familiar visual language to signify the Twelfth Night holiday through the identification of its customs. The artist represented the characteristic procession in the foreground of a town square bordered by several buildings. The celebrants include a drummer, flutist, king, queen and a few children. Proudly donning their festive diadems, they march past several peddlers selling crown prints and *duivekaters*, a lemon-flavored bread traditionally sold during holidays.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> The depicted Twelfth Night processions would have resonated with viewers because of the predictable frequency with which they were staged. Such rituals, as Catherine Bell has observed, signified a “rich set of associations between the seasons of nature and the rhythm of social life” and give “socially meaningful definitions to the passage of time.” Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 102.

<sup>29</sup> My thanks to Dr. Linda Stone-Ferrier for this observation.

<sup>30</sup> Stephen H. Goddard and David S. Ritchkoff, *Sets and Series: Prints from the Low Countries*, exh. cat. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Art Gallery, 1984), 18. Calendar pages, a standard part of medieval books of hours, were usually accompanied by representations of the twelve months. The taste for printed series apart from books of hours grew in the mid-sixteenth century and was first promoted by Hieronymous Cock and his publishing house *Aux Quatre Vents*, active in Antwerp between 1546–70.

<sup>31</sup> Barnes and Rose, *Childhood Pleasures*, 23.

Dirck de Bray's woodcut of *January*, published by Claes Jansz. Visscher between 1635–94 (fig. 3.4), more prominently features the Twelfth Night carolers. The artist depicts four children, one of whom carries the star lantern and wears a crown, as they sing in front of a family peering out from behind a half-open Dutch door.<sup>32</sup> The urban setting, economically represented with short, parallel lines, clearly situates the youth in a residential street where the star-singing processions actually took place. In the right background, a fountain features a water-pourer, the sign of Aquarius and symbol of the month of January, which equates the Twelfth Night celebrants with this time of the year.

Cornelis Dusart's mezzotint *January*, which dates from between 1679–1704 (fig. 3.5), adopts a comic, even farcical mode in the depiction of three young, costumed Twelfth Night star-singers, who signify the winter season. Paused on a cobblestone street, they impart a lighthearted tone and express the joyful beckoning of their song with their gleeful expressions and mouths agape. On the left, the figure with the drawn lot tucked into his cap carries the star-shaped lantern and wears a collection box at his waist. The middle figure, a portly little fellow, wears the paper crown symbolizing his role as the bean king. He may also represent the Glutton, a popular comic character role-played on Twelfth Night and other holidays.<sup>33</sup> On the right, a wooden spoon worn on the brim of that figure's hat identifies him as the Fool.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Eddy de Jongh and Ger Luijten, *Mirror of Everyday Life: Genreprints in the Netherlands, 1550–1700*, exh. cat. (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1997), 353. This woodcut comes from a series of twelve, ten of which were executed by Dirck de Bray and two by Christoffel van Sichem. They were probably intended for an almanac, which would have included weather, festivities and activities associated with a particular month or season. Such texts are related to medieval books of hours and astrological texts.

<sup>33</sup> Linda Stone-Ferrier, *Dutch Prints of Daily Life: Mirrors of Life or Masks of Morals?*, exh. cat. (Lawrence, KS: Spencer Museum of Art, 1983), 118; Paul Zumthor, *Daily Life in Rembrandt's Holland* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 183.

<sup>34</sup> Seymour Slive, *Frans Hals*, extensively revised second edition (New York: Phaidon Press, 2014), 36–37; Stone-Ferrier, *Dutch Prints of Daily Life*, 118.

Unlike the depiction of the star-singers in the calendar prints discussed above, Dusart's conception of the theme draws the viewer into the comic revelry of the image. In the lower left foreground, the protruding corner of a stoop, otherwise cut off from view, presumes that we, the beholders of the image, occupy the doorway before which the carolers sing. This spatial adjacency, underscored further by the left-hand figure's direct gaze and the trio's proximity to the picture plane, cleverly draws the viewer into the performance and forges a connection between him/her and the festive season as depicted by Dusart. Like the calendar prints discussed above, the success of the artist's image ultimately lies in his adoption of a common pictorial vocabulary for the representation of the month and its customs.

### **The Development of Twelfth-Night Processions as an Independent Pictorial Theme**

While first represented in seasonal and calendrical imagery, the depiction of the star-singer procession developed by c. 1630 as an independent pictorial theme. By then, over a decade had lapsed since delegates at the Synod of Dordrecht (1618–19) reaffirmed the official position of the Dutch Reformed Church, which abolished the celebration of all holidays save for Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and Ascension.<sup>35</sup> After c. 1630, artists may have felt more inclined to portray Twelfth Night festivities because the late 1620s and 1630s witnessed a growing tolerance of religious pluralism, or what Willem Frijhoff called “interconfessional conviviality.”<sup>36</sup> During this period, the Remonstrants, Jews and Lutherans were permitted to

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<sup>35</sup> The Synod of Dordrecht was convened specifically to settle the dispute between competing factions of the Calvinist faith, the Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants. For a discussion of this dispute and the ruling in favor of the Counter-Remonstrants, see chapter 1 of this dissertation.

<sup>36</sup> Willem Frijhoff, “The Threshold of Toleration: Interconfessional Conviviality in Holland During the Early Modern Period,” in *Embodied Belief: Ten Essays on Religious Culture in Dutch History* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2002), 39. Frijhoff argued that tolerance is too value-laden a word and instead described Dutch society as “ecumenical” in terms of everyday interactions.

erect houses of worship<sup>37</sup> and several outspoken religious leaders penned treatises in favor of religious toleration, which included the easing of legislation that targeted faith-based practices.<sup>38</sup> Collaboration between religious denominations also increased, most notably in the production of picture Bibles developed for a broad audience.<sup>39</sup>

While Twelfth Night was regarded as a multiconfessional holiday, representations of its festivities may have appealed particularly to Catholics, who witnessed an intensified revival of their faith beginning in the 1630s.<sup>40</sup> Dutch seminaries trained 500 active priests by 1650, compared to a mere 70 in 1602,<sup>41</sup> and Catholic residents in the provinces of Overijssel, Gelderland, Utrecht and North Holland hovered between 45–50 percent of the population.<sup>42</sup> The renewed interest in Catholicism stimulated a demand for devotional images, as evidenced by the large numbers of religious prints that flooded the art market around mid-century.<sup>43</sup> While

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<sup>37</sup> Joke Spaans, “Religious Policies in the Seventeenth-Century Dutch Republic,” in *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age*, ed. R. Po-chia Hsia and Henk van Nierop (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 81.

<sup>38</sup> Gerrit Voogt, “Remonstrant–Counter-Remonstrant Debates: Crafting a Principled Defense of Toleration after the Synod of Dordrecht (1619–50),” *Church History and Religious Culture* 89, no. 4 (2009): 508. Simon Episcopius’s 1627 Remonstrant treatise *Vrye godesdienst (Freedom of Religion)*, which argued for the unrestricted freedom of religious practice for all Churches and individuals, ranked among the best-sellers. Episcopius’s colleagues Johannes Uytenbogaert and Paschier de Fijne published similar doctrines of toleration.

<sup>39</sup> For a discussion of religious literature in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic and the emergence of the multi-confessional picture Bible, see Els Stronks, *Negotiating Differences: Word, Image and Religion in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

<sup>40</sup> For the revival of Catholicism, see Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477–1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 377–98; Charles H. Parker, *Faith on the Margins: Catholics and Catholicism in the Dutch Golden Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); L. J. Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het Katholicisme in Noord-Nederland in de 16e en de 17e Eeuw* (Amsterdam: Urbi et Orbi, 1947).

<sup>41</sup> Paul Corby Finney, *Seeing Beyond the Word: Visual Arts and the Calvinist Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 408.

<sup>42</sup> Willem Frijhoff et al., *1650: Hard-Won Unity* (Assen; Basingstoke: Royal Van Gorcum; Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 352.

<sup>43</sup> Elissa Auerbach, “Re-Forming Mary in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Prints” (Ph.D. diss., The University of Kansas, 2009), 146.

inventories suggest that artists and patrons did not produce or purchase works of art along confessional lines,<sup>44</sup> one can reasonably conclude that Twelfth Night imagery would have been desirable to a Catholic audience by virtue of the holiday's religious origins. A number of Catholic painters, including Jan Steen, Jan Miense Molenaer, Gabriel Metsu, Dirck de Bray and Cornelis Saftleven, represented Twelfth Night festivities.<sup>45</sup> The subject also appears to have been of particular interest to artists working in Haarlem,<sup>46</sup> a notable Catholic stronghold and one of two Dutch cities with a designated Catholic neighborhood.<sup>47</sup>

Dating from after 1630, individual prints depicting Twelfth Night processions generally share certain features in common. They place compositional focus on a group of star-singers, emphasize visually the act of singing and describe an intimate neighborhood setting in which the processions occurred. Such depictions of the holiday, nevertheless, vary greatly in compositional complexity and pictorial tone, which can range from celebratory and comedic to a quiet expression of piety.

Jan van de Velde II's 1630 engraving of a Twelfth Night scene (fig. 3.6), for example, depicts three humble-looking figures shrouded in darkness, their faces brightly illuminated by a

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<sup>44</sup> Rarely can direct connections be made between an artist's faith and the religion of his/her patrons. Mariët Westermann concluded through an analysis of inventories that both Catholics and Protestants collected works by Jan Steen, a Catholic artist. See Mariët Westermann, *The Amusements of Jan Steen: Comic Painting in the Seventeenth Century* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1997), 72–73; Rembrandt's patrons similarly drew from multiple religious faiths. See S. A. C. Dudok van Heel, "Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–69): A Changing Portrait of the Artist," in *Rembrandt: A Master and His Workshop, Paintings* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 50–67.

<sup>45</sup> For a near complete catalog of Twelfth Night imagery, see Van Wagenberg-ter Hoeven, "The Celebration of Twelfth Night," 201–9.

<sup>46</sup> A number of artists who were members of the Guild of St. Luke in Haarlem produced images of Twelfth Night, including Hans Bollongier, Richard Brakenburg, Dirck de Bray, Cornelis Dusart, Jacob Matham, Jan Steen and Jan van de Velde II.

<sup>47</sup> Kooi, *Calvinists and Catholics*, 123–24. Haarlem had a distinct, Catholic neighborhood that was located around the "De Hoek" community of religious virgins (*kloppen*) on the Bakenessergracht. Delft also had a designated Catholic neighborhood.

handheld lantern. They stand before a shallow doorway, their mouths open in song, with solemn expressions that instill a seriousness of purpose and hushed reverence. Using delicate cross-hatching, the artist juxtaposed this richly described foreground trio with a background procession of star-singers. Van de Velde unites the two halves of the composition by capturing the black, velvety shadows of the urban street. However, the quiet reserve of the three figures in the foreground contrasts markedly with the energetic forward momentum of the procession. More than a dozen figures participate in the parade, led by two adults and a child wearing paper crowns over their hats. One of the adults carries the large, star-shaped lantern over his shoulder, which casts the rest of the group in radiant light.

Abraham (?) Theodore's etched and engraved print *Star of the King* from 1636 (fig. 3.7) offers a playful and celebratory treatment of the holiday, which also explores the contrast of light and dark afforded by the nighttime subject. However, the pictorial focus emphasizes the interaction between the carolers, some of whom exuberantly crowd the star lantern while others converse merrily amongst themselves. A handful of *repoussoir* figures in the center and left foreground inscribe the viewer within the boisterous and festive gathering. Beneath the image, a caption notes the performers' hope for a few coins and praises the person giving the most pennies as "the best man alive."<sup>48</sup> Similarly, some Twelfth Night songs sung by carolers requested monetary gifts or the performers' fair share of the bean cake from residents.<sup>49</sup> The light-hearted inscription reinforces the festive atmosphere of the depicted imagery.

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<sup>48</sup> "Siet hoe de grage Starreman: hier komt met zijne sterren an./ daar Aeght en Truij en Jaep en Nel, staen gaepen na dit koninghs-spel,/ maer wie den dicksten penninck geeft: dat is de besten man die leeft."

<sup>49</sup> Van de Graft, *Nederlandse volksgebruiken*, 35–36. "Wij komen je Dertienavond bezoeken,/ Heb je geen wafels of pannekoeken,/ Een, twee, drie in 't beuterpateel [pateel = platte schotel]?/ Mensen, geeft on sons aandeel!"

Rembrandt, the most well-known artist to represent the theme of the Twelfth Night procession, explored variations in narrative tone when he depicted the subject on at least two occasions. A spontaneous informality characterizes a pen and ink drawing from 1647–49 (fig. 3.8), which pictures a casual group of revelers, mostly children, as they sing before a family of three peering out from behind a door. A female figure carrying a baby on her hip supervises the group and a youth to her right attempts to placate a crying toddler. These anecdotal inclusions, coupled with the fresh immediacy of the fluid pen strokes, impart a fleeting or momentary quality, as if captured from life.

Rembrandt reprised the subject a few years later. An etching and drypoint of 1651 (fig. 3.9) portrays an evening Twelfth Night parade veiled in hushed tones and inky, black shadows. A cluster of star-singers stands before a doorframe on the right side of the composition, though individual forms are barely visible underneath the artist's dense web of cross-hatching. A bright star-lantern illuminates a man and several children immediately adjacent, and in the distant background, a tiny, glowing star signals a second group of carolers. This image probably inspired the similarly darkly etched depiction of Twelfth Night (fig. 3.10) executed in 1665–70 by Pieter van de Voorde, a follower of Rembrandt.

Romeyn de Hooghe's representation of a Twelfth Night procession from 1655–67 (fig. 3.11), a rare example of the ritual in a rural environment, captures several elements of the holiday simultaneously—both joyful celebration and goodwill towards one's neighbors. His print focuses, in particular, on the distribution of alms associated with the holiday. In the right foreground, a woman holding a candle leans over an open Dutch door to drop a few coins in the outstretched hat of a cripple, whose infirmity is emphasized by his wooden leg and the crutch he



leans on for support. Behind him, half a dozen star carolers wearing crowns and carrying their star lantern pause to perform in front of a rustic cottage.

Like the images discussed above, most depictions of Twelfth Night processions appear in the form of prints, which demanded less time and labor by an artist on a subject entangled in conflicting religious attitudes. However, the parades also appeared in other media. At least ten paintings survive which include a Twelfth Night procession and thus attest to a small market for the more costly portrayals of the pictorial theme.<sup>50</sup> The majority of the Twelfth Night paintings date from after c. 1650, when Jan Steen popularized the subject in addition to depictions of other family celebrations. Star-singer processions appear occasionally in the background of his numerous paintings of the Twelfth Night indoor feast, as exemplified by the 1662 panel in Boston (fig. 3.12).

Twelfth Night processions also appeared in decorative arts, such as tiles (fig. 3.13), and as independent, sculptural objects, such as the two beautiful silver examples in the Rijksmuseum (fig. 3.14–15). Such silver miniatures occasionally functioned as toys for the children of the elite or ruling class, but were principally collected by wealthy women, who displayed them in special cabinets or in costly dollhouses.<sup>51</sup> The presence of silver star-singers alongside miniaturized tradesmen, children's games, kitchen implements and other utilitarian objects attests to the ubiquity of the processional tradition in Dutch popular culture. While seventeenth-century depictions of indoor Twelfth Night celebrations around a table outnumber representations of

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<sup>50</sup> Samuel van Hoogstraten, Gerard Dou, Egbert van der Poel, Hans Bollongier, Bernardus van Schijndel and several anonymous artists all produced paintings of Twelfth Night processions.

<sup>51</sup> Emiel Aardewerk, Esther Aardewerk, and Lynne Richards, *Tall and Small: Antique Dutch Silver Miniatures* (The Hague: A. Aardewerk Publishers, 2012), 19. Demand for silver miniatures was especially high in Amsterdam, where the Van Strant, Van Geffen and Van Somerwil families dominated production. See also Bert Vreeken and Sam Herman, *Miniature Silver: It's a Small World* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam Museum, 2014), unpaginated.

outdoor star-singing parades, the latter, in all media, affirm a contemporary cultural interest in and market demand for the processional imagery as a meaningful, independent subject.

### **Twelfth Night Rituals, the Family and Moral Literacy**

Despite differences in pictorial emphasis or tone, representations of Twelfth Night processions in all media emphasize and/or include children, who participated in the actual celebration and assumed special tasks, such as carrying the star lantern. Twelfth Night, along with the feast of St. Nicholas, remained throughout the seventeenth century the most popular festive occasions shared by kin, despite disapproval expressed by orthodox Calvinists.<sup>52</sup>

The desire to maintain longstanding and culturally-embedded family traditions may partially explain the market for Twelfth Night depictions, including both the star-singer procession and the domestic feast. I suggest that the appeal of the Twelfth Night procession, in particular, may be understood in terms of its alignment with and, therefore, fulfillment of child-rearing and moral literacy tenets of leading pedagogical theorists. Representations of the procession signaled both the ritual itself as well as the value of family and community originally registered by the performance, which may thus account for the focus on children in many images of Twelfth Night processions.<sup>53</sup>

Education in the seventeenth-century Netherlands was rooted in Erasmian humanism that stressed Christian virtues and took place primarily within the home under the aegis of the parents

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<sup>52</sup> Jeroen Dekker, "Proudly Raising Vulnerable Youngsters: The Scope for Education in the Netherlands," in *Pride and Joy: Children's Portraits in the Netherlands, 1500–1700*, ed. Jan Baptist Bedaux and Rudi Ekkart (Amsterdam: Ludion Press, 2000), 228–30.

<sup>53</sup> This argument is informed by Clifford Geertz's understanding of ritual as a "model of" a system of values and a "model for" the reshaping of those values (112). In other words, Geertz suggested that rituals both project and induce idealized images of religious beliefs and/or worldviews. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 112–23.

and relatives.<sup>54</sup> Moralists asserted that the responsibility of teaching children admirable qualities ultimately fell to the family unit, although public education certainly existed, and was indeed quite developed.<sup>55</sup> To that end, a host of devotional texts, emblem books and catechisms, both Protestant and Catholic, appeared for young audiences. Such literature subscribed to the Erasmian view of the child as a *tabula rasa*, capable of being molded and receptive to positive influences.<sup>56</sup>

Jeroen Dekker has suggested that the Dutch educated their offspring on the basis of these texts, as well as through moralizing paintings of the family, such as genre pictures depicting the well-known proverb “As the old sing, so pipe the young.”<sup>57</sup> Many representations of Twelfth Night processions, which depict a variation of that proverb, include children aping the adults who surround them as they travel from house to house. In some images of the parades, adults model the positive virtues espoused generally in educational literature and which they hoped to instill in children. The prints of Twelfth Night processions by Van de Velde and Rembrandt, for example, depict adults who exemplify the piety and respect appropriate while observing a religious holiday. In De Hooghe’s etching, a woman exhibits exemplary behavior in support of the needy.

Depictions of Twelfth Night processions often focus on the act of singing, an intrinsic part of the holiday ritual and a form of expression esteemed for its role in doctrinal instruction

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<sup>54</sup> Jeroen Dekker, *Educational Ambitions in History: Childhood and Education in an Expanding Educational Space from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Peter Lang AG, 2010), 37–39.

<sup>55</sup> For the history of the Dutch school system, see P. Th. F. M. Boekholt and E. P. de Booy, *Geschiedenis van de school in Nederland vanaf de Middeleeuwen tot aan de huidige tijd* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1987).

<sup>56</sup> For a discussion of specific texts, see Dekker, *Educational Ambitions*, 41–59.

<sup>57</sup> Jeroen Dekker, “A Republic of Educators: Educational Messages in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Genre Painting,” *History of Education Quarterly* 36 (1996): 163–90.

and moral upbringing. The emphasis on singing in nearly all pictures of Twelfth Night processions suggests that the images should be read against the backdrop of the extensive Dutch song culture, which instilled the value of singing in children at an early age. Songs served an endless variety of purposes. They provided religious and moral instruction; acted as a therapeutic remedy for those suffering from melancholy; communicated political and religious ideas; and, of course, entertained and delighted both performers and their audiences.<sup>58</sup>

Music of all kinds, easily accessible to a wide audience, could be procured in a number of ways in the seventeenth-century Netherlands. Street singers sold songs as individual sheets or small booklets that could be folded up and slipped into a pocket. Larger volumes of songs, often illustrated or bound together with emblems, could be purchased in bookshops. Religious songbooks tended to be produced along confessional lines and frequently outsold their secular counterparts. Each faith published its own collections of melodies adapted to the particular customs and preferences of its community. Such volumes exhibited tremendous variation in cost and size. Stalpart van der Wiele's Catholic *Gulde jaers feestdagen* (*Golden Year Feast Days*) of 1634, for example, the most extensive Dutch songbook with 1,292 pages, provided a composition about a saint for every day of the year.<sup>59</sup>

Even as the Twelfth Night holiday became increasingly secularized, the verses sung by star-singers were generally religious in nature. The most widespread song, for example, narrated the Magi's search for the Christ child and described the gifts they presented of gold, frankincense and myrrh:

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<sup>58</sup> Natascha Veldhorst, "Pharmacy for the Body and Soul: Dutch Songbooks in the Seventeenth Century," *Early Music History* 27 (2008): 220.

<sup>59</sup> Veldhorst, "Pharmacy for the Body and Soul," 259–62.

Here we walk, Lord, with our star;  
 We seek Lord Jesus, we want him dearly.  
 We already knocked on Herod's door:  
 Herod, the king, came out himself.  
 He spoke everything with a false heart:  
 Why does the youngest of three look so black?  
 Although he is so black, he is famous there:  
 He is the King of the Orient.  
 We came over the high mountains,  
 A star remained standing still there.  
 Oh star, you must not stand so still,  
 You must go with us to Bethlehem.  
 To Bethlehem, in that lovely city,  
 Where Maria sat with her baby.  
 The smaller the child and the greater God,  
 Who all the Jews ridiculed.  
 We offer myrrh, incense and gold  
 And praise the baby abundantly.<sup>60</sup>

Singing such verses together would have fortified the communal identities of the carolers within their family and/or neighborhood, while reinforcing the same religious teachings conveyed by the procession itself. The act of communal singing or listening to a group's repertoire, as Natasha Veldhorst has argued, united both performers and audience by underscoring their common experiences and heritage.<sup>61</sup>

Although a ritual and its representation are never the same, the sustained visual interest in the Christian tradition of Twelfth Night and the concomitant ethos it signified reveal the perceived value of both the procession and its depiction. Pictures of the holiday gave relative

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<sup>60</sup> English translation mine, quoted in Van de Graft, *Nederlandse volksgebruiken*, 36. "Hier treden wij, Here, met onze sterre;/ Wij zoeken Heer Jezus, wij hadden hem gerre./ Wij kloppen al aan Herodes zijn deur:/ Herodes, de koning, kwam zelve's veur./ Hij sprak er al met een vals hart:/ Hoe ziet er de jongste van drieën zo zwart? Al ziet hij zo zwart, hij is er bekend:/ Hij is er de Koning van Oriënt./ Wij kwamen de hoge berg opgegaan,/ Daar bleef er de sterre stille staan./ O sterre, gij moet er zo stille niet staan./ Gij moet er met ons naar Bethlehem gaan,/ Naar Bethlehem, in die schone stad,/ Waar Maria met haar kindeke zat./ Hoe kleinder kind en hoe groter God,/ Daar al de joden mee hebben gespot./ Wij offeren mire, wierook en goud/ En loven het kindeke menigvoud.

<sup>61</sup> Veldhorst, "Pharmacy for the Body and Soul," 262–63.

permanence to an ephemeral, annual event that was subject to shifting religious beliefs and the vicissitudes of governing bodies. The market for representations of the Twelfth Night procession perhaps reflects a demand for the expression of the tenets of the family and a desire for constancy in the face of change.

## **Part II: Images of Carnival Processions**

Representations of Twelfth Night processions outnumber depictions of the festivities that accompanied the Carnival (Shrovetide) season, which is now better known and more widely celebrated. Many of the traditions that once accompanied this jubilant time during the liturgical year, such as large-scale, civic-sponsored processions, were eliminated or curtailed in the wake of the Reformation. The changing religious landscape and the enactment of legislation that prohibited certain forms of celebration—particularly those disavowed by the Dutch Reformed Church—may explain a reticence on the part of artists to take up Carnival as a subject. Artists who did portray the holiday in some form or fashion display remarkable variation in terms of subject and style, and they freely adapted pictorial traditions to different ends.

Adriaen van de Venne represented Shrovetide festivities more than any other seventeenth-century Dutch artist and with particular emphasis on the procession, a motif other artists often eschewed or included only as a minor background detail. I suggest that Van de Venne used the procession as a rhetorical framework through which to express the farcical qualities inherent in the holiday, which he conveyed through the Erasmian tradition of the comic mode. An examination of the origins and traditions of Carnival as celebrated in the seventeenth-century Netherlands first establishes the religious and social milieux in which Van de Venne

engaged. Comparisons to other seventeenth-century depictions of Shrovetide festivities then serve to underscore the distinct character of his treatment of the theme.

### **Carnival in the Netherlands**

The Carnival processions represented by Van de Venne originated from medieval rituals wherein people paraded in disguise through towns and the countryside to bring about winter's end and the dawn of spring. From this practice, an entire repertoire of festival activities developed that were observed widely across Europe. Celebrations began in late December or January and culminated on Vastenavond (Shrove Tuesday or Mardi Gras), the day preceding Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent. The holiday season thus served as a prelude to the forty days of penance leading up to Easter Sunday, and was embraced as an opportunity for indulgence, merriment and performance.<sup>62</sup> The cultural historian Peter Burke described Shrovetide festivities as “a huge play in which the main streets and squares became stages, the city became a theater without walls while the inhabitants became either actors or spectators.”<sup>63</sup>

The Carnival season unfolded through a combination of structured events and more informal customs, which often occurred over many days or weeks.<sup>64</sup> As Vastenavond approached, municipalities orchestrated colorful processions through their civic squares. These parades often took the form of wheeled carts bearing people dressed as fools, devils, wild men

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<sup>62</sup> Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 3rd ed. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 264.

<sup>63</sup> Burke, *Popular Culture*, 261.

<sup>64</sup> Variations in the celebration of the holiday existed between regions. Nuremberg, for example, was famous for its procession featuring a large ship-wagon, drawn through the streets on a sled. In Venice, blacksmiths chased and ritually beheaded twelve pigs and a bull in the Piazza San Marco. For Nuremberg, see Herman Pleij, *De Blauwe schuit* (Muiderberg: Dick Coutinho, 1979). For Venice, see Peter Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 183–90.

and *commedia dell'arte* characters.<sup>65</sup> Urban governments also paid *rederijkers* (chambers of rhetoric) to perform comedic farces and other plays in market centers for crowds of spectators. Within neighborhoods or among kin, revelers held banquets, played games and staged competitions, such as goose- or herring-pulling. Youngsters often capitalized on the festive atmosphere by roving together from house to house, singing and collecting treats or money.<sup>66</sup>

Carnival celebrants embraced the holiday as a time of sanctioned letting-go by heartily indulging in everything traditionally renounced during Lent, including excess food, drink and sex. People consumed pork, beef and other meats in great quantities.<sup>67</sup> Pancakes and waffles—a staple of Carnival fare—were prepared at home and sold in the streets.<sup>68</sup>

Shrovetide festivities often integrated comic inversions of social norms, such as role reversals between men and women, masters and servants, and the rich and the poor. Dressing up and donning various disguises, a practice that figured prominently in Carnival processions and plays, provided an opportunity for identity experimentation and a chance to temporarily alter the patterns of everyday existence.<sup>69</sup> As Burke aptly described, Carnival signified “a time of institutionalized disorder, a set of rituals of reversal,” which unified the celebrations and enacted a favorite trope of early modern popular culture, the so-called “topsy-turvy world.”<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Burke, *Popular Culture*, 263; Gouw, *De volksvermaken*, 192; Herman Pleij, “Van Vastelavond tot Carnaval,” in *Vastenavond-Carnaval: Feesten van de omgekeerde wereld*, exh. cat., ed. Charles de Mooij (Zwolle: Waanders Uitgevers, 1992), 18–21.

<sup>66</sup> Schrijnen, *Nederlandsche volkskunde*, 155–63.

<sup>67</sup> Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 97. Catholics traditionally abstain from eating meat during the Lenten season. The word “Carnival” is derived from *carne*, which means flesh, and *levare*, to take away.

<sup>68</sup> Burke, *Popular Culture*, 261; Schrijnen, *Nederlandsche volkskunde*, 157.

<sup>69</sup> Burke, *Popular Culture*, 263–64; Schrijnen, *Nederlandsche volkskunde*, 157–63; Gouw, *De volksvermaken*, 189–92.

<sup>70</sup> Burke, *Popular Culture*, 270. Social anthropologists have viewed such comic inversions of normal



Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Netherlandish reformers and theologians feared that seemingly innocuous Carnival debauchery might have deleterious effects on society writ large. Such criticisms proved a familiar refrain. As early as the Middle Ages, religious controversies concerning the observance of certain Carnival customs led to their denunciation and prohibition.<sup>71</sup> Opponents of the holiday condemned it as a “vanity,” displeasing to God and an excuse for licentious behavior, drunkenness and gluttony.<sup>72</sup> In 1606, for example, the Leiden professor and Reformed minister Caspar Jansz. Coolhaes lamented “not only do many men wear women’s clothes, and women men’s clothes, but they disfigure themselves further with masks ... and do not respect the Lord’s work and pay no heed to the creations of his hands.”<sup>73</sup>

The forceful opprobrium expressed by Coolhaes and others may have influenced the nature and celebration of Shrovetide. Herman Roodenburg has argued that certain religious

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life as a release mechanism or “safety valve” for the tensions that build in structured societies, particularly the resentment of authority. Max Gluckman and Victor Turner both theorized that this emotional release actually reinforced the dominant social order because Carnival remained distinct from everyday life. The Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin alternatively viewed Shrovetide as an independent reality, one that could afford common people an experience of utopia through rituals of role reversal. According to Bakhtin, such practices forged a liberated human consciousness capable of bringing about change, destruction and renewal. Natalie Zemon Davis built upon these earlier interpretations when she theorized the multifarious potential of Carnival. On the one hand, she argued, festival traditions could perpetuate commonly held communal values. On the other, they could serve to criticize and undermine political authority, and such ideas could transcend the established parameters of the holiday season. See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984); Max Gluckman, *Essays On the Ritual of Social Relations* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963); Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co., 1969); Natalie Zemon Davis, “The Reasons of Misrule,” in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), 97–151.

<sup>71</sup> Gouw, *De volksvermaken*, 191–96. Gouw cites a law enacted in 1479 in Deventer that forbid masquerading on the street.

<sup>72</sup> Burke, *Popular Culture*, 294. Sebastian Brandt condemned Carnival as a vanity and waste of time and money in his 1494 satire, *The Ship of Fools*.

<sup>73</sup> Caspar Jansz. Coolhaes, *Comptoir almanach oft journal op het jaer 1606* (Amsterdam), 1606. Translation by Jasper Hillegers, in *Celebrating in the Golden Age*, exh. cat., ed. Anna Tummers and Frans Halsmuseum (Haarlem; Rotterdam: Frans Hals Museum; NAI Publishers, 2011), 96. “Vele mans trecken dan niet alleen vrouwecleederen, ende vrouwen manscleederen aen, maerk miskaecken hun verder met momaensichten ... ende hebben gheen acht op het geschapen sijner handen.”

feasts evolved into more private celebrations observed within the home as a result of legislation enacted specifically against their public expression.<sup>74</sup> However, he also noted that some evidence indicates such laws were not strictly enforced and that popular religious holidays, such as Shrovetide, and other high points of the liturgical calendar continued to be celebrated in public throughout the seventeenth century, albeit on a lesser scale. Some late seventeenth-century fulminations by strict theologians include allusions to the continued celebration of Carnival rituals. Writing in 1682, for example, the Reformed clergyman Jacob Koelman complained

Is it not lamentable in the extreme that there are still so many Reformed Christians who so enthusiastically keep *kermis*, or go to the *kermis*? That the abominable Bacchus festival of Shrove Tuesday eve is still celebrated, without concern, in our homes, even in the very greatest, and in public hospitals and orphanages? That the invention of St. Nicholas, that Popish Feast, is still of such consequence here; and is celebrated more than in the midst of the Papacy? What disgrace it is to us and to the Reformation ... that we cling so to the Popish high days.<sup>75</sup>

Despite such clerical laments, large Catholic populations in rural communities,<sup>76</sup> which likely observed feast days in greater numbers, may have contributed to the continued widespread

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<sup>74</sup> Roodenburg, *Onder censuur*, 76. Roodenburg based this argument on an analysis of disciplinary records of the Amsterdam Reformed Consistory. Between 1578 and 1700, he identified only four cases that concerned a man or woman summoned for Carnival-related behavior.

<sup>75</sup> Quoted from Jacob Koelman, *De vruchteloose bid-dagen van Nederlandt, gehouden tot tergingh van den Godt van den hemel, en verhaestingh ter verwoestende oordeelen en plagen [...] (1682)*, 6. Translation by Marieke de Winkel, "Mode, Mummery and Masquerade: Dressing Up in the Golden Age," in *Celebrating in the Golden Age*, exh. cat., ed. Anna Tummers and Frans Hals Museum (Haarlem; Rotterdam: Frans Halsmuseum; NAI Publishers, 2011), 41. "Is het niet ten hoogsten te beklagen, dat'er noch soo vele Gereformeerde Christenen gevonden worden, die soo gerne Kermis houden, of ter Kermis gaen? Dat het grouwelyke Bacchus-feest van de Vasten-avonden, noch in onse Huysegesinnen, selfs in de allergrooteste, ook publyke Gast-huysen en Wees-huysen, sonder achterdenken onderhouden wordt? Dat den versierden St. Nicholaes, en dat Paapsche Feest, byo ns noch in sulken aensien is; en meer dan in het midden des Pausdoms gevierdt wordt? Wat een schande is het voor ons, en voor de Reformatie,... dat wy aen de Paepsche Hoogtyden soo vast blyven."

<sup>76</sup> Frijhoff et al., *1650*, 352. Religious diversity varied both between and within provinces in the Dutch Republic. Around 1650, 45–55 percent of people in Overijssel, Gelderland, Utrecht and North Holland identified as Catholic, while in South Holland, the Catholic population hovered around thirty percent. In North Holland, 25 percent of city dwellers and 75 percent of the rural population remained Catholic.

embrace of Shrovetide and other religious festivals.<sup>77</sup> Ultimately, in the absence of a unified state church, the character and expression of religious observances must have depended upon the subjective mindset and values of the individual.<sup>78</sup> The theme of Carnival remained fraught with controversy throughout the seventeenth century, and it was this contested religious landscape with which artists like Van de Venne engaged when they represented the holiday and its customs.

### **Vastenavond in the *Oeuvre* of Adriaen van de Venne**

Dozens of representations of seasonal pastimes and folk traditions characterize Adriaen van de Venne's remarkably varied oeuvre, including at least seven depictions of Carnival celebrations in a range of media.<sup>79</sup> Van de Venne represented the holiday more than any other Dutch artist and repeatedly focused on the motif of the Shrovetide procession, a ritual largely ignored or included only as a background detail in other seventeenth-century depictions of Carnival festivities. He also adopted a manifestly farcical tone in his imagery in keeping with the festive revelry and ritual inversions for which Carnival was known. Van de Venne's focus on the procession, in particular, afforded a rhetorical strategy for the expression of the comic mode.

Representations of Shrovetide parades by Van de Venne developed from sixteenth-century paintings and prints that depict the holiday in symbolic opposition to the Lenten

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<sup>77</sup> Roodenburg, *Onder censuur*, 76.

<sup>78</sup> For a discussion of religious plurality in the Dutch Republic and the relationship between church and state, see Frijhoff et al., *1650*, 351–57.

<sup>79</sup> The seven depictions of Carnival by Van de Venne include *Peasant Shrove Tuesday*, c. 1625 (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam); *Carnival Parade*, c. 1589–1662 (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam); *Hoe Drolliger Hoe Beter*, c. 1589–1662 (Collection Dulière, Paris); and *Carnival*, c. 1589–1662 (Collection Chiaramonte Bordonaro, Palermo). Annelies Plokker also cites a third painting in Emden and two grisailles, one in Berlin and the other sold to a private collector in a 1930 Christie's auction. See Annelies Plokker, *Adriaen Pietersz. van de Venne: De grisailles met spreukbanden* (Leuven: Acco, 1984), 126n3.

season.<sup>80</sup> Pieter Bruegel the Elder's *Battle Between Carnival and Lent* (fig. 3.16), executed in 1559, is the most well-known portrayal of the subject.<sup>81</sup> The artist presented an encyclopedic collection of townsfolk enacting relevant seasonal customs, while a mock battle ensues in the foreground between the corpulent figure of Carnival and the skeletal figure of Lent. Both personifications represent extremes of existence, and thus epitomize the opposing forces of indulgence and temperance. Some scholars have read the painting as a condemnation of Carnival excess. However, most argue that Bruegel did not advocate for one side or the other, but rather presented the contrast as an inevitable part of daily life.<sup>82</sup> Whether he adopted a more neutral tone or represented a partisan perspective, the painting reveals the inherent moral and religious conflict associated with Carnival. That conflict was intrinsic to the representation of the holiday season since the very inception of the theme.

Unlike Bruegel, Van de Venne's representations of Shrovetide festivities do not register the religious controversies surrounding the holiday in such literal terms, though the pictures by the younger artist are ripe with satirical elements. Van de Venne's depictions of Carnival stem from his understanding of and appreciation for the well-established comic mode in which he engaged.<sup>83</sup> His representations of the holiday employ both the form and function of the procession as a means in which to parody the customs associated with the season.

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<sup>80</sup> Ethan Matt Kavaler, *Pieter Bruegel: Parables of Order and Enterprise* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 119–20. The theme of the battle between Carnival and Lent appears frequently in late medieval and Renaissance literature. A lost painting by Hieronymus Bosch appears to be the first representation of the conflict. A copy at the Noordbrabants Museum in 's-Hertogenbosch, one of three extant versions, is probably the oldest.

<sup>81</sup> Kavaler, *Pieter Bruegel*, 114. Bruegel's painting was likely influenced by an etching of the same subject executed the year prior by Frans Hogenburg.

<sup>82</sup> Walter S. Gibson, *Bruegel* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1977), 84–85; Kavaler, *Pieter Bruegel*, 143; Wolfgang Stechow, *Pieter Bruegel the Elder* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1940), 52–54.

<sup>83</sup> Svetlana Alpers introduced the notion of a comic mode in Dutch art in two essays centered on Bruegel's depictions of festive peasants. She argued Bruegel's imagery evokes an appreciation for, rather than

As processions ordinarily legitimate and give form to the social values expressed by their participants, such rituals typically lend authenticity to a particular occasion and/or impart a sense of solemnity. Such gravitas, however, is nowhere to be found in Van de Venne's depictions of Carnival, for he transformed the stately procession into a comic inversion of itself. The artist's portrayals of Shrovetide parades accentuate the farcical role reversals, chaos and disorder intrinsic to the holiday, and are thus at odds with the procession as a dignified, commemorative art form. This incongruity, manifest in actual Carnival parades and accentuated by Van de Venne, heightens the humorous effects of his images.

The farcical atmosphere of the rambling Shrovetide parade in Van de Venne's *Peasant Shrove Tuesday*, c. 1625 (fig. 3.17), is immediately apparent. Amongst a dozen barren trees with a view of a church on the distant horizon, a droll group of revelers bedecked with pots, pans, gridirons, funnels and other kitchen implements crosses a bridge in a playful, haphazard fashion. In the center of the composition, a figure wearing a black cauldron on his head carries the standard of the Carnival parade—a long pole topped with a tankard, below which hang a goose and several sausage links. To his left, a young woman has fallen on her knees and exposes her backside, and a man and a dog defecate under the bridge, unbeknownst to the stragglers above.

An equally colorful cast of characters can be found at the head of the procession. There, a man with a lantern on his head and a cat perched on his prominently hunched back entertains those around him by playing a *rommelpot*. This instrument—which came to be associated specifically with Carnival, though it was played on other occasions—consisted of a pig's bladder

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a condemnation of, the human condition shared by the comic literary tradition, notably the works of Erasmus, Rabelais and Shakespeare. See Svetlana Alpers, "Brueghel's Festive Peasants," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 6 (1972): 163–76; Svetlana Alpers, "Realism as a Comic Mode: Low-Life Painting Seen through Bredero's Eyes," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 8, no. 3 (1975): 115–44.

stretched over a jug of water that was pierced with a reed. When the reed was moved between the thumb and forefinger, it produced a shrill sound similar to a “stuck pig.”<sup>84</sup> Nearby, in an amusing reversal of sartorial norms, a woman with a man’s gold doublet draped over her shoulders dances while pulling her dress up around her legs to resemble trousers. She obliviously steps on the dark green rug serving as the makeshift mantle of the fellow standing on his tip-toes beside her.

Van de Venne contrasts the light-hearted celebration of this motley parade with an impassioned knife-fight between two peasants in the right foreground, the humor of which lies in the foolishness of their behavior. Carnival festivities occasionally erupted in violence, and here the aggressors seem poised to inflict serious bodily harm, if not for the woman and child who intervene. The men’s clothing and accessories suggest that they represent the contrast between country and city: the peasant on the left, whose basket of broken eggs has been cast aside, wears the wooden clogs associated with rural life; on the right, his opponent, probably a cooper based on the tools and hoops scattered at his feet, wears a leather jerkin, apron and the shoes of a townsman. Van de Venne comically distorts the expressions of both figures. With their teeth clenched and brows furrowed, they resemble petulant children. The artist took these figures directly from his album of c. 1620–26, specifically folio 77, wherein the two men appear almost unchanged.<sup>85</sup> Van de Venne portrayed fighting peasants often, usually with an overtly satirical tone, and occasionally also reprised the theme of town versus country.<sup>86</sup> The trope also appears,

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<sup>84</sup> Slive, *Frans Hals*, 37.

<sup>85</sup> Martin Royalton-Kisch, *Adriaen van de Venne’s Album in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum* (London: British Museum Publications, 1988), 105.

<sup>86</sup> For discussion of Adriaen van de Venne’s peasants as social commentary, see Mariët Westermann, “Bodily Infirmary as Social Disease: The Art of Adriaen van de Venne,” in *In Sickness and in Health: Disease as Metaphor in Art and Popular Wisdom*, ed. Laurinda S. Dixon (Cranbury, NJ: Rosemont Publishing & Printing Corp., 2004), 45–61.

for example, in a book he wrote and illustrated in 1635, titled *Tafereel van de belaachende werelt* (*Scenes from the Laughable World*).<sup>87</sup>

Van de Venne underscores the foolish behavior of the fighting peasants with several fashionably dressed city folk, who overtly gesture in their direction. In the center of the composition, a modish bourgeois couple focus their attention away from the Carnival parade to leer at the ongoing brawl behind them. The woman, wearing a stiff lace collar and *vlieger*<sup>88</sup> over a sumptuous black and gold skirt, rests her hand on her partner, who commands considerable attention in his short, orange cloak and matching plume. The man cranes his neck to the side and points at the peasants with his gloved left hand. In similar rhetorical form, a portly woman at the far right of the composition looks directly at the viewer while signaling towards the fight with her outstretched left hand. She wears a *tip-huik* headdress, a cap and a mantle with a tasseled stem, which was associated specifically with the elite.<sup>89</sup> Her elegant attire is matched by the man immediately adjacent, who sports a large, multi-feathered hat and burgundy cloak embellished with rows of gold embroidery. Behind the pair, an adolescent male, equally well-dressed in a doublet, jerkin and hosiery tied with ribbons at the knee, similarly looks in the direction of the parade and the festivities unfolding.

All five of the genteel figures in Van de Venne's composition appear comically out of place. Conceivably, they have come to witness the Carnival celebrations from the nearby town of Rijkswijk, for the church on the horizon line has been identified as the principle house of

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<sup>87</sup> Westermann, "Bodily Infirmity as Social Disease," 53. This text pairs emblems with poetry that frequently describes peasant behavior, usually to ridicule it.

<sup>88</sup> A *vlieger* consisted of a black overgown, usually worn open in the seventeenth century, which flowed from the shoulder to the hem. See Aileen Ribeiro, "Dress in Adriaen van de Venne's Album of 1626," in *Netherlandish Fashion in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Johannes Pietsch (Riggisberg, Switzerland: Abegg-Stiftung, 2012), 43.

<sup>89</sup> Aileen Ribeiro, "Dress in Adriaen van de Venne's Album of 1626," 43.

worship there.<sup>90</sup> The city was known for its many summer residences owned by wealthy people from The Hague.<sup>91</sup> However, Van de Venne's characterization of these sophisticated folk suggests that they serve an allegorical function. By forming a compositional foil to the fighting peasants as well as the boisterous—if somewhat burlesque—Shrovetide revelers, they underscore the folly of boorish behavior and peasant life more broadly, which includes customs like Shrovetide processions. At the same time, the artist extends the parody to include the fashionable townspeople. Their attire verges on ostentatious, particularly in comparison to the parade participants. Even the little dog accompanying the finely-outfitted trio in the right foreground wears a strand of pearls. Van de Venne's representation of Carnival is thus characterized by a humorous ambiguity that relies on the viewer to draw conclusions regarding the moral probity of the holiday.

Van de Venne's engraved Carnival parade, c. 1589–1662 (fig. 3.18) shares the polysemous nature and many of the same humorous motifs present in his *Peasant Shrove Tuesday*. The image depicts a group of revelers ambling in loose formation from left to right in front of a dense crowd of eager observers. At the left, a man wearing a lantern on his head and playing a flute stands on the shoulders of a figure dressed in a garland of eggs and carrying a collection box. Two men awkwardly march in front of the pair with barrels covering their torsos, heads and limbs. At the head of the procession, a man hoists a broom draped with dark fabric over his head as he blithely crosses his legs in a dancer's two-step. Van de Venne represents this comedic frieze of absurd costume and clownish behavior close to the picture plane, plainly revealed and subject to viewer scrutiny and amusement.

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<sup>90</sup> Tummers, *Celebrating in the Golden Age*, 96.

<sup>91</sup> Jeroen Blaak, *Literacy in Everyday Life: Reading and Writing in Early Modern Dutch Diaries*, trans. Beverly Jackson (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 120.



The artist again employs a fashionably dressed man and woman at the right side of the composition to direct our attention to the folly of peasant traditions. However, in this case, Van de Venne clearly implicates the couple in the farce. The “gentleman” wearing a large, feathered hat conspicuously grabs the backside of his female companion, pulling up her dress in the process. While her long skirts preserve her dignity, the adjacent woman who has fallen on her knees, buttocks in the air, serves as an immodest proxy. The inscription beneath the image seemingly mocks both the parade revelers and the city folk who contrast with them: “Without reason, without wit/ With a greedy blustering roar/ At the Shrove Tuesday Feast/ You who take pleasure/ In this farcical peasant play/ Look to your own affairs/ Prize the art and fare thee well.”<sup>92</sup>

Van de Venne’s *The Funnier the Better*, c. 1589–1662 (fig. 3.19), one of several grisailles depicting a Carnival parade, employs a similar compositional format as the engraving (fig. 3.18), but adopts a more neutral tone. Over a dozen figures playfully tramp from right to left, wearing barrels, brandishing standards, and waving kitchen implements and other utilitarian objects with the ersatz gravity of a stately procession. The well-heeled couple is missing, and in their place, a banderole in the bottom right of the composition bears the title of the work. However, “The Funnier the Better” deliberately eschews obvious interpretation and is ambiguous if not cryptic. Are we supposed to laugh with the Carnival celebrants, take pleasure in their foolishness or both? Van de Venne most often employed the technique of grisaille with inscriptions to represent the social ills of society, such as beggars dressed in tattered rags or lepers brandishing their clappers. Although the inscriptions appended to such images generally

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<sup>92</sup> English translation in Tummers, *Celebrating in the Golden Age*, 96. “Sonder reddden sonder Gheest/ Met een Gulsich bulder Brallen/ Op den Vasten Avont Feest/ Ghij die neemt een soet Vermaecken/ In dit Kluchtich Boere Spell/ Let oock op uw eigen saecken/ Prijst de kunst en houd u wel.”

ridicule the behavior depicted or offer an ironic commentary,<sup>93</sup> the banderole's text in *The Funnier the Better* simply challenges the viewer to appreciate the humor inherent in the image.

Van de Venne's depictions of Carnival speak to an educated audience capable of recognizing the wry wit inherent in the appearance and behavior of peasants, who simultaneously parody elite society through their flouting of decorum and are themselves the objects of ridicule. The artist was not a stranger to satire, and in fact engaged in political and social commentary of one kind or another during every stage of his career.<sup>94</sup> *Fishing for Souls*, 1614 (fig. 3.20), for example, the earliest painting known by Van de Venne, depicts an ideological allegory of the Reformation/Counter-Reformation debates in the form of a panoramic landscape in which the Protestants and the Catholics fish for converts. Van de Venne, a Calvinist, clearly identifies his allegiance by including his self-portrait at the left among the first row of Protestants.<sup>95</sup> It is tempting to think that because of his religious affiliation, the artist intended to critique Carnival celebrations through his risible depictions of them. The prominently placed church of Rijswijk in *Peasant Shrove Tuesday*, for example, might be viewed as a symbol of the new Protestant religious order. Ultimately, however, such a contention remains unsupported by the imagery. Van de Venne's humorous depictions of Shrovetide processions are better understood in relation to his broader interest in the rustic, low-life themes that turn up in his poetry and characterize much of his *oeuvre*.

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<sup>93</sup> Westermann, "Bodily Infirmity as Social Disease," 56. Westermann argues that these glosses reflect the artist's self-conscious wit and are intended to articulate a shared understanding between the painter and the viewer. She further claimed that the technique would have appealed to a sophisticated audience that recognized the challenge of monochrome painting and appreciated the heightened attention to the artist's brushwork.

<sup>94</sup> Royalton-Kisch, *Adriaen van de Venne's Album*, 58. Over the course of his career, Van de Venne designed at least twenty political broadsides and pamphlets as well as many historical illustrations, many of which express decidedly Pro-Orange sentiments.

<sup>95</sup> Laurens J. Bol, *Adriaen Pietersz. van de Venne: Painter and Draughtsman* (Doornspijk, Netherlands: Davaco, 1989), 35–37.

### **Van de Venne's Carnival Processions in Context: Comparative Seventeenth-century Imagery**

Van de Venne's distinctive employment of the Carnival procession as a creative lens through which to engage the comic mode stands in sharp contrast to other seventeenth-century Dutch depictions of the festive season. Artists who represented Shrovetide celebrations typically focused on identifying holiday markers, many of which were comedic in nature. However, despite their humorous subjects, not all representations of Carnival participate in the literary and visual tradition of the comic mode, which attempts to engage the reader/viewer through recognition of witticisms, punning and word play.

Several examples of seasonal and calendar imagery that depict Shrovetide processions illustrate the more straightforward conception of the Carnival theme. These images represent the winter months in which Carnival was celebrated and draw upon emblematic images or motifs metonymic of the holiday. Crispijn van de Passe's 1580s engraving of February (fig. 3.21), for example, depicts a man and woman seated at a table as they preside over a dice game while four masked mummers approach to try their luck. One of the figures, with back stooped and hand resting on the table, appears to have already engaged in play. Dice and card games were among the many popular entertainments enjoyed during the Carnival season and occasionally subject to criticisms of amorality and greed.<sup>96</sup> The owl perched on the pointed headdress of the female mummer may subtly allude to such condemnation, as the bird traditionally personified foolish and vulgar behavior.<sup>97</sup> Similarly, cockerel feathers, such as those prominently tucked into the

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<sup>96</sup> Kavalier, *Pieter Bruegel*, 115; Gouw, *De volksvermaken*, 190.

<sup>97</sup> Seymour Slive, "On the Meaning of Frans Hals 'Malle Babbe,'" *The Burlington Magazine* 105, no. 727 (1963): 435.

hats of two of Van de Passe's revelers, were both a standard part of Carnival costume and, in certain contexts, symbolic of lust and unseemly conduct.<sup>98</sup> These inclusions both facilitate the identification of the holiday and evoke the festive atmosphere for which it was known. However, in this context such symbols serve an emblematic function to refer the viewer to Carnival and its customs.

Jacob Matham's engraving of *Winter*, 1621 (fig. 3.1), discussed above for its inclusion of multiple processions of Twelfth Night star-singers, similarly features an encyclopedic assortment of traditions and an air of joyful revelry associated with Carnival. In the left foreground, a Shrovetide parade led by several costumed musicians, one playing a drum and another carrying a lute, marches forward in the company of children and other celebrants. Many of the figures don masks, feathered caps and fancy dress, the characteristic attire of the masquerades held during the Carnival season. At the head of the parade, a child bearing a torch is joined by two youths dressed as fools and by a third who wears a king's crown and plays the *rommelpot*. Other markers of the holiday include the man immediately left of the parade, who carries what appears to be a fatted goose on a long pole, and the pancake maker in the foreground dolling out treats to a group of eager children. Both foods had become symbolic of Carnival and evoked the weeks- or months-long celebrations in which they were consumed.

Cornelis Dusart's late seventeenth-century representation of *February* (fig. 3.22) shares the light-hearted and celebratory tone of Matham's and Van de Passe's depictions of the same month/season, but Dusart heightens further the image's humorous effects and is thus closer to Van de Venne's representational style. The engraving depicts three mirthful Carnival celebrants performing in the street against an adjacent building and a low wall. The child at the left does a

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<sup>98</sup> Tummers, *Celebrating in the Golden Age*, 100.

handstand with a tambourine caught around his knee and his feathered cap perched jauntily on his right foot. Across from him, a boy wearing an overturned pot on his head and a stiff, old-fashioned ruff plays the *rommelpot* and carries a gridiron for roasting meats over the fire at his waist. In the center, the third boy sports an elaborate headdress and wig, customarily worn by fashionable women, and a necklace made from eggs and sausages.<sup>99</sup> With a broad grin visible through a mask featuring a large, misshapen nose, he dances merrily with a torch in one outstretched hand and a waffle iron in the other. Dusart rendered this jubilant trio close to the picture plane, which, in combination with the direct gazes of two of the figures, imparts a sense of immediacy and physical proximity to the viewer that draws him/her into the playful revelry.

The paintings and prints that portray Carnival as a subject in its own right, absent a procession and independent of a larger metaphysical theme such as the cycle of the seasons, exhibit a range of approaches to comic representation. In one of the best-known paintings of Shrovetide revelers (fig. 3.23), for example, Frans Hals maximizes the humorous potential of his subject through references to the theater. While different in terms of pictorial focus, Hals' painting engages the viewer in a manner similar to Van de Venne's. The former artist depicted a crowded composition with two men who appear to ogle and grope a young girl wearing an elaborately embroidered red dress with a wide, lace collar. On the basis of her ostentatious attire and unusual hairstyle, this youth may represent a boy dressed in drag, a practice not uncommon during Carnival.<sup>100</sup> Equally important, the men's costumes suggest that they depict familiar characters from the comic stage performed during the holiday and ultimately derived from the *commedia dell'arte*. On the left, the red-faced Pikelharing (Pickled Herring) wears a colorful

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<sup>99</sup> Barnes and Rose, *Childhood Pleasures*, 56–57. The wig and tall headdress, called a *fontange*, became fashionable towards the end of the seventeenth century.

<sup>100</sup> Slive, *Frans Hals*, 33.

garland of sausages, salted herring, mussels and eggs. On the right, Hans Wurst (John Sausage), who smirks slightly with a side-long glance at the femininely-dressed boy, wears a red cap from which multiple sausages dangle.<sup>101</sup>

These foodstuffs, while conventionally consumed during Carnival, could also be read as potent signs of sexuality. Salted herring and mussels symbolized male and female sex organs, respectively, and eggs were considered an aphrodisiac and emblem of male virility. In this case, the eggs are broken and thus suggest impotence. Further sexual references appear in the foreground: the sausages stacked in a bowl again allude to the male form, and the deflated bagpipe and open tankard could refer to female genitalia.<sup>102</sup> These inclusions, with their emphasis on the salacious and carnal, are reinforced by the lewd gesture suggesting copulation made by Hans Wurst and the fact that Carnival was regarded as a sanctioned occasion for all kinds of excessive behavior, including sex. Hals' painting inspired a number of copies and variations, some of which employ similar overtly erotic imagery.<sup>103</sup>

A second group of Carnival-themed pictures absent a procession represents the fool, a character who appeared in numerous contexts, including parades, comedic performances and masquerades. By way of comparison, such images, which tend to be more clear-cut in their

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<sup>101</sup> Slive, *Frans Hals*, 33. For a discussion of the Italian *commedia dell'arte* and its influence on Dutch popular theater, see S. J. Gudlaugsson, *The Comedians in the Work on Jan Steen and his Contemporaries*, trans. James Brockway (Soest: Davaco, 1975).

<sup>102</sup> Walter Liedke, *Dutch Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 254–56.

<sup>103</sup> Liedke, *Dutch Paintings*, 254. Dirck Hals produced multiple copies and variations, including *Merrymakers at Shrovetide*, 1637 (Institut Néerlandais, Fondation Custodia, Fritz Lugt Collection, Paris) and a similar composition formerly in the Metzger collection, NY. Dirck Hals included the three central figures in his *Banquet in the Garden*, c. 1620 (Musée du Louvre, Paris) and *Merry Company*, c. 1620 (Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt). Mathys van den Bergh made a pen drawing, *Vastenavonds-gasten*, 1660 (Institut Néerlandais, Fondation Custodia, Fritz Lugt Collection, Paris) after the painting. Willem Buytewech made chalk drawings after the heads of the two principal male figures (about 1616; Institut Néerlandais, Fondation Custodia, Fritz Lugt Collection, Paris). For a discussion of painted variations and adaptations, see Slive, *Frans Hals*, vol. 3, 3–4.

conception, distinguish Van de Venne's witty approach to the subject of Carnival. An engraving executed by Jan van de Velde II, c. 1603–52 (fig. 3.24), for example, represents three Shrovetide celebrants, but emphasizes the central figure, a middle-aged man who plays a *rommelpot* and wears a large fur cap with foxtail, a traditional symbol of the fool.<sup>104</sup> The artist depicted him at half-length with lips slightly parted, as if in conversation with the viewer. In combination with the woman at his right, who holds a money box, and the inscription beneath the image, which reads “May fools run around at Shrovetide/ To make a half-penny grunt on the little Rommelpot,”<sup>105</sup> one can imagine that he makes an imploring case for a bit of charity. The figure evokes the Carnival custom in which the poor, the indigent and children often went house to house to request sweets or a few coins. Songs associated with the holiday reference the begging tradition, as exemplified in the popular tune published by Jos Schrijen in his history of Netherlandish folk traditions: “I have been walking so long with the rommelpot,/ I have no money to buy bread./ Rommelpot, Rommelpot,/ Give me an ear, then I will be gone.”<sup>106</sup>

An engraving by Cornelis van Dalen I, c. 1630–65 (fig. 3.25), adopts a similar compositional formula as seen in Jan van de Velde's image (fig. 3.24). A smiling youth, his face softly illuminated, plays the *rommelpot* and turns to the left as if greeting someone. His costume includes a litany of telltale Carnival emblems. A large feather, two playing cards and a wooden spoon, a common allusion to prodigality, are tucked into the broad brim of his hat.<sup>107</sup> A garland

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<sup>104</sup> Slive, *Frans Hals*, 31–33.

<sup>105</sup> The inscription at the bottom of the engraving reads “Op Vasten-avond Loopt menich Sotje/ Om duytjes gnorren op t' Rommel-potje.”

<sup>106</sup> Schrijnen, *Nederlandsche volkskunde*, 332. “Ik heb al zoo long met den rommelpot geloopt,/ Ik heb geen geld om brood te koopen./ Rommelpotterij, Rommelpotterij,/ Geef mij een oortje, dan ga ik voorbij.”

<sup>107</sup> Slive, *Frans Hals*, 31–33.

of sausage links drapes across his chest and a foxtail hangs at his back. At his waist, he carries a tankard that alludes to the drink in which he indulges.

A related group of seventeenth-century Dutch images portrays a variety of subjects adapted from the pictorial and cultural traditions of Carnival, but does not explicitly represent the holiday and does not engage the comic mode. Whether or not a seventeenth-century viewer would have interpreted these works as evocations of Shrovetide festivities would have depended on a number of factors, including the predominant mood of the picture. Contemporary with Hals' *Merry Makers at Shrovetide*, his painting *Rommelpot Player*, c. 1618–22 (fig. 3.26), would have likely called to mind the Carnival season, as the smiling musician wears a foxtail on his hat and is surrounded by a boisterous group of children who offer him coins. Similarly, the half-length figure in Judith Leyster's *Jolly Drinker*, 1629 (fig. 3.27), grins at the viewer while demonstrating his desire to refill his empty tankard. He bears a resemblance to the stock character Pekelharing and, thus, could have referred to the theatrical performances staged during Shrovetide.<sup>108</sup>

The specific allusion to Carnival is less clear in several depictions of pancake makers, despite the repeated appearance of such figures in other unambiguous images of the holiday. Jan van de Velde's *The Pancake Woman*, an engraving from c. 1626 (fig. 3.28), depicts a haggard, witch-like cook stooped in front of a griddle in a darkly lit interior. A fire brightly illuminates several chubby-faced children who consume the treats she prepares and seem oblivious to her ghoulish appearance, which is further reinforced by the prominent knife she holds in her hand. Although witches and devils, like the fool, were among the many disguises worn by Carnival celebrants,<sup>109</sup> nothing about the appearance of Van de Velde's old woman suggests the

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<sup>108</sup> Tummings, *Celebrating in the Golden Age*, 100.

<sup>109</sup> Gouw, *De volksvermaken*, 189.



exaggerated attire of a costume, except perhaps her distinctive hooked nose and sharply pointed chin. Whichever the case, the pictorial focus of Van de Velde's image centers less on the holiday and more on the effects of the fire's glow at night and the rich contrasts of light and dark created by the flames.<sup>110</sup>

Any reference to Shrovetide celebrations is even less overt in Rembrandt's *Pancake Woman*, 1635 (fig. 3.29). The artist represented an elderly cook, accentuated by deeply etched and drypointed lines, seated in front of a griddle as she prepares pancakes. Several lightly-etched figures surround her, including six children and a mother holding a baby. Similar vignettes appear in Carnival imagery such as Matham's *Winter*, 1621 (fig. 3.1), and thus it is conceivable that Rembrandt derived the theme of the pancake maker from the same pictorial tradition. However, the dominant mood of the image does not match the often-raucous Carnival spirit and it lacks any overt allegorical references to the holiday. The print arguably has more in common with the naturalistic and seemingly spontaneous street scenes featuring market sellers and merchants.<sup>111</sup> If Rembrandt's print did evoke Shrovetide festivities for some viewers, it may have been understood as a transformation or abstraction of a long-standing and culturally embedded seasonal custom.

The examples of seventeenth-century Dutch Carnival imagery discussed above exemplify artists' varied depictions of the holiday season. While representations of Shrovetide festivities often share certain motifs in common, such as the *rommelpot* or the fool's cap, a consistent

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<sup>110</sup> The inscription "Surgite, iam vendit pueris ientacula pistor/ Cristataeq[ue?] sonant undique lucis aues. Marti. lib. xiv," has been translated by Ackley from the Roman writer Martial as "summons... to rise, for the baker has already begun to sell his bread to the children, and everywhere the cocks are crowing." Ackley viewed the inscription less as an explication of meaning as a justification for the "low" subject matter of the print. See Clifford Ackley, *Printmaking in the Age of Rembrandt*, exh. cat. (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1981), 102.

<sup>111</sup> Stone-Ferrier, *Dutch Prints of Daily Life*, 114.

depiction of the pictorial theme—such as seen in pictures of Twelfth Night parades—was never established. When considered within the broader context of Carnival imagery, Van de Venne’s repeated pictorial emphasis on the Shrovetide procession emerges as a distinct treatment of the theme. Like his grisailles that pair images with ironic glosses, the artist’s depictions of Shrovetide processions and their fusion of intellectual wit and comic ambiguity must have appealed to his discerning patrons in The Hague.<sup>112</sup> Van de Venne creatively adapted the form and function of the procession to visualize the holiday’s implicit farcical qualities. In so doing, he helped to define the carnivalesque.

## Conclusion

Though ecclesiastical doctrine and the nature of religious expression underwent significant revision in the wake of the Protestant Reformation, seventeenth-century Dutch life continued to revolve around the liturgical calendar. Artists therefore embraced the representation of religious holidays as an appropriate and meaningful subject, but with characteristic selectivity.<sup>113</sup> Depictions of Twelfth Night and Carnival, two holidays that featured small-scale processions of celebrants, appear with the greatest frequency. This chapter has argued that representations of such processions communicated deeply entrenched social values with varying degrees of subtlety. Through the presence of children and emphasis on the act of singing, depictions of Twelfth Night star-singer processions register the importance of the family and reinforce moral literacy and communal identity. On the other hand, Adriaen van de Venne’s

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<sup>112</sup> For a discussion of the reception of Van de Venne’s grisailles, see Westermann, “Bodily Infirmity as Social Disease,” 55–56.

<sup>113</sup> For an historiographic overview of selectivity in seventeenth-century Dutch art, see Stone-Ferrier, *Dutch Prints of Daily Life*, 5–9, 19–24.

images of Carnival processions engage the comic mode seemingly to question the moral probity of Shrovetide festivities widely embraced, yet subject to the criticisms of Reformed theologians.

Representations of processions in other cultural contexts similarly adopt the procession as a rhetorical tool or strategy for the communication of ideas. Adriaen van Nieulandt's *Procession of Lepers on Copper Monday*, 1633, for example, models the civic virtues of community, charity and tolerance in light of a renewed debate over the privileges of local sovereignty by Remonstrant supporters.<sup>114</sup> Processional imagery in Caspar Barlaeus's *Medicea hospes*, 1638, a ceremonial book produced to honor Marie de Médicis's entry into Amsterdam, expresses civic values, specifically the desire for a peaceful truce with Spain.<sup>115</sup>

Unlike Van Nieulandt's *Procession of Lepers* or Barlaeus's *Medicea hospes*, however, the representations of religious processions analyzed here constitute variations on a theme with discernable pictorial and stylistic patterns. Many depictions of Twelfth Night and Carnival parades have a pronounced rustic quality, which may have offered a desirable counterpoint to the refined scenes painted after mid-century by artists such as Gerard ter Borch, Frans van Mieris and other Leiden *fijnschilders* (fine painters).<sup>116</sup> Furthermore, while *The Procession of Lepers* and the *Medicea hospes* were both created for elite clientele, the sustained interest in, and market demand for depictions of the processions and rituals observed on Twelfth Night and during Carnival suggest their ability to transcend boundaries of class and religious affiliation. The increasingly secular context in which the Dutch celebrated Epiphany and Shrovetide may have

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<sup>114</sup> See chapter 1 of this dissertation.

<sup>115</sup> See chapter 2 of this dissertation.

<sup>116</sup> For the *fijnschilders*, see Eric Jan Sluijter et al., *Leidse fijnschilders: van Gerrit Dou tot Frans van Mieris de Jonge 1630–1760*, exh. cat. (Zwolle; Leiden: Waanders; Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal, 1988).

made representations of those holidays more enticing to a broad, multi-confessional audience eager to preserve long-held, culturally-embedded religious traditions.

## Chapter 4

### **Hendrick van der Burch's *Graduation Procession at Leiden University*: Conceptualizing a Rite of Passage for a Local Community**

Between 1656 and 1659, while living directly across from Leiden's esteemed university, Hendrick van der Burch painted a depiction of what would have been a familiar and relatively common rite of passage at that site: the graduation procession of a doctoral candidate (fig. 4.1). The artist represented a young, bereted scholar surrounded by nearly a dozen professors as they solemnly march toward the foreground through the *Academiepoortje* (university gate) next to the *Academiegebouw* (Academy Building). Despite having no known visual precedents, Van der Burch's unusual portrayal of an academic ceremony would nevertheless have been imminently recognizable to viewers living in the artist's adopted town of Leiden,<sup>1</sup> and, in particular, those who resided in the depicted neighborhood. Van der Burch's accurate representation of university structures on the *Rapenburg* coupled with the institution's international reputation, highly prized amongst the Leiden citizenry, would have afforded identification of the pictorial setting for a contemporary viewer.

This chapter will argue that Van der Burch designed the *Graduation Procession at Leiden University* to appeal specifically to the geographically adjacent local community of which he was a part. While the procession itself—rendered in generic terms to evince university-related scholarly pursuits—would have potentially engaged a broad audience, the distinct setting on the *Rapenburg* would have resonated particularly with informed viewers capable of recognizing the

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Sutton, "Hendrick van der Burch," *The Burlington Magazine* 122, no. 926 (1980): 315–16. Hendrick van der Burgh (1627–after 1664) was probably born in Honselersdijk, a town outside of Delft. His parents moved to nearby Voorburg in 1633. At some point before 1663, the family relocated to Delft. There Hendrick is listed in a 1642 notarial record and the 1649 register of the guild of St. Luke. In 1651, the artist appeared in Leiden at a family baptism. However, that same year he also claimed residence in Delft. By September 1655, Hendrick had moved back to Leiden, where he rented a house on the *Rapenburg* until May 1659. Between 1659 and 1664, the artist is recorded in Amsterdam, Delft and Leiden.

pictorial signifiers of that neighborhood. Van der Burch's use of cropping, the close viewing range, which somewhat decontextualizes university structures, and the absence of signage or an inscription on or near the depicted building make identification of the location potentially elusive for the uninitiated. I will argue that the artist adopted his perspective as a resident of the depicted neighborhood to represent an academic ritual that, while exceptional for the graduate, would have been familiar and commonplace to residents at that location on the Rapenburg. This contrast between the simultaneously momentous and mundane, exemplified by the casual onlookers who observe the scholars' dignified march, defines Van der Burch's painting.

The limited scholarship on Hendrick van der Burch has viewed the *Graduation Procession* in relation to urban street scenes painted around mid-century by artists such as Pieter de Hooch, Carel Fabritius and others.<sup>2</sup> More than a depiction of outdoor quotidian activity, however, Van der Burch's painting portrays an important rite of passage in the life of a scholar—the transition from student to graduate—and pictorializes the privilege of bestowing degrees uniquely granted to early modern universities, such as the esteemed institution in Leiden.<sup>3</sup> In doing so, the *Graduation Procession* conceptualizes the purpose of, and pride felt for the university, yet in its manifestly local and everyday milieu.

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<sup>2</sup> Peter Sutton compared Van der Burgh's *Graduation Procession at Leiden University* to the art of Pieter de Hooch and Carel Fabritius. See Sutton, "Hendrick van der Burch," 315. For the artist's stylistic relationship to De Hooch, see C. Hofstede de Groot, "Hendrick van der Burgh, een voorganger van Pieter de Hooch," *Oud Holland* 39 (1921): 121–28; Michiel C. C. Kersten and Danielle H. A. C. Lokin, *Delft Masters, Vermeer's Contemporaries*, exh. cat. (Zwolle: Waanders, 1996), 170–76; Walter Liedtke, *Vermeer and the Delft School* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013), 235–6; Wilhelm Reinhold Valentiner, *Pieter de Hooch: The Master's Paintings in 180 Reproductions, with an Appendix on the Genre Painters in the Manner of Pieter de Hooch and Hendrik van der Burch's Art*, trans. Alice M. Sharkey and Erich Schwandt (New York: E. Weyhe, 1930), 212.

<sup>3</sup> During the early modern period, the European public had access to many different types of educational institutions, including academies, *studium generale*, gymnasia and grammar schools. Universities were uniquely defined by their ability to award diplomas or degrees. See Willem Frijhoff, "Patterns," in *A History of the University in Europe*, ed. Hilde Ridder-Symoens, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 47–61.

To make this argument, I will situate Van der Burch's painting in relation to earlier and contemporary depictions of both Leiden University, in particular, and educational pursuits more broadly, including images of scholars in their studies, to contend that the artist employed existing signs of academia, but in an inventive new pictorialization of meaning. The artist eschewed the convention of other Leiden artists who painted young scholars alone at their desks, lost in thought, and instead portrayed the doctoral graduate literally and figuratively entering into public space, surrounded by the professoriate. Van der Burch's depiction of an academic ceremony capitalized on emerging pictorial trends in Dutch genre imagery, specifically the combination of topographic street views with scenes from daily life. Such imagery developed during the height of the artist's career and flourished in various Dutch cities, including Delft, where he spent the majority of his adult life.

While the similarities between Van der Burch's *Graduation Procession* and Dutch paintings of street scenes with genre elements should be acknowledged, the unusual subject of a graduation procession has more in common with contemporary depictions of other outdoor processional rites of passage. In particular, several mid-century paintings of weddings by Jan Steen share significant pictorial similarities with Van der Burch's picture. I will suggest that Van der Burch drew inspiration from such paintings by the well-established and more successful Steen in his combination of a ritualized procession in a street scene with anecdotal details. Steen resided in nearby Warmond during the years Van der Burch lived in Leiden and both artists were members of the same painters' guild.<sup>4</sup> In drawing from Steen's imagery and other recent pictorial innovations, Van der Burch pictured a significant facet of Leiden University's academic life in which the local community was intimately absorbed.

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<sup>4</sup> Mariët Westermann, *The Amusements of Jan Steen: Comic Painting in the Seventeenth Century* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1997), 56.

### **Painting the Neighborhood: Hendrick van der Burch's *Graduation Procession at Leiden University***

Van der Burch's *Graduation Procession* manifests the extent to which Leiden University and related scholarly activities, such as graduation processions, were embedded in the physical and social fabric of the surrounding neighborhood. The painting depicts nearly two dozen men, women and children gathered to witness the dignified march of the newly minted doctor on what appears to be a sunny afternoon on the Rapenburg. Standing shoulder to shoulder between two professors, the young graduate would be hard to distinguish if not for his beret, gloves and a barely visible ring on his right index finger, all gifts presented upon graduation.<sup>5</sup> Two rectors carrying ceremonial batons lead the stoic group, uniformly clad in black academic gowns with white collars, through the arch and to the right. Such dress, a type of outmoded house garment known as a *tabbard*, had by the seventeenth century become associated specifically with learning.<sup>6</sup>

The artist's depiction of this academic ritual shares pictorial focus with the Academy Building and adjoining stone gate that served as the university's principal entrance and public face on the Rapenburg. Since 1581 the university had occupied the tall, gabled structure, a former Dominican church (Witte Nonnen Klooster or The Cloister of the White Nuns) situated at

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<sup>5</sup> Willem Frijhoff and Hilde Ridder-Symoens, "Graduation and Careers," in *A History of the University in Europe*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 361–62. The ritual of the doctoral ceremony included the bestowal of a ring, a symbol of the graduate's marriage with the Muses, the presentation of gloves and a cap, and occasionally the gift of a spur or some other attribute of nobility.

<sup>6</sup> The *tabbard*, which originated in the fifteenth century as a house garment, had by 1600 been adopted by academics and ecclesiastics as it had come to connote respectability and authority. An engraved series of thirty-four portraits of Leiden University professors published in 1609 by Johannes Merseus depicts the majority of sitters wearing *tabbards*. See Marieke De Winkel, "'Eene der deftigsten dragten': The Iconography of the Tabbard and the Sense of Tradition in Dutch Seventeenth-Century Portraiture," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 46 (1995): 154–55.



the corner of the Rapenburg and Voldergracht.<sup>7</sup> Comparisons with other images of the building, such as the engraving published in Jan Jansz. Orlers's 1614 description of Leiden (fig. 4.2), or a photograph of the structure as it stands today (fig. 4.3), indicate that the artist recorded the Academy Building with specificity and exacting detail, which afforded its proper identification.<sup>8</sup> Immediately adjacent, the classically designed stone archway, erected in 1613 to replace an older gate of simple construction, physically anticipates the humanist tradition taught within the institution's walls. The archway limited access to the Academieplein (College Square) beyond, the location of the renowned Elsevier publishing house, of which the gable and dormer appear at the right of the painting's composition.<sup>9</sup>

The distinctive architectural setting in Van der Burch's *Graduation Procession* contrasts with the much more generalized representation of the graduate, faculty and observers, which lacks portrait specificity. In the painting, Van der Burch adopted an encyclopedic, though generic, approach to the portrayal of individual figures, who collectively represent a cross-section of the local neighborhood—men, women and children; the old, middle-aged and young; the wealthy and the middle class. Leiden's Rapenburg was well known for its density of well-off inhabitants, many of whom belonged to the patrician class and made fortunes as cloth merchants. Their homes, frequently re-designed and improved upon, lined the exceptionally wide canal

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<sup>7</sup> After its founding in 1575, Leiden University occupied several different buildings before settling in 1581 at the Academy Building. At that point, the structure was altered with the addition of a floor and walls to create lecture halls and meeting rooms. Rijksmuseum, *Leidse Universiteit 400: Stichting en eerste bloei 1575–ca. 1650*, exh. cat. (Amsterdam: Het Rijksmuseum, 1975), 38–39.

<sup>8</sup> Jan Jansz. Orlers, *Beschrijvinge der stad Leyden*, 2nd ed. (Leyden: Abraham Commelijn, 1641), 180.

<sup>9</sup> Rijksmuseum, *Leidse Universiteit 400*, 38–39.

alongside the smaller homes of artisans and tradespeople, such as butchers, bakers, shoemakers, tailors and the like.<sup>10</sup>

Van der Burch populated his depiction of the Rapenburg with dozens of bystanders, some of whom regard the graduate and faculty with rapt attention while others seem oblivious to them. At the right of the composition, past the open shutters bearing announcements, a small crowd of spectators has assembled. To the left of the arch, a young boy perches atop a column pedestal to gain a better view of the ceremony. His curiosity is matched by a boy dressed in a red jerkin and breeches, momentarily stopped in his tracks directly in front of the parade.

In contrast, the observers depicted in the foreground casually take in the procession or they ignore it altogether. Bright, dappled sunlight illuminates a nurse and baby watching the parade participants—or perhaps the boy in red—while seated on the canal wall. Beyond the pair, a trio of children amuses themselves and a fashionably-dressed couple converse near a man dismounting his horse. Meanwhile, two spaniels playfully investigate their surroundings. Such anecdotal inclusions impart neighborhood, local color and a relaxed atmosphere distinct from the scholars' formalized ritual. The creative juxtaposition of momentary, unceremonious elements with the scripted *gravitas* of the procession conveys a fresh immediacy as if the artist had witnessed commencement rituals first-hand.

Van der Burch could have captured his personal observations of such graduation processions while living across from Leiden University at Rapenburg 42 between 1656 and 1659.<sup>11</sup> Two documents place him in Leiden in the second half of the 1650s. The first, dated 24

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<sup>10</sup> C. Willemijn Fock, "Culture of Living on the Canals in a Dutch Town in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: The Rapenburg in Leiden," in *New World Dutch Studies: Dutch Arts and Culture in Colonial America, 1609–1776*, ed. Roderic H. Blackburn and Nancy A. Kelley (Albany, NY: Albany Institute of History and Art, 1987), 134.

<sup>11</sup> Sutton, "Hendrick van der Burch," 319. While the Rijksmuseum lists the *Graduation Procession* as

November 1655, records the engagement between Van der Burch, a painter from Delft living on the Rapenburg, and Cornelia Cornelis van Rossum of Leiden. The second dates from two months later, 17 February 1656, when the artist signed a rental contract for Rapenburg 42 in the amount of 160 guilders.<sup>12</sup> The house in which he lived consisted of a brick edifice with a stepped gable and bordered the Pieterskerk to the rear. Though ownership changed hands on several occasions, the residence appears to have been favored by artists, as a succession of painters leased it in the 1640s, 50s and 60s.<sup>13</sup>

Van der Burch's physical proximity to the university doubtlessly influenced the subject of the *Graduation Procession*, which is unique within his *oeuvre* and without known precedents or antecedents. Less than a dozen signed works by his hand are known,<sup>14</sup> none of which is dated, and a slew of misattributions clouds scholarship on the artist.<sup>15</sup> In the early stages of his career, Van der Burch painted mainly guardroom and tavern scenes before turning to domestic interiors, likely under the artistic influence of his friend and colleague, Pieter de Hooch.<sup>16</sup> By the time Van

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Painted c. 1650, Peter Sutton has argued on the basis of style and archival data that Van der Burch executed it between 1656–59.

<sup>12</sup> Sutton, "Hendrick van der Burch," 316, 319, 326; Th. H. Lunsingh Scheurleer, C. Willemijn Fock, and A. J. van Dissel, *Het Rapenburg: Geschiedenis van een Leidse gracht*, vol. 5 (Leiden: Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, 1990), 389–90.

<sup>13</sup> Lunsingh Scheurleer, Fock, and Van Dissel, *Het Rapenburg*, 5: 389–91.

<sup>14</sup> The accepted signed works include *Night Scene with Soldiers Drinking*, n.d. (Private Collection, Geneva); *Card Players*, n.d. (Gallerie Pallamar, Vienna); *The Greenmarket, with a View of the "Stille Rijn" in Leiden*, n.d. (Museum de Lakenhal, Leiden); *Family Portrait at the Side of a House*, n.d. (Max Rothschild, London, before 1929); *Graduation Procession at Leiden University*, c. 1656–59 (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam); *Woman with a Jug in a Courtyard*, n.d. (Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL). Peter Sutton cites three additional paintings said to be signed, which are *Tavern Scene*, n.d. (Sale Foster, London, 3 March 1926, No. 17B); *Peasant Family by Candlelight*, n.d. (Sale Paget, London, 23 January 1953, No. 18); *River Scene with Ferry Boat*, n.d. (Sale G. Bakker, Hilversum, 10 September 1946, No. 317). See Sutton, "Hendrick van der Burch," 319–25.

<sup>15</sup> Willem Valentiner attributed thirty-nine paintings to Van der Burch, which Peter Sutton has disputed on the basis of style. See Sutton, "Hendrick van der Burch," 319; Valentiner, *Pieter de Hooch*, 212.

<sup>16</sup> Sutton, "Hendrick van der Burch," 316, 319. Peter de Hooch's wife, Jannetje van der Burch, was

der Burch settled in Leiden in the mid-1650s, he began painting street scenes and urban views.<sup>17</sup> The *Graduation Procession*, which bears the monogram HVB in the center foreground, is one such example.

While a resident at Rapenburg 42, Van der Burch would have had ample opportunity to witness dozens of Leiden University graduation processions (*promoties*). Between 1650 and 1674, 16 percent or 1,270 out of 7,738 Leiden University students, attained doctorates. Most recipients were Dutch born and studied law.<sup>18</sup> This commencement rate indicates that an average of fifty doctoral degrees were conferred per year, a metric that suggests academic ceremonies must have been a regular occurrence in the neighborhood around the university.

Van der Burch's painting, however, depicts just one element of the actual commencement ceremony. Before the procession, faculty administered one or more private examinations followed by the student's delivery of one or multiple public disputations, depending on the type of degree.<sup>19</sup> Upon the successful completion of these requirements, the commencement ceremony took place amidst the entire University Senate, whose members donned full regalia in the Groot Auditorium (Great Auditorium), the largest lecture hall on the first floor of the

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likely a sister or step-sister of Hendrick van der Burch. Records cited by Peter Sutton place Hendrick at the 1655 baptism of De Hooch's son, Pieter, and the two artists are recorded together as witnesses in several documents prepared by the Delft notary Frans Boogert.

<sup>17</sup> Hendrick van der Burch's urban views include *The Green Market, with a View of the Stille Rijn in Leiden*, n.d. (Museum de Lakenhal, Leiden); *View of the Dam in Amsterdam*, n.d. (Koninklijk Oudheidkundig Genootschap, on loan to the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam); and *Graduation Procession at Leiden University*. The street scenes include *Woman with a Jug in a Courtyard*, n.d. (Art Museum, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign); *Woman at a Laundry Tub in a Courtyard*, n.d. (Sale Inness, London, 13 December 1935); *Woman and Child at a Window*, n.d. (Dienst Verspreide Rijkscollecties, on loan to the Prinsenhof, Delft). For reproductions, see Sutton, "Hendrick van der Burch," 317–18, 321–22.

<sup>18</sup> Willem Otterspeer, *The Bastion of Liberty: Leiden University Today and Yesterday* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2008), 85.

<sup>19</sup> Willem Otterspeer, *Groepsportret met dame, het bolwerk van de vrijheid: De Leidse Universiteit, 1575–1672*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: Bakker, 2000), 239. Law students, for example, took two private exams and gave two public defenses before graduation.

Academy Building. The student's *promotor* (academic advisor) addressed the candidate and presented him with his diploma; a golden ring, a symbol of scholarly nobility to be worn on the index finger; and a round velvet bonnet, a sign of perfection and skill, as well as exemption from slander.<sup>20</sup> The new doctor then gave a short speech, followed by a solemn procession, as pictured by Van der Burch, which led to a church. There, the graduate and faculty sang a psalm and listened to a sermon before proceeding to a private house, where all enjoyed a feast.<sup>21</sup> Given the close proximity of Van der Burch's residence to the University's gate, it is not surprising that he depicted the ceremonial procession, which also constituted the most accessible element of the commencement celebration for the public in general. At that temporal moment and at that physical site, the academic ritual intersected with the quotidian goings-on of the local neighborhood.

### **Conventional Representations of Leiden University**

The unusual subject of the *Graduation Procession* suggests that Van der Burch drew from his personal experience as a witness to Leiden University graduation processions rather than the extant artistic record. Comparison with conventional seventeenth-century Dutch prints of the university (figs. 4.4–8) as well as depictions of students and scholars (figs. 4.9–10) reveals the ways in which Van der Burch eschewed established pictorial traditions in order to cast the university and related scholarly activities in a distinctly local idiom. Though the painting's subject appears to be unique in seventeenth-century Dutch art, generalized depictions of Leiden University and portraits of the institution's distinguished faculty were published regularly and

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<sup>20</sup> A. C. J. de Vrankrijker, *Vier eeuwen Nederlandsch studentenleven* (Leiden: DBNL, 2008), 78.

<sup>21</sup> Otterspeer, *Groepsportret met dame*, 1: 239.

disseminated amongst an international audience.<sup>22</sup> The imagery attests to the high profile and esteem that the university and its academicians enjoyed. Such pictures distinctly differ from Van der Burch's *Graduation Procession* in that they depict the institution and associated ceremony in an allegorical manner or with a straightforward, documentary approach intended principally to communicate information. When figures are included, they most often perform a perfunctory role secondary to the architectural setting.

The etching titled *Parade at the Inauguration* (fig. 4.4), the earliest representation of Leiden University, c. 1575, commemorated the grand procession held in honor of the institution's jubilant inauguration celebration staged on 8 February of that year. Like Van der Burch's painting, the etching depicts a university-related procession, yet differs in terms of compositional format, media, pictorial focus and intended purpose. *Parade at the Inauguration* represents figures and forms devoid of any larger architectural or spatial context and places emphasis on documenting the event, as evidenced by the inclusion of labels, which identify the procession participants who attended the actual celebration. In contrast, Van der Burch's painting depicts a generic graduation procession embedded within the specific site of the Leiden University neighborhood.

Executed by an unknown artist, impressions of the *Parade at the Inauguration* were probably intended to be gifted or purchased by the institution's governors, members of the senate, or other interested parties. The print's subject and form derive from the well-established sixteenth-century tradition of processional printmaking wherein artists depicted a civic ceremony

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<sup>22</sup> Willem van Swanenburg engraved a series of renowned Leiden professors, including the jurist Hugo Grotius, the poet and historian Janus Dousa and the botanist Carolus Clusius. Andries Cloucq published thirty-four of these portraits in *Icones ad vivum delineatae et expressae, virorum clariorum qui praecipue scriptis Academiam Lugduno Batavam illustrarunt* (1609), a volume intended to further the reputation of the university, which from the start strove to attract the most highly regarded professors. See Ilja M. Veldman, "The Portrayal of Student Life and Universities in the Early Modern Period," in *Education and Learning in the Early Modern Netherlands, 1400–1600*, ed. Hilde De Ridder-Symoens et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 319.

on a single sheet or in a series of images, frequently in profile, against a blank ground and with a slightly elevated viewpoint. Often such prints appeared in festival books, a genre that developed in the second half of the fifteenth century to commemorate the royal investitures (the so-called Joyous Entries) of sovereign rulers into a city under their purview.<sup>23</sup>

Divided into four registers and designed to be viewed from left to right, top to bottom, *Parade at the Inauguration* depicts the participants as they march through a series of three triumphal arches erected temporarily in honor of the occasion.<sup>24</sup> In the upper left corner, the city militia, carrying weapons, drums and two flags bearing the coat of arms of the city of Leiden leads the solemn parade towards the university. Though not depicted in the image, the group departed from the town hall after listening earlier that morning to a sermon by the pastor Pieter Cornelisz. and an academic address by the theologian Caspar Coolhaas at the Pieterskerk.<sup>25</sup>

Allegorical personifications of the university's four faculties—theology, law, medicine and the liberal arts—joined by twenty halberdiers and servants follow the civic guard. Theology, considered the most important of the faculties, appears first, represented by *Sacra Scriptura*

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<sup>23</sup> For triumphal entries in the Northern and Southern Netherlands, see Peter Arnade, "City, State, and Public Ritual in the Late-Medieval Burgundian Netherlands," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39, no. 2 (April 1, 1997): 300–318; Peter Davidson, "Festivals in the Netherlands," in *Europa Triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in Early Modern Europe*, ed. J. R. Mulryne, Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, and Margaret Schewing, vol. 2 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 469–70; John Landwehr, *Splendid Ceremonies: State Entries and Royal Funerals in the Low Countries, 1515–1791* (Leiden: A. W. Sijthoff, 1971); Emily J. Peters, "Den Gheheelen Loop Des Weerelts (The Whole Course of the World): Printed Processions and the Theater of Identity in Antwerp During the Dutch Revolt" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2005), 111–21; Larry Silver, "Triumphs and Travesties: Printed Processions of the Sixteenth Century," in *Grand Scale: Monumental Prints in the Age of Dürer and Titian*, exh. cat. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 15–34. For triumphal entries in Europe more broadly, see Roy C. Strong, *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals, 1450–1650* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1984), 3–42; Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, "Early Modern European Festivals: Politics and Performance, Event and Record," in *Court Festivals of the European Renaissance: Art, Politics, and Performance*, ed. J. R. Mulryne and Elizabeth Goldring (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002), 15–25. See also chapter 2 of this dissertation.

<sup>24</sup> Rijksmuseum, *Leidse Universiteit 400*, 36. Temporary triumphal arches were erected at the Hogewoerd (a street east of the university), the Nonnenbrugge (Nun's Bridge) and in front of the Sint-Barbaraklooster.

<sup>25</sup> Rijksmuseum, *Leidse Universiteit 400*, 36.

(Holy Scriptures), who rides in a chariot alongside the four evangelists and their attributes. Next law, symbolized by Justitia (Justice) and four renowned Roman jurists (Julian, Papinianus, Tribonian and Ulpian), precedes Medicina (Medicine) and four illustrious physicians (Galen, Hippocrates, Theophrastus and Dioscorides). The liberal arts, personified by Minerva, goddess of wisdom; two philosophers (Plato and Aristotle); an orator (Cicero); and a poet (Virgil), conclude the faculties.

The second half of the parade features several representatives of the city, the four burgomasters and pairs of dignitaries who escort the university professors. The procession then comes to a close with further members of the civic guard and a small vessel bearing Apollo, Neptune and the Nine Muses. During the actual event, a ship dressed in red and white cloth—the colors of Leiden—sailed the Rapenburg canal from the Nonnenbrugge (Nun’s Bridge) to the Sint-Barbaraklooster (St. Barbara Convent), the university’s first home prior to moving to the Academy Building.<sup>26</sup> There personifications of Apollo, Neptune and the Muses welcomed the procession with verses written in Latin by Janus Dousa, the university’s first governor, before all participants attended a banquet held at the city’s expense.<sup>27</sup>

A second group of images entitled *Views of Leiden University*, etched and engraved in 1610 by Willem van Swanenburg (figs. 4.5–8), portrays the institution’s interior spaces and landscape with specificity comparable to that depicted in the outdoor scene of Van der Burch’s *Graduation Procession*.<sup>28</sup> Yet, the prints lack the painting’s intrinsic interest in academic ritual and a student’s university experience. As a group, Van Swanenburg’s *Views of Leiden University*

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<sup>26</sup> Rijksmuseum, *Leidse Universiteit 400*, 38.

<sup>27</sup> Otterspeer, *The Bastion of Liberty*, 25–27.

<sup>28</sup> F. W. H. Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings, and Woodcuts, Ca. 1450–1700*, vol. 29 (Amsterdam: M. Hertzberger, 1949), 29–32.



share a representational style that occasionally sacrifices accuracy in favor of communicating information about the depicted buildings/spaces. The artist paid little attention to the portrayal of individuals or their occupations and employed an elevated viewpoint with a deep perspective that distances the viewer from the subject.

The printmaker's approach fundamentally differs from Van der Burch's pictorial strategy in the *Graduation Procession*, which places greater emphasis on interaction between people within the architectural and street setting. Furthermore, Van der Burch's use of an eye-level perspective and tight framing inscribe the viewer into the composition rather than create distance. The intended purpose and projected audience for each project likely influenced such divergent approaches to the compositions.

The *Views of Leiden University* were executed by Van Swanenburg after designs by Jan Cornelis van 't Woudt and subsequently published by the Leiden bookseller Andries Clouq. The series depicted the most prestigious and renowned spaces within the university: the anatomy theater, the library, the fencing school and the botanical garden. Clouq sold the prints independently so they could be assembled or displayed as the purchaser saw fit. The substantial size of each image, approximately 33 x 40 cm, suggests that they could have been hung on a wall.<sup>29</sup>

*The Anatomy Theater* (fig. 4.5) illustrates the university's famous dissection room, which took the form of a classical amphitheater over nine meters in diameter.<sup>30</sup> Since its opening in 1593, the room held public dissections in the winter and exhibited a collection of skeletons,

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<sup>29</sup> Veldman, "The Portrayal of Student Life," 319.

<sup>30</sup> For the history of the anatomy theater, see Jean-Pierre Cavaillé et Institut Universitaire Européen, *Un théâtre de la science et de la mort à l'époque baroque l'amphithéâtre d'anatomie de Leiden* (Badia Fiesolana, Italie: European University Institute, 1990).

specimens, prints and instruments in the summer, when it was too warm to store cadavers. Van Swanenburg's print combines the objects and instruments characteristic of both seasons to convey the greatest amount of information. A partially dissected corpse draped in fabric lies on the table, which, ordinarily during the summer months, was occupied by two skeletons known as "Adam and Eve."<sup>31</sup> The artist included the skeletons in the foreground of the print. Along with a serpent, they stand on a balustrade with the tree of knowledge between them. Despite this instance of artistic license, Van Swanenburg conveyed a great deal of accurate specificity. He carefully recorded the instrument cabinet, the sculpted deer sconces hung on the wall, and the tall windows of the Faliede Begijnhof, a former Benguine convent annexed by the university and the location of the anatomy theater.<sup>32</sup>

Similar attention to detail appears in Van Swanenburg's print of the library (fig. 4.6), opened in 1595 and located in the same building as the anatomy theater.<sup>33</sup> The sizeable room (approximately 25 x 9 m) housed two rows of open shelves to which the books were chained. Though not a lending library, patrons could rest their books on a small ledge while reading. For a few hours per week, the general public enjoyed the same privilege.<sup>34</sup> Van Swanenburg's print pictures two figures modeling such behavior, engrossed in mathematics volumes in front of the first row of left-hand shelves. The artist additionally documented the library's interior decoration, including painted portraits of William the Silent and Prince Maurits on the back wall

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<sup>31</sup> Rijksmuseum, *Leidse Universiteit 400*, 102.

<sup>32</sup> Rijksmuseum, *Leidse Universiteit 400*, 101–3.

<sup>33</sup> For a history of the Leiden University Library, see Christiane Berkvens-Stevelinck, *Magna Commoditas: Geschiedenis van de Leidse Universiteitsbibliotheek, 1575–2000* (Leiden: Primavera Pers, 2001).

<sup>34</sup> Rijksmuseum, *Leidse Universiteit 400*, 133–34. Due to the limited hours, patrons could ask the librarian for a key to access the library. Professors frequently requested and were granted their own keys. The philologist Claudius Salmasius famously secured a private entrance to the Benguine church from the alley adjacent his home so he could enter the library in his "robe de chambre."

and a monumental print by Melchior Lorich depicting Constantinople underneath the windows at the left. In the right foreground, celestial and terrestrial globes protected by dustcovers, gifts from Leiden professor Joseph Scaliger, sit atop a tall cabinet. A table on the right displays two more globes, probably those donated by the cartographer Jodocus Hondius.<sup>35</sup> The representation of such details enriches *The Library*'s informative qualities and help showcase the impressive book collection, which generated pride on the part of the university and the city of Leiden.<sup>36</sup>

Van Swanenburg's print of the university's fencing school (fig. 4.7), the third in the series, depicts the competition and practice space located on the ground floor of the Faliede Bagijnhof Church.<sup>37</sup> Fencing was considered an important rite of passage for students. Lessons proved instructive and necessary, as all students with the exception of those studying theology wore a dagger or rapier at the waist while in public.<sup>38</sup> The sportsmen represented in the etching illustrate the range of activities that took place in the athletic hall. Some figures practice with muskets, others with swords. Another tests his strength by supporting his bodyweight with a single hand on his horse's saddle. Van Swanenburg further described the space's large windows, the weapons mounted on the walls and the large geometric pattern on the floor, which indicated the points at which to assume proper fencing positions.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Rijksmuseum, *Leidse Universiteit 400*, 133–34.

<sup>36</sup> The regent class of Leiden viewed the library as a means of gaining prestige and competing with neighboring Dutch towns. Daniela Prögler, *English Students at Leiden University, 1575–1650* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 88.

<sup>37</sup> Rijksmuseum, *Leidse Universiteit 400*, 54.

<sup>38</sup> Vrankrijker, *Vier eeuwen Nederlandsch studentenleven*, 172–75.

<sup>39</sup> Rijksmuseum, *Leidse Universiteit 400*, 54.

In the fourth print, Van Swanenburg portrayed the botanical garden on the opposite side of the Rapenburg, hidden behind the Academy Building (fig. 8).<sup>40</sup> Planted in 1594 under the supervision of famed botanist Carolus Clusius, the garden housed a wide variety of species in addition to herbs and plants for medicinal use. The artist pictured the garden during the summer months with the flora in full bloom. The building shown on the south side of the property housed the ambulacrum, a place for storing delicate plants during the winter and the home of the natural history collection. In the lower border, Van Swanenburg illustrated several of the specimens from that collection.<sup>41</sup>

As a group, the *Views of Leiden University* sought to aggrandize the institution and spread its reputation to an international public. The series additionally served as a visual advertisement for prospective students, their families and tourists on the Grand Tour. Foreign travelers to the university could purchase the prints as souvenirs and likely did, for they documented favorable impressions of their visits.<sup>42</sup> In a description from June 1663, for example, William Lord Fitzwilliam recorded “here is one of the most famous universities of Europe, not so much for colleges (wherewith Oxford and Cambridge abound), but by reason of its diligent and learned professors of all sort of sciences and their method of teaching young youth.”<sup>43</sup>

*Views of Leiden University* proved so successful that in 1611, a year after the series’ initial publication, Clouq issued a second, enlarged edition with explanations of the images in

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<sup>40</sup> For a history of the Leiden University botanical garden, see W. K. H. Karstens, Herman Kleibrink, and Vrienden van de Leidse Hortus, *De Leidse hortus: een botanische erfenis* (Zwolle: Uitgeverij Waanders, 1982).

<sup>41</sup> Rijksmuseum, *Leidse Universiteit 400*, 166.

<sup>42</sup> Veldman, “The Portrayal of Student Life,” 319.

<sup>43</sup> Kees van Strien, *Touring the Low Countries: Accounts of British Travellers, 1660–1720* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998), 227.

German, Latin and French. That the prints were described in multiple languages speaks to the international viewership for which they were intended and their primarily informative and aggrandizing function. Demand evidently continued, for the Amsterdam publisher Claes Jansz. Visscher produced a third edition in 1644.

Several writers also appropriated the *Views of Leiden University* to illustrate their publications. In 1612, for example, shortly after the series was completed, Crispijn de Passe and Jan Jansz. of Arnhem included *The Library*, *The Anatomy Theater* and *The Botanical Garden* in their *Academia sive specvlvm scolasticae (The University, or Mirror of Student Life)*, a book intended to illuminate the operations of a university for prospective young people and to function as an *album amicorum* for those currently enrolled.<sup>44</sup> The text featured a series of engraved poems and fifteen illustrations of student occupations and pastimes, including the aforementioned three from the *Views of Leiden University*.

Jan Jansz. Orlers also appropriated the series to illustrate his *Beschrijvinge der stad Leyden (Description of the City of Leiden)*. Published first in 1614 and in an expanded edition in 1641, Orlers' publication included *The Anatomy Theater*, *The Library*, *The Botanical Garden* and a fourth image of the Academy Building seen in profile (fig. 4.2). Jacobus Marcusz. subsequently illustrated the same four images published by Orlers in his *Deliciae Batavae...* (Dutch Delights...) of 1618. Like the *Academia*, the *Deliciae Batavae...* was intended primarily for students. The volume illustrated trades, youthful entertainments and notable

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<sup>44</sup> For a lengthy discussion of the *Academia* and translations of the Latin poems and commentary, see Ilja M. Veldman, *Profit and Pleasure: Print Books by Crispijn de Passe* (Rotterdam: Sound and Vision Publishers, 2001), 33–52. For *alba amicorum*, see Bronwen Wilson, “Social Networking: The Album Amicorum and Early Modern Public-Making,” in *Beyond the Public Sphere: Opinions, Publics, Spaces in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Massimo Rospocher (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2012), 1–19.

architecture in Leiden, Amsterdam and The Hague.<sup>45</sup> Collectively, the images of Leiden University executed by Van Swanenburg and appropriated by numerous others established a widely disseminated pictorial tradition for representing the institution, in which Van der Burch's *Graduation Procession* ultimately did not participate.

### Conventional Representations of Scholarly Pursuits

In contrast with depictions of the university's inauguration procession and facilities, paintings and prints that portray scholars in their studies, a theme popularized from the 1630s by Leiden natives Rembrandt, Gerrit Dou, Jan Lievens and their followers, focus on students and/or intellectuals and academic life more broadly.<sup>46</sup> However, despite a similar focus on scholarly pursuits, such imagery does not share the emphasis on academic ritual and its relationship to a specific community evident in Van der Burch's *Graduation Procession*. Artists such as Rembrandt and Dou most often emphasized a single figure absorbed in the act of reading or writing, while surrounded by conventional attributes of erudition, such as maps and globes. Typically, a mood of quiet contemplation pervades. Such depictions have been interpreted as evocations of intellectual life<sup>47</sup> and the secular counterpart to portrayals of saintly hermits and

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<sup>45</sup> Veldman, *Profit and Pleasure*, 52.

<sup>46</sup> Rembrandt engaged with the theme of the scholar in his study repeatedly. See, for example, *The Philosopher in Meditation*, 1632 (Musée du Louvre, Paris); *Scholar in his Study*, 1634 (Národní galerie v Praze, Prague); *A Scholar in his Study ('Faust')*, c. 1652 (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam). Following the lead of his teacher, Rembrandt, Dou also depicted scholars at work. See *Man Writing by an Easel*, c. 1630–1635 (Private Collection, Montreal); *Man Interrupted at His Writing*, c. 1635 (The Leiden Collection, New York). Dou also depicted the related theme of the solitary religious hermit. For this theme, see H. van de Waal, "Rembrandt's Faust Etching, a Socinian Document and the Iconography of the Inspired Scholar," *Oud Holland* 89 (1974): 37.

<sup>47</sup> Sheila D. Muller, "'Young Scholar in His Study': Painters and Scholars Learning the Art of Conversation in Early Seventeenth-Century Leiden," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 59 (2009): 294.

portraits of the evangelists or St. Jerome.<sup>48</sup> While the theme enjoyed widespread popularity, it flourished particularly in Leiden, likely as a result of its appeal to the university community there.<sup>49</sup>

Dou's *Man Interrupted at His Writing*, c. 1635 (fig. 4.9), for example, shows an elderly scholar paused in the act of writing. In both subject and tenor the painting manifests the pursuit of knowledge or the *vita contemplativa*.<sup>50</sup> The scholar wears a fur *tabbard* and a black skull-cap, a form of headwear worn by theologians, though no other attributes confirm that specific identification.<sup>51</sup> Numerous still-life elements such as a globe, an open book with metal clasp and a pen case populate the sparsely furnished interior and allude generally to scholarly activity. Additionally, an hourglass and prominently placed skull carry *memento mori* associations and thus point to the transience of human existence, a notion which Dou echoed in his meticulous rendering of the scholar's aging countenance.<sup>52</sup> Perhaps the intellectual pictured by Dou had

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<sup>48</sup> Ronni Baer, "The Paintings of Gerrit Dou (1613–75)" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1990), 57; David De Witt, Jane Russel-Corbett, and Sandra Richards, "The Scholarship and Spirituality of Saints and Hermits," in *Wisdom, Knowledge and Magic: The Image of the Scholar in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art*, exh. cat., ed. Volker Manuth (Kingston, Ontario: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1996), 18.

<sup>49</sup> Van de Waal, "Rembrandt's Faust Etching," 37.

<sup>50</sup> Erasmus made a distinction between the *vita contemplativa* (contemplative life) and *vita active* (active life) in his development of the concept of *Imitatio Christi*. He contended that both are needed to live virtuously. See Baer, "The Paintings of Gerrit Dou," 56.

<sup>51</sup> Marieke de Winkel, *Fashion and Fancy: Dress and Meaning in Rembrandt's Paintings* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 40.

<sup>52</sup> Dominique Surh, "Scholar Interrupted at His Writing," (GD–102), in *The Leiden Collection Catalogue*, ed. Arthur K. Wheelock (New York, 2017), unpaginated. <http://www.theleidencollection.com/archive/>. Other objects, such as the parasol, birdcage and gourd, appear to be studio props. The parasol, for example, appears in Dou's *Self-Portrait*, 1645 (Private Collection, Spain); *Self-Portrait*, 1647 (Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden); *Self-Portrait*, c. 1665 (Van Otterloo Collection, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven); and *The Quack*, 1652 (Museum Boijmans Van Beunigen, Rotterdam). For the parasol as a symbol of the quack doctor, see Ivan Gaskell, "Gerrit Dou: His Patrons and the Art of Painting," *Oxford Art Journal* 5, no. 1 (1982): 20.

been contemplating the brevity of his own life while engaged in writing.<sup>53</sup> The figure's penetrating gaze seemingly expresses an awareness of the ineluctable march of time. In combination with the indistinct, yet studious setting, the aged man personifies the scholar's intellectual endeavors.

An anonymous etching titled *A Student in His Study* (fig. 4.10), executed in the second half of the seventeenth century, shares the mood of sober introspection and conventional symbols of wisdom evident in Dou's *Man Interrupted*. Another iteration of the theme of the scholar in his study, the etching compares more closely to Van der Burch's *Graduation Procession* because it depicts a young student, clearly distinguished as such through verse in Dutch and Latin beneath the image. However, because nothing in the anonymous print situates the pupil within a specific locale or ties him to a particular academic community, as in the *Graduation Procession*, the two works remain distinct treatments of a related subject.

Like Dou's *Man Interrupted*, *A Student in His Study* assumes the notional purpose of evincing the concept of learning, devoid of any particular context by virtue of the picture's universal message. The etching pictures a young man seated at a desk, absorbed in an open book, while he rests his head thoughtfully on one hand. Using delicate crosshatching and fine, parallel lines, the artist silhouetted his form against a tall bookcase filled with four rows of thick volumes. Celestial and terrestrial globes appear at the top of the bookcase and maps adorn the back wall and an open door. Beneath the image, the verses reinforce the student's singular pursuit and speak to the challenge and loneliness of scholarly endeavor.<sup>54</sup> Variations of this

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<sup>53</sup> Surh, "Scholar Interrupted at His Writing," unpaginated.

<sup>54</sup> The Dutch poem, titled "Een Student in Syn Kamer," appears at the left: "Ik ben een Heremÿt en altyd in 't gewoel:/ Ik sit meest stil, en ga door zee en aarde lopen:/ die doot sÿn spreke my, die levenloos, verkoopen/ Voor arbeÿd wetenscap, waar op ik stadig doel./ Wat Koning is sso rÿck? De weerelt is mÿn sot, De wÿsheÿd is mÿn goed, mÿn seden gebreken,/ Myn kisten niet vol gelt, mÿn armoe vol van streken,/ Mÿn



theme constitute a firmly entrenched pictorial tradition for representing students, intellectuals and educational pursuits. In his departure from expected conventions, Van der Burch engaged new possibilities for the representation of academic life and the university.

### **Mid-century Genre Trends: Van der Burch's Relation to the Delft School and Jan Steen**

A consideration of the possible artistic influences upon Van der Burch elucidates how he assimilated current artistic trends, but ultimately produced an inventive subject in the *Graduation Procession*. As an urban view with pronounced genre elements, the painting draws from mid-century developments in depictions of cityscapes, street scenes and everyday life. Seventeenth-century artists did not make strict distinctions between these pictorial genres, but rather freely combined facets from each. With a limited number of exceptions, artists most often privileged either the city/street or the human activity within it.<sup>55</sup> Van der Burch's *Graduation Procession* distinguishes itself through the shared emphasis on the architectural setting of Leiden University, the procession formed by the graduate and faculty, and the quotidian street scene.

The city- and streetscape tradition from which the *Graduation Procession* derives originated in early seventeenth-century aerial views and panoramic profiles that portrayed the distinctive skyline of an urban center. Such pictures owe their interest in topography to sixteenth-

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leven vol geneugt, mÿn heer de wÿngaard God." The Latin verse, titled "STUDIOSUS IN CUBICULO," appears at the right: "Pone supercilium totus mihi despis orbis./ Insanumq aliud nil nisi vulgus habes./ Vtilis en omnem solus studiosus in usum./ Palla da Pieria claudit utramque domo:/ Nam capiat calamos, meus es sapientia cultor,/ Si gladios. Mavors, tu meus, inquit, eris./ Ai quis tam Superum variorÿ Mÿsta premuntur/ Vina, Lÿaeae, manu, docta Lÿcaea pede" ("Beneath your appearance you, the whole world, are foolish to me/ And you offer nothing else except the absurd mob./ The student alone, useful indeed in every study,/ has kept both kinds of Pallas in his Pierian abode./ For should she take up pipes, you, wisdom, are my teacher,/ or if swords, Mars, you, she has decreed, you will./ Oh, whoever is the disciple of so many various Gods:/ wines are made, Bacchus, by hand, the learned lines by foot"). Latin translation by Michael Woo.

<sup>55</sup> Seventeenth-century market scenes, to be discussed below, are a notable exception in that they often focus on both human activity and the architectural setting. For an overview of Dutch market scenes, see Linda Stone-Ferrier, "Gabriel Metsu's Vegetable Market at Amsterdam: Dutch Horticulture and Market Paintings," *Art Bulletin* 71, no. 3 (1989): 433–42.

century cartographic conventions, of which Dutch artists were extremely cognizant, and the concomitant rise in the popularity of landscape painting.<sup>56</sup> Some artists, especially those working in Amsterdam and Haarlem, pictured flat, expansive stretches of countryside dotted with the church towers and civic buildings that served as a tremendous source of local pride.<sup>57</sup> Others rendered daily life along the canals, in urban streets and town squares, and at the thresholds or in the courtyards of private residences with views to the city beyond.

Around 1650, artists increasingly depicted tightly cropped, close-up views of the urban environment. The growing demand for such pictures coincided with a period of economic prosperity following the 1648 Treaty of Münster, which permitted cities to undertake building programs and expansion projects that inevitably resulted in greater civic awareness.<sup>58</sup> Van der Burch's *Graduation Procession* is indebted specifically to such mid-century developments, which depicted focused views within the city and flourished particularly in Delft, where the artist worked between 1649 and 1655.<sup>59</sup>

Past scholarship on Van der Burch has connected the artist to several Delft painters of cityscapes and street scenes, including Carel Fabritius and Johannes Vermeer, and especially to

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<sup>56</sup> Arthur Wheelock, "Worthy to Behold: The Dutch City and Its Image in the Seventeenth Century," in *Dutch Cityscapes of the Golden Age*, exh. cat., ed. Ariane van Suchtelen and Arthur Wheelock (Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, 2008), 14–15.

<sup>57</sup> Early practitioners include Henrick Vroom, Esaias van de Velde and Jan van Goyen. See Boudewijn Bakker, "'Portraits' and 'Perspectives': Townscape Painting in Seventeenth-Century Holland," in *Dutch Cityscapes of the Golden Age*, exh. cat., ed. Ariane van Suchtelen and Arthur Wheelock (Zwolle: Waanders, 2008), 44–49.

<sup>58</sup> Bakker, "'Portraits' and 'Perspectives,'" 52. Amsterdam, Leiden and Haarlem all initiated large-scale building projects around 1660.

<sup>59</sup> Sutton, "Hendrick van der Burch," 315–19. Guild records indicate that Van der Burch joined the St. Luke's Guild in Delft on 25 January 1649. The artist had moved to Leiden by 4 September 1655, the death date of Cornelis Stooter, to whom the artist claimed to have paid his undocumented entrance fee to the St. Luke's guild in Leiden.

genre pictures by Pieter de Hooch.<sup>60</sup> In 1654, De Hooch married Jannetje van der Burch, likely a sister or step-sister of Hendrick. Records cited by Peter Sutton place Hendrick at the 1655 baptism of De Hooch's son, Pieter, and the two artists are recorded together as witnesses in several documents prepared by the Delft notary Frans Boogert.<sup>61</sup>

Beyond their family ties, Van der Burch appears to have been influenced by, or perhaps a follower of, the younger, but more technically accomplished De Hooch. Their work exhibits clear thematic, conceptual and stylistic parallels. Both depicted guardroom and tavern scenes in the early stages of their careers, and turned to elegant companies, mothers and children, and exterior courtyard views as mature artists.<sup>62</sup> Additionally, on at least one occasion, Van der Burch produced a copy after a composition by De Hooch.<sup>63</sup>

The *Graduation Procession* shares in common some of the compositional features of De Hooch's courtyard views, in particular, yet places far greater pictorial emphasis on the distinctive, topographically accurate architectural setting. De Hooch's *Woman and Child in a Bleaching Field*, c. 1657 (fig. 4.11), for example, portrays a woman bleaching laundry while a

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<sup>60</sup> Liedtke, *Vermeer and the Delft School*, 235; Danielle H. A. C. Lokin, "Views in and of Delft, 1650–1675," in *Delft Masters, Vermeer's Contemporaries: Illusionism through Conquest of Light and Space*, exh. cat., ed. Michiel C. C. Kersten and Danielle H. A. C. Lokin (Zwolle: Waanders, 1996), 174; Sutton, "Hendrick van der Burch," 320, 324.

<sup>61</sup> Sutton, "Hendrick van der Burch," 316, 319.

<sup>62</sup> Liedtke, *Vermeer and the Delft School*, 235–36. Walter Liedtke called Van der Burch's outdoor scenes "unthinkable without De Hooch's courtyards." Paintings by the two artists that correspond closely in terms of composition include Van der Burch's *Woman with a Child Blowing Bubbles in a Garden*, c. 1660 (Kunsthhaus, Zürich) and De Hooch's *Garden Scene with a Woman Holding a Glass of Wine and a Child*, c. 1658–60 (Private Collection); Van der Burch's *Family Portrait at the Side of a House*, n.d. (Max Rothschild, London, before 1929) and De Hooch's *A Family in a Courtyard*, c. 1657–60 (Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Vienna); Van der Burch's *Officer and a Standing Woman*, n.d. (Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia) and De Hooch's *An Officer and a Woman Conversing, and a Soldier at a Window*, c. 1663–65 (Germanisches Museum, Nuremberg).

<sup>63</sup> Van der Burch's *Conversation by a Hearth*, n.d. (whereabouts unknown) closely resembles De Hooch's *A Soldier Smoking, with a Woman by a Hearth*, c. 1660–63 (Private Collection, The Netherlands). For reproductions of both, see Lokin, "Views in and of Delft, 1650–1675," 170–77.

young girl looks on within a grassy, urban space bounded by brick walls. A view to a distant courtyard reveals a couple conversing and at the left, a man strolls down an alleyway. The artist juxtaposed this quiet scene of quotidian activity with the imposing tower of the Oude Kerk (Old Church) and the distant Nieuwe Kerk (New Church), which rise above a series of rooftops. These identifiable landmarks situate the scene in Delft, yet are of secondary importance to the human pursuits in the foreground. Rather than adhere to topographical accuracy, De Hooch altered the placement of the buildings in favor of a more pleasing composition. From the depicted vantage point, the Nieuwe Kerk would be hidden out of view behind the Oude Kerk.<sup>64</sup> Van der Burch's *Graduation Procession*, in contrast, places more pictorial focus on the distinctive architectural setting, which is also rendered with greater precision and correct perspective.

In terms of composition and the significance accorded to the representation of the urban environment, the *Graduation Procession* corresponds more closely with a group of market scenes produced in the 1650s and 1660s, which include Jan Steen's *Freshwater Fish Market in The Hague*, 1650–52 (fig. 4.12); Hendrick Sorgh's *View of the Grote Markt with Vegetable Stall*, 1654 (fig. 4.13); Gabriel Metsu's *Vegetable Market in Amsterdam*, c. 1657–61 (fig. 4.14); and several related pictures. Such market scenes depict vendors plying their wares and in conversation with customers, surrounded by barrels of fish or colorful produce. They each situate

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<sup>64</sup> Lokin, "Views in and of Delft," 109. Several artists altered the appearance of actual sites, manipulated the scale of buildings and/or represented imaginary structures and settings along with identifiable buildings. Jan van der Heyden's *An Amsterdam Canal View with the Church of Veere*, c. 1670, for example, portrays three large buildings reminiscent of, though not portrait likenesses, buildings on the Keizersgracht. He juxtaposed the buildings with a Romanesque church tower based on the Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe-kerk in Veere. Wheelock, "Worthy to Behold," 17, 130.

merchants near recognizable buildings and identifiable market sites, the inclusion of which registers their economic importance and the pride they instilled.<sup>65</sup>

In contrast to De Hooch's courtyard views, the market scenes depend on the surrounding urban landscape as critical to the pictures' narrative and thus intrinsic to their overall meaning. City markets, a tremendous source of civic pride, forged deep connections to the neighborhoods in which they took place and evoked strong signifiers of community for local residents. Depictions of marketplaces would have similarly registered the predominant ethos of the particular neighborhood represented as well as the communal values of its residents.<sup>66</sup> That many painters of market scenes lived in or around the market neighborhoods they depicted suggests the strong relationship between locale and small-scale economic enterprise. Hendrick Sorgh, for example, resided in a house in Rotterdam near the Grote Markt (Great Market) when he painted it in 1654.<sup>67</sup> Likewise, Gabriel Metsu lived directly adjacent to the Amsterdam vegetable market between 1655 and 1658, when he executed the majority of his depictions of street sellers.<sup>68</sup>

Market scenes that strongly feature recognizable locales had a clear influence on Van der Burch, for when living in Leiden between 1656 and 1659 he depicted the city's vegetable market on the Hoogstraat (High Street) with an expansive view of the buildings lining the Stille Rijn

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<sup>65</sup> Stone-Ferrier, "Gabriel Metsu's Vegetable Market at Amsterdam," 430, 436–42. That markets were a source of Dutch civic pride is evident through their appearance in topographical views in maps and city histories. Claes Jansz. Visscher's *Profile of Amsterdam*, 1611, for example, includes a view of the fish market that was also extolled in the accompanying text.

<sup>66</sup> Linda Stone-Ferrier, "Gabriel Metsu's Street Vendors: Shopping for Values in the Dutch Neighborhood," in *Gabriel Metsu*, exh. cat. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 81. Linda Stone-Ferrier has argued that depictions of marketplaces "reinforced in their viewers the strong neighborhood values that such communities shared."

<sup>67</sup> Sorgh lived in a house near the market called Het Vrouwenhoofd (The Women's Head), which he purchased in 1636. Friso Lammertse, Jeroen Giltaij, and Anouk Janssen, eds., *Dutch Genre Paintings of the 17th Century: Collection of the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen* (Rotterdam: Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, 1998), 160.

<sup>68</sup> Stone-Ferrier, "Gabriel Metsu's Street Vendors," 81.

(fig. 4.15). Van der Burch based the painting on a representation of a fish market at the same location executed by Jan Steen between 1646 and 1649, likely when the latter artist lived in his father's house on the nearby Nieuwe Rijn (fig. 4.16).<sup>69</sup> Both Van der Burch and Steen would have encountered the vegetable market regularly given their close physical proximity.<sup>70</sup>

The compositional balance between anecdotal market exchange and signifiers of the urban environment exhibited in Van der Burch's *Vegetable Market* closely parallels the artist's integration of subject and setting in the *Graduation Procession*. In both paintings, the clearly identified architectural site, as opposed to an unspecified backdrop, is integral to their respective subjects, and both pictures group the genre activity in the foreground. Van der Burch also rendered the depicted locations in each painting in flattering terms and evoked a celebratory atmosphere, though it is more subtly expressed in the *Vegetable Market*. The latter painting pictures friendly exchanges between men and women, and responsible children minding their parents. Unlike Steen's depiction of the same marketplace, figures and stalls do not crowd the composition. Instead the calm, orderly market gives way to a sweeping canal view bathed in golden sunlight. The long sightlines down the length of the canal make it appear exceedingly spacious and grandiose, a perception of prosperity reinforced through the inclusion of a recent building project. At the left side of the composition, Van der Burch depicted the classicizing

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<sup>69</sup> The Steen family is recorded in several locations in Leiden. Jan lived on a short canal called the Delftse Vliet for most of his childhood. By 1636, the family had moved to the Overwulfde Papengracht, a wide street in the center of the old town, but they are again documented on the Vliet that same year. Havick Steen, Jan's father, purchased a house called The Bock sometime around 1644. They family lived there for a short while, but by 1647, they had moved to the Nieuwe Rijn. Several years later, in 1662, the family moved into their ancestral home on the Breestraat. See Marten Jan Bok, "The Artist's Life," in *Jan Steen: Painter and Storyteller*, exh. cat., ed. H. Perry Chapman, Walter Th. Kloek, and Arthur K. Wheelock (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 26.

<sup>70</sup> The Nieuwe Rijn, where Steen lived in the second half of the 1640s, intersected the Hoogstraat where the vegetable market was located. Van der Burch's residence at 42 Rapenburg would have required a five-minute walk to the north and east to reach the Hoogstraat.

Weigh House, newly constructed between 1657 and 1659 after a design by famed architect Pieter Post.<sup>71</sup> Viewed together, the *Vegetable Market* and the *Graduation Procession* illustrate a clear interest on the part of the artist to represent contemporary depictions of daily life within the evolving city.

Van der Burch's representation of university ceremony, in particular, likely draws from Jan Steen's genre paintings of ritualized occasions. Beginning in the 1650s, Steen produced numerous depictions of rites of passage, such as wedding feasts, bridal processions, baptisms and childbirth celebrations. Such momentous events, which signaled a significant transition in an individual's life, typically entailed a sequence of rituals conducted in a special place, either outdoors or in the family home.<sup>72</sup>

Conceptually, the *Graduation Procession* corresponds most closely with a group of Steen's depictions of outdoor wedding processions painted in the 1650s, including *The Village Wedding*, 1653, in Rotterdam (fig. 4.17); *The Village Wedding*, 1655, in Edinburgh (fig. 4.18); and the *Country Wedding*, c. 1649–55, in Madrid (fig. 4.19).<sup>73</sup> Like the *Graduation Procession*, each of the above paintings features a ritual procession that assumes the pictures' organizing motif. Unlike Van der Burch's painting, however, Steen's works manifest a theatrical element in

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<sup>71</sup> For building projects in Leiden, see Eduard Taverne, *In 't land van belofte: In de nieuwe stad—ideaal en werkelijkheid van de stadsluitleg in de Republiek 1580–1680* (Maarsse: Gary Schwartz, 1978), 177–237.

<sup>72</sup> In his seminal 1908 study, Arnold van Gennep argued that rites of passage constitute rituals that mark a person's change of status or passage from one stage of life to the next. Such rituals, Van Gennep claimed, unfold in three distinct phases: in the first, the "rite of separation," the individual is displaced from his/her previous state; in the second, the "rite of transition," the individual is temporarily suspended between his/her old and new state; and in the third, the "rite of aggregation," the individual is embraced by the community in his/her new state. See Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (London: Routledge, 2010), 1–14.

<sup>73</sup> The numerous copies and paintings produced in the manner of Jan Steen make it difficult to ascertain precisely how many times the artist represented the theme of the village wedding. For a list of possible works in addition to those cited above, see Ivan Gaskell, *Seventeenth-Century Dutch and Flemish Painting: The Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection* (London: Sotheby, 1990), 218–221.

keeping with a longstanding tradition of comic festive wedding imagery.<sup>74</sup> They picture the customary wedding procession of a bride and her bridesmaids as they wend their way through a group of enthusiastic and colorful bystanders, presumably the newly married couple's family and friends. In each case, a demure bride with head bowed approaches the groom's house to the accompaniment of music and fanfare as he dramatically bounds down a set of steps to greet her.<sup>75</sup> In seventeenth-century Holland, the wedding procession represented the bride's figural transformation from single woman to wife through literal movement. The event occurred after the marriage rites had been performed at a church or town hall and was followed with feasting, dancing and entertainment that could last several days.<sup>76</sup>

The *Graduation Procession* similarly portrays a celebratory rite of passage in an outdoor setting coupled with quotidian genre elements. Like Steen's wedding pictures, Van der Burch pictorialized a momentous, ritualized occasion by portraying the doctoral candidate's figural transformation from student to graduate. Commencement ceremonies such as that pictured by Van der Burch effected and signaled the end of the student's training period and membership in the wider scholarly community. The conclusion of one's time at university also marked the end of youth. Upon graduation, the student was expected to marry and enter professional life.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Paul Vandenbroeck, "Verbeeck's Peasant Weddings: A Study of Iconography and Social Function," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 14, no. 2 (1984): 79–124.

<sup>75</sup> For further discussion of the comic and theatrical elements in Steen's wedding pictures, see H. Perry Chapman, W. Th. Kloek, and Arthur K. Wheelock, *Jan Steen, Painter and Storyteller*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1996), 116–18; Friso Lammertse, Jeroen Giltaij, and Anouk Janssen, eds., *Dutch Genre Paintings in the Seventeenth-Century*, 167–68.

<sup>76</sup> For seventeenth-century Dutch marriage rites, see P. van Boheemen and Historisch Museum Marialust, *Kent, en versint, eer datje mint: Vrijen en trouwen, 1500–1800* (Apeldoorn: Historisch Museum Marialust, 1989), 154–87.

<sup>77</sup> Willem Frijhoff, "Graduation and Careers," 335.



Van der Burch would have been familiar with Steen's work because of the latter artist's appreciable reputation, their shared membership in the Delft Guild of St. Luke, as well as their close physical proximity at various points in their careers. Steen was born and spent his childhood in Leiden, but moved to The Hague following his marriage on 3 October 1649 to Margriet van Goyen. In his absence, he continued to sell paintings in Leiden and paid his membership dues to the guild. In July 1654, Steen leased the "Snake" brewery in Delft and moved there by the fall of that year, at which point he could have met Van der Burch as a fellow member of the artists' St. Luke's Guild. However, around 1657 in the wake of financial hardship, Steen retreated to Leiden and shortly thereafter moved to nearby Warmond, where he remained until 1660.<sup>78</sup> During this period, Van der Burch lived on the Rapenburg in Leiden and could have easily encountered Steen again through professional and/or personal contacts.

A comparison of the artistic interests of Steen and Van der Burch shows significant overlap, especially in terms of their depictions of daily life set in urban environments. Ultimately, however, the genesis of the *Graduation Procession* cannot be attributed solely to dependence upon Steen's influence or that of other mid-century painters, such as De Hooch. An evaluation of Van der Burch's autograph paintings reveals him to be an eclectic painter who consistently drew inspiration from the artistic environments in the various cities in which he worked.<sup>79</sup> While sometimes billed as derivative, Van der Burch successfully capitalized on contemporary pictorial trends in cityscape, street scene and genre painting.<sup>80</sup> An interest in

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<sup>78</sup> Bok, "The Artist's Life," 28–31.

<sup>79</sup> The woman and child seen peering through a window frame in Van der Burch's *Woman and Child at a Window*, n.d. (Diesnt Verspreide Rijkscollecties, on loan to the Prinsenhof, Delft), for example, suggests the influence of Gerrit Dou and painters in Leiden.

<sup>80</sup> Sutton, "Hendrick van der Burch," 323–24. Sutton characterized Van der Burch as a derivative painter whose strengths laid in his ability to assimilate current artistic trends.

depictions of precisely rendered, identifiable structures, in particular, had only recently emerged by the 1650s. Such pictures, including the *Graduation Procession*, anticipated the representation in the 1660s and 1670s of cityscapes with significant civic buildings by Gerrit Berckheyde and Jan van der Heyden. Van der Burch's inventiveness, therefore, lay, in his creative adaptation of the widespread interest in urban views more broadly to the particular demands of the Leiden University neighborhood in which he lived.

### **Representing Leiden University in a Local Idiom**

The unusual subject and localized conception of the *Graduation Procession* suggest that Van der Burch executed the painting to fulfill a commission or perhaps as a gift for someone in the Leiden University and/or local community. Upon graduation, faculty commonly received gifts from the doctoral candidate. Such gifts varied in degree of extravagance, but usually consisted of gloves, fruit, confectionary or a shared meal.<sup>81</sup> A painting would have been an appropriate, albeit sumptuous gift from a graduate. Other university-related events, however, such as the retirement of a distinguished professor, may have been honored with the presentation of a painting.

A lack of documentation concerning the *Graduation Procession* makes identification of a possible patron or recipient difficult to determine. Past scholars have not speculated as to the intended audience of Van der Burch's painting, though they frequently remark that the artist could have witnessed the depicted ceremony from his doorstep at Rapenburg 42.<sup>82</sup> It should be noted, however, that the particular vantage point represented in the painting positions the viewer

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<sup>81</sup> Frijhoff, "Graduation and Careers," 365; Vrankrijker, *Vier eeuwen Nederlandsch studentenleven*, 79–82.

<sup>82</sup> Sutton, "Hendrick van der Burch," 319.

at the much larger residence located at Rapenburg 48, two doors down from Rapenburg 42. Conceivably, Van der Burch may have painted the *Graduation Procession* in response to a commission, as a gift or in an attempt to appeal to his proximate neighbors.

Since 1658, but perhaps as early as 1656, Diederik I van Leyden van Leuwen and his wife, Alida Paets, leased Rapenburg 48 for a sum of 800 guilders per annum.<sup>83</sup> The couple had moved to Leiden from The Hague, where in 1654 they had married. Shortly after their arrival in 1656, Diederik became a citizen (*poorter*) of Leiden and aspired to a position in the city's elite governing body, the Council of Forty. From 1657–65, he assumed an illustrious career in civil service as the *weesmeester* (director) of the civic orphanage; from 1663–82 as a member of the *vroedschap* (city council); from 1666–71 as a *schepen* (alderman); and in 1669, 1671–72, 1675 and 1678 as a burgomaster.<sup>84</sup>

As new residents of the neighborhood who lived across the street from Leiden University, Diederik and his wife Alida would have found the graduation procession meaningful. Moreover, Alida grew up at Rapenburg 19 as the daughter of burgomaster Willem Paets,<sup>85</sup> and would have known well the view of the university depicted in Van der Burch's painting. By virtue of living on the Rapenburg as a girl and young woman, Alida would have routinely encountered university students and faculty. Additionally, her father's involvement with the institution's administration would have provided her with multiple opportunities to familiarize herself with aspects of the university. As one of four annually appointed burgomasters of the city of Leiden,

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<sup>83</sup> Lunsingh Scheurleer, Fock, and Van Dissel, *Het Rapenburg*, 5: 498. The earliest rental contract between the owner of Rapenburg 48, Everard van Weede, and Diederick van Leyden van Leeuwen dates from 1659. However, Diederick lived in Leiden since 1656 and the house was unoccupied in 1655, which suggests the earlier date of the lease.

<sup>84</sup> Lunsingh Scheurleer, Fock, and Van Dissel, *Het Rapenburg*, 5: 472.

<sup>85</sup> Lunsingh Scheurleer, Fock, and Van Dissel, *Het Rapenburg*, 5: 498.

Alida's father would have participated in university government along with three curators nominated by the States of Holland.<sup>86</sup>

Van der Burch and the Van Leyden family would likely have had frequent contact with each other because of the adjoining rear walls of their two residences. Both houses originally belonged to a vast estate located on the property of the Pieterskerkhof, which underwent significant alterations in the second half of the sixteenth century and at various points during the seventeenth century.<sup>87</sup> Construction on the present façade of Rapenburg 48 did not begin until 1640. Around 1645, the house annexed the back of Rapenburg 42 to complete a passageway to a nearby stable. A ground plan of the former estate (fig. 4.20) makes clear the subsequent division of the property and the passageway that would have created ample opportunity for friendly exchange between the Van der Burch and Van Leyden families.

Van der Burch's conceptual approach to the representation of a Leiden University graduation procession within a specific, identifiable locale suggests that he may have designed the painting for residents of the immediate neighborhood, such as the Van Leyden family. The artist carefully framed the scene to evoke the fresh immediacy of encountering the graduation procession first-hand as a local resident might have done. The slightly elevated viewpoint and the low canal wall at the bottom of the painting position the viewer on the opposite bank of the Rapenburg across from the university. From there, one's view of the academic structures would be partially obstructed, the effect of which Van der Burch captured by cropping the Academy Building at the left and shielding it with tall trees. Such a representation of the university

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<sup>86</sup> Otterspeer, *The Bastion of Liberty*, 34–37.

<sup>87</sup> Lunsingh Scheurleer, Fock, and Van Dissel, *Het Rapenburg*, 5: 397–410.

presumes intimate and specific familiarity on the part of the viewer to identify the particular context for the depicted ceremony.

Neighborhood residents would have been uniquely attuned to the pictorial signifiers of their community present in the *Graduation Procession*.<sup>88</sup> As both a physical place and a social network, the neighborhood effected a strong sense of identity born out of required membership, repeated interactions between individuals and familiar routes.<sup>89</sup> The presence of Leiden University on the Rapenburg conferred a special degree of prestige upon the neighborhood, in particular, and the city more broadly. Many of its facilities, such as its famed botanical garden and highly regarded library, permitted public access, thereby imparting respectability and an air of sophistication to the local as well as wider community.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, several of the nearby businesses established reputations as gathering places for intellectual exchange. Joost Lieven's bookshop located at Rapenburg 56, for example, was frequented by faculty, students and artists, many of whom lived in the surrounding neighborhood.<sup>91</sup>

Van der Burch's *Graduation Procession* pictorializes the distinctive visual signs and attendant sociocultural connotations of Leiden's Rapenburg neighborhood in numerous ways. The tightly focused view of the precisely rendered Academy Building and gate reflect the lived

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<sup>88</sup> For this observation, I am indebted to Linda Stone-Ferrier's examinations of market views and street scenes as evocations of the Dutch neighborhood. See Stone-Ferrier, "Gabriel Metsu's Street Vendors: Shopping for Values in the Dutch Neighborhood," 87–93; Linda Stone-Ferrier, "Jacobus Vrel's Dutch Neighborhood Scenes," *Midwestern Arcadia* (Northfield, MN: Carleton College, 2014), 75–85.

<sup>89</sup> Stone-Ferrier, "Gabriel Metsu's Street Vendors," 87–89. A neighborhood typically consisted of an average of twenty to thirty houses on one or two streets or part of a canal. Regardless of nationality, citizenship, religion, class, or profession, all residents who fell within a geographically proscribed area were required to maintain membership in official neighborhood organizations known as *gebuyrten*. Run by elected administrators, the organizations enforced the regulations established in the *buurtbrieven* (neighborhood charter) and arbitrated between neighbors when necessary.

<sup>90</sup> Prögler, *English Students at Leiden University*, 88.

<sup>91</sup> Muller, "Young Scholar in His Study," 304–5.

experiences of neighborhood residents as they conduct business or converse with passersby on the street just outside the university. Genial exchanges between figures, such as the casual observers who interact in the foreground, suggest the natural fellowship of neighbors. Moreover, the variation in representations of class signals the social pluriformity that was characteristic of the Rapenburg, and of Dutch neighborhoods in general. Such local color grounds the formalized commencement ceremony firmly within a local milieu and an everyday moment that would have appealed to the adjacent residents.

Graduation processions would have also resonated with members of the Rapenburg neighborhood as familiar, seasonal markers of celebration. As frequently occurring events, such commencement rituals would have quickly become a facet of that community's direct engagement with the institution and part and parcel of its perception among residents.<sup>92</sup> Even if an individual lacked an academic affiliation, repeated observation of commencement traditions would have forged deep connections between the institution and its neighbors. Most scholarly activity occurred behind university walls, yet the ritual of the graduation procession signified and made visible the institution on a human level, accessible to anyone. By picturing the physical, but also symbolic, intersection of academic ritual with the wider community, Van der Burch represented the *Graduation Procession* through the lens of a neighborhood resident.<sup>93</sup> As such,

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<sup>92</sup> In this sense, we might think of the graduation procession depicted by Van der Burch as both a rite of passage and a calendrical rite. For the graduate, the procession honors his transition from student to doctor. Yet for the neighboring community, the ritual signifies the cycle of the seasons and the passage of time. For discussion of the various genres of ritual action, see Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 94–108.

<sup>93</sup> My focus on the crowd represented by Van der Burch and the possible audience for the *Graduation Procession* is informed by Edward Muir's analysis of the spectators of a procession. Those witnessing a procession, Muir explained, simultaneously view and are viewed by the processors and are thus caught up in the "kinetic character of rituals." As such, processions must be acknowledged as dynamic performances that can never have a fixed meaning by virtue of their changing performance. Processions ultimately signal a host of associations despite their assertion of their unchanging character. Muir reasoned "a procession created the same epistemological conundrum as the water in a river, always passing by, never actually the same water, but

the *Graduation Procession* conceptualizes the pride for the institution and its graduates within a manifestly local and vernacular sensibility.

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we choose to see the river as a unified phenomenon and labeled with a name—the river Arno—as a way of making it possible to talk about it” (132). Edward Muir, “The Eye of the Procession: Renaissance Ways of Seeing,” in *Ceremonial Culture in Pre-Modern Europe*, ed. Nicholas Howe (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2007), 130–32.

## Conclusion

Early modern European processions exhibited a wonderful diversity of character, purpose and significance to the communities in which they were staged. Such rituals ranged from simple, small-scale parades to grandiloquent, multisensory spectacles, and were adapted to an endless number of political, social, religious and secular ends. Contemporary representations of processions display a similarly rich density of meaning and pose a number of interpretive questions concerning their function and cultural resonance within European societies.

This study has focused specifically on representations of processions produced in the seventeenth-century Northern Netherlands and the changing roles of such images within an increasingly secular, urban and culturally pluriform society. With varying degrees of frequency, Dutch artists depicted processions held to honor a multitude of occasions, including the recognition of numerous civic groups, such as guilds, confraternities, *rederijker* ensembles (amateur theater groups) and *schutterijen* (militia companies); state visits by native and foreign dignitaries; religious holidays and rites of passage. Some of the processions pictured by artists would have been familiar to viewers as habitually occurring rituals, while others would have evoked bygone traditions and/or officially proscribed behavior. Legislation concerning the nature and expression of secular and especially religious processions affected how such rituals were experienced by communities in their daily lives and, therefore, how viewers would have engaged with representations of those same customs. In the preceding chapters, I have endeavored to show that seventeenth-century Dutch images of processions were inflected by the evolving regulation of actual public performance yet such depictions continued to assert their relevance and appeal amongst a broad audience.



By commemorating transitory public events, representations of processions helped preserve the ideological purposes of such rituals within a broader cultural ethos. Processional imagery thus constituted one way in which artists and viewers codified and categorized social life. Evidence of processional imagery's capacity to classify and characterize beliefs and customs can be found in illustrated travel books, a genre which thrived particularly in the Northern Netherlands in the seventeenth century and beyond. Netherlandish interest in such volumes, which pictured and described the religious traditions and cultural practices of peoples from across the globe, was undoubtedly inspired by the far-reaching explorations of the Dutch East and West India Companies.<sup>1</sup> Jan Luyken's *Carnival Parade with Torches and Music* (fig. 5.1), for example, appeared in a chapter devoted to Turkish Ramadan traditions in multiple editions of Jean de Thevenot's *Voyages Tant en Europe qu'en Asie et en Afrique (Travel in Europe, Asia and Africa)*, published in the Netherlands by Jan Bouman between 1681–82.<sup>2</sup> The etching, which depicts a cavalcade of celebrants parading through a bazaar astride camels and a donkey, casts the rituals of a foreign culture in familiar terms with which its European audience could relate. The religious motivations for such an observance during Ramadan may have been alien to many westerners, but the form and practice of the procession would have been a recognizable marker of sacred significance.

As we learn from scholars of ritual studies, processions constitute a form of collective expression that inscribe participants and spectators within a larger system of shared, social

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of representations of foreign religious traditions in illustrated travel books, see Ilja Veldman and Lynne Richards, "Familiar Customs and Exotic Rituals: Picart's Illustrations for *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples*," *Simiolus* 33, no. 1/2 (2007–08): 95–6.

<sup>2</sup> Jean de Thevenot, *Voyages tant en Europe qu'en Asie et en Afrique*, vol. 2 (Paris: Charles Angot, 1689), 463. The Amsterdam bookseller Jan Bouman published the first Dutch edition between 1681–82 under the title *Gedenkwaardige en zeer naauwkeurige reizen van de heere De Thevenot (Memorable and very accurate trips of the gentleman De Thevenot)*. Jan Luyken's illustrations were subsequently used in later editions.

values. The efficacy of such rituals is never assured, however, for ephemeral performances are subject to a host of unpredictable variables, including weather, visibility and the agency of individuals. Depictions of processions elude such delimiting circumstances and instead express the particular point of view of the artist, patron and/or other viewers. As I have argued, through various visual and pictorial strategies, many processional images attempt to engage the beholder and draw him/her into the depicted ritual action, the effects of which evoke the experience of identity and/or membership within a community.

The significance of a particular representation would have depended on a number of factors, including the subjective mindset of individual viewers. Northern Netherlandish depictions of processions, especially, exhibit an exceptional degree of variety in subject, media, scale, and intended audience, which suggests their broad appeal and social value to the communities represented. The four chapters that comprise this dissertation have analyzed representative examples of the varied secular and religious processions represented by Dutch artists and the constellation of meanings which each generated.

Chapter 1 examined Adriaen van Nieulandt's large-scale painting of a leper procession, which initially had limited viewership in a board room of the Amsterdam Leprozenhuis, but ultimately reached a wide audience through the international dissemination of reproductions in multiple histories of the city. I argued that the painting memorialized a storied, yet defunct ritual and, in doing so, inscribed the values of community, civic charity and tolerance within Amsterdam's cultural memory.

Chapter 2 investigated Caspar Barlaeus's *Medicea hospes*, a lavishly illustrated book produced to honor the 1638 visit to Amsterdam of Marie de' Médici, Queen Regent of France. Intended for an elite European audience, the text featured a series of etched and engraved images

depicting the Queen's ritual procession through the city as well as the *tableaux vivants* and water spectacles staged in her honor. I suggested that Barlaeus and the Amsterdam *vroedschap* (city council) capitalized on Marie's ritual entry and its subsequent representation in the *Medicea hospes* as opportunities to aggrandize and disseminate the city's reputation at home and abroad.

Chapter 3 considered paintings and prints of religious processions designed for an open, middle-class market. Often intimate in scale, these images demonstrate an ongoing interest in and demand for depictions of processional subjects, which civic and ecclesiastical bodies routinely subjected to legislation. I focused on scenes of parades held on Twelfth Night and Shrovetide, the two processional rituals most often depicted by Dutch artists, and argued that viewers desired such images for their pictorialization of communal identity and the concomitant cultural values they espoused.

Chapter 4 examined Hendrick van der Burch's unusual painting of the graduation procession of a doctoral candidate at Leiden University. The subject of such an institutional rite of passage, I suggested, would have appealed to residents of the surrounding university neighborhood as a familiar, seasonal marker of celebration and as a symbolic representation of the intersection between academic ritual and the local community.

Collectively, the four chapters represent the broad range of processional activities depicted by artists and experienced in seventeenth-century Dutch life, but by no means constitute a comprehensive examination. Several other processional traditions represented by Dutch artists merit further investigation and analysis. For example, images portraying Amsterdam *schutterijen* (civic militias) in parade formation, such as an anonymous painting of c. 1620 (fig. 5.2) or Daniël Marot's print of 1686 (fig. 5.3), raise questions about the close identification of such militia companies with the urban community and the role of processions in wielding civic influence

and/or projecting a positive self-image.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, pictures of funerary processions, which by all accounts would have been near daily occurrences, have received comparatively little scholarly attention. Representations of the especially grand funeral corteges of the Dutch stadholders and members of the House of Orange warrant further scrutiny in light of recent scholarship on the politicized nature of courtly Dutch funerary rites.<sup>4</sup> A consideration of such processional imagery would augment the case studies presented here by more fully describing the richly varied artistic, socioeconomic, political and religious contexts in which Dutch artists depicted processions and establish a foundation for broader studies of the complex intersections of art and ritual in the seventeenth-century Northern Netherlands.

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<sup>3</sup> Major studies on Dutch *schutterijen* include Paul Knevel, *Burgers in het geweer: De schutterijen in Holland, 1550–1700* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1994); Maarten Prak, “Stedelijke schutterijen en sociale identiteit en Europa in de vroeg-moderne tijd,” *Tijdschrift voor sociale geschiedenis* 1 (1997): 1–128. For militia company portraiture, see also Marijke Carasso-Kok and J. Levy-Van Helm, *Schutters in Holland: kracht en zenuwen van de stad*, exh. cat. (Zwolle; Haarlem: Waanders; Frans Halsmuseum, 1988); Margaret Deutsch Carroll, “Rembrandt’s Nightwatch and the Iconological Traditions of Militia Company Portraiture in Amsterdam” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1976).

<sup>4</sup> Geert H. Janssen, “Political Ambiguity and Confessional Diversity in the Funeral Processions of the Stadholders in the Dutch Republic,” *Sixteenth-Century Journal* 40, no. 2 (2009): 283–301.

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