

The Prints of
Pieter
Bruegel
the Elder



Photo by Jean-Luc Tillière

PETRO BRUEGEL, PICTORI.

Quis nouus hic Hieronymus Orbi
 'Boschius' ingeniosa magistri
 Somnia peniculusque, styloque
 Tanta imitari arte peritus,
 Vt superet tamen interim et illum?

Macte animo, Petre, mactus ve arte.
 Namque tuo, veterisque magistri
 Reticulo, salibusque refero
 In graphices genere inclyta laudum
 Præmia vbiq̃, et ab omnibus vltro
 Artifice haud leuiora mereris.

J. Cock sculp.

Dom. Lampsonius.

Pieter Bruegel the Elder

from *Pictorum Aliquot Celebrium Germaniae Inferioris Effigies*, Antwerp, 1572.

The engraved portrait of Pieter Bruegel the Elder appeared in the humanist Dominicus Lampsonius's *Portraits of some of the famous painters of Lower Germany*. (*Pictorum aliquot Celebrium Germaniae Inferioris Effigies*), published by the widow of Hieronymus Cock in Antwerp in 1572. Since the work was published in the third year after Bruegel's death, and since it comes from the publishing house of the publisher responsible for so many of his prints, with a text by someone who very likely knew him well, we may be certain that it is reasonable likeness of the artist.

The verses below the portrait, translated into Dutch by van Mander in 1604 in his life of Pieter Bruegel the Elder, provide an insight into at least one of the important ways in which Bruegel was viewed by his contemporaries. They refer to him as a new Hieronymus Bosch, indeed one whose skilful art even surpassed the ingenious inventions of his (so-called) master. The verses go on to refer to the satirical and witty nature of the art of both Bosch and Bruegel; and they refer specifically to the way in which Bruegel's prints were responsible for the spread of his fame and fortune.

Unlike many of the twenty-three portraits in Lampsonius's book, the engraving is not signed; but it has been attributed to Hieronymus Cock himself (who died just a year after Bruegel). The book was re-edited on four occasions before 1600. In this way the image of the learned and keen-witted artist was widely circulated and fixed for posterity.

The Prints of
Pieter Bruegel the Elder

David Freedberg

January 7—February 26, 1989

Bridgestone Museum of Art

Organized by

Bridgestone Museum of Art, Ishibashi Foundation
The Tokyo Shimbun

Patronized by

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan
The Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan
Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium in Japan

March 4—April 9, 1989

Ishibashi Museum of Art

April 15—May 14, 1989

Mie Prefectural Art Museum

May 20—June 18, 1989

Hiroshima Prefectural Museum of Art

Catalogue

Edited by Curatorial Department of the Bridgestone Museum of Art,
Ishibashi Foundation
The Tokyo Shimbun

Designed by Kiyoshi Asai

Produced by Imex Inc.

Published by The Tokyo Shimbun, © 1989

Printed in Japan

We are very pleased to be able to present this exhibition of the complete prints of Pieter Bruegel. Pieter Bruegel the Elder is one of the most important figures in sixteenth-century Flemish painting. He explores the surfaces and depths of the human condition with marvelous incisiveness and exposes the hypocrisy and vanity of society with a sharply satirical point of view. The spiritual vigor of his art still appeals to us today, losing none of its significance or illumination in the twentieth century. He used a large variety of themes in his work, including popular proverbs and fables, Bible stories, myths, and peasant customs, and each picture depicts the doings of human beings with great, and sometimes cruel, clarity.

This exhibition contains all of the 95 prints acknowledged to be the work of Pieter Bruegel the Elder. These prints, like the oil paintings, are richly expressive. They demonstrate the extent of his powers of thought and imagination. We hope that this will be an opportunity for many people to gain a deeper appreciation of the significance of Bruegel's art. We also hope that this catalogue will prove useful as a basic reference in the study of Bruegel's prints.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Bibliothèque Royale Albert 1^{er}, Brussels and the other collectors who have lent their valuable works of art to this exhibition and the many individuals and institutions who have provided such tremendous cooperation and support.

1989

The Organizers

Acknowledgements

The organizers of the exhibition would like to express their deepest gratitude to the following lenders who have so generously given their consent to loan their valuable works to the exhibition.

Bibliothèque Royale Albert 1^{er}, Brussels

Nos. 1-5, 7-11, 13-17, 19, 24, 26-30, 33, 36, 43, 52, 54, 55, 57, 59-62, 64, 66, 69, 77, 78, 83-85, 87, 89-95

Stedelijk Prentenkabinet, Antwerp

Nos. 6, 12, 22, 32, 34, 35, 41, 42, 44-51, 56, 63, 65, 67, 68, 74, 81, 82, 86

Museum Mayer van den Bergh, Antwerp

Nos. 18, 20, 21, 23, 25, 31, 37-39, 53, 58, 80, 88

Collections Artistiques, Université de Liège

Nos. 70-73, 75, 76

Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam

Nos. 40, 96

The organizers also wish to extend their sincere appreciation to the following persons for their assistance and co-operation in making this exhibition possible.

Martin Wittek

Director, Bibliothèque Royale Albert 1^{er}, Brussels

Nicole Walch

Curator, Bibliothèque Royale Albert 1^{er}, Brussels

Pierre Cockshaw

Chief of Department, Bibliothèque Royale Albert 1^{er}, Brussels

Francine de Nave

Director, Museum Plantin-Moretus en Stedelijk Prentenkabinet, Antwerp

Hans Nieuwdorp

Director, Museum Mayer van den Bergh, Kunsthistorische Musea van Antwerpen

André Marchal

Director, Collections Artistiques, Université de Liège

W.H. Crouwel

Director, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam

The organizers' special thanks go to David Freedberg, Professor of Art History at Columbia University in the City of New York, for his supervision of the catalogue and essays.

Contents

- 11——Introduction David Freedberg
- 21——The Life of Pieter Bruegel the Elder David Freedberg
- 32——Antwerp during Bruegel's Lifetime: The Economic and Historical Background David Freedberg
- 42——Pieter Bruegel and Popular Culture Keith Moxey
- 53——Allusion and Topicality in the Work of Pieter Bruegel:
The Implications of a Forgotten Polemic David Freedberg
- 66——An Alchemical Message in Bruegel's Prints? Jacques Van Lennep
- 80——The Printed Landscapes of Pieter Bruegel Lisa Vergara
- 89——The Impact of the Prints of Pieter Bruegel the Elder Jan Van der Stock
- 103——Catalogue Kristin Lohse Belkin/Bernadette Huvane /David Freedberg
- 197——Bibliography

Introduction

David Freedberg

The Tokyo Shimbun is to be congratulated on organizing this exhibition, only the third complete showing of the prints since the great exhibition held in the Bibliothèque Royale Albert 1^{er} in Brussels in 1969. That exhibition was itself unique, and was held on the quatercentenary of Bruegel's death, in the town in which he died. In 1972 the Tokyo Shimbun collaborated on the highly successful exhibition of the prints held in the Kamakura Museum of Modern Art, but the present catalogue and the accompanying set of essays provide the first complete survey of the prints to take into account the findings of the magnificent exhibition of drawings held in Berlin in 1975 as well as subsequent scholarship on the subject. There have, indeed, been no other complete exhibitions of *any* aspect of Bruegel's career. Certainly there have been no exhibitions of all the paintings, since his approximately forty-three surviving panels and canvases (the figure varies from authority to authority) are far too fragile to travel. The scholar and viewer of Bruegel's art *could* of course, journey to Vienna, where by far the largest and most significant collection of his paintings is held (twelve of the paintings in the Kunsthistorisches Museum are now generally accepted); but if one does not go to Vienna, it is precisely an exhibition such as the present one which gives the best impression of Bruegel's career as a whole, and arguably the deepest and most comprehensive view of his art.

A sharp distinction must be drawn between the paintings and the prints. The paintings, it is true, give a sense of his purely artistic and technical skills that could evidently not be conveyed by any print. They show Bruegel to be an extraordinary colourist, whose marvellous russet, brown and terracotta tones are interspersed with strikingly orchestrated elements of deep reds, blues, yellows, greens and—especially in the winter scenes—large areas of the whiteness that conveys snow and frozen ponds, rivers and lakes. Often the ground of the panels and canvases shows through, and so does the vigorous underdrawing, beneath a thin and sketchy paint layer of subtle translucency. In such areas he sketches with the brush, in a manner that in its trenchant swiftness and its unmatched vividness and precision, is unparalleled before Rubens, his greatest successor. But this lightness and translucency is combined with a resonance of tonality he learned from his famous Netherlandish predecessors of the fifteenth century, from Jan van Eyck and Roger van der Weyden onwards, and whose technical and painterly lessons he never forgets.

The paintings show a master who peoples the majority of his pictures with great crowds of lively figures, all painted with an exceptional eye for vivid and telling poses and gestures. These figures, as well as the occasionally more isolated figures seem taken with apparently great verisimilitude from the peasant life of his time. There are awful and poignant figures, such as those in the paintings of the *Crippled Lepers* in the Louvre and the *Blind Leading the Blind* in Naples; and there are a few monumental figures, whose rusticity is nevertheless undeniable—as in the *Peasant and the Birdnester* in Vienna and the *Adoration of the Magi* in London, and interspersed in some of the multfigured scenes, such as the heroic figure sprawling in the foreground of the *Summer* scene in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The paintings show an evolving landscape artist, and a painter of religious subjects who (in the variety and multiplicity of the figures amongst whom he sets traditional events from the Bible) learns from near-contemporaries like the Brunswick Monogrammist, as well as from his predecessors, above all Hieronymus Bosch. In the paintings, the influence of Bosch appears most strikingly in the eerie and fantasmagoric demons, monsters and semi-humans of the *Fall of the Rebel Angels* of 1562 in Brussels. There are some other more or less straightforward religious subjects (although even in pictures like the *Suicide of Saul*, or the *Conversion of Saul*, both in Vienna, there are remarkably fine veristic moments, above all in the treatment of landscape details). But the pictures for which he is justly most renowned are those which seem to show episodes and events from the everyday life of the Flemish populace.



- *Hunters in the Snow*, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna



The Harvesters (July), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1919. (19.164)
(Photo: Eric Pollitzer)



The Lepers, Musée du Louvre, Paris
(Photo: Service photographique de la Réunion des Musées nationaux)

In 1559, and in the next year or so, he painted pictures with very high horizons, with the earth itself tilted improbably upwards—almost, it would seem, in order to create the maximum amount of land on which to place his teeming scenes of people representing *Flemish Proverbs* (Berlin), or *Childrens Games* (Vienna), or mock-battles on the eve of Lent (Vienna). This high ethnographic interest is sustained in pictures such as the *Carrying of the Cross* (Vienna), and the *Census of Bethlehem* (Brussels), in which the religious centre of each scene is almost lost amidst a great and picturesque confusion of people who can only be the inhabitants of the towns and countryside which Bruegel himself knew. Clothing is modest and everyday, faces rough and rustic, gestures stolid and gauche, with the occasional element of grace redeeming the apparent coarseness of so many of the figures and the seemingly ordinary settings (although always there is some geological or architectural improbability and amidst it all). He paints no Holy Land for the biblical scenes, but rather settings and people which are recognizably or plausibly Flemish and, for the most part, convincingly local.

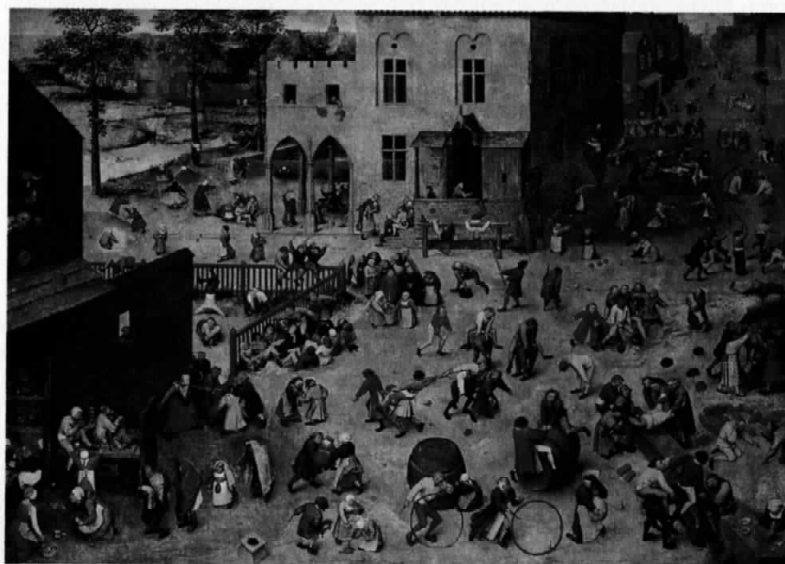
From the middle of the 1560s onwards, the peasant figures became larger, and the outdoor settings much more ambitious, as in the famous series of landscapes known as the *Months* (or Seasons?) of the year (three in Vienna, one in Prague, one in New York, the other(s) lost); then finally, in the few years before his death, he renounced religious subject matter almost entirely, to paint scenes of coarse peasant life, for the most part set in country villages or just outside them, in which the rustic protagonists acquired a monumentality worthy of the greatest masters of High Renaissance art in Italy. But in each case there is a liveliness about these figures, both in their clumsy attitudes and their tender, affectionate and winning gestures, that redeems all coarseness; while in the very last pictures like the *Misanthrope* (Naples), the *Peasant and the Birdnester* (Vienna), the *Parable of the Blind* (Naples) the *Magpie on the Gallows* (Darmstadt), poignancy turns to a kind of ominousness and pessimism that reminds one, finally, of the bleak and terrifying mood of the *Triumph of Death* in the Prado in Madrid of six or seven years earlier. As with so much of Bruegel's work, the general theme and message of that picture is clear; its indebtedness to the medieval tradition of the inexorable and inescapable advance and omnipresence of death is plain; but its specific motive and occasion remains baffling and inexplicable.

If only the paintings survived, however, we would have an incomplete view of the mind and art of Pieter Bruegel the Elder. It is to the prints that we must turn, for example, for an understanding of the full extent of Bruegel's great and epochmaking contribution to the art of landscape, of his detailed and devoted pursuit of the popular and proverbial culture of Flanders, of his unsparing revelations of the foolishness of human behaviour, his withering satires on its vices, and his sustained and hard views of human virtue. It is in the prints that we get the full measure of his inventiveness, not only in the pullulating Boschian monsters of the series of the vices (Nos. 18–24) but also in the delightful capers of the irreligious and over-indulging fairgoers in the scenes of Kermesses and skating, in the mindless behaviour of the alchemist who squanders everything at the expense of his family (No. 27), in the stupid schoolmaster with a donkey significantly reading behind him while his students play the fool (No. 17), and in the people who surround the charlatans and false surgeons opening the skulls of crazed and mad people to remove the stones that cause their madness (Nos. 26 and 83). Sometimes he can be quite unsparing, as in the chilling but enthralling scenes, only published in the next century, of the epileptics who make a pilgrimage to Meulenbeek outside Brussels in the hope of obtaining a cure (Nos. 91–93). The sometimes witty and sometimes sarcastic and satirical investigations of the follies and charm of rustic or unsophisticated behaviour are still more sustained, deeper, and certainly more wide-ranging in the prints. Aside from the poor alchemist and his family (No. 27), there is the great Feast of Fools (No. 29); and then there are the satires on capitalism in the wonderfully animated *Battle Between the Money Chests and the Money Bags* (No. 54), or on pure greed, in the robust and slightly disgusting behaviour of the peasants in the so-called *Fat and Thin Kitchens* (Nos. 55–56), and on the blatant self-interest evinced by Everyman searching for something he can turn to his own advantage wherever he can, at any price. Indeed, he wears a thick pair of spectacles he is so short-sighted (both literally and spiritually so), and he requires a lantern to go in search of what he needs, even though it is daytime (No. 26).

As we have come to expect from the paintings, there are visualizations and personifications of popular Flemish proverbs (eg. Nos. 65–76), and vivid portrayals of the delightfully naive popular entertainments that took place at Carnival-time. These include the masquerade of the wildman Ourson and his brother the gallant knight Valentin



Flemish Proverbs, Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen
Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin (West)
(Photo: Jörg P. Anders)



Children's Games, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

(No.60), shown in the sole surviving woodcut; or the marriage of the thick-witted peasant Mopsus and his wild bride Nisa, a story ultimately derived from Virgil (No.80; cf. Lebeer No.79).

Against—or, rather, along with—these displays of verism, this sense of everyday reality, and these rustic adaptations of precedent from classical antiquity, we must set his indebtedness to his strange Dutch predecessor Hieronymus Bosch (ca. 1450–1516). We see it in the early prints of 1557, from *The Big Fish Eating the Little Fish* (No.16) onwards. Here Bosch is recorded as designer of the print, not Bruegel. This was presumably done in order to cash in on the taste for Bosch, over forty years after his death (that Bruegel was its designer we know from the extant preparatory drawing for the print in the Albertina in Vienna). Indeed, in the years between 1556 and 1558, a series of prints by Bruegel was published, from the *Temptation of St. Anthony* (No.14) and the scene of *Patience* (No.15), with their inverted table tops, huge broken eggshells symbolizing fragility and vanity, and the all-too anal monsters, to the sequences of *Virtues and Vices*, with their improbable flying beasts, suspended boats, and sexual caprices of men, women, and weird animals, with their broken eggs and smashed eyeglasses—all, once again, derived from Bosch. So too is the wild array of strange and often disgusting monsters that surround St. James in the rather later prints showing the saint's contest with the magician Hermogenes, who is the commander of a mad crew of acrobatic,

deformed, trunkless multilimbed, squat, froglike and finally sexual and suicidal demons (Nos. 57–58). Even in the scene in the print of the *Witch of Mallegem* (Mallegem = "Home or Place of the Mad", No. 28) where a wizard cuts stones of madness out of fools' heads, the scene is enacted in the characteristic broken egg we see everywhere in the painted oeuvre of the master from 's Hertogenbosch. But it would be wrong to think of Bruegel's prints as only indebted to precursors, or, indeed, to his more popular contemporaries. There is much more to them, and even when he borrows, it is the transformations of each borrowing that is significant: the demons are turned into fools, for example, or their deeds made to seem grimmer, more savage, and still darker.

Then there are those aspects of his art that can hardly be gauged from the paintings at all: the great series of men o' war and other vessels strikingly exemplify an ability that one might only suspect from pictures like the *Fall of Icarus* in Brussels (a beautiful work now almost unanimously regarded as a copy), the *Gloomy Day* in Vienna, and the *View of Naples* in the Doria Gallery in Rome. Only the prints can convey his real mastery in this area (Nos. 41–50). His knowledge of classical antiquity, so obviously important to him, and a crucial part of his culture (since it stands at the other pole to his interest in the everyday and local popular culture of his time) occasionally emerges in pictures like the *Fall of Icarus*, but we see it again and again in prints such as the landscapes not only with that subject, but also with the *Fall of Phaethon* and the *Mercury and Psyche*, and in the possibly apocryphal allegory of the *Triumph of Time or Saturn* (Nos. 81, 82 and 87 respectively). Finally, the prints supply us, as will be seen in the catalogue and in the essays, with important information about the compositions that also appear as paintings—as, above all, in the case of those two very beautiful sketches in grisaille that served as the basis for the engravings of *The Death of the Virgin* and *The Woman Taken in Adultery* (Nos. 86 and 88).

It is important to bear in mind the status of the prints within Bruegel's artistic output. With one exception, the marvellously delicate etching of the *Rabbit Hunters* (No. 62), they are not by him. As was the practice at the time, Bruegel drew the compositions, which were then handed over to an accomplished engraver, who executed the compositions given to him almost line for line. This was the age when printmaking passed from the domain of the artist alone to that of the entrepreneur-publisher. It is significant that Bruegel's career coincides almost exactly with that of one of the most famous print-publishing shops of all time, that of Hieronymus Cock in Antwerp. Known throughout the world as the House of the Four Winds (which, of course, aided in the dissemination of the prints to all corners of the earth) it dominated the world's print trade for twenty-two years, and was responsible for endowing the reproductive print with new purposes and functions. The first prints from Cock's shop were published in 1548 and Cock died one year after Bruegel himself. It was natural that Cock should publish many of Bruegel's prints, and possibly even engrave several of them himself.

Without the opportunities afforded by Cock, Bruegel may well not have turned to printmaking at all; but it seems that as soon as he returned to his native town of Antwerp from Italy in 1554–55, he started to make prints. The earliest drawings specifically for prints date from 1555. Needless to say, some of the earliest prints reflect the experience of his journey to Italy, most notably his crossing of the Alps. These are the images which changed the course of Western landscape depiction. They show great and craggy mountains, deep lakes and forests, and wide rivers; there are buildings and villages and a surprising amount of human activity too, but they are generally tucked comfortably and inconspicuously in unexpected parts of grand and incredibly detailed settings. These are his so-called cosmic landscapes, where the eye looks down on the valleys from above, and where it seems to descend from high mountaintop into the deepest valley, and then to rise again to the precipitous rocks of another range opposite, or to a high and very far horizon. This is exactly the kind of vast landscape that Bruegel recalled when, ten or so years later, he returned to the famous series of paintings known as the *Seasons* or *Months* (it seems that there were six in the series, each representing two months, though it is not impossible that there were once as many as twelve). But, as we shall see, the slightly more intimate scale of prints like the *Pagus Nemorosus*, the *Wooded Grove* (No. 11), were to prove even more important for the subsequent history of landscape in the Netherlands.

For the next few years—say until around 1560—he worked intensely on his print output. Until then he seems to have worked on a comparatively modest scale when it came to the paintings. But as the paintings grew in importance, and commanded more of his attention, the amount of time devoted to the prints seems to have decreased. Indeed, the move that Bruegel was forced to make to Brussels in 1563, where there was no publisher like Cock, seems pretty

much to have put paid to his activities as a designer of prints. And it was from this date on that his production of paintings reached a pitch of intensity that was to remain almost unabated until his death in 1569.

It is worth examining in greater detail the varieties and classes of his print output. Timothy Riggs has recently shown that the first print by Bruegel to be published by Cock was the 1554 *Landscape with the Temptation of Christ* (No.96),¹ shortly followed by the famous series of large landscapes (Nos.1–13). With two exceptions (Nos.83 and 30), all the prints after Bruegel's designs produced between 1554 and 1563 were published by Cock. In fact, the exceptions are paralleled by very similar compositions within the Cock output (Nos.28 and 52). Once he moved to Brussels Bruegel did continue, for a year or two, to send a few designs for Cock to publish from the Antwerp shop, but between this year and his death, seventeen of Bruegel's prints were published by other firms.

Most of the prints carrying Bruegel's name as designer or inventor were based on drawings by him, and were published in his lifetime; but several of those published later may well not stem from works by him at all—although some certainly do reflect extant or lost works, in painting and in drawing.

As already mentioned, only one of the prints carrying Bruegel's name, or associated with him, is by the artist himself—namely the beautiful and delicate *Rabbit Hunters* published by Cock in 1560 (and not 1566 as used to be supposed) (No.62).² In its lightness of touch and its marvellously atmospheric evanescence it comes closer, not surprisingly, than any of the other prints to the quality of one of Bruegel's own subtle and technically imaginative landscape drawings. There is one anonymous woodcut after a design by him (No.60), and one surviving woodblock which has only been cut in a very small area: the rest of the block—now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York—still shows the artist's design on its surface; but for one reason or another the woodblock project was aborted, and the design reproduced in an engraving by Pieter van der Heyden (No.80). The series of twelve large landscapes and the one large alpine landscape (Nos.1–13) are in fact done in a combination of etching and engraving; but for the rest the prints are all entirely engraved with the burin. The important and magnificent sequence of large landscapes—just as with the *Festival of St. George*, No.52—were attributed by Lebeer to the hand of Hieronymus Cock himself, but Oberhuber (who insisted that they were all pure etchings) gave them to the brothers Jan and Lucas van Duetecum³. A couple of drawings specifically preparatory to these prints survive, but for the rest, quite a number of elements within them have been shown to be based on drawings which Bruegel made in the course of his journeys and just after them, between 1552 and 1556. Subsequent engravings were done by—or have been attributed to—Pieter van der Heyden, commonly also known, *inter alia* by the latinized version of his name, Petrus a Merica (Nos.14–26, 38, 53–58, 61, 63, 77–78, 80), F. Hogenberg (No.30), Philips Galle (Nos.27, 31–37, 59), Frans Huys, (Nos.40–51) and Jan Wierix (Nos.64–76). But this last group, a series of roundels illustrating popular proverbs, takes us into a further problematic area. Only the first of them is inscribed as having been designed by Bruegel himself; but most scholars are now of the opinion that none of them stem from designs by him. The implication is that they rather reflect the taste for proverbial illustration, instigated by Bruegel himself and by artists such as Frans Hogenberg, and then carried further by contemporaries such as Pieter Balten and Maerten van Cleef, and finally, of course, by the work of Bruegel's son and careful copyist, Pieter Bruegel the Younger. The relationship with all these masters, as well as with earlier German printmakers, has carefully been examined by Yoko Mori.⁴

Of the prints published by Cock after Bruegel's death, some, such as the *Spring* and *Summer* (Nos.77 and 78) are clearly after drawings which Cock must have acquired for his business, while others, such as the *Battle of the Money Chests and Money Bags* (No.54), the *Wedding Dance* (No.61) and the *Feast of Fools* (No.29) were published by Cock's widow after her husband's death—and their immediate models are uncertain. Three engravings published after Bruegel's death (the *Resurrection*, the *Death of the Virgin* and the *Woman Taken into Adultery*, (Nos.84, 86 and 88), by Philips Galle and Paul Perret respectively) are after the beautiful and still surviving grisailles in oil by Bruegel himself. The *etchings* of the landscapes with *Mercury Abducting Psyche* and the *Fall of Icarus* (Nos.81–82) were also done long after his death, probably later than 1580, even though the inscriptions record that they followed drawings made by Bruegel in Rome in 1553. The seventeenth-century prints, such as those by Lucas Vorsterman (Nos.89–90), and Hendrick Hondius, of the epileptics being carried to the pilgrimage church of St. John in Meulebeke (now a suburb of Brussels) (Nos.91–95), are all said to be after Pieter Bruegel the Elder; but the claim, especially in the case of the Hondius prints, has frequently been doubted—and with some justification. But one of the great merits of the

present exhibition is that the interested spectator will have the opportunity of making these distinctions for himself, and thus contributing to the vexed debates about quality, attribution and originality. Is a work an etching or an engraving, or a combination of both? Does it appear to be directly after a design by Bruegel himself, or is it some more distant derivation? This is the kind of question that the more technically and stylistically minded visitor will ask himself. But these are by no means all the questions to be asked of these prints.

Amongst the more difficult issues in the field are those that now surround Bruegel's iconography (and not just of the prints), as well as the question of the extent to which he followed nature in his landscapes and in his representations of peasant scenes. As will be apparent from the essays in this catalogue, and from the catalogue entries themselves, these are the two chief areas on which the most recent art historical scholarship has concentrated. Almost every print has specific iconographic problems; but even the visitor to the exhibition who has not immersed himself in the scholarly literature will realize immediately that there are more general interpretive difficulties. For example: are the grand and breathtaking alpine scenes to be regarded as direct representations of actual scenes, or are they composites? Does the more intimate representation of Flemish villages, as say, in the *Pagus Nemorosus*, the Wooded Grove, reflect any village in particular (No.11)? Then there are the cases which are clearly composite, such as the prints showing the kinds of village that we may assume could have been seen anywhere in the Low Countries but which are set in the foreground of huge mountainscapes that could not possibly occur there (such as the *Plastrum Belgicum*, the Belgian Plough or the *Sollicitudo Rustica*, Rustic Solitude or Rustic Cares) (Nos.6 and 7). Here the question arises as to which elements Bruegel would have taken from the drawings he made as he crossed the Alps or on the basis of his recollections of them. And what purpose is served by subjects such as the *St. Jerome* or the *Penitent Magdalen* (Nos.2 and 3)? It sometimes used to be claimed that such subjects were there simply in order to provide pretexts for the vast and teeming landscapes, in which the figural subjects are almost entirely lost. This, at any rate, is what often was supposed of earlier painted Flemish landscapes, notably those by Bruegel's illustrious Flemish predecessor, Joachim Patinir. Or do the landscapes have a further spiritual meaning, as the most recent research is beginning to suggest?

There is a related problem in the case of many of the figurative compositions. Some of the prints, such as those which show the *Feast of Fools* (No.29) and the blind—or at least shortsighted—stupidity and greed of *Everyman* (No.26) are clearly allegorical, while others are even more clearly illustrations of proverbs; but even in instances such as these, the question must arise as to the extent to which Bruegel based his representations on actual behaviour or everyday happening. There can be no doubt that they give the appearance of reality, even when physiognomies are satirically distorted, or made pointedly grotesque; but how much is based on actual event, on real life? It might, for example, be thought that scenes such as the *Witch of Mallegem*, and the *Dean of Ronse* (No.83, a print possibly not after Bruegel himself), show a purely fantastic surgical operation; and that the meaning of the print is to be related to the proverbial expressions in which fools have the stone of folly in their head, which can only be excised by the surgical operation removing that stone. The theme is to be found in this sense in a painting by Hieronymus Bosch, and not infrequently in sixteenth century Flemish literature; but R.H. Marijnissen has recently found archival evidence of the performance of just such operations for the stone as late as 1571.⁵ While the print is clearly no documentary record, we are still left with the problem of what elements of reality may be detected in it; in addition to its resonance in terms of proverbial criticisms of folly, might it also contain a specific criticism of those gullible enough to be taken in by charlatans and quacks?

Once we pose the questions in this way we realize that the issue at stake is not only the extent to which the scenes (or parts of them) are taken after the life, but rather of Bruegel's attitude towards what he chooses to represent. In the splendidly rambunctious depictions of the *St. George's Day Fair* (No.52), for example, or the now much-discussed *Fair at Hoboken* (No.30), or the *Wedding Dance* (No.61), or even the delightful skating scene outside the *St. George's Gate* at Antwerp (No.51), even a swift glance will be sufficient for most beholders to realize that one has to do with more than a simple documentary record of the life of the countryside, or the pastimes of simple urban folk. After all, in the *Fair of Hoboken*, just as in the *St. George's Day Fair*, the actual religious event is deep in the background, while the behaviour of the peasants seems anything but decorous and respectful. Indeed, in the *Fair at Hoboken* a fool leads two children in the foreground; just behind them a troop of swine cross the path. The crucial question, then—

and it is one which has been more discussed than any other Bruegel problem in recent years—is whether he is critical of the low and coarse behaviour of the peasants; or whether, as the earliest biography suggests, he was rather more sympathetic to them. Of course, it is possible both to be sympathetic and to be critical, as one might, for example, say of Bruegel's near-contemporary in France, François Rabelais, the great philosopher of excess, or to see the virtue in folly, as in the writings of his greatest Netherlandish forebear, Desiderius Erasmus (1469–1536); but this is what many contemporary scholars tend to forget. On the other hand, they can hardly be blamed. Bruegel himself seems to be ambivalent: in the *Hoboken* (as in the famous painting of the mock *Fight between Carnival and Lent* in Vienna) we find the fools and the pigs; in the other two prints the spectators within the picture simply point at what seem to be comparatively straightforward representations of people enjoying themselves. It might be thought that problems like these could be resolved by examining the one piece of documentary evidence that we have in the case of the prints and not in the case of the pictures, namely the inscriptions beneath the prints.

But here too a caution is necessary. As with any number of sixteenth and seventeenth century prints—but most notably Dutch and Flemish ones—the inscriptions were not added to the prints by the artist himself, but usually by the publisher. They were often commissioned from a third or fourth party, on the basis of the image presented to them. While in some cases one may assume that the composer of the inscription wrote his words in the spirit of the intention of the artist—or, very rarely, in keeping with the artist's instructions—most were done simply on the basis of the ideas suggested to the writer by the print itself. The result could be one which had very little if anything to do with the artist's intention, and was sometimes deliberately—and quite appropriately—ambiguous. In any event, ambiguity is precisely what arises acutely in the case of the interpretation of any number of Bruegel's prints, and especially with the scenes of everyday and popular life. Thus the second state of the print of *Skating outside St. George's Gate in Antwerp* (No.51) has an inscription likening the frequency with which the skaters fall and the fragility of the ice to the course of human life: Some fall, some slip, some manage to stay upright: the picture of skating teaches us how we go through our lives; but what we do know is that these mortal lives of ours are still more fragile than ice. This kind of moralizing inscription was very often *post facto*: we cannot say that Bruegel himself intended such lessons to be drawn from his charming scene of winter pastimes (though why is the prominent child in the lower right foreground riding on a sleigh made of two jawbones?). On the other hand there is some evidence to suggest that this is just the kind of moral that he intended to be drawn from all his works, and that everyday life, however realistically it may seem to be represented, was saturated with moral symbolism. The *Wedding Dance* (No.61) has an inscription suggesting something of the empathetic delight the spectator might take in the robust and lively dance of the peasant wedding. On the other hand, the signs of licentiousness are quite clear, and although we would do well not to import nineteenth and twentieth century notions of prudishness into our interpretations, features like the bagpiper very often carried with them connotations of sinfulness. The *Feast of Hoboken* has its prominent fools and pigs, offering a kind of visual commentary on the behaviour of everyone else; and while the inscription notes, almost insistently, how much the peasants enjoy their revelries, their feasting and drunkenness, it also adds that they are drunk like *animals*, and that they are given to such indulgences, even though they might have to fast and die of the cold as a result. Contrary, then, to the suggestions of a positive attitude to the peasants, there seems much that is critical of their ways. But in the print of the *St. George's Day Fair*, a banner showing the saint hangs outside the inn with an unequivocal statement on it: let the peasants hold their feasts (No.52). Could it be, as Monballieu has suggested, that this statement is made in defiance of the varieties of restrictions placed on peasant revelry, especially in the celebration of feast days, in the very years in which this print was made?⁶ Given the abundance of polemic on just this subject, and the clear legislation about it, there is much to support the proposal. It would be hard, in any case to avoid the possible symbolism of the pointing figures on the left and in the right foreground, the game of ball and hoop on the left, the somersaulting figure, and children on their hobbyhorses so prominently placed in the centre foreground of the print as a whole. These childish games—as is probably the case with the great pictures known as the *Children's Games*, the *Flemish Proverbs* and the *Fight Between Carnival and Lent*—can hardly be construed as anything but parallels for the childish and often foolish behaviour of adults, whose false pride (as suggested by the hobby-house) often goes before a fall (as, perhaps suggested by the somersaulting figures). Such an interpretation may not be correct; but it would be within the spirit of everything else we know about Bruegel's work, and about the literature of his time, where everyday behav-

iour, whether childish, popular or rustic, becomes the carriers of serious moral messages. The issue of accurate ethnography thus recedes in the face of symbolization; but it does not recede altogether. For the investigator—whether art historian or anthropologist—to deny the symbolic motivation of behaviour is to lose oneself in false empiricism.

When it comes to the prints which are not of landscapes or of peasant or every life, the issues of interpretation may seem, on the whole, to be simpler—or rather, that we can at least go some way with them. With series like the *Virtues and the Vices*, or individual prints like the *Ass at School*, the *Alchemist*, the *Peasant Robbed by Monkeys*, or even the immensely complex print of *Elck*, Everyman, we have the sense that each element in them can at least potentially be interpreted, even though specific meanings may occasionally be lost to us. We can immediately see that the motif of the upturned beehive in the *Ass at School* (No.17), or the large knife carried by helmeted figures whose heads are characteristically suppressed in *Ira*, Anger (No.18), or the marvellous astronomer and geographer perched on or near the orb of the world in *Temperantia* (No.37) must all be capable of specific interpretation.

Most of the vices, indeed, are accompanied by the animals that symbolize them, the two figures in *Elck* that tug at a piece of cloth are a straight illustration of the Flemish proverb that “everyone pulls for the longest piece” (i.e. seeks his own advantage), *Ira* is literally “armed to the teeth”, while in the print of *Luxuria*, Lust, for example, the naked embracing couple are enclosed in a bubble (the usual symbol of vanity). This in turn is enclosed in a mussel shell (the usual symbol of lust) from which a monkey (the usual symbol of raw sensuality) leans forward (No.24). We may not know exactly what it is that hangs from the animal’s hand, but at least we may be confident that it means *something*. If no interpreter has yet discovered what it is, we can be sure that in due course he or she will.

The series of *Virtues* (Nos.31–37), on the other hand, epitomize some of the most typical problems in the scholarship on Bruegel. Some scholars more or less straightforwardly maintain that the multitudes of figures and scenes within each print simply exemplify the virtue the chief figure is meant to personify; but others have noted a disjunction between the virtue represented by each female figure in the centre and the surrounding ones, and have suggested that there may even be a deliberate opposition between the central figure on the one hand, and the subsidiary scenes on the other. Indeed, when one considers a print like *Fides*, Faith, and notes that the bulk of the congregation turn their backs on Faith herself in order to listen to a monkish preacher, while other members of the congregation count money or pick pockets, it is hard not to wonder whether the print might not perhaps contain at least some suggestion, deliberate but conceivably veiled, that the followers of orthodox and organized Catholicism were not the followers of the True Faith after all (No.31). Just as in several—if not all—of the prints of the rest of the series, what may seem at first sight to be no more than exemplifications of the central virtue, turn out, quite possibly, to be perversions of those virtues. Thus, in *Prudentia*, Prudence, while the figures carrying sacks, or gathering wood, or pouring money from bags into chests, may seem to exemplify that virtue, they do so to excess, and thus embody nothing less than one of the antitheses of Prudence, namely avarice and greed itself (No.35). All the subsidiary figures in *Spes*, Hope, do have abundant reasons for hope; but very few seem near to the salvation they need: in fact, most of them are perilously near death, and look alarmingly desperate—thus suggesting nothing so much as hopelessness itself (No.32). And while it is easy enough to maintain that sixteenth-century standards of justice were far more rigorous and severe than modern ones, do not the punishments meted out under the supervision of Blind Justice seem quite unnecessarily and unjustly harsh (No.34)?

The answer to this kind of question must necessarily remain ambiguous; at least for the time being. But that is precisely the stance that so many of Bruegel’s work seems to demand. It is almost as if Bruegel has evolved a philosophy that is predicated on the ultimate ambiguity of things. In some respects it is a view of the world that is similar to the wise folly of Erasmus’s great *Praise of Folly* of about two generations earlier, but which continued to inform Netherlandish thought (it is certainly closer to Erasmus than to Sebastian Brant (1457–1521), the author of that other famous book of the century, the *Ship of Fools*); but it is a philosophy that also seems profoundly and resignedly pessimistic. There is much humour in Bruegel, but it is always replete with implication, and, sometimes, foreboding. In this respect he comes closer to his distinguished contemporary, Dirck Volckertsz. Coornhert (1522–1590), the engraver-philosopher of Haarlem, who taught a whole generation of engravers in the Northern Netherlands, and whose writings exemplified the virtues of tolerance, moderation and the tempering of excessive orthodoxy. Coornhert may also have been a printmaker, but he is even more renowned for the books in which his position on the orthodox

institutions of man and God seems just as ambiguous as that of Bruegel, and are certainly as sceptical—even if not quite as pessimistic.

But it would be wrong to conclude this introduction on a sombre note. The philosophical issues raised by the work of Pieter Bruegel the Elder, their descendancy and their context, may long continue to be debated; but the status of his art and the high pleasures it afford are beyond dispute. No visitor to the exhibition will fail to marvel at the spectacular alpine views; or at the means whereby he conveys damp airiness in the series of ships; or at the teeming multiplicity of his demon regiments, the picturesque crassness of the peasants, the stolidity of those taken in by quacks and the stupidity of those, like *Elck* and the *Alchemist*, whose passage through this transient world is driven solely by greed. The ideas for the demons, the upended, trunkless or multi-limbed monsters, the flying fish, the omnipresent frog-like creatures who gesticulate all too vividly may for example, have come from Hieronymus Bosch, but Bruegel transformed them with the unabated inventiveness that characterizes all of his art. It is hard not to be spellbound by compelling images such as the howling man in the print of *Desidia*, Idleness, whose large and exposed rump is lanced and thereby made to defecate by a veritable cohort of naked-bottomed militiamen (No.19); or by the frightful exposure of genitalia in the print of *Lust*, where mouth and genital orifice become one, or where horrible demon holds a mutilated penis in one hand, while with the other he prepares to cut off the new one that has sprouted in its place (No.24).

The alpine and marine views may be wide and untrammelled, but in the dark vision of the *Christ in Limbo* (No.38) and the hellish fights waged by St. James against Hermogenes (No.57) space is claustrophobic and so fiercely delimited that the monsters press outward upon us from the very paper on which they are printed. In the print of *Spring* (No.77), as in many of the paintings, the picture plane is tilted upwards to accommodate an aery vision of the diligent and pleasurable activities it generates; while in the *Virtues* and *Vices* series, and even more so in the peasant scenes the viewer looks down upon the scenes from an even greater height, and is thus enabled to take in an array of activities that is so compendious that it seems to be made up of every possible variation of the theme at hand. In other works, like the *Fat* and *Thin Kitchen*, or the *Battle of the Money Bags and Money Chests*, the overwhelming oppressiveness of the scenes is only enhanced by the near-suppression of any outlet to the sky beyond. To his prolific and endlessly fertile inventiveness Bruegel adds an ability in the manipulation of space that is hardly ever remarked upon, but is one the great hallmarks of his art. One has only to think of how earth, table and roof tilt in a kind of drunken counterpoint to each other in a way that seems to match the sprawling stupor of the drunken and sated figures in the *Land of Cockaigne* (No.63). While no one who looks at Bruegel's art can quite avoid the tone of pessimism, there is much that is comic in it too, as Svetlana Alpers so forcefully reminded Bruegel scholars over ten years ago.⁷ But whatever the morality beneath the comedy, there can few who will fail to be moved by the charming scenes with children, by the quaint local customs of Flemish peasants, by the frequently sympathetic psychological penetration with which he depicts their faces and their mien. He shows the peasant customs of a world that is mostly long lost, but which some visitors to the Low Countries and Northern France might still see. The images are documents of the past, for the most part, but in their psychological insight they are part of a world that we intimately know. He recalls the past, but just as with the vision of the divine, he enfolds it—brings it down to earth, one might justly say—in the sometimes enduring and sometimes lost culture of proverbs. The art is boisterous and abundant too, and if the message is often a bleak one, Bruegel's genius lies in the energy and generosity of spirit with which he depicts the world around him. He transforms it by an imagination that is commanding, poignant, and boundlessly keen, and an art that is so far beyond that of his contemporaries that while their names are now largely forgotten, his name rightly shines amongst the greatest and most thoughtful pictorial inventors of all time.

Notes

1. Riggs 1979, p.167.
2. See L. Malke in Berlin 1975, Nos.75 and 75a, and White 1979.
3. Oberhuber in Vienna 1968.
4. Mori 1976 and 1978.
5. Cf. Marijnissen 1979, p.61.
6. Monballieu 1974; cf. now Monballieu 1986 for a further refinement.
7. Alpers 1972–73.

The Life of Pieter Bruegel the Elder

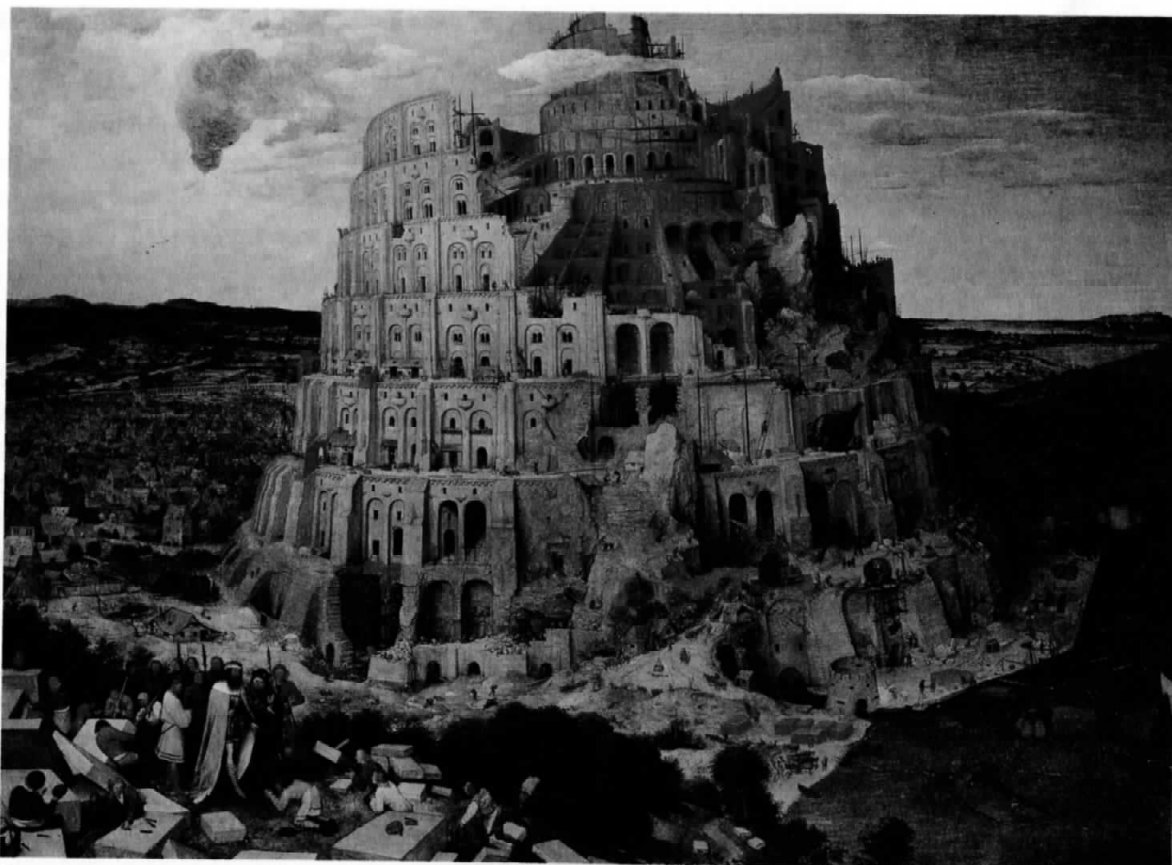
David Freedberg

We can be certain of neither Bruegel's birthdate nor his birthplace. What we do know is that he entered the Antwerp Guild of St. Luke as a painter in 1551, that he was in Italy (where all young Flemish painters of the time travelled to study the art of classical antiquity and of the Italian Renaissance) in 1552–53, that he married and moved to Brussels in 1563, and that he was buried there in 1569. Since Antwerp painters usually became masters of the guild between the ages of 21 and 25, and since there is some evidence to suggest that he died at the age of 41 or 42, it seems likely that he was born between 1526 and 1530, and quite possibly in the year 1527–28.¹ But of this, like so much else in his life, we cannot yet be sure. There is one fairly long early biography; it is that by the first great historiographer of Netherlandish art, Carel van Mander—who did for the history of Dutch and Flemish art what the still more famous Giorgio Vasari did for Italian art between 1555 and 1568.

The trouble with van Mander's account is that it was written over thirty years after the death of Bruegel, and that it is full of rather predictable and possibly fanciful anecdotes. On the other hand, his informants included men like his teacher, Lucas d'Heere, who may well have known Bruegel himself. The biography of Bruegel occurs in the section on the lives of the old Flemish and Dutch Masters in the book known as *Het Schilderboek*, published in Haarlem in 1604, in the newly liberated Northern Netherlands (the region we now generally call Holland). It is a lively and engaging account, and, provided we remain aware of its shortcomings, can be fleshed out with other evidence. This is how it runs:

Nature wonderfully found her Man, and seized him, and then was in turn splendidly seized by him, when she went out to choose amongst the peasants (in order to imitate the peasants with the brush) the very witty and artful Pieter Bruegel, and roused him to the art of painting, to the eternal fame of the Netherlands. He was born not far from Breda in a town called Brueghel, which name he in turn took and left to his descendants. He learned his art with Pieter Coecke van Aelst, whose daughter he subsequently married; indeed when she was still small, he frequently carried her on his arm, at the time he was living with Pieter Coecke. Afterwards he went to work with Hieronymus Cock, and then he travelled to France and from there to Italy. He did a lot in the manner of Hieronymus Bosch: and made so many grotesques and drolleries that he was called by many Pieter the Droll. There are several works by him which the spectator can scarcely look at without laughing. In fact, however stolid, surly or reserved one may be, one has at least to smile or grin.

In the course of his travels he portrayed many views after the life, so that it was said of him, that when he was in the Alps he swallowed all the mountains and rocks, and that when he came home he spat them out on his canvases and panels, so closely could he imitate these and other parts of nature. He chose and took Antwerp as his home, and became a member of the guild or painters' chamber in the year of Our Lord 1551. He did much for a merchant called Hans Franckert, who was a man of noble character and who much enjoyed the company of Bruegel, and spent time with him every day. With this Frankert Bruegel often went out of doors to the peasants' fairs and weddings, dressed up in peasant clothes; and they gave gifts just like the other guests, claiming to be of the same family or kin of the bride or groom. Here Bruegel took pleasure in observing the life and essence of the peasants, in their eating, drinking, dancing, jumping, making love, and capering about. These things he very wittily and cleverly knew how to imitate in paint, both in watercolour and in oils, because he was very good in handling both. He also knew how to show the peasant men and women of the Kempen and elsewhere in their characteristic and peculiar garments and how to represent the very nature of their rusticity, in dancing, walking, standing still, and



Tower of Babel, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

moving in different ways.

He was amazingly secure in his compositions, and was very clever and pure in his handling of the pen, thereby making many small views after the life. When he was still living in Antwerp he kept house with a young girl, whom he would have married; but he was displeased by the fact that she always tended to tell lies (and thus was rather sparing with the truth). He made a contract with her and agreed that he would carve all her lies on a stick of cherry wood, which he made reasonably long, but should the stick in time become full, the marriage would be off—which is exactly what happened before long. Finally when he was staying with the widow of Pieter Coecke in Brussels, he began to court her daughter, having often (as has already been said) carried her on her arm as a child. And so he married her. But the mother insisted that he should leave Antwerp and come and live in Brussels and forget the previous girl. And so this also happened.

He was a very quiet and decorous man, of not many words, but rather humorous in company. Sometimes he even gave people—including his own assistants—a fright with some spooking about or strange noise.

Some of his most important works are now with the Emperor, including a large picture of the *Tower of Babel*, in which there is much fine work, and the interior can also be seen from above. There is also another smaller version of this subject. There are also two pieces of the *Carrying of the Cross*. They too look very natural and as usual they have some drolleries in it. Also a *Massacre of the Innocents*, in which there are many realistic things to be seen, as I have told elsewhere: a whole family trying to stop a peasant child from being killed by one of the murderous soldiers who has grabbed it; the sorrow and the swooning of the mothers, and other effects which are well shown. Further a *Conversion of St. Paul* with many fine rocks. Indeed it would be hard to tell of everything he painted showing weird and magical scenes, Hell, rustic events and other things. He did a *Temptation of Christ*, in which one looks from above, as if in the Alps, and sees below one towns and fields, covered with clouds, in which

sometimes one sees the places appearing through them. Also a *Mad Meg*, who does a robbery in front of Hell itself. She looks completely dazed and is strangely armed and dressed. I believe that these and other pieces are also to be seen in the court of the Emperor. In Amsterdam the art-loving Herman Pilgrims has a *Peasant Wedding* in oils which is very fine. In it one sees the peasant's faces and naked skin all yellow and brown as if burned by the sun; their hide is ugly, not at all like town dwellers. He also made a piece in which *Carnival fights with Lent*; and another in which all remedies are used against Death; another in which all kinds of childrens' games are shown; and many other moralizations. Two canvases in watercolour at the home of the art-loving Willem Jacobsz., near the New Church in Amsterdam, depict a *Peasant Fair and Wedding*, in which there are many droll and comic scenes, showing the true character of the peasants. Amongst those giving the bride her gifts is an old peasant with a small money bag round the neck busy counting out the money into his hand. These are all outstanding pieces.

A short while before his death, the Council of Brussels commissioned him to do some pieces showing the digging of the canal from Brussels to Antwerp; but they were left unfinished at his death. Many of his inventions of comical and devilish subjects can be seen engraved. But he also made many very careful and beautiful drawings, with several inscriptions added to them. Some of these were all too biting and satirical; and so as he lay dying he had them burnt by his wife, either through sorrow or because he feared that she might suffer as a result of them, or be held responsible for them. In his will he bequeathed to his wife a piece with the *Magpie on the Gallows*. By the magpie he meant the gossiping tongues whom he dedicated to the gallows. He also made a piece in which Truth broke through: according to him this was the best piece that was done by him. He left behind him two sons who also both became good painters. The one called Pieter studied with Gillis van Coninxloo, and is a painter after the life.² Jan learned watercolours from his grandmother, the widow of Pieter van Aelst, and then went to study oil painting with Pieter Goedtkindt, who owned many fine things. He then went to Cologne and then to Italy and has risen to such esteem with his small landscapes and very small pictures in which there are outstanding fine compositions.

Lampsonius speaks to Bruegel in this way, and asks:

Who is this new Jerome Bosch come into the world, who imitates his Master's clever dreams [i.e. Bosch's] and lets us experience them with the brush, and imitates his style so ably that in the meantime has even exceeded him? Pieter gains in spirit just as his art grows more fruitful: and the wit and inventiveness of his painting in the manner of his old master is certainly worthy of laughter; and he is his equal, and deserves to be praised, no less than any other artist.³

Although this good natured, anecdotal and slightly repetitious account outlines some of the most important aspects of Bruegel's life and art, and must form the basis for any biography, it has not generally had a good press from later biographers and historians of art. But it is much more revealing than usually acknowledged. It has not received a good press because it has been felt to overemphasize Bruegel's involvement in and affection for peasant life, because it is theoretically uncritical about the way in which he is supposed to have painted *naer het leven* "after the life," and because of its omissions.

Certainly there are flaws. Art historians have been swift to point out that the image of Bruegel dressing up like a peasant in order to mix more freely with the people of the countryside and villages is a commonplace of art historical biography. But to fault the account as a whole simply on the grounds that one of its anecdotes is no more than a cliché is to overlook its insights.

Van Mander's life of Bruegel begins with the two intertwined themes that will form the persistent leitmotif of the whole account: the theme of the great recorder of peasant life, and the theme of his ability to rival Nature herself. Indeed, the latter notion had already been broached by Bruegel's own friend, the great humanist geographer, Abraham Ortelius, in his autograph eulogy of the artist in the early to mid-1570s. Ortelius, as we shall see, commented that after starting off as a rival of Nature, he soon outdid her, until she became jealous of him, and caused his premature death. All this, of course, is a commonplace of artistic compliment, but it is as well for the modern reader to bear in mind the close relation between the theme of rustic and peasant representation and the imitation of nature. It is a relation that no one who examines Bruegel's work could deny, even if we now know to be rather more

sceptical about what is actually meant by that repeated phrase in Dutch writing about art, "after the life", which, of course, recurs several times in van Mander's life of Bruegel. While we may be fully aware that not all Bruegel's mountains can be regarded as exact representations of particular mountains—and that what we ourselves mean when we speak of the following of reality is not at all clear—the point is that they give the *impression* of being close to nature, or even after it. The same applies to his wonderfully vigorous presentation of peasant life.

It is therefore unfair to van Mander to claim that he was trying to suggest that Bruegel was of peasant stock himself. Indeed, the brief description of his quiet, thoughtful and decorous character is in keeping with what we know about Bruegel as a member of the most refined and serious of Antwerp's intellectual circles. But at the same time van Mander insists on just that aspect of Bruegel's life and work that modern scholars, with a very few (and notable) exceptions, have tended to underplay, or to ignore altogether: his humour. This is as important a theme of the life as the other two I have already mentioned. Bruegel is witty, the spectator cannot look at his works without breaking into a smile—at least; he gives his students frights (though psychoanalytically-minded readers might regard this as further evidence of his saturninity and bleakness); and he paints natural scenes which have comic episodes in them (another telling collocation). But it is not as if van Mander thinks only of Bruegel as a witty and droll painter. Despite bestowing on him the name of "Pieter the Droll", van Mander makes the dark side of his work perfectly clear; indeed, he even hints at a perilous or precarious side of his life too. Aside from the references to the picture of the *Dulle Griet* who loots—apparently unafraid—at the very mouth of Hell, or to the picture in which all kinds of resources are tried—assuredly in vain—against Death, there are the ominous implications of the episode at his deathbed. As we shall see, these were not times in which to preserve satirical or subversive works: was this why he ordered the burning of some of his works? And what is the meaning of the chilling description of the picture he specifically left to his wife in his will? 1569 was a good year for informers, but a terrible one for those they informed upon. The Council of Troubles instituted by the Duke of Alva, Philip of Spain's commander in the Netherlands, was hungry for information about possible subversives or heretics; and the informers, of which there inevitably a large number, were much hated. Is this why Bruegel wanted to deliver the gossips to the gallows? And what did he have to hide, where did he stand in the last few years of his life, the first years of the Revolt of the Netherlands? We will return to this issue in chapters three and five.

The other important theme in van Mander's *Life*—and in this van Mander, like the humanist Domenicus Lampsonius (1532–1599) before him, is absolutely correct—is Bruegel's indebtedness to Hieronymus Bosch. But in which areas is van Mander deficient, where does he need supplementation? Let us try to piece the life together in a little more detail, and with more precision, than the slightly unexact van Mander seems to demand.

All the modern biographers have been swift to point out the problem with van Mander's identification of the artist's birthplace. There are in fact two villages called Brogel (or, as it *might* have been spelt in the sixteenth century, Brueghel); but neither of these are near Breda (now in Holland), as van Mander claims. The great Italian merchant and writer, Ludovico Guicciardini, who wrote a much-translated *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi* (first published in 1567), says he came from Breda. Was van Mander simply confused, assuming that the name Bruegel was a patronymic which came from the name of a town; did he need to insist on a peculiarly humble origin for his "peasant painter", by making him come from a small village with the same name as his artist which he wrongly thought was near Breda? But one should be careful not to proceed in the way Fritz Grossman did in his otherwise very sound monograph on the artist. Grossman asserts that "the question [of Bruegel's birthplace] is of more than academic interest, for if we reject van Mander's assertion of Bruegel's village origin, nothing except the subjects of a few paintings remains in support of what we must call the legend of Bruegel the peasant". To say this is to lay the blame for the so-called legend of Bruegel the peasant at the door of van Mander; but—as I have indicated—while van Mander certainly makes a claim (which seems to me entirely justified) for Bruegel's affection for peasants and his deep interest in them, there is nothing whatsoever in his account to suggest that he regarded Bruegel himself as a peasant. He may or may not have come from peasant stock; but if anything there is a clear sense in van Mander that Bruegel, as we might expect from the pictures alone, was an intellectual observer of the peasants. Just because he depicted them brilliantly, comically and with great verve does not make him a peasant; and van Mander is very far from suggesting that he was. The blame for whatever mistaken notions we may now hold of the "peasant Bruegel" cannot be assigned to van Mander.

While there is no clear evidence in support of the alleged apprenticeship with Pieter Coecke van Aelst, there is nothing against it either. Once again we must take van Mander's information seriously. Here one has to add one of the few significant pieces of documentary evidence to come to the fore about his life in recent years. Between 1550 and 1551 (that is, after the presumed apprenticeship with Pieter Coecke, who died in 1550), Bruegel is recorded as having worked briefly on an altarpiece for the Glovers' Guild in Mechlin, the great ecclesiastical city exactly halfway between Antwerp and Brussels, under the somewhat older artist, Pieter Balten (who was later to become a kind of imitator of Bruegel). While it is natural enough that the painter should have tried his hand for a short while in this rather lesser town than Antwerp or Brussels, we know that Mechlin was a center of watercolour painting; and that Pieter Coecke's wife, Mayken Verhulst, who carried on the business of her husband once he died, was an expert in this area. The connection between Bruegel's stay in Mechlin and his relationship with the Coeckes might seem extremely circumstantial, were it not for van Mander's explicit statement that Bruegel's own son, the famous painter Jan, learned watercolour painting from his grandmother Maeyken. Even if this material remains circumstantial—and even if he were not to turn out to have been Bruegel's master—it may perhaps be worth considering Pieter Coecke's own work at greater length.

By the time of his death at the end of 1550 Pieter Coecke van Aelst was one of the most influential painters in the Netherlands and one of its most dominant artistic forces. He had a large workshop producing altarpieces painted in a manner which drew strongly on the local technical, formal and figurative traditions, but which—especially in its representation of the human anatomy—revealed a strong indebtedness to the latest currents from Italy, and to Michelangelo's muscular and anatomically demonstrative art in particular. The ornamental and decorative aspects of his work were also derived, ultimately, from Italianate sources. The combination of Italian elements with the native tradition (which showed itself too—and most clearly—in the landscape backgrounds so deplored, ironically, by Michelangelo himself, in a famous attack on the poor abilities of Flemish artists in the domain of figure painting) was to remain one of the most characteristic traits of Netherlandish painting from now on. Almost every major Flemish painter of Bruegel's lifetime, and for a long time afterwards, revealed in his work the lessons of Italy—and of Michelangelo in particular. But while Bruegel was certainly not oblivious to these, it might almost be said that in his pictorial style, in his robust and swift representation of rustic figures—not heroic religious ones—he represented a profound reaction to the dominant modes in the art of his time.

Indeed, the same might be said of his representation of landscape backgrounds and townscapes. The towns and villages, while perhaps not taken directly from the life, all give the impression of being plausibly and recognizably Flemish. Not for Bruegel the lessons of Pieter Coecke van Aelst in the field of architecture—for it was Coecke who first imported the latest ideas and themes of Italian architecture into the Netherlands.

While everyone must have had some remote sense of the work of the great humanist architects of the fifteenth century, Coecke took it upon himself the painstaking burden of translating the great modern treatises of Sebastiano Serlio into Dutch. These treatises, including a translation of the classical writer on architecture Vitruvius, were published in several instalments between 1539 and 1553, with specially drawn illustrations to serve as models for architects, painters and designers. The impact of Coecke's Serlio was swift, almost instantaneous. The renaissance motifs, the scrollwork, the ornamentation (the grotesque and strapwork ornamentation in particular) and the rules of the orders derived from classical antiquity, all these, along with exaggerated and fanciful grotesques and much scrollwork, appear almost immediately in the work of the designer and architect Cornelis Floris (1514 or 1518–1572 or 1576), who went on to build the fabled Town Hall of Antwerp between 1561 and 1564, and whose brother Frans (ca. 1516–1570) was probably the greatest painter of altarpieces during Bruegel's lifetime. One could hardly imagine a more Italianate building than the Town Hall (at least in terms of the ornamentation and the adoption of the strict rule of the classical orders of architecture). It was built during Bruegel's last years in Antwerp, but we see no such building in any work of his. *His* buildings, like the people, are proudly local and proudly Flemish, vivid but generally modest. Their pride lies not in their elevation (for the buildings) nor in their muscularity (for the bodies), but in their truth to what his contemporaries might have regarded as the essence of the life of the countryside and of the urban poor. It was these that Bruegel regarded as worthy of artistic celebration. The theorists might have railed against such celebration of the lowly, the ugly and the vivacious ordinary, just as they were to rail against the same tendencies in

Rembrandt's art, almost exactly a century later; but there was no shortage of patrons, not even amongst the highest levels of society.

But this is no move ahead too swiftly. Bruegel's development cannot solely be seen in terms of a reaction to the modes introduced or reinforced by Pieter Coecke. From Coecke and his circle he must first have learned—or at least supplemented—his knowledge of classical culture (which appears more frequently in his works than one might think, and certainly in his representation of mythological subjects). And it is more than likely that the extraordinarily detailed knowledge of architecture revealed by works like the *Towers of Babel* was ultimately derived from—or at least inspired by—the lessons of books such as Coecke's translations of Serlio; and that Coecke's famous series of woodcuts representing Constantinople, the Levant and the customs of its inhabitants—the *Moeurs et Fachons de Faire des Turcx*—are reflected, a little dimly perhaps, in the more exotic aspects of Bruegel's work as well as in some of its figurative elements. But it is to Bruegel that we must give the greatest and almost the sole credit of the realization that native Flemish life and its folk culture—as, say, in its customs, proverbs, folkways and festivals—could attain a pictorial and cultural status to rival that of ancient Greece and Rome.

Be that as it may, it is significant that in the very year following the death of Coecke, 1550–1551, Bruegel is documented as working in Mechlin. Van Mander records that he entered the Antwerp painters' guild in 1551, and his name is indeed recorded in the surviving guild list for the year running from October 1551 to October 1552. It was in the same year that the accomplished Italian engraver Giorgio Ghisi enrolled in the guild too, presumably in order to enable him to work for the prospering print publishing house of Hieronymus Cock. Could this also have been one of Bruegel's motives for going to Antwerp, as Grossman suggested? But we hardly need search for a reason for a move to what was by now the wealthiest town of the Netherlands, with the greatest concentration of artists and the greatest potential for patronage. It seems unnecessary to enquire further into the young artist's motivation: joining the guild in 1551–52 was a natural step for the talented and aspiring painter-printmaker to take. By the end of that year he was off to Italy, as every budding Flemish artist who could possibly manage it was expected to do. The difference from the others who made the journey is that there are very few direct records of Italy in his work—none of the great buildings of Rome, as with Maerten van Heemskerck, and none of the statues, as with the sketchbooks of Heemskerck, Floris and umpteen others. And how *they* used their Roman notes and recollections in their subsequent work! Bruegel, on the other hand, seems consistently to have been more interested in other aspects of Rome, in the kind of picturesque scenes of buildings, landscapes and boats that we know from his later work. William Robinson has trenchantly noted of his only surviving drawing of Rome, which shows the Ripa Grande—the "Great Bank" of the Tiber—that it was "a site less remarkable for its antiquity or its architectural character than for its function as the city's principal harbor for sea-going vessels... Unlike the Roman views of Jan Gossaert, Maerten van Heemskerck or Matthijs Bril, Bruegel's does not depict one of the city's ancient precincts or venerable ruins. Rather his drawing is... a townscape animated with everyday activities and enlivened by the picturesque lines of the masts and riggings against the austere masonry" and so on.⁴ In other words, even in a Roman view such as this we may detect, without the slightest difficulty, the seeds of a whole range of Bruegel's later pictorial interests.

It is true that in the print entitled *Prospectus Tyburtinus* (No. 1) Bruegel showed the famous cascades at Tivoli, which every artist until well into the nineteenth century was to do (although the others generally included one of the classical temples of Tivoli shown as well!); but what really grasped his attention were the landscapes on his way to and from Italy. He drew them with a passion and recorded them with keen and fond remembrance and recollection in his first set of prints (Nos. 2–13), and then in his paintings. It is from the earliest of his drawings of Alpine landscapes that we know he must have been on his way to that country, since they are dated to 1552. He is likely to have passed through France, as van Mander records; by the end of the year he seems to have reached as far south as Calabria and Sicily. One drawing of the burning town of Reggio can satisfactorily be dated to 1552⁵, and it can only be at that time that he saw the straits of Messina as recorded in his later print of the *Sea Battle* there (1561, No. 40), the Bay of Naples, as in the picture still in Rome, and the astonishing fresco of the *Triumph of Death* in Palermo, the mood of which is so closely matched in Bruegel's picture of just this subject in the Prado.

It would be interesting to know whether he was accompanied on these journeys by the two other Flemish artists who are recorded in Italy in 1552: the painter Maerten de Vos and the sculptor Jacob Jonghelinck. It seems very likely

that he travelled at least some of the way with de Vos, who was to become the foremost painter of altarpieces in Antwerp after Bruegel's death and one of the most extraordinarily prolific designers of prints ever known. Although there are signs in de Vos's work, especially in his print production, of an interest in native traditions and in rustic habits, they are dim compared to Bruegel's. In fact, his work is fraught with the lessons he would have learned in Italy (and acquired through the medium of prints after Italian works). Jonghelinck deserves mention not only because he may have travelled with Bruegel at least some of the way, and because he might have met him in Italy, but because he was the brother of the wealthy Antwerp merchant Nicholas Jonghelinck who, as we shall see, turns out to have bought more paintings by Bruegel during his lifetime than any other patron of whom we know.

Whatever the course of his travels, we know that Bruegel was in Rome in 1553. Inscriptions on two of the prints (Nos. 81 and 82) clearly record his presence there in that year, and it must have been at that time that he met the famous Croatian-turned-Italian miniaturist, Giulio Clovio, who had himself just returned from a two-year absence from Rome. The inventory of Clovio's estate refers to a small painting which the two artists did in collaboration, and—partly on the basis of this reference—Charles de Tolnay has tried to identify the hand of Bruegel in several manuscript pages by the older artist. In any event we may be sure that Bruegel acquired or enhanced some of his skill in the depiction of multitudinous small figures (as, for example, in the paintings of the *Triumph of Death*, the *Conversion of Paul* and the *Suicide of Saul*) as a result of his work with the distinguished miniaturist. Clovio's inventory also contains references to further works by Bruegel: a *Tower of Babel* on ivory, and a view, significantly in watercolour, of the town of Lyons, thus confirming that Bruegel must have passed through it on his way to Italy. It may also have been sometime in the course of 1553–54 that he came under the influence of the Venetian landscapes of Titian and Muziano, as has been suggested on the basis of the 1554 print (No. 96) and a series of drawings of close-up woodland scenes with animals preserved in copies possibly by his son Jan Brueghel.⁶ But Bruegel's vision was to turn out to be wider and more ambitious yet.

It used to be thought that in the course of his return journey to Antwerp Bruegel wandered still further in search of landscape. At least some of a considerable journey eastward is recorded for us by surviving drawings and by a now lost painting of the St. Gotthard, referred to in Rubens's inventory. There are also, for example, a drawing of the valley of the Ticino south of the St. Gotthard, several other drawings showing places on the other side of that perilous pass, and an important view of the *Martinswand* in the Tyrol, in the neighbourhood of Innsbruck. But recent scholarship, on the basis of observations made by Konrad Oberhuber, has suggested that some if not all of these drawings were made on the way down to Italy.⁷

In any event, by the time Bruegel returned to Antwerp he was ready to pour forth his recollections of his travels and the signals he saw onto paper (a process so graphically described by van Mander). Indeed, it is only from 1554 onwards that we can be sure that he was designing prints for Hieronymus Cock at the House of the Four Winds. In the following year he dated a drawing now in Paris that served as a preparatory study for one of the great series of etched and engraved landscapes (Nos. 2–13)—and we thus have a secure date not only for the series but also for his return to the renowned and thriving Flemish metropolis.

For the time being, as we have seen, Bruegel concentrated on the prints. In 1556 he began to produce his first figurative compositions under the influence of Bosch and derived from popular proverbial culture, such as the *Temptation of St. Anthony* (No. 14) and the *Donkey at School* (No. 17). The prints continued to be published by Cock and it was presumably he who assigned them to engravers like Pieter van der Heyden and Philips Galle. In the following year the Boschian and dark fantastic strain reached an extraordinary pitch of intensity in the series of *Vices* (Nos. 18–24, prints dated 1558); and with them his success as a printmaker was evidently assured. Both the Boschian themes, and the sage and popular ones, apparently conveying some moral or another belying their popular and satirical surfaces, continued; but in 1559 the course of what might, by this stage, have seemed an established career as a printmaker suddenly changed. Although he was to continue to make prints until the end of his life, it was in this year that he first showed his true talent as a great painter, with pictures like the *Battle between Carnival and Lent* now in Vienna and the *Flemish Proverbs* in Berlin. From then on the production of paintings never abated, and he produced one masterpiece of another, in quick and intense succession.

The series of *Virtues* (Nos. 31–37) was completed in 1560. In this year too he made his only print, the marvellous

Rabbit Hunters. Until very recently scholars assumed that Bruegel made a trip to Amsterdam in 1562, on the basis of a pair of beautiful drawings of the gates of that city; but this assumption has now been undermined by K.G. Boon's and Hans Mielke's brilliant suggestion that they—like several others in the corpus of drawings generally attributed to Bruegel—are unlikely to be by him at all.⁸ Certainly 1562 seems to have been an astonishingly productive year, with paintings (amongst those that survive) like the *Fall of Rebel Angels*, the *Mad Meg*, the *Two Monkeys* and, probably, the *Triumph of Death*, all dating from that year.

It seems, therefore, that Bruegel remained in Antwerp until his marriage to Mary Coecke—"Mayken", as the wedding registers, and perhaps Bruegel, called her—in 1563. In that year too, as van Mander tells us, he moved to Brussels. But did he do so only for domestic reasons, or was the political situation in Antwerp growing too tense? Were his connections with clandestinely heterodox intellectuals becoming too dangerous in a town that was growing increasingly restless in its opposition both to the Spanish regime and to the Catholic religion? We will return to the issue.

Neither marriage nor the growth of his family—Pieter the Younger was born in 1564—seems to have affected the intensity of his production, neither in paintings nor in prints. Indeed, the intensity is such that it is hard not to plot the few remaining years of his life in terms of the key works produced in each year. The production of 1564 varies from the drawing for the *Fall of Hermogenes* (No.58) to the unsparing portrayal of the procession of epileptics to Meulebeke (Nos.91–93); and to paintings such as the *Carrying of Cross* and the monumental *Adoration of the Magi* in London. Indeed, the latter work, with its apparently and (for Bruegel) rather conventional religious subject, seems to mark one of the major turning-points in the development of his style. The figures are monumentalized as never before; they are comparatively few in number and take up more of the picture space; and in this respect alone they prepare the way for the final breakthrough to the large-scale figure paintings of the last years of Bruegel's life. Hans Mielke has claimed that the breakthrough only came with the *Mopsus and Nisa* composition of 1566 (No.80; cf. Lebeer No.79); but in the *Adoration of the Magi* we see the beginnings of the monumental style, just as we see its development in the fabulous series of the *Months* of 1565–66.

These pictures belonged to the wealthy Antwerp merchant Nicholas Jonghelinck (brother of the sculptor Jacob), as we know from a document of 21 February 1566 in the Antwerp city archives, in which Jonghelinck offered his collection of paintings to the city as security for a very large loan made to one Daniel de Bruyne. The paintings mentioned on this occasion included "sixteen pieces by Bruegel, such as the Tower of Babel, the Carrying of the Cross and the Twelve Months". The document also mentions works by Albrecht Dürer and Frans Floris—the latter probably the best known Antwerp artist in his time; but how much one would like to know what the other paintings by Bruegel were! It has occasionally been suggested, on the basis of the Jonghelinck document, that the five surviving pictures of the *Months* (or Seasons) in New York, Prague, and Vienna were once part of a 12-picture series each representing one of the twelve months; but Tolnay and others have proposed, quite plausibly, that such an attrition rate is improbably high—especially in the light of the fact that as soon as thirty years later, and then a few times in the next century, only six are recorded in the series. This, then, was probably their original number. The proposal therefore, is that Bruegel painted a series of six, each representing two months; which would mean that only one of the original series is now lost. On the other hand, Grossman noted that this solution would leave eight of the pictures in the Jonghelinck inventory unnamed and unaccounted for.

Whatever the case, the *Months*, with their extremely beautiful and grand depictions of landscape, in which the life of the countryside, as enacted by peasants and farmers and herdsman, mark the last great turning-point in Bruegel's career. Everything that he had learnt in the field of landscape representation was brought together in these great and sombre works. Nature is shown in all her magnitude and all her detail, with an attention to atmospheric description that has hardly been equalled since. It is a commonplace of popular description to say that one can almost feel the crisp coldness in the air, or the summer's heat, or the dark dampness of *November* or *February*; but in front of these pictures such descriptions seem more than usually appropriate; and one can begin to see, in the eulogies published shortly after Bruegel's death why he was said (in the manner of the times, but fittingly) to be capable of emulating nature and even of outrivalling her. From the snow covering the mountain tops to the snow dusted on the bare branches, from the frozen ponds on which skaters engage in typical winter pastimes to the boats foundering in the

stormy seas; in the consistently loving attention to the representation of buildings lost in the folds of the countryside or on the plains of these majestic expanses, the *Months* are the final justification of Bruegel's long engagement with landscape that had begun with the drawings on his Italian journey and then evolved in the work for the landscape prints shown in the present exhibition. It was, of course, through them that knowledge of Bruegel's landscape style was disseminated to such an extent that his influence was both immediate and taken up by artists through the Golden Age of Dutch painting and printmaking in the next century.

But while it would be impossible to deny the power of the representation of nature and the countryside in these landscapes, they are all clearly landscapes out of the imagination—cosmic, as they are often called, and visionary, despite all the multiplicity of local detail lost and buried within them and which the spectator delights in finding for himself. When it comes to the figures, however, local detail was expanded in a way that was to determine the course of the last years of his art. For these figures are evidently the fruits of Bruegel's study, so quaintly but characteristically recorded by van Mander, of the peasants and village dwellers of the countryside around Antwerp and Brussels. They are engaged in a whole gamut of rustic activities, either profitable or—as in the picture of *August* ("The Corn Harvest") in the Metropolitan Museum of Art—pleasantly relaxed. It is, of course, the same combination of gainful and not too exhausting exertion on the one hand and relaxation on the other that we see in the two prints after drawings of Summer and Spring (Nos. 77 and 78). But while these figures are plainly peasants and rustics of a kind Bruegel knew, they betoken a knowledge and understanding of the body—and of the body at work in particular—that make them the Flemish equivalents of the monumental figure painting of the Italian High Renaissance. Michelangelo himself is reported to have been rather caustic about the Flemish predilection for landscapes, and the inability of Northern painters at figure painting, at anatomy and muscles; but in these pictures Bruegel gives the lie to this assertion. The figures in the *Months* may only occupy a comparatively small proportion of the picture space in relation to the landscape, but they are at least as memorable as the landscape itself. No other artist has shown more movingly, in these grave figures, and in these vast landscapes, the integration of human activity with nature. In these pictures neither is imaginable without the other; nature rules the activities of man; but man, even on the grimmest of days, orders it, tames it and draws benefit from it. He does so bluntly, plainly, toughly and with humour. Much ink has been spilt about the problem of Bruegel's attitudes towards the life of peasants and poor city dwellers, particularly as exemplified by prints such as the *Fair at Hoboken* or the *St. George's Day Fair* (Nos. 30 and 52 respectively). Authors have hotly debated whether Bruegel viewed their often rather rough behaviour on such occasions—and holy days at that too—in a negative light (as the church authorities did and as Erasmus might have), or in a positive and benign way, possibly even with comic intentions. In the case of the *Months*, however, it is hard to take the negative view.

By the time Bruegel painted these works he had moved to Brussels. It is not entirely clear whether he did so simply because his wife was from there, because he was in search of the patronage of the court, or because of increasing political tensions in Antwerp. Indeed, in the very year of Jonghelinck's inventory, 1566, Antwerp itself was to erupt in anti-Spanish revolt, in a series of riots that destroyed pictures, sculptures, glass, and every other kind of art in churches throughout the town. A new and tyrannical leader, the Duke of Alva, was sent to restore control. And from this year on the proportion of prints to pictures began to decline, and Bruegel seems to have devoted ever more time, in the last remaining years of his life, to his paintings. They became ever more allusive, and they seem increasingly to refer to contemporary political events in the guise of biblical subjects—as, perhaps, in the *Massacre of the Innocents*, the *Census of Bethlehem*, and the *Sermon of John the Baptist*.

But even these pictures are set in the local and recognizable Flemish countryside, or in possible (if not actual) towns. Their inhabitants are the simple but noble people Bruegel had begun heroizing in the *Months*. The meaning of some of the late pictures is very mysterious indeed—as, for example, in the ponderous but poignantly monumental figure of the peasant in the painting of the *Peasant and the Birdnester* in Vienna, and in the extraordinary scene of the peasants dancing cheerily beneath the gallows in the magical landscape of the tiny picture in Darmstadt known as the *Maggie on the Gallows*. This is the picture that van Mander says Bruegel left to his wife and which the artist described—rather cryptically—as referring to the gossips (informers?) whom he would deliver to the gallows. At the same time we remember that on his deathbed he also instructed his wife to burn some drawings on the grounds that they (or their inscriptions) were too subversive or satirical. We can only speculate on what these might have been; and



The Wedding Dance, The Detroit Institute of Arts, City of Detroit Purchase

Peasant Wedding Feast, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna



ask ourselves what the implications are for our own understanding of Bruegel's own political attitudes.

Indeed, similar interpretive puzzles arise in the case of the great peasant paintings of the last years, the *Wedding Dances* and *Wedding Feasts*. From the middle of the decade on, Bruegel started making closer studies of individual peasant figures *naer het leven*—"after the life"—than ever before (although many of the drawings of this category once attributed to Bruegel have now rightly been reattributed to Roelandt Savery and others). From these—and presumably from other studies now lost—he put together the pictures for which he is most famous, in which both peasant and countryside are shown in all their magnificent and rude robustness—qualities exemplified in the present exhibition by prints such as those of the *Wedding Dance* (No. 61), of *Spring* and *Summer* (Nos. 77 and 78), and even of the *Land of Cockaigne* (No. 63).

But whatever inclination we may have to sentimentalize in our reading of these works is offset by another and vastly graver mood. It is not only the roughness of notes such as the men pissing at the wedding dances, the overly coarse faces in works such as the *Wedding Dance* in Vienna, or the gallows and the man shitting in the *Magpie on the Gallows*. It is the sombreness and terror of works of whose meaning we cannot be entirely certain, but whose mood of pessimism and bleakness is indisputable, as with the tiny painting of the *Lepers* in the Louvre, in which suffering is magnified beyond all proportion to the scale of the picture; or with the Naples *Blind leading the Blind*, as the men with their frightfully sunken eye-sockets fall inexorably into the ditch; or with the astonishing figure of the *Misanthrope* also in Naples (here represented by the print related to the composition, No. 67), where the hooded figure, painted in black, is so absorbed in his own misanthropy that he doesn't even notice that he is about to be robbed by the little figure craftily creeping through the world. Nothing could be bleaker than this statement about man-hatred, where the ominous pessimism of the misanthrope is shown to be utterly justified in the very quality which repels us. The puzzles and contradictions of interpretation, as we deal with Bruegel's final compositions, could hardly be greater. The one work that we do not have by Bruegel—unless it is represented by the very curious and certainly frightening mythological composition of the *Triumph of Time* (No. 87)—is the work which, according to van Mander, he claimed to have been the finest thing he ever did, namely the picture of "Truth breaking Through". Like the pictures of the *Misanthrope* and the *Blind Leading the Blind* we may imagine this work to have been of remarkable pictorial beauty. It showed a subject which, like Truth itself, is difficult but once revealed, goes to out very core. In that sense it may stand as an emblem for the whole life and work of Pieter Bruegel the Elder.

Notes

1. See now J. B. Bedaux and A. van Gool, "Bruegel's Birthyear, motive of an *ars/natura* transformation", *Simiolus* 7 (1974, No. 3): 133–156, who set out the evidence for the 1527/8 dating, largely on the basis of the very complex inscription on the 1606 engraved portrait by Egidius Sadeler.
2. Often translated as a portraitist after the life. In an addendum van Mander corrects himself somewhat, nothing that he had been wrongly informed that Pieter the Younger painted after the life; what he did, according to this revision, was make clever copies and imitations of his fathers work.
3. The lines by Lampsonius are taken from the verses beneath the engraved portrait of Bruegel in Dominicus Lampsonius' *Pictorum aliquot celebrium Germaniae inferioris effigies* ("Portraits of some of the famous painters of Lower Germany"), published in Antwerp in 1572, three years after Bruegel's death.
4. W. Robinson, in Washington 1987, p. 95.
5. See F. Grossman in *Bulletin Museum Boymans-van Beuningen*, 5 (1954), p. 85.
6. Berlin 1976, Nos. 41–49.
7. See Oberhuber 1981 pp. 147–151, and W. Robinson in Washington, 1975, p. 94.
8. Mielke 1986, pp. 76–81.

Antwerp during Bruegel's Lifetime: The Economic and Historical Background

David Freedberg

The heyday of Antwerp coincided with the reign of the Hapsburg Emperor Charles V and the first seven years of that of his son Philip II—in other words from around 1517 to 1566. The bulk of the working career of Pieter Bruegel the Elder was passed in the period of the city's greatest prosperity. By the time of the great iconoclastic revolt of 1566—which marked the sudden beginning of the Revolt of the Netherlands, and, simultaneously, of the city's long decline—Bruegel had himself decamped to the economically less significant town of Brussels (in this respect it was always far behind Antwerp, despite the fact that it remained the seat of the Netherlands government). Even by then Philip of Spain was starting to lose his grip on his domains in the Netherlands. But first let us ask another question that may cast some light on the immediate context of the art of Bruegel.

What was Antwerp like during Bruegel's career? By the time he returned there from his trip to Italy it was arguably the richest town in Europe, and certainly its chief commercial center. At the height of Antwerp's prosperity neither London nor Venice nor Lyons could compete with it. Its population had grown from 40,000 in 1500 and 53,000 in the mid-1520s to around 110,000 in the early 1550s—not large by modern standards, but enormous for a sixteenth century city. Its rise, in short, had been meteoric; but its fall, as we shall see, was to be even more rapid. Bruges had been the chief business port of the Netherlands throughout the fifteenth century, relying (like the other important trading town of Bergen-op-Zoom) to a large extent on its proximity to the rich wool producing regions of England for the crucial supply of cloths and textiles. These were then traded for the more exotic products of the Mediterranean and the East, brought there by the Italian merchants who had long been established in the town. But the Zwijn was to silt up, the sea-routes to India and the New World were discovered, and Bruges's preeminence, bolstered by the favours shown it by a succession of Burgundian dukes, soon declined. The town's government and its relations with the ruling Burgundian dukes were riven by feuds, while Antwerp struck up an agreement with the Duke Maximilian, the new Hapsburg Emperor, giving it a series of commercial privileges that transcended the petty rights granted to each of the lesser centers of the Netherlands. In return for its support against the rebellious towns of Flanders, Maximilian not only ordered the transfer of all the Netherlands commerce from Bruges to Antwerp, he actively encouraged the Bruges merchants to settle in the growing metropolis. Bruges' position was thus soon taken up by Antwerp from the beginning of the sixteenth century on, in a more brilliant way than anyone might have anticipated. And it did so even though it was not the chief seat of government in the Netherlands (since the court resided at Brussels); even though it had no university (the most distinguished one was at Louvain); and even though it was not even an archbishopric (the primacy of the Netherlands was the archdiocese of Mechlin).

Three reasons for Antwerp's rapid rise are given in the marvellous account written by the Italian resident in Antwerp, Bruegel's contemporary, Ludovico Guicciardini. His *Description of all the Low Countries* was first published in Italian in Antwerp in 1567 and republished in 1581, 1588 and 1591; French editions appeared in 1568 and 1582; an English epitome came out in London in 1593; and the work continued to be published in the following century. It provides a full and reliable contemporary account of Antwerp at just the time we are describing.

According to Guicciardini, the first basis for Antwerp's preeminence was its many fairs. These were held throughout the course of the year, but notably on the Feast Days of the Virgin and of the Circumcision. Then there were the fairs of Pentecost, of St. Remy, the two Horse Fairs, and finally the two Hide or Leather fairs (as well as many lesser ones). What made these fairs both so stimulating and so economically viable were precisely the old privileges accorded to them by the Burgundian Dukes. Contrary to the normal restrictions on movement and residence in the town, during the course of the fairs all could come and go as they pleased; they could stay in Antwerp without

restriction and bring whatever merchandise they liked, and return to their homes with their goods "in full security".

The second reason for Antwerp's great richness and fame, Guicciardini maintained (with justification), was provided by the intrepid voyages of the Portuguese in the year 1503–04, when they took and occupied Calicut. From this time on they started trafficking in spices and other Indian goods, which they then took to Lisbon; but soon they realized that a better market would be provided by the growing trading possibilities offered by Antwerp. And so they established a factor there, soon to be followed by the factors of the great German families, the Fuggers, the Welsers, and the Hochstetters.

The third reason offered by Guicciardini is not so often given by the textbooks. He recalls how in 1542 the Duc de Longueval and the brigand leader Marten van Rossem ravaged the country around Antwerp; and when the town itself was threatened by his mercenary band, the citizens set about building the splendid new city walls and fortifications. In order to make them safer, great moats were built around them, and all houses within a mile of the walls were razed to the ground. In future no one was to be allowed to build within 3500 feet of the walls. As a result, people were encouraged to build inside the city, and 3000 new houses were added.

In 1549 Charles V himself ordered the further strengthening of the fortifications and a whole new district of the town was built, encouraged by the extraordinarily vigorous speculative building ventures of the real-estate magnate Gillis van Schoonbeke, who was thus responsible for much new urban growth. Nothing gives a better sense of the growth of the city than the figures for the houses: in 1480 there were approximately 5450; in 1496, 6586; and in 1526, 8749 (containing 10431 households). But by the time Guicciardini was writing he could give the reasonably accurate figure of 13500 houses, with—as he notes with characteristic care—space for 1,500 more (there were 212 streets in the city). This figure is corroborated by the Spanish regent Don Luis de Requesens, who in 1575 counted 130000. Thus, as Guicciardini proudly observes, the city became one of the richest, most populous, and best built of all Europe. No one was allowed to build in wood any more, and rents in Antwerp were higher than anywhere else—with the possible exception of Lisbon. The minimum rent for a house in the city was 200 *écus* per year, with many going for 500 or more.

The basis of the economy was very clearly mercantile. It was in 1531–32, during Bruegel's boyhood, that the great Bourse, or Exchange, of Antwerp was built to the plans of the famous architect Dominicus de Waghemakere (who had also worked on completing the cathedral after the terrible fire of 1533). The 1550s, in the same years that Bruegel was establishing himself as a painter, saw the height of its activity. It was here that the merchants from England (the so-called "Merchant Adventurers"), from Spain, from Italy, Portugal and from the great grouping of German traders known as the Hanseatic League (or, in Antwerp at the time, as the "Easterlings") met and conducted much of their business. But the famous merchant families from south Germany were perhaps even more prominent, and still wealthier; the banking houses of the Fuggers and the Welsers were already established by the end of the first decade, shortly to be followed by the Hochstetters and Imhofs. Antwerp became the great entrepôt of Europe, where goods of every imaginable description were exchanged. All the spices brought to Lisbon and Cadiz by the Spanish and Portuguese fleets had to pass through Antwerp before being sold, or exchanged for furs and cloth from Northern Europe, or corn and wheat, or fine goods from Italy, or simply distributed further to the more northerly towns and countries, and eastward to Danzig and to Riga. Antwerp finished almost all of the cloth of England before trading it or exporting it further; the silk industry grew, so did that of tilemaking and pottery, and the crafts of gold-, silver-, iron- brass- and glassworking thrived; while engraving, painting and printing continued to gain ever more practitioners, as the potential markets for each expanded, under the auspices of the guild of St. Luke. As the great historian of the Southern Netherlands, Henri Pirenne, cogently noted, all this was possible not only because Antwerp had the support of Charles V, the great Hapsburg Emperor and successor of the Burgundian dukes onto whom the sovereignty of the Netherlands devolved, but also because it fulfilled two of the most important conditions for the conduct of large scale commerce: it was a free market, and there was no shortage of capital. Antwerp was the centre of a great network of trade that extended from the Americas to the India and China, and from the Mediterranean to the Baltic. Although it had a marvellous harbour with ever-improving modern facilities for loading and unloading, Antwerp never was a great shipbuilding center itself: it simply became the lodestone for boats from England, Zeeland, Holland, Italy, Portugal and Spain. No wonder that in his great series of ships Bruegel should have celebrated the

means whereby the merchants acquired the raw materials for their speculations and sent the goods they bought or exchanged to other parts of the world again (Nos. 41–50).

All these activities required great financial resources, and here too entrepreneurs, merchants and speculators found an important base. The new system of Italian double-entry bookkeeping was swiftly adopted to keep record of ever more complex and intense transactions. Bills of exchange—rather than money—were in widespread use: indeed the discounting of such bills was already under way by the 1530s. Not surprisingly, it often became necessary to form joint stock companies or to arrange for the selling of goods on commission. “The commission business made cheap buying and selling in distant markets possible, whereas the pooling of shares in a temporary company aimed at the successful financing of distant sea voyages”. Antwerp, therefore, had not simply become a vast and hectic entrepôt where goods were exchanged. As a result of the activities concentrated in the German banking houses, in the Merchant Halls of the respective nations, and—above all—in the celebrated Exchange (which provided the model for the equally famous one soon to be built in London), the city became the most important financial market in all of Europe. Here vast loans were negotiated, not only to other merchants, but also to cities, emperors and kings, even to Elizabeth I of England and Charles V. These operations rested primarily on a twofold system of deposit and credit: the merchants were encouraged to make deposits to enable loans to monarchs like these, and to profit from other smaller loans. Indeed, as Dame Veronica Wedgwood once observed “every important loan in Europe was negotiated there”, while in her *History of the Business Man*, Miriam Beard commented even more trenchantly that “perhaps never again will so great a proportion of the universal trade pass through a single harbor, or such an immense part of the world’s credit operations be transacted on a single exchange”. Bruegel thus lived at in Antwerp at the very height of the city’s prosperity and greatness; and he left, in 1563, at the first signs of its decline—which was more imminent than even he could have realized.

But first let us try to imagine a little more carefully what the city on the Scheldt must have looked like. Once again we have an enthusiastic but careful witness in Guicciardini. Even today it is possible to corroborate many of the local details of his account just by walking the streets of Antwerp. Despite the ravages of both the sixteenth century and the twentieth, the centre of Antwerp still preserves its sixteenth century town plan, and some of the most prominent and beautiful buildings of that age. Indeed, since its expansion has been nothing like as great as that of London or Paris, say, it gives a better impression of what a major town in the sixteenth century must have been like than any other. The only aspect one really misses is that of the old fortifications: the moats and canals have been filled in and only a few remnants remain. Guicciardini’s description is vivid. “There are so many things worth seeing”, says our guide,

that it would be impossible to go into a description of all the beautiful and spacious squares of the town, or its streets, churches, monasteries, and gardens. But first let us note the wall of the city, with its large number of boulevards, cavaliers, ramparts, entries, exits (some secret and some well-known and clear) with seven excellent gates and six magnificent bridges. The castle is of a subtle and rare architecture, and well-made, as is suitable for such a fortress. The New Town is full of breweries, wells and forges, and implements for making beer of every kind. The port of the city is on a large and deep river, and is packed with ships of every kind and every capacity. Many canals take you from one part of the city to another, right up to your house. Then there is the extremely high tower of [the church of] Our Lady, and so many other striking things to note: the New Exchange, for example. Here, when the merchants gather, you can see an infinitude of them, of all nations, all in their proper section, conducting their business. Here too, in a short space of time, you can hear them speaking six or seven of the major languages. [Earlier in the book Guicciardini had given a colourful description of how the merchants wore the particular garb of their respective countries and regions, and kept all their native habits, thereby giving an extraordinarily international flavour to the townscape]. The Mint is an august place with a variety of forges and other locations where one strikes much gold and silver with the name and arms of the Emperor. Then you see the Marketplace and Hall of Tapestries, with many beautiful inventions and marvellous works. The Marketplace and Hall of Paintings have different inventions and are subtly adorned. The Halls of the Silverworkers and Jewellers show a large number of rich and magnificent objects. The Butchers’ Hall abounds in meat of every kind, the Fish Hall always has a supply of good and delicate fish. [Guicciardini goes on to mention] The superb Town Hall [built

and adorned by Cornelis Floris, between 1561 and 1564]. Then too one sees the excellent and proud place or house of the Easterlings, built between two canals in the New Town... The House where the English merchants meet is a goodly structure, while that of the Portuguese is spacious and very agreeable. At the admirable Furnace crystalline vessels of every kind are made, in the manner of Venice... But no less excellent, agreeable and marvellous than anything just mentioned is the magnificent Printing House built adjoining the Printing Shop in a separate wing, by Christopher Plantin, King's Printer. There is nothing else like it in all of Europe, with more presses, more characters and a greater diversity of fonts, more chases and other instruments appropriate for this excellent art than anywhere else. Here there are rare and skilled men, paid considerable wages and salaries, who work at editing and correcting books in every language, whether in the original or in the vernacular, which are used in every part of the Christian world... And all this, I swear, not only redounds to the profit and honour of the praiseworthy Plantin himself, but also to that of the whole city, because of the number of books published that are well-edited and which thus spread its name throughout the world. This is perhaps enough about the most notable sights of this marvellous town, without even mentioning the large number of stores and the infinity of shops which one can see here and which are well supplied with every kind of merchandise, to such a degree that one usually thinks that one is right in the centre of a market or fair.

At the end of this almost exalted chapter on Antwerp, Guicciardini spends several long pages just listing some of the items which Antwerp exported, sold in its shops, or received from abroad. Here were sent every imaginable kind of herb, spice and ointment; corals, musk and amber (to which Guicciardini devotes a long excursus); silks, brocades, velveteen, and the local textile specialities of towns from Ancona to Florence to Lyons (to which in turn were sent more native products like serges, linens, worsteds, tapestries and lace). Here came oranges, nuts, ginger, raisins, and other exotic foods; pigments, colours, cotton and furs; gold from the Indies, marvellous pearls from Portugal, copper, lead and salpeter from Scandinavia; and if these things were not sold, they were exchanged for other commodities such as English cloth, Antwerp tapestries or any of a number of a well-nigh incredible host of commodities that were brought there only to be re-exported again. Amongst the towns which Guicciardini listed as selling goods to Antwerp and, usually but not always, receiving other goods in return, were Rome, Ancona, Bologna, Florence, Mantua, Venice (which forwarded many other articles from the Levant), Naples, Genoa, Milan, and umpteen other towns in Italy and Sicily. The countries which traded with Antwerp included Denmark, Livonia, Norway, Sweden, Poland, Scotland, Ireland, France, Spain, Portugal, the Barbary Coast, and England above all (its trade with Antwerp was worth an astonishing 100,000 *écus* per annum). But it is clear that for Guicciardini the chief glory of the city was the great printing press founded by Christopher Plantin—and with this we may agree, even though we can see Guicciardini's understandable motivation to praise the man who had published his *Description* in so splendid a way that the beautiful, well-illustrated, and magnificently printed editions of his book still command the highest admiration. The house and printing office still stands, as a museum and as a memorial to the man and his family.

Christopher Plantin (ca.1520–1589) was a remarkable figure. To begin with, he was arguably the city's cultural lynchpin. It is true that there were other distinguished publishers too, plenty of poets and musicians (like the great songwriter, Tielman Susato (1529–1561), who had his own press) and that much literary and artistic activity was concentrated in the three "Chambers of Rhetoric", known as the "Violets" (to which the painters belonged), the "Marigold" and the "Olive-Branch". These were largely middle-class organizations, both literary and social in their aims and functions literary. But their importance should not be underestimated. Especially for the great national theatrical and literary festivals known as the Land Jewels (such as those in Ghent of 1539 and Antwerp in 1561), they wrote satires and plays, usually on moralizing and scriptural subjects. These works often and rather notoriously contained subversive and anti-government ideas, with a strong Protestant tinge to them. The plays took up the latest ideas about religion and God that had filtered over from Germany, France and Switzerland; and the authorities often made stringent efforts to control the performances, censor the productions, and discredit or condemn the more overtly heretical exponents of such ideas. But the Rhetoricians were also responsible for designing the processions and decorations that were set up to welcome visiting rulers, as well as for the performance of plays and the recital of gratulatory poems on such occasions, from the famous Entry of Charles V in 1549 (under the overall supervision of

the learned Town Clerk of Antwerp, Cornelis Grapheus) to the entries of the Duke of Anjou in 1582 and the Archdukes Albrecht and Isabella in 1594 and 1599. Nevertheless, the activities of the Rhetoricians could hardly be said to have been a central focus of cultural activity; whereas the house and shop of Plantin decidedly could.

From his presses issued not only editions of the standard classical authors—often with newly edited texts and commentaries—but also a vast range of books in the vernacular (both French and Flemish). They varied from translations of the classics to Bibles and devotional handbooks, from collections of folk remedies and nostrums to the popular tale of Reynard the Fox. Plantin bridged the transition between classical and popular culture with French and Flemish grammars, with a series of dictionaries (culminating in Cornelis Kilian's pathfinding Latin-Flemish dictionary of 1574 and 1588), and with a large number of collections of proverbs. These brought together the labours of Erasmus (who had assembled his own remarkable collections of adages) with those of several others, as well as with a range of more popular sayings and proverbs. For all these compilers of proverb anthologies, as for Plantin himself, it was the degree of wisdom that seemed to be buried in popular lore that made the proverbs so culturally weighty. It is just this aspect of what one might perhaps too broadly term "popular culture" that appealed to Bruegel both in his paintings—especially that of the *Flemish Proverbs* in Berlin—and in his many representations of proverbs in the prints. But one should remember just how misleading the term "popular" can be in a context like this, since the proverbs were known to a whole variety of social classes, and was certainly not the property of one segment alone. Herein too, one assumes, must have lain some of their appeal. The upper end of these endeavours are perhaps represented by the charmingly illustrated and delightfully and carefully printed emblem books of Claude Paradin, Gabriele Symeoni, Hadrianus Junius and Janus Sambucus.

In addition to his scriptural and literary contributions, Plantin's influence extended to any number of other spheres as well, including the scientific. He published geometry, arithmetic and architectural handbooks, and a series of medical texts—as well as an anatomy book derived from the great Brussels anatomist, Andreas Vesalius (1514–1564). In 1560, 1561, 1566, 1567, and again in 1585 he printed the famous book on natural magic by the Neapolitan doctor Giovanni della Porta (the 1566 edition being in Flemish); while from the beginning of his career through to its end he took a great interest in the studies of the great Flemish botanists, from Rembert Dodonaeus (1517–85) through Mathias Lobelius (1538–1616) to Carolus Clusius (1525–1609), later to become professor of Botany at Leiden University and founder of the famous botanical garden there. He published Dodonaeus' works on grains, legumes, herbs and flowers in 1565, 1566, 1568, 1569, 1574 and 1583; the first part of Lobelius's great *History of Plants* appeared in 1576 with 1,473 woodcuts; and after publishing the compendium of medical antidotes collected by the young Clusius in 1561, went on to print the latter's marvellous works on exotic and rare plants in 1576, 1582 and 1583. Plantin did everything he could to ensure not only the quality and variety of his typefaces, but also the quality of his illustrations in engraving and woodcut. To this end, he worked together with a large number of engravers and remained in constant business contact with the director of the House of the Four Winds, Hieronymus Cock. Thus he published the sumptuously illustrated book commemorating the funeral ceremonies of Charles V in 1558, with illustrations that came from Cock's shop, and books commemorating the temporary arches and floats set up to celebrate the triumphal entry into Antwerp of men like the Duke of Anjou in 1582. Needless to say, he also published all but the first of the sixteenth-century editions of Guicciardini's popular description of the Low Countries, each time with more sumptuous illustrations and better maps of each town.

It was, indeed, in the area of cartography that the Netherlands became justifiably renowned in the very years in which Bruegel flourished. These mapping and mapmaking activities were first stimulated and then encouraged, constantly, by the heroic voyages of the Spanish and Portuguese merchants and explorers, but then simply by the need engendered by every burgeoning merchant fleet—as well, of course, as by the need to know the many overland transport routes. The first major name is that of Gemma Frisius (1508–1555); but he spent his most fruitful years in Louvain. Antwerp saw the even more important publication of all the major books of Gerard Mercator (1512–1594). Mercator started making better maps than anyone before him, and he collected them into the first real precursors of modern atlases. It was he who developed the projection that is named after him and is still used in mapmaking today; but his name was soon rivalled by that of a younger man who was not quite as actively engaged or as skilled in the scientific side of cartography as he, but whose energy was devoted to arranging for ever better engravers and

illustrators, and to setting up extraordinarily ambitious projects for mapmaking and map collections—Abraham Ortelius (1527–1598). Ortelius was an intimate of both Plantin and Bruegel; Bruegel features quite frequently in his correspondence and is the subject of a moving posthumous tribute by the cartographer. For many years Ortelius had supplied Plantin with maps and worked on atlases for him; but it was only in 1570, the year after Bruegel's death, that the celebrated geographer's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* appeared, the "first uniformly sized systematic collection of maps in the countries of the world based only on contemporary knowledge". It employed some of the best engravers of the time, the typefaces used were of the finest quality, and the maps were adorned with borders and decorative and figurative vignettes to such a fine degree that the marriage of art and science still commands admiration. It went through several editions, each time with an expanded number of maps, and set the tone for similar compendia throughout the next century and for a long time after.

In 1572–73 there finally appeared Plantin's most ambitious and most difficult project—the Polyglot Bible. For over four years he had been working on his staggering plan of producing texts of the Old and New Testaments in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Syriac and Chaldaean (for which, characteristically, he had a special type made). He went to enormous lengths to engage the best textual and philological specialists in and worked closely together with the king's censor Benito Arias Montano, who oversaw the whole project as a whole, engaged the king's interest in it, and made it ever more ambitious both in scope and in size. The king was to subsidize the project as a whole; but in the end, after Plantin had expended the fabulous sum of over 100,000 florins, the king reneged on his commitment—even though he had insisted on twelve sets of the giant eight-volume work (naturally it was in folio) to be printed especially for him on vellum. This required more skins than were actually available in Antwerp at the time. Twelve hundred sets were printed, but not all were sold—and then the Inquisition and a variety of Spanish theologians started raising queries as to its doctrinal and textual soundness. Final papal approval only came in 1580, by which time Plantin had completely destabilized his own financial position as a result of the whole brave enterprise. But by the time the Polyglot Bible appeared, the decline of Antwerp had begun. The town had been ravaged once already, and was shortly to be set upon even more seriously. And the adventures of the Bible itself seem to epitomize some of the chief religious crises of these days.

We remember Plantin for his great contributions to both printing and learning; but there was another side to his life that is essential to record in our present context. In the conduct of his life and in the beliefs he espoused are refracted some of the chief tensions of his age. Like his friend the geographer Ortelius, and probably—though not certainly—like Bruegel, Plantin could not be said to have been an orthodox Catholic. We know this from hindsight and from a number of documents; but at the time it would have been difficult to tell. In the first place, men like Plantin, Ortelius, and a number of other intellectuals believed that in matters of faith what was important above all was inward faith, not outward observance, or external practice. True faith consisted in the inward imitation of Christ, not the ceremonies of one particular church or another. To us this may seem comparatively innocuous, but at the time such views—in which one dissimulated one's true beliefs, hiding them under a cloak of dissimulation—would certainly have been regarded as heretical. Along with the reservations about Catholic doctrine and practice which these men already held, they would have seemed to be influenced by the newly formulated Protestant beliefs coming out of Germany in particular, but also from France; and in those days such beliefs were regarded as subversive, since they seemed to threaten the indissoluble nexus between the Spanish regime and the Catholic faith. There were in any case plenty of examples of political subversion that went hand-in-hand with the adoption of Protestant views.

But it seems that Plantin, Ortelius and several other Antwerp intellectuals and merchants went still further, and were followers of a still mysterious individual called Hendrik Niclaes, the founder of a peace-loving sect whose basis was a personal faith free of external ceremonies—even of the minimal sacraments required by Luther—and which was predicated on Niclaes' own idiosyncratic and often highly symbolic outlines of the love of God and of one's neighbour. It was a sect that had no hierarchy like any of the established churches—let alone the elaborate one that had the Pope of Rome at the top, the Roman Pope who for many had become the embodiment of the Antichrist, and the Whore of Babylon.

Even for modern historians it is hard to account for the appeal of this highly clandestine sect—so clandestine that we are still uncertain about exactly who belonged to it; but it does now seem that in addition to men like Plantin and

Ortelius, no less a figure than the king's censor, Benito Arias Montano, the supporter of the Polyglot Bible, was an adherent. On the other hand it is not hard to understand the appeal of the ideas of Hendrik Niclaes. It seems that one did not officially have to deny the Catholic faith—or, indeed, whichever of the established faiths one happened to belong to; and so the motivation of many of the adherents of the Family of Love was both ecumenical and irenic in a time of terrible religious strife, when the inquisition was fierce and many reformers rather rabid. The motivations of men like Plantin, Ortelius and their circle could, in hindsight, hardly be faulted; and they seem, moreover, to dovetail with projects like the *Theatrum Orbis Theatrum*, the great collection of maps betokening a broad and open interest in all the nations of the earth, and the Polyglot Bible, where not one or two but five languages were made the equipollent vehicles of the most sacred text of all. The interest in the project cannot only be said to have been antiquarian, as little as the interest in Niclaes's sect can be said to have been wholly doctrinal.

But it has also been suggested that Bruegel—and some of his friends—belonged to an even more radical and independent strain of thought running from the German writer Sebastian Franck (1499–1542–43) through to the philosopher-engraver of Haarlem, Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert (1522–1590). Franck, whose ideas Bruegel is sometimes claimed to have followed, rejected all narrow sectarianism, and spoke of a truly spiritual faith, governed wholly by the eternal and invisible Word of God, rather than by any external institution. The claim that he influenced Bruegel is an appealing one, but it is in the nature of such ideas that they are not often explicitly held, and so there is no secure evidence one way or the other: only the justified but uncorroborated suspicion of a natural sympathy. The term "libertine" has often been applied to the strain of thought referred to here, but the positions vary widely, from comparatively freethinking adherents of the Catholic church to apparent libertines like Franck and moderates like Coornhert. Coornhert, whose key works were published a little after Bruegel's death, adopted both a moderate and a stoical view which may be said to have been borne of the religious and civil tensions through which he lived in his native town of Haarlem. What we do know of all these beliefs and positions is that they were less doctrinal than humanist, benign and not rigid, tolerant and not extreme, intent on a general community of believers in Christ—in the Word of Christ in particular—and not on dogmatic exclusivity. But, alas, beliefs like these were only those of minority—and they were to be of little avail in the strained and difficult times through which Bruegel lived.

The trouble, effectively, started in Germany. Anti-clericalism had been rampant for some time, from the fifteenth century on; but more serious concerns—about matters like the sale of indulgences, the traditional sacraments of the Catholic church, the whole question of the relations between faith and good works, and, of course, the nature of the Eucharist—began to be voiced by a wide range of would-be reformers of the church. Even Erasmus had serious reservations about many Catholic practices (although he seems to have been less exercised about the substance of its doctrines); but it was with the rise of the most dynamic and powerful of the German reformers, Martin Luther, from 1517 on, but especially in the 1520s, that the very foundations of Christendom began to be shaken. Soon Luther acquired a variety of followers among the German potentates; but his reforming zeal—though not necessarily his effectiveness—was swiftly exceeded by the great and intense French and Swiss reformers, John Calvin and Huldrych Zwingli. By the time they articulated their views in print they could count on both local and national support in a number of countries; and Christendom would never be the same again. It was split at its very core. Before the century was out, the Netherlands itself was divided into two, one part soon to come together as the United Provinces of the Netherlands (the direct forerunner of the modern Netherlands), and the other to remain under Spanish rule—more or less exactly the area we now know as Belgium.

Even before Luther nailed his famous theses to the Wittenberg doors in 1517, there had been trouble with heretics and subversives in the Netherlands. Already in 1515 four men were sentenced for eating meat openly on Ash Wednesday (during the Lenten period, when they should have been eating fish), and there had been periodic trouble with objectors to the wealth of the church and the means whereby it acquired money (such as the sale of indulgences and the use of images in churches). In that year Charles V acceded to the Hapsburg throne, which he had inherited from his father, Philip the Fair of Burgundy (the Dukes of Burgundy and Brabant, simultaneously Margraves of the Holy Roman Empire, had ruled over the Netherlands for most of the fifteenth century). By 1521 he had issued the first of a series of notorious placards against heresy, even forbidding the performance of plays with what were

regarded as heretical doctrines. The next year the first and only Dutch pope, Adrian VI, set up a Commission of Inquisition for the Netherlands.

But none of this could slow the influence of the Reformation, or of the even more anarchic and threatening groups which often commanded widespread popular support, such as the Anabaptists. Those who overstepped the mark, or whose heretical views became public, were often summarily executed, as, for example, in the case of the distinguished Antwerp printer, Willem van Liesvelt, who was beheaded in 1544 for printing Lutheran bibles—or, at any rate, ones contraining apparently heretical material. It is, of course, significant that Liesvelt was one of the great printers of bibles in the vernacular. These were always more suspect: since it seemed to be held by many that the only way of assuring the purity of God's word—and not putting the wrong ideas into common people's heads—was to keep it in Latin. This attitude towards the vernacular—and therefore popular culture in its broad generality—must be borne in mind as we consider Bruegel's undeniable affection for a culture that, if not as low as once thought, was not especially high either—and certainly not the domain of the canonical.

Although Charles V—who was himself born in Ghent—continued to keep a strict eye on the Netherlands, and although he issued ever stricter placards in a vain attempt to stem the tide of heresy (already in 1529 a placard proclaimed that death alone would be the penalty for anyone guilty of any infringement of Catholicism), the day-to-day running of the country was left to his regents, Margaret of Austria (1506–15 and 1518–30) and Mary of Hungary (1532–55). But on 25 October 1555 he abdicated his throne, and left it to his austere son Philip II of Spain. Just a few days later, Philip ordered the inquisitors to be unrelenting in their execution of his father's instructions, and renewed the notorious placards of 1550 against heresy. Thus he confirmed his lifelong antipathy to every form of Protestantism. In 1559 he tightened control over the Church by increasing the number of bishoprics from four to eighteen, which were all to be under the primacy of Mechlin. The measure roused the deepening anxiety of both the clerical and lay sections of the population, who feared this intrusion of the power of the state into the realm of the Church, and saw in it the possibility of the introduction of the Spanish Inquisition into the Netherlands. Philip then appointed his half-sister Margaret, Duchess of Parma, as his regent and gave her strict instructions to enforce the regulations against heresy. At the end of the year, he departed from his Netherlands domains, never to return there again. But first he made one more appointment: William, Count of Nassau and Duke of Orange was granted the Stadholdership of the provinces of Holland, Zeeland, and Utrecht. In the next year, from Spain, he appointed Antonio Perrenot de Granvelle as Archbishop of Mechlin and Primate of all the Netherlands; and it was he who adopted an unwaveringly firm stand against the heretics, in the face of Margaret's continuing inclination to compromise with the increasingly restive opposition to Spanish rule and the dominance of the Catholic church.

One can only assume that William—soon to acquire the sobriquet "the Silent" by which he became most famous—felt as unhappy as many others about the growing severity of Philip's religious policy and the continued presence of Spanish troops in the Netherlands, but it was only in 1564 that he openly voiced his protest. In that year the king's refusal to allow religious liberty in the Netherlands had been underlined by the publication of the decrees of the Council of Trent (which had finally concluded its eighteen long years of deliberations in 1563) by his regent Margaret. Philip grew dissatisfied with the services of Granvelle and dismissed him from the Netherlands. He was replaced by William and the Count of Egmont on Margaret's council of advisors. Both of them sympathized with much of the mounting opposition, but they did not align themselves with those nobles—mostly of the middle level—who signed the famous "Compromise of the Nobles" at the end of 1565 in the palace of the Count of Culemborg. Amongst those who signed this document testifying to their disaffection with the Spanish sovereignty and the inquisitorial measures of the government were William's brother Louis, the Marnix brothers, some members of the famed Egmont family, and the somewhat notorious Hendrik van Brederode. Also present on this occasion was a representative of the Calvinist consistories, Gilles de Clercq. In April of the following year the 400 nobles of the Compromise went to Brussels to present their Request to the regent, demanding the suspension of the Inquisition and the placards, and the calling of the States General. It was on this occasion that the regent's counsellor Berlaymont derisively referred to the petitioners as *les gueux*—"beggars"—for the first time. The name stuck, and from then on it was applied to, and proudly adopted by, all opponents of the regime and Calvinists in particular, although the opposition was by no means confined to them alone. Margaret yielded to the pressure by issuing an

Edict of Moderation, ordering caution in the execution of the Edicts; but this no means stilled the rising protests.

The Calvinists now began to increase their activity. Preachers not only from the Netherlands but from France and Germany too held well-attended meetings in the open air, which Margaret tried to forbid by her placard of July 1566. At the end of the month the nobles of the Compromise and representatives of the consistories met to draw up a new petition. Granvelle was sent back to the Netherlands to help strengthen Margaret's position. Tension mounted, and one could hear criticism of the official church and demands for Protestant places of worship at any one of the open-air sermons now held all over the country, openly but under armed guard. The whole situation erupted at the beginning of August, when an iconoclastic movement which started in the towns of lower Flanders gathered momentum and swept from the South to the farthest North, with a force which led even its opponents to see in it the assisting hand of God. The churches and monasteries of Antwerp were particularly badly hit, on 22–23 August 1566, and hundreds of precious works of art—not only paintings—were destroyed, mutilated, stolen, and lost. Images were the symbols of the Catholic church, the exemplification of its doctrines, and—above all—the embodiment of idolatry. To worship images was not to worship the true God. In Antwerp, Orange tried to intervene, but failed to prevent the riots; in Brussels Margaret vainly sought a concerted plan of action; and in most places the governors and councils responded equivocally to the storm. Often they were sympathetic to the iconoclasts, sometimes they granted them aid and cover, and on occasion they allowed the exercise of the reformed religion.

But Philip responded clearly. All that Margaret had done was to assent to an Accord on 23 August, allowing preaching in those parts where it was already practised. A year later she issued an edict ordering the foreign pastors to quit the country; but the fulminations against Catholic idolatry continued everywhere. So Philip ordered his regent to make no concessions to the rebels and to dispatch forces against the rebel armies. Then he sent the Duke of Alva to the Netherlands—exactly one year after the outburst of iconoclasm in Antwerp. Alva brought his troops with him and built the awesome new citadel of Antwerp, to protect it against attacks from both land and sea. No one could have been more ferocious in the pursuit of heretics than he. Reprisals started immediately; informers were encouraged; the terrible investigation known as the Council of Blood was set up; and in June 1568, along with eighteen others the Counts of Egmont and Hoorn were publicly executed in Brussels. Not even the fact that both of them had consistently refused to join the Compromise of Nobles was able to save them.

Things swiftly went from bad to worse. William of Orange had in the meantime retired to his home in Saxony. His attempts at conciliation had come to nothing, and he realized the necessity of taking a stand on the side of the opposition. Despite the publication of a "Justification" in which he professed his loyalty to the king, he began to organize the resistance against Alva, seeking contacts with French and German Protestant forces, and appointing William de Lumey, Baron de la Marck, a confirmed Calvinist, as admiral of his fleet. When Orange invaded Brabant, however, he was outmanoeuvred by Alva's troops, and had to withdraw to Picardy. It was his fleet, the *Gueux de Mer* under Lumey, which achieved the first major success with their capture of Den Briel in 1572. By now Alva's persecutions and his institution of a succession of oppressive tax schemes had aroused countrywide opposition; many town councils were won over to William's side as a result of their detestation of the Spanish garrison and the particular tax known as the "tenth penny", and the States of Holland, Zeeland, and Utrecht took the step of acclaiming him as their Stadholder once again (Philip had stripped him of that title five years earlier). But a second invasion of Brabant failed, and Spanish victories culminated in the following year with the sack of Mechlin and the plunder of its monasteries and churches by the king's troops. The rebels, however, were not to be subdued. Alva's tax schemes had proved unsuccessful, and he was clearly incapable of curbing the religious plans and ambitions of the Protestants. In 1571, the Synod of Emden completed the work of the Wesel conventicle held three years earlier, and gave a constitution to the reformed communities. Despite the surrender of Haarlem, Holland rejected the amnesty Alva offered in the name of Philip. It was all too much for Alva and at the end of 1572 he was officially recalled.

Here it is not necessary to examine the attempts at mollification by Alva's successor, Don Luis de Requesens. Bruegel himself had died four years previously and he was spared the agony and ever steeper decline of the city which had nurtured him. By now William had assumed sovereign authority over Holland and Zeeland, and had himself professed Calvinism: the way to an independent Dutch Republic north of the Spanish domains was now well and truly prepared. When Requesens died in March 1576, the country was in a state of grave instability, with dissatisfied and

unpaid troops mutinying everywhere. The populace, which had been suffering from grain shortages ever since the winter of 1565–66, was now at the mercy of the undisciplined Spanish troops as well as marauding mercenaries of every nation. No wonder, as the Estates of the Northern provinces took more power into their own hands, that the underpaid—or wholly unpaid—and leaderless troops in the south should finally have grown uncontrollable. On 4 November, 1576 Antwerp was ferociously sacked by mutinying troops in what immediately and for ever afterwards was called the “Spanish Fury”. Four days later, the provinces of the Netherlands met to sign the Pacification of Ghent, whereby the Spaniards were to be expelled and agreement was reached that they would not work with the newly arrived governor, Don Juan of Austria, the great victor against the Turks at Lepanto.

The terrible events of these days really sealed Antwerp's fate as the chief metropolis of Northern Europe. It would never be the same again, and it entered its long decline. Indeed, it is arguable that the decline had already set in much earlier, and that it is this, rather than the previous economic boom, that provides the backdrop against which one has to see the great cultural achievements of someone like Plantin. Even by the time Bruegel moved to Brussels in 1563, all was not entirely rosy on Antwerp's economic horizon. Already by the 1550s the spice trade had withdrawn to Lisbon; Charles was spending his resources on his wars with the Protestant princes of Germany; both the Spanish and the Netherlands government transferred their loans to state bonds at interest rates more advantageous to them; France declared a moratorium on its debts; and Portugal itself went bankrupt. The Antwerp bankers never recovered from the crash that followed. Trade began to fall off, manufacturing tapered off, and the money market was flat. Guicciardini himself commented on the high risks and the many bankruptcies that were a consequence of Antwerp's slightly overheated system of deposits and high interest-bearing loans. England was growing ever more prosperous, and Amsterdam was on the road to building an economy that was to rest on even firmer foundations than those of Antwerp. By the mid-sixties the Southern Netherlands was in a state of war, ruled by military commander who subjected the population to crippling taxes in order—*inter alia*—to finance his campaigns; and it was in the grip of a series of terrifying trials and investigations for religious and political dissidence.

The cause of Antwerp's decline, therefore, cannot solely be attributed to financial factors. It had at least as much to do with great political and religious issues. First the shock of 1566, the iconoclastic riots, then the Spanish Fury, and finally the French Fury—less wild and cruel than its Spanish precursor, and caused not so much by mutinying and uncontrollable troops but by the abortive attempt to instal the Duke of Anjou as commander in the Netherlands—all were like death-knells. The country was strained enough without such sudden and violent traumas. Antwerp would never recover; but Amsterdam, already burgeoning, swiftly took its place. For some time it had been the commercial center of the Seven Northern Provinces; and they, after a series of negotiations and prolonged wars both at sea and by land, finally sealed their independence from Spain with the Twelve Year Truce of 1609. But they had *de facto* independence for several years before that, arguably from the Pacification of Ghent of 1576 onwards. The Spanish governors of the Southern Netherlands from then on—Don John of Austria, the Archduke Matthias, nephew of the King, Alexander Farnese, Prince of Parma, (perhaps the most successful from a military point of view), the Archduke Ernest, and finally the Archduke Albert and the Archduchess Isabella could do little but wage costly and futile wars against William and his son Maurice, and preside over the economic eclipse of their chief city. Indeed, by the time the English ambassador Sir Dudley Carleton visited the town in 1606, he could end his observations with a series of remarks on the faded splendor of the city. The traces of its greatness were still very palpably there (although the churches and other ecclesiastical buildings had been devastated by iconoclasm); but the splendid houses of the merchants were either given over to the Jesuits or abandoned; the fine and broad streets were empty; and the shops wanting for custom. It was in short, as Carleton remarked, a great city, but a great solitude: *magna civitas magna solitudo*. The only factor that prevented an almost complete reversal of its once stupendous fame was the advent of another great artist: Peter Paul Rubens. And it was through his works, like those of Pieter Bruegel the Elder almost a half century before, that the city could vindicate its glory as the cradle and nurturer of some of the most intense and inventive artistic cultures the world has ever known.

Chief sources consulted

De Roover 1953; Geyl 1962; Guicciardini 1582; Parker 1979; Pirenne 1907; Pirenne, 1973; Van der Wee 1963; Van der Wee, 1967; Voet 1973; Wegg 1916; Wegg, 1924.

Pieter Bruegel and Popular Culture

Keith Moxey

No issue bears more directly on our understanding of the work of Pieter Bruegel than the interpretation of its relation to popular culture. Bruegel's paintings and engravings represent proverbs, games, festivals and peasant occupations. Do these images afford us an unbiased glimpse of sixteenth-century life, or are they to be regarded as social constructs that were meant to extol or criticize the customs and practices they record? Did Bruegel identify with the values of the lower social orders or did he pass comment on those values from the perspective of one who belonged to a higher social class? Did such images promote the values of the subordinate classes, or did they serve to disparage them so as to keep those classes under control?

The discussion of such issues in the literature on Bruegel has not been aided by the ambiguous remarks of his first biographer, Carel van Mander. It was van Mander, for example, who first characterized Bruegel as a peasant and thus a member of the same class as the figures he so often represented:

In a wonderful manner Nature found and seized the man who in his turn was determined to seize her magnificently, when in an obscure village in Brabant she chose from among the peasants, as the delineator of peasants, the witty and gifted Pieter Bruegel, and made him a painter to the lasting glory of our Netherlands.¹

Van Mander's suggestion that Bruegel was a peasant appears to have no other source than the fact that he painted many peasant subjects. It is contradicted just a few lines later when he informs us that Bruegel had to "disguise" himself as a peasant when he attended peasant fairs and weddings:

He did a great deal of work for a merchant, Hans Franckert, a noble and upright man, who found pleasure in Brueghel's company and met him everyday. With this Franckert, Brueghel often went out into the country to see the peasants at their fairs and weddings. Disguised as peasants they brought gifts like the other guests, claiming relationship with the bride or groom. Here Brueghel delighted in observing the droll behaviour of the peasants, how they ate, drank, danced, capered or made love, all of which he was able to reproduce cleverly and pleasantly in water-colour or oil, being equally skilled in both processes. He represented the peasants, men and women of the Campine and elsewhere naturally, as they really were, betraying their boorishness in the way they walked, danced, stood still or moved.²

How are we to understand the paradox presented us by van Mander's text? What impelled him to describe the artist in such contradictory terms? Grossmann pointed out that van Mander's description was decisively colored by the Italian sources on which he based his text. Vasari's *Lives* of the artists, which was the most important of these, was a history of the way in which technical innovations introduced by different artists led to the development of an ever more naturalistic art. Among the devices he used to illustrate art's progress towards greater and greater illusionism was the *topos* of the unschooled artist whose only guide was nature. Grossmann suggested that Vasari's description of Giotto as a shepherd boy may well underlie van Mander's description of Bruegel as a peasant.³ He also proposed that van Mander's account of the way in which Bruegel dressed up as a peasant in order to observe the behavior of other peasants at first hand, was derived from a story told about Leonardo in Lomazzo's *Treatise on the Art of Painting*. According to Lomazzo, Leonardo arranged a peasant banquet at which he entertained them, making them laugh, so that he could study their facial expressions.⁴ If we accept Grossmann's interpretation of van Mander's life of Bruegel,

then it becomes apparent that the seeming contradiction between the identification of the artist as a peasant and his ability to see this class from a perspective other than its own so as to be able to record its "droll behaviour," can only be reconciled in terms of the author's overriding concern to characterize his subject as committed to the representation of nature.

In view of the way in which van Mander's humanist ideology shaped his account of Bruegel's work, it is not surprising that subsequent authors should also have betrayed as much about themselves and their times when writing about Bruegel. The nineteenth-century scholars who laid the foundation of Bruegel scholarship tended to see him as a realist, that is, as an artist who recorded the life of his contemporaries in a direct and unmediated fashion. This characterization was motivated not merely by their admiration for Realist painting, a school which in the hands of Courbet and his followers dominated much of European art in the second half of the nineteenth century, but by nationalist sentiment as well. Pieter Bruegel was seen as an artist who was true to his native Flemish culture in an age that witnessed the triumphant spread of the culture of the Italian Renaissance. The consequence of the fusion of what was perceived as Bruegel's nationalism with his realism was that the subject matter of his art was interpreted as an expression of his sympathetic identification with the ordinary people of his native land.⁵ In the course of time, this attitude was replaced by a vision of Bruegel as a middle-class urban intellectual whose images were complex allegories.⁶ This alternative was substantially reinforced by the discovery in 1931 of documents that indicated that Bruegel's work had been much admired by a circle of humanist intellectuals.⁷ A feature of this second view, one which can be described as the reigning orthodoxy, is the suggestion that Bruegel's paintings were capable of being understood on two different levels. That is, it is thought that they were capable of being appreciated by the uneducated as witty and amusing depictions of everyday life, while offering the educated meditations on the nature of human experience.⁸

In the following analysis of those works of Bruegel's that are most relevant to our understanding of his attitude towards popular culture, I will argue that the current attitude, which interprets Bruegel's paintings as the artist's reflections about the religious, philosophical and political movements of his time, projects a romantic conception of the artist as an autonomous creator, as an individual who could rise above the social context in which he lived, thus failing to grasp the importance of his works as sites for the creation of social meaning.⁹ Much contemporary scholarship seeks to enhance the aesthetic significance of Bruegel's work by positing a phantom that hovers behind the painted or engraved surface of his work. As a consequence, the pictorial sign systems that constitute those works are divorced from their social function and treated as enigmatic texts that betray the absent presence of the artist.

It may seem ironic, after this introduction, for me to turn to a discussion of Bruegel's class identity. In focussing on the personality of the artist, I appear to be doing what I have just accused so much of the literature of having done. However, this discussion of Bruegel's class background is not intended to *isolate* the personality of the artist, but rather to *locate* it in the broader context of the class to which he belonged. Second, it will not be undertaken on the basis of his art. That is, there will be no attempt to see through his work but rather the analysis will be based on documents that inform us about his life. Keeping this in mind, we must ask what was Bruegel's class background, what class did he belong to and what class did he identify with? While there is little evidence that can be adduced to answer these questions, the documents relating to his friendship with the humanist geographer Abraham Ortelius do afford us some insight into the matter. Ortelius's epitaph for Bruegel, which he included in his *Album amicorum*, or "friendship album," is a paean of praise to the artist's skills and achievements. It closes with the words "Abraham Ortelius dedicated this with grief to the memory of his friend."¹⁰ Other indications of the nature of this friendship can be found in the fact that Ortelius owned a painting of *The Death of the Virgin* by Bruegel which he had engraved. He is also known to have sent impressions of this engraving to his friends.¹¹ Several scholars have used these documents as the basis for far-reaching interpretations of Bruegel's work. It is argued that because Bruegel was a friend of Ortelius, he must have shared the latter's intellectual interests and religious attitudes. It is thus claimed that Bruegel was a humanist of considerable learning and that he belonged to an esoteric reformed movement known as Spiritualism.¹² While Ortelius remained outwardly orthodox throughout his life, his correspondence reveals that he shared the opinion of a number of his friends in questioning Catholic teaching without subscribing to the reformed alternatives offered by Lutheranism and Calvinism.¹³ The validity of these claims as they affect the interpretation of

Bruegel's relation to popular culture will be discussed in reference to particular works. However, it is important to note that Bruegel's friendship with Ortelius, his inclusion in the circle of acquaintance of a prominent humanist scholar, one who had been named Cosmographer to Phillip II of Spain, is our most valuable clue regarding Bruegel's class identity.

Another indication of Bruegel's social status is afforded by the record of his collaboration with Giulio Clovio during his trip to Rome in 1553.¹⁴ Clovio was a highly regarded miniaturist who enjoyed the patronage of some of the most important Italian art collectors of the period. Having worked first for Cardinal Marino Grimani, Clovio was in the service of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese when Bruegel visited Rome. The inventory taken at Clovio's death indicates that he collaborated with Bruegel in the execution of several paintings and that he owned two landscapes by Bruegel's hand. Since Clovio was an ardent admirer of Michelangelo and Raphael, whose works he frequently copied, it is fair to assume that Bruegel was introduced to the work of the leading artists of the humanist culture of the Italian Renaissance by one who understood and admired their artistic achievements.

One of Bruegel's most important patrons was Nicholas Jonghelinck. Jonghelinck who was the son of the mint master of the province of Brabant, occupied the post of receiver of the Zeeland toll from 1551 onward.¹⁵ Since this toll was paid by every ship entering or leaving the port of Antwerp, this was an extremely lucrative office. Jonghelinck's marriage in 1545 to the daughter of the former city recorder further reinforced his position as a member of Antwerp's patriciate. Shortly after purchasing a house which his brother had built on a spacious lot in a new quarter of the city in 1554, Jonghelinck ordered a series of large paintings of *The Labours of Hercules* from the painter Frans Floris. This manifestation of Jonghelinck's humanist interests was followed by important commissions to Pieter Bruegel which included paintings of *The Tower of Babel* and *The Way to Calvary*, as well as the spectacular series of the twelve *Months* of the year.¹⁶ Jonghelinck's patronage suggests that Bruegel was much admired by at least one member of Antwerp's ruling class.

Bruegel's most prominent patron was undoubtedly Cardinal Granvella, Archbishop of Mechelen, President of the Netherlands Council of State and advisor to Margaret of Parma, the regent of Phillip II. According to Granvella's correspondence, it appears that he had more than one painting by Bruegel in his collection in the archbishop's palace before he was forced to flee the country in 1564. According to a letter written to Granvella in 1572, while he was living at Besancon, it seems that the cardinal was anxious to replace works by Bruegel that had been lost during the looting of his palace.¹⁷ The inventory taken of Granvella's palace at Besancon on the death of his nephew in 1607, mentions several works by Bruegel of which only one can safely be ascribed to Pieter Bruegel the Elder.¹⁸ This painting can be identified with *The Flight into Egypt*, now in the Courtauld Institute Gallery in London.¹⁹ Granvella was a cultivated man who had studied at the universities of Padua and Pavia. He patronized many artists other than Bruegel and commissioned the publication of a series of engravings representing *The Baths of Diocletian* from the famous Antwerp print publisher Hieronymus Cock.²⁰ Whether it was Jacob Jonghelinck, a sculptor and medallist who was patronized by Granvella and the brother of Bruegel's patron Nicholas, who brought Bruegel to the cardinal's attention is unknown. Nevertheless, Bruegel's inclusion in the collection of this distinguished politician, affords us insight into the social class in which Bruegel's work found favor.

One of the paintings that has traditionally been singled out as a manifestation of Bruegel's attitude to popular culture is the painting *Netherlandish Proverbs* in the former Prussian State Collections in West Berlin. It has been argued by de Tolnay and others that the work illustrates human folly and that it exemplifies Bruegel's philosophical detachment from the world around him. As a Spiritualist, Bruegel is said to have viewed existence with a sharp eye for human comedy. While the painting's didactic quality is acknowledged—the proverbs were intended to illustrate behavior that should be avoided—Bruegel is said to have been interested above all in making a general statement about the human condition.²¹ Such an interpretation of Bruegel's painting serves to distract attention from its manifest content, that is, from the representation of nearly one hundred proverbs, in favor of an analysis of the artist's personal motives. What would have been the significance of proverbs for a sixteenth-century audience? Stridbeck and others have shown that proverb collecting was a passion among Renaissance humanists.²² Erasmus compiled a collection of ancient proverbs which he published in ever-expanding editions. Martin Luther and Sebastian Franck also published collections of contemporary proverbs which they regarded as manifestations of divine wisdom

embedded in the language of the people. It was thus the moral point of the proverbs as much as their status as linguistic curiosities that interested humanist scholars. A new perspective on this type of moralizing has been put forward by David Kunzle, who observed that unlike other representations of proverbs in this period, Bruegel depicted his collection in the context of a Flemish village. In locating the proverbs in a village setting and in depicting most of those involved in these violations of accepted social conduct as peasants, Bruegel's painting makes a social as well as a moral statement:

"This is the way peasants really *are*": in saying this, Bruegel was not denying that the urban and upper classes were immune from such follies; far from it. But he was reinforcing the idea of the lower classes as the characteristic repository, and in some sense the true source of irrational and foolish behavior.²⁴

Kunzle's reading of *Netherlandish Proverbs* takes into account the probable audience for which the work was painted. That is, it acknowledges the class identity of the wealthy, educated humanists who seem to have been Bruegel's patrons. Not only would it have offered them an illustration of an important aspect of linguistic experience, that is the moralizing function of proverbs, but it would have confirmed a sense of superiority in a class that regarded itself as more enlightened than the rest of society. The social implications of the painting would have been enhanced by the traditional tension that existed between urban and rural ways of life in the sixteenth century. City governments, usually constituted by members of the patriciate, regarded themselves as the spiritual leaders as well as the temporal rulers of their populations. As a consequence, cities were administered according to a strict code of ethics that regulated every aspect of social behavior and urban dwellers took a particular pride in the morality of city life. The implications of Kunzle's argument for the traditional interpretation of the painting are clear. We can only understand the work as a statement concerning the human condition if we are prepared to subordinate the significance of the cultural signs that flow through it, in favor of some notion of the autonomy of artistic intention.

The consequences of subscribing to a view of the artist as an autonomous creator may also be seen in the interpretation of *Children's Games*. As in the case of *Netherlandish Proverbs*, authors such as Stridbeck have recognized the way in which the games were made the vehicle for moralizing comment by Bruegel's contemporaries, that is, the way in which these inconsequential pastimes were considered examples of human folly, yet insisted that the significance of the painting lay in the way in which its negative, didactic air affords us insight into the artist's detached view of the human condition.²⁴ This approach still colors more recent interpretations, such as that of Sandra Hindman, who while recognizing the moralizing program embedded in the games, is just as concerned to characterize the artist's personal attitude towards his subject matter as that of a humorist amused by the human comedy:

Added to Bruegel's heightened appreciation of visual and verbal stimuli around him was the vision of a humorist, able to elicit laughter in others as he laughed at himself.²⁵

A daring attempt to break out of the hermeneutic tradition sketched above, has been proposed by Edward Snow. Arguing that what had been recognized as signifying structures in Bruegel's paintings were actually elusive and ambiguous rather than univocal in their meaning, Snow suggested that the ultimate ground of interpretation be shifted from the intellectual construct that is our understanding of the past, to our phenomenological experience of the work in the present.²⁶ Snow's notion of signifying structures depends upon semiotic theory. It is, for example, Saussure's theory of the linguistic sign as composed of a material signifier, the spoken or written word, and an ideological meaning, the signified, which bear no necessary relation to one another, which allows Snow to insist that conventional sign systems such as the pictorial signs that constitute *Children's Games*, can never be given univocal meaning.²⁷ Snow exploits the ambiguity inherent in the notion of the sign to sabotage attempts to recreate the painting's meaning within the ideological parameters of its historical context. One of the most important aspects of his argument is his analysis of the sixteenth-century conception of childhood. After bringing much new information into the discussion, Snow asserts that the evidence is ambivalent and contradictory and thus incapable of affording us

insight into whether or not Bruegel's society regarded children in a positive or a negative light.²⁸ Such an approach enables him to interpret Bruegel's work in existential rather than in historical terms. Speaking of the group of children in the background spinning tops, he writes:

We experience them with an utter visceral particularity. The top-spinner on the right, especially, is a self-conscious tour de force of motor visual representation. All Bruegel gives us is a head, a raised arm, part of a shoulder (all in red), and an unrelated portion of one leg (an unrelated blue); yet our imagination assembles the whole body, and experiences its stance and gesture from the inside out.²⁹

This kind of "motor visceral empathy with the human figure" is experienced by Snow as "something intrinsically positive":

It involves a *representational* faith in the goodness of the body, both as the basis of experience and the vehicle for our identification with other selves.³⁰

Snow's article serves to question some of the more unexamined assumptions of the historical profession. If the signifying systems of the past are unstable in their meaning, then historical interpretation depends to a large extent on the historian's projection of his or her own ideas and values. Snow brings to consciousness the ways in which historians impose their own views, allegiances and beliefs in shaping our understanding of the past. He implies that an awareness of the way in which the historian's subjectivity is incorporated into his or her account of the past, serves to relativize historical interpretation in order to make it no different from an interpretation based on a personal or phenomenological experience of the work. However, I would argue that far from invalidating historical interpretation, an awareness of the way in which this approach conflates historical horizons in asserting the distance which separates them, affords us insight into the role of social context in the construction of meaning. Historical interpretation implies that the sign systems of the past once had specifiable social meaning, even if that meaning is not always easy for us to discern. The importance of historical interpretation lies not in the way it imposes closure, not in the way it closes possibilities of interpretation, but in the way in which it reworks the representations of the past into representations about the present and the future. In other words, it is the social position of the sign in history as well as the social position of the sign systems used by the historian in the present, that permit us to make the past relevant and meaningful for us today.³¹

If we evaluate Snow's contribution from this perspective, that is, if we ask in what way does his interpretation make the painting relevant and meaningful for us today, we must observe that by privileging the phenomenological over the historical, Snow places the aesthetic significance of the painting for the contemporary viewer above the concern to understand the image within the cultural context of its own time. By claiming that the cultural significance of the state of childhood in the sixteenth century cannot be determined, that it is impossible to decide whether children were regarded as "innocent" or "unenlightened," Snow effectively rules out any possibility of evaluating the significance of that class for our understanding of the painting. This means that the significance of the difference separating the class in the painting from that of the patrons for whom it was made cannot be assessed. Needless to say, such a strategy is fundamentally opposed to our conception of the work as a signifying system whose function is the creation of social meaning.

Of prime importance for our understanding of Bruegel's relation to popular culture is his painting *The Battle between Carnival and Lent*. While de Tolnay had viewed the painting as an allegory of the battle between good and evil in which Bruegel went beyond the constraints of human morality by showing how these forces interpenetrated so as to be indistinguishable,³² Stridbeck claimed that the painting was an allegory of the religious situation in Bruegel's own time.³³ That is, he saw in the forces of Carnival those of reformed opinion and in those of Lent the power of the orthodox church. Since Bruegel presented neither side in a particularly flattering light, Stridbeck concluded that the painting gave expression to Bruegel's own religious views, namely, that of a Spiritualist who subscribed to neither side in the doctrinal struggles of the day. Stridbeck's concern to see the work as a reflection of Bruegel's personal views

obscures its significance for the social context in which it was produced. In view of the fact that the very existence of the Spiritualists depended on their ability to conceal their views from others, it seems unlikely that Bruegel should have sought to give them public expression. It is significant, for example, that the painting Bruegel executed for Abraham Ortelius represented *The Death of the Virgin*. This was a traditional Catholic subject based on apocryphal writings whose authority had been questioned by the reformers.³⁴ Stridbeck's desire to see through the painting to the underlying personality of the artist, leaves the critic in the awkward position of claiming that Bruegel's contemporaries were unable to appreciate the original significance of the work.

If *The Battle between Carnival and Lent* is not a Spiritualist allegory, then what was its meaning for those who originally viewed it? Mock battles between allegorical personifications of Carnival and Lent were a feature of late medieval carnival celebrations.³⁵ It has been pointed out that Bruegel represented a variety of practices that offer the observer an almost encyclopedic account of the ways in which this point in the church calendar was marked at the level of popular culture.³⁶ However, what was the appeal of such a painting for Bruegel's wealthy humanist patrons? It seems unlikely that they would have identified with the kind of raucous celebration depicted in the painting. While it is known that the patricians of late medieval cities played an energetic role in carnival celebrations, their participation tended to manifest itself in highly ritualized forms of behavior.³⁷ It is improbable that they would have participated in the type of street theatre represented in Bruegel's work. A close reading of Bruegel's visual forms within the context of his practice in other works suggests that he has made extensive use of caricature to satirize both parties in the confrontation. The painting thus shares with *Netherlandish Proverbs* and *Children's Games* an awareness of the distance separating the class represented in the picture from that which admired it. It seems likely that Bruegel's depiction of the *Battle between Carnival and Lent* is a satire of the street celebrations that marked this moment in the church calendar. Rather than identifying with popular culture, the painting satirizes its excesses for a class that did not participate in it.

Two of Bruegel's early engravings, the *Church Anniversary Festival at Hoboken* (No.30) and the *Church Anniversary Festival on St. George's Day* (No.52), represent popular festivals and are therefore important elements in any argument concerning the artist's relation to popular culture. A leading Bruegel scholar, Adolph Monballieu, has recently dedicated considerable attention to the interpretation of the *Church Anniversary Festival at Hoboken*. Following a method he had used with success in other studies,³⁸ Monballieu attempted to determine the significance of the reference to Hoboken in the inscription on the flag that flies from the inn on the right-hand side of the composition. His research into the history of the village of Hoboken, near Antwerp, revealed that its fairs were particularly popular with the inhabitants of Antwerp, who flocked to them in order to drink beer that was cheaper than that produced within the city because it was subject to lower taxation.³⁹ The popularity of these festivals is attested in songs and popular texts. In 1559, the date on the print, the village of Hoboken was bought by the wealthy Antwerp merchants Melchior and Balthasar Schetz. Monballieu made use of this new archival information to provide a new interpretation of the inscription placed beneath the image. The inscription reads:

The peasants delight in such feasts
Brawling and fighting and getting drunk as beasts
To go to the kermis [church anniversary festival],
be they men or women,
So let the peasants have their kermis.⁴⁰

Instead of regarding this as an ironic condemnation of the excesses to which such festivals were subject, as others have done,⁴¹ Monballieu read it as a reaction to the regulations governing the conduct of church anniversary festivals issued by Charles V in 1531 (re-issued in 1559), which ordered that they should last only one day and that they should be attended only by the inhabitants of the locality in which the festival took place. That is, Monballieu interpreted the last line of the inscription, "So let the peasants have their kermis," as a veiled request to Balthasar Schetz the new owner of the village of Hoboken, that he ignore the new decrees and permit the festivals to be celebrated as they had been in the past. According to this view, the image represents the consequences of obeying

the new regulations, for it depicts all the activities associated with church anniversary festivals as taking place at the same time (that is, as if they had been squeezed into one day), and it shows a public that consists only of local peasants, the citizenry of Antwerp having been forbidden from attending. The image is thus interpreted as an ironic comment on the way in which the festivals would be celebrated according to the new regulations.

Monballieu's interpretation is open to a number of questions. Why would Bruegel have sympathized with the way in which festivals had traditionally been conducted rather than adopting a critical attitude towards them? Why would he have created a print, intended for sale on the open market, that directly challenged the official position regarding their celebration? Why would the engraving's publisher have risked official disapproval by issuing it? Such a challenge to authority can only be understood if we choose to follow de Tolnay, Stridbeck and others in looking through Bruegel's images themselves in order to determine the nature of the personality of the artist who created them. Bruegel would only have participated in such a challenge if he belonged to a religious sect that found itself at odds with the religious policies of the orthodox church as well as those of the reformers, both of which were united in their condemnation of the excesses that characterized the church festivals. As we have seen, such a view depends on our accepting the paradox that Bruegel belonged to a group that wished to keep its beliefs secret, yet sought to give them public expression.

Monballieu's interpretation privileges a view of representation as mimesis above its role as a site for the creation of social meaning. It is the transparency of the image that is stressed, the way in which it allegedly captures what sixteenth-century Hoboken looked like, rather than its opacity, or the way in which it is composed of signs used for the purpose of social communication. As a consequence, he fails to bring out the extent to which the image is indebted to a traditional iconographic type, one which had used the representation of festival abuses as a vehicle for peasant satire.⁴² Far from detracting from the force of the satire, the reference to Hoboken on this print must have served to actualize, for an Antwerp audience, the ideological distinction between urban and rural cultures.⁴³

The Festival at Hoboken has also been the subject of a new interpretation by Margaret Carroll, who characterized it as an expression of Bruegel's patriotic sentiments in the context of the Netherlands's struggle for independence from Spain.⁴⁴ Carroll argued that the prominence accorded by Bruegel to the village shooting guild is an indication of his support for the local militia, whose role had been threatened by the introduction of foreign troops by Philip II. Bruegel is said to have transformed the satirical iconography of the church anniversary festival by eliminating depictions of overindulgence or violence. In support of the contention that the peasant festival is thus endowed with patriotic significance, she offers evidence to suggest that these festivals were regarded as characteristically national occupations by both German and Netherlandish humanists of this period. These views are thought to be reflected in the inscription beneath the image, which far from being regarded as a condemnation of peasant excess is interpreted as a commendation of a national pastime.

Like Monballieu, Carroll would view the engravings as a positive commendation of the traditional celebration of church anniversary festivals. However, whereas the former would see the image as an ironic commentary on the way in which such celebrations were to be conducted in accordance with recent legislation, the latter would see it as an example of the way in which such festivals ought to be observed. Like Monballieu, Carroll attempts to see through the work to the historical circumstances in which the artist lived—in this case by identifying the prominence accorded the shooting guild as a reference to historical reality. If Bruegel had wished to represent a patriotic subject, why did he incorporate it within an image that otherwise bore all the characteristics of peasant satire, including peasants dancing before an inn and defecating in public? Furthermore, why would Bruegel and his publisher have risked official sanction by producing an image that extolled Netherlandish autonomy in a culture controlled by the repressive power of Spanish domination? We can only answer such questions if we are prepared to distinguish Bruegel's work from his life in such a way as to regard one as an expression of the other. I suggest that if we are fully to appreciate the social function of the image we must be prepared to recognize that art and biography belong to distinct cultural sign systems that are equally socially determined but which have nothing at all to do with one another.

The greatest controversy surrounding our understanding of Bruegel's attitude towards popular culture involves the interpretation of his representations of peasants. These scenes include several paintings, *The Peasant Wedding*

Dance in the Detroit Institute of Arts, *The Church Anniversary Festival* in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna and *The Peasant Wedding Feast* in the same museum, as well as the engraving *The Peasant Wedding Dance* (No.61). On the one hand, it has been argued that these works offer us a favorable image of peasant life, one that permits the viewer to identify with the figures represented. On the other, the images have been characterized as satires that insist that the distance that separates the viewer from the scenes depicted is a social one. The most important proponent of the first view is Svetlana Alpers.⁴⁵ Basing herself on the quantity of anthropological detail about peasant life that Bruegel includes in these images, Alpers suggests that the artist's attitude towards this class must have been sympathetic. This view was supported by the claim that far from being a despised class, sixteenth-century Flemish peasants were a prosperous lot who in all likelihood would have been envied by their urban counterparts. Contemporary comments or even inscriptions on prints which appeared to condemn the peasantry for their drinking and fighting were regarded as non-judgmental observations on the nature of peasant life, rather than as expressions of social opprobrium.⁴⁶ The basis for Alpers's positive conception of the peasants represented in Bruegel's paintings is Mikhail Bakhtin's influential book on Rabelais in which the sensuality and violence of popular culture are regarded as the structural opposite of the order and repression of the culture of the elite.⁴⁷ However, whereas in Bakhtin the eternal struggle between the assertion of the demands of the body, the delight in food and sex, and the equally human need for order and stability, is treated as an allegory of the war of the subordinate versus the dominant classes, Alpers's analysis is free of social connotations. According to Alpers, all classes participated in the type of vital exuberance and sensual excess that is a feature of Bruegel's peasant festivals. Erasmus's notion of folly, as developed in his *Praise of Folly* of 1511, provided Alpers with a principle by which to interpret the licensed exuberance she attributes to Bruegel's scenes. In contrast to Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools* of 1494 in which folly was equated with sin, Erasmus wrote about folly as if it were a necessary aspect of the human condition, something we all participate in whether we like it or not. Bruegel's peasant scenes are thus to be understood as a form of comedy in which the spectator is intended to share the mirth and the sensual pleasures offered by the painting rather than see them as illustrations of the moral failings of a despised class.

Alpers's interpretation of Bruegel's peasant paintings was questioned by Hessel Miedema.⁴⁸ Miedema returned to the traditional moralizing interpretations of Bruegel's peasant scene as satires of the questionable mores of a particular class which had been most fully developed by Stridbeck.⁴⁹ Miedema pointed to the mass of literary evidence surviving from the period that displays an unmitigated hostility towards peasants as a class, as well as to the satirical iconography of peasant weddings and festivals which were popular both in Germany and the Netherlands.⁵⁰ Miedema claimed that Alpers had placed her personal or phenomenological response to the paintings as aesthetic objects above considerations of their status as cultural artifacts belonging to another age. Her interpretation is characterized as having been shaped by the conviction that the aesthetic appeal of the paintings was intimately linked to a sympathetic vision of the peasantry.

If we are prepared to accept both Alpers's and Miedema's positions as historical, are there any grounds for preferring one over the other, or is there a third interpretation that is preferable to both? Since the Alpers/Miedema debate took place, much work has been done on the representation of peasants in the visual culture of both Germany and the Netherlands in the sixteenth century. Most important is the book by Hans-Joachim Raupp which provides a history of the theme and an article by Paul Vandenbroeck which provides exhaustive documentation to support his analysis of the peasant wedding scenes by the Verbeek family of Mechelen.⁵¹ Both of these authors take issue with Alpers's interpretation, arguing that while the ideological currents animating peasant imagery are various and sometimes responsible for images which praise peasants, the ideological function served by Bruegel's work must be understood in terms of the hostile and derogatory attitudes displayed towards this class in much of the culture of the period. According to Raupp, Bruegel's peasant images combined class satire with moral satire in such a way as to give expression to the values of the dominant classes in an age that witnessed the centralization of the authority of the secular state and the imposition of religious orthodoxy.⁵² By refusing to acknowledge that the paintings contain any reference to class conflict, Alpers's account ignores an important aspect of the social significance of these works in favor of a vision of their aesthetic value that is attractive to twentieth-century taste.

The five surviving pictures from Bruegel's series representing the months of the year which he executed for Nicholas Jonghelinck in 1565, contain depictions of peasants both at work and at play and thus offer us further insight into Bruegel's attitudes towards popular culture.⁵³ Our current understanding of this series is still determined by de Tolnay's thesis according to which the paintings are allegories of the unity of man and nature inspired by his Spiritualist religious outlook and his humanist nature philosophy.⁵⁴ According to this perspective, the peasants who work the landscape are anonymous beings whose activities are equated with the cycle of the seasons. Justus Müller-Hofstede has argued that Abraham Ortelius subscribed to a Stoic vision of nature as a model of universal order and harmony from which man had much to learn. He claimed that Bruegel shared this point of view and that as a consequence, the anonymous peasants who inhabit his landscapes of the months afford the viewer a positive model of humanity living in harmony with nature.⁵⁵

This interpretation once more places a consideration of Bruegel's personal religious and philosophical views above a consideration of the social function of the paintings. It betrays the grip still held by the history of ideas on art historical interpretation. If Bruegel were not giving expression to Spiritualist or Stoic attitudes towards man and his relation to nature in these landscapes, then how are we to understand them? The dependence of these paintings on the calendar cycles of illuminated manuscripts produced at Ghent and Bruges during the first half of the sixteenth century has often been commented upon. It was Konrad Renger, however, who first drew attention to the social implications of Bruegel's use of such a source.⁵⁶ Since illuminated manuscripts were a medium restricted by their cost to the patronage of the aristocracy, calendar cycles must also have been associated with the culture of the elite. Renger suggested that it may have been the social prestige of this iconography that inspired Jonghelinck's choice of subject. In other words, the wealthy tax farmer may have wished to decorate the walls of his suburban home with an iconographic type associated with aristocratic culture. The manuscripts that Bruegel drew inspiration from, that is, those produced by the Ghent-Bruges school, made repeated use of compositions created by the Limbourg brothers for the illumination of the *Tres Riches Heures* of the Duke of Berry over a century earlier. The iconography of the months established in this tradition made an important point of representing peasants as comic types which were contrasted with the idealized elegance of the aristocracy. A close analysis of the peasants that inhabit Bruegel's series, particularly perhaps of the peasants eating their midday meal in the *Wheat Harvest* in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, indicates that they are as much the subjects of caricature as any of the figures in his large scale peasant scenes discussed earlier. Rather than representing a positive vision of man's recognition of the order of nature as de Tolnay and Müller-Hofstede have claimed, Bruegel's peasants reveal the same condescending view of this class as comic and uncouth as that which is found in the rest of his work.

A review of what little is known about Bruegel's class situation, together with an analysis of that of his patrons enables us to draw some conclusions regarding his relation to popular culture. The importance of popular culture in Bruegel's work, his representation of proverbs, games, festivals and peasant occupations, cannot be interpreted as an indication of his identification with culture of the lower classes. The documents relating to his friendship with Ortelius and Clovio, together with the patronage of Jonghelinck and Granvella, suggest a very different story. As a professional painter, that is, as an artisan belonging to a guild, it is unlikely that Bruegel belonged to the same social circle as his benefactors. On the other hand, he must have had an opportunity to acquaint himself with humanist thinking on many subjects and may also have been an educated man. Certainly the respect he was accorded by such figures as Ortelius and Clovio would suggest this. Whatever Bruegel's class situation may have been, he shared the urban attitudes of his fellow citizens when it came to depicting the life of the peasantry. As we have seen, Bruegel made use of existing iconographic traditions that satirized that class as the basis for his own treatments of the subject. Bruegel thus participated in the growing rejection of popular culture by the culture of the elite that is a characteristic of the age in which he lived.⁵⁷ The satire of carnival was followed in reformed areas by its complete suppression, and the raucous church festivals aroused the anger of both Catholics and Protestants alike.

The interpretations advanced in this essay differ substantially from those which constitute received opinion. By refusing to see through Bruegel's art in order to determine the personality of the artist in a way that implies that his works are to be understood as personal communications (in which the artist is the sender and the viewer the

receiver), I have suggested that the significance of Bruegel's work can better be determined if we view it as a network of social communications that traversed the historical horizon in which he lived. In doing so, I have proposed that the significance of those interactions is better understood if we interpret them on the basis of class rather than personal values. While the role of Bruegel's art in the creation of social meaning must be understood as a synchronic process, the hermeneutic enterprise is necessarily a diachronic one. By rejecting the work of art as a privileged object and the status of the artist as an autonomous creator in asserting the role played by Bruegel's art in the construction of a hierarchically ordered society, I have hoped to show how nineteenth century notions of aesthetic value continue to distort our understanding of the art of the past.

Notes

1. From Carel van Mander's *Schilderboek* which was published in Haarlem in 1604. This translation is provided by Fritz Grossmann, *Pieter Bruegel. Complete Edition of the Paintings* (London, 1973; 1st ed. 1955), p.9. For a more accurate translation, see David Freedberg's essay "The Life of Pieter Bruegel the Elder" in this volume.
2. Grossmann, *op. cit.*, pp.9–10.
3. Grossmann, *op. cit.*, p.42. For a different interpretation, see David Freedberg, "The Life of Pieter Bruegel the Elder."
4. Grossmann, *op. cit.*, p.43.
5. For an account of the historiography to 1955 see Grossmann, *op. cit.*, pp.42–50; also Carl Gustaf Stridbeck, *Bruegelstudien. Untersuchungen zu den ikonologischen Problemen bei Pieter Bruegel d. A. sowie dessen Beziehungen zum niederländischen Romanismus* (Uppsala, 1956), chapter 1, "Der Maler und der Kenner," part 3, pp. 27–33.
6. See Max Dvorák, "Pieter Bruegel the Elder," in *The History of Art as the History of Ideas*, trans. John Handy (London, 1984; 1st German ed. Munich, 1924), pp.70–96; Charles de Tolnay, *The Drawings of Pieter Bruegel the Elder*, trans. Charles Sleeth (London, 1952; 1st German ed. 1925); *idem.*, *Pierre Bruegel l'ancien*, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1935).
7. Alexander Popham, "Pieter Bruegel and Abraham Ortelius," *Burlington Magazine*, 59 (1931), pp.184–188.
8. Hans Sedlmayr, "Die 'macchia' Bruegels," *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlung in Wien*, N.F. (1934), pp.137 ff.; Stridbeck, *op. cit.*
9. For a critique of the role of the concept of the author in literary criticism, see Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York, 1977), pp.142–148.
10. See Popham, *op. cit.*, p.187. For the text and further discussion, see David Freedberg's essay "Allusion and Topicality in the Work of Pieter Bruegel the Elder" in this volume.
11. *Ibid.* For the engraving, see Lebeer, 86. The fact that the original painting was executed in grisaille rather than in color has been interpreted as a sign that the work was intended for a personal friend rather than for an ordinary patron. See Fritz Grossmann, "Bruegel's *Woman Taken in Adultery* and Other Grisailles," *Burlington Magazine*, 94 (1952), pp.218–229.
12. de Tolnay, *Pierre Bruegel*; Otto Benesch, "Soul and Mechanism of the Universe" in *The Art of the Renaissance in Northern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 1945), pp.87–106; Stridbeck, *op. cit.*
13. René Boumans, "The Religious Views of Abraham Ortelius," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 17 (1954), pp.374–377.
14. de Tolnay, "Newly Discovered Miniatures by Pieter Bruegel the Elder," *Burlington Magazine*, 107 (1965), pp.110–114.
15. Carl van de Velde, "The Labours of Hercules, a lost series of paintings by Frans Floris," *Burlington Magazine*, 107 (1965), pp.114–123.
16. Grossmann, *Pieter Bruegel*, p.27. See also Freedberg, "Allusion and Topicality."
17. de Tolnay, *Pierre Bruegel*, p.62, note 19.
18. See René van Bastelaer and Georges Hulin de Loo, *Pierre Bruegel l'ancien. Son oeuvre et son temps* (Brussels, 1905), p.327.
19. Grossmann, *Pieter Bruegel*, pp.104–195.
20. Maurice Piquard, "Le C. Granvelle, les artistes et les écrivains," *Revue belge d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art*, 17 (1947–48), pp.133–147.
21. de Tolnay, *Pierre Bruegel*, p.24; Stridbeck, *op. cit.*, pp.172–184.
22. Stridbeck, *op. cit.*, pp.180–181; Walter Gibson, *Bruegel* (New York, 1977), pp.65–66.
23. David Kunzle, "Bruegel's Proverbs Painting and the World Upside Down," *Art Bulletin*, 59 (1977), pp.197–202.
24. Stridbeck, *op. cit.*, pp.184–191.
25. Sandra Hindman, "Pieter Bruegel's *Children's Games*, Folly and Chance," *Art Bulletin*, 63 (1981), pp.447–475, 469.
26. Edward Snow, "Meaning in *Children's Games*: On the Limitations of the Iconographic Approach to Bruegel," *Representations*, 1 (1983), pp.27–60.
27. See Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Roy Harris, ed. Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye and Albert Riedlinger (La Salle, Ill., 1986; 1st French edition 1916).
28. Snow, *op. cit.*, pp.40–44.
29. Snow, *op. cit.*, pp.48–49.

30. Snow, *op. cit.*, pp.48–49.
31. For the importance of the present in the historian's confrontation with the past, see Hayden White, "The Burden of History," in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore, 1978), pp.27–50.
32. de Tolnay, *Pierre Bruegel*, p.26.
33. Carl Gustaf Stridbeck, "'Combat Between Carnival and Lent' by Pieter Bruegel the Elder: An Allegorical Picture of the Sixteenth Century," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 19 (1956), pp.96–109.
34. Suzsza Urbach, "Notes on Bruegel's Archaism. His Relation to Early Netherlandish Painting and Other Sources," *Acta Historiae Artium*, 24 (1978), pp.237–256.
35. Martine Grinsberg and Sam Kinser, "Les Combats de Carnaval et de Carême. Trajets d'une métaphore," *Annales. Économies. Sociétés. Civilisations*, 38 (1983), pp.65–89.
36. Arthur Haberlandt, "Das Faschingsbild des Pieter Bruegel d. A., *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, N.F. 5 (1933), pp.237–249 and 277; Claude Gaignebet, "Le Combat de Carnaval et de Carême de P. Bruegel (1559)," *Annales. Économies. Sociétés. Civilisations*, 27 (1972), pp.313–345.
37. For their participation in the carnival celebrations of Nuremberg, see Hans-Ulrich Roller, *Der Nürnberger Schembartlauf. Studien zum Fest- und Maskenwesen des späten Mittelalters* (Tübingen, 1965).
38. See A. Monballieu, "P. Bruegels 'Schaatsenrijden bij de St. Jorispoort te Antwerpen,' de betekenis van het jaartal 1553 en een archiefstuk," *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerpen* (1981), pp.17–30.
39. *Idem.*, "De 'Kermis van Hoboken' bij P. Bruegel, J. Grimmer en G. Mostaert," *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerpen* (1974), pp.139–169 and "Nog eens Hoboken bij Bruegel en tijdgenoten," *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerpen*, 1987, pp.185–206.
40. For this translation, see Hessel Miedema, "Realism and comic mode: the peasant," *Simiolus*, 10 (1977), pp.205–219; 210.
41. Miedema, *op. cit.*, pp.209–210.
42. See Keith Moxey, "Sebald Beham's church anniversary holidays: festive peasants as an instrument of repressive humor," *Simiolus*, 12 (1982), pp.107–130; Hessel Miedema, "Feestende boeren lachende dorpers. Bij twee recente aanwinsten van het Rijksprentenkabinet," *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum*, 29 (1981), pp.191–213.
43. In this respect, it seems to have served much the same function as references to the village of Mögelsdorf (which lay outside Nuremberg), in the representations of church festivals by the German artists who had created this iconographic tradition. See Hans-Joachim Raupp, *Bauernsatiren. Entstehung und Entwicklung des bäuerlichen Genres in der deutschen und niederländischen Kunst, ca. 1470–1570* (Niederzier, 1986), p.164.
44. Peasant Festivity and Political Identity in the Sixteenth Century," *Art History*, 10 (1987), pp.289–314.
45. Svetlana Alpers, "Bruegel's Festive Peasants," *Simiolus*, 6 (1972/73), pp.163–176.
46. It is significant that the inscription below the engraving *The Peasant Wedding Dance* (Lebeer, 61) is not referred to in her text. It reads:
 Keep it up, musicians! Make it last
 As long as pipes and drum can play,
 So Liz will gaily move her ass;
 It's not her wedding every day.

 Queer Joes are doing fancy prancing;
 I hear the pipe, and you're missing the beat;
 But our bride has already given up dancing;
 And a good thing, too, for she's "full and sweet!"
 For this translation see Arthur Klein, *Graphic Worlds of Peter Bruegel the Elder* (New York, 1963), cat. no.24.
47. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge, Mass., 1968).
48. Miedema, "Realism and comic mode."
49. Stridbeck, *op. cit.*, pp.214–230.
50. Miedema, "Realism and comic mode," pp.205–219.
51. See Raupp, *op. cit.* and Paul Vandebroek, "Verbeek's peasant weddings: a study of iconography and social function," *Simiolus*, 14 (1984), pp.79–124.
52. Raupp, *op. cit.*, pp.316–321.
53. For a recent discussion of whether the series was originally composed of six or twelve paintings, see Hans van Miegroet, "The twelve months reconsidered: how a drawing by Pieter Stevens clarifies a Bruegel enigma," *Simiolus*, 16 (1986), pp.29–35.
54. de Tolnay, *Pierre Bruegel*, pp.37–42; *idem.*, *The Drawings of Pieter Bruegel*, *passim*. See also Fritz Novotny, *Die Monatsbilder Pieter Bruegel d. Ä* (Vienna, 1948).
55. Justus Müller-Hofstede, "Zur Interpretation von Pieter Bruegels Landschaft. Ästhetischer Landschaftsbegriff und Stoische Weltbetrachtung," in *Pieter Bruegel und seine Welt*, ed. Otto von Simson and Matthias Winner (Berlin, 1979), pp.73–142, 140–142. For a view that differs both from that of de Tolnay and Müller-Hofstede and my own, see David Freedberg's contributions to this volume.
56. Konrad Renger, "Bettler und Bauern bei Pieter Bruegel d. Ä.," *Sitzungsberichte der Kunsthistorische Gesellschaft zu Berlin*, N.F. 20 (1971–72), pp.9–16, 10.
57. For the history of the repression of popular culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Robert Muchembled, *Popular Culture and Elite Culture in France, 1400–1750*, trans. Lydia Cochrane (Baton Rouge, 1985; 1st French ed. Paris, 1978).

David Freedberg

What could be the relevance of sixteenth century Netherlandish art theory to the interpretation of Bruegel's paintings? To many readers this will seem a puzzling question, since art theoretical matters have almost entirely been neglected in the study of sixteenth century Netherlandish art. Sometimes, it seems, they are not even felt to exist. But there was at least one lively theoretical controversy in Bruegel's time that deserves to be brought to the fore rather more sharply than it has so far. The two main documents for the controversy raise an issue of considerable significance for the study of his work as a whole; and they happen to highlight some of the chief interpretive problems that occur when one considers the meaning of his paintings and prints. But I will not begin with theory and end with the problem of allusion; the two problems are too complexly interwoven to do that. They also point to several further desiderata for future research in the field.

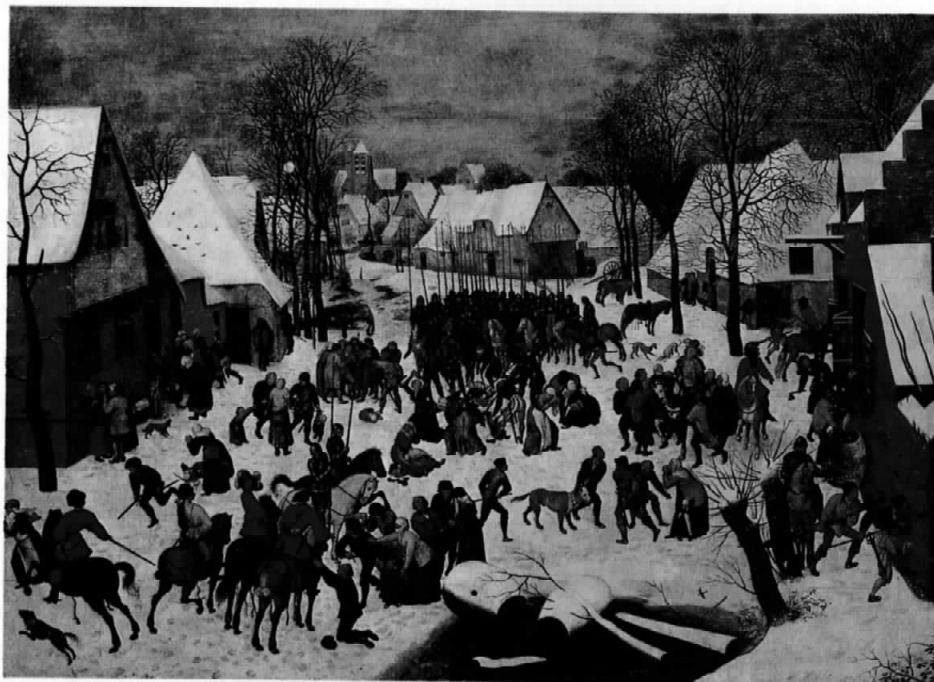
But first let us remember the broader political context. The revolt of the Netherlands, as we have seen, may be said to have begun in August 1566, when small groups of rioters broke into churches and chapels throughout the country and destroyed the images in them. I have written much elsewhere about these tumultuous events—and, in particular, about their consequences for the fate of works of art; but here the issue is the extent of their implications for the work of Pieter Bruegel the Elder, who produced his greatest works in the three or four years before his death in 1569. These were the days of the great hedge sermons, those clandestine outdoor meetings which the regent Margaret attempted to suppress; of the iconoclastic riots; of the repressive regime of the Duke of Alba; of the introduction of Spanish troops into the Netherlands; of the fearsome placards forbidding every kind of activity which might be thought to promote heresy; of the imposition of the tax known as the "Tenth Penny"; and finally of the terrifyingly wide-ranging Council of Troubles, which the Duke of Alba set up to examine anyone even remotely suspected of heresy, sedition and rebellion. Thousands were examined, condemned and executed; and informers had a field day.

How, if at all, were these events reflected in Bruegel's work? The case of the painting of *Dulle Griet*, the 'Crazy Margaret' (in the Mayer van den Bergh Museum in Antwerp) raises the problem. It has usually been taken to illustrate what seems to have been one view of an excessively bold woman; or perhaps of excessively bold women. The view was both current and rooted in Flemish proverbial tradition. This fierce harridan is not only armed to the teeth; she is so brazen that she would even do a robbery in front of flaming Hell itself. Indeed, she carries off bags of money before the very gates of Hell. In this she is assisted by hordes of smaller women who are themselves so bold that they would even "tie the devil to a cushion", as the old Flemish proverb has it. But is this really all there is to the picture, where Bruegel makes his indebtedness to Bosch so clear? Could this really be all he intended, a painted diatribe against overbearing women? Van Mander tells of how a few years earlier he finally gave up his girlfriend because she lied just once too much; but even if this story were true, it could be hardly be sufficient to account for this crazed Margaret. Is it then, as Walter Gibson has suggested, a painted polemic against the great and sometimes fierce female rulers of the middle of the sixteenth century, like Mary Tudor and the long line of female regents in the Netherlands, right up to Margaret herself? That may be to make too great a leap from proverbial culture to broad political issues.

Much ink has recently been spilt over this picture, but the interpretation recently proposed by Jeremy Bangs merits serious consideration. Could it not be a quite specific allusion to the case of one *Lange Griet* ("Long Margaret") who was a notorious informer in 1564? She informed on two Protestant ministers who were subsequently executed, and in that year riots broke out, in which she played a prominent role. The question, then, is this: are we dealing with a painting that has largely to do with Flemish proverbial culture, or rather one that makes a specific

topical allusion? The question may be falsely posed, since these are possibly not polarities at all, but rather two sides of the same coin. Let us consider the matter further.

The problem of Bruegel's politics is raised again in the case of the paintings of the *Massacre of the Innocents* (Hampton Court) and the *Census of Bethlehem* (Brussels). With the *Massacre* one wants to know whether these are the Spanish soldiers recently billeted in the Flemish countryside; and whether the *Census*, so charmingly situated in a recognizably Flemish village, is a biting allusion to the so-called "Tenth Penny" or any of the severe taxes introduced by the Spanish regime and so resented by the populace. We cannot be sure, even though the fashionable view is that both pictures were painted too early to justify such an interpretation:



Massacre of the Innocents,
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna



Census at Bethlehem,
Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels

Before moving closer to an examination of the extent to which political events and issues may or may not be reflected in Bruegel's work, it is perhaps worth considering two of the major lacunae in the study of the artist and his times. They may just illuminate the thorny question of his politics, even if—at first sight—they may not seem to do so.

We know a fair amount about his friends and patrons. At the highest social levels there are his connections with figures like Cardinal Granvelle, and with rich merchants such as Nicholas Jonghelinck. Unlike many of the other wealthy merchants of the time, notably Gilles Hooftman, Pieter Panhuys and Emmanuel Rademacher, we can almost certainly be sure that Jonghelinck remained orthodox. Apart from his intimate connection with the administration, his name does not occur on that extraordinary document in the Antwerp archives, *Les moyens à remedier à Anvers* which systematically lists every heterodox figure in the city. This is a more reliable and revealing document than usual, as it appears to have been compiled with the aid of inside information. Thus it reveals the names of the most prominent dissimulators like the great printer, Christopher Plantin. But it is Jonghelinck's remarkable collection of paintings, with its sixteen Bruegels and twenty-two Frans Florises, that needs a more thorough examination. Here were to be found series like Bruegel's *Months* hanging in close proximity to Floris's *Labours of Hercules* and to several of his other mythological scenes. There must be a great deal to be gained from a closer analysis of the contents of this collection, in which two streams of Antwerp painting—to which we shall return—hung side by side.

Bruegel's heterodox connections are perhaps even better documented, from the great geographer Abraham Ortelius (for whom he painted the beautiful *Death of the Virgin* in Upton House, here represented by the print Ortelius himself commissioned, No.86)—to Plantin and the engraver Philips Galle. But too many commentators have been over-eager in assuming that Bruegel's friends provide adequate evidence of his religious attitudes. This is clearly insufficient. His paintings do not seem to reflect a particular and consistent viewpoint, and there is no proof, either documentary or artistic, of a specific religious adherence on Bruegel's part. It is entirely likely that he should sometimes have adopted a critical stance towards the obvious abuses in the Catholic Church, and on other occasions have shown a reasonable and intellectual sympathy with the more liberal groups of his age. Probably the most one can say of him is what the Calvinist Saravia, rightly or wrongly, said of the famous Stoic philosopher and scholar Justus Lipsius—the greatest vacillator of his times, perhaps—to the Archbishop of Canterbury: "The reason why in these large-scale religious differences he committed himself to no party was because he did not wish to offend any of his friends who were of varying religious persuasions." However anodyne and unexciting this may sound, there is not a single document that pertains directly to Bruegel's outlook—let alone an official, or, for that matter, an autobiographical one.

Perhaps the most important lacuna in the study of Bruegel and his circle is the lack of attention that has been paid to his artistic contemporaries. To judge from the extant literature on the subject, one would scarcely believe that fellow artists also counted amongst his acquaintances and friends. Aside from the then-famous Frans Floris, there is Maerten de Vos, whom we know to have been Lutheran and with whom, it seems likely, Bruegel travelled to Italy. These are two of the Italianate painters of his time, if they may provisionally be described this way, but there are also painters like Pieter Aertsen and Joachim Beuckelaer, whose methods of hiding clues to the real meaning of their works within the pictures themselves provide illuminating contrasts to Bruegel's own method of doing the same. Pieter Balten, with whom Bruegel worked on an altarpiece for the guild of Fishmongers in Mechlin swiftly turned into a minor emulator; the subject matter of Maerten van Cleef, who joined the Antwerp guild of painters in the same year as Bruegel, provides close contemporary parallels with that of the far greater master; and we need only go through the guild lists to find the names of other artists whom Bruegel must have known. Willem Key, for example, was dean of the painters' guild in the year of Bruegel's entry into it; a few years later one finds not only the all-too Italianate Crispiaen van den Broeck, but also Cornelis van Dalem, the far too little studied painter of a number of ravishing and curiously deserted farmyard scenes. Later on, Jacob Grimmer is mentioned. These painters at least—and a good number of others have been omitted in this rapid survey—must have been well-known to Bruegel, if only on the basis of the guild connections. Here historians of art should come into their own. Other aspects of Bruegel's life may be satisfactorily dealt with by political, social and theological historians, but art historians have yet to assess the degree of cross-fertilization in the artistic life of Bruegel and his peers. We still know too little about who else was painting in

Antwerp and Brussels at the time of Bruegel's activity there.

The present state of our knowledge about Bruegel and his circle may therefore be summarized as follows: we have a fair amount of information about his patrons and his closest friends; rather less about his artistic acquaintances. But here our chief aim is to examine one intellectual issue within his circle that hardly seems to have been discussed at all.

It has often been noted that before the seventeenth century there is no body of artistic theory and discussion in the Netherlands comparable to that in Italy. There is no Netherlandish equivalent to Alberti or Vasari, for example, before van Mander, although a possible exception is provided by Lampsonius's *Vita* of Lambert Lombard, that oddly stilted and antiquarianizing painter who was born in Liège and died there in 1566, two years before Bruegel himself. This document was published in 1565 by Hubert Goltzius, through the mediation of Abraham Ortelius, to whom it is dedicated. But apart from an open espousal of the *disegno* rather than the *colore* cause, it is more concerned with artistic biography and an insistence on the status of the artist in general than with the more theoretical issues. It is entirely Vasarian in tone, apart from the obligatory references to classical artists and a passing reference to Politian and Alberti.

Lambert Lombard's own letter to Vasari, written in April 1565, casts an interesting though possibly exceptional light on contemporary Flemish attitudes towards the art of the past. Lombard asks Vasari to send him some compositions by Margaritone, Gaddi and Giotto, so that he can compare them with certain old glass paintings and bronze reliefs. The works of such artists, says Lombard, please him more than the art of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, however defective they may be in the imitation of nature. But painting between Giotto and Donatello was coarse and ungainly, just as Netherlandish and German art was before the advent of Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden, Schongauer and Dürer. Jan van Eyck opened artists' eyes to the potential of colors, but the trouble with his successors was that they did not follow nature; they simply filled their works with pretty colors. Here is an issue that will recur again.

But first it is worth reflecting on the four letters to Vasari from Lombard's biographer, Domenicus Lampsonius. This poetaster and amateur artist, a fervent devotee of Italian art and theory, took it upon himself to write two letters to Vasari, one to Titian, and one to Giulio Clovio between 1564 and 1570—all of them unsolicited. Naturally enough, the letters eulogize both their recipients, and, in the case of the letters to Vasari, the art of Michelangelo and the great Roman and Florentine artists of the Cinquecento, especially Raphael, Andrea del Sarto and Daniele da Volterra. But Lampsonius is less concerned with theoretical matters—of which there is barely a glimmering—than with the need for good engravings of the Italian masters just mentioned. Even this seems to have been little more than an excuse to recommend the abilities of the budding Flemish engraver, Cornelis Cort; and he never had been to Italy himself. Predictably, the bulk of these letters is filled with expressions of slavish admiration for the achievements of the art of the High Renaissance, expressions which exceed the bounds of conventional compliment. The only Northern artists to receive favorable mention are Dürer and the great court portraitist Antonis Mor, on whom he appends three poems in the letter to Giulio Clovio.

For the rest, artists' encomia hardly ever rise above the level of the rudimentary citation from Pliny the Elder or elementary versification such as one finds in Lampsonius's later work, the *Pictorum aliquot effigies...* ("Portraits of Some Painters of the Low Countries") of 1572. Indeed, it is usually felt that in the Netherlands there is nothing like the late humanist debates about artistic issues such as the discussions of *disegno* and *colore* and the protracted analysis of concepts like *grazia*, *bellezza* and *decoro*. However, in addition to the moralistic and theoretical discussions about art in the sixteenth century, there are indications of a debate about purely artistic issues which appears to have been as heated as in the South and which has been overlooked until now.

At least two documents, reproduced in the Appendix, show that a number of such issues were a matter of live interest in the Netherlands. One of these has often been referred to, but has never been analyzed properly; the other, while known to some historians of sixteenth-century Dutch literature, has not yet featured in any discussions of Bruegel's art. The first is Abraham Ortelius's long tribute to Bruegel in his *Album Amicorum* preserved in the Pembroke College in Cambridge; the second is the "Invective against a certain Painter who criticized the painters of Antwerp"—as the title reads with tantalizing vagueness—by Lucas d'Heere (the teacher of Carel van Mander)

included in his rare *Hof en Boomgaerd der Poesien*, published in Ghent in 1565.

Ortelius's tribute however, is the shorter and the more immediately approachable of the two texts. Although it is about eight or nine years later, it raises fewer new issues—and in a more elegant way.

It begins with a straightforward tribute to the artist, *pictor sui seculi absolutissimus*, "the most perfect painter of his age". As it is this opening passage which is usually reprinted, not much space needs to be devoted to it here. It is suggested that Bruegel's early death may have been precipitated by nature herself, jealous of the painter's ability to imitate her. Now this may at first seem to be little more than a common topos of artistic theory. But in the next section the point is emphasized twice over. First the relevance to Bruegel of Eupompos's statement that he followed no artist but rather nature herself is made clear. Bruegel's pictures are not to be called *artificiosae* ("artificial"); they are said to be *naturales* ("natural"). He is not the best of painters; he must be the very nature of painters (*naturam pictorum dixerim*). Now this too may be a common component of humanist encomia, but the relevance to Bruegel seems to be especially pointed when we think not only of his paintings in comparison with those of his contemporaries, but even more when we consider the famous *naer het leven* drawings, the figural drawings after life. At least some of these are indisputably by Bruegel, even if others have recently been given to later masters.

That the implied difference between paintings which are described as *artificiosae* and those which are *naturales* reflects a real issue at the time is apparent not only from the paintings, as is to be expected, but also from the poem by Lucas d'Heere, as well shall see. A final section is now added, breaking the format of the page, in order to make the following claim: *In omnibus eius operibus intelligitur plus semper quam pingitur*, "In all his works there is always more to be understood than he actually painted." What havoc the adoption of this viewpoint has wrought amongst the interpreters of Bruegel's art! It is as if it has provided the license for those critics who always insist on finding more in Bruegel's paintings than even Ortelius can have dreamed. But the statement is an important one, and it is worth dwelling a little on its implications. In recent years a number of writers, most notably Justus Müller Hofstede and Jan Muylle, have rightly criticized the tendency (of which de Tolnay was perhaps the chief exponent) to interpret this passage as an indication that Bruegel concealed heterodox views within his works, and that the works were strongly allusive either politically or doctrinally. Such critics have justly insisted on the fact that the passage is clearly to be situated in terms of standard rhetorical habits, and is therefore more a statement of a particular aspect of Bruegel's artistic abilities than about veiled messages or beliefs. It is, they assert, rather straightforwardly to be seen in the light of contemporary artistic and rhetorical theory. Nevertheless, it does seem to be more than an excuse for yet another classical allusion, in this case to Timanthes, who—as Pliny recounted—only suggested Agamemnon's grief at the sacrifice of Iphigenia, by painting a veil over his face rather than actually painting his tears.

Of course it is not surprising to find such a statement coming from Ortelius. Here the hermeneutic issues become denser and more problematic. Is there not an interpretive parallel between the ways in which we formulate the problem of artistic strategy and those in which we express the problem of personal belief? The theoretical issue merits considerably further expansion, but cannot immediately be resolved. What could be said—broadly—is that just as in Bruegel's paintings there was more than met the eye, so in Ortelius' own actions outward appearances belied his true beliefs. But while Ortelius's connections with that extraordinary but oddly elusive group, the Family of Love, are well established, it has now become clear—as a result of the work of scholars like Cantimori, Ginzburg, Rekers and Hamilton—that the whole phenomenon of dissimulation was widespread in the sixteenth century, and not only confined to the Familist or any other of the so-called Nicodemist groups. The Family of Love, like the other Libertines and Nicodemists, believed that the crux of faith resided in the personal imitation of Christ (often entailing a variety of highly idiosyncratic inward devotions), not in outward religious affiliation. One was perfectly at liberty—indeed it was expedient and advisable to do so—to follow the external practices and ceremonies of a particular church, whether Protestant or Catholic; but in spiritual terms such adherence was irrelevant and indifferent. Attitudes like these were viewed with horror by the Catholic authorities above all—but one can understand their attraction. They had strong ecumenical and irenicist overtones in a time of appalling religious strife. Furthermore, when even mildly deviant beliefs were liable to be severely punished, it is not surprising that those who held heterodox views should wish to cloak them under the guise of conventional behavior. Nor would one expect works of literature and art which conveyed a heretical message or made a heterodox point to appear anything but conventional and

straightforward. But recognition, now, of the necessity for dissimulation does not entitle us to read extravagantly unorthodox or seditious meanings into the works of a painter like Pieter Bruegel.

Let us examine more closely some of the modes of conveying the meanings of a picture in the Netherlands during the 1550s and 1560s. In order to do so, the work of Bruegel may be compared with that of his slightly older contemporaries, Pieter Aertsen (1508–1573) and Joachim Beuckelaer (c.1530–1573). The paintings of these men also appear to contain more than it seems, at any rate at first sight. But their method of supplying clues to the apparently hidden significance of a picture is entirely different from that of Bruegel. In Aertsen and Beuckelaer meaning may be hidden but it is usually explicit; in Bruegel it is implied but hardly ever made explicit.

Amongst the most puzzling pictures by Pieter Aertsen are his representations of kitchen and market scenes. At first sight, a painting such as the Rotterdam *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary* appears to be little more than a kitchen scene with an extensive depiction of vegetables and poultry. But when we take the trouble to look into the background we find a clue to the real meaning of the painting. The scene there is an illustration of Christ's visit to the house of Martha and Mary, where Christ reproached Martha for being careful and troubled about many things—domestic things in short. But only thing is needful, said Christ in Luke 10:42, and "Mary hath chosen the good part"—namely faith. The clear implication of this picture, therefore, is that one should not be diverted from faith, from the *amor dei* ("the one thing needful", the love of God) by sensual distraction, the *amor carnis* (the love of flesh). Furthermore, I think we may now be sympathetic to Emmens's proposal that at least some of the pictures of this kind may be taken to be recommendations of the contemplative over the active life—Martha being the personification of the active, and Mary, who chose the good part, of the contemplative. Such works are fairly characteristic of a large group of pictures by both Aertsen and Beuckelaer, where all the spectator has to do is to look for the clue in the background in order to discover that the painting is not what it seems.

Two paintings with a similar subject, one by Beuckelaer, and the other by Bruegel, may usefully be compared. At first sight, the picture by Beuckelaer in Stockholm of a *Fish Market with Christ Presented to the People* seems little more than the representation of a fish market. But then, as usual, one finds the clue in the background: a depiction of the people mocking Christ. The foreground, it is apparent, refers to the Lenten eating of fish; but the very superabundance of fish puts one in mind of the criticism both by Erasmus and by the *rederijkers*, the Rhetoricians—those great amateur players of the sixteenth century—who insisted that true faith does not consist in excessive devotion to external religious practices. This makes a mockery of faith, like the people mocking Christ in the background. Or, to put it in other terms, the believer, the good Christian, should not be seduced by outward aspects of religion, such as the eating of fish during Lent (and one can see the obvious associations with carnality), but rather should remember to imitate Christ's suffering, as exemplified by the scene of the *Ecce Homo*. The clue to the meaning of this picture—that which enables the beholder to determine its moralizing content—is hidden in the background; but it is explicitly hidden.

In Bruegel's painting in Vienna of *Carnival and Lent*, on the other hand, the key is not to be found explicitly within the picture. Its meaning depends on a much wider knowledge of context. It too is not simply a representation of practices associated with Lent (in this case the Carnival procession on the eve of Lent). To provide a key to the picture as a whole would, in the present state of our knowledge about it, be impossible, but some of the more telling elements are worth recalling. The figure of Lent we may suppose to have been intended as a personification of the Catholic church. Not only is she on the same side of the painting as the church building, she wears on her head a classic symbol of Popery, the beehive (one remembers Marnix van Sant Aldegonde's almost exactly contemporary satire on Catholicism). Carnival, on the other hand, must represent Protestantism, or perhaps Lutheranism in particular, as Stridbeck has suggested. The figure of Carnival is opposed to that of Lent; we know that Protestants retained Carnival but abandoned Lent; and this gross figure's head is topped by the satirical pie, which, like the red, yellow and white flag borne by the runner in front of him, and like the lute-player behind, are probably to be seen as acid allusions to the major Protestant groups. Both personifications are derogatory enough.

But for the purposes of comparison with the Beuckelaer, the criticism of Lent in Bruegel's *Carnival and Lent* should be analyzed more closely. Here criticism is not pointed by reference to a particular biblical scene, sequestered

in the background. It is up to the spectator to disentangle the moral gloss from the whole genre-like portrayal of a contemporary event. The people who go to church wear the *blauwe huyck*, the typical blue cloak or hood; they are hypocrites, unlike the people behind the ridiculous figure of Lent distributing alms to the poor. The implications of this pictorial juxtaposition were spelled out by the rhetorician Jan de Brune: true following of the rules of the church is represented by those who help the poor—not, as in *Carnival and Lent*, by the ridiculous figure of Lent in the foreground, or by the children with their trivial games who follow her. These foolish figures eat the meagre bread and pretzels of Lent; and one child even has a fish placed pathetically and all scrawny on his head.

Of course there is much else in this picture, and many further layers of meaning. But this brief outline may just be sufficient to make plain the moral overtones of an apparently genresque scene. The apparent meaning of both the Beuckelaer and the Bruegel is immediately clear. The latent meaning, however, depends, in the case of the Beuckelaer, on the perception of the significance of the background scene; in the case of the Bruegel, on its wider contextual status.

But first one more comparison of paintings with the same subject by Aertsen and by Bruegel may be made. In one of Aertsen's most typical scenes, the *Christ and the Woman taken in Adultery* (also in Stockholm) an amorously engaged couple is set amidst a great quantity of market produce. Their actions are underlined by the presence of birds and onions whose obscene connotations are well-known or perfectly obvious. But the moralizing point, as we have come to expect, is made by the scene in the background—predictably of *Christ and the Woman taken in Adultery*. How different is Bruegel's representation of the subject (No. 88)! While it is possible that both the print and the picture on which it depends could be read as a plea for tolerance, in the way that Christ pleaded on behalf of the adulteress, there are no clues to this kind of latent meaning, apart from the words "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone" on the engraving and which Christ inscribes, significantly in the vernacular, on the steps before the Pharisee. The clues depend on a context, now unfortunately lost to us, which would probably have been provided by the owner of the picture or the commissioner of the engraving after it, and which, as in the case of all the pictures we have been considering, would have depended on the use to which it was put or the place where it was hung. As I have noted, many of Bruegel's friends belonged to a clandestine group which fervently believed that the only hope for concord in their troubled times was by a spirit of tolerance towards the many heretical groups. They believed that what mattered was the inward imitation of Christ, not the following of the external practices and ceremonies of the faith. Such beliefs were themselves heretical, and the practice of dissimulation was consequently widespread. Men like the printer Plantin, the geographer Ortelius, the engraver Philips Galle and even the king's censor Benito Arias Montano dissimulated their true beliefs precisely by following outward ceremonies of the church, and by appearing to be conventional Catholics. It seems likely, on the basis of this and much other evidence, that the painting should be read in similar terms to these. Its outward appearance—its apparent or manifest meaning—may have belied its true but latent meaning.

But here a note of caution should be added. Even if Bruegel regularly painted more than it actually seemed, and even if some of his paintings contained heretical statements or allusions, the messages they conveyed can only be determined in terms of their beholders. Indeed, the painter's intention is not really the issue at all, for that is notoriously difficult to recover. The significance of Bruegel's pictures depends entirely on their social context and the ways in which they were capable of being read at the time. This may all seem very obvious, but it is too often forgotten by art historians who fail to take into account the possibilities of interpretation open to a particular social group. In Bruegel's *Carrying of the Cross*, for example, some commentators have seen a covert statement of Anabaptist beliefs. Christ is shown almost lost amidst the great crowds dispersed over the vast and bleak landscape—no Golgotha this, but some fanciful interpretation of a recognizable countryside, bar the characteristically outlandish rock formations. But can we say, on this basis alone, that Christ's humanity is thus assimilated to that of the crowd's, that his humanity is like theirs, theirs like his—a sentiment that was to receive such emphasis in Anabaptist thought? And is the merchant in the foreground one of that breed who notoriously spread the Anabaptist message? Then there is the problem of the scuffle on the left of the picture: Simon of Cyrene is seized by soldiers in order to help Christ carry the cross. He struggles against doing so, and is supported by his wife, from whose bodice a rosary conspicuously hangs. Heterodox or Anabaptist criticism of outward piety, or merely one of Bruegel's characteristically trenchant allusions



Carrying of the Cross,
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna



Sermon of John the Baptist,
Szépművészeti Museum, Budapest



Peasant and the Birdnester,
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

to religious hypocrisy, Erasmian at the most? The fact is that unless one can show that the painting was specifically made for an Anabaptist patron, and that such a subject was capable of conveying such complex allusions at all, then the claim must remain irrelevant. It is far more likely that it would have been read in the same straightforward way as the many similar representations of this subject by Aertsen, Beuckelaer, Herri met de Bles, the Brunswick Monogrammist and Pieter Balten—to cite only a few examples. When a particular pictorial tradition is as strong as this, then all that can be ascertained are the kinds of responses it was capable of evoking, not a particular meaning. All the art historian can do is to attempt to recover the potential sets of meaning for a particular context.

There is still another painting by Bruegel that exemplifies the problem acutely. The *Sermon of Saint John the Baptist* in Budapest has often been taken to reflect the outdoor sermons held by clandestine reformed preachers in the days preceding the great uprising of 1566, and has even been said to indicate his sympathy for these outlawed and troublesome groups. Would it not have been perfectly natural for Bruegel to use elements from contemporary scenes such as these without suggesting sympathy for one side or the other? Even this, however, seems unlikely, when one takes into consideration the fact that precisely these elements—the armed guard, the unassuming presence of John the Baptist and so on—are to be found in many other paintings of the subject by Netherlandish artists before and during Bruegel's lifetime, especially in several paintings by Herri met de Bles and Pieter Balten.

It is all very well to seek contemporary allusions in Bruegel's work, but examples like these suggest that such features are perfectly explicable in terms of established iconographic and pictorial habit. Even if these paintings were sometimes capable of being taken as political statements, they could also have been read in a traditional and straightforward way. There is a danger of failing to take into account that what one might call the positional meaning of a symbol may only be determined by its relationship to other symbols in the total social system; and that iconographic contamination is one of the characteristics of all signs, even though in any given context only a few of the meanings of a polyvalent symbol may be stressed.

These are the problems encountered in dealing with an artist who is supposed to have painted more than actually appeared on the surface. In some cases the matter seems to be quite straightforward. Thus in Bruegel's painting of *Two Monkeys* in Berlin the monkeys have often been interpreted on the basis of the widespread use, in emblems and literature, of the monkey as symbol of the soul chained to its sensual earthly desire (the nut), from which it cannot escape to the spiritual. But recently Monballieu has made an equally plausible but altogether different proposal: that the picture, of the kind called a *singerie* in sixteenth century inventories and literature, may well be taken as an allusion to the *seigneurie*, the city government of Antwerp (its spires are significantly to be seen in the background), then wholly submissive to Spanish chains; and that it is a complex statement of the relative jurisdictions of the city and a local lord.

Other seemingly straightforward cases include the *Vienna Peasant and the Birdnester* and the poignant *Blind Leading the Blind* in Naples. The first one we are supposed to interpret in terms of a well-known Flemish proverb, the second in terms of a biblical parable. To us, the old Flemish proverb "He who knows where the nest is has the knowledge, but he who robs it has the nest" seems amusing but cryptic; in the middle of the sixteenth century, however, it was clear enough. It was understood as an encouragement to direct action, usually in matters of courtship. But this seems hardly applicable here. Can one go further, turn the proverb upside-down, and say with Boström that "Bruegel has here given expression to his pessimistic view of human nature, and contrasted the active and the wicked thief with the passive man who is virtuous in spite of adversity"? Despite the brambles, the sword-like iris, and the brook into which the nobly simple peasant seems about to tumble, there are just too few clues to go any further.

And similarly with the *Parable of the Blind*. Matthew 15: 14 goes "if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch"; and *that* may at first sight seem sufficiently applicable to the picture. But what of the church in the background? Does it stand, when combined with these awfully deprived stumblers, for some form of spiritual neglect and unawareness, or is it simply a necessary adjunct to the landscape setting? We cannot certainly know.

These examples illustrate, perhaps more clearly than some of the earlier ones, the ways in which Bruegel's method of pictorial dissimulation, if we may put it that way, differed from that of his contemporaries. Pictorial clues of the order provided by Aertsen and Beuckelaer are never included in Bruegel. One was doubtless expected to deduce from one's knowledge of the context of his works the true meaning of what was painted, rather than what was actually

painted on the canvas or panel. In this sense, therefore, there is, after all, a precise justification for Ortelius's claim that in all Bruegel's works there is always more to be understood than he actually painted, *in omnibus eius operibus intelligitur plus semper quam pingitur*. It goes beyond the issues of rhetoric *tout court*.

After this long excursus, we come back to the art theoretical problems. The penultimate sentence in Ortelius's tribute, probably added as an afterthought, is taken from the Neo-Platonist Eunapius's *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists* published by Plantin, in Latin, in Antwerp in 1568. It criticizes those painters who prostitute their work by prettifying it, and by adding some grace of their own, thereby completely distorting what they are supposed to represent, and departing both from the model before them and from true form. Almost every word and phrase here—especially *gratia*, *representatam effigiem*, *exemplari proposito* and above all, *vera forma*—is pregnant with art theoretical implications. Contrary to what one might think, however, this is not merely an extrapolation from the notion that painting should follow nature. Of course it does suggest the exhortation: Follow nature. Do not deck out your paintings with all sorts of adornments and embellishments. But that the process of decking out one's works was a particular and contentious issue at the time becomes perfectly clear when one reads Lucas d'Heere's invective. Before dealing with it, however, the general content of Ortelius's tribute to Bruegel should briefly be recalled. It begins with the usual encomium, and protracts the praise it contains by emphasizing at length Bruegel's ability to imitate nature. His works have an intellectual and imaginative content beyond what actually meets the eye. He is free from the fault of adorning his paintings with superfluous attractions—*ab hac labe purus noster Bruegelius*. This is a bald account of what is in effect a moving tribute.

Lucas d'Heere's *Invective against a certain painter*, published in the collection of his poems which appeared in 1565, is quite different. Of course, it is of exactly the opposite literary genre, an invective against an unnamed but presumably living painter, rather than an encomium for a dead one. Instead of the measured tones of Ortelius's Latin, it is composed in vigorous Dutch verse. Instead of praising by allusion to the best classical sources, it damns by descending to the level of the popular language of abuse. To some extent it belongs to the same literary genre as Clement Marot's row with Sagon, but its importance goes far beyond its tenuous connection with French poetry. Let us examine more closely the ideas it contains. The painter against whom d'Heere inveighs has apparently criticized the works of Frans Floris (of whom de Heere was a pupil) and his school. One recalls that Floris was far and away the most popular and successful painter of the time. In the first place, the quidam painter, a *brodder* (that is, a botcher, or bungler), a *dwasen bottaert* (that is, a foolish oaf), worse than Momus (that asinine critic of mythology) is said to despise the beauty of Floris's works (and by implication their classical beauty), which was otherwise acknowledged by all.

In the third stanza, the grounds for the quidam painter's disapproval are elaborated. He calls the works of Floris *suuckerbeeldeken*, "sugary little pictures", because they are adorned, *omdat si verciert sijn*. At this point one remembers that according to Ortelius this was precisely the fault of which Bruegel was free: he did not adorn his pictures. So here is one theoretical issue that seems to have been in the forefront of artistic debate in mid-sixteenth century Flanders. Ortelius implies that Bruegel followed nature so accurately that he had no need to adorn his pictures further. D'Heere's approach to the problem is a different one, as is apparent from his very following words. He appeals to a well-known concept, at least in Italian art theory. He makes it clear that although Floris' paintings are richly adorned, they come entirely within the bounds of decorum: they are only *verciert*, *becamelijc en rijcke* (that is, they are only adorned, becomingly and richly) where it is fitting, *daert behoort en betaemt*. And in this respect the quidam painter is completely unskilled, *Daerin sijt ghi self gh'heel onghemaniert*. It should perhaps be noted that in this context the Dutch word *onghemaniert* does seem to carry with it some of the overtones of the Italian *maniera*. In any event, his paintings are more like carnival dolls (*kaeremes poppen*) than anything else. The suggestion is that he does not know either how to adorn them, or—at least—how to adorn them within the bounds of decorum.

A further battery of abuse follows, but apart from an expansion of the notion of sugaring one's art, and from an allusion to the lack of grace in the quidam painter's work, which is rather like Ortelius's similar remark about Bruegel, there is not much more that need concern us here. But in the penultimate stanza whatever suspicions we may have

about the identity of the quidam painter are reinforced. The claim is made that even though this painter had been in Rome, you would not be able to guess it from his works, as Balthasar Gerbier was to put it in his extremely rare Funeral Tribute to Hendrick Goltzius of some fifty years later (and as the inscription to the print of the *Ass at School* No.17, similarly notes of going to study in Paris), "even if a donkey goes to Rome he does not return as a horse". We know that almost every Flemish painter of the sixteenth century made the well-nigh statutory journey to Italy, and that their subsequent works are pervaded with reminiscences and reflections of their Italian experience. Of Bruegel alone may this not be said. His Italian journey and his stay in Rome are well documented, and yet there is nothing like the adoption of Italian forms or ideas that we see in the artists of his circle discussed at the beginning of this essay. Now of course there are Italian and classical or traditional elements in his work. But not by any stretch of the imagination could the paintings which contain them be said to be either "Roomachtig" or "antijcx", Roman or antique: "classical", in short.

It may be argued that one cannot go so far as to claim that Lucas d'Heere's invective was specifically directed against Bruegel. Its tone is probably too strong to have been directed against a painter who, after all, seems to have been almost (but not quite) as well respected as Floris. But the identification of the quidam painter is not so important. These passages merit attention for two reasons. In the first place they provide sound evidence of art theoretical problems and categories in Bruegel's milieu which have not yet been recognized. Of course it would be wrong to give the impression that the awareness reached anything like the level of sophistication that it did in Italy; but it does seem clear that the issues raised not only by Lucas d'Heere but also by Ortelius may be said to have reached the level of a polemic, especially when seen in relation to each other; and that there are important implications for the art historical interpretation of his art. But the issues are also indicative of a tendency in Flemish art as a whole which receives its greatest expression in Bruegel.

Ortelius's tribute to Bruegel is written, fittingly, in measured classical terms, in Latin. But the virtue it extols is Bruegel's unadorned truth to nature. D'Heere's poem, on the other hand, is written—despite its meter—in the coarse language of the Flemish populace. Its aim is to sing the praises of the most classical, the most Italianate painter of the time. These two streams, the autochthonous and the Italianate, the classical and the popular, each have their representatives in Bruegel's artistic circle—although it must be said that at the time the Italian and the classical were accorded a higher status. But in no other painter of his time does one find a similar incorporation of Italian lessons within the popular tradition. In pictorial terms, it is true that whatever he learnt in Italy seems to have been given a less prominent place. But if we consider the intellectual motives for the entirety of Bruegel's oeuvre, we find an unparalleled combination of humanist and popular themes. That is why there are subjects like the *Icarus*, the Towers of Babel, even the *Two Monkeys*, as well as the illustrations of vernacular proverbs and the great peasant paintings of the last years. This is in these pictures that Bruegel makes his commitment to the national life of Flanders, and not to the canons of Italy. It is the national and the natural life of Flanders, distinctively so. The vernacular has acquired the same status as the classical. Bruegel elevates the pictorial possibilities of ordinary peasant life into subjects fit for painting; not for low-level picturemaking, but for pictures of the highest order.

Perhaps his very last painting—now that the great *Storm at Sea* has been given to Joos de Momper—is the enchanting *Magpie on the Gallows* in Darmstadt. It is clearly what might be called a peasant picture, or a landscape with peasants; but its interpretation is difficult. Are we to understand that the gallows loom over these figures as an intimation of mortality, or, more specifically, as a reminder of the mortality of their dance? I find this proposal, made by all those commentators who link Calvin's well-known condemnation of dancing with this picture, unconvincing. The peasants seem so clearly to be dancing in defiance of the gallows. Is the picture then a statement about a simple and happy life in the face of adversity, that one dances despite one's mortality, that no reminder of death is sufficient to halt the pleasures of these country folk? The idea is appealing, even if it is a little sentimental. It seems somehow in keeping with the elegiac tone of the picture as a whole.

But a much harder interpretation is also possible. It is one which almost all scholars have dismissed, in the face of the more attractive possibilities of a moralizing or elevating interpretation. Van Mander remarked that this was the picture bequeathed to his wife, and noted that "by the magpie he meant gossips he would deliver to the gallows". The magpie was certainly the standard proverbial expression for gossip. Now this picture was painted in 1568, the year



Magpie on the Gallows,
Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt

that Alva's Council of Troubles, or Council of Blood, as it was frequently called, was at the height of its fearsome activities. Could it be that it conveyed the idea, not only that informers deliver people to the gallows, but that informers deserved to go to the gallows themselves, rather like Haman being strung up on the very tree he prepared for Mordechai? In this case one deals with a political allusion in the guise of a peasant picture. The peasants are recognizably Flemish, and so are the buildings in the lower right and middle left; no one would mistake this for an Italian or French or Spanish landscape. And yet the ravishing intimacy of the lower half of the tiny picture expands into a vast vista of plain, sea and precipitous mountain that is quite unimaginable anywhere in the Low Countries. The picture may be a political statement, but it is pervaded by the spirit of the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics*. On the other hand, we lose hold of this picture if we forget that it is not about ancient mythology, but rather about the rural life of Flanders; that it has a dance in it, but also the gallows and the cross.

The genius of Bruegel resides in the transformation of political statement and political allusion into something that grew directly out of the popular and the autochthonous. He and his friends were thoroughly schooled in the classical humanist tradition, and it may well have been that which helped open his eyes to the possibilities of the Flemish countryside—just as Ortelius celebrated his truth to nature in Latin, while d'Heere, patriotically writing in Flemish, could only damn the painter who had been to Rome, but could not paint in a Roman way. But the difficulty we have in reading these pictures arises precisely from the fact that in them Bruegel relinquished the humanist strain he knew so well and that we might still recognize. We cannot read these symbols because they are codified in the countryside, and not in books; and we find it hard to see politics amidst these idylls. That, in the end, is the lesson of these intractable but beautiful pictures and prints.

Chief printed sources consulted:

Auner 1956; Bangs 1978; Becker 1972-73; Becker 1973; Boström 1949; Cantimori 1948; Cantimori 1967; De Toinay 1935; D'Heere 1565; Emmens 1973; Freedberg 1982; Frey 1930; Gibson 1979; Ginzburg 1970; Hamilton 1981; Lampsonius 1565; Lampsonius 1572; Monballieu 1983; Müller-Hofstede 1979; Muylle 1981; Rekers 1972; Rombouts and van Lerijs 1872; Stridbeck 1956a; Stridbeck 1956b; Sullivan 1977; Van de Velde 1975.

Abraham Ortelius's Tribute to Pieter Bruegel

Dij's Manibus sacrum

Petrum Brugelium Pictorem fuisse sui seculi absolutissimum, nemo nisi invidus, emulus, aut eius artis ignarus, unquam negabit. Sed quod nobis medio etatis flore abreptus sit, an hoc Morti, quod fortasse eum ob insignem artis peritiam, quam in eo viro observaverat, etate provectionem duxerat; an Nature potius, quod eius artificiosa ingeniosa; imitatione, sui contemptum verebatur, imputavero, non facile dixerim.

AMICI MEMORIAE ABRAHAMUS ORTELIUS LUGENS CONSECRAB.

Eupompos pictor interrogatus quem sequeretur antecedentium, demonstrata hominum multitudine, dixisse fertur, naturam ipsam imitandum esse, non artificem. Congruit nostro Brugelio hoc, cuius picturas ego minime artificiosas, at naturales appellare soleam, neque eum optimum pictorum, at naturam pictorum vero dixerim. Dignum itaque iudico, quem omnes imitentur.

Multa pinxit, hic Brugelius, quae pingi non possunt, quod Plinius de Apelle. In omnibus eius operibus intelligitur plus semper quam pingitur. Idem de Timanthe Eunapius in Iamblichio. Pictores qui formosulos in etatis flore consitos (?) [p] ingunt voluntque picture lenocinium quoddam et gratiam de suo adjicere, totam depravant representatam effigiem et ab exemplari proposito pariter et a vera forma aberrant.

From: A. Ortelius *Album Amicorum*, Pembroke College, Cambridge, fols. 12 verso-13.

Translation of Ortelius's Tribute to Bruegel

That Pieter Bruegel was the most perfect painter of his age, no one—unless jealous or envious or ignorant of his art—could ever deny. But that he was snatched away from us in the flower of his age—I cannot say whether I should attribute it to Death, who thought Bruegel was more advanced in age (sc. than he actually was) when he observed the distinguished skill of his art, or whether I should attribute it to Nature who feared that she would be held up in contempt because of his artistic and talented skills at imitation.

A grieving Abraham Ortelius consecrates this to the memory of his friend.

When asked which of his predecessors he followed, the painter Eupompos is said to have declared that he followed nature herself, not an artist. This agrees with our Bruegel, whose pictures I would not really call *artificiosae*, but rather natural. Indeed, I would not call him the best of painters, but rather the very nature of painters. So I think that he is worthy of being followed by all.

This Bruegel painted many things which are not able to be painted, as Pliny says of Apelles. In all his works more is always to be understood than he actually painted, as the same writer says of Timanthes.

As Eunapius says in his commentary on Iamblichus, painters who paint pretty young people and wish to add some charm and grace of their own completely destroy the image presented to them, and stray both from the exemplar set before them and from true form. From this fault our Bruegel was free.

Lucas d'Heere's Invective against a certain Painter who criticized the Painters of Antwerp

Invective, an eenen Quidam Schilder: de welcke beschimpte de Schilders van Handwerpen

Waerom quetst ghi u selven? wane siende blent
Deur haet ende nijt, als de beroofde van sinnen?
Meent ghi (die een brodder sijt) u te maken excellent
Met te verachten, die lof end' eere ghewinnen
Deur heur excellentie? hielt ghi u zotgen binnen,
Men moght u voor wijsachtigh hauden, t'alder stont,
Wt overvloedicheit des herten spreect den mont.

Niet so valschen was Momus schimpigh iugement
Die Veneris Pantoffel wel dorste controleuren:
Want ghi veracht heur schoonheit, die elcken bekent
Onberespelicken te zine achter en veuren:
Maer gheel tot uwer schande moet alsulx ghebeuren:
Zullen u nu achten voor eenen dwasen bottaert.

De schilderye van Florus, en sijns ghelijcke,
Ghi (plompen schimper) suuckerbeeldekens naemt:
Om dat si verciert sijn, becamelijc en rijcke,
Niet allome: maer daert behoort en betaemt.
Tis te verwonderen, dat ghi u dies niet en schaemt,
Naer dien ghi self daerin sijt gh'eel onghemaniert:
Want als kaeremes poppen ghi u beelden verciert.

Maer hoe ghi die verciert, en u selven met eenen
Hoe seer ghi u pluymstrijct, looft, priest, en laudeert,
Hoe seer ghi elcken veracht, en wilt vercleenen,
Ghi en sijt dies maer te minder gh'estimeert.
Een graci' hedby, dat ghi seer wei stoffeert,

Niet soo schilder-stoffeerdere doen sonder bedrieghen:
Maer met u staute blasen, stoffen, ende lieghen.

Oft ghi u werck soo const suykeren en goetmaken
Dattet (d'welck nu bitterder is dan galle altijt)
Mocht inder constenaers mont eenighsins soet smaken
Zo waert ghi doch wat, t'welck ghi nu niet en zijt:
Ten waer den Coningh van de beesten int spijt
Vanden Leeu, diett veur u oyt, hier te sine alleene:
Dits d'eere die u toebehoort en de anders gheene.

Wilt u moeijen met verwen cleerschrijvers Apostels
Diese wel alle twaelf trecken met eenen treck:
En daermen int sté van pinceelen besigt grove bostels
Want het dosjn werck (wat roerdi dan uwen beck)
En is u maer veel te constigh, aermen gheck,
Al hebby te Room' gheweest, tis een sober dingh,
Dat geschiedde, zo den hont deur de vitsen ghingh.

Dat ghi te Room' hebt geweest, en merct men toch niet
An u schilderye, vul lamme, quade treken,
Die voorwaer noch Roomachtig, noch ooc antijcx en siet.
En zaudemen u fauten al tellen: veel weken,
Pappier, penn' end' inc, zoude my verre ghebreken:
Maer hieraf en ware u gheen verwijt of queste,
Const ghi uwen mont hauwen, en doen u beste.

From: L. d'Heere, *Den Hof en Boomgaerd der Poesien*, Ghent, 1565, p.87

An Alchemical Message in Bruegel's Prints?

Jacques Van Lennep

As early as the fourth century B.C., the Chinese were practising a form of alchemy comparable to that which we now know to have existed some seven hundred years later in Egypt. Here, however, according to legend—which in all probability was close to the truth—its beginnings were to be looked for much further back, the creative impulse being ascribed to the god Hermes-Thoth.

Alchemy was also practised at a later date in Byzantium and the Arab world, and so passed into the hands of the Europeans, mainly during the twelfth century. In Europe it grew rapidly and extensively, a development that slowed only with the gradual advent of chemistry, of which in many respects it marks the starting point. And to think that it still prevailed at the height of the 18th century!

Alchemy was a complex system combining a mystical, highly syncretic doctrine with experimental work in the laboratory. Its adepts devised a remarkable secret language using symbols to convey both a spiritual message and a "chemical" meaning. Through experimentation, the alchemist strove to discover the "philosopher's stone" (the energy-giving principle in the universe). This he reduced to a "powder of projection" that allowed him either to transmute base metals into gold or to distil the "elixir of life". This utopian scheme of things led to numerous discoveries being made in the realism of physics, chemistry and medicine, just as it provided a framework for a philosophy aimed at perfecting the individual and had far-reaching effects in the fields of art and literature.

* * *

In the funeral oration that he delivered in praise of his friend Pieter Bruegel, the celebrated geographer Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598) made a relation to fire the imagination: "And this Bruegel I speak so highly of has painted many things that cannot be painted (...). In all his work he would have us understand far more than indeed he shows us." This ambiguous statement was echoed by the very first historiographer of Flemish painting, Carel van Mander, who in 1604 wrote: "A good many of his later works being too offensive or too satirical, he called upon his wife to burn them as he felt the end drawing near. Was he smitten with remorse? Or was he afraid that she would be made to suffer, obliged perhaps to explain his works?"

In 1935, inspired by these texts, Charles de Tolnay endeavoured to unravel the mystery surrounding a master whose work is undeniably coloured by moral and philosophical considerations. Bearing in mind the immense religious upheavals of the age, marked as it was by numerous mystical experiences and a critical attitude on the part of humanists towards traditional Christianity, de Tolnay came to believe that a group of "freethinkers" who had gravitated round the printer Christopher Plantin (c.1520-1589) exercised a certain influence on Bruegel. Among these emancipated spirits there were Protestants and followers of a sect founded by Hendrik Niclaes in 1540 or thereabouts, the "Family of Love" (*Het Huys der Liefde*). This sect proclaimed the universality of all religions, which express an identical truth: the salvation of mankind through love. Before de Tolnay, A.E. Popham, in a study written in 1931 pointing out the friendship between the painter and the geographer Ortelius, drew attention to the fact that the latter had belonged to this sect. Indeed, the "Family" counted many a distinguished personage among its number: the philologist Justus Lipsius (1547-1606) for one, and a theologian who played an important political role in the Netherlands, Benito Arias Montano (1527-1598). He was also chaplain to the Emperor Philip II, who had given him the task of supervising the publication of the polyglot Bible (*Biblia Real*) by Plantin, a leading figure within the sect. Thanks to the generous financial support of its wealthy, bourgeois members, its printing houses in Antwerp, Paris and Leiden served as centres for spreading the doctrine. And it was a doctrine that, as Wallace Kirsop has indicated,

aroused enormous interest among alchemists in France. This was certainly true of Plantin's Paris correspondent, Pierre Porret, described as "a highly ingenious man" by Jacques Gohory (1520-1576), publisher and author of treatises on alchemy and himself a member of the sect. Of particular interest in this connection is the poet Clovis Hestean de Nuysement, secretary to Henry III and his brother Alençon. It was he who translated Justus Lipsius' *De Constantia* into French for Plantin, with Porret serving as intermediary. Nuysement went to Antwerp in 1582, having been initiated into the mysteries of alchemy by the Bishop of Aire, François de Foix de Candale, who played such an important part in disseminating the hermetic philosophy by translating into French the *Poimandrès*, a collection of Greek texts setting out its precepts.

This philosophy, closely linked with alchemy, must be taken into account in any attempt to shed light on the spiritual climate in which Bruegel lived. The artist may well have discovered it for himself during his travels through Italy in 1552, whither it had spread thanks to the philosopher Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499). Alchemy and the hermetic philosophy, both believed to have been instituted by the Greek god, Hermes, are so closely related that alchemy (the basis of modern chemistry) can be regarded as the experimental aspect of the hermetic philosophical theory, the materialization through laboratory experiments of the precepts attributed to Hermes. This was how A.J. Festugière situated the Greek texts on alchemy within the writings on the hermetic philosophy as a whole (*Corpus hermeticum*).

Hermetic philosophy blossomed in Alexandria during the early centuries A.D. It displaced Greek rationalism—already on the decline—by substituting a series of hybrid speculations in which symbolic imagery played an important part. The sun was thus seen as the radiant source of the Universal Nature, to which it attracted matter in order to transmute it. Man was to serve as mediator in this transformation process by seeking to achieve perfect union with nature. During the same period, alchemy appeared as a cross between the doctrine itself and the craft traditions associated with the working of metals, i.e. as a practical expression of the doctrine in the laboratory. The task of its adepts was to transmute base metals into gold (the metal of the sun) by artificially bringing about a fusion of its constituents, sulphur and mercury (symbolizing man's union with nature), though these elements corresponded more to the active (male) and passive (female) principles in nature than to the chemical substances as such.

During the Renaissance in Western Europe there grew up an esoteric form of humanism that corroborated Christian dogma—or so it maintained. Consequently—in general, at least—it escaped persecution by the Church of Rome and its court charged with hunting out all manner of heresy, the Inquisition. Hermetic philosophy was very much a leaven in this particular brand of humanism, as was the cabbala, from quite different origins. This Jewish doctrine, observed essentially by the rabbis, considered the Bible to conceal a message accessible only to the initiated, and that it provided them with a code by which they might decipher its words and numbers.

The person chiefly responsible for disseminating this doctrine among the humanists was Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), who endeavoured to adapt it to Christianity. The alchemists were fired with enthusiasm for the cabbala, just as they were for hermetic philosophy, convinced that it would unlock the secrets of their own creed. One of Bruegel's contemporaries, Blaise de Vigenère (1523-1596), published a treatise on alchemy that was influenced by the rabbinical theory throughout. Among the cabbalist humanists we need mention here only those who formed part of Plantin's entourage and so may have been known to Bruegel—and what illustrious names they are. In seeking help with his polyglot Bible, the printer naturally turned to such scholars as had a knowledge of Hebrew. Accordingly, he was assisted in various ways by Jacques Gohory and by Guy Le Fèvre de la Boderie (1541-1598), who was well disposed towards the "Family of Love", to which Gohory belonged. Le Fèvre was a disciple of Guillaume Postel, who from 1567 corresponded with Plantin and Ortelius on the subject of the cabbala and the views held by the "Family". One of the best known figures among the esoteric humanists Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535), who was in the service of Margaret of Austria, regent of the Netherlands, stayed in Antwerp from 1526 to 1530, and it was there, at Plantin's, that his treatise on the occult sciences, *De occulta philosophia*, was published in 1531. A true connoisseur of all matters pertaining to magic, the cabbala and astrology, he maintained a critical attitude to everything. To him, a scholar, the significance of the occult sciences did not lie in the so-called power they were alleged to have over nature (if their claims were to be taken literally); rather, their essential message was the revelation that true power stemmed from perfect harmony between the universe and man—an insight that might apply to Bruegel himself.

Having touched upon three currents of mystical thought that were connected with alchemy in one way or another and provided a focus of attention for the intellectual circles in which Bruegel seems likely to have moved, we now turn to examine the status of alchemy in the Netherlands. Certainly, this is a subject that deserves our close attention, for there are clear indications in the master's works that he was interested in alchemy, something which cannot be shown where the "Family" doctrine, hermetic philosophy or cabbala are concerned, as the latter were not characterized by any specific iconography comparable to the extremely abundant repertoire of the alchemists.

The story of alchemy in the Netherlands has never been written by expert historians, and yet it was in this part of the world that the first illustrated treatise was drawn up in the second half of the 14th century.

A hundred years later, a famous printer, Arnoldus de Bruxella, nicknamed "Fiamingo" (the Fleming), who owned a considerable library on alchemy, composed a treatise on the subject himself, while at the end of the 16th century, Henri van Lindhout, a medical practitioner in Brussels, also wrote a text that he signed with the French form of his name (de Linthaut). Other manuscripts on the subject of alchemy dating from the time of Bruegel have been preserved, such as those by Tassin of Brussels and Gilbert of Landen. In 1595, Ewald Vogel published a work on the mysterious philosopher's stone, followed in 1604 by the poet and theologian Guilielmus Mennens, who claimed that Greek mythology was simply a fable concealing the processes by which this stone could be produced. In 1607, the "Modern Mirror of Alchemy" by Eduardus Plusius appeared, while Justus Balbian (c.1560-1616) was responsible for no fewer than seven treatises. Other names that have come down to us include Jean du Chastelet of Brabant (c.1578-1645), who enjoyed a certain reputation as a mineralogist in France and devoted an *Opusculum* to the raw material of the philosopher's stone. The work of the French alchemist René de Cerclaires (d.1636) can be linked with one of the heroes of the Netherlands, Count Philippe de Hornes, who had a laboratory fitted out for him. Later, in 1618, the alchemist entered the service of Archduke Albert and his wife Isabella, regents of the Netherlands. Finally, we should not forget that one of the most glorious figures in the history of medicine, Jean-Baptiste Van Helmont (1577-1644), was a fervent adept of the hermetic philosophy and of alchemy, to which he appears to have been initiated whilst serving as a page at the court of Ernest of Bavaria, Prince Bishop of Liège. His son, François-Mercure, was equally well versed in alchemy and the cabbala. The father carried out several remarkable transmutations with the help of a powder received from an Irishman by the name of Butler as a token of gratitude for freeing him from Vilvorde prison near Brussels.

A number of other alchemists from abroad passed through the Netherlands, including the mysterious Basile Valentin, to whom some of the most famous treatises in the history of alchemy have been attributed. John Dee (1527-1608) studied at the university of Louvain and went on to stay in Antwerp, where he published a major work, his *Monas hieroglyphica*, in 1562. Two other important treatises were printed in Antwerp in 1567: Denis Zachaire's *Opusculum* and Bernard le Trévisan's *Livre* (Book), at a time when there were already about a hundred and fifty printed treatises on alchemy, the work of some hundred authors or so, in circulation in Europe. It was not until later, in 1599, that the time of Plantin published one such work in Leiden, the celebrated *De lapide philosophico* (On the Philosopher's Stone) by Lambsprinck. Furthermore, a manuscript in the Plantin Museum in Antwerp clearly shows that the printers knew alchemy. In it they recorded ways of making inks, along with highly mysterious recipes, magic formulae and the like.

Alchemy is sometimes considered, through ignorance, to be a heresy, whereas in fact it was generally encouraged by the Church. Mainly practised in the Middle Ages by monks, it was at times prohibited by those orders that were mistrustful of it, possibly because it served to convey a somewhat heterodox line of thought likely to perturb the faith—especially for economic reasons. As alchemy instructed its adepts in the art of making gold and silver by artificial means, it posed a threat to monetary stability and to any power that assumed the sole right to mint coin. To avoid risks, Pope John XXII promulgated a bull in 1317 advising against alchemy on moral grounds rather than for reasons of dogma. However, alchemy did not imply making a pact with the Devil, as was the case for witchcraft, nor did it question the doctrine of Rome in any way. Consequently, it was not persecuted by the Inquisition, which was so active in Bruegel's day. In the Netherlands, as indeed elsewhere, the monarchs and their representatives were only too happy to avail themselves of the services of the alchemists with their promises of wealth. Charles the Fifth took a certain Giacomo da Biella into his service, while his son, Philip II, fitted out laboratories in Madrid and Malines, where



The Alchemist, 1558? (No. 27)



in S. Brant, *Das Narrenschiff*, Basel, 1494

he employed Tiberio Della Rocca. The latter's secretary, Pedro de Hoyo, was given the task of keeping him up to date with the very latest developments. At the request of the emperor, Ricardo Estamhist showed in his *Toque de alquimia* (Essay on Alchemy) that this was the noble art to which his ancestors owed the family fortune. His delegate to the Inquisition, the theologian Francisco de Peña, pointed out the errors of the grand inquisitor of Aragon, Nicolas Eymerich, who had condemned alchemy two centuries earlier. His regent in the Netherlands, Cardinal Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle, owned a laboratory where the alchemist Nicolas Guibert worked. If we are to believe the account of one of his colleagues, François Rossellet, the cardinal also carried out experiments there in person.

In this context, it is highly significant that both Philip II and Granvelle also collected paintings by Bosch and Bruegel.

In Bruegel's day alchemy was a phenomenon of considerable importance, and in one of his works we find incontrovertible evidence of his interest in the subject. This is in *The Alchemist*, a drawing dating from 1558 (Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett der Staatlichen Museen) from which a number of different engraved prints were made (No. 27).

Figures are shown in a laboratory amid a jumble of instruments and substances used for experiments. On the left, a tattered individual is just about to place his last crown piece in a crucible, while in the centre his wife is indicating that the family purse is quite empty and that, impoverished by his investigations, they will have to beg for help (as depicted in the outdoor scene). The naivety of the alchemist reduced to poverty by his obsession for gold is personified in the centre of the picture by a fool wearing a dunce's cap and working a pair of bellows. The wife is being rebuked by a well-dressed scholar seated on the right at a desk covered with books. On a page in one of them can be read the legend *Alge-mist*, a pun in Flemish on the word *alchemist* meaning: he has "ruined everthing" or even "all is dung"!

With no knowledge of the complexities of alchemy, the critics came to the (somewhat hasty) conclusion that this was nothing more than a satirical work, an opinion that now needs to be revised by considering the distinctions drawn in the texts on alchemy themselves between alchemists of different kinds. Often repeated since the Middle Ages, this was an argument used in 1740 by Herman Fictuld, who, in a work revealingly entitled "Touch-stone" (*Probiër-Stein*), remained true to tradition by contrasting "philosophers" with "sophists".

To the former, gold and the philosopher's stone were essentially a symbolic expression of wisdom, of a state of perfection, of union between man and the universe. The quest for such ideal happiness inevitably led the alchemist to

experiment on matter, at the heart of which he might hope to find, if not the secret of supreme power, then at least an answer to his questions.

Philosophers such as these utterly despised those who gave themselves over to (generally) ridiculous experiments of various kinds in the vain hope of acquiring wealth. These gullible fools, charlatans and forgers deceived everyone with their elixirs of life and their fake gold. They were commonly referred to as "puffers"—the celebrated painter and alchemist Jean Perréal (1460-1530) even dubbed them "silly sophistic puffers" (*ung sot souffleur sophistique*)—for as still ignorant apprentices their job in the laboratory was to work the bellows. They were frequently the butt of biting satire and criticism at the hands of authors untroubled by such fine distinctions. Dante, for instance, simply thrust all alchemists into Hell. Petrarch gave a warning similar to Bruegel's: "Your house shall be overrun with imposters. Wherever you look, you shall find bowls, basins and flasks filled with stinking water, strange plants, mysterious salts, sulphur, stills and forges". The alchemist was placed aboard Sebastian Brant's "Ship of Fools" (*Das Narrenschiff*, 1494); in England, he was held up to ridicule, first by Gower, then Chaucer and finally by Ben Jonson, while in Spain, he became one of the rogues of the picaresque genre. In France, Bonaventure des Périers tossed off the puns "art qui n'est mie" (art not worth a thing) and "art qui mine" (art that saps). Evidently, Bruegel's was not the only one of its kind. Besides, elsewhere in the literature we find *alckumistica* or *altkumist* (who has ruined everything), *argchimistisch* (bad chemist), *lauchimistica* (lukewarm chemist), *lachrimistica* (tearful chemist) and *kachimia* (shit chemistry). In Bruegel's print, on a sheet of paper pinned above the unfortunate alchemist's head can be seen the word *misero*, an allusion to the destitution awaiting him—something which, it should be emphasized, certain alchemists were not at all concerned about. Indeed, it was not unusual for them to write in praise of poverty. In a text addressed to Philip II, one explained that many of them were "fools and deceivers spending their own fortune and that of others", and speaking of the philosopher's stone, he goes on: "Be sure, however, that God reveals it only to a small number, specifically to those who understand nothing of riches". Acceptance of poverty—the fate, after all, of those who devote their lives to research—became part and parcel of the history of alchemy thanks to the Franciscans, a mendicant order that included some of the best known adepts in its ranks.

Looked at in this light, Bruegel's work loses some of the keen satire that was said to characterize it; rather, it takes on the tone of a "Complaint" similar to that dedicated to the alchemist by another artist, Jean Perréal, in the year 1515 or thereabouts.

Certainly, in the texts appearing below the prints there is no trace of mockery. In some versions there appears a complaint written in French, words spoken by the scholar-philosopher:

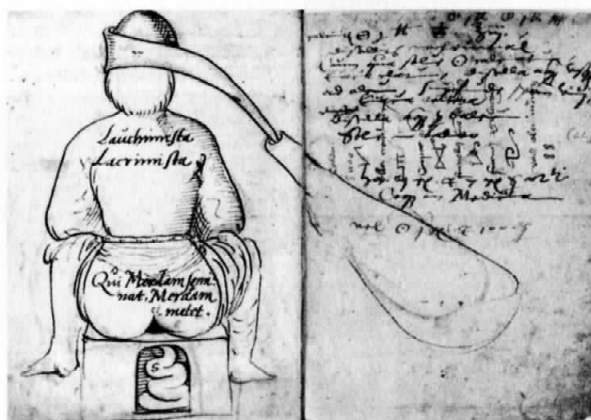
"L'art Alchemiste ha son nom bien a plain [dre]
Le bien d'autrui & le nostre s'y pert...
Ceste fois cy encoir veulx je esprouver
De chercher l'art, cest tout mon pensement
Si à coup je ne le puis trouver
Je brusleray mes livres
J'enraige au vif voyant que notre bien
Par ce sot cy en la cendre demeure".
("The name of the Alchemical art is to be defamed
It squanders the fortune of others & our own...
Now, once more, I wish to experiment
To seek the art is my only ideal
If, for sure, I am unable to find it
I shall burn my books
I am in a fearful rage seeing that our fortune
Lies in ashes because of this fool here")

The six-line Latin poem that provides a comment on other versions of No.27 is quite different in character; given

the extremely obscure vocabulary it contains, it might well have been taken from an alchemist's book of magic. Rather than distorting its sense, a literal translation should be given here:

"Men of ignorance have to acquire things and then take an interest
In the power (or essence) of the worthless though rare gemstone
The only thing that is undoubtedly worthless yet to be found everywhere
Mingling in abundance with the four elements in a cloud
Where no mineral thing predominates
But locally it is to be found everywhere".

This is a linguistic analysis, based on treatises dealing with alchemy, of a text many would regard as so much gibberish, an analysis showing the text to contain a message addressed by the philosopher (or initiate) to the apprentices concerning the fundamental nature of the philosopher's stone, which, being essentially spiritual, is within reach of everyone. The stone's constituent matter is to be found everywhere, blending in particular with the four elements; it is, in a word, the entire universe. To this extent, its matter is worthless, though few recognize the fact. In this connection authors had no qualms about comparing it symbolically with dung or excrement, as the following extract from Richardus Anglicus illustrates: "Gather here and there whatever droppings you find and make manure of them". Again, in a passage from a treatise attributed to Hermes we find: "Our most precious stone evacuated with our excrement is the dearest we have, the most worthless of all worthless things". In similar style, a manuscript on alchemy dating from the 15th or 16th century portrays a flask-man defecating and bears the legend "Whosoever sows shit, so shall he reap". There is, incidentally, a striking resemblance here with a detail in *Dulle Griet* (Mad Meg), a Bruegel painting dated 1561-1562 (Mayer van den Bergh Museum, Antwerp). A fantastic creature is excreting gold from a bottom in the form of a broke egg (the egg being an alchemist's symbol for the vessel in which he mixed and distilled his chemical substances).



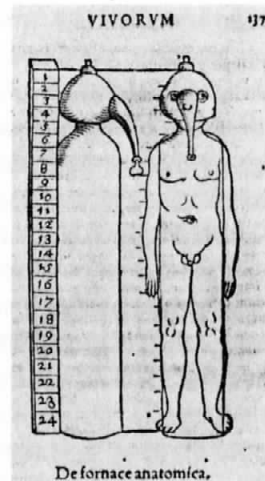
Lacrimista in MS Clm 25110 (15th-16th century), Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich



Dulle Griet (1561 or 1562), detail, Mayer van den Bergh Museum, Antwerp

Comparisons between man and the flask in which alchemists performed their distillations to arrive at the philosopher's stone are common in the treatises. The raw material placed in the "fundament" of the apparatus rose with the heated vapours towards the top or "head", identified in the present instance with the figure's hat. Once it had cooled, the distillate ran out through a pouring spout or lip. In view of the parallelism between the laboratory process and the philosophical exegesis, it was only natural that from the earliest times alchemists considered the head to be the "seat" of their stone. Precisely what one might expect, of course, of a "philosopher's" stone!

This was brought out in an engraved print most probably based on a theme of Bruegel's, which had already been dealt with by Hieronymus Bosch in *The Cure of Folly* (Prado Museum, Madrid). It is known as *The Deacon of Ronse* (No.83). A group of quacks are attempting to extract from their patients' skulls a stone that has nothing necessarily to

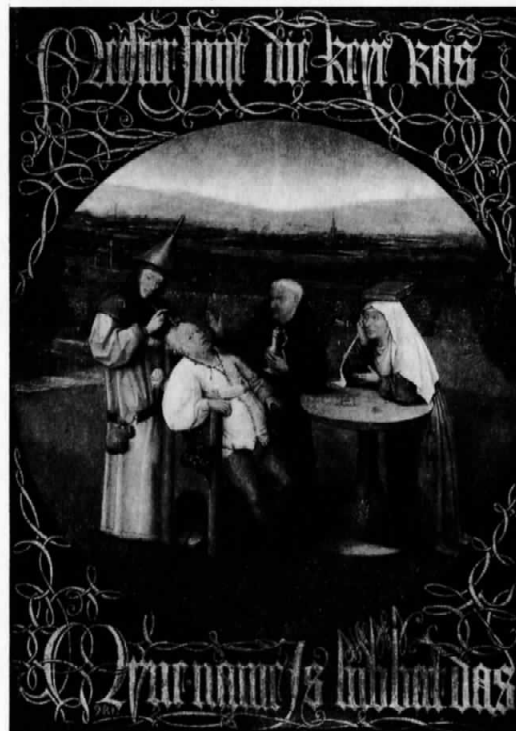


Anatomical furnace in G. Dorn, *Aurora*, Basel, 1577



J. de Vries, *Furnace* (16th century)

H. Bosch, *The Cure of Folly*, Museo del Prado, Madrid



P. Bruegel, (attributed to) *The Notable from Ronse*, 1557 (No.83)

in *Aurora consurgens* (early 15th century),
MS VI Fd 26 Universitni Knihovna, Prague



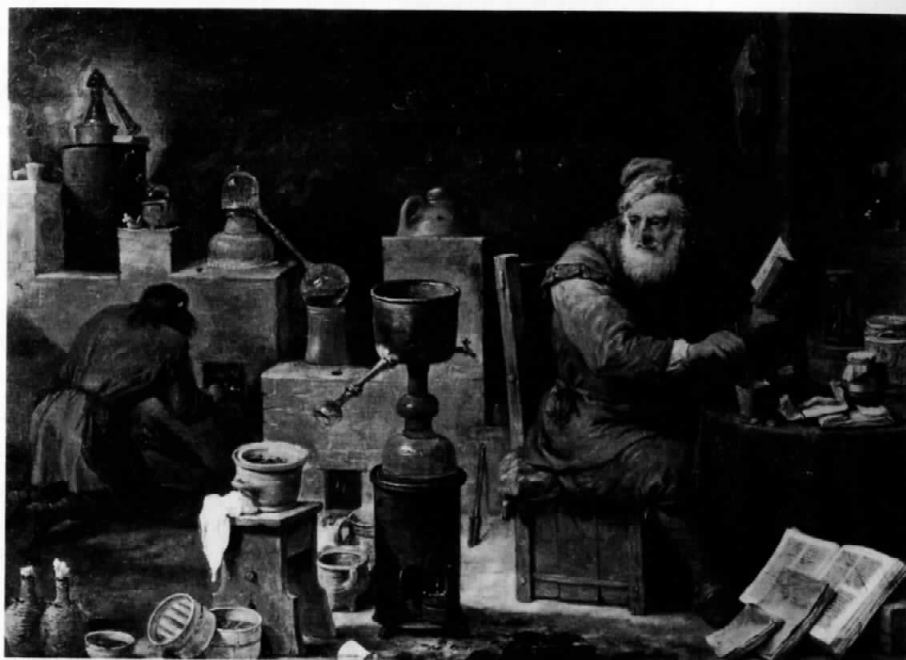
in M. Maier, *Atalanta fugiens*, Oppenheim, 1617 (emblem XXIII)



do with madness. The connection with alchemy is indicated by a laboratory at the far end of the room and a figure who, significantly, is wearing a crucible on his head. He is working the bellows, reminding us that the Latin word *foliis* denotes both "fool" and this instrument.

To suggest the philosophical nature of their stone, the alchemists termed it "alabaster brain" or "encephalic stone", claiming it was produced in the "vessel of the brain". In one of their texts, *Visio Arislei* (Arislea's Vision), we read that Beya and Gabricus (a sister and brother who would mate to beget the philosopher's stone) were born from their father's brain. The illustrations in a number of treatises are based on the same symbolism: in the early fifteenth-century "At Break of Day" (*Aurora consurgens*), an alchemist is shown to have a head wound, while in "Atalanta Fleeing" (*Atalanta fugiens*, 1617), Athena—or the philosopher's stone—is seen being born from Jupiter's brain. No

D. Teniers, *The Alchemist*,
Mauritshuis, The Hague

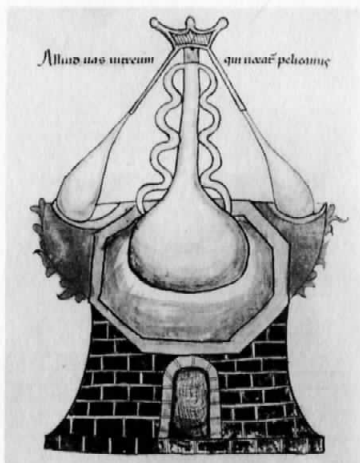


A. Van Ostade, *The Alchemist*,
National Gallery, London





Superbia (1558), detail (No.20)



Furnace in *Ars sine doctrina* (1461),
Aldini MS 74 Biblioteca Universitaria, Pavia



Furnace in MS Ashb. 1166 (late 16th century),
Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Florence



J. Perreal, *Remontrances de Nature à l'Alchimiste errant*
(1516), Musée Marmottan, Paris

in *Speculum Veritatis* (early 17th century),
MS Lat. 7286 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome



in *Livre des figures hiéroglyphiques* (17th century),
MS 3047, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris



doubt what underlay the alchemist's symbolism were Jesus Christ's words when he appointed the apostle Peter head of the Church: "You shall be called Cephas, which is to say Peter" (John: 1,42). For centuries theologians argued that "Cephas" was derived from the Greek "kephalé" meaning "head", and that Peter was thus designated as leader or head (in Latin, *caput* is used in both senses) of the Church, a community of living "stones". In passing, we should point out that such linguistic puzzles, frequently based on fanciful etymologies, constitute one of the keys to interpreting the alchemist's illustrative material. As far back as the "Leiden Papyrus" (c. 4th century), one of the earliest texts on alchemy, this secret language was referred to as "hieroglyphics" or sacred language of the god Hermes (Thoth in Egypt), and even—somewhat more poetically—as "tongue of the birds".

To return to the engraving after Bruegel, this was the starting point of a recurrent theme in later Dutch and Flenish genre painting. It is impossible to keep count of all the minor 17th- and 18th-century masters that painted laboratory scenes or portrayed alchemists indulging in weird experiments. The vividness of such depictions, the equivocal, enigmatic nature of the central figure and the success alchemy enjoyed must all have contributed to the proliferation of such paintings by Adriaen Van Ostade, David Ryckaert, David Teniers, Mathieu Van Hellemont, Jan Steen, Cornelis Bega, Balthazar Van den Bossche, Justus Van Bentum, Hendrik Heerschop and others.

For a long time Bruegel was considered a mere imitator of Hieronymus Bosch (c.1450-1516), an opinion relating only to part of his work, in which—it is true—the frenzied fantasies and the eerie visions of his predecessor re-emerge. It may well apply to works with an element of alchemy in them, like the *Dulle Griet* or the *Seven Deadly Sins* (1556-1558), a series of drawings subsequently published in the form of prints by the Antwerp engraver Hieronymus Cock.

Whereas Bruegel had outlined a social situation, as it were, and painted psychological portraits in *The Alchemist*, he certainly made use of strange symbols specific to alchemy in his treatment of the fantastic. The art historian Jacques Combe initially detected this kind of image in the paintings of his predecessor, Hieronymus Bosch, in 1946, and more recently, Laurinda Dixon broadened this hypothesis to include a less frenzied yet equally enigmatic work, the *Marriage of Cana*.

Many historians have accepted this line of reasoning in respect not only of the painter from Hertogenbosch but of Bruegel himself, to whom I was the first to apply it in 1965. Others have rejected it, arguing chiefly that regarding Bosch and Bruegel as alchemists is tantamount to accusing them of heresy. Many were already put out by W. Fraenger's (extremely bold) thesis reproaching the former with having belonged to a sect called "Brothers of the Free Spirit", founded by Jacob Van Almaengien. It is only right to dispel the spectre of alchemy as heresy here and now, once and for all, quite simply because the Church never thought of it as such. If this were not so, that devout defender of the faith, Philip II, would never have become a patron of the alchemists; nor would he have made a collection of Bosch's works, had they been at all suspect.

But just what are the main alchemical symbols Bruegel uses in his works that carry on the Bosch tradition? The most obvious is undoubtedly that suggested by the crazy constructions sometimes seen emitting smoke, several of which are shown in *Pride* (*Superbia*—1557, No.20). Then there are the collections of breastplates, castle keeps, vegetable matter, retorts, etc., all in fact representing alchemists' forges. Alchemists were known to conceive such transpositions, often picturing or describing their apparatus in this way. As they sought to produce the philosopher's stone that guarantees eternal life in their forges, they termed them "athanor", from the Greek "a-thanatos" (immortal), constructing them in the form of a castle keep or even a tabernacle! One particular symbol of the forge was the hollow tree, seen in a number of prints in the series of the *Seven Deadly Sins*, for example in *Lust* (*Luxuria*—1558, No.24). The tree is clearly identified with the forge in the Jean Perréal miniature decorating his *Remonstrances de Nature à l'Alchimiste errant* (Nature's Admonishments to an Erring Alchemist) (Musée Marmottan, Paris), and in another manuscript, *Speculum Veritatis* (Mirror of Truth—Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome, MS lat. 7286). The almost legendary alchemist Nicolas Flamel (c. 1330-1418) one day discovered a collection of enigmatic "figures", the *Livre d'Abraham le Juif* (Book of Abraham the Jew), the meaning of which he went off to find in Spain. The fifth of these figures shows the hollow tree shedding water with restorative powers in a garden tended by alchemists. These figures are known to us only through reproductions or descriptions that appeared later, from 1612 on (for example, the 17th-century MS 3047 in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris). Flamel states in his

text that the forge could also be symbolized by a barrel made out of the wood of this tree. Indeed, the barrel is associated with the hollow tree in prints dated 1557 and 1558 on the theme of *Patience* (*Patientia*, No.15) and *Anger* (*Ira*, No.18), in which it is "guarded" by what might be an alchemist holding a receptacle of some kind. This container, which can only be guessed at, since it holds what every alchemist dreams of, was regarded as something sacred throughout the literature. It could be symbolized by an egg, a sphere or a sailing vessel (ship, boat, etc.). The last of these was an obvious image: the Latin *vasculum* (vessel, ship) is a diminutive of *vas* (vase), while in Old French the word *vaisseau* covers both meanings.

This interpretation in terms of alchemy goes some way to explaining the numerous eggs, spheres and boats which Bosch passed on to Bruegel. The best example is once again provided by the defecating figure in *Dulle Griet*, where he is pictured holding up a sphere inside a boat, though all these symbols are to be found in *Anger*, *Patience* and *Lust*.



Patience, detail (No.37)

Patience, detail (No.37)

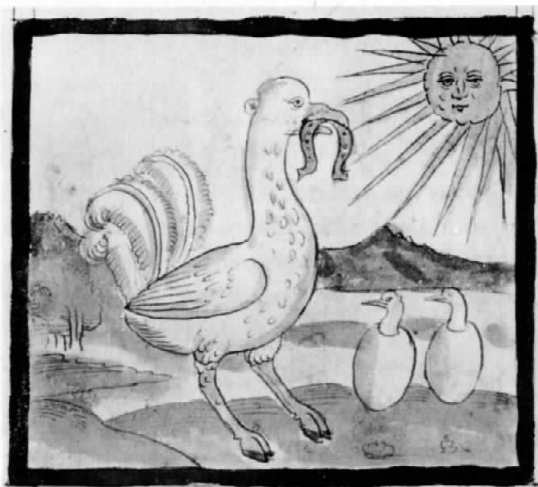


Ira, detail (No.18)

Ira, detail (No.18)



By way of reference, mention should be made of one or two treatises on alchemy in which these symbols are used: in *De Alchimia* (On Alchemy—1522, Rijksuniversiteit Bibliotheek, Leiden Cod. Voss. F 29), and in the *Splendor Solis* (Splendour of the Sun—1532-1535), several richly illustrated copies of which are in existence. In them a magnificent androgynous figure can be seen simultaneously displaying an egg and a cosmic sphere (British Library, London, Harley MS 3469, dated 1582). The egg and sword are symbolically linked in the print of *Atalanta Fugiens* (1617), as they are in Bruegel's *Patientia*, in which the sword is replaced by a knife having the same meaning: Fire. Such spheres or vessels are typical elements of alchemical iconography, and have been plentiful in treatises since the first to have been illustrated in Europe at the end of the 14th century (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, MS 2372). Furthermore, the substances treated in the receptacles were also symbolized in various ways—for instance, by a couple indulging in amorous pursuits, as in the *Aurora Consurgens*, of which there are a number of copies, the



in *De Alchimia* (c. 1526), Cod. Voss, Chem. F29 Rijksuniversiteitsbibliotheek, Leiden

in Gratheus, Untitled alchemical treatise (late 14th century), MS 2372 Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna



in S. Trismosin, *Splendor Solis* (16th century), MS 146766 Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg



in M. Maier, *Atalanta fugiens*, Oppenheim, 1617 (emblem VIII)



in *Aurora consurgens* (early 15th century), MS VI Fd 26 Universitni Knihovna, Prague

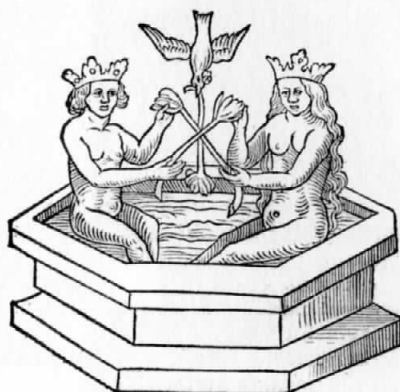
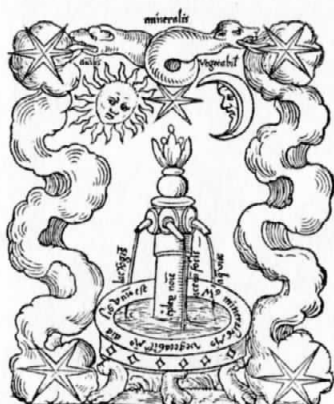




in G. Anrach, (?) *Donum Dei* (late 15th century),
Sloane MS 2560 British Library, London



Luxuria (1558) (No. 24)



in *Rosarium philosophorum* in *De Alchimia*, Frankfurt, 1550



in S. Trismosin, *Splendor Solis* (1582),
Harley MS 3469 British Library, London

in *Rosarium philosophorum* in *De Alchimia*, Frankfurt, 1550



earliest dating from the beginning of the 15th century (e.g. Prague, Universitni Knihovna, MS VI Fd 26, first half of the 15th century) and the *Donum Dei* (Gift of God), also in several versions from the end of the 15th century (British Library, London, MS Sloane 2560). The couple are seen in a sphere perched at the top of the hollow tree in *Lust*, for example. The woman corresponded to mercury and the man to sulphur, or, more generally, to the passive, liquid substances and the active, fiery substances respectively. The fruit of their union was gold, either metallic or potable (the elixir of life). Illustrations show this elixir flowing from the "fountain of youth", which in the *Rosarium philosophorum* (Rosary of the Philosophers—printed in Frankfurt in 1550) can be seen beneath the sun (or sulphur) and moon (mercury), while elsewhere the couple make love in water in the basin of a fountain. A similar motif also appears in *Lust*. Mercury itself could be represented by a stag and sulphur by a cock, two symbols that in this particular print are linked with the tree sheltering the couple. The cock was the bird of Hermes, god of the alchemists and esoteric knowledge in general, owing no doubt to the similarity of the Greek words "alektor" (of the cock) and "alektos" (what must not be uttered). "Kerux" (cock) also means "herald"; Hermes was the herald of the Gods and the staff that was his emblem was called "kerukeion". In addition, some alchemists mentioned the alloy of gold and silver ("elektron" in Greek) in which, according to Cesare Della Riviera (an alchemist whose work was published in 1605), statues of Hermes were cast. Finally, any connection between the cock and the dawn it heralds was only strengthened by the fact that "sunrise" in Greek is "elektor". To the alchemists, this dawn symbolized the appearance of the philosopher's stone which they also associated with the resurrection of Christ. Clear evidence of this is provided by the title *Aurora consurgens* ("At Break of Day") or by an engraving in the *Rosarium* already mentioned. This same symbolism may be concealed in a print supposedly engraved from one of Bruegel's works (No.84), in which Christ rising from the dead is pointing at the rising sun. Nearby, stands a hollow tree. Certainly, de Tolnay was greatly mystified by the unusual pictorial elements in this work.

* * *

We have dealt here with only a limited selection of the alchemical symbols appearing in Bruegel's prints and other work. The question now is this: is the presence of alchemy strong enough to enable us to deduce that the master himself was an adept? Perhaps so. If he was, no one is better placed to characterize the goal of the alchemist's quest than his fellow countryman, the famous doctor of medicine Jean-Baptiste Van Helmont. He it was who, sitting beside his forge, experienced a "transmutation of the intelligence... so profound as to be able momentarily to become, so to speak, each of the things the mind desired to know". At such a time, he explained, "the soul... attains a state of simplicity in which the senses, the imagination, the memory, reason and will merge with the intelligence... Then, but only then, the soul is filled with a certain light...". This, no doubt, was the secret of the philosopher's stone.

Guide to Further Reading

In the present essay, the author returns to an argument first put forward in J. Van Lennep, *L'alchimie et Pierre Bruegel l'Ancien*, in *Bulletin des Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique*, 1965. This was developed further in his general work on art and alchemy: J. Van Lennep, *Alchimie—Contribution à l'histoire de l'art alchimique*, 2nd enlarged edition, Brussels, Editions du Crédit Communal de Belgique, 1985 (distributed by Editions Dervy, Paris), 504 pages containing 1015 illustrations, numerous indexes, notes and a bibliography.) The best dictionary of alchemical symbols is still that by A.J. Pernety, *Dictionnaire mytho-hermétique*, Paris, 1758 (republished in facsimile edition, Milan, Archè, 1980). A brilliant attempt at explaining the underlying nature of alchemical symbolism was made by C.G. Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy* in *The Collected Works* London, 1953, Vol. XII.

There is a wealth of literature dealing with all aspects of alchemy. For a critical bibliographical approach, the reader is advised to consult: R. Halleux, *Les textes alchimiques*, Turnhout, 1979. The most scholarly encyclopedia in several volumes remains that by L. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, New York, 1923-1956 (republished 1960).

On the relationship between Hieronymus Bosch and alchemy, see especially; L.S. Dixon, *Bosch's Garden of Delights Triptych: Remnants of a "Fossil" Science* in *The Art Bulletin*, March 1981; and *Water, Wine and Blood—Science and Liturgy and the Marriage at Cana by Hieronymus Bosch in Oud Holland*, 1982, No. 2.

The Printed Landscapes of Pieter Bruegel

Lisa Vergara

Introduction

The governing themes of Pieter Bruegel the Elder can be summed up in two terms: *human nature*—played out through allegories, scenes of peasant life, the encyclopedic compendia of children's games and proverbs—and *nature*, conceived as landscape. The poles of his richly diverse production are maplike vistas of land and sea, at one end, and on the other, sometimes harshly humorous maps of human behaviour. Opposite the liberating expansion of mountain valleys in the landscapes, stands the crush of humanity in the satires. Against the serene majesty of nature's forms, presses Bruegel's version of the world-turned-upside-down. There is a vast middle ground, to be sure, but human beings and nature become completely reciprocal only in those unsurpassed masterpieces of Northern Renaissance art, Bruegel's painting of the Months (1565; Vienna, New York, Prague). The most universalizing of all his conceptions, the Months were prepared for by the large landscape prints designed some ten years earlier. And in their own right, these prints rank among the most celebrated and influential of all the etchings and engravings made after the artist's work.

The landscape prints issued in Bruegel's lifetime were all published by Hieronymus Cock. The first was a dense, evocative woodland scene, *The Temptation of Christ* (c.1554; No.96), which along with the related drawings inaugurated a new type of landscape in the Netherlands, the forest interior. Next, in the second half of the 1550s, came the "Twelve Large Landscapes", works of unprecedented size in this genre (Nos.1–12); *Large Alpine Landscape* (No.13)—a single print even grander in scale; and compositionally similar to these, *Rabbit Hunters* (No.62), an etching unique in having been executed by Bruegel himself (c.1560). The largest of all is a huge seascape, *Naval Battle in the Straits of Messina* (436 × 720 mm.; 1561; No.40). Two other subjects, not landscapes strictly speaking, were of signal importance to painters of the following century: *Skating before St. George's Gate in Antwerp* (No.51; c.1558–59) paved the way for many a Dutch winter scene, and the great series of *Ships* (Nos.41–50; c.1562–65)—even more than the *Naval Battle*—lies behind the magnificent seascapes and harbor views that typify the next sustained flowering of naturalistic Northern art.

The twelve "Large Landscapes" (Nos.1–12) provide the most convenient entry into a discussion of Bruegel's prints in this genre. All scholars place these works between 1555 and 1560, and most would restrict the dates further to 1555–56. The nearly uniform dimensions of the sheets, an impressive 323 × 427 mm., and the vogue at the time for sets of prints on a single subject, indicate that Cock intended them to be collected as a group.

Konrad Oberhuber's (1967–68) attribution of the prints to the brothers Lucas and Johannes Duetecum is generally accepted. Their innovative technique consisted largely of etching, deeply bit, followed by some strengthening marks with the burin. Timothy Riggs (1977) has pointed out that, unlike the regular hatching systems of engraving, so well suited to conveying a sculptural roundness of form, this method—with etched lines less than perfectly straight and the supplementary marks of the burin varying in width—is more appropriate to describing the natural irregularity of the earth's surface. In fact, three extant preparatory drawings by Bruegel for the prints reveal how closely the brothers Duetecum followed the artist's directions, even though they could not reproduce all the fine points of the models. But the best examples show a happy conjunction of draftsman's vision and printmakers' technique. Thus, for a connoisseur, prints such as these, approximating Bruegel's salient graphic effects, were a far more available alternative to prestigious presentation drawings—that is, finished drawings conceived as autonomous works of art. It was in an attempt to capture his airy, impressionistic drawing style of c.1560 that Bruegel himself

actually etched the plate for *Rabbit Hunters* (No.62).

Still, a few of the "Large Landscapes" contain less solid foreground figures clearly not by Bruegel (Nos.8, 10, possibly 5) and some may have been etched from drawings not specifically designed for the purpose. As a result, the quality varies, and one gets the sense that at some point Cock's eagerness to extend the set outstripped that of Bruegel to supply him. The designation of Bruegel as inventor of these etchings, however, is always warranted.

Whatever the degree to which the artist participated in each case, all the prints offer prospects calculated to delight and surprise lovers of landscape. Yet only two of the brief, purely denotative Latin titles appearing on the etchings actually refer to scenery. In one of these cases the title cites a specific place. *Prospectus Tyburtinus* (No.1) depicts the falls of the Tibur River (nowadays: Aniene) at Tivoli, to the east of Rome. In the other, the title is redolent of Virgilian poetry: *Pagus nemorosus*, "wooded village" (No.11). One (No.4) carries no title, and for the rest, the inscriptions are prompted by the foreground elements—for example, *S. Hieronymus in deserto* (*St. Jerome in the Desert*; No.2) or *Plaustrum belgicum* (*Belgian Wagon*; No.6).

The hodge-podge of titles reminds us that by the mid-sixteenth century an explicit theory of landscape as a genre was still to be formulated. Yet when Bruegel entered the guild in 1551, few subjects enjoyed greater popularity. Artists of the previous generation maintained the appetite for deep vistas and high mountains stimulated by the first Flemish landscape specialist, Joachim Patinir (died 1524). The works of Patinir and his followers have come to be known as "world landscapes"—panoramas of great expanse, with an elevated horizon line and multiple points of view, both features allowing the artist to assemble within a single field a wide array of naturalistic motifs. The type, however formulaic it became, succeeded in conveying a sense of the earth's boundless variety and extent.

Until Bruegel began his association with Hieronymus Cock, however, Netherlandish artists had rarely exploited the taste for landscape by designing prints. (Some German and Venetian etchings and woodcuts—such as those by Altdorfer, Lautensack, and the Campagnolas—had undoubtedly made their way north, but we can only assume the extent of the dissemination.) Bruegel's immediate predecessors in the field, Cornelis Massys (1505/1508—c.1557; Fig.1) and Matthijs Cock (c.1509—before 1548), produced outstanding presentation drawings of landscape, but never arranged for them to be etched or engraved. Only posthumously did Matthijs's brother Hieronymus issue a set of his landscape designs (1558), by which time Bruegel's had already appeared; one can imagine that the success of the one project gave rise to the other.

Genesis and Style

Whether the idea for the "Large Landscapes" originated with draftsman or publisher cannot be determined, but one can plot the genesis of Bruegel's designs. This means going back to his earliest surviving works—all drawings, and consisting of little else but landscape, a subject that was to remain exclusive for nearly half a decade.

Almost all Bruegel's landscape drawings are based, to a greater or lesser degree, on observations made during his journey over the Alps, from Autumn, 1551 to Spring, 1552, and a year or so afterward in southern Italy. Innovative not so much in subject, the early works are nevertheless radical in what they imply of a quiet, optical approach to nature. From a fixed viewpoint, the observing eye had first slowly recorded in soft chalk the irregular shapes, imposing masses, and bare, riven walls of faraway summits. Elaboration with meticulous penwork, whether in the midst of the mountains or in the itinerant artist's lodgings, nearly always followed. The style, characterized by a strangely miniaturistic yet exceedingly sensitive system of dots, hatching, and loops, was used to bring the original sketch—or merely the vivid memories of a scene—more clearly into view. These studies next were adapted for finished compositions, in which all the previous work of hand and eye was brought aesthetically to life as landscape (Fig.2).

The finished compositions are novel in their creation of a completely unified space, with no break between background, middle and foreground. Bruegel causes our eyes to move throughout the landscape gradually and in awe, comprehending both the majestic dimensions and intricate complexity of nature's forms. In the presence of works such as these, we can recognize a rare moment in the history of landscape, when a draftsman was able to see more than he had been taught to look for, and to feel more than he had been prepared to feel.

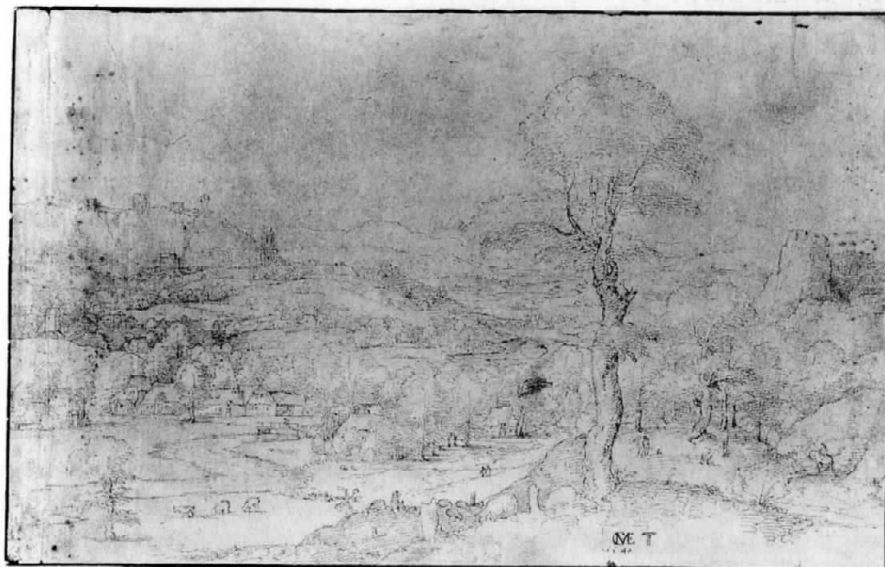


Fig. 1.
Cornelis Massys, *Hilly Landscape*,
1546 (Photo: A.C.L.-Brussels)

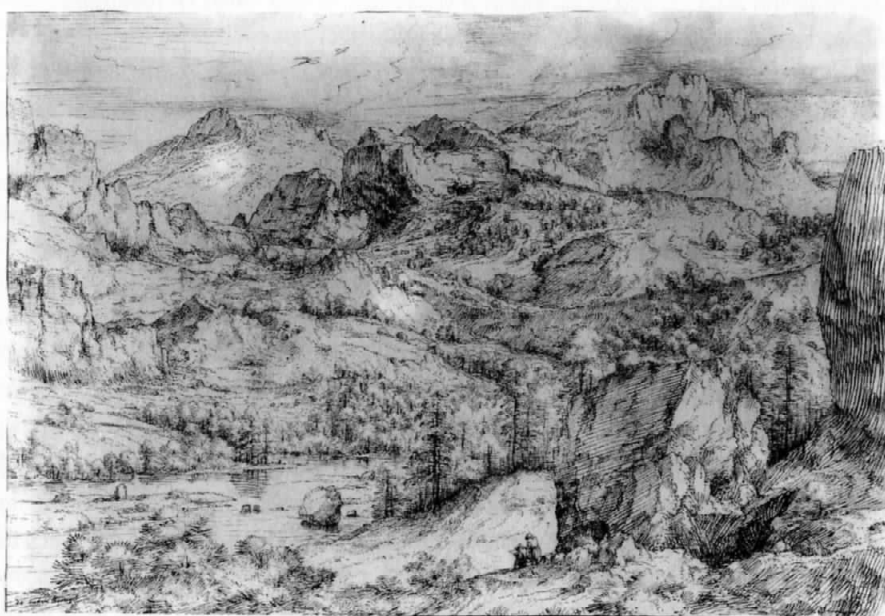


Fig. 2.
*Landscape with an Artist
Sketching*, Courtauld Institute
Galleries, London (Prince's Gate
Collection)

If Bruegel was able to break the idols of pattern informing Northern landscape, it was through the peculiarity of his artistic practice. In his famous epitaph for his friend, the geographer Ortelius summed it up, conventionally but aptly, speaking of Bruegel's images "hardly as works of art, but as works of Nature," and asserting that through his powers of imitation Bruegel had threatened Nature's supremacy. The Flemish painter and art theorist Carel van Mander (1604) offered a more crudely original formulation: "On his journeys Brueghel did many views from nature, so that it was said of him, when he traveled through the Alps, that he had swallowed all the mountains and rocks and spat them out again, after his return, on to his canvases and panels, so closely was he able to follow nature here and in her other works."

Once back in Antwerp, Bruegel drew landscape compositions for Cock that differ greatly from the pathbreaking early designs. The conditions of the Antwerp art market and the requirements of printmaking, no less than Bruegel's own evolving concept of the genre, contributed to the distinct look of the "Twelve Large Landscapes".

Prospectus Tyburtinus (No.1) provides us with clues to Bruegel's own earlier approach. The scene contains a

motif found quite often in Bruegel's drawings, a person busy sketching (compare Fig.2 and No.81). The depicted draftsman, a little to the right of center foreground, sits hunched as if in deep concentration, focussing upon some detail of the scene spreading out all around. (As Justus Müller Hofstede has pointed out, here for the first time an artist is represented drawing not the monuments erected by man, but nature's own more ancient wonders.) When in Rome, Bruegel too probably sketched the falls, cliffs, and buildings one-by-one, and only later, for the purpose of the print, artfully orchestrated them into a dramatic prospect of crashing and eddying waters, the flanking rocks bulging and writhing so energetically that we almost hear the torrent's roar. Thus Bruegel communicated what only an artist could, a view both comprehensive and expressive. The tiny figures looking down from the bridge at left seem to represent the more limited scope available to the mere tourist.

The majority of the *Large Landscapes* depict deep mountain valleys and towering peaks. Yet not one of the inscriptions on Bruegel's prints alludes to the Alps, his prime extra-artistic inspiration. Indeed, "alpine"—grandly evocative as that term may be—is too restrictive for most of the print designs. After Bruegel's first powerful confrontation with mountains, a brief period in the sum of his career, he had continued to develop his art of landscape. No longer did he relinquish so much to the contours and particularities of the scene laid before him. At the same time, his eyes opened to the graphically powerful landscape designs of Domenico Campagnola (Fig.3) and possibly Titian, and he seems to have refreshed his memory of Massys' most modern looking country views as well (Fig.1). The trend was toward ever greater artistic control, the substitution of a "mental approach" for an optical one, the increasing dominance of organization over observation. Van Mander had the prints in mind when he gave tips to young painters on how to construct a landscape—indeed, when he painted them himself. In the treatise entitled *Foundation of the Painters Art (Den grondt der...schilderkunst, 1604, chapter VIII)* van Mander revealed his understanding of the teachable scheme that Bruegel had perfected:

"First of all, it is proper to make the foreground always solid in order to cause other grounds to recede quickly, and also plan to depict a large object in front, as was done by Bruegel and others of great fame who bear the palm in landscape painting..." (19)

"One should make the grounds meander along rather than heap pile behind pile" (20)

"I might proudly praise the...excellent design of the...prints of the clever Bruegel. As if we were [with him] on the cliffs and rocks of the Alps, he teaches us to depict, without too much trouble, how one looks down into dizzying abysses, at steep crags, cloud-kissing pine trees, vast distances, and rushing streams." (28)

This scheme is strikingly apparent in the views of mountain valleys. The print entitled *Sollicitudo Rustica* (*Country Concerns*; No.7), raises issues important for all of the prints, and so will occupy us at length. The mountains, deriving from drawings started *ad vivum* in the Alps (Münz 6 and 18), are adapted to a new setting. Bruegel's beautifully drawn model for the etchers (Fig.4) results, then, from the rigors of selection and synthesis, while managing to breathe free from the studio's confines.

Sollicitudo rustica is typical in the tightness of its linear structure, the clarity of individual forms, the strong separation of planes through light and dark, spatially aggressive trees along the vertical dimension, and criss-crossing, zig-zagging diagonals forcefully guiding the eye into depth. For all that is innovative in a design such as this, its marshalling of elements into a strongly conceptual scheme reconnects it with established landscape tradition.

As a corollary to the increased rationalization of landscape, the presence of human beings and their works becomes ever more dominant. Christopher White has noted of the drawing for this print (Fig.4): "A number of human figures dotted around this landscape shows this is no deserted land. The viewpoint may be high, but the identification of the artist with his subject is close." In the print, the details multiply, and even in the distance, people, buildings and cattle are not only exaggerated in size, but possess an unreal clarity, thus ensuring visibility wherever the eye roams.

And yet, culture still does not edge out nature. Instead, it brings nature into line with the expectations of sixteenth-century viewers, humanizing the scene without diminishing its grandeur and breadth. Bruegel's artistic wisdom in this regard is attested not only by the popularity of the prints in his day, but by their enduring power to



Fig. 3.
Domenico Campagnola, *Landscape with Wandering Family*,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris
Brisbane Dick Fund. and Rogers Fund.,
by exchange, 1967. (67.770)



Fig. 4.
Study for *Sollicitudo Rustica*,
British Museum, London

awaken fresh interest and sensations, and to evoke a richer range of associations than the earlier drawings of wilder, more overbearing nature (Fig. 2).

Indeed, in *Sollicitudo rustica* what prevails is an exhilarating sense of the valley's open space—not the impenetrable mass of the mountains. By cropping the elements at lower left and by opening up the horizon on the right, Bruegel suggests the infinite. But the opposite corners of the field are definitely closed, by grand mountain walls rising in the distance, and by an elevated wedge of land in the foreground—a traditional foothold anchoring the scene. The foreground wedge is of utmost importance to Bruegel's conception of landscape; how strongly it affects our perceptions can be gauged by comparing *Sollicitudo rustica* with two vertiginous prints lacking its firm reassurance (Nos. 4 and 13).

The foreground wedge also introduces the scene. It provides a stage for sizeable figures, intermediaries between the viewer of the print and the fictional landscape that fans out below. In *Sollicitudo rustica* the two peasants at right shaded by framing trees—moreover, the disposition of the trees themselves—epitomise the print's satisfying duality of

open and closed. The seated peasant sharpening his scythe is oriented toward us, recapitulating the angle of the wedge that supports him, and the tree that seems to spring from him stays close to the frame. The standing peasant, on the other hand, who leans on his scythe, orients himself to the distance, just as the corresponding tree arches out to the left.

Along with their contributions to our perception of the space, the peasants' thematic import should be considered, especially since they seem to have inspired the title of the print.

Subjects and Themes

Justus Müller Hofstede was the first to attend to a motif found frequently in Bruegel's landscapes: a figure surveying a broad panorama. In *Sollicitudo rustica* it is the peasant who leans on his scythe. Müller Hofstede is persuasive in connecting this device—in terms of general affinity—with a citation from Book II of Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods*. The quote, appearing as one of five mottos on Ortelius's great atlas, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (second edition; 1579), is a fragment:

"the horse for riding, the ox for plowing, the dog for hunting and keeping guard; man himself, however, came into existence for the purpose of contemplating [and imitating the world; he is by no means perfect, but he is a small fragment of that which is perfect]." (II, xiii, 37)

Ortelius omits the end of Cicero's sentence, given here in brackets. Yet it must be included if the passage is to have the same tenor as Bruegel's landscapes, in which the figures "imitate the world" through their work and leisure. One suspects, in fact, that the artist deliberately perverted the usual *solitudo rustica* of poets and philosophers to fit his highly personal panorama of life in this world.

Nevertheless, the conviction stated—at times stirring—by Cicero, that the world is rationally, artistically, and providentially ordered by divine Nature, is worth considering in relation to Bruegel's landscapes. It was a sentiment shared by many humanists of the day. Conrad Gessner, the notable Swiss physician and student of natural history, who was an enthusiastic devotee of the Alps, exclaimed in a letter published in 1543: "What greater delight for the soul justly touched than to admire the spectacle offered by the enormous mass of these mountains. Without being able to explain it, I sense my spirit struck by their astonishing heights, and ravished in the contemplation of the sovereign architect." Gesner's expression of delight, admiration, and rapture seems in perfect accord with the ultimate thrust of Bruegel's world landscapes.

Müller Hofstede departs from what the prints give us to see, however, by joining them too closely to Stoicism. Bruegel's prints do not bid us to gaze at the firmament, keeping all eternity before our eyes so as to ridicule "the boundaries of mortals," to dismiss the earth as a "pinpoint divided by sword and fire," in which human occurrences are of no moment. Bruegel's art always maintains a more earthly aim.

The terrain of *Sollicitudo Rustica* is full of arresting details, hardly to be overlooked in contemplating the whole: nestled cottages and armed citadels, barren outcroppings and burgeoning meadows, houses of worship and crowded ports, terraced slopes and thick woods, and everywhere, signs of humanity, from errant peddler to settled homesteader.

More so than earlier Flemish world landscapes with their simultaneous viewpoints, Bruegel's invite the eye to repeated wanderings; a ship, a rider, a road or riverway serves to initiate a new route every time. The artist surely expected his armchair wanderer to pause at times (like two gazing figures in this print), perhaps to consider moral as well as physical geography. Bruegel stimulates the faculty of reflection in several prints by an ingeniously simple, pointed pairing of cross and gallows (here on two hillocks near the center of the terrain). Although submerged in the reality of everyday life, these markers surely struck at the heart of the viewer's meditations. But the compositions never demand that we linger there, and in the totality of the spectacle these emblems of Christian salvation and worldly shame, though hardly insignificant, have little more weight than the masts of the ships. This device does in fact suggest something of lofty, Stoic indifference; it is typical of Bruegel, however, to let us intellectually "frame" such

motifs as we will, even when he monumentalizes them in his last surviving landscape (*Magpie on the Gallows*, 1568, Darmstadt).

A print such as *Sollicitudo rustica* must have been rich in associative values for the audience of its time. For that growing segment of the public possessing the rudiments, at least, of a humanistic education, Bruegel's landscapes added to the positive goal of expanding their view of the world, to take the most general sense of such images. A letter to Ortelius on the first publication *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1570) praises the way in which the atlas compresses "the immense structure of land and sea into a narrow space," thus making "the earth portable, which a great many people assert to be unmovable"—yet another sentiment that could be applied to Bruegel's "Large Landscapes." It can hardly be coincidence that the stretch of the valley depicted in this print has so much in common with the maps published earlier by Cock. At least one print collector of the day, we know, assembled a topographical volume that grouped city ruins, maps, and landscapes.

Variety rather than consistency seems to have been Bruegel's goal in creating "The Large Landscapes," and *Sollicitudo Rustica* gives us only a piece of the whole. Among the most striking of the prints are two dramatic mountain scenes, each sanctified by the figure in the foreground: *Magdalena Poenitens* (*Penitent Magdalene*; No.3) and *S. Hieronymus in deserto* (*St. Jerome in the Desert*; No.2). In both, the complex graphic style creates a vast range of tonal and textural effects—light playing over innumerable facets of towering rock, upon the placid surfaces of water, and on many species of foliage, from the birch's light featheriness to the fir's heavy shag. And already in St. Jerome's "desert" there appear those moiré clouds and chainmail shadows that would enliven engravings for nearly a century to come.

Landscape had long played a signifying role in depictions of penitent saints in retreat from the enticement of the city, and here both Netherlandish and Venetian traditions merge; one thinks equally of Patinir's paintings and Titian's woodcuts. Like them, Bruegel's two prints on this theme emphasize the isolation of the holy figures and their envelopment in nature.

Jerome, esteemed by sixteenth-century humanists for his scholarly pursuits as well as his saintliness, has left a written account of his wild retreat: "Filled with stiff anger against myself, I would make my way alone into the desert: and when I came upon some hollow valley or rough mountain or precipitous cliff, there would I set up my oratory, and make that spot a place of torture for my unhappy flesh" (Letter 22).

In the thirteenth-century *Golden Legend* we read of Jerome: "He was called a grove after the grove wherein he made his abode for some time...". Accordingly, Bruegel makes much of the trees in this print. Jerome's attributes of lion, crucifix, and book, indeed the saint himself, practically merge with his arboreal retreat. A scraggly offshoot of an adjacent tree even echoes the form of his crucifix. And although Bruegel does not depict the saint castigating his flesh, Jerome's well known self-inflictions are suggested by sharp thornlike branches projecting from two trunks. Two other trees, framing the saint fore and aft—a dead, crownless tree behind him, a tall flourishing one in front—signal those required meditations upon death and immortality. Finally, a naturally brilliant complement to Jerome's little halo is formed by the cloudless portion of sky overhead—a sympathetic note from nature such as to be sounded in many a later painting by Bruegel.

Whether Bruegel knew Jerome's letters or not (and it is likely that he did—Erasmus' edition of the complete works began appearing in 1516), we are justified in citing the saint's words in connection with the print:

"let us...make for the haven of a rural retreat. Let us live there on coarse bread and on the greenstuff that we water with our own hands, and on milk, country delicacies, cheap and harmless. If thus we spend our days, sleep will not call us away from prayer, nor overfeeding from study. In summer the shade of a tree will give us privacy. In autumn...the leaves beneath our feet point out a place for rest. In spring the fields are gay with flowers, and the birds' plaintive notes will make our psalms sound all the sweeter. When the cold weather comes with winter's snows, I shall not need to buy wood...Let Rome keep her bustle for herself, the fury of the arena, the madness of the criculus, the profligacy of the theatre..." (Letter 43)

The composition of the landscape with Saint Jerome (*S. Hieronymus in deserto*) is boldly bisected along the

diagonal, high and castellated on the right, low on the left, where a populous valley and an estuary reach out to the sea. Although St. Jerome keeps his eyes on his book, and shuts us out with the spiky fallen tree, a figure opposite gives a different cue. Standing on a road at the brink of a sweeping vista, a traveler beckons us onward to sample the sights, including such minute particulars as a mountain goat balancing on a precipice, three ducks afloat, men driving beasts, and far off on the horizon, sailboats by the dozen.

The Magdalene print, which would make an appropriate pendant to *St. Jerome*, can be analyzed in much the same way as that work. Here "the excellent armor of penance" that Mary Magdalene was said to have donned is once again represented by thorned logs. Bruegel fittingly contrasts the saint's huddled presence in the darkness of her "mountain cave" below with her radiant full-length ascension above (one of her seven daily levitations, aided by angels, as reported in the *Golden Legend*). In this print we see once again the juxtaposition of gallows and cross, this time centered on the mountain crests, with a road leading right between them. The formulation of opposing alternatives had long been part of the language of landscape, and would persist for centuries to come.

Magdalena Poenitens raises another issue: it is the only one of the "Large Landscapes" to contain a female figure by Bruegel. One might conclude from this singular fact that for the artist, women's place was restricted to the interior space of the home. But whatever the case, this trait was to change: the greater scope and humanization of the Months results in part from the inclusion of women in a steady, cyclical world.

A thoroughly secular subject, *Pagus nemorosus* (*Wooded Village*; No.11), adds to the variety of "The Large Landscapes". This print constitutes the single close-hand view in the series. Its triangulation of soldier, peasant, and merchants emphasizes the microcosmic nature of the imagery; for once, "world landscape" is replaced by a slice of Flemish life. This innovation reveals the novel flexibility of Bruegel's thinking about space: the right foreground—a tapestry of vegetation rising to the very top of the field; the sinking middleground more lightly etched; and then, no background of which to speak, but an instantaneous telescoping of distance, marked by a faint tower beyond, a mere blip on the line of the horizon.

Yet Bruegel seems more interested in the grander view. *Plaustrum belgicum* (No.6) is the perfect example of a "mixed landscape", combining local Netherlandish features—the wagon of the title, a cross set up as a wayside shrine, a Flemish village—with those of the world landscape. Here, the horizon conveys the very shape of the "orb of the world", its swelling contour answered beautifully by a dipping curve, traversed by the wagon below. Never before had a landscape achieved such explicit fullness of form. More than any other print in the series, *The Belgian Wagon* points forward to the paintings of the Months.

Finally, two untitled prints, today called *Alpine Landscape with a Deep Valley* (No.4) and *Large Alpine Landscape* (No.13), can be properly discussed with respect to those mountains. Van Mander, we recall, mentions the Alps twice in connection with Bruegel's work.

Despite the dominance of "mountain gloom" over "mountain glory" in the thinking of the time, the Alps had their promoters, as it were, climbers who dared scale its peaks for the first time, and naturalists who strove to describe them. Gesner, who has already been quoted, published an account of his ascent of Mons Fractus (Riven Mountain) in 1555, in which he listed the ways that mountains delight each of the senses. The section on "sight" makes a fitting analogy to the way a contemporary observer might view Bruegel's "Alpine" prints of the same date:

"Sight is charmed by the wondrous and unwonted appearance of mountains, ridges, rocks, forests, valleys, streams, springs, and meadows...strange and unusual are the aspects of crags, rocks, winding ways and other things, worthy of admiration for their form but also for their size and height. If you wish to extend your field of vision, cast your glance round about and gaze off afar and wide at everything. There is no lack of lookouts and crags on which you may seem to yourself to be already living with your head in the clouds. If on the other hand you should prefer to contract your vision, you will gaze on meadows and verdant forests, or even enter them; or to narrow it still more, you will examine dim valleys, shadowy rocks, and darksome caverns."

Comparing these two "alpine" prints with the mountainous landscapes of Patinir and his successors, the latter appear alternatively too fanciful or too domesticated to threaten vicariously and to thrill as Bruegel's can. In all this we

should recall that the discovery of the New World increased Europeans' awareness of the geographical peculiarities of their own lands—Ortelius's pioneering atlas being one indication.

For all their diversity, Bruegel's prints do not comprise all the landscape themes of the day. A theater of pleasure, leisure and love he particularly eschewed; his territory is no garden of the world. Nor do tempests make an appearance, for all the opportunity they offered artists for bravura display. If Bruegel created world landscapes, the world is that of an artist possessing a most individual turn of mind. In his landscapes there is toil, and the rest that prepares for yet more toil—thus do human beings imitate the working of nature itself, and in the process serve to articulate its forms. Tilling a field, erecting fortifications, moving goods over water and rock, even the tireless praying of saints continue the construction of the world. Bruegel's landscapes were to stimulate a host of practitioners in the field, but that peculiar affinity between human industry and the activity of Nature was seldom to recur.

Bibliographical Note

On the production and publication of Bruegel's landscape prints, see Oberhuber in Vienna 1967-68; Riggs 1971 and 1979; and White 1979. For an original and lucid account of Bruegel's early development as a landscape draftsman that analyzes the style of the "Twelve Large Landscapes", see Oberhuber 1981. Oberhuber discusses the preparatory drawing for No.9. Another model for a landscape print was published by White (1963), who also considers a drawing that appears to be a more advanced model for the print, but in too poor a state to attribute. For the only other extant model (M.13), see under No.4 below. The most recent treatment of Bruegel's landscape drawings is in Washington 1986, where Cornelis Massys and Matthijs Cock are also discussed. For the *Landscape with the Temptation of Christ* (No.96) and related drawings, see Arndt, 1972.

Regarding the imagery of the printed landscapes, see Klein; Fehl, 1970 (with references to Erasmus's *Adagia*); Gibson 1977, chapters 1 and 2, and Müller Hofstede 1979. H. Miedema, in his edition of Van Mander's 1604 *Den Grondt der edel-vrij schilder-const* (Utrecht 1973), provides a wealth of material about the artistic conception of landscape. For the Venetian landscape tradition, which contributed to Bruegel's art, see Rosand 1988. Among the primary sources useful for interpreting the prints are the epitaph for Bruegel by Abraham Ortelius (discussed, reproduced, and translated by Freedberg in his essay "Allusion and Topicality in the Work of Pieter Bruegel" above), as well as van Mander's *Life of Bruegel* (also translated by Freedberg, in his discussion of the Life of Pieter Bruegel above). Conrad Gesner's writings on the Alps are available in *On the Admiration of Mountains....*, translated by H.B.D. Soule and edited by J.J. Monroe Thorington, San Francisco, 1937. A useful selection of the letters of St. Jerome is available in the English translation by F.A. Wright in the Loeb Classical Library, London-Cambridge (Mass.), 1933.

The Impact of the Prints of Pieter Bruegel the Elder

Jan Van der Stock

Whoever presumes to sketch Pieter Bruegel with words will instead embarrassedly stammer out his own visual experience of the surviving works of the artist.^(*)

The Impact of the Prints of Pieter Bruegel the Elder

It is not easy to sketch a nuanced picture of the impact of Bruegel's œuvre on his contemporaries and on later generations. As is the case with most great artists, the appreciation of his work and the perception of his personality have undergone a striking, but certainly not a regular or linear, evolution. Moreover, the formation of a view of Bruegel's œuvre in the art-historical literature may not simply be reduced to the appreciation of his work by collectors and his impact on other artists¹.

In general, it is accepted that Bruegel's paintings were valued very highly in his own time and in the second half of the sixteenth century. In the seventeenth century, an ever-growing incomprehension is apparent, an incomprehension that changed to complete repudiation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries². Only during the last decades of the nineteenth century was there a quite rapid rehabilitation, thanks to a number of critical studies³. The incomprehension and repudiation of Bruegel's painted œuvre, particularly in the academic circles of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, was partially due to the difficulty of gaining access to his work⁴. His paintings were in demand from the outset, and a few ardent collectors spared neither cost nor effort to gain possession of them⁵. In order to satisfy this enduring demand, the market was flooded with countless copies and pastiches of sometimes very dubious quality. In particular, the ateliers of his sons Pieter the Younger and Jan and of his grandson Pieter (son of Pieter the Younger) profited from the demand, and other painters also took advantage of the opportunity⁶. Already in the seventeenth century, the iconographic stylistic affinity on the one hand and the qualitative artistic distinction on the other between the œuvre of the various members of the Bruegel dynasty and their epigones led to discussions about their respective value. In one case a dispute on the originality of a particular painting was even decided by a court of law⁷.

In addition, the association of his work after his first biographer Carel Van Mander in 1604, primarily with farcical and bizarre situations while ignoring the other aspects contributed to the incomprehension expressed in the later literature. It is not by chance that this is precisely the dimension of his work that makes Bruegel today one of the most popular Western European artists.

The appreciation of Bruegel prints evolved differently. In contrast to the painted and the drawn œuvre, the original prints were available in abundance. Thus, as is reasonable to expect, a more complete and nuanced image of them developed sooner. Not only do the prints form an essential part of Bruegel's œuvre, in the past they were also for many the most important source of knowledge for his work as a whole. But my concentration on some aspects of the prints—which is necessary in the scope of this article—inevitably means that the picture of Bruegel's impact will be incomplete.

From Vasari (1568) to Van Mander (1604)

The Italian architect, painter, and writer on art, Giorgio Vasari, was the first to mention Bruegel engravings. In the second edition of *Le vite de' piu eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori* (1568) (The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects), he discusses in detail the work of Hieronymus Cock, which he seems to have known quite well⁸. He concludes his exposition of Cock's activities as a publisher and engraver with a list of some prints that Cock published from drawings of Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel, but without mentioning the name of the latter explicitly. Although Vasari was not the first to associate the work of Bruegel with that of Bosch⁹, he was the first to go extensively into his oeuvre¹⁰: "And after Jerome Bosch, he did St. Martin in a boat full of curiously shaped devils¹¹. And an alchemist wasting his substance and coming at length to the hospital with his wife and children: this was drawn by a painter¹² who got him to engrave the seven mortal sins with various demons, a fantastic and laughable thing, the Last Judgment, and an old man with a lantern seeking quiet amid the turmoil of the world and not finding it. He also did a large fish eating a small fish and a Carnival rejoicing at table with others and driving away Lent, while in another Lent expels the Carnival, with many other fancies which it would be tiresome to recount"¹³.

Vasari seems to have been particularly well informed on the workings of the publishing house of Hieronymus Cock, for he unhesitatingly and correctly ascribed the drawing of the print *The Large Fishes Devouring the Small Fishes* (No.16) to Bruegel (albeit implicitly, for Bruegel's name was not mentioned). This indicates that he was indeed well-informed on this point. For if his ascription had been based on the engraving, then he would have given Hieronymus Bosch as the designer¹⁴. In any event, this seems to indicate that he received his information from Hieronymus Cock himself, directly or indirectly. If this weight may indeed be assigned to Vasari's words, then the hypothesis of a Bosch model that was reworked by Bruegel cannot be maintained¹⁵. Nor can one decide on the basis of these data that Bruegel would have provided the drawing for the print *Saint Martin with His Horse on a Ship*, as was often contended¹⁶. One inaccuracy by Vasari, however, is that he indicates Hieronymus Cock as the engraver of these prints, while he was only the publisher¹⁷—an error corrected by J.P. Mariette in 1741¹⁸.

In 1604, Carel Van Mander wrote the first biography of Bruegel¹⁹. His findings are still one of the principal sources for the life of Pieter Bruegel the Elder, partially because he was able to consult people who had known him personally. In addition, it is agreed that Van Mander worked into his book not only historical data but also a considerable amount of topical and metaphorical elements. The prints are mentioned only in passing, for the book deals primarily with painting²⁰. With Van Mander's commentary on Bruegel's paintings and his attention to the "farcical" and "bizarre" elements in it, the foundation was laid for most of the later studies in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries on the painted oeuvre of the artist.

In the theoretical treatise *Den grondt der edel vry schilder-const* (1604) (The Foundation of the Noble Free Art of Painting), Van Mander discussed totally different aspects of Bruegel's oeuvre. Among other things, he placed Bruegel's landscape prints (e.g., Nos.1 – 12) on the same level as the prints of Titian²¹. He commended the landscapes, which he praised for their wide panoramas, as models to be followed. Nevertheless, this great appreciation for Bruegel prints met with little response among later authors who wrote about the art of painting, but the authoritative words of Van Mander were certainly not forgotten in publications on the history of the art of engraving.

From Evelyn (1662) to Heineken (1789)

Nevertheless, one must wait until 1662 to find new information in the literature. The English diarist and art historian John Evelyn gave an incomplete and erroneous interpretative translation of Vasari in his *Sculptura*²². The engravings *The Alchemist* (No.27), *The Set of the Seven Vices* (Nos.18 – 24), *The Last Judgment* (No.25), and *A Carnival* (Nos.55 and 56) he ascribed to Hieronymus Bosch and the execution of the prints to Hieronymus Cock. Without seeing the link with the above, he went on: "For the rest, we shall only call over their names, after we have celebrated the extravagant fancies of both the Brueghels, as those of The Seven Deadly Sins [Nos.18 – 24]. Satirical pieces

against the Nuns and Friars, with diverse Histories, Drolleries, Landscapes, fantastic Grylles and Grotesques of these two rare Rhyparographs..."²³. Finally, he commented that Crispyn and Magdalena de Passe had engraved many excellent things after Bruegel, especially landscapes²⁴. The words of Evelyn indicate not only that he had read Vasari but

also that he had seen many of Bruegel prints. As already stated and as will appear further on, the merging of the various members of the Bruegel family (here Pieter the Elder and Jan, his son) was not so unusual in the seventeenth century²⁵.

Four years later, in 1666, Michel de Marolles compiled a catalogue of his first collection of 123,400 prints²⁶. As many did before him, he associated Bruegel with Bosch; but de Marolles was the first to invert the relationship between them: he stated, incorrectly, of course, that Bosch worked from Bruegel. The latter he called one of the famous Flemish painters whose work was engraved by Pierre Perret (No.88), Hieronymus Cock—whom he mentioned twice—, Hieronymus Bosch, Philips Galle (Nos.59, 85, and 86), Peter Mandere, Hans Bol, Maerten de Vos, Willem and Bosch. This rather detailed exposition was taken over almost literally in 1702 by Florent Le Comte in the third volume of his *Cabinet des singularitez d'Architecture, Peinture et Graveure* (Collection of Extraordinary Objects of Architecture, Painting, and Engraving)²⁸. In the second part of this publication, Le Comte based himself largely on Carel Van Mander for the biography of Bruegel, but he added a very original comparison with the work of the French engraver Jacques Callot. Le Comte described Bruegel as the Callot of his time, and Callot, he said, was in his turn the Bruegel of his time²⁹.

Relevant information on the Bruegel engravings was also given by J.P. Mariette in 1741³⁰. Mariette based himself primarily on Lampsonius, Vasari, Van Mander, and Sandrart³¹, whom he evaluated critically, although not always correctly. He did correctly point out that Hieronymus Cock was the publisher of the prints and not the engraver, an inaccuracy he found in Vasari, as mentioned above. Not only did the so-called "folk" compositions draw his attention, but he valued Bruegel's landscapes in particular. He knew of an engraved landscape from Bruegel, dated 1553 (Nos.81 or 82) and mentioned the engraving by Prenner of the *Tower of Babel* in the imperial collection in Vienna³². From the catalogue of his own collection (compiled by F. Basan in 1775), it seems that he owned 214 prints after Pieter and Jan Brueghel, who were named together, as in Evelyn in 1662 and de Marolles in 1666. Among them were both "folk" subjects and landscapes³³.

A.J. Dezallier d'Argenville in 1745 listed a number of engravers who worked from Bruegel and identified some prints that had not been mentioned until then³⁴. A similar method was used by Jacobus De Jongh, who provided a commentary in 1764 for a reedition of the biography of the painters of the Netherlands by Carel Van Mander³⁵. De Jongh was the first explicitly to ascribe the execution of a number of prints to Bruegel himself. De Jongh argued that the woodcut *The Masquerade of Ourson and Valentin* (No. 60) and the etched landscapes of 1553 (Nos.81 – 82) were made by the artist himself³⁶.

P.F. Basan (1767) considered the landscapes of Pieter Bruegel to be the best Hieronymus Cock published, which was also the opinion of J.P. Mariette, whose collection Basan had catalogued in 1775³⁷.

In the art literature of the eighteenth century, the focus shifted from interest in the often picturesque and topically constructed life story of the painter to his actual oeuvre. These first attempts at "modern" art historiography fit into a broader framework in which history and other sciences were being approached in a more critical way. It was also the time in which vast print collections were formed or further expanded, partially with the intention of providing an overview of the important periods in the history of art, organized according to several West-European regional schools. This objective was explicitly formulated by Carl Heinrich von Heineken in 1771³⁸. He included Pieter Bruegel and Hieronymus Bosch on the list of the most important artists of the Flemish and the Dutch School³⁹. A somewhat similar imaginary museum had already been set up in 1699 by Florent Le Comte, for whom Bruegel was also an important representative of the painters of the Netherlands⁴⁰.

In 1785, Joseph Strutt wrote that Bruegel excelled primarily in the presentation of the landscape and comic themes. This author, too, made the association with the work of Bosch and explicitly discussed the prints made by Bruegel himself. Following Basan (1767), he considered Bruegel's landscapes to be among his best work. With this author, it is shown that there was not only interest in Bruegel on the European continent but also that he was not

unknown in eighteenth-century London⁴¹.

The most influential and best prepared publication on Bruegel prints (before the catalog of Van Bastelaer in 1908) was published precisely 200 years ago in 1789 in Leipzig by Carl Heinrich von Heineken⁴². In 1768, von Heineken had already made a German translation of Vasari (1568) and provided it with the necessary commentary⁴³. Ten years later, he began with the publication of an ambitious catalog of the prints of all possible artists. In other words, it was a study that perfectly met the needs of print collectors and dealers. Von Heineken published the first volume of this alphabetical list of artists in 1778. Volume four appeared in 1790, but his death in 1791 left the remaining 18 planned volumes still in manuscript⁴⁴. First, von Heineken pointed out that Bosch and Bruegel were often confused with each other because they depicted the same subjects. For the biography of both of these artists, he worked with that of Van Mander (1604), but he gave only the facts that could be checked and omitted the anecdotal elements of the story⁴⁵. Then he gave a list of all the known portraits of the artist. The catalogue of Bruegel's work is without precedent in the art-historical literature: von Heineken lists more than 125 works, and, for a number of them, he knew of several states⁴⁶. When possible, he gave the date, the publisher, the engraver, and the copies⁴⁷. The catalogue is divided into three sections. The first comprises religious subjects. In the second are the "inventions", which cover the thematic folkloric iconography and the allegorical presentations, i.e., the themes that would have derived from the imagination of the artist. Finally, the landscapes are listed. As a number of authors before him had already stated implicitly, von Heineken ascribed the series with the sailing ships (Nos. 41 – 50) to a fictitious painter on the basis of the monogram F.H. (Frans Huys): Frans Hieronymus or Pieter Hieronymus Brueghel. According to von Heineken, this was a marine painter who worked ca. 1560⁴⁸. However, it is obvious that von Heineken was wrong here. The drawing of these prints may be immediately assigned to Pieter Bruegel, and they were executed by Frans Huys. A detailed analysis of von Heineken's catalog would take us too far afield, but it is obvious in any case that the list is virtually complete⁴⁹. A number of his ascriptions are dubious, however, and were accepted neither by Van Bastelaer (1908) nor by Lebeer (1969), although it would certainly be worth the effort to subject them again to critical examination. It is possible that a number of them were indeed drawn by Bruegel⁵⁰.

The nineteenth century

In the late eighteenth century, namely after von Heineken's work was published, and the nineteenth century, no additions worth mentioning were made to the catalog of Bruegel prints, on the contrary. The fact is that the work of and from Bruegel was increasingly forgotten. Moreover, the few authors that did go into it in detail worked primarily with previous publications. Here and there, an unknown state was described⁵¹.

A remarkable study by J. Renouvier on European engraving schools appeared in 1854⁵². The 21st chapter of his book is devoted in its entirety to *Les Maîtres Drôles* (The Comic Masters), in which both Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel are dealt with extensively. The author discusses explicitly the Bosch revival in the atelier of Hieronymus Cock. According to Renouvier, Bosch was the inventor of the satirical genre, and Cock printed many of his compositions. Bruegel was, as far as Renouvier was concerned, only a weak imitator of Bosch, although he was successful, and Renouvier mentioned especially Van Ostade and Teniers as followers⁵³. Renouvier's judgment of Bruegel's quality was on the negative side, which was typical for the nineteenth century⁵⁴. Of greater importance is that he was the first to formulate a largely correct explanation of the enigmatic monogram P.A.M.E., which he identified as *Petrus Myricinis* or *Petrus Van der Heyden*⁵⁵.

However, it would take us much too far afield to list all the authors who wrote about Bruegel prints. Moreover, original contributions or insights are rare in the nineteenth century.

The most extensive oeuvre catalog appeared in 1906 from the hand of Alfred von Wurzbach⁵⁶. His summary, however, contained a considerable number of erroneous ascriptions, which were later changed to, among others, Pieter Brueghel the Younger and Jan Brueghel.

After the rehabilitation of the artist and his painted oeuvre at the end of the nineteenth and particularly the beginning of the twentieth century, it is not surprising that his prints, too, would be the subject of a monograph. Indeed, the pioneering work of R. Van Bastelaer became a solid point of departure for all later publications on the

subject⁵⁷. This sudden reappraisal was, of course, not an isolated phenomenon. It fit into a complex whole of rapid changes in which the old academic norms were questioned. It also fit in with the ever-growing general interest in the national historical heritage, including the artistic heritage. That an artist like Bruegel, who sublimely depicted the supposedly authentic national character, apparently averse to any Italianizing academicism, would attract renewed interest is not at all surprising.

* * *

The literature on Bruegel's prints from 1568 to 1908 manifests three striking constants.

First, there is a constant lack of clarity about the precise identification and size of the oeuvre. This was partially due to extensive association of Pieter Bruegel with Hieronymus Bosch, which even led to a merging of the two artists in a number of publications. The confusion over the identity of the various members of the Bruegel dynasty also played a role, and certainly did not clarify matters.

Second, there is the fact that Bruegel did not himself engrave his prints. The identity and the craftsmanship of the engraver, the etcher, and the publisher are thus additional dimensions of the problem. In addition, the graphic oeuvre of Bruegel can be divided into two major groups. There are the prints that were especially drawn by the artist for this purpose, and there are the very many that were made, often after his death, of paintings and drawings not intended for this purpose. The intention is thus of essential importance, even when the dividing line in some cases is not all that clear⁵⁸. These two groups represent two different categories. The first is the original graphic work of Bruegel, although they were not engraved by him because of an organized division of labor within the publishing firm. The second belongs integrally to the domain of reproduction prints and, strictly speaking, cannot be counted as the graphic oeuvre of Bruegel. Two more reasons why his work was slowly forgotten in the nineteenth century were that Bruegel did not engrave himself and thus was not a *peintre-graveur* and that it was not always the best engravers who executed his drawings⁵⁹.

Finally, it must be kept in mind that many earlier authors worked with authoritative sources, such as Vasari (1568) and Van Mander (1604), without critically evaluating them or even citing them by name. The juxtaposition of data from different sources sometimes led to internal contradictions in the arguments, which aggravated the confusion still more. However, it would be historically incorrect and scientifically irrelevant to impose contemporary norms on previous writings in art history. Each period has its own criteria and places its own emphases in the judgment of artistic activity.

With all due reservations, this review of the literature shows in any case that the Bruegel prints could count from the outset on an assured place in the historiography of art. This historical interest, however, should not be overrated. Bruegel never received the same attention as did, for example, Albrecht Dürer, who enjoyed an almost divine status already in the sixteenth century⁶⁰. European academic thought indeed, found nothing in Bruegel of the ideal *homo universalis*, the universal man. He left no writings on the theory of art behind, as Dürer did, and depicted a thematic folkloric iconography that, for the superficial viewer, was far from the Renaissance ideal. The confusion surrounding his person and the identity of his work reinforced this prejudice. Nevertheless, the traditional view of the popularity of Bruegel must be qualified somewhat. For his prints did receive considerable attention in several publications, and the landscape prints in particular were valued and praised as models.

Bruegel's true apotheosis, however, is a rather recent phenomenon, which meant for some impetus for the construction of an explanatory model for his work appropriate to this status. While Bruegel, albeit a genius, was a child of his time, so were some of the visionary exegetes who rallied around his work, often unhindered by any expertise in the subject.

Bruegel Prints as Collector's Objects and Source of Inspiration

The popularity of Bruegel prints is a problem with many facets. Data can be derived not only from the commentary of "connoisseurs" but also from the many reprints, copies, and pastiches of and from the prints. Painted copies, on

canvas or panel, can point to interest in certain iconographic themes. But descriptions of the prints in inventories and other sources from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries clearly show that the name of Bruegel did indeed represent a certain artistic and/or financial value.

Publishers and Dealers

The oldest published archival trace of Bruegel prints with indication of the name of the artist is the mention of the twelve *Great Landscapes* (No.1 – 12) in a list of engravings that Christopher Plantin, the most important book printer and publisher of the Netherlands, received on 27 August 1561 from Hieronymus Cock⁶¹. Probably, Plantin was acting here as an intermediary for the resale of the engravings. The explanation for the explicit mention of the name of Bruegel is that Hieronymus Cock also offered landscapes of other artists for sale, which could have led to confusion⁶². Nevertheless, on the basis of iconographic indications, many other Bruegel prints can be identified with certainty in the Plantin commercial records. It is certainly striking that the prints were always inventoried in terms of the iconographic presentation. Neither the name of the designer nor the name of the engraver were mentioned. In other words, the name of the artist was not, at least for the commercial administration in the mid-sixteenth century, of essential importance. No “Bruegels” were sold, only prints with a specific iconography. This business-like attitude—and many other examples can be cited in the Antwerp archives of this period—is a possible indication of the “ordinary” status of certain artists in their own time. It may also serve to enable one to see their current status in a relativizing historical perspective.

Already in 1558 Plantin had sold prints from Cock to the Paris dealer Martin le Jeune, including eight copies of *The Ass at School* (No.17) and six copies of *The Big Fish Eating the Little Fish* (No.16)⁶³. It is explicitly stated that these prints were colored, which is still a totally unknown aspect of the Bruegel prints⁶⁴. In fact, they were four to five times more expensive than the uncolored specimens⁶⁵. Moreover, the prices also depended on the quality of the printing⁶⁶. In the same consignment, a number of prints were qualified as “drollery”, which indicated the presence of bizarre or comical figures in the presentation. Thus, for example, forty copies of “Patience, drollery” (No.15), twelve copies with “The Temptation of Saint Anthony, drollery” (No.14), twelve engravings of “The Large Fishes Devouring the Small Fishes, drollery” (No.16), which, as noted, were also available in a colored version, and four complete sets of “The Seven Vices, drollery” (Nos.18 – 24) were sold. The last were engraved only in that year, 1558, while the other prints had also only recently come on the market. It is in this archival document—dating from the time of the production itself—that the work of Bruegel was first associated with the notion of “drollery”. A half century later, the artist was called “Pier den Drol” by Carel Van Mander, which indicates that the notion of “drollery” was then considered one of the primary characteristics of his work⁶⁷. This supports the hypothesis that a certain humorous dimension in certain compositions formed a substantial part of the iconography from the outset. Moreover, some ten years later in 1568, Vasari, too, whom I quoted at length above, wrote that he could heartily laugh at some prints⁶⁸.

Archival witnesses from the sixteenth century print trade remain rare in the present state of research, partially because most of the commercial records were not preserved and partially because prints were almost never described in detail. In any case, it is clear that Bruegel occupied a prominent place in the market and attracted an international buying public from the beginning. This also remained the case after his death in 1569 and, when Hieronymus Cock died in 1570, his widow, Volcxken Diericx, regularly reprinted Bruegel prints. On 24 September 1582, for example, she concluded an agreement with the art dealer and print publisher Bartolomeus de Mompere whereby she released a number of prints for him to sell⁶⁹. Among them were ten copies of *The Fair on St. George's Day* (No.52) and one *Naval Battle in the Straits of Messina* (No.40).

On 1 March 1601, almost all the copper plates of Bruegel, previously published by Cock, were still in the publishing company *In de Vier Winden* (In the Four Winds), where the inventory was made of the estate of Volcxken Diericx, who died on 23 December 1600⁷⁰. Here, too, the designer of the print was only listed sporadically, where confusion was possible. The executors or engravers, however, were never mentioned. In the store of the publishing company there were, in addition to the copper plates, still dozens of prints, including very many after Bruegel, that were also

carefully inventoried. There is no trace of the drawings, however, which could indicate that the artist remained the owner⁷¹.

Through the heirs, a large number of the copper plates were acquired by Theodoor Galle, who was a friend of the family of Hieronymus Cock. His father, Philips Galle, worked several times for Hieronymus Cock, and Volcxken Diericx was his godmother⁷². Theodoor Galle, one of the most important engravers and print publishers of seventeenth-century Antwerp, reissued a number of these prints⁷³. After his death in 1636⁷⁴, some of the copper plates were again printed by his son, Johan Galle, who lettered some of them in sequence⁷⁵. Some of the plates from the estate of Volcxken Diericx ended up in one way or another in Paris and others turned up in Amsterdam⁷⁶. In any case, some of them were obviously repeatedly reprinted until far into the seventeenth century.

Collectors

Bruegel prints were bought and collected for all sorts of reasons. An intellectual and humanistically educated public certainly formed the most important clientèle⁷⁷. Prints were collected by artists and publishers as models, or they formed a valued portion of a collection carefully built up for aesthetic and/or didactic reasons. The collection of prints with the intention of giving an overview of the history of art, possibly ordered by regional school, has been a widespread practice since the seventeenth century. And in a number of cases, as might be expected, the prints were given as gifts to friends. Direct and explicit witnesses of the appreciation of Bruegel prints, however, are extremely rare. Of special interest, therefore, is a letter from the author and engraver Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert to the geographer and cartographer Abraham Ortelius⁷⁸. In the art collection of the latter was the *grisaille*, *The Death of the Virgin*, which Ortelius had published in 1574 by Philips Galle (No. 86). The owner of the painting sent the engraving to many of his acquaintances as a posthumous memento of his friend Pieter Bruegel. Coornhert thanked Ortelius for this in a poem written in Haarlem and dated 15 July 1578. The poet acknowledged the receipt of the engraving, which he admired very much, and said that Bruegel and Galle, encouraged by their friend Ortelius, had never executed better work. He was of the opinion that he had never seen a better composition or a better executed engraving, and he gave a detailed description of the presentation⁷⁹. An echo of these words was formulated by Benedictus Arias Montanus, who asked Ortelius in a letter of 30 March 1590 to send him a copy of the print⁸⁰. This was the same Montanus who had purchased prints from Christopher Plantin and Jan Moretus in 1568, including some of Bruegel, in order to resell them in Spain⁸¹.

The Plantin commercial archives demonstrate indeed that there was international interest for these prints from the beginning, and, from the end of the sixteenth century on, Bruegel prints appear regularly in private collections. Some examples will suffice to illustrate this interest.

The inventory compiled in 1596 of the print collection of Ferdinand, Archduke of Tyrol already lists a considerable number of them. In addition to the Bruegel prints described only as "religious subjects", the inventory lists *The Fall of the Magician Hermogenes* (No. 58), *The Set of the Seven Virtues* (Nos. 31 – 37), *The Parable of the Prudent and Foolish Virgins* (No. 39), and the series of the *Great Landscapes* (Nos. 1 – 12)⁸². The Dutch historian Arnoldus Buchelius mentioned ca. 1600 the series of engravings of ships (Nos. 41 – 50)⁸³. Around 1630, Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, explicitly mentioned the engraving *Peasants Fighting*, executed by Lucas Vorsterman (No. 89) in a letter to Lionel Wake, an English merchant who lived for years in Antwerp⁸⁴. On 22 February 1635, Bruegel prints were sold in Amsterdam⁸⁵, and the inventory of the famous Dutch painter Rembrandt van Rijn compiled on 25 and 26 July 1656 showed that he, too, had an extensive collection of Bruegel prints⁸⁶. The Paris collection of Michel de Marolles was also extensive, and the collection of P.J. Mariette is particularly noteworthy for the eighteenth century⁸⁷. The most famous French furniture maker, André Charles Boulle, also had Bruegel prints in his possession (1720 inventory)⁸⁸.

Copies, Pastiches, Impact

The countless copies of Bruegel prints come under the wider question of copying. The problem is quite complex. Who made these copies and why they were made are generally mysteries. Research into this problem has yet to be

undertaken, and it is impossible to give a complete review here. A few examples will suffice to give an idea of the problem.

The *Emblemata Saecularia* (Profane Emblems), published for the first time in 1596 by the De Bry brothers in Frankfurt were very popular, particularly in the beginning of the seventeenth century⁸⁹. The book, which was intended to serve as a genealogical and heraldry register, is of essential importance for assessing the reception of Bruegel at that time. The first edition already had seven copies of his prints; the second edition of 1611 had no less than sixteen of his compositions. In addition, the book also contained copies of many other well-known sixteenth century artists of the Netherlands such as Hieronymus Bosch, Cornelis Massys, and Maarten Van Heemskerck. The prints were described in Latin, German, French, and/or Dutch verses, and the whole can be taken as a moralizing pictorial representation of an urban-bourgeois value and norm system⁹⁰. In a foreword to the second edition, the author explained in detail how it is to be understood. The presentation of objectionable acts, he stated, was done exclusively with the purpose of engendering a positive reaction from the reader. This, Theodoor De Bry contended, was all too often forgotten by unscrupulous individuals who abused the subtle and discerning art for profit and served it up to the unsuspecting viewer—and buyer—without the necessary precautions. Further, he stated that he had spared no cost or effort to collect a set of pictures that was as representative as possible. That Bruegel played such a prominent role here witnesses to the vital interest that still existed around 1600 for his work. This is also shown by the many other seventeenth century copies of Bruegel prints that were reasonably successful as separate prints or as book illustrations⁹¹. Thus, Mariette published a free copy of the engraving of *The Fight of the Money-Bags* (Ill.1) (No.54)⁹².



P. Mariette (ed.), *The Fight of the Money-Bags*, (Free copy), copper engraving



Jan Tiel (ed.), *The Large Fishes Devouring the Small Fishes*, (Pastiche after several Bruegel prints), copper engraving

It is possible that De Bry, with his "abuses", was alluding to the numerous pastiches of the work of Bruegel, among others. The pastiche or imitation—often with an altered iconographic intention—of famous prints or paintings was a quite common practice. A rewarding subject from the oeuvre of Bruegel was, for example, the presentation of the large fish devouring the small fish (No.16). Around 1600, Jan Tiel published such a print with citations of several Bruegel prints (Ill.2)⁹³. The major difference with the respective examples is that Tiel replaced the human figures by anthropomorphic fishes. The social satire implicit in the original print was here very explicitly clarified by means of an extensive apparatus of explanatory texts.

The Bruegel prints not only served to inspire engravers, but certain painters also made eager use of the diversified iconographic supply. Bruegel's oldest son, in particular, Pieter the Younger profited from the success of his father, and countless copies left his atelier⁹⁴. The engravings, which, unlike the paintings, were very easy to find, were also reproduced by other painters. Not only were the presentations of peasants endlessly copied, but also the proverb pictures, the "marginal themes", and the few religious presentations from his repertoire were very popular⁹⁵.

The importance of the Bruegel prints in the history of art goes much further than that, however. The impact of Bruegel cannot be captured in the categories of "genius" and "epigone", which would imply that Bruegel only had slavish imitators after him. This approach overemphasizes too didactic a periodization, ordered according to a single causal principle, and takes too little account of socio-historical reality. Certainly Bruegel, whether or not commissioned by his publisher or publishers, which is irrelevant here, provided the market with themes for which there was a demand at the time. He delivered mostly landscapes, folkloric peasant and marginal compositions, and humanistically inspired and often humorous presentations of bourgeois values. Bruegel never "invented" a theme all by himself. He was occupied with things with which other contemporary artists were also concerned.

As I have shown, the landscape prints of Bruegel were valued highly in the art literature of around 1600. Van Mander (1604) was the first to note the link with the landscapes of Titian⁹⁶. This appreciation also appears from the numerous reminiscences of the Bruegel prints in the work of other artists. The renewals in the perception of space and particularly the impression of unity in the landscape, a unity that is preserved even in the most spectacular panoramas, were popular with many artists, among them many from the southern Netherlands, mostly from Antwerp, who had fled at the end of the sixteenth century to Amsterdam in the northern Netherlands because of the religious unrest⁹⁷. Indeed, it was in Amsterdam that Van Mander had his theoretical treatise of 1604 republished in 1618, and it was probably not by chance that some of the copper plates of the Bruegel landscapes were reprinted there at the beginning of the seventeenth century⁹⁸. Van Mander said that the landscapes and prints of Bruegel were models. If it were a contest, he would rank the well-colored and skillful composition of the paintings and prints of Bruegel, which look so natural, alongside Titian. Bruegel, Van Mander went on, teaches us how to depict without great effort, how to look deeply into a dizzying valley, and how to depict steep cliffs, pine trees that kiss the clouds, panoramas and gurgling streams like those encountered in the Alps⁹⁹. Obviously, Van Mander's advice to imitate the landscapes of Bruegel did not drop out of thin air. At the time he wrote his theoretical treatise, many artists had already discovered the artistic value of the Bruegel landscapes¹⁰⁰.

The more intimate, closed composition of *The Wooded Grove* (*Pagus Nemorosus*, No.11) is then again considered an essential link in the development of the forest landscape, which was enormously popular only after 1600. The full scope of Bruegel's contribution became clear only after Arndt was able to demonstrate that the artist had delivered more drawings of this kind of landscape to Hieronymus Cock¹⁰¹.

While the impact of the Bruegel prints on the further development of the landscape in the Netherlands is obvious, it is generally accepted today that they were also significant for the development of the folkloric genre. However, the direct influence of specific concepts that would have originated exclusively from the Bruegel prints can rarely be indicated with certainty¹⁰². Certain "lower" genres (for example, peasant and marginal themes, moralizing presentation of proverbs) were popular for generations before Bruegel, and paralleled the rise of an urban middle class, a bourgeoisie that wanted to distance itself from the "ordinary" people. Their own norms and values were delineated by the presentation of what they thought they were not. This has been called *negative self-definition*¹⁰³. It would be wrong to call the artists who made successful use of this iconography Bruegel epigones. Obviously, Adriaan Brouwer, David Teniers, Adriaan Van Ostade, and Jan Steen in the Netherlands, and Jacques Callot in France, to name only

a few on a virtually endless list, developed the theme further. And they were supported by sharp theoretical discourse in the literature on art of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries¹⁰⁴. The genre prints of Bruegel formed an important part of the legitimate iconographic repertory and also of the legitimate artistic frame of reference.

* * *

The graphic work of Bruegel was primarily intended to be a commercial product, to be sold on as large a scale as possible to a very specific public. As far as the history of art is concerned, what is most important about the Bruegel prints is that the artist found stylistic and content solutions to the problem of efficiently and successfully depicting specific themes. It is with these solutions that others after him continued to work creatively. The ultimate explanation of this success cannot be reduced to a single point. Only an integral historical and anthropological approach to the problem could possibly resolve the issue satisfactorily.

* * *

Notes

(*) M. WINNER, in: *Pieter Bruegel d. Ä. als Zeichner. Herkunft und Nachfolge* (exhibition cat.), Berlin, (1975), p.3.

1. As yet there is no complete history of the literary and artistic reception of the painted oeuvre of Pieter Bruegel the Elder. It is outside the scope of this essay to sketch an integral overview. For this, I refer the reader to F. GROSSMANN, *Pieter Bruegel. Complete Edition of the Paintings*, 3rd ed. revised, (London, 1973), pp.29-50 and 53-56; and also to E. MICHEL, "Bruegel et la Critique Moderne", in *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 80, 6th ser., no.19, 1938, pp.27-46;—H.W. von LÖHNEYSEN, *Die Ältere Niederländische Malerei. Künstler und Kritiker*, Eisenach-Kassel, (1956), pp.141-152;—E. DUVERGER, "Pieter Bruegel. 1569-1969", in *Spiegel Historiae*, 4, 1969, pp.659-665. Also of importance is: J. MUYLLE, "Pieter Bruegel en Abraham Ortelius. Bijdrage tot de literaire receptie van Pieter Bruegels werk", in *Archivum Artis Lovaniense. Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van de kunst der Nederlanden. Opgedragen aan Prof. Em. Dr. J.K. Stegge, M. SMEYERS* (Ed.), Leuven, 1981, pp.319-337;—IDEM, "Pier den Drol"—Karel van Mander en Pieter Bruegel. Bijdrage tot de literaire receptie van Pieter Bruegels werk ca.1600", in *Wort und Bild in der Niederländischen Kunst und Literatur des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, H. VEKEMAN and J. MÜLLER HOFSTEDE (Ed.), Erfstadt, (1984), pp.137-144.
2. The negative attitude of the 19th century—for example, with respect to the color perspective of Bruegel—is expressed in: C.-J.-F. LECARPENTIER, *Essai sur le Paysage...Ouvrage utile aux Amateurs*, Paris-Strasbourg, 1817, pp.174-175: "One may reproach Bruegel only for a general abuse of green and blue, which was somewhat the custom of this century in which all the major landscape artists had the same defects. The landscapes of Bruegel have been for several centuries the ornament of drawing rooms and were quite expensive but for some time now they have dropped somewhat in value." (see also infra, note 6).
3. The earliest historical-critical studies of the paintings of Pieter Bruegel the Elder: H. HYMANS, "Pierre Bruegel le Vieux", in *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 32, 3rd ser., no.3, 1890, pp.361-375; 32, 3rd ser., no.4, 1890, pp.361-373; 33, 3rd ser., no.5, 1891, pp.20-40. Reprinted in: H. HYMANS, *Oeuvres*, vol.3, Brussels, 1920, pp.230-276; A. ROMDAHL, "Pieter Brueghel d. Ä. und sein Kunstschaffen", in *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, 25, 1904-1905, pp.85-163;—R. VAN BASTELAER and G. HULIN DE LOO, *Peter Bruegel l'ancien, son oeuvre et son temps, étude historique, suivie des catalogues raisonnés de son oeuvre dessiné et gravé*, Brussels, 1907.
4. François-Xavier de Burtin refers explicitly to this in 1808 in his *Traité théorique et pratique des Connaissances qui sont nécessaires à tout Amateur de Tableaux, et à tous ceux qui veulent apprendre à juger, apprécier et conserver les Productions de la Peinture*, vol.2, Brussels, 1808, pp.154-155 (see: infra, note 6).
5. The most famous collector of paintings of Pieter Bruegel the Elder was without doubt the Emperor Rudolf II. His systematic approach was mentioned in a letter from Jan Brueghel, a son of Pieter Bruegel the Elder, to the Archbishop of Milan, Frederigo Borromeo (10 March 1609): "The emperor has made a great effort to collect his complete works." G. CRIVELLI, *Giovanni Brueghel, pittor fiammingo o sue lettere e quadretti esistenti presso l'Ambrosiana*, Milan, 1868, p.119. Carel Van Mander (1604) also mentioned the Emperor's enormous collection of Bruegels: C. VAN MANDER, *Het Schilder-Boek, waer in voor eerst de leerlustighe Jueght den grondt der Edel Vry Schilderconst in verscheyden deelen wort voorgedraghen*, Haarlem, 1604, fol.233 v^o (2nd Edition: Amsterdam, 1618, fol.153 v^o—154 r^o).
6. Still in 1808 François-Xavier de Burtin (*op.cit.*) wrote: "The touch, in particular the heads and the hands, is spiritual and delicate like that of Teniers. It is this touch, which distinguishes the original compositions of this skillful artist, so difficult to encounter, from the many old copies made later, and that made them sought by the true lovers of art, even though they leave something to be desired as regards the aerial perspective." See also: A. von WURZBACH, *Niederländisches Künstler-Lexikon*, vol.1, Vienna-Leipzig, [1906], p.208; Many copies of Bruegel the Elder are discussed extensively in: G. MARLIER, *Pierre Brueghel le Jeune*, J. FOLIE (Ed.), Brussels, 1969, passim; and: K. ERTZ, *Jan Brueghel der Ältere* (1568-1625), Cologne, (1979), pp.453-461.
7. In a particularly interesting lawsuit, which ran from 1653 to 1657 before the Antwerp court, on the alleged authorship of the painting *Landscape with Cattle Market* ascribed to Pieter Brueghel the Younger, also called "The Hellish", there was considerable confusion about the identity of the various members of the Bruegel dynasty. Pieter the Elder was described as follows: "And there was also a Pieter Bruegel, the father of Jan and of the Hellish [Pieter the Younger], who made nothing but very large paintings and no small ones, as is the one that is being discussed here." Also discussed were the owner of the original painting by Pieter the Younger and the various prices of original and copy. The lawsuit had been introduced by the Antwerp painter Peter van Haelen and various "specialists" were witnesses (including the art dealer Jan Siebrechts and the artist Jan Boots). The citation shows that the work of Pieter the Elder was not very well known, not even among artists and art dealers. Stadsarchief, Antwerp, Processen Suppl.4904. I hope to be able to discuss this information in detail elsewhere.
8. G. VASARI, *Le Vite de' piu eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, G. MILANESI (Ed.), vol.5, Florence, 1880, pp.436-441. The author

- dwells on the work of Hieronymus Cock during his exposition on the Italian engraver Marcantonio Raimondi. Correctly, T.A. Riggs points out that it is improbable that Vasari and Cock met each other in Rome. T.A. RIGGS, *Hieronymus Cock 1510–1570: Printmaker and Publisher in Antwerp at the Sign of the Four Winds*, (Dissertation Yale University), New Haven, 1972, p.29.
9. The first explicit association of Bruegel with Bosch: L. GUICCIARDINI, *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi*, Antwerp, 1567, p.99. It is certain that Vasari directly or indirectly used this publication in his presentation of artists from the Low Countries (1568). G. VASARI, *op.cit.*, vol.7, Florence, 1881, pp.579–592 (Bruegel-Bosch: p.586). According to D. Lampsonius (1572), Bosch is the ideal teacher of Bruegel, who surpassed him: ideal because Bosch died before Bruegel was born. D. LAMPSONIUS, *Pictorum aliquot celeberrimae Germaniae inferiores effigies*, Antwerp, 1572. The same idea (pupil who surpassed his teacher Bosch) was also formulated by Felipe de Guevara before 1563, without the mention of the name of Bruegel. F. DE GUEVARA, *Commentarios de la Pintura*, A. PONZ (Ed.), Madrid, 1788, pp.41–44. The identification of the anonymous pupil with Bruegel, however, remains problematical here. Cf. J. MUYLLE, *op.cit.*, (1984), pp.138–139.
 10. G. VASARI, *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, translated from the Italian by A.B. HINDS, vol.3, (Everyman's Library, 786), London, (1927), p.85 (with some corrections in the translation).
 11. See F.W. HOLLSTEIN, *Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts ca.1450–1700*, vol.3, Amsterdam, s.d., p.135.
 12. Pieter Bruegel the Elder is intended here.
 13. The Bruegel prints listed by Vasari are: *The Alchemist* (No.27); *The Set of the Seven Vices* (Nos.18–24); *The Last Judgment* (No.25); *Nemo Non: Everyman Looks for His Own Profit* (No.26); *The Large Fishes Devouring the Small Fishes* (No.16); *The Rich Kitchen* (No.56); *The Poor Kitchen* (No.55).
 14. On the first state of this print (1557), Hieronymus Bosch is indicated as the designer. The name of Bruegel appears only after 1619 on the third state of a copy of this engraving (see: L. LEBEER, *Catalogue raisonné des estampes de Bruegel l'ancien* (exhibition catalog), Brussels, 1969, p.58); The drawing, signed by Bruegel, is in Vienna (Albertina, Graphische Sammlung); See: L. MÜNZ, *Bruegel. The Drawings. Complete Edition*, London, (1961), p.225 (no.128).
 15. It is known that Vasari corresponded with D. Lampsonius in order to assemble as accurate information as possible. See, for example, S. SULZBERGER, "Dominique Lampsonius et l'Italie", in *Miscellanea J. Gessler*, s.l., 1948, pp.1187–1189; G. BONSAITI, "Gli artisti stranieri nelle Vite del Vasari", in *Il Vasari Storiografo e Artista. Atti del Congresso Internazionale nel IV centenario della Morte*, Florence, 1974, pp.717–734. My hypothesis rests primarily on the fact that Vasari here very obviously had certain inside information at his disposal that could only have come, directly or indirectly, from the publishing house of Hieronymus Cock. D. Lampsonius corresponded with Vasari, and Lampsonius certainly knew the print publishing firm of Hieronymus Cock with whose widow he had his *Pictorum aliquot celeberrimae Germaniae inferiores effigies* published in 1572. Thus it is possible that the information was provided by Lampsonius.
 16. R. Van Bastelaer was the first to formulate this hypothesis in: R. VAN BASTELAER and G. HULIN DE LOO, *op.cit.*, p.13 and 152. This topic was further developed by F. GROSSMANN, "Notes on some Sources of Bruegel's Art", in *Album Amicorum J.G. Van Gelder*, The Hague, 1973, pp.147–152.
 17. This "oversight" is difficult to explain. If Vasari was misled, which is hardly likely, by the word "excudit" (edited) after the name of Cock, then he was inconsistent. For in one particular case he did give the name of the engraver, even though Cock's name was also on the print.
 18. P.J. MARIETTE, *Abecedario et autres Notes inédites de cet Amateur sur les Arts et les Artistes* [1741], P. DE CHENNEVIÈRES and A. DE MONTAIGLON (Ed.), vol.1, Paris, 1851–1853, pp.188–189.
 19. C. VAN MANDER, *op.cit.*, Haarlem, 1604, fol.233 r^o–234 r^o (2nd edition: Amsterdam, 1618, fol.153 r^o–154 r^o).
 20. C. VAN MANDER, *op.cit.*, Haarlem, 1604, fol.233 v^o (2nd edition: Amsterdam, 1618, fol. 154 r^o): "There are many prints of his curious compositions."
 21. C. VAN MANDER, *op.cit.*, Haarlem, 1604, fol.36 r^o (2nd edition: Amsterdam, 1618, fol.15 r^o); See: C. VAN MANDER, *Den grondt der edel vry schilder-const*, H. MIEDEMA (Ed. and Comment), vol.1, Utrecht, 1973, pp.210–211 (also: pp.208–209). The link with the oeuvre of Titian is taken up again in 1741 by P.J. MARIETTE, *op.cit.*, p.189.
 22. J. EVELYN, *Sculptura or the History and Art of Chalcography and Engraving in Copper with an ample Enumeration of the most renowned Masters and their Works*, London, 1662 (here consulted: 2nd Edition, London, 1755, p.65).
 23. Rhyparograph: painter of common, low subjects. For the term, see, for example; E.H. GOMBRICH, *Norm and Form (Studies in the art of the Renaissance, I)*, London and New York, (1986), p.113.
 24. The only prints by Crispijn De Passe (ca.1565–1637) of Bruegel are four landscapes from Jan Brueghel. See: F.W. HOLLSTEIN, *Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts ca.1450–1700*, vol.15, Amsterdam, s.d., pp.216–217 (no.651–654). Magdalena De Passe (1600– before 1640) was a daughter and pupil of Crispijn. See: F.W. HOLLSTEIN, *op.cit.*, vol.16, Amsterdam, s.d., pp.211–220. However, no Bruegel prints by her are known.
 25. See also: J.B. BEDAUX and A. VAN GOOL, "Bruegel's Birthyear, Motive of an ars/natura transmutation", in *Simiolus. Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art*, 7, 1974, pp.133–156.
 26. M. DE MAROLLES, *Catalogue de livres d'estampes et de figures en taille douce, avec un dénombrement des pieces qui y sont contenuës*, Paris, 1666, p.60. The collection is now at the Cabinet des Estampes in Paris.
 27. Peter Mandere is an erroneous interpretation of the monogram P.A.M.E. of Pieter Van der Heyden, an engraver in the atelier of Hieronymus Cock. He is the one who converted most of the drawings of Bruegel into prints (No.14–26, 28, 29, 38, 51, 53–58, 61, 63, 72, and 77–80). Only one print (consisting of two copper plates) of Willem Van Nieuland the Younger (ca.1584–1635) is known that was drawn by Jan Brueghel. See: F.W. HOLLSTEIN, *op.cit.*, vol.14, Amsterdam, s.d., p.167, no.114. No works from Bruegel by Hans Bol (1534–1593) and Maerten de Vos (1532–1603) are known. Hendrik Hondius (1573–after 1649) republished a few plates (Nos.81 and 82), made some copies of Bruegel prints (Nos.16, 17, 55, 56, 77, 78), and engraved some five prints from drawings of Pieter Bruegel. (Nos.91–95). In my opinion, these last prints may have been drawn by Pieter Brueghel the Younger. It is important that de Marolles, like Evelyn in 1662, made no strict distinction between the various members of the Bruegel family.
 28. F. LE COMTE, *Cabinet des Singularitez d'Architecture, Peinture, Sculpture, et Graveure*, vol.3, Paris, 1700, pp.271–272 (under the heading: *Traité de la gravure, où il est parlé succinctement de la vie & des ouvrages des plus excellens Graveurs*).
 29. F. LE COMTE, *op.cit.*, vol.2, Paris, 1699, pp.255–257. The assumed impact of Bruegel on Jacques Callot (French etcher and engraver,

- 1592–1653) is repeated by, among others, A. BLUNT, *Art and Architecture in France 1500–1700*, Melbourne–London–Baltimore, (1953), p.128 and by D. TERNOIS, *L'art de Jacques Callot*, Paris, 1962, pp.70–71.
30. P.J. MARIETTE, *op.cit.*, 188–189; P.J. MARIETTE, *Description sommaire des desseins des grands Maîtres d'Italie, des Pays-Bas et de France, du cabinet de feu M. Crozat. Avec Réflexions sur la manière de dessiner des principaux Peintres*, Paris, 1741, pp.105–107.
 31. J. von SANDRART, *L'Academia Todesca della Architectura, Scultura & Pittura oder Teutsche Academie*, vol.2, Nuremberg, 1675, p.259. Like so many other studies, this is not included in my review because only Bruegel's paintings are discussed.
 32. Reproduction, not in mirror image. Published by Antonio Josepho de Prenner (or: Brenner) in 1728 in his *Theatrum artis pictoriae quo tabulae depictae quae in Caesaria Vindobonensi pinacotheca servantur*. See: R. VAN BASTELAER, *Les estampes de Peter Bruegel l'Ancien*, Brussels, 1908, p.42 (no.109).
 33. F. BASAN, *Catalogue raisonné des différens objets de curiosités dans les sciences et arts qui composent le Cabinet de feu Mr. Mariette*, Paris, 1775, pp.309–310 (annotated copy in: Brussels, Bib. Reg.: II 1748/8^o).
 34. A.J. DEZALLIER D' ARGENVILLE, *Abregé de la vie des plus fameux peintres*, vol.2, Paris, 1745, p.132.
 35. C. VAN MANDER, *Het leven der Doorluchtige Nederlandsche en eenige Hoogduitsche Schilders*, revised edition by J. DE JONGH, vol.1, Amsterdam, 1764, p.188.
 36. Since the publication of R. Van Bastelaer (*op.cit.*, 1908, pp.31–32) it is assumed that these two landscapes were etched by George Hoefnagel or Cornelis Cort. The woodcut is anonymous. The only etching that is unanimously ascribed to Pieter Bruegel the Elder himself is the *Landscape with the Rabbit Hunt* (No.62).
 37. P.F. BASAN, *Dictionnaire des graveurs anciens et modernes*, vol.1, Paris, 1767, p.139. The landscapes were also mentioned in an 18th-century inventory (manuscript) of the most important Paris collections: Brussels, Bib. Reg.: Mss. B.R. II 1668: *Inventaires de collections artistiques* [Paris], [18th century], f^o 233r^o: "Hieronymus Cock engraved thirteen great landscapes of Pieter Bruegel the Elder."
 38. [C.H. von HEINECKEN], *Idée général d'une collection complète d'estampes*, Leipzig and Vienna, 1771, passim. See also note 77.
 39. [C.H. von HEINECKEN], *op.cit.*, p.181.
 40. F. LE COMTE, *op.cit.*, vol.1, Paris, 1699, p.19.
 41. J. STRUTT, *A Biographical Dictionary; containing an historical account of all the Engravers*, vol.1, London, 1785, pp.144–145 (Bruegel) and p.208 (Cock).
 42. [C.H. von HEINECKEN], *Dictionnaire des Artistes dont nous avons des Estampes avec une notice détaillée de leurs ouvrages gravés*, vol.3, Leipzig, 1789, pp.333–339 and 344.
 43. [C.H. von HEINECKEN], *Nachrichten von Künstlern und Kunst-Sachen*, vol.1, Leipzig, 1768, pp.348–349. This author, too, identifies the anonymous designer produced by Vasari as Pieter Bruegel the Elder.
 44. In 22 folios, preserved in the Kupferstichkabinett, Dresden (G.D.R.).
 45. [C.H. von HEINECKEN], *Dictionnaire*, vol.3, Leipzig, 1789, p.335.
 46. An example: He said that he knew of several states of the print *The Fight of the Money-Bags* (No.54). *Ibid.*
 47. The author was the first to note that the print *The Big Fish Eat the Little Fish* (No.16) is ascribed to both Hieronymus Bosch and to Pieter Bruegel the Elder. He was also the first to recognize copies from Bruegel in the *Emblemate Saecularia* (1596 and 1611) of Theodoor De Bry (cf. infra).
 48. This erroneous hypothesis was already formulated by G. GORI GANDELLINI, *Notizie degli intagliatori*, vol.1, Siena, 1771, p.140 (with a typographical error in the date: 1665 instead of 1565). Up to 1906 the series with the ships was assigned to Frans Hieronymus Brueghel: A. von WURZBACH, *Niederländisches Künstlerlexikon*, vol.1, Vienna and Leipzig, [1906], p.203.
 49. The only omission in his catalogue is *Twelve Flemish Proverbs* (Nos.65–76).
 50. An example: von Heinecken includes the print *The Temptation of Christ by the Devil* by H. Cock in his catalog (p.338). It was only in 1966 that K. Arndt was able to show, without knowing von Heinecken's thesis, however, that Cock indeed worked from a drawing by Pieter Bruegel the Elder. K. ARNDT, "Unbekannte Zeichnungen von Pieter Bruegel d. Ä.", in *Pantheon*, 24, 1966, pp.206–216. L. Lebeer, apparently unaware of Arndt's demonstrations, did not include the print. L. LEBEER, *Catalogue raisonné des estampes de Bruegel l'ancien* (exhibition catalog), Brussels, 1969.
 51. Also of importance is, for example, M. HUBER and C.C. ROST, *Handbuch für Kunstliebhaber und Sammler über die vornehmsten Kupferstecher und ihre Werke*, vol.5, Zurich, 1801, pp.76–78; R. WEIGEL, *Kunstlager-Catalog*, vol.18, Leipzig, 1947, p.46 (no.15644); vol.19, Leipzig, 1848, p.60 (no.16625); vol.29, Leipzig, 1858, p.44; G.K. NAGLER, *Die Monogrammisten*, vol.1, Munich and Leipzig, (1858), pp.884–886; A. ANDRESEN, *Handbuch für Kupferstichsammler*, vol.1, Leipzig, 1870, pp.184, 279, and 705.
 52. J. RENOUVIER, *Des Types et des Manières des Maîtres graveurs*, vol. 2, Montpellier, 1854, pp.146–149.
 53. Adriaan Van Ostade, a Dutch painter (1610–1685) was known principally as a painter of peasant life. The same applies to David Teniers the Younger (1610–1690). The "affinity" of these two artists with Pieter Bruegel the Elder consisted primarily of their partially parallel iconographic interest.
 54. This negative attitude toward the painting of Bruegel was qualified somewhat by a number of other 19th-century authors such as M. GAULT DE SAINT-GERMAIN, *Guide des Amateurs de Tableaux pour les écoles Allemande, Flamande et Hollandaise*, New Ed., Paris, 1841, pp.251–252, and M. ROOSES, *Geschiedenis der Antwerpsche Schilderschool*, vol.1, Ghent–Antwerp–The Hague, 1880, pp.113–128.
 55. A. von WURZBACH, *op.cit.*, pp.206–211.
 56. R. VAN BASTELAER, *Les estampes de Peter Bruegel l'Ancien*, Brussels, 1908; IDEM, in: R. VAN BASTELAER and G. HULIN DE LOO, *op.cit.*, pp.204–273.
 57. A small selection of essential studies and monographic surveys on the Bruegel prints: L. LEBEER, "Les Estampes de Pierre Bruegel l'Ancien", in *Annales de la Société Royale d'Archéologie de Bruxelles*, 45, 1941, pp.154–180; H.A. KLEIN, *Graphic Worlds of Peter Bruegel the Elder*, New York, (1963); J. LALLUYE, *Lucas van Leyden—Peter Bruegel l'Ancien. Gravures. Oeuvres complètes (Arts et Métiers graphiques)*, sl., 1966; K. OBERHUBER, *Zwischen Renaissance und Barock. Das Zeitalter von Bruegel und Bellange. Werke aus*

- dem Besitz der Albertina (Die Kunst der Graphik, IV) (exhibition catalog), (Vienna), 1968; L. LEBEER, *op.cit.*, 1969; T.A. RIGGS, *op.cit.*, 1972; *Pieter Bruegel und seine Welt. Ein Colloquium, 13. und 14. November 1975*, Berlin, (1979), especially the contributions of K. Oberhuber, L. De Pauw-De Veen, T.A. Riggs, and C. White.
58. Van Bastelaer was the first to note this phenomenon. However, he made no distinction between the two groups. Lebeer was the first who did make it. He only included the prints of paintings of Bruegel if they were made before 1700, which is a totally arbitrary cut-off point. R. VAN BASTELAER, *op.cit.*, 1908, p.17; L. LEBEER, *op.cit.*, 1969, p.177.
 59. As noted, some etchings have been constantly assigned to Bruegel over the centuries and also the only completed woodcut is occasionally attributed to him. Nevertheless, neither A. Bartsch nor J.D. Passavant include Pieter Bruegel the Elder. In the beginning of the 19th century, Bartsch compiled the large basic work on West European prints. He discussed only the artists who converted their own drawings into prints. Passavant, who also did not mention Bruegel, wrote the most important supplement to this magisterial study a half century later. A. BARTSCH, *Le peintre-graveur*, 21 vol., Vienna, 1802–1821; J.D. PASSAVANT, *Le peintre-graveur*, 4 vol., Leipzig, 1860–1864.
 60. On the proverbial "divinization" of Dürer, see: B. DECKER, "Gelingen oder Misslingen des Fortschritts", in *Dürers Verwandlung in der Skulptur zwischen Renaissance und Barock* (exhibition catalogue), Frankfurt am Main, 1982, pp.440–447; and M. BURY, "The Taste for Prints in Italy to c.1600", in *Print Quarterly*, 2, 1985, pp.15–26.
 61. Published first by: A.J.J. DELEN, "Christoffel Plantin als prentenhandelaar", in *De Gulden Passer*, 10, 1932, pp.3–4; republished in: IDEM, *Histoire de la gravure dans les anciens Pays-Bas & dans les provinces Belges des origines jusqu'à la fin du XVIIIe siècle*, vol.2 *Le XVIe siècle: Les graveurs d'estampes*, Paris, 1935, p.151 (French translation).
 62. An example: On 27 July 1568 Plantin received from Cock: "One Cock Landscape". A.J.J. DELEN, *op.cit.*, 1932, p.5; and IDEM, *op.cit.*, 1935, p.152.
 63. A.J.J. DELEN, *op.cit.*, 1932, pp.9–11; and IDEM, *op.cit.*, 1935, pp.156–157.
 64. Colored prints, done by "illuminators" in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries have been studied very little.
 65. The situation was the same for books, maps, and atlases. See: L. VOET, *The Golden Compasses*, vol.2, Amsterdam, (1972), pp.242–243.
 66. The latter was discussed in detail in a letter from Plantin to Franciscus Gentilis in Padua, Italy, 19 July 1567, in which he spoke about the differences in quality of offprint of the prints of Albrecht Dürer. In comparison with printed books, the prices of the engravings were generally very high. L. VOET, "Kopergravure en houtsnede in de boekillustraties van het Plantijnse huis in de tweede helft van de XVIe eeuw", in *Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van de grafische kunst, opgedragen aan Prof. Dr. Louis Lebeer ter gelegenheid van zijn tachtigste verjaardag*, Antwerp, 1975, pp.382–383.
 67. Cf. J. MUYLLE, "Pier den Drol'-Karel van Mander en Pieter Bruegel. Bijdrage tot de literaire receptie van Pieter Bruegels werk ca. 1600", in *Wort und Bild in der Niederländischen Kunst und Literatur des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, H. VEKEMAN and J. MÜLLER HOFSTEDTE (Ed.), Erfstadt, (1984), pp.137–144 (without reference to this document).
 68. See note 10.
 69. L. DE PAUW-DE VEEN, "Archivalische gegevens over Volcxken Diericx, weduwe van Hieronymus Cock", in *Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van de grafische kunst, opgedragen aan Prof. Dr. Louis Lebeer ter gelegenheid van zijn tachtigste verjaardag*, Antwerp, 1975, pp.228–229 and 245–247.
 70. *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen uit de zeventiende eeuw*, vol.1: 1600–1617, E. DUVERGER (Ed.), (*Fontes Historiae Artis Neerlandicae. Bronnen voor de kunstgeschiedenis van de Nederlanden*, 1), Brussels, 1984, pp.17–37.
 71. The precise relationship between the designer (here Bruegel) and publisher (here Cock) is not clear. For comparison: on 20 April 1629, Theodoor Galle was paid by the heirs of Jan Brueghel because he had printed certain engravings for the family. "Paid to Theodore Galle for printed plates printed for the heirs, according to his bill the sum of FL 21-11." Published in: *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen uit de zeventiende eeuw*, vol.3: 1626–1635, E. DUVERGER (Ed.), (*Fontes Historiae Artis Neerlandicae. Bronnen voor de kunstgeschiedenis van de Nederlanden*, 1), Brussels, 1987, p.150.
 72. J.J.P. VAN DEN BEMDEN, *De familie Galle. Plaetsnyders van het laetst der XVIe en de eerste helft der XVIIe eeuw*, Antwerp, 1863, p.19.
 73. For example, Nos.27, 28, 44, 47, 50, 53, and 59.
 74. In the estate of Theodoor Galle (1636), the following copper plates of Pieter Bruegel the Elder are mentioned: twelve plates with ships from Bruegel. These are Nos.41–50 and two other, unidentified ones. In addition, 43 plates are listed with presentations of "drolleries", without the name of the artist. Probably, some of them were drawn by Bruegel and some by Bosch. Published by: J. DENUCE, "Prentenhandel Theodoor Galle en Catharina Moerentorf. Inventaris van 1636", in *Antwerpsch Archievenblad*, 2nd series, 1927, resp. p.143 and 149.
 75. However, it is not at all certain that all the plates that Johan Galle republished were from the estate of his father. The following plates were lettered in sequence: Nos.58 (H), 63 (I), 51 (K), 16 (N), 26 (P), 54 (Q), 59 (S).
 76. Some examples: Nos.7, 11, 77 and 78 were reprinted in Amsterdam, Nos.40 and 52 were republished in Paris. (cf. note 98).
 77. T.A. RIGGS, *op.cit.*, pp.203–211. Of great importance for the general problem of the collecting of prints is W.W. ROBINSON, "This Passion for Prints: Collecting and Connoisseurship in Northern Europe during the 17th Century" in C.S. ACKLEY, *Printmaking in the Age of Rembrandt* (exhibition catalogue), Boston, (1981), pp.XXVII–XLVIII; P. PARSHALL, "The Print Collection of Ferdinand Archduke of Tyrol", in *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien*, 78, 1982, pp.139–190; J. VAN DER WAALS, "The Print Collection of Samuel Pepys", in *Print Quarterly*, 4, 1984, pp.236–257; and M. BURY, *op.cit.*, pp.12–26.
 78. A.E. POPHAM, "Pieter Bruegel and Abraham Ortelius", in *The Burlington Magazine* 59, 1931, pp.184 and 187–188.
 79. The admiration of Coornhert should perhaps be qualified with the observation that this was a reaction to a gift.
 80. A.E. POPHAM, *art. cit.*, p.184.
 81. The Spanish theologian who came to Antwerp in 1568 to supervise the production of Plantin's polyglot Bible. See: B. REKERS, *Benito Arias Montano 1527-1598*, Amsterdam, (1961). See also chapter five by David Freedberg above.
 82. P. PARSHALL, *op.cit.*, resp. pp.153, 156, 157, and 163.
 83. A. BUCHELIUS, "Res Pictoriae", *aanteekeningen over kunstenaars en kunstwerken in zijn Diarium, Res Pictoriae, Natae Quotidianae en*

- Descriptio Urbis Ultrajectinae (1583-1639)*, G.J. HOOGEWERFF and J.Q. VAN REGTEREN ALTENA (Ed.), (*Quellenstudien zur Holländischen Kunstgeschichte*, 15), The Hague, 1928, p.55.
84. G. GLÜCK, "Peter Brueghel the Elder and Classical Antiquity", in: *The Art Quarterly*, 6, 1943, p.184.
 85. *Künstler-Inventare, Urkunden zur Geschichte der Holländischen Kunst des XVIten, XVIIten und XVIIIten Jahrhunderts*, vol.3, A. BREDIUS and O. HIRSCHMANN (Ed.), (*Quellenstudien zur Holländischen Kunstgeschichte*, 7), The Hague, 1917, p.797. The prints were in the estate of Barent Van Someren, a painter and art dealer who was born in Antwerp and lived in Amsterdam. Adriaan Brouwer would have worked for him. It cannot be determined whether the prints belong to the oeuvre of Pieter Bruegel the Elder or of Jan Brueghel.
 86. W.L. STRAUSS and M. VAN DER MEULEN, *The Rembrandt Documents*, New York, (1979), p.369: "One dito [book] with prints by the elder Bruegel". Note that the identity of Pieter Bruegel the Elder is here explicitly stated. Unfortunately, it was not indicated which prints exactly Rembrandt had in his possession. For the "impact" of Bruegel on Rembrandt, see, for example, K. CLARK, *Rembrandt and the Italian Renaissance*, London, (1961), p.180.
 87. See note 26 and note 33
 88. *Archives de l'art français. Recueil de documents inédits relatifs à l'histoire des arts en France*, A. DE MONTAIGLON (Ed.), vol.4, Paris, 1855-1856, p.337. It cannot be determined whether the prints belonged to the oeuvre of Pieter the Elder or of Jan Brueghel.
 89. *Emblemata Saecularia. Kulturgeschichtliches Stamm- und Wappenbuch von Johann Theodor de Bry. Mit einer Einleitung über die Stammbücher des 17. Jahrhunderts*, F. WARNECKE (Ed.), Berlin, 1894.
 90. P. VANDENBROECK, *Jheronimus Bosch. Tussen volksleven en stadscultuur*, (Berchem), (1987), pp.156-158.
 91. On the status of "original" prints and copies in the 17th century, see, for example: A. BOSSE, *Sentimens sur la Distinction des divers Manières de Peinture, Dessain & Graveure, & des Originaux d'avec leurs Copies*, Paris, 1649; particularly chap. 7, pp.73-86. Bruegel is mentioned on p.53 among the landscape painters. For the listing of countless engraved copies from Bruegel prints, I refer the reader to: R. VAN BASTELAER, *op.cit.*, passim; and L. LEBEER, *op.cit.*, 1969, passim.
 92. Not mentioned either by Van Bastelaer or by Lebeer.
 93. F.W. HOLLSTEIN, *Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts, ca. 1450-1700*, vol.3, Amsterdam, s.d., p.139 (incorrectly attributed to H. Bosch); G. UNVERFEHRT, *Christliches Exempel und profane Allegorie. Zum Verhältnis von Wort und Bild in der Graphik der Boschnachfolge*, in *Wort und Bild in der Niederländischen Kunst und Literatur des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, H. VEKEMAN and J. MÜLLER HOFSTEDE (Ed.), Erfstadt, (1984), p.233.
 94. See: G. MARLIER, *Pierre Brueghel le Jeune, J. FOLIE* (Ed.), Brussels, 1969, passim.
 95. T.A. RIGGS, *op.cit.*, pp.211 and 229 (notes 31 and 32);—M. ROOSES, *Geschiedenis der Antwerpsche Schilderschool*, vol.1, Ghent-Antwerp-The Hague, 1880, pp.117-118: a painted copy of *The Alchemist* (cat.27) is described.
 96. See note 21. Cf. M. MURARO and D. ROSAND, *Tiziano e la xilografia Veneziana del cinquecento* (exhibition catalog), (Vicenza), (1976), pp.99-100.
 97. The most important are: Hans Bol (1534-1593), Gillis Van Coninxloo (1544-1607), Jacob Savery (ca. 1565-1603), Roelant Savery (1576-1639), and David Vinckeboons (1576-1632). See also: K. OBERHUBER, *op.cit.*, 1968, p.19; and *Pieter Bruegel d. Ä. als Zeichner. Herkunft und Nachfolge* (exhibition catalog), Berlin, (1975), passim.
 98. Cornelis Danckerts (the Elder or the Younger), copper engraver and publisher in Amsterdam, made a second state (17th century) of *Sollicitudo Rustica* (No.7). Clement de Jonghe, also an Amsterdam engraver and publisher, was a friend of Rembrandt and published a second state of *Pagus Nemorosus* (No.11). On 12 December 1662, four engraved copper plates with landscapes by Bruegel (Pieter or Jan?) were mentioned in the property of Rombaut Van den Hoeve and Sara De Bary: *Künstler-Inventare. Urkunden zur Geschichte der Holländischen Kunst des XVIten, XVIIten und XVIIIten Jahrhunderts*, vol.2, A. BREDIUS and O. HIRSCHMANN (Ed.), (*Quellenstudien zur Holländischen Kunstgeschichte*, 6), The Hague, 1916, p.540.
 99. See note 21.
 100. A few years ago, Terész Gerszi published a series of articles systematically examining the significance of the Bruegel prints for landscape art: T. GERSZI, "Bruegels Nachwirkung auf die niederländischen Landschaftsmaler um 1600", in *Oud Holland*, 90, 1976, pp.201-229 (among other things, on Bruegel's significance for the "forest landscape" of Hans Bol, Lucas van Valckenborch, Jacob Savery, Jan Brueghel, and Paulus Bril); IDEM, "Pieter Bruegel und die niederländische Landschaftskunst", in *Sitzungsberichte Kunstgeschichtliche Gesellschaft zu Berlin*, n.s., 28/29, Oct.1979-May 1981, pp.4-6; IDEM, "Landschaftsdarstellungen von Pieter Bruegel und Hercules Seghers", in *Pantheon*, 39, 1981, pp.133-139; IDEM, "Pieter Bruegels Einfluss auf die Herausbildung der Niederländischen See- und Kustlandschaftsdarstellung", in *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen*, n.s., 24, 1982, pp.143-187 (among other things, on the impact of the series with the sailing ships (cat.41-50); See also: A. ZWOLLO, "Jacob Savery, Nachfolger von Pieter Bruegel und Hans Bol", in *Pieter Bruegel und seine Welt. Ein Colloquium, 13. und 14. November 1975*, Berlin (1979), pp.203-213.
 101. K. ARNDT, "Unbekannte Zeichnungen von Pieter Bruegel d.Ä.", in *Pantheon*, 24, 1966, pp.206-216; IDEM, "Pieter Bruegel d. Ä. und die Geschichte der 'Waldlandschaft' in *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen*, n.s., 14, 1972, pp.69-121.
 102. See, for example, T. DORING, "Jan van Bijlert und die Ikonographie von Karneval und Fasten", in *Jahrbuch Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Sonderband 4: Holländische Genremalerei im 17. Jahrhundert. Symposium Berlin 1984*, H. BOCK and T.W. GAEHTGENS (Ed.), (Berlin), (1987), p.84; K. RENGGER, "Adriaen Brouwer. Seine Auseinandersetzung mit der Tradition des 16. Jahrhunderts", in *Ibidem*, pp.253-282; H.J. RAUPP, *Bauernsatiren. Entstehung und Entwicklung des bauerlichen Genres in der deutschen und niederländischen Kunst ca. 1470-1570*, Niederzier, (1986), pp.223 ff.; K. RENGGER, *Adriaen Brouwer und das niederländische Bauerngenre 1600-1660*, Munich, (1986).
 103. P. VANDENBROECK, *Over wilden en narren, boeren en bedelaars. Beeld van de andere, vertoog over het zelf* (exhibition catalogue), Antwerp, 1987.
 104. On the formation of the theory on the genre iconography and the genre painters, see: H. J. RAUPP, "Ansätze zu einer Theorie der Genremalerei in den Niederlanden im 17. Jahrhundert", in *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 46, 1983, pp.401-418; J. MUYLLE, "Beschouwingen over genre-iconografie en genreschilders", in *Onze Alma Mater*, 40, 1986, pp.210-218; P. VANDENBROECK, (review) *Hans-Joachim Raupp, Bauernsatiren: Entstehung und Entwicklung des bauerlichen Genres in der deutschen und niederländischen Kunst ca. 1470-1570*, Niederzier (Luca-Verlag) 1986, in *Simiolus. Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art*, 18, 1988, pp.69-73.

Catalogue

Catalogue numbers

14–27, 31–39, 53–54, 57–59, 64–76, and 84–95 by Kristin Lohse Belkin

1–13, 28–30, 40–52, 55–56, 60–63, and 77–83 by Bernadette Huvane

96 by David Freedberg

1–12

THE LARGE LANDSCAPES

In these magnificent images, Bruegel infused the existing landscape tradition with new life and in doing so changed the course of western landscape representation. Landscape had long been a major component of Netherlandish painting and had drawn the admiration even of Italian collectors. But until the sixteenth-century, landscape, no matter how exquisitely rendered, was still essentially a backdrop for religious imagery. In the work of the Antwerp painter, Joachim Patinir, this relationship was reversed. Although the biblical scenes did not disappear, the surface area devoted to them was considerably reduced. Technically, the paintings could still be called *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* or *St. Jerome in the Wilderness*, but the real fascination for both painter and public was the beauty of the natural world.

Patinir's best works provide a birds-eye view of a partially real, partially fantastic landscape. They take us swiftly over a meticulously detailed foreground to a horizon so distant that it seems to suggest the very end of the earth. Bruegel drew on this formula to create his own panoramic landscapes, but not without making substantial modifications. Despite the jewel-like perfection of Patinir's surfaces, his compositions often suffer from a structural weakness.

His fanciful rock formations lack weight and density. Moreover, he often neglected the relationship of these forms to the earth; they sit on its surface rather than act as integral parts of its structure. If we compare these to the peaks, for instance, in Bruegel's *Alpine Landscape* (No.4), we perceive a profound change. Bruegel not only gives these forms a new cohesiveness and weight, but endows them with a living presence. Instead of being quickly drawn to the horizon, our attention is captured by the paths carved into the mountains and the muscularity of the slopes that support them. Patinir's vast, yet somehow artificial world has been transformed into an earth so vital that it almost seems capable of respiration. We can attribute this new understanding to Bruegel's firsthand experience of the Alps, but in doing so, we must not underestimate the artist's superior powers of observation. The same views beheld by a lesser craftsman could not have inspired the powerful images offered in the large landscapes. Bruegel achieved this heroic vision of nature, moreover, without sacrificing human presence. No matter how forbidding the terrain, a castle, a shanty, or a pair of travelers along a simple road appear as evidence of the peaceful coexistence of man and nature. In *NVNDINAE RVSTICORVM* (No.8), where the mountainous scenery is a subordinate element of the composition, or in *PAGVS NEMOROSVS* (No.11), where it is eliminated altogether, Bruegel al-

lowed the subtle charm of a more thoroughly tamed landscape to dominate his imagination. But even in these scenes, lovingly embellished with homely buildings and rustic figures, the artist's sensitivity to the structures and rhythms of the living world shines through.

Before considering further the pictorial qualities and subject matter of these crucial prints in Bruegel's oeuvre, it is important to discuss in some detail how a date for this series has been established. None of the twelve etchings in the large landscape series (Nos. 1–12) bears a date. Of the three surviving preparatory drawings, only the sheet in the Louvre is inscribed 1555. This provides us with a *terminus post quem* for the corresponding etching, but not necessarily for the series as a whole. Much of the debate concerning this issue has revolved around Charles de Tolnay's characterization of the series as a piecemeal production, somewhat haphazardly orchestrated by the publisher, Hieronymus Cock. Tolnay saw the first seven prints as the core of the series, made from Bruegel's designs c. 1555–1557. He interpreted the lower viewpoint and the more tightly structured composition of Nos. 9, 11 and 12 as evidence of a stylistic advance. These prints he assigned to 1558. Nos. 8 and 10, *NVNDINAE RVSTICORVM* and *FVGA DEIPARAE IN AEGYPTVM*, he felt were not based on designs by Bruegel at all, but were invented by the engraver to complete the series. He offered this opinion despite the fact that the prints in question bear Bruegel's name.

A different interpretation of the inconsistencies noted by Tolnay was presented by Konrad Oberhuber in 1968–69. The large landscapes have often been described as engravings made by Cock himself. Oberhuber established that they are etchings, only occasionally reinforced with the burin, and attributed them to Jan and Lucas van Duetecum. The variation in design that Tolnay claimed to see in Nos. 8 and 10, Oberhuber ascribed to a difference in the quality of the etching. The greater density of line and the less heavily accentuated contours in these two prints, suggested to Oberhuber one of the Dueteccums working alone. The slightly cruder treatment of the rest of the series could be attributed to the brothers working together. Tolnay's argument was weakened further by Karl Arndt's assignment of a group of drawn woodland scenes to 1550–1554. One of the better examples from this group is Bruegel's *Forest Landscape with Bears* in Prague, dated 1554. The relatively low vantage point and the handling of the transition from the thick cluster of trees at the right to the distant waterscape at the left, links the drawing to prints such as *PAGVS NEMOROSVS* (No. 11), and *EVNTES IN EMAVS* (No. 9). The early existence of these drawings undermines Tolnay's assumption that

these images represented a stylistic advance reached only in 1558. The knowledge that such compositions were part of Bruegel's repertoire in 1554 or earlier, eliminates the need to date Nos. 9, 11 and 12 any later than the rest of the series.

Here we are reminded of the fact that we have no firm date for any part of the series save that established by the Louvre preparatory drawing dated 1555. A tentative *terminus ante quem* of 1556 for the etching derived from this drawing can be established by means of Timothy Riggs's observation that, in general, Cock published Bruegel's designs within a year of their creation. These dates thus have to serve as a working hypothesis for the dating of the series as a whole.

PROSPECTVS TYBVRTINVS is the only print in the series that does not bear Bruegel's name. Nevertheless, the attribution to Bruegel has not been contested. Like many of the etchings in the series, the subject is based on one of the impressions Bruegel received during his travels through Italy and the Alps. The *View of Tivoli*, however, is unusual in that it seems to represent a specific place. It was probably based on a drawing begun before the actual site and then finished in the studio. No preparatory drawing for this etching survives, but a drawing made by Bruegel in Rome (c. 1553), depicting a topographically correct view of the Ripa Grande of the Tiber, suggests that this was Bruegel's practice.

The other etchings in the series have a less direct topographic relationship. These compositions were probably created in the studio, composed from studies, only a portion of which were likely to have been done *en plein air*. Despite the large number of surviving drawings that seem to be related to the large landscapes, the obstacles to retracing the steps of Bruegel's creative process are considerable. For example, a drawing, now in the Courtauld Institute Galleries, known as the *Landscape with Two Mules*, has been related to both Nos. 3 and 5. The road and trees in the lower, right corner of the drawing are almost exactly the same as those in No. 3. But beyond this one shared motif, the two compositions are dissimilar. Then the rocks in the lower left corner of the drawing reappear in No. 5, somewhat enlarged. These comparisons are made even more confusing when one realizes that the *Landscape with Two Mules* is a rather finished drawing and may itself be a fictive composition worked up from more rudimentary sketches. Because of this we cannot assume, as Popham and others did, that the drawing was a source for the etchings. We must keep our minds open to other explanations—in particular, the possibility that the drawing and both prints evolved from a common source.



PROSPECTVS TYBVRTINVS

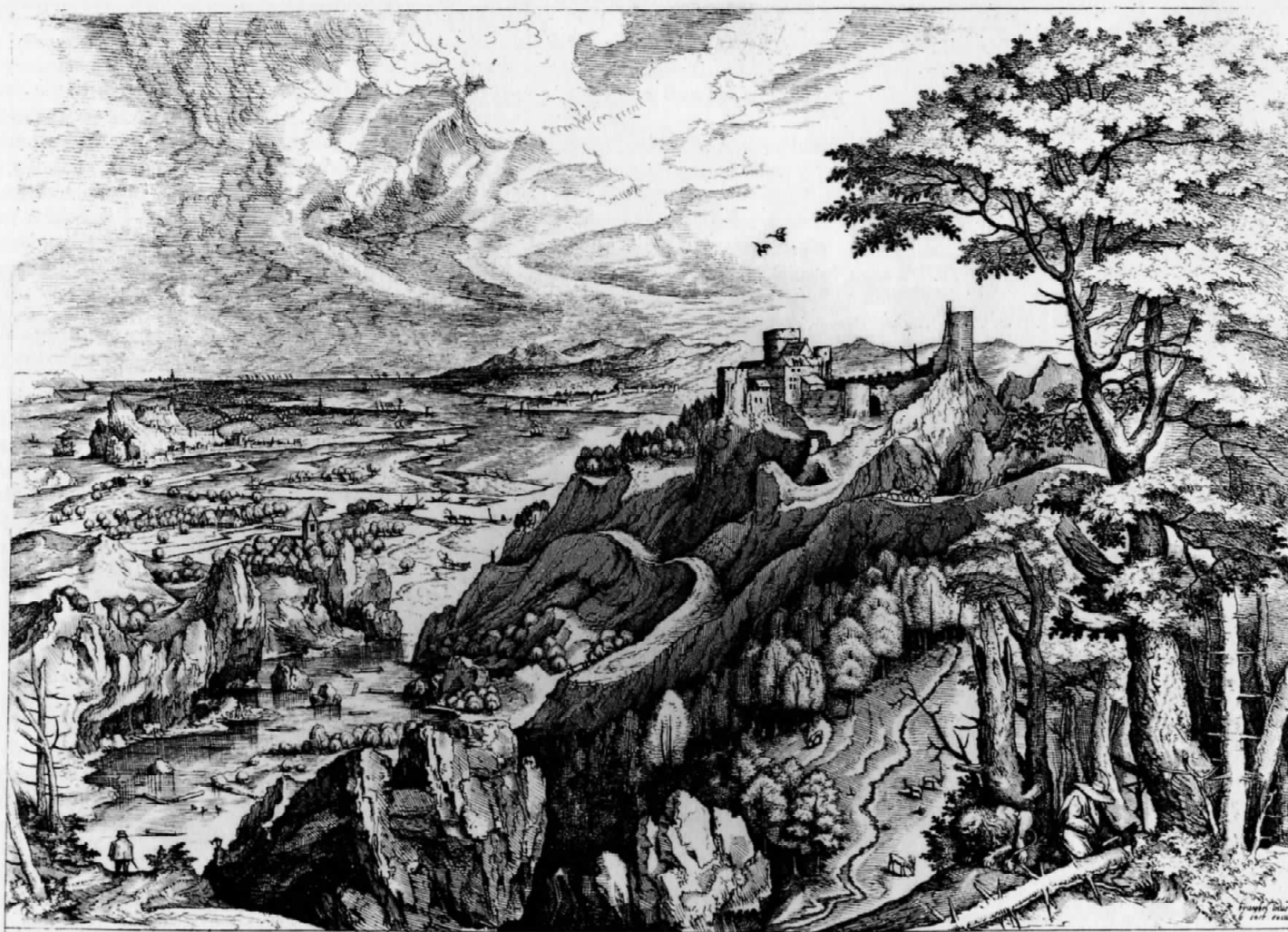
1

VIEW OF THE TIBER [TIVOLI]
(PROSPECTVS TYBVRTINVS)

Etching and engraving (by Jan and Lucas van Duetecum).
322 x 427 mm.

In the lower right corner: *h. cock excude*. Without P.
Bruegel's name. In the middle of the lower margin:
PROSPECTVS TYBVRTINVS (The first and second *s* are
reversed.)

Tivoli was famous even in Bruegel's time for its ruins of Roman villas. Although artists were drawn here by the opportunity to study ancient architecture, their drawings frequently reveal an interest in the process of decay itself. Bruegel's composition is unusual in that it not only lacks any hint of this "romantic" sensibility, but also omits the ruins themselves.



S- HIERONYMVS IN DESERTO -

2

SAINT JEROME IN THE WILDERNESS
(S. HIERONYMVS IN DESERTO)

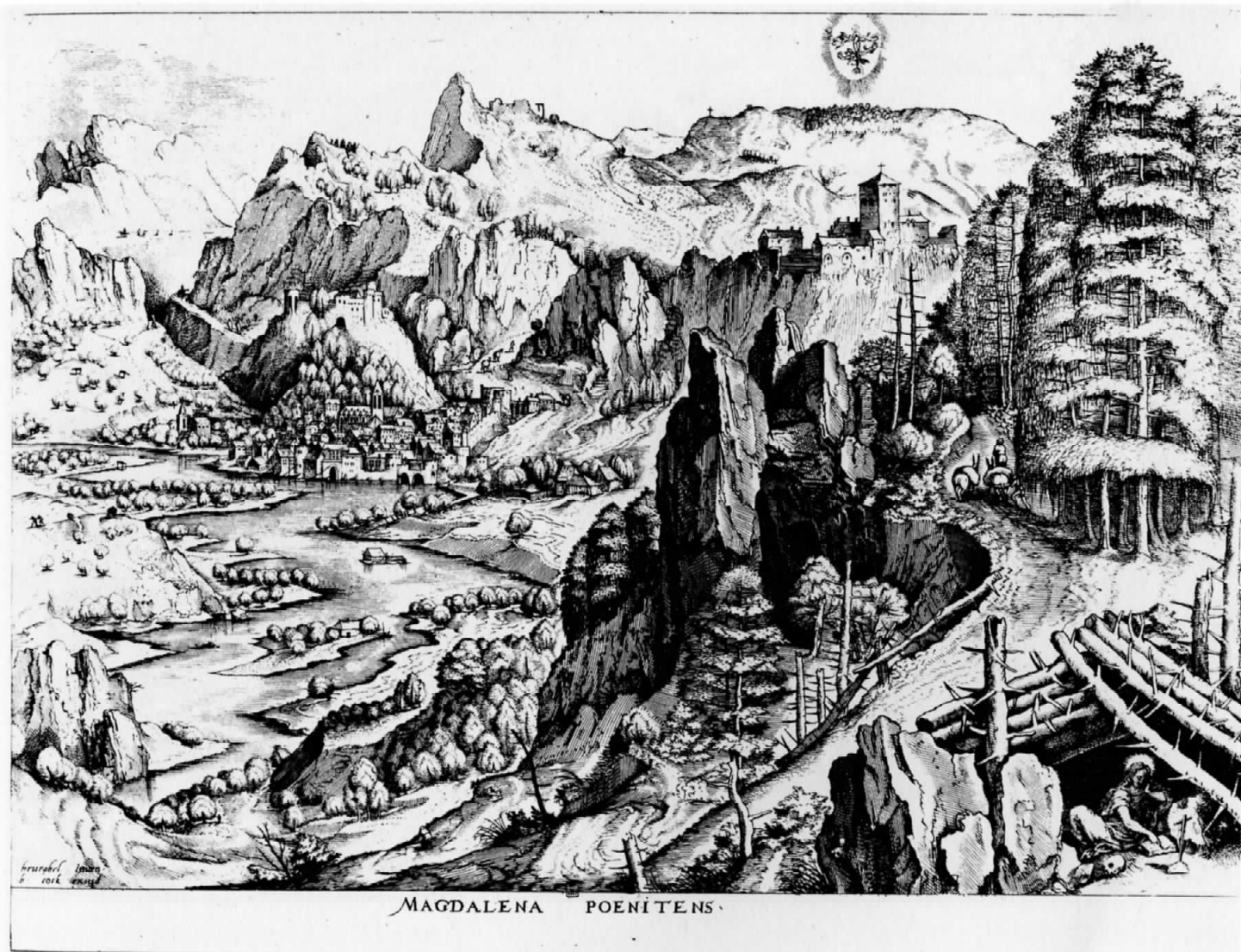
Etching and engraving (by Jan and Lucas van Duetecum).
322 x 422 mm.

In the lower right corner: *brueghel Inue*, and below this: *h. cock excu*. In the lower margin: S. HIERONYMVS IN DESERTO.

According to van Bastelaer, the preparatory drawing for this etching was sold in Cologne in 1892. It is likely, however, that this is the same drawing, now in the British Museum, considered by Tolnay to be a copy. Münz seems to refer to this drawing as an autograph study for the etching, but does not include it in his

catalogue.

The figures of Saint Jerome and his lion in the lower right corner were probably not part of Bruegel's original design. Oberhuber has suggested that many of the figures in the large landscapes were in fact designed by Cock. Riggs has more recently given greater weight to this idea by citing examples of drawings Cock commissioned from other artists, where the added *staffage* can be attributed to his hand. None of the preparatory drawings for this series, however, carry such additions. In S. HIERONYMVS IN DESERTO, the fact that the saint is not exactly in a desert or wilderness, leads us to suspect that the title is Cock's invention as well. For further discussion of Cock's additions, see No. 9.



3

THE PENITENT MAGDALENE
(MAGDALENA POENITENS)

Etching and engraving (by Jan and Lucas van Duetecum).
322 x 422 mm.

In the lower left corner: *brueghel Inuen*, and below this: *h. cock excud*. In the lower margin: *MAGDALENA POENITENS*.

Totally absorbed in her penitential devotions, the Magdalene is oblivious to the breathtaking view that lies beyond her rustic enclosure. She is inserted into the landscape in much the same way as Saint Jerome in No. 2. A drawing now in the Courtauld Institute Galleries, reproduces the road and the trees at the right but not the saint.



4

ALPINE LANDSCAPE

Etching and engraving (by Jan and Lucas van Duetecum).
320 × 422 mm.

In the lower left corner: *brueghel Inuentor*; below the letter
r in *brueghel* there is: *h.* (followed by a space) *cock excude.*;
in the lower right corner: *brue inu.* The lower margin is
blank.

The preparatory drawing for this etching is in the Louvre (No.20720) and is signed, "(Br)ueghel," "(15)55." It is curious that although a number of *staffage* figures were added, the print was never given a title.

Although we are at first awed by the proportions of the landscape—the precipitous cliffs and the deep ravine—we are also charmed by the care Bruegel has taken to humanize the scene. Castles, churches and an assortment of simple dwellings are perched atop the more hospitable heights and nestled beside the stream. Instead of appearing improbably placed, the buildings and their inhabitants have reached a gentle accord with the forces of nature. Even the travelers who brave the narrow mountain roads are only dwarfed, not threatened, by the heroic landscape that surrounds them.



5

THE CRAFTY BIRD-CATCHER
(*INSIDIOSVS AVCEPS*)

Etching and engraving (by Jan and Lucas van Duetecum).
320 x 424 mm.

In the lower right corner: *BRVEGHEL INVE*, and below this:
h. cock excudeb. In the lower margin: *INSIDIOSVS AVCEPS*.

In the three preceding landscapes we look down into a valley from above. Here our viewpoint is lower and the "constructed" nature of the landscape is more apparent. Particularly conspicuous is the wedge of land constituting the lower right corner. The silhouetting of the buildings here against the lighter background seems rather less convincing than usual. As a compositional device, however, it heightens our sense of the space contained by the walls of this immense canyon.



6

**THE BELGIAN WAGON
(PLAVSTRVM BELGICVM)**

Etching and engraving (by Jan and Lucas van Duetecum).
320 x 423 mm.

In the lower right corner: *BRUEGHEL INVE*, and below
this: *H. cock excude*. In the lower margin: *PLAVSTRVM
BELGICVM*.

Lebeer describes this landscape as one of the more obvious hybrid compositions in the series. Bruegel has skillfully combined elements of the Brabant countryside with impressions gathered during his travels through Italy and the Alps. There are, of course, no such mountainous horizons in Brabant.



7

RUSTIC SOLICITUDE
(*SOLICITVDO RVSTICA*)

Etching and engraving (by Jan and Lucas van Duetecum).
322 × 421 mm.

In the lower middle foreground: *brueghel inve*; below this:
H. cock excu. In the lower margin: *SOLICITVDO*

The preparatory drawing for this etching is in the British Museum. Not included in the drawing are the trees and figures in the right foreground of the etching. The lower corner of the corresponding section of the drawing has been left blank. When the drawing was published by Christopher White in 1963, Tolnay objected to his claim that it was a preparatory drawing. He argued that we must assume that a model closer to the etching once existed.

It is not impossible that the inscription was intended to read *Solitudo Rustica* (Rustic Solitude) rather than *Solicitudo Rustica* (Rustic Care[s]).



NVNDINAE RVSTICORVM.

8

RUSTIC MARKET
(NVNDINAE RVSTICORVM)

Etching and engraving (by Jan and Lucas van Duetecum).
317 × 421 mm.

Near the lower left corner: *brueghel Inue*; below this: *H. cock excude*. In the lower margin: NVNDINAE RVSTICORVM.

In the left foreground and across to the middle distance to the right, Bruegel reveals his interest in a more intimate kind of landscape, reminiscent of the Flemish villages he knew so well. The lake and the mountain in the upper right seem to be foreign elements skillfully intergrated into the composition. Oberhuber has argued that the etching here and in No.10 is of a slightly higher quality than the rest of the series. He has suggested that it represents the work of one of the Dueticums working alone.



EVNTES IN EMAVS

9

THE WAY TO EMMAUS (EVNTES IN EMAVS)

Etching and engraving (by Jan and Lucas van Duetecum).
323 x 423 mm.

In the lower left corner: *brueghel inv.*; below this: *H. cock excud.* In the lower margin: *EVNTES IN EMAVS*.
The upper right corner is not etched and the border is incomplete in the upper left and right corners.

A preparatory drawing for this etching is in the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp. Wash has been added to the drawing but Arndt has convincingly argued that this was done after it served as the model for the etching.

It is significant that, unlike the other two surviving preparatory drawings, this *Landscape with Three Pilgrims* already contains major *staffage* figures. Moreover, these figures are characteristic enough of Bruegel's work to quell any suspicion that they were added to the drawing by Cock. What Cock perhaps did add to the etching is the halo over the central figure's head. This simple addition transforms the scene from three figures (who carry the staffs and badges of pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela) approaching a village, into the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13–30). The other major addition to the etching, the setting sun, also has a function in the story. The apostles press Jesus to stay with them because it is nearly evening. This detail foreshadows the supper during which Christ will reveal himself to the three apostles.



FVGA DEIPARAE IN AEGYPTVM.

10

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT
(FVGA DEIPARAE IN AEGYPTVM)

Etching and engraving (by Jan and Lucas van Duetecum).
315 x 420 mm

Toward the lower right corner: *brueghel inu*; below this: *H. cock excud*. In the lower margin: *FVGA DEIPARAE IN AEGYPTVM* (The Flight of the Virgin into Egypt).

There is a fine crack in the plate below the letter G in FVGA.

There is no doubt that the figures here have been added by Cock or someone else. One need only compare them with the figures in No.9 to see how out of step they are with Bruegel's work. Nothing could be more improbable than the setting of this biblical scene in a wide river landscape with a high peak and a delightful array of sixteenth-century buildings.



11

**WOODED REGION
(PAGVS NEMOROSVS)**

Etching and engraving (by Jan and Lucas van Duetecum).
321 x 425 mm

In the lower left corner: *brueghel inue*; to the right of this
and towards the centre: *h. cock excu*. In the lower margin:
PAGVS NEMOROSVS.

In this etching Bruegel surrenders his interest in wide vistas and foreign terrain and presents an intimate view of a countryside that looks recognizably Flemish. The composition has much in common with two series of prints attributed to the so-called Master of the Small Landscapes, published by Cock only a few years later (1559, 1561). In fact, the design of the small landscapes was originally attributed to Bruegel. The low viewpoint, the apparently casual depiction of rural buildings and people, and in general, the lack of any obvious theme or topographical novelty, distinguishes these images from earlier traditions. For the same reasons, *Pagus nemorosus* and the small landscapes anticipate the development of the Dutch landscape print in the seventeenth century.



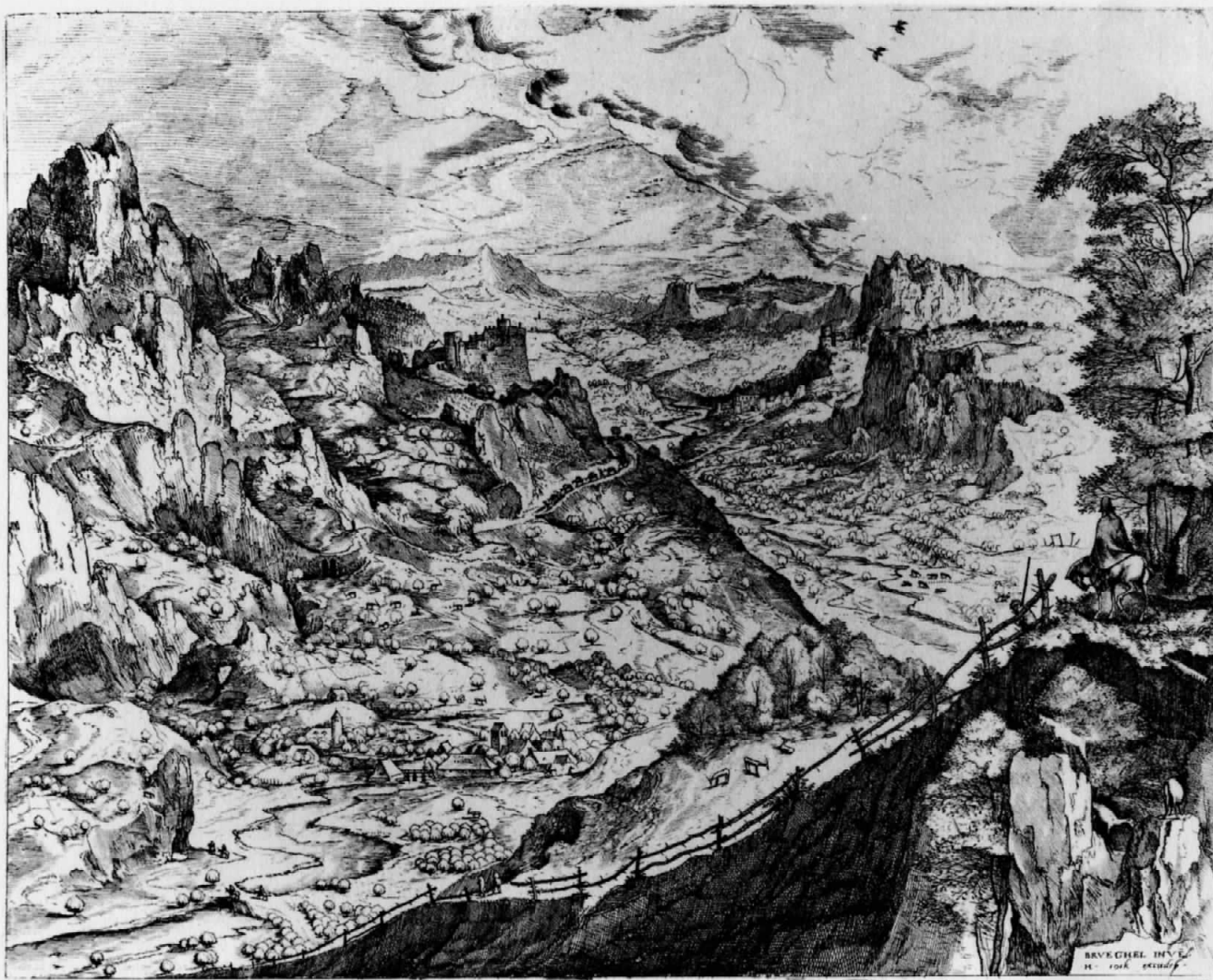
12

SOLIDERS AT REST
(MILITES REQUIESCENTES)

Etching and engraving (by Jan and Lucas van Duetecum).
 321 x 424 mm.

At the bottom, toward the left: *bruegel inu* (short line below *n* and *u*); in the lower right corner: *h. cock excu*. In the lower margin: *MILITES* (the second *I* is smaller and interposed between the *L* and the *T*) *REQUIESCENTES*.

This is the only print in the series in which Bruegel's name is spelled without an "h," a form he only began to use around 1558. Because of this, Lebeer has suggested that the print must date from this same time. Timothy Riggs has argued, however, that the spelling of Bruegel's name is not a reliable dating device because the artist did not use either the "old" or the "new" spelling with absolute consistency. For instance, the pre-1558 spelling appears on a print from 1563 (No. 55).



13

THE LARGE ALPINE LANDSCAPE

Etching and engraving (by Jan and Lucas van Duetecum).
368 × 468 mm.

In the lower right corner: *BRUEGHEL INVE*; below this: *H. cock excudeb*. (A crack at the lower right passes through the last letters.)

Although distinguished by its size, *The Large Alpine Landscape* is stylistically and technically related to the large landscape series. It is probably from the same period, 1555–1556. But compared, for instance, with the mountain vistas presented in Nos. 2 and 3, *The Large Alpine Landscape* offers a wider panorama and a more vivid sense of light and atmosphere. The valley is deep and its sides vastly more precipitous than in any of the other Alpine scenes by Bruegel. The mounted figure at the right not only provides a sense of scale but surveys the vista stretched out before him, inviting us to do the same.



THE TEMPTATION OF ST. ANTHONY

Engraving attributed to Pieter van der Heyden.
245 x 320 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *Cock excud. 1556*; on lower margin, in Latin: *MVLTAE TRIBVLATIONES IVSTORVM, DE OMNIBVS IIS LIBERABIT EOS DOMINVS. PSAL. 33* (Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. Psalm 34, 19, The engraved inscription gives the Vulgate numbering).

The original drawing is in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. It is signed and dated 1556 by a later hand. The drawing is in the same direction as the print. Along with the later signature and some stylistic inconsistencies this has led to doubts about its attribution, but it is

now generally accepted as Bruegel's preparatory design for the engraving.

This is the first of a series of figure compositions which Bruegel designed for Hieronymus Cock. All are characterized by strong satirical, didactic or moralizing tendencies in a fantastic or grotesque manner derived from Hieronymus Bosch.

Anthony (c.251–356 AD) was a hermit saint who lived in the Egyptian desert for many years. Like other hermits he was subject to vivid hallucinations resulting from his ascetic life. These 'temptations' assume various forms in art, most commonly assaults by demons and erotic visions. The *Temptation of St. Anthony* was a popular theme in the late middle ages,

especially in the works of Bosch and his followers. Bruegel's treatment of the subject, however, differs from that of his predecessors, despite his Bosch-like imagery. There are no naked women, no attacking demons, only a small moneybag tempting the Saint (a rather insignificant detail easily overlooked). The main subject seems to be the foolishness, stupidity and corruption of the world, particularly of the church. From all this the Saint has turned away, a calm and enlightened figure absorbed in the study of his holy book.

Prominent in the scene is the monstrous head swimming in the water, a motif familiar from Bosch's repertoire of horror and one which appears again in Bruegel's *Gula* (No.22).



H. Cock. excude. 1557.

Æ

Brueghel. Inuent.

PATIENTIA EST MALORVM QVÆ AVT INFERVNTVR, AVT ACCIDVNT, CVM ÆQVANIMITATE PERLATIO. Lact. Inst. Lib. 5.

15

PATIENCE

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden, engraver's monogram lower right.

340 x 440 mm.

Inscribed lower left: H. Cock. excude. 1557; lower right:

Brueghel. Inuent; lower centre: PATIENTIA; on lower margin, in Latin: PATIENTIA EST MALORVM QVÆ AVT INFERVNTVR AVT ACCIDVNT, CVM ÆQVANIMITATE PERLATIO. Lact. Inst. Lib. 5. (Patience is the tranquil endurance of evils which assail you or happen to you. From Book 5 of the *Institutiones Divinae* of Lactantius.)

No drawing survives. The print is related, thematically as well as compositionally, to the *Sins* and *Virtues* series (Nos. 18–24; 31–37). Like

the *Seven Deadly Sins*, it makes use of diabolical and monstrous creatures; yet the subject, *Patientia*, is not a sin but a virtue.

Patience is seated on and chained to a stone in the centre foreground. Clasp ing a cross in her hands and looking up to heaven, she is surrounded by fantastic figures and charades, indicating the evils that beset the patient person. In the background a village is burning. Undoubtedly, the scene is full of symbolic meaning difficult to unravel today, but certain motifs and figures seem to allude to the political and religious tensions in the Netherlands at the time. Prominent among them are the gigantic, open egg and the hollow tree, images which appear repeatedly in Bruegel's prints.



GRANDIBVS EXIGVI SVNT PISCES PISCIBVS ESCA.
Siet sone dit hebbe ick zeer langhe gheweten / dat die groote vissen de cleijne eten

16

THE BIG FISH EAT THE LITTLE FISH

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden, engraver's monogram lower left.

229 x 296 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *Hieronimus Bos. inuenter*; lower right:

COCK. EXCV. 1557; on lower margin, in Latin:

GRANDIBVS EXIGVI SVNT PISCES PISCIBVS ESCA

(Little fish are the food of big fish), and, in Flemish: *Siet sone dit hebbe ick zeer langhe gheweten dat die groote vissen de cleijne eten*. (See, son, I have known for a long time that the big fish eat the small.)

The original drawing is in the Albertina, Vienna. It is signed with Bruegel's name (unlike the print) and dated 1556. The scene is an illustration of the Flemish proverb "Big fish eat little fish." It is the first in a series of prints inspired by proverbs.

On the bank of a river a man cuts open the belly of a gigantic fish: out pours a tangle of smaller

fish, mussels and eels, many themselves swallowing fish in their turn. The same situation is repeated at the creature's mouth. This central theme is surrounded by similar images, prominent among them a fool who sits on the edge of the water dangling one fish to catch another. In the foreground, a man in a boat points out the whole spectacle to a boy; the word 'Ecce' in Latin means 'see', as in the Flemish inscription. The latter literally informs us of his words, like those contained in 'balloons' in modern-day comic strips.

In addition to the proverbial inscription which is the main subject of the print, other related proverbs are also illustrated, such as "Little fish lure the big" or "One fish is caught by means of another," as demonstrated by the fool. The knife in the belly of the fish carries the sign of the world—in this case referring to a wicked and foolish world.

In this print Cock substituted Bosch's name for Bruegel's. Bosch-like monsters, most prominently the fish with human legs on the left, are, indeed, inspired by the older master, as is the didactic character of the print, but the design is undoubtedly Bruegel's own. Cock's attribution to Bosch poses a problem not completely solved even now, though scholars generally agree that Cock used Bosch's name for commercial reasons, since the older master was much more famous at this time. But it has also been suggested that the scene veils a political statement which would have been more safely attributed to the older (and long dead) master. Whatever the various levels of meaning may be, the sentiment expressed in this print is not difficult to grasp. It must have been particularly close to Bruegel's heart, as he included a representation of the same proverb in his famous painting of *Netherlandish Proverbs* now in Berlin.



17

THE ASS AT SCHOOL

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden, engraver's monogram on the lid of the box suspended from the wall.
234 x 303 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *Bruegel. Inuentor.*; lower right: *COCK. EX. 1557*; on the lower margin, in Latin: *PARISIOS STOLIDVM SI QVIS TRANSMITTAT ASELLVM. SI HIC EST ASINVS NON ERIT ILLIC EQVVS.* (If you send a stupid ass to Paris, if it is an ass here, it will not be a horse there), and in Flemish: *Al reijst den esele ter scholen om leeren/ist eenen esele hy en sal gheen peert weder keeren.* (Although the ass goes to school in order to learn, if it is an ass, it will not return [as] a horse.)

The original drawing is in the Berlin Print Room. It is signed and dated 1556 but, unlike the engraving, Bruegel's name is spelled with an 'h', i.e. 'brueghel.' This is the earlier spelling of his name which the artist still used in that year but which he was to give up in 1558/59.

In a schoolroom filled with unruly children a teacher is about to punish one of them. An ass looks in through a window, a sheet of music in front of him. As the inscription tells us, the ass will not benefit from instruction, despite the spectacles and the burning candle which Bruegel placed next to him to help him in his endeavor. Learning does not seem to be on the mind of the children either: some of them poke fun at the whole enterprise by making rude grimaces, while others study their texts in crazy postures and combinations.

The inscription has proverbial character, akin to the English "Once an ass, always an ass."

Proverbs are certainly suggested elsewhere in the print. The two figures under one hat, for example, relate to the Flemish saying "Easily caught under a hat" or "Two fools under a single hood," a proverb also to be found among the many scenes in the Berlin painting.

Contemporary sources tell us that the use of ABC-books and slates hanging from strings, as seen in the engraving, were common in the classroom of the day, as was corporal punishment (for a description of the instruction of children, see also No.37). As so often with Bruegel, he combined accurate details with fantastic ones.

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Pieter Van der Heyden engraved all seven *Sins*. They were published by Hieronymus Cock in 1558. All of Bruegel's original drawings have survived (their present locations are mentioned under the individual entries below). One of the seven drawings, *Avarice*, is dated 1556; the rest, 1557. The series is sometimes called the *Seven Deadly Sins*, sometimes the *Seven Vices*, the latter in relation to the *Seven Virtues* which were conceived as their sequel (Nos. 31-37). *Sins* is the correct title as there are seven of them while there are more than seven Vices. They correspond to the canonical list in the Catholic Church.

Each composition is dominated by the Sin personified by a female figure. In gender and attributes the *Sins* conform to medieval iconography, even including the traditional animal denoting each one (e.g. *Superbia*—peacock, *Avaricia*—toad, etc.). Surrounding the central figure is a hellish landscape where examples of the sin and its consequences are displayed. It is in the depiction of this landscape that Bruegel responded most strongly to Bosch's fantastic imagery. However, despite the hell-like scenery, the *Sins* are not meant to be seen as future hells that await sinners after death. The place of Bruegel's *Sins* is, rather, within man's soul. Punishment for sin is not hell in afterlife but hell on earth. It leads to misfortune and degradation, to spiritual and bodily decay. Sins serve as their own punishments.

The Bruegel scholars F. Grossmann and C.G. Stridbeck saw in the *Sins* the viewpoint of a religious-ethical movement known as Libertinism or Spiritualism which was influential during Bruegel's time and within his intellectual circle. The leading spokesman of this viewpoint in the Netherlands was the philosopher and engraver of Haarlem, Dirck Volckertsz. Coornhert. His rather tolerant religious conception centered on a personal relationship with God that dispensed with the outward ceremonies of the churches (Catholic or Protestant), and a moral philosophy concerned with man's duty to overcome sin, to which he is driven by foolishness. This view differs drastically from the Catholic, Lutheran, or Calvinist conceptions of sin as inborn; yet it is the view basically illustrated by the *Sins*, and supported by the Latin and Flemish inscriptions. These inscriptions often paraphrase passages in Coornhert's writings so that it has been suggested that their wording can be attributed to Coornhert himself. Whether they were selected by Bruegel, his publisher Cock or by Coornhert does not matter greatly; there is no ground to suppose that they were added in opposition to the views of

Bruegel. For a further discussion of the implication and meaning of these prints, see the first essay by David Freedberg in this volume; for more on the ideas that have been called Libertine, see his fourth essay.

Although Coornhert and the ideas he voiced were undoubtedly influenced by the humanistic revival, there is a medieval aspect to Bruegel's *Sins* too. In their choice of personifications and symbols, their diabolism and their crowded compositions they go back to Bosch and beyond.

Not every detail in the *Seven Deadly Sins* can be understood by the modern viewer, but in most instances the basic subject is clear. As in so many of Bruegel's compositions, proverbs play an important part. Like Bosch, Bruegel had a predilection for transforming everyday sayings into striking visual images, and for startling juxtapositions of form. This is discussed in more detail under the individual entries.

The sequence that follows is the one used by Lebeer. It does not follow the chronology of the drawings, as the *Allegory of Avarice* (No. 21) is Bruegel's earliest design.



18

ANGER (IRA)

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden, engraver's monogram lower centre.

223 x 293 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *P. brueghel. Inuentor.*; lower right: *H. Cock. excude. Cum gratia et priuilegio. 1558.*; underneath the allegorical figure: *IRA*; on the lower margin, in Latin: *ORA TVMENT IRA, NIGRESCVNT SANGVINE VENÆ* (Anger makes the face swell up and the veins grow black with blood), and in Flemish: *Gramscap doet den mont swillen/en verbittert den moet sij beroert den gheest/en maecht swert dat bloet* (Anger swells the mouth, embitters the spirit and blackens the blood).

The original drawing is in the Uffizi, Florence. It is signed and dated 1557.—*Anger* and her army emerge from a tent into a world ruled by violence and war. Compared to the other personifications in the series, she takes an unusually active part in the proceedings. She is fully armed, with a sword in one hand, and a torch in the other. Her attendant animal, a bear, attacks the leg of a helpless victim. Twin warriors with huge helmets wield a giant knife of the style that is cutting the great fish in the *Big Fish Eat Little Fish* (No. 16). It cuts into several naked sinners at once, victims of anger. In the shed next to a hollow tree a human being is being roasted over the fire of anger. The giant riding on a barrel holding a carafe in his (her?) hand and a knife in his (her?) mouth has been interpreted as a reference to drunkenness. Two men are fighting in the barrel, as drunkenness often leads to anger and quarrel.



19

SLOTH (DESIDIA)

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden, engraver's monogram lower centre.

225 × 292 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *brueghel. Inuenter.*; lower right: *H. Cock. excud. cum priuilegio. 1558.*; underneath the allegorical figure: *DESIDIA*; on lower margin, in Latin: *SEGNITIES ROBVR FRANGIT, LONGA OCIA NERVOS* (Sluggishness breaks strength, long idleness ruins vigour), and in Flemish: *Traechtheyt maect machteloos en verdroocht Die senuwen dat de mensch nieters toe en doocht* (Sloth takes away all strength and dries out the nerves until man is good for nothing).

The original drawing is in the Albertina, Vienna. It is signed and dated 1557.—Sloth is asleep on her beastly counterpart, a sleeping ass. Her head rests on one hand; a devil behind

her adjusts a pillow for her. Other sleeping figures can be seen at the table on the right. Two figures in bed signify sleep as well as lechery—sloth encourages lechery. The dice are another symbol of *Desidia*: only a lazy person earns his money by gambling. Snails and slugs further symbolize indolence.

In the background we see an enormous half-submerged clock; a human arm points at the number 11. The lazy leave things until the eleventh hour. Disaster lies behind: a blaze is burning up the clock structure. A squatting giant in a building half hut, half boat, enacts the proverb "He is too lazy to shit." The midgits behind him are inducing a bowel movement with poles and pressure. As the inscription informs us, Sloth, far from resting and recuperating, wastes a man, renders him impotent and good for nothing.



20

PRIDE (SUPERBIA)

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden, engraver's monogram lower centre.

225 x 292 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *Cock excud cum priuileg 1558*; lower right: *P. brueghel Inuentor.*; underneath the allegorical figure: *SVPERBIA*; on the lower margin, in Latin: *NEMO SVPERBVS AMAT SVPEROS, NEC AMATVR AB ILLIS* (Nobody who is proud loves the gods above, nor is he loved by them), and in Flemish: *Houerdije werdt van godt bouen al ghehaet Tseghelijx werdt godt weder van houerdije versmaet* (Pride is hated by God above all, at the same time, Pride scorns God).

The original drawing is in the Institut Néerlandais (Fondation Custodia), Paris. It is signed and dated 1557.—*Pride* is a richly dressed woman who admires herself in a mirror, her attribute, the peacock, at her side. She not only personifies pride but also vanity. A shield with a pair of scissors on it, sign of a tailor, and a view of a barbershop on the right point to professions which support this vice. The mirror, a common attribute of Vanity, can be seen repeatedly in the composition. In the foreground, the lady's vanity is echoed and mocked by a demon who looks into a mirror, while another points his ass at one.

Particularly striking is the fantastic architecture, reminiscent of Bosch's in the *Garden of Earthly Delights*. This may be a commentary on the conspicuous waste indulged by the rich and proud on this earth.



21

GREED (AVARITIA)

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyen, engraver's monogram lower centre.

224 x 293 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *P. brueghel. Inuenter.*; to the right: *Cock. excud. cum priuilegio 1558*; underneath the allegorical personification: *AVARITIA*; on the lower margin, in Latin: *QVIS METVS, AVT PVDOR EST VNQVAM PROPERANTIS AVARI?* (Does the greedy miser ever possess fear or shame?), and in Flemish: *Eere, beleeftheijt, scaemte noch godlyck vermaen En siet die scrapende ghierichheijt niet aen* (Grasping Avarice sees neither honour, courtesy, shame nor divine command).

The original drawing is in the British Museum, London. It is signed and dated 1556.—*Greed* sits amid her money-bags and chests; her gown and head-dress are of the fifteenth century, in common with many other archaic elements in Bruegel's compositions. Near her feet crouches a toad, her animal attribute. Behind *Greed* is a pawnshop whose signboard is an oversized pair of shears from which dangles a nude figure. This illustrates the saying "There hang the shears," originally applied to tailors who cheated when measuring cloth, but later applied to any dishonest shopkeeper. It seems, however, that even the moneylender is being robbed. A thief

has climbed the roof and reaches in to steal. The avaricious cannot retain what they have snatched in their greed.

This is the first composition in the series, its earlier date explained by Grossmann and Stridbeck by its position relative to the other sins. The two scholars saw *Avarice* as the moral source of all other vices. It certainly was a subject close to Bruegel's heart as he treated it again in the two important prints *Elck* and the *Alchemist* (Nos. 26, 27).



22

GLUTTONY (GULA)

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden, engraver's monogram lower centre.
223 x 293 mm.

Inscribed underneath the allegorical personification: *GVLA*; on the overturned feeding tub: *brueghel Inuentor*; in the lower right: *H. Cock, excud cum gratia et priuilegio. 1558*; on the lower margin, in Latin: *EBRIETAS EST VITANDA INGLVIESQVE CIBORVM* (Dunkenness and gluttony are to be shunned), and in Flemish: *Schout dronckenschap en gulsichlijck eten Want ouerdaet doet godt en hem seluen vergheten* (Shun drunkenness and gluttony, for excess makes a man forget both God and himself).

The original drawing is in the Institut Néerlandais, Paris. It is signed and dated 1557.—Enthroned on her main attribute, a pig, *Gluttony* entertains a party of guzzlers and drinkers. It is clear from the imagery and the inscription that gluttony includes drunkenness as well as overeating, and that both lead to human degradation.

The personification of gluttony is a fat woman dressed like a sixteenth-century burgher's wife but with a fifteenth-century head-dress—again the archaic element in costume. She gulps wine from a pitcher. Her animal attribute, a pig, has gorged on turnips and carrots. Two fat and

naked women and their monstrous companions are drinking and stuffing themselves at the table. After-effects of such indulgence are expiated by a man who vomits abundantly over the bridge.

A particularly horrible example of compulsive eating can be seen on the bank of the stream where a man, too fat to walk unaided, carries his monstrous belly in a wheelbarrow before him. On the left, a giant in human form is imprisoned in a building from which only his head emerges, pierced by a shaft carrying spiked wheels. He is thus forced to look at the scene before him which he no longer can share.



ENVY (INVIDIA)

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden, engraver's monogram lower centre.

227 × 295 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *brueghel. Inuet.*; further to the right: *Cock. excud. cum priuil.*; underneath the allegorical personification: *INVIDIA*; on the lower margin, in Latin: *INVIDIA HORRENDVM MONSTRVM, SÆVISSIMA PESTIS* (Envy is a monster to be feared and a most savage plague), and in Flemish: *Een onsterffelijcke doot es nijt en wreede peste Een beest die haer seluen eet met valschen moleste* (Envy is an eternal death and a terrible sickness, a monster which devours itself in imaginary sorrow).

The original drawing was formerly in the collection of Robert von Hirsch, Basel. It is signed and dated 1557. —*Envy*, seated on a stone bench, eats a heart (i.e. her heart) with one hand and points at her animal attribute, a turkey, with the other. While the eating of a heart is the common Renaissance way of rendering this sin (it refers to the saying "Eating one's heart out with envy"), the turkey is an unusual attribute, since *Invidia* is generally associated with snakes. In front, two dogs are fighting over a bone. In representations of Envy a dog is occasionally seen with her. As in most of the series' personifications, *Invidia* wears a style of dress long outdated in Bruegel's time.

Behind *Envy* is the by now familiar hollow tree, here decorated with peacock feathers, the attribute of *Pride* (No. 20). According to Coornhert's hierarchy of sins, *Invidia* is the eldest daughter of *Pride*. The insatiable self-love of *Superbia* could only envy the success or fame of others.

According to Stridbeck, the boots and shoes illustrate the proverb "Everybody knows best where his shoe pinches." A new pair of shoes may arouse envy in others but only its wearer will know the pain.



LUST (LUXURIA)

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden, engraver's monogram lower centre.
225 x 296 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *brueghel. Inuentor // H. Cock. excu. cu. priu.*; underneath the allegorical figure: *LVXVRIA*; on the lower margin, in Latin: *LVXVRIA ENERVAT VIRES, EFFOEMINAT ARTVS* (Lust enervates the strength, weakens the limbs), and in Flemish: *Luxurje stinckt, sij is vol onsuuerheden Sij breeckt die Crachten, en sij swackt die leden* (Lechery stinks, it is dirty. It breaks the strength and weakens limbs).

The original drawing is in the Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels. It is signed and dated 1557.—*Luxuria* is personified by a nude woman being caressed by her demon lover; a second demon offers them a carafe on a tray. These figures are in a hollow tree trunk, an image frequently used by Bruegel. Here it satirizes the love pavilions depicted in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century art (e.g. Bosch's *Tabletop of the Seven Deadly Sins* in Madrid). Juxtaposed with the hollow tree trunk is a conventional bower and a traditional garden of love with a Gothic fountain. Other features taken from Bosch are the couple in a transparent bubble within a giant mussel or oyster (from the *Garden of Earthly Delights*)

and the naked figure riding a skeleton monster (from the *St. Anthony* triptych). He is an adulterer, as revealed by the writing fastened to his hat. Examination of the original drawing shows significant change or censorship in the engraving. In the drawing the adulterer wears what is unmistakably a bishop's mitre; in the engraving this has become an ordinary hat. Throughout the composition, sexual passion and erotic symbolism predominate. In the lower right a man who has just castrated himself, holds an amputated penis in his right hand. This is a literal interpretation of the inscription's 'effeminat,' meaning to make womanish, to enervate—the result of sexual overindulgence.



VENITE. BENEDICTI. PATRIS. MEI. IN. REGNUM. AETERNUM.
ITE. MALEDICTI. PATRIS. MEI. IN. IGNUM. SEMPITERNUM.

Compt ghy ghebenedyde myns vaders hier.
En ghaet ghy vermaledyde in dat ewighe vier.

25

THE LAST JUDGMENT

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden, engraver's monogram lower right.

225 × 295 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *Brueghel. inuict*; slightly further to the right: *H. Cock. excude. cum priuilegio. 1558*; on lower margin, in Latin: *VENITE. BENEDICTI. PATRIS. MEI. IN. REGNUM. AETERNUM.//ITE. MALEDICTI. PATRIS. MEI. IN. IGNUM. SEMPITERNUM*, and in Flemish: *Compt ghy ghebenedyde myns vaders hier//En ghaet ghy vermaledyde in dat ewighe vier* (freely translated from Latin and Flemish: Come you, blessed by my father to the eternal kingdom, and you, cursed by my father, go to everlasting fire).

The original drawing is in the Albertina, Vienna. It is signed and dated 1558.—Christ is represented as a judge, seated on a rainbow, his feet on a globe, the lily and the sword on either side of him, symbolizing, respectively, mercy

and severity. This arrangement is close to early Netherlandish treatments of the subject (e.g. Bosch, Roger van der Weyden and Memling) but rarely used in Bruegel's time.

On the right (i.e. good) side of Christ the blessed march up to heaven, on his left (i.e. bad) side, the damned tumble down to hell, represented as the gaping mouth of a gigantic monster. The medieval image of the gaping jaws of hell is derived from the sea monster, the Leviathan, of the book of Job (chap.41). Christ is surrounded by four angels blowing trumpets; one of these, on his left, has devil's claws instead of the usual billowing garment, its wings equally claw-shaped. From the trumpet hangs a barbed hook instead of a banner. This hook seems to be of particularly cruel significance in Bruegel's work for it appears

again on the banners of the army of money bags and strong boxes in No.54.

The print follows immediately after the *Seven Deadly Sins* (Nos.18–24), not only chronologically but also theologically. Traditionally the Last Judgment was associated with the Sins.

26

EVERYMAN

Engraving attributed to Pieter van der Heyden.

228 × 294 mm.

Inscribed lower right: *H. COCK. EXCVD. CVM. PRIVILEG*; on the hems of the coats of the five old men: *ELCK* (Everyman); on the lower margin, in Latin: *Nemo non quaerit passim sua commoda, Nemo//Non querit sese cunctis in rebus agendis, //Nemo non inhiat priuatis vndique lucris, //Hic trahit, ille trahit, cunctis amor vnus habendi est.* ([There is] no one [who] does not seek his own advantage



THE ALCHEMIST

Engraving attributed to Philip Galle.
320 × 330 mm.

Inscribed upper left: *Bruegel Inue*; lower edge, towards the left: *T. GALLE EXCVD CVM PRIVILEGIO*; on margin below, in two columns, in Latin: *DEBENT IGNARI RES FERRE ET POST OPERARI IVS LAPIDIS CARI VILIS SED DENIQUE RARI VNICA RES CERTA VILIS SED VBIQUE REPERTA QVATVOR INSERTA NATVRIS IN NVBE REFERTA NVLLA MINERALIS RES EST VBI PRINCIPALIS SED TALIS QVALIS REPERITVR VBIQVE LOCALIS* (The ignorant should suffer things and labour accordingly. The law of the precious, cheap but at the same time rare stone is the only certain, worthless but everywhere discovered thing. With four natures stuffed into the cloud it is no mineral that is unique somewhere but is of such a kind as to be found everywhere).

The original drawing is in the Berlin Print Room, signed and dated 1558 which probably also is the date of the engraving. The authenticity of the signature has been doubted in the past but was accepted in the most recent discussion of the drawing.

The alchemist is the man at the work bench holding a crucible with a pair of tongs over a flame with one hand while the other throws a coin (his last?) into a second crucible, in the hope of changing it into gold. His wife behind him tries to get a coin from an empty purse. Above her their three children scramble in the empty larder, one of them using a cooking pot as a helmet. A figure wearing a fool's cap fans the flame in a brazier with a pair of bellows, at the same time knocking over three crucibles and their contents. At the lectern on the right sits a scholar in old-fashioned dress pointing at a book before him on which one can read the words "Alge Mist", a reference to the subject of

the print (Alche-mist) as well as its unfortunate outcome, the words meaning "all is lost" as well as "all is rubbish" (or "excrement"). Such is the present state of this follower of alchemy. But his future is even more bleak. Beyond the window we see the family—alchemist, wife and children—being received into the poorhouse (identified as "hospital").

The words inscribed on the scholar's book reflect the low esteem in which alchemy was held during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Many stories circulated about alchemists who deceived their patrons with fraudulent claims to make gold. The scholar may represent such a deceiver; both he and the fool are not among the group seeking refuge in a poorhouse.

The print was one of Bruegel's most famous. It is even mentioned by Vasari—who does not, however, give the artist's name—in his *Life of Marcantonio Raimondi*.



28

THE WITCH OF MALLEGEM

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden.
 355 x 480 mm.

On the right leg of the bench in the foreground, the
 centre, in the lower margin (only of the first state): H.
 COCK EXCVD. CVM PRIVILEGIO. 1559.

When the print was first published it carried only Cock's name and the monogram of the engraver. In the later states, Cock's name was replaced by that of other publishers, the Galles, and Bruegel's name was included as the

"inventor" of the composition. The Galles also added lengthy inscriptions near the top and bottom edges and in the lower margin. Because these were added later, these inscriptions can not be viewed as literal and fully accurate interpretations of the print. Nevertheless, they do provide a foothold for understanding. The lines in Dutch in the lower margin are perhaps the most illuminating. Here the Witch addresses the people of Mallegem, roughly the Flemish equivalent of Foolsville. She has come to town to cure those who suffer from stones or wasps in their heads. In the French inscription just above this she adds that she deserves her wages more than Italian practitioners who rid people of kidney stones; she, after all, heals the mind. The illness she cures is foolishness. Its victims suffer from stones which, upon maturity, must be cut out of their heads. In the center foreground we see three victims of folly being treated by the Witch and her

assistants. The Witch, the figure slightly to the right of center, holds up to the crowd the large stone she has just removed from her patient's head. An assistant shines a lantern into his open mouth, apparently to check for more stones. The winking figure under the bench seems to alert us to the deception being perpetrated. The fool's bauble, peeking out of his sleeve, is perhaps meant to tell us that the secret of the Witch's trick is up her sleeve. R.H. Marijnissen has pointed out that charlatans actually performed such mock operations on gullible victims at Kermises and fairs. They were evidently a popular form of comic entertainment. Once hooked, the audience became not only potential customers for the quack, but victims for pickpockets. Bruegel's composition may be to some degree an attack on quackery, but it is above all a sharp if humorous comment on the fact that it is often our own foolishness that allows us to be deceived.



THE FESTIVAL OF FOOLS

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden.
325 x 437 mm.

In the lower left corner: P. Brueghel Inuenter, next to this: the monogram of the engraver Pieter van der Heyden; in the center, the address: *Aux quatre Vents*; in the lower margin: *Ghy Sottebollen, die met ydelheyt, ghequelt sijt. // Comt al ter banen, die lust hebt om rollen...* (you numbskulls who are plagued with foolishness come to the green if you want to go bowling).

The fools in the foreground of the engraving are playing a game of bowls. In the inscription below, the fools are referred to as "*sottebollen*." "Sot" in Flemish means "fool," and "bol" can mean "ball" or "head." Bruegel has made the same pun visually, by making the fools' heads as round and smooth as balls.

It has been suggested that the composition represents an actual festival of fools, organized by the Chambers of Rhetoric in Brabant in

1551. Keith Moxey, however, thinks that this is unlikely and has suggested instead that the print is an allegorical representation of folly. Moreover, he has pointed out that the primary definition of folly here is deceit, and that mixed in among the obscene and insulting gestures are numerous allusions to fraud and dishonesty. The figures in the center of the sheet pulling each other by the nose are an example. A Flemish saying, "to lead someone by the nose," meant to lead someone astray. The meaning of the figure in the lower left selling eyeglasses, is explained in the inscription below: "Some of them (the fools) sell trumpets, others sell spectacles//with which they deceive many nitwits."

The larger theme of the inscription below the image is that, although the world is full of fools, they are not all easily recognized. The last quatrain claims that some fools are actually wise; these are the fools who accept themselves

for what they are. This notion immediately calls to mind Erasmus's *In Praise of Folly* and the latter's advocacy of self-knowledge as a defense against sin and foolishness. It must be emphasized though that these "wise" fools do not seem to be depicted in Bruegel's picture.

30

KERMIS AT HOBOKEN

Engraving by Frans Hogenberg(?).
298 x 408 mm.

On the cask in the lower left corner, the monogram of the engraver, Frans Hogenberg; on the banner flying before the inn at the right: *Dit is de Gulde van hoboken* (this is the guild of Hoboken); below, toward the right: *Bruegel*; in the lower margin, to the right, the address: *Bartolomeus//de mumpere. Excu.*; below this, four lines of verse in Dutch: *Die boeren verblijuen in sulken feesten//Te dansen springhen en dronckendricken als beesten//Sij moeten die kermessen onderhouwen//Al souwen sij vasten en steruen van kauwen.* (The peasants rejoice at such festivals To dance, jump, and drink themselves drunk as beasts. They must observe church festivals even if they fast and die of cold.)



Kermises were popular rural festivals, usually held in honor of a church holiday. Bruegel's composition depicts a kermis in Hoboken, a village whose proximity to Antwerp made it a popular destination for city dwellers seeking an outing in the country. An added attraction was the fact that Hoboken's beer tax was half that of Antwerp's. Excessive drinking and eating were, in fact, traditional kermis activities. In the foreground of the print two well-satisfied customers emerge from a crowded public house which happens to be the meeting place of the local longbowman's guild. The guild has set up a shooting range in front of the inn and its members are practicing their skills, seemingly without fear of hitting the nearby animals and spectators. Behind the inn two separate religious processions are taking place, while in the upper right corner a play is being performed on a temporary stage.

The sheet most scholars now believe to be the

preparatory drawing for the engraving is in the Courtauld Institute in London, and is dated 1559. Adolf Monballieu has recently argued that this date is a key to understanding the print. In 1559 the village of Hoboken was sold to Melchior Schetz, and with the new owner came the fear that he would try to enforce the edicts promulgated by the government designed to curb the excesses associated with *kermissen*. The edicts first appeared in 1531, but were reissued when Margaret of Parma was appointed as governess of the Netherlands in 1559. The government declared that each village could have no more than a single day-long celebration per year. If three or four were traditionally held throughout the year, they now had to be condensed into one kermis. Moreover, attendance at the kermis was restricted to inhabitants of the village; no tourists from Antwerp would be allowed to swell the ranks of the revelers. The inscription below the print can

be read as a plea to the new owner not to enforce these restrictions. Furthermore, the image itself seems to be a depiction, not of an actual kermis at Hoboken, but of how events would proceed if the government's reforms were carried out. Stylishly dressed city dwellers are conspicuously absent and the two religious processions in the background seems to indicate the simultaneous celebration of two different holidays which occur in May and September.

Although Bruegel seems to sympathize with the peasant, he does so not without a trace of cynicism. Monballieu has suggested that the two figures relieving themselves—one against the church, the other dangerously close to one of the targets—refer to a derisive nickname given to the peasant inhabitants of Hoboken. Moreover, it is difficult to overlook the last line of the inscription and its sobering premonition. (See Nos. 52 and 61.)

THE SEVEN VIRTUES

The set was most probably engraved by Philip Galle and is of higher quality than the *Sins*. The compositions were designed by Bruegel in 1559-60 and published by Cock in the same years. With the exception of *Charity* (1559) the prints are not dated. All drawings have been preserved; their locations are given under the individual entries.

The *Virtues* should be seen as a sequel to the *Vices* (or rather *Sins*; Nos. 18-24). The theme of the struggle of virtue over vice goes back to Early Christian writings, and during the Middle Ages the number of Sins and Virtues was set at seven. The seven Virtues are divided into two groups: the three 'theological' virtues, Faith, Hope and Charity (so-called because of their New Testament source, i.e. I Cor. 13: 13), and the four 'cardinal' virtues, Justice, Prudence, Fortitude and Temperance.

Each Virtue, personified by a female figure, occupies the centre of the composition. She is

surrounded by scenes illustrating the specific virtue in action. In contrast to the *Sins*, however, the influence of Bosch's demonic imagery appears only in the *Allegory of Fortitude* where men and women battle with the Seven Deadly Sins symbolised by beasts and devils. Each Virtue is identified by several attributes of which some are relatively unusual. But precursors can be found in a number of French manuscripts of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century. While it is unlikely that Bruegel was familiar with these manuscripts, their existence points to a late-medieval tradition known to the artist. Once again these unusual scenes depend at least partly on the fusion of medieval imagery with contemporary humanist ideas.

In his treatment of the Virtues Bruegel does not differentiate between the theological and the cardinal ones. More importantly, he does not represent all the Virtues as God-given forces inspiring man to perform good deeds. Bruegel humanised the Virtues, making them into expressions of human wisdom necessary for the well-being of the individual and society.

31

FAITH (*FIDES*)

Engraving attributed to Philip Galle.
223 x 287 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *Cock exc*; underneath the allegorical personification: *FIDES*; lower right: *Brugel Inu*; on lower margin, in Latin: *FIDES MAXIME A NOBIS CONSERVANDA EST PRAECIPVE IN RELIGIONEM, // QVIA DEVS PRIOR ET POTENTIOR EST QVAM HOMO*. (Above all we must keep faith, particularly with respect to religion, for God comes before, and is mightier than man).

The original drawing is in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. It is signed and dated 1559. Since Faith is the first of the theological virtues, this

print is the first in the series.

Faith is represented as a nun standing on the lid of the opened grave of Christ, with the Tablets of the Law (signifying the Old Testament) on top of her head and a book (New Testament) in her hand. Next to the grave lie the symbols pertaining to the Passion of Christ; behind *Faith* stands the cross. Bruegel did not depict Faith in the traditional manner. Instead of the more usual representation of a woman with a church on her head, she is shown in a church, an image which occurs in fifteenth-century manuscripts.

Around *Faith* a congregation has gathered to receive the sacraments and hear the word of God: baptism, communion, confession and matrimony on the left side, preaching of the



sermon on the right. Without the figure of *Fides*, the composition is reminiscent of Rogier van der Weyden's famous *Seven Sacrament* altarpiece in the Antwerp museum. However, Bruegel depicts only four of the seven sacraments and, more importantly, not only includes instruction from the pulpit—not a sacrament—among his religious observances but assigns to it most of the right half of the composition. The sermon is not an essential part of the Catholic mass but is an important element of the Protestant service. Seen together with the celebration of the Eucharist represented on either side of the pulpit (communion on the left, transubstantiation on the right), the emphasis seems to be on the interpretation of the Eucharist, an important issue of debate be-

tween Catholics and Protestants. Central to this issue in either faith is the Passion of Christ represented in the centre of the composition by the crucifix and the instruments of the Passion. Sermons are rarely shown in art; one earlier example can be found in Hans Holbein's *Dance of Death* woodcuts where preacher and congregation are unmistakably Protestant. Bruegel's preacher is a monk; the sacraments enacted on the left include two (matrimony and confession) not accepted by Protestants; the priest in the background raising the chalice leaves no doubt as to the denomination of this congregation. But the separation of the Eucharistic celebration into the distribution of the wafers (on the left) and the raising of the cup at the moment of transubstantiation (right back-

ground) may indicate that Bruegel was concerned with the contemporary debate on the Eucharist. Without actually expressing Protestant ideas, Bruegel at least admits the validity of debate. For another interpretive possibility see also the introductory essay by David Freedberg above.

The emphasis on questions of interpretation may also explain Faith's attributes, the Old and New Testament, and her pointed gesture to the latter (could the bird perched on the book possibly be the dove of the Holy Ghost?) In Bruegel's intellectual circle, particularly as expressed by Coornhert's philosophy, the reading and interpretation of Scripture was considered more important than the forms and ceremonies of the Church.



32

HOPE (SPES)

Engraving attributed to Philip Galle.

223 × 288 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *BRVGEL INV*; underneath the allegorical figure: *SPES*; lower right: *H. cock excu.*; on lower margin, in Latin: *IVCVNDISSIMA EST SPEI PERSVASIO, ET VITAE IMPRIMIS NECESSARIA, INTER TOT AERVMNAS PENEQVE INTOLERABILES.* (Very pleasant is a conviction of hope and most necessary for life. [Hope is essential] amid many and almost unbearable hardships).

The original drawing is in the Berlin Print Room. It is signed and dated 1559.—*Hope* stands on her anchor in the midst of a raging sea. Ships are engulfed by huge waves and attacked by monstrous fish; the survivors pray for help and attempt to swim to safety. Fear makes their hair stand up. In the fortress at the left prisoners sit in irons: through a window above other prisoners lower a bottle on a string. On the embankment, a pregnant woman clasps her hands in prayer; a man inspects his fishing rods for a catch. Behind this scene people are trying to save a house on fire; in the far distance, farmers are working on the land. Thus *Spes* is represented as hope for delivery from prison or from physical danger, or as hope

for material gain (fish and agricultural products). Her attributes, besides an anchor, are a spade and a sickle. They allude to hope for a good harvest; the beehive on her head symbolizes the hope for prosperity in general. The sea-storm, moreover, alludes to another object traditionally connected with *Spes*, the ship, which Bruegel omitted as an attribute. See also the introductory essay by Freedberg in this volume.



33

CHARITY (CHARITAS)

Engraving attributed to Philip Galle.
222 x 289 mm.

Inscribed lower edge, left of centre: *H. cock excude*; underneath the allegorical figure: *CHARITAS*; lower right: *BRUEGEL 1559*; on lower margin, in Latin: *SPERES TIBI ACCIDERE QVOD ALTERI ACCIDIT, ITA DEMVM EXCITABERIS AD OPEM FERENDAM//SI SVMPSERIS EIVS ANIMVM QVI OPEM TVNC IN MALIS CONSTITVTVS IMPLORAT*. (Expect what happens to others to happen to you; you will then and not till then be aroused to offer help only if you make your own the feelings of the man who appeals for help in the midst of adversity.)

The original drawing is in the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam. It is signed and dated 1559. The engraving, also of 1559, is the only dated one in the series.

Charitas is a woman with a garland on her loose, flowing hair which gives her the appearance of a bride. She holds a flaming heart in one hand, symbolizing the love of God. Upon her head is a pelican feeding its young with its own blood (as it was supposed to do according to medieval bestiaries), an emblem of piety and charity. Two children at her side signify the most human aspect of love, that of a mother for her children.

Bruegel followed the traditional representation of Charity by depicting around her the Seven

Acts of Mercy: (on the left), feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, visiting prisoners; (on the right), clothing the naked, visiting the sick, giving hospitality to the homeless. The seventh act of mercy, burying the dead, is depicted in the background—here a pauper's grave, as the plot behind the church's sanctuary was reserved for free burial for the poor.

According to Stridbeck, Coornhert's belief that the passive and theoretical aspects of virtue are insufficient without practical action is mirrored in all of Bruegel's compositions. As seen here, charity means service to others, but is motivated by sharing the misfortune of one's fellow man. This is the sentiment expressed by the inscription.



34

JUSTICE (*IUSTITIA*)

Engraving attributed to Philip Galle.
223 x 287 mm.

Inscribed underneath the allegorical figure: *IUSTITIA*;
on lower margin, in Latin: *SCOPVS LEGIS EST, AVT VT EV QVE PVNIT EMENDET, AVT POENA EIVS CAETEROS MELIORES REDDET AVT SVBLATIS MALIS CAETERI SECVRIORES VIVAT.* (The aim of law is either to correct [through punishment] him who is punished, or to improve the others by his example, or to provide that the population [others] live more securely by removing wrongdoers.)

The original drawing is in the Bibiothèque Royale, Brussels. It is signed and dated 1559.—*Justice*, the first of the cardinal virtues, is in the centre of the composition, in her hands sword and scales, symbols of her power and impartiality. She is blindfolded. While her blindness might seem to indicate absence of judgement, it does, however, signify impartiality. She stands on a block with a ring for shackling prisoners: a set of shackles lies next to it.

Justice is accompanied by scenes of torture and punishment. If these seem unduly harsh to us, it would appear from the inscription that they were accepted by Bruegel's contemporaries as necessary to maintain public law and order.

This does not necessarily mean that Bruegel approved of such harsh treatments. It may be revealing, however, that he only portrayed cruel (even if considered just) punishments and none of the more lenient aspects of Justice, as he could have done, for example, in the court session on the right. A magistrate, with the rod of Justice in his hand, sentences a poor sinner in front of him. The man grasps a crucifix and the outcome is obviously bad. But see also the comments on this work in the introductory essay to this volume by David Freedberg.



35

PRUDENCE (PRUDENTIA)

Engraving attributed to Philip Galle.
225 x 293 mm.

Inscribed lower edge, left of centre: *H. cock excu.*;
underneath the allegorical figure: *PRVDENTIA*; lower right:
Bruegel. Inuentor.; on lower margin, in Latin: *SI PRVDENS
ESSE CVPIſ, IN FVTVRVM PROſPECTVM OſTENDE,
ET/QVAE POſSVNT CONTINGERE, ANIMO TVO
CVNCTA PROPONE.* (If you wish to be prudent, think
always of the future and keep everything that can happen in
the forefront of your mind.)

The original drawing is in the Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels. It is signed and dated 1559. — *Prudence* holds a mirror in one hand, in this case not a symbol of vanity (see No.20) but of selfknowledge; a coffin leans against her signifying the wisdom of taking precautions for one's death. The sieve on *Prudence*'s head implies the ability to separate wheat from chaff, i.e. right from wrong. The ladders and other firefighting equipment at her feet are unusual in connection with this virtue but may simply refer to caution and wise conduct in an agricultural society constantly endangered by fire. Indeed, at the left, a woman prudently douses some smouldering twigs.

Many of *Prudence*'s followers are occupied with household chores: they butcher animals and preserve the meat (the slaughtered ox may well be the first in a series of images culminating in Rembrandt's famous paintings); they store firewood and repair a house. One man in the centre secures his money in a strong chest, his gesture imitated by the child at the lower right who puts a coin into his money box. In a building on the left, a sick man consults both priest and physician. Bruegel's *Prudence* is the very antithesis of his *Alchemist* which satirizes man's folly (No.27). For the possibility of a different reading, see again Freedberg's introductory essay here.



36

FORTITUDE (*FORTITUDO*)

Engraving attributed to Philip Galle.
223 × 287 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *COCK EXC*; underneath the allegorical figure: *FORTITVDO*; lower right: *BRUEGEL INVENTOR*; on the lower margin, in Latin: *ANIMVM VINCERE, IRACVNDIAM COHIBERE, CAETERAQVE VITIA ET, AFFECTVS//COHIBERE, VERA FORTITVDO EST.* (To conquer one's impulses, to restrain anger and the other vices and emotions: this is true fortitude.)

The original drawing is in the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam. It is signed and dated 1560.—*Fortitude*, winged and armoured, tramples on a dragon which she holds on an iron chain; a pillar is in her other hand, an attribute of strength. The anvil on her head signifies the same quality while the press nearby in which the dragon's tail is caught, stands for the triumph of the soul over itself. Man's struggle with himself is also the subject of the inscription.

Around *Fortitude* men and women battle with the Seven Deadly Sins, symbolised by beasts and devils. This is the only one of the seven designs where Bruegel returned to the Bosch-like monsters of his *Sins*. The fortress in the background is guarded by angels: the flags carry the symbols of the four Evangelists. It is the bastion of Christian faith.



37

TEMPERANCE (TEMPERANTIA)

Engraving attributed to Philip Galle.
223 x 287 mm.

Inscribed lower right: *BRVEGEL*; on the hem of the dress of the allegorical figure: *TEMPERANTIA*; on the lower margin, in Latin: *VIDENDVM, VT NEC VOLVPTATI DEDITI PRODIGI ET LVXVRIOSI APPAREAMVS, NEC AVARA TENACITATI SORDIDI AVT OBSCVRI EXISTAMVS* (We must look to it that, in the devotion to sensual pleasures, we do not become wasteful and luxuriant, but also that we do not, because of miserly greed, live in filth and ignorance.)

The original drawing is in the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam. It is signed and dated 1560.—*Temperance* is seen as the virtue governing the Seven Liberal Arts: Arithmetic, Music, Rhetoric, Astronomy, Geometry, Dialectic and Grammar. These, in turn, are illustrated (from left to right) by representatives of the various crafts and professions, including bankers, painters and rhetoricians (see also No.26). The fact that a painter is included shows that Bruegel was concerned with the debate of the time whether painting should be included among the liberal arts. *Temperance's* four attributes are about regulation and control: the clock on her head symbolises the rhythm which governs the life of the temperate man; the bridle with the bit in the mouth points to restraint (in speech); eye-glasses are an instrument of vision, and the

blade of a windmill on which *Temperance* stands signifies man's control over the wild wind.



TOBLITE Ô PORTE, CAPITA VESTEA, ATTOLLIMINI FORES SEMPITERNE, ET INGREDIETVR REX ILLE GLORIOSVS

38

THE DESCENT OF CHRIST INTO LIMBO

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden, engraver's monogram lower edge, left of centre.

232 x 291 mm.

Inscribed lower right: *Bruegel inuent.*; slightly to the left: *H. cock excu.*; on the lower margin, in Latin: *TOBLITE [recte TOLLITE] O PORTE, CAPITA VESTEA [recte VESTRA] ATTOLLIMINI FORES SEMPITERNE ET INGREDIETVR REX ILLE GLORIOSVS.* (free version of Psalm 24, 9: Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.)

The original drawing is in the Albertina, Vienna. The signature and date of 1561 are probably not by Bruegel but a later addition.—The story is that of Christ, after his death, going down to Limbo to liberate the saints and patriarchs of the Old Testament. It is an apocryphal story, from the so-called Gospel of Nicodemus (probably 5th century) which enjoyed great popularity in the middle ages.

In the print Christ is seen inside a great radiance, insulated from the infernal horrors around him. He holds the banner of the Resurrection (see No.84) and is surrounded by music-making angels. At the left, the saints and patriarchs pour out of the gaping Hellmouth whose gates are unhinged.

The design and the assemblage of Bosch-like monsters is close to the *Seven Deadly Sins* series of 1557–58 (Nos.18–24).



39

THE PARABLE OF THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS

Engraving attributed to Philip Galle.

221 x 286 mm.

Inscribed lower edge, left: *H. cock excu.*; lower right corner: *BRVEGEL INV.*; on lower margin, in Latin: *DATE NOBIS DE OLEO VESTRO, QVIA LAMPADES NOSTRAE EXTINGVNTVR. NEQVAQVAM, NEQVANDO NON SVFFICIAT NOBIS ET VOBIS math. 25.* ([And the foolish said unto the wise,] Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. [But the wise answered, saying,] Not so; let there be not enough for us and you. Math., 25, 8-9); on the banderole in front of the angel: *Ecce sponsus venit exit[e] obuiam ei.* (Behold, the bridegroom cometh: go ye out to meet him. Math. 25, 6); on the wall to the right: *Non noui uos* (I don't know you).

No drawing survives; the print is not dated but the years 1560–63 have been ascribed to it.—The parable, as told by Christ and described by Matthew, is about the maids of honour who, according to middle eastern wedding custom, accompanied the bride to the house of the groom, here meaning Christ himself. Five of the ten maids had failed to provide themselves with oil for their lamps. When the groom arrived, the five wise virgins entered the house, but the foolish who had meanwhile gone to buy oil, returned later to find the door closed. By this parable Christ was warning his listeners to be in a state of preparedness for the Second Coming, the hour of which is not known.

Bruegel's composition is divided vertically by a tree and, above it, an angel, and horizontally by a cloud. In the lower left, the wise virgins are working diligently by the light of their lamps,

while the foolish virgins, on the right, idle away their time with dancing beside their empty lamps. The music is supplied by a bagpipe, instrument of boisterous merrymaking. Above the cloud, the wise virgins are received into heaven, a Gothic building. The foolish virgins stand before closed doors. On either side of this scene is an angel blowing a trumpet to which is attached a banner decorated with the instruments of Christ's Passion (see No.31).

The subject was extremely popular in the middle ages. It is sometimes seen in connection with the *Last Judgment* (No.25) because the virgins symbolise the elect and the lost souls. The hieratic structure of Bruegel's composition is, in fact, close to a *Last Judgment* scene, including even the trumpet-blowing angels.



40

NAVAL BATTLE IN THE STRAIT OF MESSINA

Engraving by Frans Huys.
425 x 715 mm.

In the upper margin: *FRETI SICVLI SIVE MAMERTINI VVLGO EL FARO DI MESSINA OPTICA DELINEATIO*. In the sky at the left: *REZO* (i.e., Reggio in Calabria) and to the right: *MESSINA*. In the lower right corner, in the cartouche, the following four couplets: *Trinacriæ insignes portum quæ urbem quæ vetustam // Messanam, veteres quam construxere Pelasgi. // Parte vides dextroæ & scopulos, sedesq3 Gigantum // Qua micat horrendum nocturnis ignibus Æthna. // Rhegius a' loqua est Calabrum traiectus: at illud // Inter utrumque fretum Scylla terribile monstro // Olim terra fuit, quæ post quassata dehiscens // Ionium exceptit Pelagus, factum quæ barathrum*. Below this: *Hieronymus Cock pictor excudebat M.D. lxi (1561) // Cum Gratia et priuilegio. // Bruegel Inuen.* In the lower left corner: *F. HVYS. FECIT.*

In the summer of 1552, a Turkish fleet of about a hundred ships sailed to southern Italy and threatened various coastal towns and cities. It has been suggested that Bruegel's engraving represents this incident, in particular, the burning of the city of Reggio in Calabria, seen here in the upper left. Bruegel was in Italy in 1552 and may actually have witnessed the event. Curiously, the inscriptions on the print identify the cities of Reggio and Messina, and the eruptions of Mount Etna at the right, but do not

mention the reason for the battle.

Bruegel's composition seems to have been constructed in a manner not unlike many of his landscapes. A drawing in Rotterdam reproduces, in reverse, the view of Reggio in the upper left corner of the print. It is likely that a similar drawing existed for the view of Messina on the right and that numerous studies were made for the ships in the foreground. The view of Reggio is thought to have been made in Italy c. 1552–1553 and carried back to the Netherlands by Bruegel for future use. It was probably only in 1559–1560 that Bruegel used this drawing and others to create the composition seen here, set down in a drawing prepared especially for the engraver.

An important Netherlandish precedent for this scene, both compositionally and thematically, is found in a series of tapestry cartoons begun by Jan Vermeyen in 1546, commemorating the campaign of Charles V in Tunis. One of these designs, *The Capture of Goleta*, shares with Bruegel's composition, a foreground filled with carefully observed battle ships and a harbor in the far distance. Bruegel may have known these designs through his father-in-law, Pieter Coecke, who is thought to have assisted Vermeyen with the cartoons.

THE SAILING VESSELS

Much of Antwerp's success as a commercial center was dependent on shipping. In his *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi* of 1567, Lodovico Guicciardini claimed that often as many as 2,500 ships were anchored in her harbor. In Bruegel's lifetime Antwerp was, in fact, the busiest port in northwestern Europe, serving merchants from Spain, Italy, England, Holland and Portugal. It is not surprising, therefore, that Bruegel's publisher believed that a market existed for pictures of sailing ships. Bruegel and Cock, however, did not invent the genre. Louis Lebeer has called attention to earlier engraved sets of ships made in Flanders and Italy in the late fifteenth century and has observed that Bruegel's compositions are in some ways reminiscent of an anonymous Venetian series of ca. 1470-1480. Needless to say, the prints published by Cock are technically far superior. Most of the plates for the series were engraved by Frans Huys shortly before his death which probably occurred in the early part of 1562. Riggs believes that Huys left Nos. 41 and 49 undone and that they were executed by another hand. Though this may explain the date 1564 which appears on the stern of the ship in No. 41, it does not tell us why a second date, 1565, is added to the foreground. The latter date may indicate, however, when the series was actually published. Riggs has argued that since the copyright Cock obtained ran for a fixed number of years from the date of publication, it was in his interest to have the latest date possible on the print.

None of the preparatory drawings for the series have survived. It is obvious from looking at the prints, however, that Bruegel must have made numerous careful studies of ships before making the preparatory drawings. These, too, have disappeared. It has been suggested that Bruegel made the studies in Italy, although it seems that Antwerp's harbor could have supplied him with a similar array of vessels. The same studies may have been used to create the *Naval Battle in the Strait of Messina* (No. 40) and the undated painting, *View of the Bay of Naples*.

Because the prints do not carry inscriptions identifying the ships, there is disagreement over what the different vessels should be called. The titles given here to Nos. 41, 44, 45, 48 and 50, are those proposed by Irene de Groot*. The remaining titles have been taken from Lebeer.

* *Sailing Ships: Prints by the Dutch Masters from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century*, ed. I. de Groot and R. Vorstman, trans., Michael Hoyle (New York, 1980), Nos. 1-5.



41

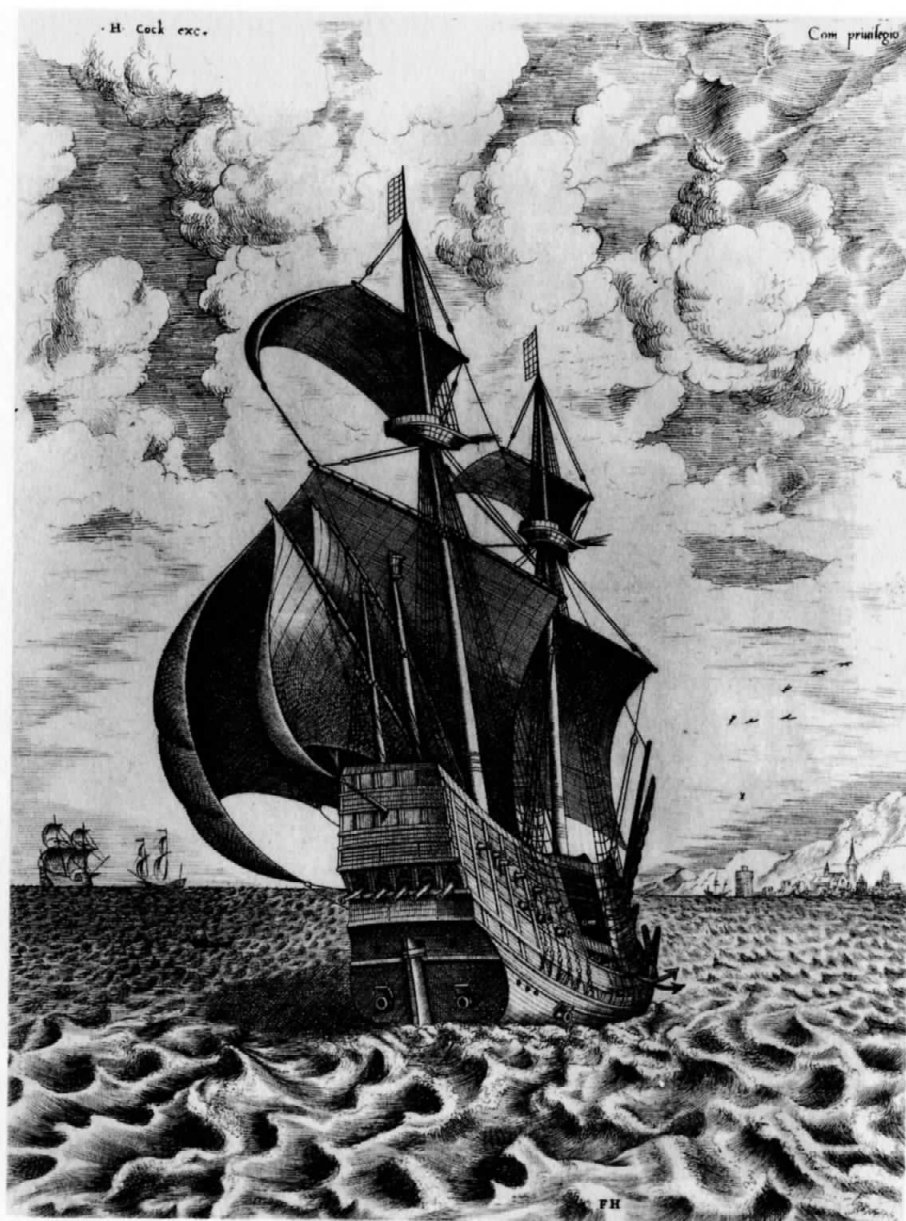
A DUTCH HULK AND A BOEIER

Engraving (by Frans Huys).
240 x 194 mm.

Without the artists' or publisher's names. At the bottom, toward the left, the date 1565; on the stern of the larger ship, barely engraved, in small characters: *Dit scip 1564* (this ship 1564). To the right, a large radiant sun has been burnished out of the sky.

Riggs believes this to have been engraved by someone other than Huys (see the introduction to this group of entries).

Bruegel's ships were obviously meant to be more than documentary illustrations; pictorially, they are as rich as his landscapes. In this engraving a Dutch hulk sails over a choppy sea that seems almost to have been carved from wood. The billowing clouds and the handling of the light on the water suggest the changeable skies characteristic of the Netherlands. A peculiar detail is the corpse floating in the water in the right foreground. The stern of the ship bears the arms of Amsterdam and Enkhuizen, and the flag of Hoorn flies from one of the masts.



42

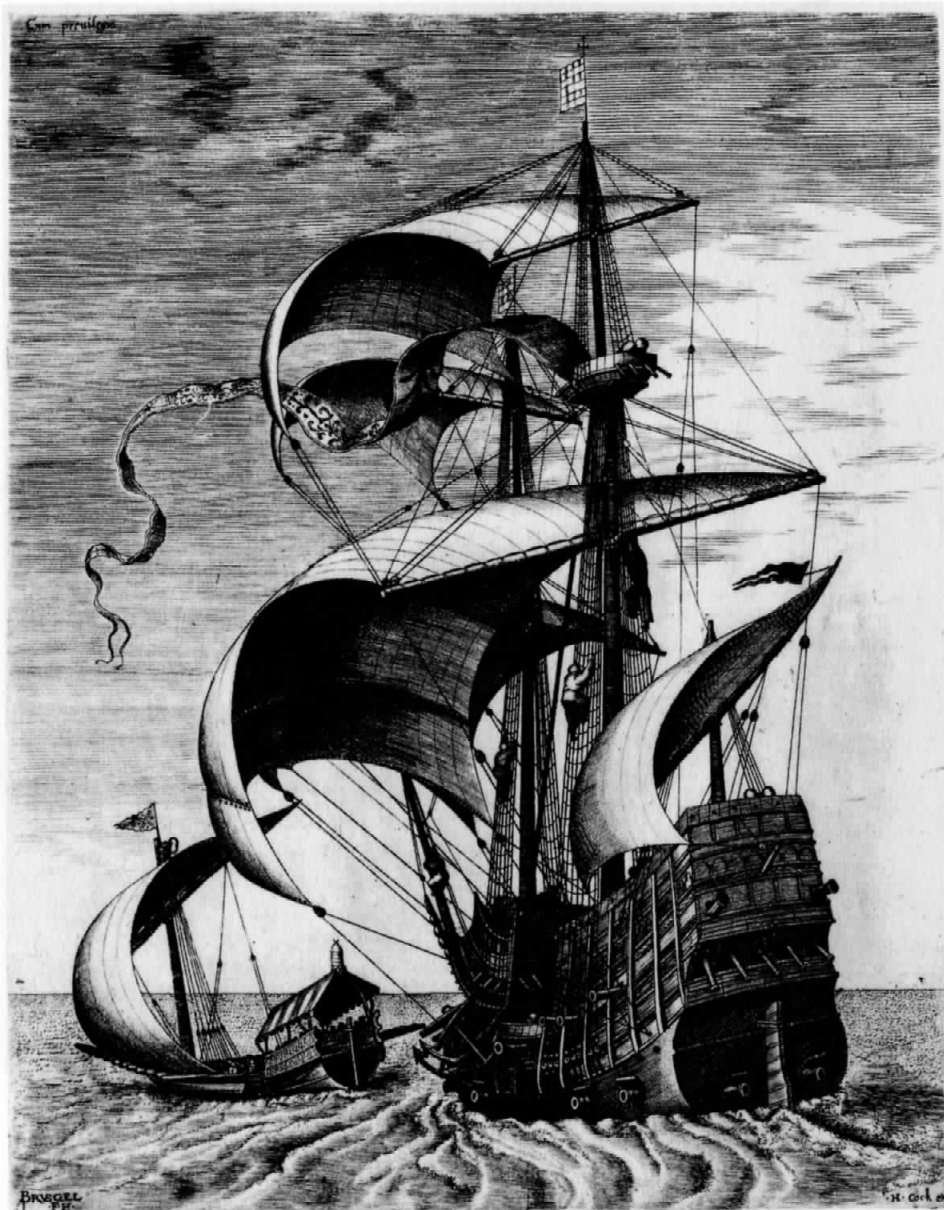
ARMED FOUR-MASTER SAILING TOWARDS A PORT

Engraving by Frans Huys.

289 × 217 mm.

At the bottom, toward the right, the initials: *F.H.* (Frans Huys). In the upper right corner: *Cum privilegio*.

Most of the ships in the series are armed, some more heavily than others. Besides the numerous guns protruding from all sides, the tops of the masts are often supplied with throwing spears and shields. Two of the ships in No.48 display rams used to batter or cut into enemy ships. The grappling iron, visible at the left in No.45, was used to draw and hold the enemy vessel alongside during battle.



43

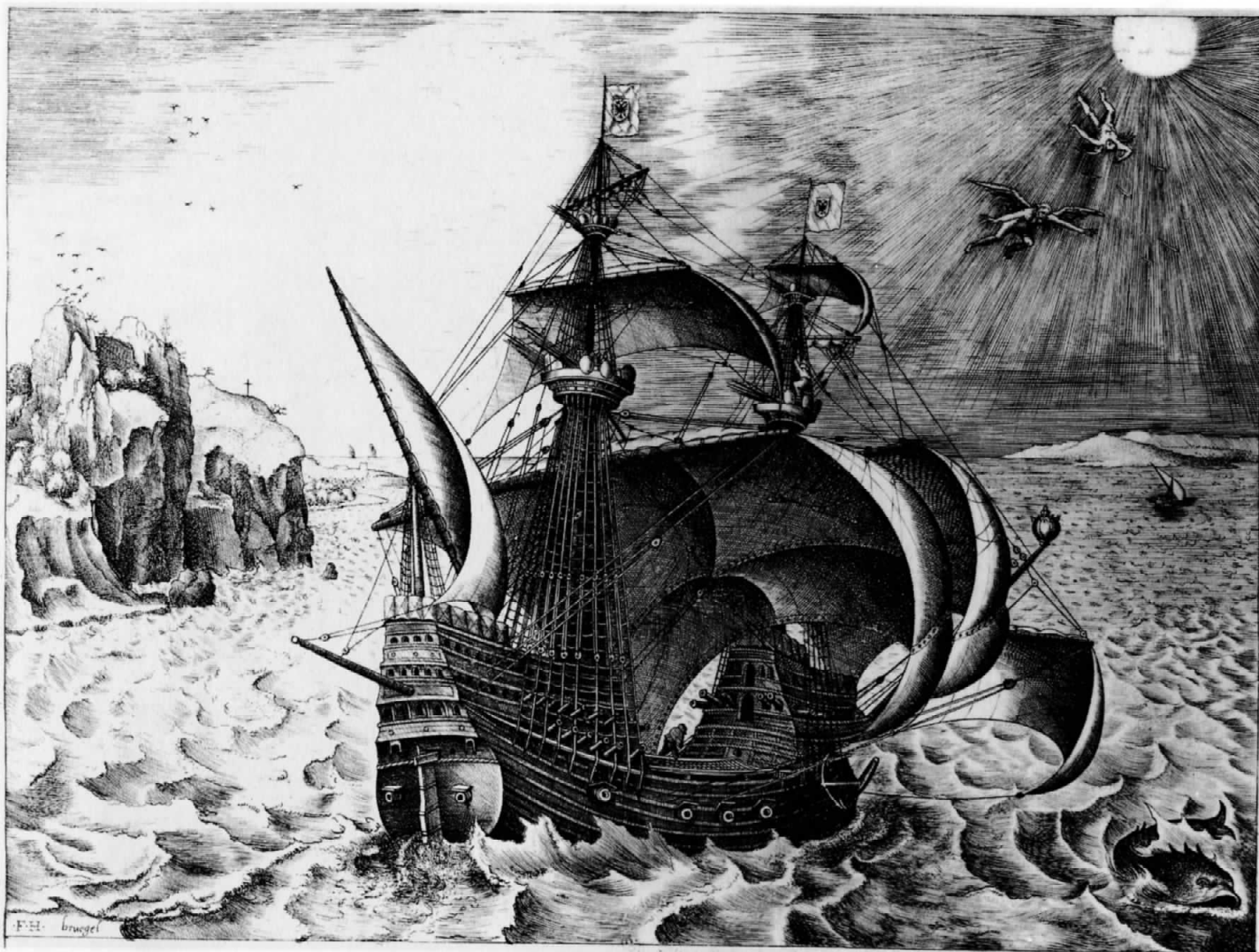
ARMED THREE-MASTER ON THE OPEN SEA, ACCOMPANIED BY A GALLEY

Engraving by Frans Huys.

314 x 245 mm.

In the lower left corner: *BRUEGEL* (the *V* and *E* are connected); underneath this, the initials of the engraver: *F.H.*; in the lower right corner: *H. Cock ex.*; in the upper right corner: *Cum privilegio*.

It is interesting to observe how Bruegel varies each composition. Compared to the preceding two prints, the horizon here is particularly low and the sea and sky are calm. Accents are provided by the converging ripples of the ship's wake and the long swallow-tailed pennant that flaps in the wind.



44

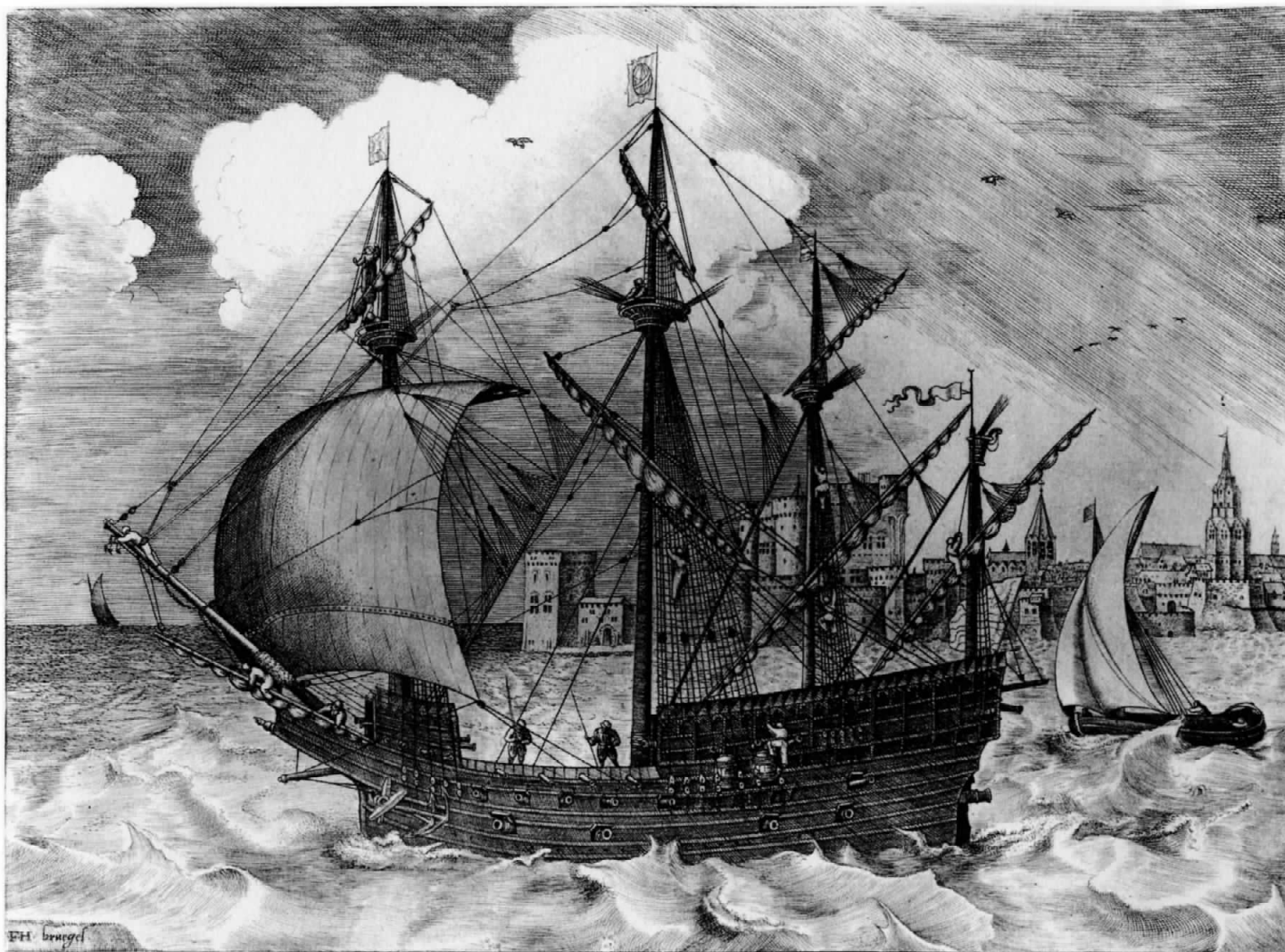
ARMED THREE-MASTER WITH DAEDALUS AND ICARUS IN THE SKY

Engraving by Frans Huys.
222 x 287 mm.

In the lower left corner, the initials of the engraver: *F.H.*;
next to this: *bruegel*; in the lower margin, to the right:
Cum. priuileg.

Three of the compositions from the series are embellished with mythological scenes. In this engraving we see Daedalus, the legendary artist and inventor, flying above the sea with his son Icarus. Icarus, however, has ventured too close to the sun. The heat has melted the wax holding his wings together, and he is about to fall into the sea. It is not clear whether these figures were part of Bruegel's original design or whether they were added by another hand. Nevertheless, it is interesting to recall that in Bruegel's famous painting in Brussels, *The Fall of Icarus**, a similar type of ship sails in the water beside the drowning boy.

*Two versions of this painting exist, both of which may be only copies of the lost original by Bruegel. The authenticity of the composition, however, is undisputed.



45

ARMED FOUR-MASTER PUTTING OUT TO SEA

Engraving by Frans Huys.

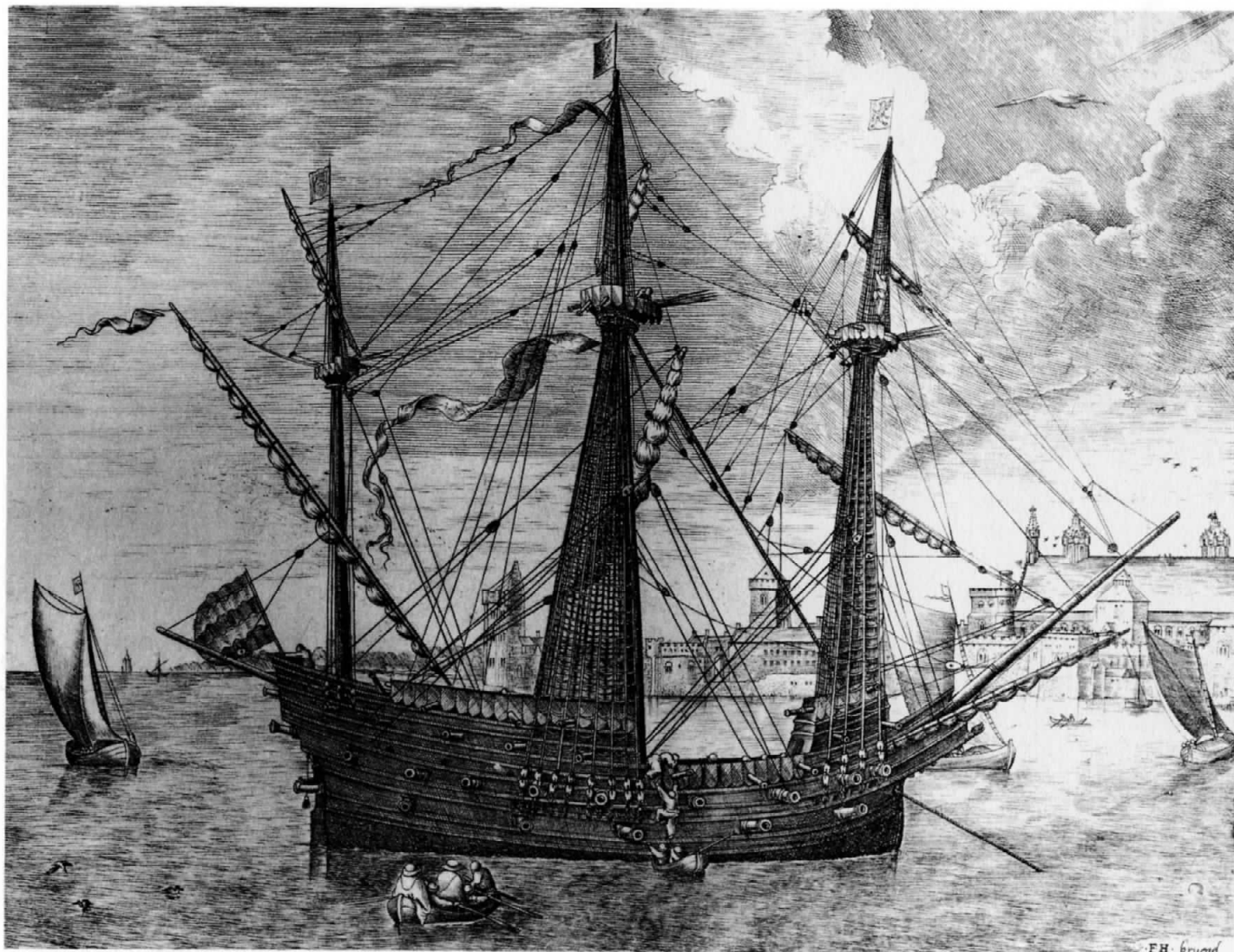
222 x 285 mm.

In the lower left corner, the initials of the engraver: *F.H.*;

next to this: *bruegel*; in the lower margin, to the right:

.Cum. privileg.

The flags flying from the masts indicate that this is a Portuguese ship. It is armed with guns of various caliber and a grappling iron is visible at the left. It has been suggested that the city in the background is Antwerp. Whether this is true or not, it is probably not intended to be a topographically correct view.



46

ARMED THREE-MASTER ANCHORED NEAR A CITY

Engraving by Frans Huys.

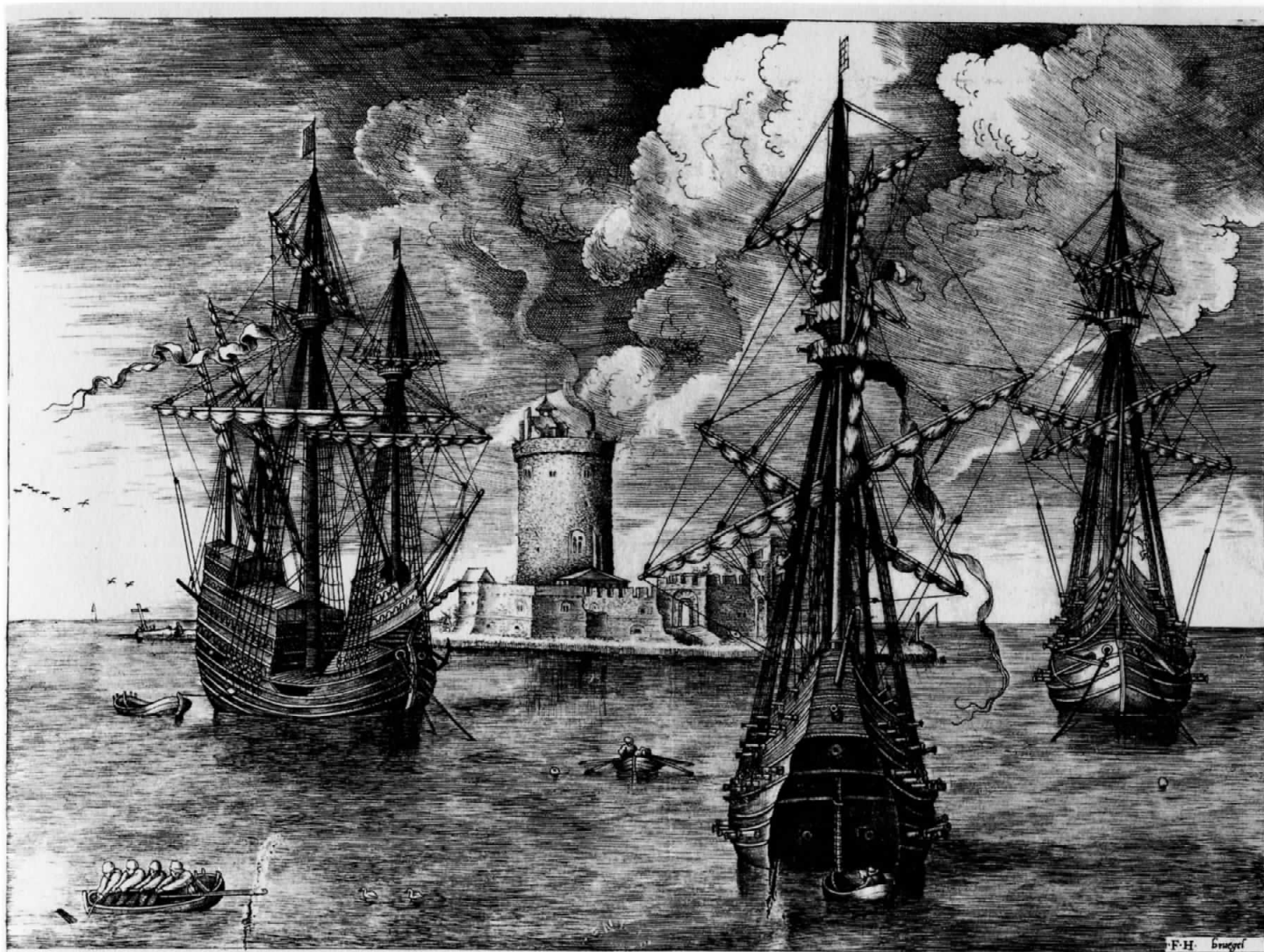
230 x 287 mm.

In the lower right corner, the initials of the engraver: *F.H.*;

next to this: *bruegel*; in the lower margin, to the right:

Cum. priuileg.

This is the first image in the series that does not depict a ship under sail. The lack of movement is, in fact, emphasized by the smooth surface of the water. Again, it is not clear whether the city in the background is meant to represent a specific place.



47

FOUR-MASTER (LEFT) AND TWO THREE-MASTERS ANCHORED NEAR A FORTIFIED ISLAND WITH A LIGHTHOUSE

Engraving by Frans Huys.

222 × 289 mm.

In the lower right corner, the initials of the engraver: *F.H.*;

next to this: *bruegel*; in the lower margin, to the right:

.Cum. privileg.

There are two cracks in the plate which must have appeared early: one cuts across the oar of the boat in the left foreground, the other cuts into the stern of the ship.

Here we are again impressed by the stillness of the water, contrasted now with an agitated sky. The combination is perhaps meant to suggest the quiet gathering of clouds that often precedes a summer storm. It is also important to note that the architecture of the buildings below the lighthouse may indicate a southern locale.



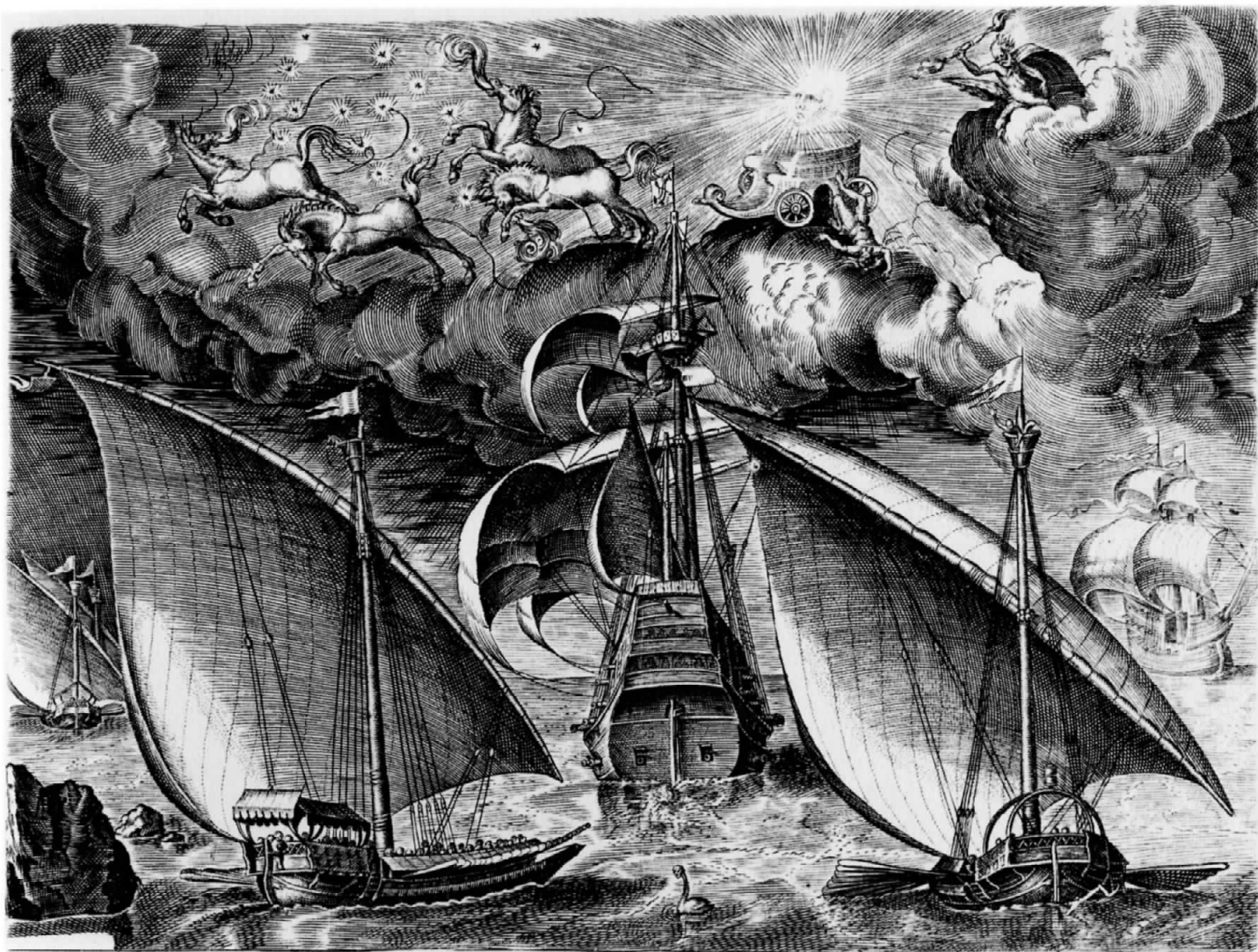
48

THREE CARAVELS IN A RISING SQUALL, WITH ARION ON A DOLPHIN

Engraving by Frans Huys.
220 x 286 mm.

In the sky at top right: *H. Cock ex.*; in the lower left corner:
the initials of the engraver: *F.H.*; next to this: *bruegel*; in
the lower margin, to the right: *.Cum. priuileg.*

Arion was a Greek poet whose musical skill was legendary. Returning from a musical contest in Sicily where he had won many prizes, he was robbed by the crew of his ship. Before jumping overboard, he was allowed to sing a final song. Attracted by his singing and playing on the lyre, a school of dolphins gathered near the ship and bore Arion away to safety. Here, as in No. 44, it is not clear whether Arion was drawn by Bruegel or was added by another hand.



49

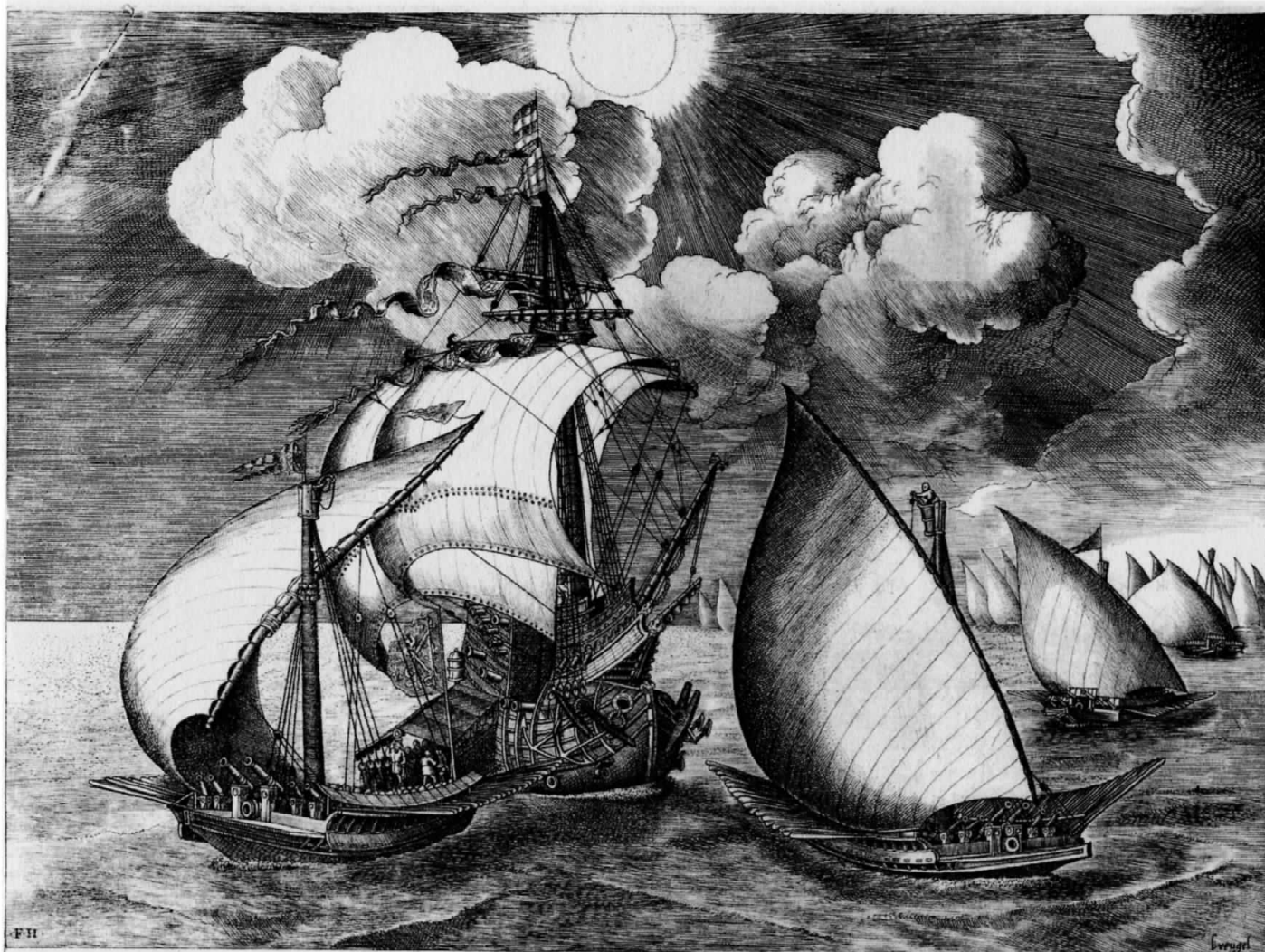
**TWO GALLEYS SAILING BEHIND AN
ARMED THREE-MASTER WITH
PHAETHON AND JUPITER IN THE SKY**

Engraving (by Frans Huys).

223 × 278 mm.

Without the artists' or publisher's names. Riggs believes that this was engraved by another hand, perhaps Cornelis Cort.

Phaethon was the offspring of the mortal Clymene, and Apollo, god of the sun. He asked to take his father's place for one day and drive the chariot of the sun across the sky. Against his better judgment, Apollo was forced to assent, warning Phaethon that the task would be too arduous for a mortal. Once in the sky, Phaethon lost control of the horses, causing terrible heat and drought on earth. To restore order, Jupiter struck him down into the sea with a thunderbolt. Here, as in Nos. 44 and 48, it is not clear whether the mythological figures were part of Bruegel's design.



50

A FLEET OF GALLEYS ESCORTED BY A CARAVEL

Engraving by Frans Huys.
223 × 290 mm.

In the lower left corner, the initials of the engraver: *F.H.*; in the lower right corner: *bruegel*; in the lower margin, to the right: *.Cum. priuileg.*

The galley in the left foreground seems to be the flagship of the fleet. Its banner shows a key and a reversed crosier on a field with lilies. The flags flying from the caravel indicate that it is a Spanish ship.

51

SKATING BEFORE THE SAINT GEORGE'S GATE, ANTWERP

Engraving by Frans Huys.
232 × 299 mm.

In the lower left corner: *.H. cock excudeb;* in the right corner, the initials of the engraver Frans Huys.

The print was probably originally published in 1559–60. A signed preparatory drawing dated 1558 or 1559 survives in an American private collection. A mystery that has perplexed scholars, however, concerns the inscriptions added to the print in the seventeenth century by Joan Galle. In this latter state Cock's name was removed and the claim that the scene had been drawn and painted "from life" by Bruegel in 1553 was added to the lower left margin. Also new was an inscription on the top of the gate



itself identifying it as St. George's, and where the date, 1553, was given once more. Most significant, however, was the title added at the top of the sheet, written in Latin, French and Dutch: *LVBRICITAS VITÆ HVMANÆ...* (the slipperiness of human life). In the lower margin more verses were added which compare the perilous way in which we proceed through this mortal world with the vagaries of ice-skating: "This is how one rides on the ice in Antwerp on the outskirts of the town. One goes this way, the other that, gaped at from every side. One stumbles, the other falls, another keeps himself upright. O learn from this image how we ride in the world, and slide on our way, the one crazy, the other wise, through this mortal life, much more fragile than ice." These inscriptions have prompted two questions: first, why did Galle

add the date 1553, a year in which Bruegel was in Italy and could not have drawn the scene "from life," and second, do the added verses represent Bruegel's original meaning? The latter question is the more crucial because it is a problem often encountered in Bruegel studies. Here, and elsewhere in his œuvre, we are eager to know whether Bruegel meant to give us an unembellished appreciation of nature and the daily life of ordinary people, or whether a moralizing message is intended.

Recently, Monballieu proposed a solution to the St. George's Gate mystery. In 1553 a large municipal corruption scandal, centering around Antwerp's former burgomaster, Michiel van der Heyden, became known to the public. Irregularities had been discovered in the financing of the city's newly built fortifications, a section of

which is visible in the print. The older brother of Bruegel's publisher, Cock, had been responsible for the excavation of the particular section of wall depicted. It was in 1553 that the elder Cock and two hundred other witnesses were called to testify before investigators. Although Cock's brother was not found guilty of any crime, he, and no doubt many other prominent men in the city were embarrassed, if not compromised by the scandal. Given this information, it is hard to believe that the scene was not meant to comment on the events of 1553. Even without the added inscriptions, it seems reasonable to assume that Bruegel's contemporaries would have made the connection between the shaken positions of those involved in the scandal and the figures struggling to maintain their balance on the ice.



THE KERMIS OF SAINT GEORGE

Etching and engraving attributed to Jan or Lucas van Duetecum.

332 x 523 mm.

At the bottom, near the middle: *H. COCK EXCVDBAT* (sic); in the lower right corner: *BRVEGEL INVENTOR*. On the sign hanging outside the tavern: *dit is in die kro*, (this is in the crown or pub [?]), to the right, on the banner: *laet die boeren haer kermis houuen* (let the peasants have their kermis).

The etching was probably made shortly after the *Kermis at Hoboken* which can be dated ca. 1559–60 (see No.30). Compared with *Hoboken*, the activities depicted here are more varied and the event as a whole has a slightly more chaotic flavor. The feast day of St. George was a special holiday of the cross-bowman's guild. In

the center, behind a group performing the sword dance, a mock tournament is held between St. George and the dragon. In the distance archers shoot at a target atop a windmill. It is perhaps significant that the artist has included scenes of people fighting, a detail omitted from the *Hoboken* print.

Even more clearly than in the *Hoboken* engraving the inscription on the banner here seems to refer to the edicts reissued in 1559 which sought to regulate the excesses associated with *kermissen*. Ostensibly, it is a plea to leave the tradition intact and not to begrudge the peasants their pleasure. This interpretation, however, has been long disputed by scholars, notably Keith Moxey, who cite abundant contemporary criticisms of the lewd or belligerent behavior of the drunken peasant. According to their arguments the kermis was viewed as an

event which promoted sinful behavior and only served to reveal the peasants' lack of discipline and propensity toward vice. Recently, attempts have been made to moderate this view. Margaret Carroll, for instance, has noted that more tolerant, even affectionate, descriptions of the peasant and his festivities existed alongside the condemnations. She goes so far as to suggest that on the eve of the revolt against Spain, the kermis was viewed by Netherlanders as a symbol of their native heritage. Many of the governmental changes instituted by the Spanish in the 1550's were infringements of time-honored local privileges. The effort to regulate the *kermissen* may have been viewed as part of the overall attempt to dismantle provincial independence. For a full account of the critical and negative view, see the essay by Moxey in this volume.



53

THE MERCHANT ROBBED BY MONKEYS

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden, engraver's monogram below the drum in the lower right. 225 x 290 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *BRVEGHEL INVE*; lower centre: *H. Cock excu. 1562*.

Brugel's drawing has not survived. In his catalogue of Bruegel engravings, van Bastelaer listed an earlier state than the one exhibited

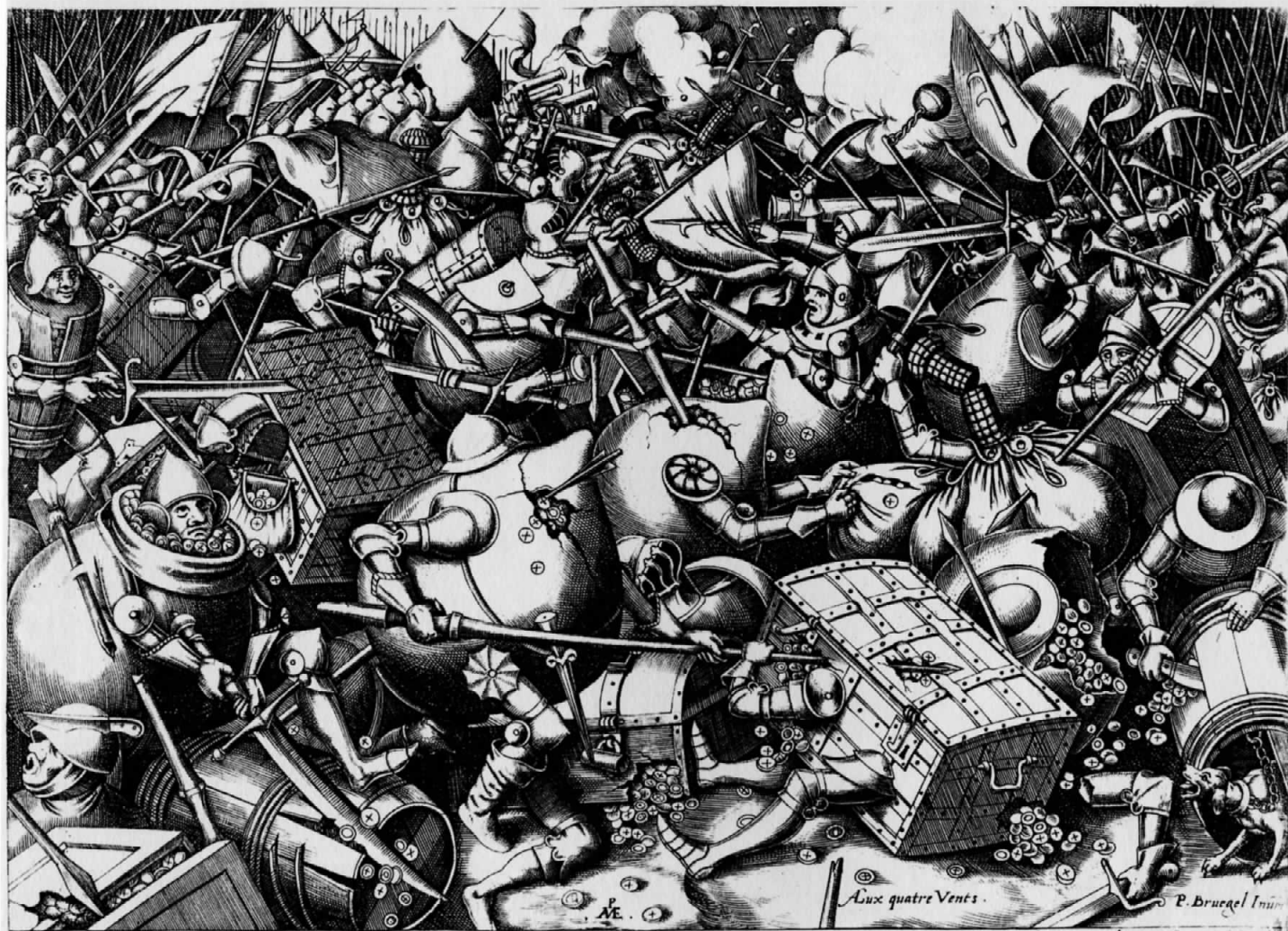
(although Lebeer rejects van Bastelaer's reading of its date as 1557). The spelling of Bruegel's name with an 'h' does seem to suggest that the design dates from earlier than the date 1562 given on the print here.

Pictures of the plight of the pedlar who falls asleep and is robbed by a band of monkeys are found in earlier works, for example, on the famous tabletop in the Zürich museum, formerly attributed to Hans Holbein the Younger but now thought to be by Hans Herbster. Probably of Northern origin, the subject was also popular in France and Italy by the fifteenth century.

The monkeys have descended on an itinerant pedlar of haberdashery as he lies blissfully asleep on the edge of a forest. They play with the products of his basket: one tries on a pair of boots, another spectacles; one looks into a

mirror, another searches through the pedlar's money pouch; two play on hobby-horses, others dance to the accompaniment of a drum and a trumpet. The pedlar's finest merchandise has been hung on trees: beads, purses, gloves, jewelry. Even the man himself has been invaded: his trousers are pulled down and a monkey holds his nose with his fingers; another, atop the man's head, is looking for lice; a third shifts into the pedlar's hat.

From the middle ages, apes' imitiveness was depicted to mirror human behaviour. At first only associated with the art of painting and sculpture (the artist's skill was regarded as essentially imitative), the ape's parody of man soon was extended to other human activities. As so often with Bruegel, it is man's folly—in our case falling asleep when one should be wakeful—which is satirized here.



*Quid modo diuitie, quid fului vasta metalli
congeries, nummis arca referta nouis,
Wel aen ghij Spaerpotten, Tonnen, en Kisten.
Tis al om gelt en adelt, dit striden en twisten.*

*Illecebres inter tantas, atq. agmina furum,
Inditum cunctis efferus, Sineus erit,
Al seetmen v ooc anders, willet niet ghelouen.
Daerom vuere wy den haec die ons noyt en miste,*

*Preda facit furem, seruens mala cuncta ministrat
Impetus, et spolijs apta rapina feris.
Mek soecht wel actie om ons te uerdooouen,
Maer men souwer niet krygen, waerder niet te roouen.*

54

THE BATTLE OF THE MONEY BAGS AND THE STRONG BOXES

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden, engraver's monogram lower centre.

236 x 304 mm.

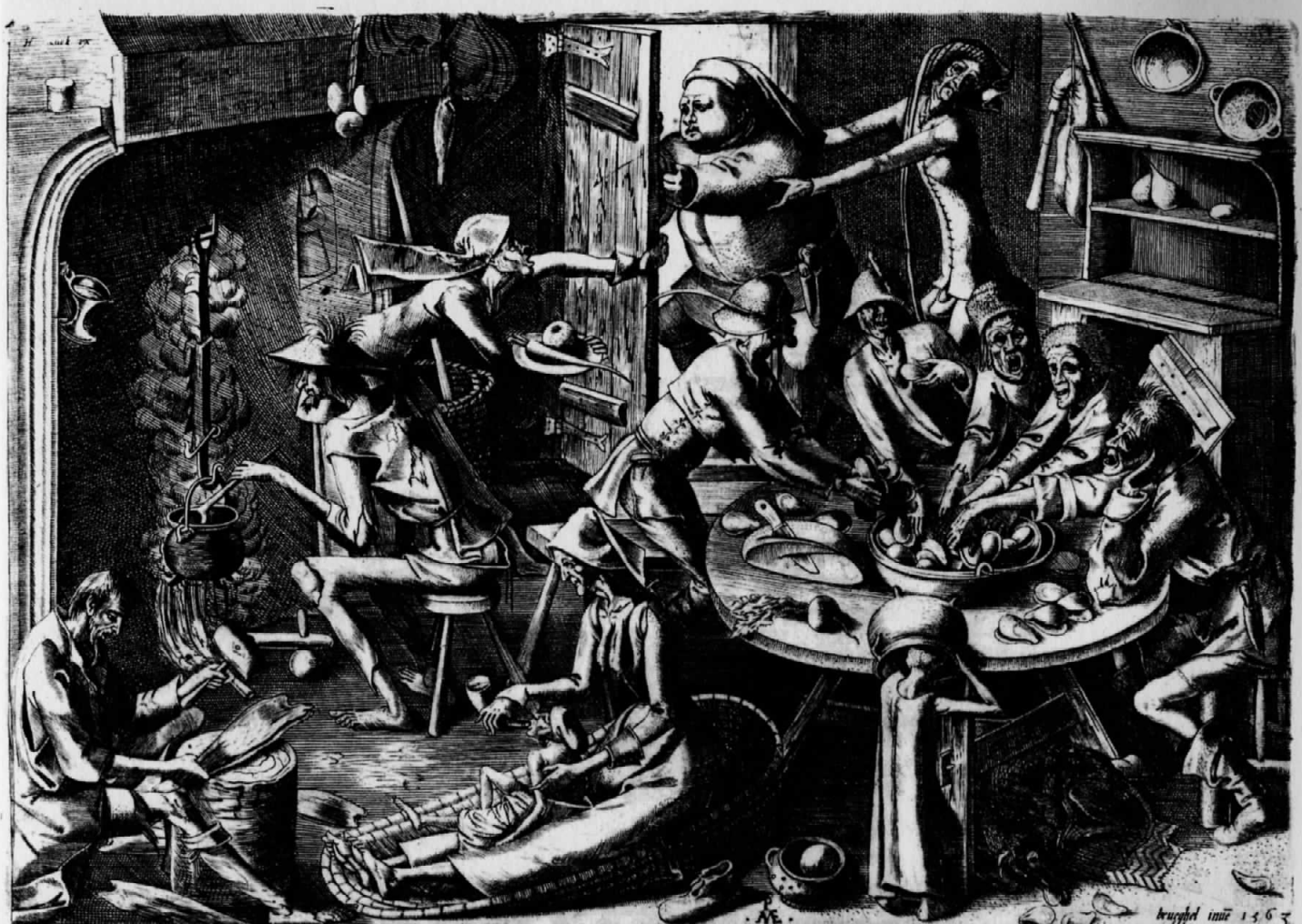
Inscribed lower right: *P. Bruegel Inuit*; slightly to the left: *Aux quatre Vents*; on the lower margin, in Latin: *Quid modo diuitiae, quid fului vasta metalli/Congeries, nummis arca referta nouis//Illecebres inter tantas, atq[ue] agmina furum, //Inditum cunctis efferus vncus erit, //Praeda facit furem, seruens mala cuncta ministrat//Impetus, et spolijs apta rapina feris.* (The savage hook will reveal to all the riches, the vast pile of yellow metal, the strong box stuffed with new coins among these great enticements and the ranks of thieves. Booty makes the thief, the assault that serves all evil helps him, and so does the pillage good for fierce spoils), and in Flemish: *Wel aen ghij Spaerpotten, Tonnen, en Kisten. //Tis al om gelt an goet, dit striden en*

twisten. //Al seet men v ooc anders, willet niet ghelouen. //Daerom vuere wy den haec die ons noyt en miste, //Men soecht wel actie om ons te uerdooouen, //Maer men souwer niet krijgen, waerder niet te roouen. (Come on, you money boxes, barrels and chests, it's all for money and goods, this fighting and quarrelling. Even if they say it's different, don't believe it. That is the reason we carry the hook on our banners which has never failed us. They are taking action to drug us. But one would not get anything if there were nothing to steal.)

The original drawing has not survived. The print was issued by Cock's publishing house, "Aux quatre Vents", as indicated by the inscription. It is one of three engravings bearing Bruegel's name issued after Cock's death in 1570 by his widow (see also Nos. 29 and 61). Bruegel's direct responsibility for these prints, published in the 1570's, obviously cannot be

assumed. Stylistically No. 54 is very close to the *Thin Kitchen* and *Fat Kitchen* (Nos. 55, 56), or even to *Elck* (No. 26). It may well be a composition intended by Bruegel for engraving but, like *Spring* and *Summer* (Nos. 77, 78), never carried out during his lifetime.

The objects traditionally referred to in the English title as money bags and strong boxes might be better termed money boxes and treasure chests: the warriors who approach from the left are, in fact, made of pottery and are not bags. They are involved in a fierce battle with chests and barrels. Pottery banks were quite common in Bruegel's time; coins were inserted through a slot near the top, as one can see in No. 35. Accumulated wealth was removed by breaking the bank. Human heads, arms and



Où Maigre-os Le pot mouue, est un pourre Conuue S I 767

Daer magherman die pot roert is een arm ghassterje dus Loop ick nae de uetir Cuckken met herten blij

legs in armour project from some of the animated pots and chests, but others, more consistently dehumanized, have only arms and legs. In the lower right, an arm lies severed from the strong box nearby. The 'savage hook' in the Latin inscription refers to the emblem on the banners.

The scene has been interpreted, in the light of rising capitalism in the sixteenth century, as the struggle of small enterprises against the rich. However, as has also been noted, there does not seem to be such a distinction, unless one takes into account that chests stand for greater wealth than money boxes. As the pottery banks are enormous in size they may be seen as equal to the strong boxes. In this light, the scene depicts a fight of rich against rich. It is the rich who

start wars. Rather than making a critical statement of social conditions of the time, the message of Bruegel's print may well be the universal truth that money leads to war, a message supported by the inscription.

55

THE THIN KITCHEN

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden.
220 x 290 mm.

In the lower right corner: *brueghel inue 1563*; near the center, the monogram of the engraver; in the lower margin, two distichs, one in French, the other in Dutch: *Où Maigre-os Le pot mouue est un (un) pourre Conuue// Pourre, à Grasse-cuisine iray, tant que ie Vive//Daer magherman die pot roert is een arm ghassterje//dus loop ick nae de uette Cuckken met herten blij* (Where the thin man

stirs the pot, meager fare is offered. Thus I'll gladly take myself off to the fat kitchen).

The fat man seems to have stumbled into the thin kitchen by mistake and is eager to flee from its gaunt inhabitants who offer to share their meager meal of bread, mussels and turnips. The man in the lower left corner may be softening dried fish to make it edible. The poor fare seems to be the result of poverty rather than frugality carried to a comical extreme. Despite this disturbing note, Bruegel's contemporaries were no doubt able to appreciate the humor in the image.

The Thin Kitchen and its counterpart, *The Fat Kitchen*, were evidently popular images. At least four copies and two pastiches of the set are known.



THE FAT KITCHEN

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden.
220 x 292 mm.

Near the upper right corner: *pieter brueghel inue*; in the lower left corner: *H. Cock excudeb*; at the bottom, slightly to the left of the middle: 1563, and to the right of this date, the monogram of the engraver, Pieter van der Heyden. In the lower margin, two distichs, one in French, the other in Dutch: *Hors dici Maigre-dos á eune' hideuse mine//Tu nas que' faire ici Car cest Grasse-Cuisine//Vuech magherman uan hier hoe hongherich ghij siet//Tis heir al uette Cuecken ghi en dient* (the *e* under the *i*) *hier niet* (Go away thin man, no matter how hungry you are. This is the fat kitchen and you won't be served).

Although they have more food than they need, the inhabitants of the fat kitchen turn the hungry man away. They are too fat to have been considered, even in Bruegel's day, as well-fed peasants. Even the dog's body is grotesquely distorted; he has the shape and posture of a pig. Before Bruegel Bosch had already employed the fat kitchen theme as an illustration of the sin of gluttony. Although Bruegel certainly represents this vice, it is not his only concern. The fat man's eagerness to avoid the company of the thin man implies not only greed, but the embarrassment and displeasure of the rich man confronted by the poor.



DIVVS IACOBVS DIABOLICIS PRAESTIGIIS ANTE MAGVM SISTITVR

57

ST. JAMES AND THE MAGICIAN HERMOGENES

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden.
222 x 290 mm.

Inscribed lower edge, left off centre: *Bruegel. inuent.*; lower right corner: *Cock. excudebat.*; on the lower margin, in Latin: *DIVVS IACOBVS DIABOLICIS PRAESTIGIIS ANTE MAGVM SISTITVR.* (St. James, by devilish deception, is placed before the magician.)

The original drawing is lost.—The scene depicts the competition between the apostle James the Greater and the magician Hermogenes as told in the *Golden Legend*, a popular compendium

of apocryphal stories collected by Jacobus de Voragine (1228/30-98). On his return from Spain, James converted and baptized Hermogenes, after each had tested his powers on the other.

James is shown in his traditional garb as a pilgrim with broad-brimmed hat, cloak, staff and water bottle attached to his wrist. His special attribute, the scallop shell, appears on his hat. As the inscription states, he has been brought by magic to Hermogenes who sits hunched over a book in a chair on the left. The place swarms with diabolical monsters and misshapen devils. Naked witches fly astride dragons and a goat above.

The scene does not follow the account in the *Golden Legend* where it is explicitly stated that Hermogenes's attempts at transporting James failed by the saint's success at converting all the demon messengers. As we shall see in the following scene, it is the magician who will be sent to James. Unless Bruegel had a specific meaning in mind, one can only assume that this is the scene when the demons are getting ready to seize the magician and his chair prior to transporting him to the saint, as seen in No. 58. The saint's presence may be but a reminder of his spiritual power which already conquered Hermogenes's disciple and various demons and soon is to conquer the magician himself.



58

THE FALL OF THE MAGICIAN

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden, engraver's monogram on the table lower left.
225 x 288 mm.

Inscribed lower centre: *Cock. excudebat. 1565*; lower right: *Bruegel. inuent.* on lower margin, in Latin: *IDEM IMPETRAVIT A DEO VT MAGVS A DEMONIBVS DISCERPERETVR.* (Hence [the Saint] obtained from God that the magician should be torn to pieces by demons.)

The original drawing is in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. It is signed and dated 1564.—This is the continuation of the previous scene. Hermogenes has been brought to the saint who stands in front of a church. The magician and his chair have just been dumped, upside-down. The scene swarms with typical Bruegel demons and monsters, prominent among them figures performing acrobatic and juggling acts. According to the inscription, Hermogenes is about to be torn apart by demons. However, the *Golden Legend* tells of his conversion and baptism, not of his death. It is open to question whether Bruegel, indeed, intended to represent the death of the magician who is only being dumped, but not torn to pieces. Bruegel was almost certainly not responsible for the inscrip-

tion, since it does not appear on the drawing. It is possible that the engraver (or publisher) confused the fate of Hermogenes with that of the other famous magician from the apocryphal lives of the apostles, Simon Magus, especially as the latter is mentioned in the third state of the engraving. Simon Magus did, indeed, meet his death due to apostolic prayers, but those of Peter and Paul and not of James.

It has been suggested that Nos. 57 and 58 imply a protest against the Inquisition or, alternatively, denounce the practices of magic in Bruegel's time. But Bruegel's interest in the theme is more likely—and more simply—to have been prompted by the possibilities it offered for showing a diabolical throng.



HIC TVTO STABVLATE VIRI, SVCCEDITE TECTIS; QVID LATERA, AVT CVLMEN PERRVMPITIS? ISTA LVPORVM,
ME PASTORE OVIVM, IANVA LAXA PATET. 51 7616 ATQVE FVRVM LEX EST, QVOS MEA CAVLA FVGIT. HAD IV

THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Engraving by Philip Galle, engraver's monogram on blade of axe.

225 x 295 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *BRVEGEL. IN. VEN.*; lower centre: *Th. Galle exc.*, and below the door post the date 1565; on the lintel of the door, in Latin: *EGO SVM OSTIVM OVIVM* (I am the door of the sheep) and above this the source: *IOHA. 10*; on the lower margin, in Latin: *HIC TVTO STABVLATE VIRI, SVCCEDITE TECTIS; ME PASTORE OVIVM, IANVA LAXA PATET. QVID LATERA, AVT CVLMEN PERRVMPITIS? ISTA LVPORVM, ATQVE FVRVM LEX EST, QVOS MEA CAVLA FVGIT. HAD [rianus] IVN [ius]* (Stable your flocks safely here, o men, come under my roof; while I am shepherd of the sheep the door is open. Why are you breaking into the walls or the roof? This is the way of wolves and thieves, whom my sheepfold shuns. Hadrianus Junius).

This is the second state of the engraving, with the name of the publisher, Th. Galle, added. No drawing is known today.—As the inscription above the door tells us, the scene interprets the parable from John 10, 1–16; the inscription below is by the humanist Hadrianus Junius. Christ, as the good shephred, stands in the door of the sheepfold. He carries a ewe over his shoulders; other sheep look up to him in confidence. On both sides and above, thieves break into the fold seeking to steal the sheep. In the upper left and right corners are shown related episodes of sheep-tending. At the left, a shephred defends his flock with a spear against an attacking wolf; at right, the unfaithful shepherd runs from his flock which falls prey to the wolves. The latter subject also is known from a

painted composition by Bruegel, a copy of which is in the John G. Johnson Collection in Philadelphia.

It has been suggested that Bruegel's preference for the subject has a political meaning. The shepherd abandoning his flock may be a commentary on the action of Margaret of Parma, regent of the Netherlands for the Spanish emperor, Philip II, who resigned after Philip sent the bloody Duke of Alva to stamp out Protestantism. Such a meaning may apply to the painting in the Johnson collection; but the date on the engraving is too early to make this assumption. Of course it is possible that a more general comment on the political situation is intended here.



60

THE MASQUERADE OF OURSON AND VALENTIN

Anonymous woodcut.
275 x 410 mm.

In the lower right corner: 1566. BRVEGEL.

This is the only woodcut made after a design by Bruegel. *The Marriage of Mopsus and Nisa* was begun as a woodcut but was never finished (see No. 79). It is likely that the designs were commissioned as a set from the anonymous publisher. It is almost certain that this was not Cock since no woodcuts published by him are known. Like *Mopsus*, *Ourson* depicts the performance of a popular play. Ourson and Valentin were twin brothers abandoned in the forest as infants. Ourson was raised by bears while Valentin found his way to the court of King

Pepin where he was trained to be a knight. Eventually the brothers are reunited. Ourson, the wildman, is tamed by his brother and becomes the knight's faithful companion. Together they rescue their mother, Bellisant, from a giant. The figures in the background of Bruegel's composition are collecting money for the performers.

61

THE PEASANT WEDDING DANCE

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden.
375 x 423 mm.

In the lower left corner: P. BRVEGEL. INVENT.; in the center of the foreground: *Aux quatre Vents*; in the lower right corner, the monogram of the engraver, Pieter van der Heyden. In the lower margin of the third and later states: *Locht op speelman ende latet wel dueren.//Soo langh als de lul ghaet en den rommel vermach://Doet lijse wel dapper*

haer billen rueren.//Want ten is vrij met haer gheen bruijloft alden dach.//Nu hebbelijck hammen danst soomen plach.//Ick luijster na de pijp en ghij mist den voete://Maer ons bruijt neemt nu van dansen verdrach.//Trouwens, tis oock best, want sij ghaet vol en soete (Keep it up musicians and make it last, So long as the flute and drum play. Liz will pluckily move her rump, Because her wedding is not every day. Tricky Dicks are doing fancy steps, I'm listening to the fife and you've missed a beat: But our bride has given up dancing, Which by the way, is for the best, because she's full and sweet).

The use of the address "*Aux quatre Vents*," without Hieronymus Cock's name, indicates that the print was one of a group published after 1570 by Cock's widow. Cock died in that year and Bruegel had died in 1569.

The print closely resembles Bruegel's painted *Peasant Wedding Dance* of 1566, now in Detroit. The four couples dancing in the foreground of the print are found in the same poses



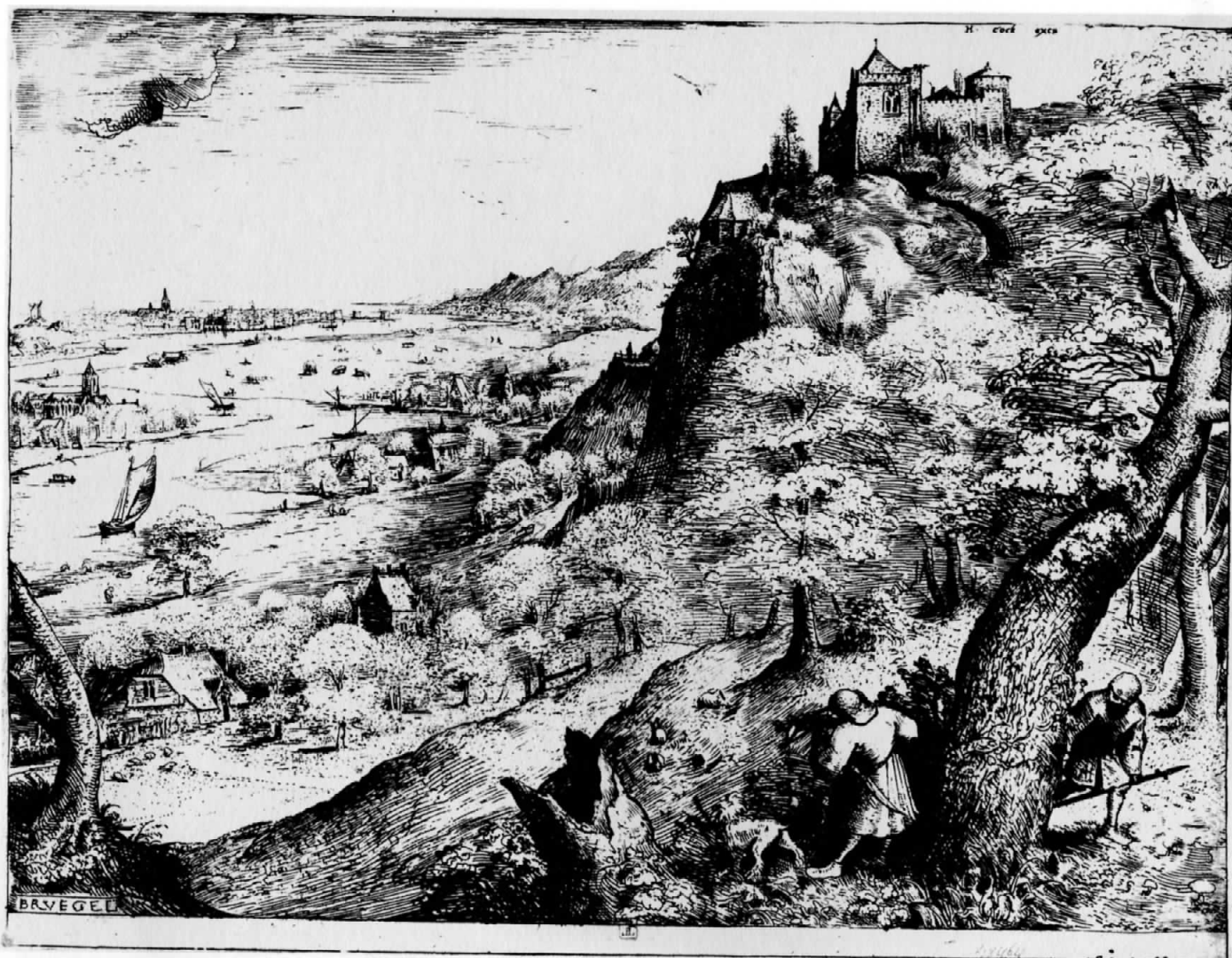
in the painting. Riggs has suggested, however, that the print is not dependent on this painting but on another, lost painting by Bruegel. He observes that the handling of light and shadow in the print suggests a painted rather than a drawn model, and that a number of paintings by Bruegel's followers reproduce the composition of the print in reverse. The argument, however, is not conclusive.

The similarity of the figures here to those in the Detroit painting raises an important issue. Among Bruegel's surviving drawings, there are surprisingly few figure studies. The early seventeenth century Dutch art historian, van Mander, tells us that Bruegel liked to attend peasant weddings and fairs, presumably in order to study faces and postures firsthand. Whether or not van Mander's story is true, Bruegel's peasants reveal his preoccupation with phy-

siognomy and the expression of different psychological and emotional states. It is difficult to believe, however, that these faces were not the result of careful study which at some point would have included working from life. Konrad Oberhuber has attempted to shed some light on this mystery by pointing to an etched series of individual heads usually described as a copy of a similar series by Adriaen Brouwer. The etchings represent peasant men and women of different ages and facial types, and surprisingly, include blacks. Although the nature of the relationship is by no means clear, these etchings may reflect lost studies by Bruegel.

The inscription below the image calls on the musicians to play as long as they can because not every day is the bride's wedding. The last two lines, however, tell us that she has given up dancing because she is "full and sweet," or, in

other words, pregnant. In recent years there has been much debate over how such images were viewed by Bruegel's contemporaries: were they only intended to make the viewer laugh as van Mander thought, or were they understood to be thinly disguised warnings against the sins of gluttony and lust? At the heart of this debate are questions concerning the attitudes toward the peasant and the peasant's role in society. There is much evidence to suggest that the peasant was often reviled as the embodiment of vice and stupidity. On the other hand, Margaret Carroll has recently argued that on the eve of the revolt against Spain, the traditional revelries of the peasantry were being celebrated by Netherlanders as 'an expression of their heritage and independence (see Nos.30 and 52). The contrary position is well set out by Keith Moxey in his essay in this volume.



62

THE RABBIT HUNT

Etching by Pieter Bruegel.
223 x 291 mm.

In the lower left corner: *BRUEGEL 1506* (the date is barely readable underneath the lines at the base of the tree). In the sky at the right: *H. Cock excu*.

The date on the print has only recently been read correctly as 1506. A copy of Bruegel's lost preparatory drawing (Fondation Custodia, Paris) is dated 1560, and it is clear that this is the date the artist intended to record on the etching. The error was probably due to his lack of experience with the medium. The *Rabbit Hunt* represents, in fact, Bruegel's first and only surviving attempt at print making. His reasons for taking up the experiment are easier to guess, however, than his reason for abandoning it so soon.

When one compares the *Rabbit Hunt* with the large landscapes etched by the Duetecums it is immediately apparent how much of the delicacy of Bruegel's drawings had been sacrificed to the Duetecums' technique. As Christopher White has suggested, Bruegel's experiment in etching may have been an attempt to see if a better translation of drawing into print could be made. Compared, for instance, with *HIERONYMVS IN DESERTO* (No. 2), it is plain that Bruegel as an etcher was less preoccupied with light and shadow as a means to separate form and create space. Instead he exhibits an almost impressionistic concern with light's ability to penetrate and dissolve form. Particularly striking is his handling of the foliage. By making maximum use of the white of the paper and by shunning contour in favor of short strokes and dots, he succeeds in giving the tree tops the same downy

softness we often admire in his drawings. But the difference we discern here is not simply the difference between the Duetecums' etching technique and Bruegel's. Around this time, Bruegel demonstrated an overall increased interest in creating compositions out of light and tone. The group of intimate landscape drawings made by Bruegel in 1559–1561, sometimes referred to as the "small landscapes," is an even clearer manifestation of this change. It has been suggested that the hunters in the foreground represent a proverb: he who pursues two rabbits at once, will lose both. It has also been suggested that the man with the spear is not hunting rabbits, but is a marauding soldier stalking the first man. Although this has not been confirmed, it would not be uncharacteristic of Bruegel to have tucked this chilling note into an otherwise serene landscape.



*Die dār luy en lacker sijt bōr crijsman oft clercken
die gheraekt daer en smaecht clār van als sonder werken*

*Die tuijnen sijn worsten die huysen met vlaijen
cappuinen en kieckens tvlechter al ghebraijen*

63

THE LAND OF COCKAIGNE

Engraving attributed to Pieter van der Heyden.
208 × 276 mm.

In the cartouche at the lower right: *P. Breugel//inuentor.*

Without the name of the publisher or engraver. In the lower margin: *Die daer luy en lacker sijt boer crijsman oft clercken//die gheraecht daer en smaecht clār van als sonder werken//Die tuijnen sijn worsten die huysen met vlaijen//cappuinen en kieckens tvlechter al ghebraijen* (The lazy and gluttonous farmers, soldiers and clerks get and taste all without working. The gardens are sausages, the houses are made of tarts. The fowl fly by already roasted).

The engraving is based on Bruegel's painting of the same subject dated 1567 in Munich. Lebeer claims that in its second state the print bears Cock's name. Riggs has found no impressions with Cock's name and doubts whether it was

published by him.

In the land of Cockaigne people eat and drink as much as they like, yet they never have to work or pay. The only passage to the mythical land is through a mountain of buckwheat pudding. The figure in the upper left corner of the engraving is tunneling his way through this substance. The scholar, the soldier and the farmer have presumably eaten all that they are physically able to and cannot rouse themselves out of their torpor. Grossmann interpreted this scene as a condemnation of the sins of gluttony and sloth, and there is evidence in contemporary literature that the theme could have a moralizing undercurrent. A text from 1546 connects the desire to visit the land of Cockaigne with crime: it claims that the only ones who know of such a place have discovered that it lies beside the gallows.



64

THE DRUNKARD PUSHED INTO A PIGSTY

Engraving by Jan Wierix (see Nos. 65-76).

Diam. 182 mm.

Inscribed lower centre: *P. Brueghel inueta*//*I.H.W.*, and below this: *martinus petreiu (= Petri) excude.*

The print shows a large crowd of women and men shoving a man into a pigsty which he is about to share with two pigs seen eating from a trough. The scene is of proverbial character, although it has no proverb inscribed on it. But a slightly altered rectangular copy, published by Visscher, showing the composition in reverse and with a landscape background, does include the verses: *Die haer goet als droncken Swynen// Brengen door in Venus Kott// Moeten nae elendich quynen// Eyndelyck int Varckensschott* (Drunken swine who spend time in Venus's den, will in the end languish miserably in the pig-pen). In other words those who pass their time in drunken lechery end up in a pig's trough. But once again we cannot be certain that the inscription accurately reflected the meaning intended by Bruegel. Although the print gives no indication that the subject is drunkenness, it has traditionally been interpreted in this way. No. 64 should be seen together with the series of Flemish proverbs discussed below, to which it is related both in theme and format.

The series consists of twelve roundels of which seven carry the monogram of the engraver Jan Wierix. The remaining five have been attributed to Wierix as well (by T. Riggs), or to Pieter Van der Heyden (by Lebeer and others). Jan Wierix (born around 1549) came from a well-known Antwerp family of engravers.

While No. 64—to which these prints are so similar—bears Bruegel's name, none of the *Proverbs* gives any indication of having been based on drawings by him. Grossmann suggested that they may be derived from lost paintings by Bruegel. Indeed, two of the compositions clearly are based on paintings by the master: the *Misanthrope* (see No. 67) and the *Parable of the Blind* (see No. 72), both in the Naples museum. It is possible that the *Proverbs* are Jan Wierix's own invention, inspired by Bruegel compositions. The fact that the Naples *Misanthrope* is dated 1568 has led scholars to assign a date around 1568 to the engravings but such a date is in no way conclusive.

A child of his time—we need only think of Erasmus and Rabelais—Bruegel was fascinated with proverbs and proverbial wisdom. He repeatedly put them into visual form in his compositions. Even if the main subject is not a proverb, as for example in the *Vices and Virtues* series, we discover that illustrations of common sayings make up part of his scenes. Several pictures are exclusively devoted to individual proverbs, and in at least one instance Bruegel filled an entire landscape with them. The famous painting in the Berlin museum probably does not constitute his only collection of aphorisms and common sayings: a series of twelve roundels illustrating Netherlandish proverbs in the Museum Mayer van der Bergh in Antwerp has sometimes been attributed to him. Whatever its authorship, the series strongly reflects Bruegel's influence. In format (roundel) as well as in the combination of image and text the Antwerp paintings and the *Misanthrope* in Naples are closely related to the engraved series. This is not the place to discuss the complicated problem of authenticity; suffice it to say that the *Flemish Proverbs* were created in the spirit of Bruegel and are, to some extent, if not by him, at least derived from his work.

THE QUARRELSOME HOUSEWIFE

Engraving by Jan Wierix, engraver's monogram underneath the French quatrain.

Diam. 177 mm.

Inscribed lower centre: *Femme qui tance sans raison, // Ne fait qu'enrager à la maison.* (A woman who nags without reason doesn't do anything but make trouble at home), and in a circle around the composition, in Flemish: *Een leekende dack, ende een roockende schouwe, Ja daer de simme aenden heijrt sit en siet, Een craijende hinne, een kijfachtige vrouwe, Is ongheluck in huijs ja quellinghe en verdriet.* (A leaking roof and a smoking chimney, yes, where the monkey sits at the hearth and looks around. A crowing hen, a scolding woman means bad luck in the house, yes, trouble and grief.)

A servant, sitting on a chair with folded hands, no longer listens to the nagging housewife: she has heard it all too often. A woman who scolds too much without reason, as the French inscription tells us, is no longer effective: the result is misery and disorder in the home. The monkey who peeks around the fireplace is, as always, a symbol of human folly and frivolity.



THE MAN WITH THE MONEYBAG AND HIS FLATTERERS

Engraving by Jan Wierix, engraver's monogram lower centre.

Diam. 177 mm.

Inscribed on the back of the giant: *On ne sait comme entrer en veul, // Au trou de cil qui donner peut.* (One does not know how to enter as one would like the hole of the one who can give), and in a circle around the composition, in Flemish: *Die ghelt te gheuen heeft onder hooghe en slechte, En dat hij wat milt laet van synen schat, druipen, Hy crijcht Offitien en comt t'synen rechte, Want elck en weet niet hoe hem sal in t'gat cruijpen.* (He who has money to give to high and low, and who lets drip somewhat generously from his treasure, acquires official positions and comes into his own, for everyone does not know how to creep into his hole.)

A human giant throws coins from a sock-shaped cornucopia, while people creep into his body through a hole in his back. The message seems to be: the world is full of flatterers (asslickers) trying to bribe their way up the social ladder but only a few succeed (e.g. the giant).



THE MISANTHROPE ROBBED BY THE WORLD

Engraving by Jan Wierix, engraver's monogram underneath the figure of the Misanthrope.

Diam. 179 mm.

Inscribed next to the head of the Misanthrope: *Je porte dueil voyant le monde, // Qui en tant de fraudes abonde* (I wear mourning seeing the world in which so many deceits abound), and in a circle around the composition, in Flemish: *De sulck draecht rou—om dat de weerelt is onghetvou, Die meeste ghebruijcken minst recht en reden, Weijnich leefster nou—also hij leuen sou, Men rooft men treckt elck steeckt vol gheueijsde seden.* (He wears mourning because the world is unfaithful, most people behave without rhyme or reason. Few now live as one should live. People rob, grab, and everyone is full of deceit.)

A robed figure, the Misanthrope, wanders unseeing through a landscape, his back to the thief who has crept up to steal his purse. This figure, stuck through a globe, serves as the embodiment of worldly guile which cheats and steals from anyone foolish enough to try to walk through the world upright. The Misanthrope, his face and body hidden by the robe, hopes, unrealistically, to ignore the world and all its wicked ways—and to escape the moral of the proverb which cynically preaches the wisdom of bending to worldly corruption. In the background a loaded wagon is being attacked; a corpse is hanging from the gallows.

The composition closely resembles the painting of the same title in the Naples museum. The engraver added background details which emphasize the wickedness and cruelty of the world.



THE MUSIC OF THE RICH IS ALWAYS PLEASANT, EVEN IF PLAYED ON A JAWBONE

Engraving by Jan Wierix, engraver's monogram underneath the cloak of the rich man.

Diam. 177 mm.

Inscribed on the giant jawbone, in French: *Qui de recevoir a moiien, // Sur la machoire il ioue bien.* (He who was the means to receive plays well on the jawbone), and in a circle around the composition, in Flemish: *Tis goet Ontfangher sijn, inden Crijch principael, Hij vult den Aessack, en men laudeert sijn sake, Al is sijn gagie groot noch weet hij sijn v[er] hael, Hij hout hem heerlijk en speelt op die kake.* (It is good to be the receiver in the big pay-off. He fills his pouch and one praises his business. As long as his gain [pay] is big enough, he knows his story. He holds himself splendidly and plays on the jawbone.)

The proverb "To play on the jawbone" means to acquire something illegally. Obviously, such shameful behaviour applies to the richly-dressed man (an official?) who sits—and plays—on an animal's jawbone. At the same time, the Flemish word for jawbone, *kake*, also means pillory. In the background we see a man playing a trumpet in a pillory post. He is also playing on the jawbone, i.e. playing on the pillory.



Bruegel's famous painting *Netherlandish Proverbs* in Berlin also includes a man in a pillory post playing a fiddle. Interestingly, in one of Pieter Brueghel the Younger's copies of this painting, the fiddle is replaced by a jawbone, as in the engraving.

69

EVERY PEDLAR PRAISES HIS OWN WARES

Engraving by Jan Wierix, engraver's monogram on the wall behind the fat man.

Diam. 177 mm.

Inscribed next to the fat man the letter 'B'; next to the pedlar the letter 'A'; underneath the French quatrain:

A. Voicij des rets, trompes, et fleutes: Telle denree onques vous neutes. // B. Va ten mercier va ten dicy: Ven ailleurs ta denree aussi. (A. Here are the nets, trumpets and flutes.

Such wares you never had. B. Go away, pedlar, go away from here, take your goods somewhere else.), and in a circle around the composition, in Flemish: *A. Hier netten ende trompen ja oock schoon fluijten, Gheen beter ware men nu hier in d'landt en vindt. B. Wech versiet v Crémere loopt elders stuijten, Daer t'uolck noch is hoorende doof en siende blindt.* (freely translated: A. Here are nets and trumpets, also pretty flutes. No better wares can be found in the country. B. Go away, pedlar, praise your wares somewhere else where people are still hearingly deaf and seemingly blind.)

A pedlar offering his merchandise is also included among the many scenes and figures in the Berlin painting (on the left edge, underneath the pair of dangling legs).

70

HE BEGS IN VAIN AT THE DOOR OF THE DEAF MAN

Engraving by Jan Wierix, engraver's monogram lower right.

Diam. 177 mm.

Inscribed lower centre with a French verse: *Maintenant en vain nous mendions, // Car a l'huijs du sourd nous crions.*

(We now beg in vain because we shout at the door of a deaf person), and in a circle around the composition, in Flemish: *Wat ick clop, oft bid, tis voor en doofmans deure, Ons proue wort soper, ons cappe die verslijt, Eijlaes, hebben wij t'beste, nu gheten veure, Soo wil ick mij, den bedelsack, haest maken quijt.* (Wherever I knock or beg, it is before the door of a deaf man. Our trying is in vain, our cap is worn; alas, we have already eaten the best first, so I almost want to get rid of the beggar's sack.)

Two monks with beggar's sacks stand in front of closed doors. Both inscriptions inform us that their begging is in vain. As they have already squandered their best provisions they will soon be destitute. The moral seems to be: live frugally and save for the future. In any case, do not eat the best first.



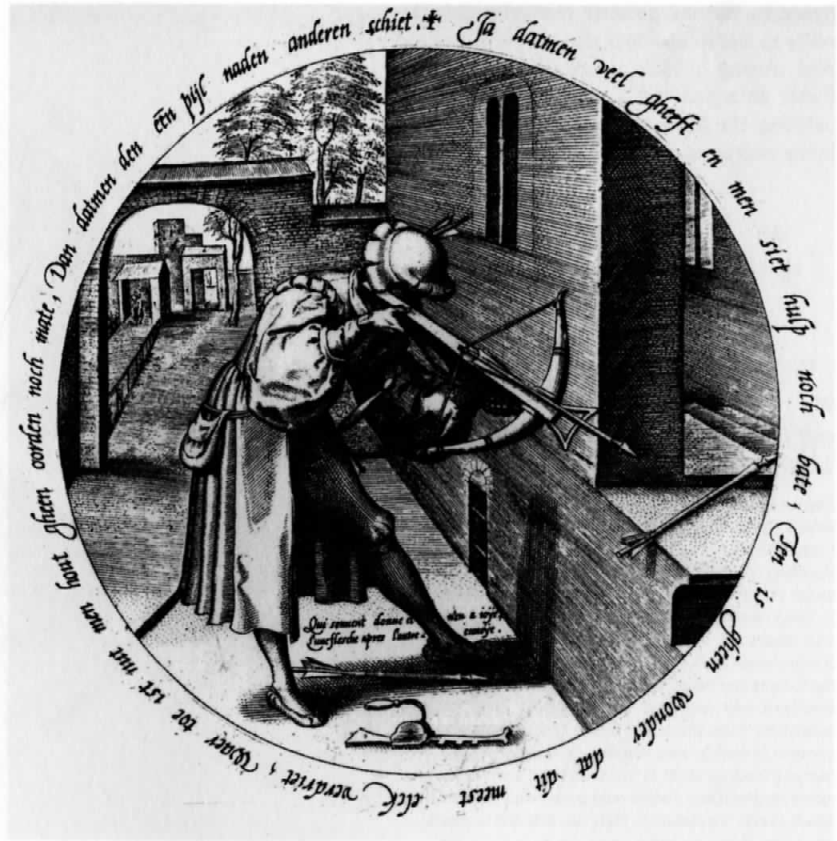
THE ARCHER WHO SHOOTS ALL HIS ARROWS

Engraving by Jan Wierix, engraver's monogram on the wall near the point of the arrow.

Diam. 177 mm.

Inscribed with a French verse: *Qui souuent donne et n'en a ioye, // L'une flesche apres l'autre il enuoie.* (He who gives often and has no joy of it [i.e. success], dispatches one arrow after the other), and in a circle around the composition, in Flemish: *Ja datmen veel gheeft en men siet hulp noch bate, Ten is gheen wonder dat dit meest elck verdriet, Waer toe ist nut men hout gheen oorden noch mate, Dan datmen den een pijl naden anderen schiet.* (Yes, if one gives often and sees neither help nor gain, then it is no wonder that it displeases almost everybody. What use is it that one has neither order nor measure but that one shoots one arrow after the other.)

The archer shooting one arrow after another is a symbol of meaningless behaviour. Such foolish activity is also included in the painting *Netherlandish Proverbs* in Berlin (the man on the roof).



TWO BLIND MEN LEADING EACH OTHER WILL FALL INTO THE DITCH

Engraver not known, probably Jan Wierix.

Diam. 177 mm.

Inscribed in a circle around the composition, in Flemish: *Wandelt alijt in alle voorsichticheijt, Sijt ghetrou, betrouwt niemant, dan Godt in allen: Want om dat deen blinde dander leijt Sietmense beij tsamen inde gracht vallen.* (Walk carefully at all times, be faithful, trust nobody but God in all things. For if a blind man leads another, one sees that they both fall together into the ditch.)

This print and the next four (Nos. 73–76) carry neither an engraver's monogram nor a French inscription. According to Lebeer they were not executed by Jan Wierix but by another engraver (Pieter Van der Heyden?) who made them as a complement to the previous seven to create a set of twelve. However, in the most recent study on Bruegel and his engravers, by Timothy Riggs, they are given to Wierix.

The scene is based on the parable of the blind, as found in Matthew 15: 14: "And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." This subject had already appeared in the far background of the Berlin *Netherlandish Proverbs* of 1559, and is the theme of one of Bruegel's most impressive paintings, the *Parable of the Blind*, of 1568, in Naples. Indeed, the present engraving is loosely based on the central figures in that painting. However, the engraver kept more closely to the text by showing two blind men instead of Bruegel's chain of six.



A FOOL HATCHES A BIG EMPTY EGG

Engraver not known, probably Jan Wierix.
Diam. 177 mm.

Inscribed in a circle around the composition, in Flemish:
Foeij v verbuijckte dronckaerts sot, Altijt leckt en suiijt vol tot den croppe: Op v vuijl eij vindende als een marot, Ten lesten inden ijdel en doppe. (Shame, you pot-bellied drunken fools, always licking and drinking full to the crop. Finding yourself like another fool on a dirty egg, you end up in the empty shell.)

A fool drinking from a cup sits on a huge, hollow egg in whose interior one can barely make out another fool's bauble. The meaning of the illustration and inscription is not clear. An esoteric interpretation relating to alchemy, suggested previously, is not convincing. The scene may simply refer to the foolishness of excessive drinking.



THE CAREFREE PEDLAR

Engraver not known, probably Jan Wierix.
Diam. 177 mm.

Inscribed in a circle around the composition, in Flemish:
Wie met bedroch sijn craem stoffeert, En also meijnt te ghewinnen rijkdom groot: Voorwaer hij ten lesten met pover logeert, Bij de bruijt sittende craut sijn hoot. (He who fraudulently fills his pedlar's tray and thus thinks he will gain riches, indeed, he in the end lodges with the poor, and sitting next to his bride scratches his head.)



THE HAY RUNS AFTER THE HORSE

Engraver not known, probably Jan Wierix.

Diam. 177 mm.

Inscribed in a circle around the composition, in Flemish:
*Daer t'hoij den peerde nae loopt is verkeert waert gheschiet,
 Merckt ghij dochters die self aensoeckt soo ombeschaemt:
 De Jongmans te vrijen tuwer eeren niet, Maer als t'peert,
 t'hoij, soeckende, uwer eeren betaemt.* (When the hay runs
 after the horse, that is wrong where it happens. Take note,
 you daughters, who court so shamelessly: It does you no
 honour to court young men. But if the horse runs after the
 hay, that is becoming to your honour.)

The proverb was very popular in Bruegel's time,
 always associated with marriage-seeking women.
 This is illustrated literally in the middle distance
 where a woman chases a man into a house.



HE WARMS HIMSELF AT A BURNING HOUSE

Engraver not known, probably Jan Wierix.

Diam. 177 mm.

Inscribed in a circle around the composition, in Flemish:
*De sulck eigghenbaetghierich met onuerstant, Soeckt elcks
 bederffenis, sonder ontfemen, Hem en ruchs wiens huijs
 dat brant, Als hy hem mach bij de colen wermen.* (He who
 greedily and with lack of understanding seeks his own
 advantage, looks for everyman's ruin without compassion.
 He does not care whose house is burning as long as he can
 warm himself at the fire.)

The proverb here illustrated points out the
 wickedness of self-centred and egoistic people
 who benefit from other people's misfortunes.
 The saying also makes up part of the great
 collection of proverbs in the Berlin painting.





77

SPRING

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden.
228 x 287 mm.

In the lower left corner: *Bruegel inuict*; to the right between the feet of the gardener: *H. Cock excud. 1570*; further to the right, the monogram of the engraver, Pieter van der Heyden. In the lower margin, to the left: *Martius, Aprilis, Maius, sunt tempora ueris* (March, April and May are the months of Spring); in the middle, in a small cartouche: *VER Pueritiae compar* (Spring, similar to childhood); to the right: *Vere Venus gaudet florentibus aurea sertis* (in Spring, golden Venus rejoices in garlands of blooming flowers).

Nos. 77 and 78 are part of a set of four engravings representing the seasons, published by Cock in 1570. The images are loosely based on a late medieval tradition of calendar illumination which used the seasonal labors of the peasants to illustrate the months. Here, we see peasants straightening and planting a formal garden. In the middle ground more peasants are busy shearing sheep, and in the distance a solitary figure is sowing seed. To the left, fashionably dressed people embrace, drink and listen to music; they are no doubt meant to remind us that spring is also the time for love. The preparatory drawing for *Spring* is in the Albertina in Vienna and is dated 1565. The drawing Bruegel made for *Summer* in the Kunsthalle in Hamburg, however, is dated 1568.

There was evidently some delay in completing the series and it was left unfinished at Bruegel's death in 1569. The remaining two prints (*Fall* and *Winter*) were engraved from designs made by Hans Bol.

The inscriptions in the lower margin were probably Cock's idea. He compares the seasons with the ages of man: spring represents childhood, and summer, adolescence. The theme seems to have been an afterthought; there is no reflection of it in the images themselves. Ilya Veldman has recently discovered that the lines given at the right are taken from the *Anthologia Latina*, each from a different epigram written by a different author. Those for *Spring* are from Euphorbius.



78

SUMMER

Engraving attributed to Pieter van der Heyden.
225 × 283 mm.

In the lower right corner: *Cock excu. Bruegel Inuet*. In the lower margin at the left: *Iulius, Augustus, nec non et Iunius Aestas* (July, August and also June make Summer); in the center, in a small cartouche: *AESTAS Adolescentis imago* (Summer, image of youth); to the right: *Frugiferas arvis fert Aestas torrida messeis* (hot summer brings bounteous harvests to the fields).

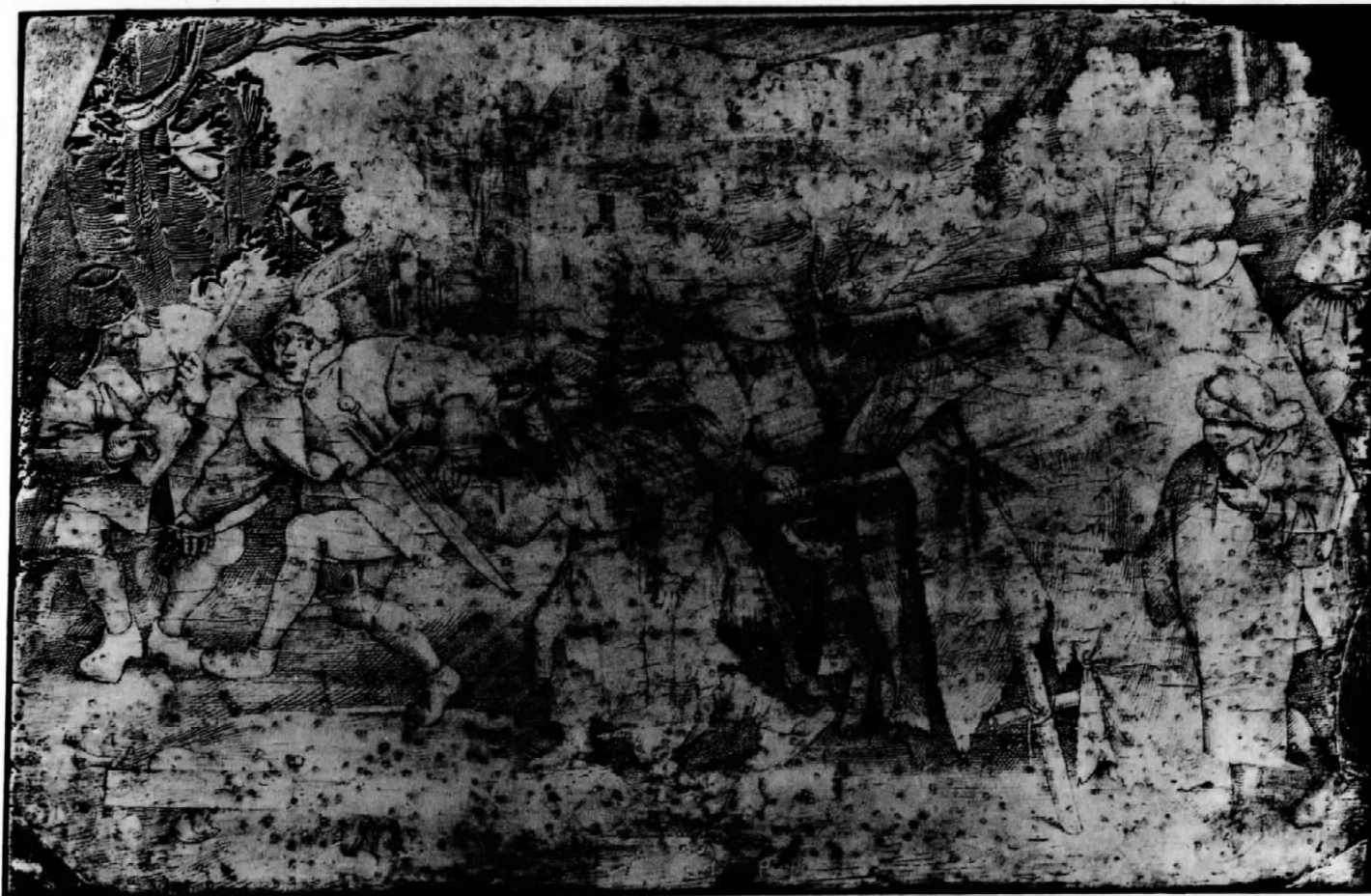
Like *Spring* (No. 77), *Summer* is an illustration of the labors of the months. The activities of June, July and August are depicted here simultaneously. The main scene is the wheat harvest of August. The man in the foreground to the

right is a traditional emblem of late summer; his substantial thirst has been aroused by August's heat. The figure next to him bearing baskets of fruits and vegetables may represent June, and in a distant field people are making hay, an event that occurs in July.

The image is one of the most powerful in Bruegel's oeuvre. We are immediately impressed by the monumental figures in the foreground whose foreshortened limbs seem to break through the picture plane. Positioned on either side of a deep swath cut into the field, they anchor the composition and hold the pull of the receding landscape in check. Although the composition is obviously related to Bruegel's famous *Harvesters* in New York, it is interesting

to observe how different his formal concerns are there.

The two figures in the foreground of *Summer* are thought to have been inspired by Italian or antique art. Because of this presumed ancestry, they are often described as heroic. That Bruegel intended to portray the peasant in this strictly positive light is, however, not clear. It is disturbing to most viewers that all the faces in the picture are either hidden or barely formed. Given Bruegel's preoccupation with faces—and this is documented by such paintings as *The Peasant Wedding* in Vienna—we must assume that their omission here has a meaning. Lebeer supports the opinion that they have been suppressed in order to strengthen the sense of



harmony between the laborer and nature. Others have pointed to the figure whose head is engulfed by the fruit basket and have suggested that it alludes to a Netherlandish saying which claims that a woman's head is easily mistaken for a melon (see also Nos.30 and 61).

A few words must be said about the high quality of Pieter Van der Heyden's engraving. He has succeeded in preserving the power of Bruegel's spatial conception without sacrificing the more delicate aspects of Bruegel's drawing. The effect of the sunlight on the distant field and the richness of the shadows in the foreground are particularly striking. The line on the right is taken from an epigram by Julian in the *Anthologia Latina*.

79

THE WEDDING OF MOPSUS AND NISA

Partly cut woodblock with drawing by Pieter Bruegel.
266 x 416 mm.

Exactly the same design as is visible on this partly cut woodblock was used for the engraving of *The Wedding of Mopsus and Nisa* published by Cock in 1570 (No.80). Since its pendant, *The Masquerade of Ourson and Valentin*, the only surviving complete wood-

cut after a design by Bruegel is dated 1566 (No.60), one may suppose that this one too was commissioned before that date. For some reason, however, the unknown woodcutter abandoned his work on the block shortly after it was begun. Could it be that already the block showed signs of distress?

Certainly the present condition of the block is too fragile to allow it to travel (it is here shown in reproduction), and it now suffers from a considerable amount of worming and various degrees of wear, especially around the edges. But the panel is nevertheless a rare instance of a woodblock from the sixteenth century, with the added interest of having a complete drawing by Bruegel on its surface.



80

THE WEDDING OF MOPSUS AND NISA

Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden.
222 x 290 mm.

At the bottom, towards the left, the monogram of the engraver; slightly to the right of the middle (in the first state): *H. Cock excud. 1570.*; in the lower right corner: *Bruegel. inuentor.*; in the lower margin: *MOPSO NISA DATVR, QVID NON SPEREMVS AMANTES* (Mopsus marries Nisa, what may not we lovers hope for?).

It is likely that the *Wedding of Mopsus and Nisa* was originally conceived as a woodcut rather than an engraving. A partially cut woodblock with Bruegel's drawing of the same design is preserved in the Metropolitan Museum in New York (No. 79). The unexecuted woodcut was probably meant to be a pendant to the *Ourson and Valentin* woodcut of 1566 (No. 66). Each of these images depicts a popular play traditionally performed during carnival, and in fact, we find them in Bruegel's painting, *The Battle between Carnival and Lent* (1559).

The title of the print is based on the inscription which is a line taken from Virgil (*Bucolica* VIII, 26). The play itself was known to contemporaries as "The Dirty Bride." Why a reference to Virgil's pastoral lovers has been injected is not clear. It is possible that it was added by the publisher only as an afterthought. The fact that

the original woodcut design was not commissioned by Cock seems to support this possibility.

In "The Dirty Bride," the conventional marriage celebration was mocked. The bride's slovenly appearance was interpreted not only as evidence of poverty, but of a dissolute life. The groom's willingness to marry her identified him as a fool. Many of the details were meant to be recognized as laughably poor substitutes for the real thing. This includes the man at the right who makes music with a knife and shovel. The paper pilgrimage pennant poking out of the bride's tent may be an allusion to the expensive banners used at weddings and the bride herself wears a colander on her head instead of the traditional crown. The figure at the left holding a small bank is probably collecting money for the performers.



81

RIVER LANDSCAPE WITH MERCURY AND PSYCHE

Etching and engraving attributed to Joris Hoefnagel.
270 x 342 mm.

In the lower margin: *ARTI ET INGENIO STAT SINE MORTE DECVS.*, and below this: *Pulcher Atlantiades Psychem ad Sydera tollens, // Ingenio scandi sydera posse docet. // Ingenio liquidum possum consendere Coelum, // Si mundi curas fata leuare velint.*; and below: *Petrus Bruegel fecit: Romae A°: 1553. // Excudit Houf: cum prae: Caes:*

Both this print and No.82 are probably based on drawings by Bruegel which the publisher Joris Hoefnagel obtained after the artist's death. The inscriptions on the prints which say "made

by Pieter Bruegel, Rome, 1553," seem to refer to these designs, not the prints themselves. The etched plates produced from the drawings may date from as late as 1580. For this reason these landscapes cannot be awarded the same place in Bruegel's oeuvre as, for instance, the large landscapes published by Cock (Nos.1-13).

A drawing in Besançon, dated 1553, appears to be a copy of the drawing used by Hoefnagel for No.81. The original drawing by Bruegel was probably made in Italy in 1553 as the inscription on the print indicates. The same composition appears in a painting in London attributed to an anonymous Antwerp painter of the mid-sixteenth century. It has been suggested that Bruegel's composition was dependent on this painting and not on impressions recorded in Italy. As Müller-Hofstede has pointed out, however, it is equally possible that the painting

was derived from Bruegel's drawing.

The figures of Mercury and Psyche do not appear in the drawing in Besançon, and so were probably not part of Bruegel's composition. Moreover, it is significant that the figures are engraved and not etched. This suggests that they were an afterthought and were perhaps even added by another hand.

Psyche was a mortal girl whose beauty inspired Venus's jealousy. Much to the Goddess's displeasure, her son, Cupid, fell in love with Psyche. In order to neutralize Venus's jealousy and make it possible for them to live together in peace, Cupid arranged to have Psyche deified. In the print we see Psyche being delivered to the gods by Mercury. Psyche of course, represents the spirit, and the words below the image proclaim that art, like the spirit, is immortal.



RIVER LANDSCAPE WITH DAEDALUS AND ICARUS

Etching attributed to Joris Hoefnagel.
275 x 337 mm.

In the lower margin: INTER VTRVMQVE VOLA, MEDIO TVTISSIMVS IBIS.; below this: Qui fuit ut tutas agitarer Daedalus alas?//Icarus immensas nomine signet aquas?// Nempe quod hic alté, demissius ille volabat://Nam penmas ambo non habuere suas., and below this, in the center: Petrus Bruegel fecit: Romæ A° 1553.//Excudit: Houf: cum præ: Cæs°.

Joris Hoefnagel published Nos.81 and 82 as part of a set of four prints, the other two based on designs by Cornelis Cort. Although no surviving drawing by Bruegel corresponds exactly to the landscape depicted here, the composition is reminiscent of drawings made by Bruegel in the mid 1550s.

Daedalus, the legendary artist and inventor, flies above the landscape with his son Icarus. Icarus however has flown too close to the sun. The heat has melted the wax holding his wings together and he is about to fall into the water. In the verses below the image, Icarus's fate is held up as a lesson for the ambitious. The fall of Icarus also appears in one of the prints from Bruegel's ships series (No.44).



83

THE DEAN OF RENAIX (RONSE)

Anonymous engraving.

283 x 406 mm.

Attached to the curtain in the back of the room: *THVIS* (*s* is reversed) *VA NERI* (= *het huis van neringe*, the house of commerce?); at the left, on the piece of parchment on the wall: *BRUEGEL INVEN 1557*.

The print depicts a shop where people are having the stone of folly cut out of their heads. In other words, they have come to be cured of foolishness. The stone-cutting operation was a popular image in the Netherlands, both in speech and in art. It is the subject of a painting by Hieronymus Bosch, and was treated at least one other time by Bruegel (see No. 28).

Although a piece of parchment on the wall claims that the print was "invented" by Bruegel in 1557, many have questioned whether Bruegel had anything at all to do with its production. The inscription presumably means that the composition was based on a design by Bruegel. No such drawing or painting by the artist has survived, and as Riggs has observed, the

engraving is so crude that it is difficult to say whether Bruegel's genius is behind it or not. The traditional title, *The Dean of Renaix* (Ronse), may be misleading. It is based on a handwritten notation on an impression in Leiden. Presumably, the writer knew that a church in Renaix was a pilgrimage site for those seeking to be cured of foolishness and assumed that this was the subject of the print. There is no indication in the image itself that the place is Renaix.



THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Engraving attributed to Philip Galle.

465 x 328 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *BRVEGEL. INVEN.//COCK. EXCVDEBAT.*

A monochrome wash drawing on paper, attached to panel, is in the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam. It has been dated c. 1562. It is one of three grisailles, executed by Bruegel either for himself or as personal gifts for friends, comparable to Michelangelo's presentation drawings (see Nos. 86 and 88). The engraver of this important work is not known; he seems to have been Philip Galle who engraved *The Death of the Virgin* (No. 86).

The scene combines the gospel accounts of Mark (16, 1-7) and Matthew (28, 1-8), of whom only the latter mentions the soldiers guarding the tomb. The elongated forms, especially of the risen Christ, the angel and the holy women as well as the general compositional arrangement are derived from late 15th and early 16th century models, e.g. by Dürer and Memling and his workshop.

For the Christian doctrine of salvation the miraculous resurrection of Christ is the essential event. The promise of salvation, of a new day, is the central theme in Bruegel's composition. It is symbolised by the rising sun to which points the hand of Christ whose nimbus is another sun.



CHRIST AND TWO DISCIPLES ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Engraved by Philip Galle.

248 x 192 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *P. BRVEGEL INVENTOR*; lower centre: the date 1571; below the date, the name of the engraver: *P. GAL. [le] FE.*; sometimes with an inscription on the lower margin, in Latin: *CHRISTE PEREGRINI DIGNARIS SUMERE FORMAM, // VT FIRMA SOLIDES PECTORA NOSTRA FIDE. LVC. 24* (O Christ, you think it worthy to assume the appearance of a pilgrim in order to confirm our hearts in steadfast faith).

This engraving was executed two years after Bruegel's death. No drawing is known to exist. It has been suggested that the print renders only part of a composition which, in its complete form, provided the basis for a painting by Pieter Bruegel the Younger.

The incident illustrated occurs shortly after the Resurrection (No. 84) when Christ appears to two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus, unrecognized by them (Mark 16, 12-13; Luke 24, 13-28). It is a somewhat unusual subject unlike the incident that follows it, the more celebrated Supper at Emmaus (e.g. Rembrandt and Caravaggio). Each figure wears pilgrim's dress and carries the pilgrim's staff (see No. 57).



86

THE DEATH OF THE VIRGIN

Engraving by Philip Galle.
310 × 417 mm.

Inscribed lower margin, in cartouche on left: *Sic Petri Brugelii/archetipum [m], Philipp. // Galleus imitabatur*; in cartouche on the right: *Abrah. Ortelius, // sibi & amicis, // fieri curabat*.

The engraving is based on the grisaille on panel of around 1564, now in Upton House, near Banbury, England (National Trust). The latter was painted for Bruegel's friend, the eminent geographer Abraham Ortelius who had it engraved in 1574 (date on first state, not exhibited). It was later owned by Rubens. The print is in the same direction as the painting. The engraver obviously wished to remain faithful to his prototype.

The account of the Virgin's death, as given in the *Golden Legend*, is attributed to John the Evangelist. It has been suggested that the sleeping figure on the left of the composition is the Evangelist who sees the scene before him as in a dream. The Virgin lies on a canopied bed in a typical domestic interior of Bruegel's time. She is surrounded by the apostles and many other figures. This interpretation differs from the traditional scene showing the Virgin mourned by the apostles only. In Bruegel's composition her death—her passing to her son's Kingdom—appears as an event in which all the righteous, not only the apostles, take part.

Bruegel's use of light—which here carries symbolic meaning—is particularly striking. The illumination from natural sources—the candles, the lamp and the fireplace—pales into insignificance in contrast to the mystical light issuing from the Virgin.

87

THE TRIUMPH OF TIME

Engraved by Philip Galle.
208 × 301 mm.

Inscribed lower edge, centre: 1574; towards the right: *Petrus Bruegel inuen.*; in a cartouche, lower right: *Phs Galle/excudebat*; on the lower margin, in Latin: *Solis equus, Lunaque, inuictum [i.e. inuictum] quattuor Horis, // Signa per extenti duodena volubilis Anni, // Proripiunt Tempus: curru quod praepete secum // Cuncta rapit: comiti Morti non rapta relinquit // Pone subit, cunctis rebus Fama una superstes // Gaetulo boue vecta, implens clangoribus orbem (The horse of the sun and that of the moon rush Time forward; who, borne by the four seasons through the twelve signs of the rotating extensive year, bears off all things with him as he goes on his swift chariot, leaving what he has not seized to his companion Death. Behind them follows Fame, sole survivor of all things, borne on an elephant, filling the world with her trumpet blasts).*

No drawing survives; indeed, doubts have been expressed as to the authenticity of the design. The engraving was included, with reserv-



ations, in the comprehensive catalogues by van Bastelaer (1908) and Lebeer (1969), but only Gustav Glück (1943) fully accepted Bruegel's authorship.

Inspired by Petrarch's famous poem (the *Trionfi*), the *Triumph of Time* was a popular subject in the Renaissance. Its essential meaning is: Time destroys everything that it has created.—In the centre is a cart on which Cronos (Saturnus in Latin) rides. In one hand he holds a child which he is about to devour, in the other a snake in the form of a circle. In Greek mythology it was prophesied to Cronos, son of Heaven and Earth, that one of his children would usurp him (as Zeus eventually did). In order to prevent this from happening, he devoured them. Because of the confusion of Cronos, the name of the God, and chronos, the Greek word for time, the God came to represent Time; the swallowing of his children became a symbol of the destruction by time. The snake

with the tail in its mouth is an ancient Egyptian symbol of eternity. Cronos sits on an hourglass, another symbol of time.

On the cart, beside Time, is the globe of the earth, surrounded by the signs of the Zodiac. A tree grows out of the globe, its left half dead, its right half covered with foliage (Tree of Life?). On the left side of the picture we see barren trees and a burning town, on the right side a prosperous townscape. This is the side the destructive power of time has not yet reached. Three of the signs of the Zodiac are a little outside the circle: the scorpion is half-way up the trunk of the tree; the scales (Libra) hang higher up from a branch; and the crab (Cancer) seems to be slipping off the cart. These signs have come to life, so to speak. Such a witty and imaginative way of representing these conventional symbols would seem to support Bruegel's authorship. In the tree stands a clock, its hammer striking the unceasing hours.

The cart itself has contrasting wheels: one woven from twigs, the other ornately patterned. It has been suggested that this possibly refers to the seasons (autumn and spring?), or, alternatively, suggests that Time sometimes travels along smoothly, sometimes roughly. The cart is pulled by two horses: the light horse of day (sun ornament), and the dark horse of night (half-moon). Time is followed by mounted Death with his scythe, followed, in turn, by Fame riding on an elephant and blowing a trumpet: Fame triumphs over Death but, in the end, Time conquers everything.

Time and his entourage ride on a road strewn with the emblems and objects of life: the painter's palette and brush, musical instruments, tools and weapons, the crown of the king, the soldier's helmet, the cardinal's and the burgher's hat, a broken wheel, a money bag, etc. Time, followed by death, conquers everybody and everything; it makes no distinction.



CHRIST AND THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY

Engraving by Pieter Perret, engraver's signature lower edge, left of centre.
265 × 345 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *BRVEGEL M. D. LXV* (indicating the date of the painting rather than the engraving); further to the right: *P. Perret sc[ulpsit] 79* (i.e. 1579); followed by *Cum Priuilegio* further to the right; on the stone in front of Christ, in Flemish: *DIE SONDER SONDE IS/DIE...* (He that is without sin...); on lower margin: *QVI SINE PECCATO EST VESTRVM, PRIMVS IN ILLAM LAPIDEM MITTAT. Ioan. 8.* (He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her, John 8, 7); followed by *Antverpia apud Petrum de Iode* on the second state exhibited here.

The print is based on the grisaille painting formerly in the Princes Gate Collection, London which was stolen in 1981 and has not been recovered. It is signed and dated 1565. The engraving was done in 1579, ten years after Bruegel's death. The engraver retained the direction of the grisaille because Christ had to

be shown writing with his right hand.

The story is told in John 8, 2-11. While Christ was teaching in the Temple at Jerusalem the Pharisees (here identified by fake Hebrew letters on their garments) brought to him a woman who had been caught in the act of committing adultery. Under Mosaic law the punishment for the offence was stoning to death (there is a stone on the ground). The Pharisees wanted to find out what Christ had to say hoping to trap him into an answer that would offend their law. Christ bent down and wrote the answer into the dust with his finger—the same as the inscription on the engraving. At this the woman's accusers went away mortified and when they were alone Christ forgave the woman. Bruegel shows the moment when Christ, accompanied by some of his disciples, writes his answer into the dust. Some of the mortified Jews have already turned away, others are staring at the words. Although, according to the Gospel account, all the Pharisees leave "being convicted by their own conscience," it seems

that the old Jew pointing at the inscription is not about to show any remorse. Bruegel's view of mankind was somewhat more pessimistic than the Evangelists's.

As in the *Death of the Virgin*, the scene is characterised by strong chiaroscuro. The main group of four figures, strongly lit, is set off against the rest: Christ and the woman on one side, the hostile Pharisee and the old man on the other. Bruegel painted the *Woman Taken in Adultery* for himself and kept it among his possessions until his death.

This composition, together with the *Resurrection* and the *Death of the Virgin* is part of a group that treats in an unconventional and personal way Bruegel's views on essential Christian themes. If the true subjects of the other two grisailles are Christian faith and hope, that of the *Woman Taken in Adultery* is Christian charity. For the interpretive problems posed by this work, see the references to it in the fourth essay by David Freedberg in this volume.



89

PEASANTS' BRAWL OVER A GAME OF CARDS

Etched and engraved by Lucas Vorsterman.
426 x 522 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *Pet. Bruegel inuent.*; on lower margin, printed in six columns, Latin verses by F.A. Reuter, based on Virgil's *Eclogues*; underneath a dedication, in Latin, to Jan Brueghel, son of Pieter Bruegel: *CLARISS. PRAESTANTISSIMOQ. VIRO DNO IOANNI BRVEGELIO, PETRI BRVEGELII SVI TEMPORIS APELLIS FILIO, PATERNAE ARTIS HAEREDI EX ASSE, HOC PATRIAE MANVS MONVMENTVM ARTIFICIOSISSIMVM, L.M.Q.D.D. Lucas Vorsterman. excud. cum. priuil.*

The print reproduces one of Bruegel's last compositions, now lost. It is known from many copies, including the engraving. The original probably once was in the possession of Pieter's son, Jan Brueghel (died 1625) to whom the print is dedicated. It was later owned by the great English collector Lord Arundel. Vorsterman's engraving is probably not done directly after Bruegel's painting but rather after a design by Peter Paul Rubens and Jan Brueghel based on the older Bruegel's composition. Vorsterman was Rubens's most talented engraver who worked for the painter from around 1618 to 1622.



90

A MAN YAWNING

Etched and engraved by Lucas Vorsterman.

209 x 207 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *Pieter Breughel Pinxit*; lower right:

Cum Priuil.

The print reproduces a composition by Pieter Bruegel the Elder once owned by Rubens. It is known from several copies, of which the best is in the Brussels museum. The original may have belonged to a series of roundels with single heads which survive in copies only.

THE EPILEPTIC WOMEN OF MEULEBEKE (MOLENBEEK)

A series of three plates engraved by Hendrik Hondius (1573-ca. 1649), showing the annual pilgrimage of epileptics to the church of St. John at Molebeek, just outside Brussels. For a further account of this event, see under No.91.



91

TWO BAGPIPE PLAYERS

131 × 156 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *P. Breugel inv.*; lower right: *Hh. fec. Cum priv. 1642.*

The long title explains the composition and names its inventor as Pieter Bruegel the Elder. It tells how the pilgrims had to dance to Molebeek—or were made to dance—on the Feast Day of St. John. Once they had crossed the bridge, they were cured for a year. Bagpipe-players preceded them, as here. These were followed (as in the second and third prints, below) by the pilgrims, who were made to go against their will, some shouting and screaming. Once they reached the bridge they turned round and resisted, but were dragged and lifted across. It may perhaps be worth noting that

since only women are portrayed as patients, it may be that some sort of female hysteria is represented here as the cause of the illness, rather than epilepsy.

It is not clear from the title whether Hondius's model was a painting or a drawing by Bruegel. Several copies of the original composition are known, including several drawings (e.g. Vienna, Berlin and Amsterdam). All show one continuous scene, not three separate parts as in the prints. It is possible that one of them was used for the engraving. The original should be dated 1564.



92

A GROUP OF MEN AND TWO EPILEPTIC
WOMEN GOING TO THE RIGHT

227 × 163 mm.

Inscribed lower centre: *P. B. inv.*; lower right: *Hh. sculp.*
Cum priv. See under No. 91.



93

**A GROUP OF MEN AND TWO EPILEPTIC
WOMEN GOING TO THE LEFT**

228 × 169 mm.

Inscribed lower centre: *Hondius sculp. 1642. Cum pr.*
See also under No.91.

94

TWO FOOLS FROM A CARNIVAL

Engraving by Hendrik Hondius.

130 x 157 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *P. B. inv. Hh. fecit. 1642. Cum priv.*



95

THREE FOOLS FROM A CARNIVAL

Engraving by Hendrik Hondius.

128 x 157 mm.

Inscribed lower left: *Pet. Breug. inv. Hondius fecit.*; lower center: *C. privit.*; on the wall the date: 1642.

Nos. 94 and 95, published by Hondius in the same year as the *Epileptic Women of Meulebeke* cannot convincingly be attributed to Bruegel; indeed, their designs are probably not even of the sixteenth century.





NON IN SOLO PANE VICTURVS EST HOMO, SED OMNI VERBO QVOD DIGREDITVR PER OS DEI. MAR. 4. DEVT 8.

96

LANDSCAPE WITH THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST

Etching by Hieronymus Cock.
226 x 351 mm.

On the lower left: *H. Cock fecit.*, below: *NON IN SOLO PANE VICTURVS EST HOMO SED OMNI VERBO QVOD DIGREDITVR PER OS DEI MAR. 4. DEVT. 8.* (Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord).

This print is not listed in Lebeer's fundamental Catalogue Raisonné of 1969. Yet it is almost certainly the first print to have been made as a result of the collaboration of Bruegel and his distinguished publisher Hieronymus Cock. It almost certainly antedates the well-known and justly-famed series of Alpine Landscapes (Nos. 2–13). It is clearly based on a drawing in the National Gallery in Prague of a forest landscape with five bears, published by Arndt in 1966. The Prague drawing appears to carry the

date of 1554. This date also appears on one of a series of closely related drawings of woodland scenes, chiefly in Paris and London, which either are by Pieter Bruegel himself or are copies after him by his son, Jan Brueghel (1568–1625). These drawings sometimes show bears too, but occasionally other animals are depicted as well.

All the evidence, therefore, suggests that the Prague drawing was made by Bruegel in Rome, which he then carried with him back to Antwerp, to be handed over to Cock to form the basis of the present print. In one significant respect, however, the print differs strikingly from the drawing. Cock substituted a scriptural scene for the animals, that of the Temptation of Christ in the Wilderness. The devil meets Christ, who is hungry after wandering for forty days in the wilderness, and offers him stones to eat, saying: "If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread" (Luke 4:3).

The importance of the print could hardly be overestimated. It is almost certainly the earliest of the prints after Pieter Bruegel. It is clearly signed as the work of Hieronymus Cock. More than any other of his landscape prints it shows Bruegel's indebtedness to the wooded landscapes of Muziano, whose work he must first have encountered in Rome in 1552–53, as well as to the two other great Venetian Landscape artists, Titian and Campagnola. This type of densely wooded landscape, with a distant view off to one side was to affect the subsequent course of landscape representation in the Netherlands at least as profoundly as his more airy and spacious mountain scenes. Indeed, in the two generations immediately following his death it was arguably even more influential, as is evident from the work of a whole school of painters who depicted forest interiors and massive and knotty trees, from Gillis van Conixioo and David Vinckboons to Roelandt Savery and Bruegel's own son, Jan.

Bibliography

Select Bibliography of Works Consulted and Referred to in the Catalogue and Essays

- Alpers 1972-73
Alpers, S. "Bruegel's Festive Peasants", *Simiolus*, 6 (1972-73): 163-176.
- Arndt 1972
Arndt, K. "Pieter Bruegel d.Ä und die Geschichte der Waldlandschaft", *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen*, 14 (1972): 69-121.
- Auner 1956
Auner, M. "Pieter Bruegel. Umriss eines Lebensbildes", *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien*, 52 (1956): 51-122.
- Bangs 1978
Bangs, J.D. "Pieter Bruegel and History", *Art Bulletin*, 60 (1978): 704-705.
- Becker 1972-73
Becker, J. "Zur niederländischen Kunstliteratur des 16. Jahrhunderts: Lucas de Heere", *Simiolus*, 6 (1972-73): 113-127.
- Becker 1973
Becker, J. "Zur niederländischen Kunstliteratur des 16. Jahrhunderts: Domenicus Lampsonius", *Nederlands Kunsthistorische Jaarboek*, 24 (1973): 45-61.
- Bedaux and van Gool 1974
Bedaux, J.B. and van Gool, A. "Bruegel's Birthyear, motive of an ars/natura transformation", *Simiolus*, 7 (1974): 133-156.
- Boström 1949
Boström, K. "Das Sprichwort vom Vogelnest", *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift*, 18 (1949): 77-89.
- Boumans 1954.
Boumans, R. "The Religious Views of Abraham Ortelius", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 7 (1954): 374-377.
- Calmann, 1960
Calmann, G. "The Picture of Nobody", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 23 (1960): 60-104.
- Cantimori 1948
Cantimori, D. "Nicodemismo e speranze conciliari nel cinquecento italiano", *Belfagor* (1948): 12-23.
- Cantimori 1967
Cantimori, D. *Eretici Italiani del Cinquecento*, Florence 1967 (first edition 1939).
- Carroll 1987
Carroll, M.D. "Peasant Festivity and Political Identity in the Sixteenth Century", *Art History*, 10 (1987): 289-313.
- De Roover 1953
Roover, R. de. "Anvers comme marché monétaire au XVI^{ème} siècle", *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 31 (1953).
- De Tolnay 1935
Tolnay, C. de. *Pierre Bruegel l'Ancien*, Brussels, 1935.
- De Tolnay 1965
Tolnay, C. de. "Newly Discovered Miniatures by Pieter Bruegel the Elder", *The Burlington Magazine*, 107 (1965): 110-114.
- De Tolnay 1978
Tolnay, C. de. "A New Miniature by Pieter Bruegel the Elder", *The Burlington Magazine*, 120 (1978): 393-396.
- De Tolnay 1980
Tolnay, C. de. "Further Miniatures by Pieter Bruegel the Elder", *The Burlington Magazine*, 122 (1980): 616-622.
- D'Heere, 1565
D'Heere, L. *Den Hof en Boomgaard der Poesien*, ed. W. Waterschoot, (Zwolle Drukken en Herdrukken voor de Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde te Leiden, 65) Zwolle, 1969.
- Emmens 1973
Emmens, J.A. "'Eins aber ist nötig'—Zu Inhalt und Bedeutung von Markt- und Küchenstücken des 16. Jahrhunderts", in: *Album Amicorum J.G. van Gelder*, ed. J. Bruyn et al., The Hague, 1973, pp.93-101.
- Fehl 1970
Fehl, Ph. "Peculiarities in the Relationship of Text and Image in two Prints by Peter Bruegel", *North Carolina Museum of Art Bulletin*, IX (March 1970), pp.25-36.
- Fraenger 1923
Fraenger, W. *Der Bauern-Bruegel und das deutsche Sprichwort*, Erlenbach-Zurich, Munich and Leipzig, 1923.
- Freedberg 1982
Freedberg, D. "The Hidden God: Image and Interdiction in the Netherlands in the Sixteenth Century", *Art History*, 5 (1982): 133-153.
- Frey 1930
Frey, K. and Frey H.W. *Der Literarische Nachlass Giorgio Vasaris*, Munich, 1930, II, pp.114-116, and 158-163.
- Geyl 1962
Geyl, P. *The Revolt of the Netherlands, 1555-1609*, third corrected impression, London, 1962.
- Gibson 1977
Gibson, W.S. *Bruegel*. New York and London, 1977.

- Gibson 1979
Gibson, W.S. "Bruegel, Dulle Griet, and Sexist Politics in the Sixteenth Century", in: *Bruegel und seine Welt*, Berlin, 1979, pp.9-14.
- Gibson 1981
Gibson, W.S. "Artists and Rederijkers in the Age of Bruegel", *Art Bulletin*, 63 (1981): 426-446.
- Ginzburg 1970
Ginzburg, C. *Il Nicodemismo. Simulazione e dissimulazione religiosa nell'Europa del '500*, Turin, 1970.
- Grauls 1957
Grauls, J. *Volkstaal en volksleven in het werk van Pieter Bruegel*, Amsterdam and Antwerp, 1957.
- Grossman, F. *Pieter Bruegel. Complete Edition of the Paintings*, Third revised edition, London, 1973.
- Guicciardini 1582
Guicciardini, L. *Description de tous les Pays Bas*, Antwerp, 1582.
- Hamilton 1981
Hamilton, A. *The Family of Love*, Cambridge, 1981.
- Hollstein 1950
Hollstein, F.W.H. *Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts, ca.1450-1700*, (in progress), Amsterdam, 1949ff. [Vol.III, *Boeckhorst-Brueghel*, Amsterdam, 1950].
- Kemp and Kemp 1973.
Kemp, E. and W. "Lambert Lombards antiquarische Theorie und Praxis", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 36 (1973), pp.122-152.
- Klein 1963
Klein, H. Arthur. *The Graphic Worlds of Pieter Bruegel*, New York: Dover, 1963.
- Lampsonius 1565
Lampsonius, D. *Lamberti Lombardi apud Eburones pictoris celeberrimi vita...*, Bruges., 1565.
- Lampsonius 1572
Lampsonius, D. *Pictorum aliquot celeberrimorum Germaniae inferioris effigies*, Antwerp, 1572.
- Lebeer 1969
Lebeer, L. *Catalogue raisonné des estampes de Pierre Bruegel l'ancien*, Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale Albert I^{er}, Brussels, 1969.
- Marijnissen 1979
Marijnissen, R.H. "De Eed van Meester Oom. Een Voorbeeld van Brabantse Jokkernji uit Bruegels Tijd", in: *Pieter Bruegel und Seine Welt*, Berlin, 1979, pp.51-62.
- Marijnissen 1984
Marijnissen, R.H. and Seidel, M. *Bruegel*, New York: Harrison House, 1984.
- Mielke 1980
Mielke, H. Review of K.G. Boon,
- Netherlandish Drawings of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Catalogue of the Dutch and Flemish Drawings in the Rijksmuseum, vol.2), The Hague, 1978, in: *Simiolus* (1980): 39-50.
- Mielke 1986
Mielke, H. Review of K.G. Boon, *L'Epoque de Lucas de Leyde et Pierre Bruegel: Dessins des anciens Pays-Bas: Collection Frits Lugt*, Catalogue of an Exhibition held at the Istituto Universitario Olandese, Florence and Institut Néerlandais, Paris, 1980-81, in: *Master Drawings*, 24 (1986): 75-90.
- Monballieu 1964
Monballieu, A. "P. Bruegel en het altaar van de Mechelse Handschoenmakers (1551)", *Handelingen van de Koninklijke Kring voor Oudheidkunde, Letteren en Kunst van Mechelen*, 68 (1964): 92-110.
- Monballieu 1969
Monballieu, A. "Een Werk van P. Bruegel en H. Vredeman de Vries voor de Trezorier Aert Molckeman", *Jaarboek, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerpen* (1969): 113-135
- Monballieu 1974
Monballieu, A. "De 'Kermis van Hoboken' bij P. Bruegel, J. Grimmer en G. Mostaert", *Jaarboek, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerpen* (1974): 137-169.
- Monballieu 1983
Monballieu, A. "De 'Twee Aapjes' van P. Bruegel of de Singerie (seigneurie, over de Schelde te Antwerpen in 1562)", *Jaarboek, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen* (1983): 191-210.
- Monballieu 1987
Monballieu, A. "Nog eens Hoboken bij Bruegel en tijdgenoten", *Jaarboek, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerpen* (1987): 185-206.
- Mori 1976
Mori, Y. "The Influence of German and Flemish Prints on the Works of Pieter Bruegel", *Bulletin of Tama Art School*, 2 (1976): 17-60.
- Mori 1978
Mori, Y. "The Tradition and the Sources of the Peasant's World of Pieter Bruegel", *Bulletin of Tama Art School*, 4 (1978): 109-162.
- Moxey 1982
Moxey, K.P.F. "Pieter Bruegel and The Feast of Fools", *Art Bulletin*, 64 (1982): 640-646.
- Müller-Hofstede 1979
Müller-Hofstede, J. "Zur Interpretation von Bruegels Landschaft. Ästhetischer Landschaftsbegriff und Stoische Weltbetrachtung", in: *Pieter Bruegel und seine Welt*, Berlin, 1979, pp.73-142.
- Münz 1961
Münz, L. *Bruegel's Drawings. A Complete Edition*, London, 1961.
- Murray 1972
Murray, J.J. *Antwerp in the Age of Plantin and Brueghel*. Newton Abbot (Devon), 1972. For all its egregious spelling errors, a workable and lively overview.
- Muyll 1981
Muyll, J. "Pieter Bruegel en Abraham Ortelius. Bijdrage tot de literaire receptie van Pieter Bruegels Werk", in: *Archivum Artis Lovaniense. Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis van de Kunst der Nederlanden. Opegedragen aan Prof. Em. Dr. J.K. Steppe*, ed. M. Smeyers, Louvain, 1981, pp.319-337.
- Oberhuber 1981
Oberhuber, K. "Bruegel's Early Landscape Drawings", *Master Drawings*, 19 (1981): 146-156.
- Parker 1979
Parker, G. *The Dutch Revolt*, Harmondsworth, 1979.
- Pieter Bruegel und seine Welt 1979
Pieter Bruegel und seine Welt, Ein colloquium veranstaltet vom Kunsthistorischen Institut der Freien Universität Berlin und dem Kupferstichkabinett der Staatlichen Museen Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz am 13 und 14 November 1975, edited by O. von Simson and M. Winner, Berlin, 1979.
- Pirenne 1907
Pirenne, H. *Histoire de Belgique, III, De la mort de Charles de Téméraire à l'arrivée du duc d'Albe dans les Pays Bas* (1567), Brussels, 1907.
- Pirenne 1973
Pirenne, H. *Histoire de Belgique des Origines à Nos Jours. II. La Renaissance du Livre*, 1973.
- Popham 1931
Popham, A.E. "Pieter Bruegel and Abraham Ortelius", *The Burlington Magazine*, 59 (1931): 184-188.
- Raupp 1986
Raupp, H.J. *Bauernsatiren. Entstehung und Entwicklung des bauerlichen Genres in der deutschen und niederländischen Kunst, ca.1470-1570*, Niederzier, 1986.
- Rekers 1972
Rekers, B. *Benito Arias Montano (1527-1598)*, London and Leiden, 1972.
- Renger 1971-72
Renger, K. "Bettler und Bauern bei Pieter Bruegel d.Ä.", *Sitzungsberichte der Kunstgeschichtliche Gesellschaft zu Berlin*, 20 (1971-72): 3-20.
- Riggs 1971
Riggs, T.A. *Hieronymus Cock (1510-1570); Printmaker and Publisher in Antwerp at the Sign of the Four winds*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1971 (New York-London, 1977).

- Riggs 1979
Riggs, T.A. "Bruegel and his Publisher", in: *Pieter Bruegel und seine Welt*, Berlin, 1979, pp. 165-174.
- Robinson 1975
Robinson, W.W. in *Washington 1975*, pp. 91-96.
- Rombouts and van Lierus 1872
Rombouts, T. and van Lierus, T. *De Liggeren en andere historische archieven der Antwerpsche Sint Lucasgilde*, 2 vols., Antwerp-The Hague, 1872.
- Rosand 1988
Rosand, D. "Giorgione, Venice and the Pastoral Vision", in: *Places of Delight: The Pastoral Landscape*, ed. R. Cafritz. Washington, National Gallery of Art and the Phillips Collection, 1988.
- Spicer 1970
Spicer, J.A. "The 'Naer het Leven' Drawings: by Pieter Bruegel or Roelandt Savery?", *Master Drawings*, 8 (1970): pp. 3-30.
- Stridbeck, 1956a
Stridbeck, C.G. "Combat Between Carnival and Lent" by Pieter Bruegel the Elder. An Allegorical Picture of the Sixteenth Century", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 19 (1956): 96-109.
- Stridbeck, 1956b
Stridbeck, C.G. *Bruegelstudien*, Stockholm, 1956.
- Sullivan 1977
Sullivan, M.A. "Madness and Folly: Peter Bruegel the Elder's *Dulle Griet*", *Art Bulletin*, 59 (1977): 197-202.
- Terlinden 1942
Terlinden, C. "Pierre Bruegel le Vieux et l'histoire", *Revue Belge d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art*, 12 (1942): 229-257.
- Van Bastelaer 1908
Van Bastelaer, R. *Les Estampes de Pieter Bruegel l'ancien*, Brussels, 1908.
- Van de Velde 1975
Van de Velde, C. *Frans Floris (1519/20-1570): Leven en Werken*, 2 vols. Brussels, 1975.
- Vandenbroeck 1984
Vandenbroeck, P. "Verbeeck's Peasant Weddings: A Study of Iconography and Social Function", *Simiolus*, 14 (1984): 79-124.
- Van der Wee 1963
Van der Wee, H. *The Growth of the Antwerp Market and the European Economy (Fourteenth-Sixteenth Centuries)*, 3 vols., The Hague, 1963.
- Van der Wee 1967
Van der Wee, H. "À Anvers: les innovateurs de la technique financière aux XIV^e-XVII^e siècles", *Annales*, 22 (1967).
- Van Leeuwen 1970
Van Leeuwen, F. "Iets over het handschrift van de 'naar het leven' tekenaar", *Oud-Holland*, 85 (1970): 25-32.
- Van Leeuwen 1971
Van Leeuwen, F. "Figuurstudies van 'P. Bruegel'", *Simiolus*, 5 (1971), pp. 139-149.
- Van Mander 1604
Van Mander, C. *Het Schilder-boeck...*, Haarlem, 1604.
- Voet 1973
Voet, L. *The Golden Age of Antwerp*, Antwerp, 1973.
- Wegg 1916
Wegg, J. *Antwerp, 1477-1559. From the Battle of Nancy to the Treaty of Cateau Cambrésis*, London, 1916.
- Wegg 1924
Wegg, J. *The Decline of Antwerp under Philip of Spain*, London, 1924.
- White 1963
White, C. "Pieter Bruegel the Elder: A New Alpine Landscape Drawing", *The Burlington Magazine*, 105 (1963): 560-563.
- White 1979
White, C. "The Rabbit Hunters" by Pieter Bruegel the Elder", in: *Bruegel und Seine Welt*, Berlin, 1979, pp. 187-192.

Select Bibliography of Exhibitions

- Berlin 1975
Pieter Bruegel d.Ä als Zeichner. Herkunft und Nachfolge. With entries by F. Anzelewsky, P. Dreyer, L. Malke, H. Mielke, K. Renger and M. Winner. Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, 1975.
- Brussels 1963
Le siècle de Bruegel. Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels, 1963.
- Vienna 1967-68
Die Kunst der Graphik IV. Zwischen Renaissance und Barock. Das Zeitalter von Bruegel und Bellange. Catalogue by Konrad Oberhuber. Graphische Sammlung Albertina, 1967-68.
- Washington 1987
The Age of Bruegel: Netherlandish Drawings in the Sixteenth Century. With contributions by J.O. Hand, J. Richard Judson, W.W. Robinson and M. Wolff. National Gallery of Art, Washington and the Pierpont Morgan Library, 1987-88.

C
G
P
u

G
G
A;
4;

Gi
Gi
di
Ti

Gr
Gr
va
19:

Gr
of
Lo

Gu
Gu
Ba:

Ha
Ha
198

Hol
Hol
Eng
pro
Boe

Ken
Ken
anti
für I

Klei
Klei
Piete

Lam
Lam
Ebur
1565

Lam
Lam
Gern

Lebe
Lebe
de Pi
Biblio

Marij
Marij
Een V
Brueg
Welt,

Marij
Marij
York:

Mielke
Mielke

Photo Credits Owners:

Jean-Luc Tillière

Nos.1-5, 7-11, 13-17, 19, 24, 26-30, 33, 36, 43, 52,
54, 55, 57, 59-62, 64, 66, 69, 77, 78, 83-85, 87, 89-95

Peter de Laet, Antwerp,

The Educational Department of the City Museums, Antwerp

Nos. 6, 12, 22, 32, 34, 35, 41, 42, 44-51, 56, 63, 65,
67, 68, 74, 81, 82, 86

Kunsthistorische Musea van Antwerpen

Nos.18, 20, 21, 23, 25, 31, 37-39, 53, 58, 80, 88

Grand 'Ry

Nos.70-73, 75, 76

Tom Haartsen, Ouderkerk a/d Amstel

No. 40

A. Frequin, Voorburg

No. 96

Exhibition Committee

Yasuo Kamon

Director, Bridgestone Museum of Art, Ishibashi Foundation

Yoh Nakagawa

Director, Ishibashi Museum of Art, Ishibashi Foundation

Tetsuro Kagesato

Director, Mie Prefectural Art Museum

Kenji Sugakawa

Director, Hiroshima Prefectural Museum of Art

Juro Natsume

General Director of Cultural Affairs, The Tokyo Shimbun

Exhibition Staff

Nobuo Abe

Chief Curator, Bridgestone Museum of Art, Ishibashi Foundation

Tatsuji Ohmori

Curator, Bridgestone Museum of Art, Ishibashi Foundation

Naoko Kichijoji

Curator, Bridgestone Museum of Art, Ishibashi Foundation

Yoriko Kobayashi-Sato

Lecturer, University of Art and Design, Tokyo

Junji Miyagawa

Director, Cultural Affairs Department, The Tokyo Shimbun

Masaru Hasegawa

Deputy Director, Cultural Affairs Department, The Tokyo Shimbun

Takashi Sumi

Cultural Affairs Department, The Tokyo Shimbun

Yuko Kuchiki

Cultural Affairs Department, The Tokyo Shimbun