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Undoing Architecture: Temporalities of Painted Space in Early Modern Amsterdam

By
Jennifer Mari Sakai

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
History of Art
in the
Graduate Division
of the
University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Elizabeth Honig
Professor Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby
Professor Todd Olson
Professor Jan de Vries

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Abstract

Undoing Architecture: Temporalities of Painted Space in Early Modern Amsterdam

by

Jennifer Mari Sakai

Doctor of Philosophy in History of Art

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Elizabeth Honig, Chair

This dissertation explores the entanglement of temporality, realism, and representation in the making and viewing of Dutch art. I explore these issues through paintings, prints, and drawings by Dutch artists of Amsterdam made in the second half of the seventeenth century. Printed maps, paintings, drawings, and engravings of the destruction and ruination, both historical and imagined, of well-known Amsterdam structures, and images that have been understood to be straight-forward portraits of Amsterdam buildings and spaces are the main subjects of this study. This is not, however, a dissertation about architecture, or even, directly, about the representation of real architecture. Instead, I consider what happens in the intervals between representation and represented, the spaces where imagination transforms the experienced into the imaged. That is, this study begins with the assumption that what is represented in the works of art under consideration is not something that resides in the physical world, but rather the artist's imagining of what could, or should, or might exist in its place. This dissertation therefore questions the very structure of Dutch realism, arguing that the realism effect was actually the location of the severing of world from image.

I argue that Amsterdam cityscapes subvert their own apparent status as realistic representations of contemporary Amsterdam. Though these images have always been treated as mimetic, they actively resist recording the present city, sometimes including structures that have yet to be built, in other instances destroying edifices that were already extant. These images, by Rembrandt, Ruisdael and Jan van der Heyden, among others, visually remake the city in a variety of ways: as it was meant to appear in the future; as a nostalgic and idealized version of its lost, past self; as a decayed ambivalent version that is neither clearly past nor clearly future. Denying the present, seventeenth-century images of Amsterdam convey unease about contemporary urban experience and probe the uncomfortable limits of representation itself. These creative reconstructions of Amsterdam were a form of resistance to the modernizing environment of the city, for they catered to both a false nostalgia for a fictive ancient past, and a deep ambivalence about the modernization and monumentalization of the urban fabric. I argue that Dutch art, which appears to insistently transcribe contemporary experience, is also paradoxically invested in the erasure of the present and the construction of alternate realities. The realist mode favored by many Dutch artists was far more concerned with the construction of new paradigms for society than with the representation of contemporary life.

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Introduction

Ed Ruscha's *Los Angeles County Museum on Fire* was perhaps less revolutionary than it seemed in 1968. It was merely the latest in a long tradition of such bizarre and provocative representations of destruction to relatively new urban structures and institutions. **(Figure 0.1)** In the eighteenth-century, the French painter Hubert Robert imagined the distant future of abject (if romanticized) decay of the Grand Gallery of the Louvre, which had only three years previously been converted from a royal palace into one of the earliest public museums in Europe. **(Figure 3.1)** In seventeenth-century Amsterdam, Rembrandt made a drawing, seemingly from life, of the ruined form of the Montelbaanstoren. **(Figure 0.2)** Like Ruscha and Robert's paintings, Rembrandt's drawing made a ruin of a structure that had been renewed in the Dutch Renaissance style less than forty years earlier. But compared to Ruscha's curiously bloodless destruction of the newly built LACMA, or Robert's heavily romanticized vision of his own society's far distant future, Rembrandt's image, in its medium, its sketchiness, and its inclusion of incidental detail, goes much further in its attempt to elide its own reality status.

I do not begin with Rembrandt's drawing because it is tricky, or an anomaly of Dutch art, or simply strange. It is none of these things, or all of these things, if we decide to label all Dutch art in the same way. Although knowing the "facts" behind what appears to be represented here would place this image in a paradoxical relationship to realism or truth, I start here because I believe this image to be utterly typical of Dutch seventeenth-century image-making. To be more precise, this image is typical of Dutch seventeenth-century realism. It is not that Rembrandt's drawing gives the lie to Dutch realism. To the contrary, it reveals the ability of Dutch art to make real what was not, and would, in many cases, never be.

This dissertation explores the entanglement of temporality, realism, and representation in the making and viewing of Dutch art. I explore these issues through paintings, prints, and drawings by Dutch artists of Amsterdam made in the second half of the seventeenth century. Printed maps, paintings, drawings, and engravings of the destruction and ruination, both historical and imagined, of well-known Amsterdam structures, and images that have been understood to be straight-forward portraits of Amsterdam buildings and spaces are the main subjects of this study. This is not, however, a dissertation about architecture, or even, directly, about the representation of real architecture. Instead, I consider what happens in the intervals between representation and represented, the spaces where imagination transforms the experienced into the imaged. That is, this study begins with the assumption that what is represented in the works of art under consideration is not something that resides in the physical world, but rather the artist's imagining of what could, or should, or might exist in its place. This dissertation therefore questions the very structure of Dutch realism, arguing that the realism effect was actually the location of the severing of world from image.

Dutch painting's realism has always been its most notable feature, particularly from the standpoint of those outside of Dutch culture. Beginning even before the Dutch Republic existed as a political entity, painting from the Netherlands was both revered and reviled for its attention to contemporary experience. While Italian painters focused on the construction of ideals, Netherlandish artists, it was said, put their considerable technical skill to the task of representing the world seen. This distinction between constructing or inventing on the one hand, and representing or counterfeiting on the other, continues to define the differences between the two great early modern art traditions. The Portuguese art critic Francisco de Hollanda, attributing his

comments to Michelangelo, famously lambasted northern artists and their slavish and simplistic commitment to the visible world in 1548:

In Flanders they paint with a view to external exactness or such things as may cheer you and of which you cannot speak ill... They paint stuffs and masonry, the green grass of the fields, the shadow of trees, and rivers and bridges, which they call landscapes... And all this, though it pleases some persons, is done without reason or art, without symmetry or proportion, without skillful choice or boldness and finally, without substance or vigour¹.

Of course, the Hollanda's highly negative view of "external exactness" is hard to miss, yet not quite explicit: he took for granted, as any southern European art theorist worth his salt would have, the utter condemnation implicit in describing a work of art as concerned only with the outward appearances of the physical world.

This dissertation considers temporality in Dutch paintings and prints of Amsterdam from the second half of the seventeenth century. I argue that these cityscapes subvert their own apparent status as realistic representations of contemporary Amsterdam. Though these images have always been treated as mimetic, they actively resist recording the present city, sometimes including structures that have yet to be built, in other instances destroying edifices that were already extant. These images, by Rembrandt, Ruisdael and Jan van der Heyden, among others, visually remake the city in a variety of ways: as it was meant to appear in the future; as a nostalgic and idealized version of its lost, past self; as a decayed ambivalent version that is neither clearly past nor clearly future. Denying the present, seventeenth-century images of Amsterdam convey unease about contemporary urban experience and probe the uncomfortable limits of representation itself. These creative reconstructions of Amsterdam were a form of resistance to the modernizing environment of the city, for they catered to both a false nostalgia for a fictive ancient past, and a deep ambivalence about the modernization and monumentalization of the urban fabric. I argue that Dutch art, which appears to insistently transcribe contemporary experience, is also paradoxically invested in the erasure of the present and the construction of alternate realities. The realist mode favored by many Dutch artists was far more concerned with the construction of new paradigms for society than with the representation of contemporary life.

The distinction between situation or reality and the experience of reality is understood in this dissertation in relation to the Situationist technique of *détournement*, and particularly Michel de Certeau's appropriation of that term. *Détournement* referred to the intentional subversion-through-appropriation of cultural products (works of art, ad campaigns, etc.), turning their own message, values, and form against them. The Situationists' main target was no less than capitalist society itself. While the Situationists generally applied the term to what we might call artistic actions, de Certeau applied the term more broadly, allowing it to encompass the totally unintentional actions of normal people (who were therefore unwitting cogs in the wheel of capitalism) as they went about their everyday lives. Thus, while the Situationists understood the *détournement* as a subversive political and artistic action, de Certeau emphasized the ways it could be political and active without intentionality, or even knowledge. De Certeau therefore opened the door for an infinitely larger pool of actions to be understood as subverting the capitalist system, including something as seemingly minor as laughter, or children playing in the

¹ Francisco de Hollanda, *Four Dialogues on Painting*, 1548, trans. Aubrey F.G. Bell (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), 16.

street. While traditional Marxism had described consumption as a sort of passive and blind enactment of the values of the ruling class (and thus always to the detriment of the working class, which does not control the means of production), de Certeau redefined consumption as itself a hidden form of active production. Thus, while the Situationists' form of *détournement* might be seen as a clear example of production of new works of art (if ones based on other works of art), de Certeau's version did not require production in any traditional sense of the term. Discussing the ways in which the conquered Native Americans related to the Spanish colonizers, de Certeau writes:

Submissive, and even consenting to their subjection, the Indians nevertheless often *made of* the rituals, representations, and laws imposed on them something quite different from what their conquerors had in mind; they subverted them not by rejecting or altering them, but by using them with respect to ends and references foreign to the system they had no choice but to accept...their use of the dominant social order deflected its power, which they lacked the means to challenge; they escaped it without leaving it. The strength of their difference lay in procedures of "consumption."²

This example was particularly prescient, given that the scholars who would take up this project most ardently would be post-colonial theorists. For these theorists, resistance and agency, rather than passive victimization, which had for so long seemed to be the only way to understand the oppressed colonial in relation to the colonizer, became increasingly central to the understanding of colonialism and globalization from the point of view of the non-western.

As the discussion has moved from colonialism to globalization, scholars have increasingly taken up the imagination as one of the key terms in the discussion of how we might characterize what goes on when we move beyond the official producers of globalized culture in the west. Arjun Appadurai has argued that "the work of the imagination...is neither purely emancipatory nor entirely disciplined but is a space of contestation in which individuals and groups seek to annex the global into their own practices of modernity."³ He writes:

Terrorists modeling themselves on Rambo-like figures...; housewives reading romances and soap operas as part of their efforts to construct their own lives;...domestic servants in South India taking packaged tours to Kashmir: these are all examples of the active way in which media are appropriated people throughout the world. T-shirts, billboards, and graffiti as well as rap music, street dancing, and slum housing all show that the images of the media are quickly moved into local repertoires of irony, anger, humor, and resistance.⁴

² Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), xiii.

³ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 4.

⁴ Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 7.

Appadurai's usage of de Certeau's reading of *détournement* is evident, but it is his insistence on the imagination as the driving force that moves the concept forward. Imagination allows *détournement* to become more intentional and creative than in de Certeau's reading.

Furthermore, Appadurai makes clear that the stakes are far higher than the "merely" cultural when he writes that,

the imagination, especially when collective, can become the fuel for action. It is the imagination, in its collective forms, that creates ideas of neighborhood and nationhood, of moral economies and unjust rule, of higher wages and foreign labor prospects. The imagination is today a staging ground for action, and not only for escape.⁵

This understanding of the imagination is particularly important to my dissertation, as it allows for resistance and agency to exist in a realm of the non-concrete, outside of but still relevant to lived reality. While the works of art I discuss are in many ways far from de Certeau and Appadurai's decidedly non-high art products of everyday people, they have in common a need to be extricated from a reading as passive consumption of a reality not of their own making. They share the ability to exist parallel to, rather than merely be absorbed into, a disciplinary system that immediately fails to discipline its subjects, even as it appears, and believes itself, to be successful at just that. In the case of de Certeau, the subjugating force is the bourgeoisie, for Appadurai, it is the creeping western culture, and for the artists under discussion in this dissertation, it is on the one hand the physical city of Amsterdam and its creation and planning by the city's governors, and on the other hand, the seemingly irresistible lure of Dutch realism and its ability to make us believe that what we see must have existed in the world of experience.

I chose paintings, prints, and drawings of the urban fabric Amsterdam as the object of my study because they serve four interconnected purposes: as an extreme test case that exposes the limits and edges of Dutch realism; as a case study in the role of early modern images in actively remaking reality; as an inquiry into how and why the city has played such an important role in the articulation of imaginative resistance by the disenfranchised; and as a study of the contemporary understanding of urban change on a massive scale in seventeenth-century Amsterdam. These images' apparent replication of a stable and lived reality makes Amsterdam cityscapes an excellent case study for Dutch realism because they elicit an exacerbated tendency to collapse image into presumed referent. They also offer a circumscribed historical and political context that provides insight into some of the ways in which this complicated form of realism functioned in Dutch culture. The height of the Golden Age is a classic example of a period of transition between paradigms, when few things are determined or fixed, and when cultural consensus has not yet been reached. At such times, the spaces between dominant regimes are characterized not only by a lack of order, but also by an attendant amplification of creativity and experimentation. It is one of the purposes of this dissertation to demonstrate how mid- to late seventeenth-century images of Amsterdam provide an important example of the sort of creativity and imagination that modernization and change entailed in the Dutch Republic.

The first chapter of the dissertation turns back to the output of the class (the Amsterdam Burgomasters) that controls the means of production. However, as this chapter makes clear, what the Burgomasters produced was not precisely, and certainly not exclusively, the physical city of Amsterdam, in spite of their claims to be doing so, and also in spite of modern historians'

⁵ *Ibid.*

general belief that they did so. Amsterdam's city government instead created a consistent, specific, and deliberate *version* of the city through the texts, prints, paintings, and architecture they commissioned. This version of the city existed only in these artistic forms and bore little resemblance to reality. They emphasized an image of the city as homogenous, fixed, stable, complete, delimited, comprehensive, whole, and modern. More specifically, they subtly and not so subtly advanced the idea of Amsterdam as the true successor to Republican and imperial Rome, positing their city as the proper alternative to decadent, messy contemporary Counter-Reformation Baroque Rome. Scholars have tended to take officially-commissioned works of art as representative of the physical reality of the city, but, as this chapter shows, such a relationship between representation and physical reality cannot be taken for granted. While the rest of this dissertation explores alternatives to this particular version of the city, the fictive nature of the official version of the city exposes the fact that all of these versions had an equal claim to reality status. I discuss the formal and thematic elements most consistently applied to their image of Amsterdam. The diversity of the works of art under consideration in this chapter only underlines the astonishing consistency of this output.

Chapter Two takes us into the realm of the "productive consumption" of Amsterdam. This chapter considers works of art that take as their subject Amsterdam's new (1648) town hall. The new town hall was the crown jewel in the city's modernization campaign, and it was also the most well-known, dramatic, and contested of all of Amsterdam's monuments and built structures. While the building has been read solely in terms of the triumphalist agenda that determined its iconography and style, this chapter explores the massive outpouring of representations that the building inspired, which reveal a far more conflicted and heterogeneous understanding of the town hall. These representations reveal the town hall to have entered the popular imagination not in the form we now understand, but rather as a porous structure that circulated constantly between various conflicting understandings.

The third chapter asks why paintings of Amsterdam and its environs in ruins proliferate around mid-century. Ruin images, I argue, were a response to the city government's modernization of the city and the totalizing version of the city the government spread through print. These images subverted the classicizing vision of Amsterdam, replacing the new, modern, homogenous, geometric, whole, and gridded with the ruined, uneven, old, and authentic. This chapter examines the ways in which representations of new parts of Amsterdam as ruins served not as prompts to generalized nostalgia or melancholy (like the Romantic ruin); rather, they participated in the destabilization of communal public spaces by encouraging viewers to see the actual locations these images represented in relation to various moments in the history of these spaces.

The final chapter considers the output of the extraordinary late seventeenth-century artist and inventor, Jan van der Heyden. While van der Heyden's idealizing cityscapes and his dramatic engravings for his *Firebook* are never understood in the literature to bear any significant relation to each other, this chapter argues the opposite: that both groups of images were meant to be understood in relation to one another, and that they should be understood to be part of a single system of meaning, reference, and innuendo. Together, these two groups of seemingly antithetical images form a potent warning about the vulnerability of private and public property in Amsterdam. Stirring up his wealthy and powerful audience's anxieties about the personal, professional, and very concrete losses they will suffer without his help, van der Heyden masterfully deploys the open, multimedia system of images in support of his business ventures. Van der Heyden's refiguring of the familiar, comforting, and new spaces of Amsterdam as

constantly on the verge of total destruction constitutes a new idea of event and effect as fundamentally void of emblematic or divine meaning. His references to the long tradition of northern images of disaster, hell, and conflagration places his startling (and of course self-serving) claim that innovation, insight, and capital alone can both predict and determine outcomes in stark relief. Van der Heyden's program represents a shift away from the collective to personal interest in the representation of Amsterdam, particularly in his image's recasting of domesticity as fundamentally private. His images suggest that the revelation of the domestic is tantamount to the loss of property itself, marking a fundamental shift away from the Delft domestic painters.

Chapter One

Construction and Monumentalism in Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam

In an essay on the relationship between city and pedestrian, Michel de Certeau begins, paradoxically, with the view of Manhattan from the 110th floor of the World Trade Center. De Certeau asks, “what is the source of this pleasure of ‘seeing the whole,’ of looking down on, totalizing the most immoderate of human texts.”⁶ The “most immoderate of human texts” de Certeau is referring to is, of course, the city. Or more accurately, the concept of space planned and carried out by some centralized authority. De Certeau thus distinguishes between the city as something conceived and physically produced by a dominant class on the one hand, and the city as an urban experience “produced” through the physical city’s consumption by people going about their everyday lives⁷. What de Certeau terms “pedestrian speech acts,” or the ways in which simply walking about the city undermines the intended appearance, function and meaning of the city through an act of appropriating, are his primary concern. This chapter, however, returns back to the city that is being appropriated, the city that attempts (futilely, according to de Certeau) to produce its citizens by telling them where to go and how, the city that the “underclass” only has an illusory access to, in the form of the totalizing view from above.

This chapter considers images of, texts about, and construction within Amsterdam, either commissioned by or produced with the patronage of the Amsterdam burgomasters in the second half of the seventeenth century. These works were produced concurrently with a busy period of construction and demolition that was controlled and planned by the same Amsterdam Burgomasters. While such a confluence of commission and construction appears utterly predictable, this chapter problematizes this apparently straightforwardly correlative relationship and to tease out the uneasiness of that connection. I will focus on two maps that have the benefit of being both indisputably commissioned by and designed in concert with the burgomasters, and relatively widely and publicly distributed.

I argue that the city officials who planned and oversaw the construction of large parts of Amsterdam simultaneously created an entirely separate Amsterdam through the commissioning and circulation of a large body of texts and images that purported to represent Amsterdam as it “really” was and appeared. I will call this iteration of the idea of Amsterdam the “pictured city.” It is crucial for my argument that the pictured city be viewed not as a representation or interpretation of the “actual” city, but as a city with a reality and status within the world itself. Therefore I will refer to the “actual” Amsterdam as the physical city. This is all the more important because the pictured city contrasted profoundly with the physical city on multiple levels, both philosophical and visual. I am interested here in the physical city only insofar as it contrasts with the pictured city. Furthermore, that contrast cannot be assumed to privilege the physical city as the origin of the difference of the pictured city. I do not intend for the pictured city to be seen as merely a reaction to the physical city, but as an imaginative construction that developed symbiotically with the physical city, and at times completely independently of any reality (in the conventional understanding of that word). Lastly, I contend that the pictured city actually superceded the physical city in importance, both for seventeenth-century Amsterdammers and for modern scholars.

⁶ De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 92.

⁷ This type of distinction is integral to de Certeau’s wide project, which considers how consumption can be viewed as a form of active production, or “the difference or similarity between the production of the image and the secondary production hidden in the process of its utilization.” De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, xiii.

A set of methodological problems inevitably arises when discussing this material. How do we define the official, and how do we know what it entails? In the case of this chapter, I am defining the term relatively narrowly, and the “official” here refers specifically to the burgomasters, the group of four upper middle-class men who served as Amsterdam’s governors. While Amsterdam was technically ruled by a sheriff, nine aldermen, and thirty-six city councilors, the burgomasters, who in any case nominated most of the candidates for the other positions, are generally understood to have wielded the most power.⁸ All of these men, while elected anew every year, came from the very small and wealthy merchant Regent class, which was not precisely a subset of the middle class, although it was distinct from the patrician class. Entrance into the class, and thus into the position of burgomaster, was essentially closed, and circulated amongst a small group of families. During the second half of the seventeenth-century, the burgomasters came from twenty-four families.⁹ Accounting for overlap, a much smaller number of families had members serving as burgomasters almost constantly. Johannes Hudde alone, for instance, was burgomaster eighteen times between 1672 and 1699. I have limited the purview of this chapter to works commissioned by or at the behest of the city councilors during the second half of the century. While this group of men was of course by no means homogenous, whether in interests or even political beliefs, it is precisely this diversity that further underlines the remarkable consistency with which the material these very different men commissioned spoke about and defined Amsterdam.

As I have defined the group of texts and images under discussion by their patronage, I need to address how I understand the relationship between patron and artist, commission and work of art. By no means does my emphasis here on patronage assume the artist’s muteness in the production of works of art. In fact, the visual and verbal language of these works of art, while at times openly didactic and ideological, was largely too subtle and abstract to be transmitted in detail to the artists by the city leaders who commissioned them. Rather, the relationship must be seen as mutually beneficial, and the artists had a vested interest in furthering and even adopting the particular version of Amsterdam that the city leaders propagated.

However, it must be pointed out that, in a nation in which commissioned art was remarkably rare for western Europe in the seventeenth century, what little evidence we do have of commissions suggests a significant and unusual degree of control over at least the iconography and style of the work of art in question. Essentially the only sources of commissions were the Oranges and their court on the one hand, and city or regional governments on the other. To this extent, commissioned art in the Dutch Republic is not so far removed from the way in which commissions worked in other western European countries at the time. The difference, of course, is the significant degree to which art production in the Dutch Republic was supported not by the aristocracy or the government, but by the open art market. The vast majority of paintings and prints in the Republic were created for, catering to the tastes of, and owned by members of the middle class.¹⁰

⁸ For an overview of the role and history of the Amsterdam regent class, see: Johan Engelbert Elias, *Geschiedenis van het Amsterdamsche regentenpatriciaat* (‘s-Gravenhage: M. Nijhoff, 1923).

⁹ The families were: De Graeff, Bakker, Pancras, Bicker, de Wildt, Valckenier, Dedel, Schaep, de Vicq, Munter, Corver, Witsen, Bas, Tulp, Hinlopen, Boreel, Six, Trip, Huydecoeper, Witsen, Opmeer, van Beuningen, Geelvinck, and Hudde.

¹⁰ This is, of course, very well documented. The classic work on the Dutch art market is John Michael Montias, *Artists and Artisans in Delft: A Socio-Economic Study of the Seventeenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982). Also see Ad van der Woude, “The volume and value of paintings in Holland at the time of the Dutch Republic,” in *Art in History, History in Art*, ed. David Freedberg and Jan de Vries (Santa Monica: Getty

While painted portraits far outstrip any other form of art in quantity of commissions, buildings and their decorative and painting programs were certainly the most famous, expensive, and ambitious works produced on commission. The Oranjezaal, the main hall of Huis ten Bosch in The Hague, was commissioned by Amalia van Solms, the widow of the Prince of Orange and Stadthouder Frederick Henry, who died in 1648. The arcane and intricate iconography and the unusual mix of styles¹¹ of the room's painting cycle, completed by twelve different artists, were clearly the product not of artistic license, but of extremely careful planning on the part of Amalia van Solms in consultation with her late husband's famous secretary, Constantijn Huygens, and the court artist and architect, Jacob van Campen.¹² Artists were given detailed descriptions of the figures they were to represent, including how large they should be to the nearest centimeter, the meaning of the allegorical figures, and what they should wear and hold. They were also given sketches that showed what the composition itself should look like, parsing out the exact relationship between different figures and forms. The famous Flemish artist and former student of Peter Paul Rubens, who was responsible for the largest painting in the room, complained repeatedly about the strictness of the instructions that regulated the appearance of his painting.¹³ While not prescribing precisely which pigments and how much of them to use, as Baxandall famously showed was the case in fifteenth-century Italian commissions¹⁴, the Oranjezaal

Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1991), 285-329; Michael North, *Art and Commerce in the Dutch Golden Age*, trans. Catherine Hill (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

¹¹ Furthermore, the odd disparity in style between the many paintings in the Oranjezaal suggests that it was precisely stylistic heterogeneity that the van Solms, Huygens, and van Campen were after. About half of the artists chosen came from the Southern Netherlands, the Catholic, Spanish-ruled portion of the Low Countries, and more specifically, were either trained directly by Peter Paul Rubens himself or painted in his style. The rest of the artists came from the Dutch Republic and painted in the Classicist style that was by far the favored style of painting, architecture, and literature of the Orange court. Unsurprisingly, the organizers of the commission seem to have thought quite carefully about which artists to choose, but it is the unusually strict adherence to this splitting of Flemish, Catholic, and painterly in the Rubens style on the one hand, and Dutch, Protestant, and Classicist on the other. Jacob Jordaens, notably given the largest and most important painting in the cycle, was in fact a Protestant Southern Netherlandish artist. It is extremely unlikely that this fact is merely coincidental. Why the Orange court would not have chosen a Dutch artist to complete the most significant painting in the Oranjezaal can only be explained by the unusual and satisfying integration in the figure of Jacob Jordaens of a staunchly Protestant Southern Netherlandish court artist trained by Rubens. Jordaens perfectly embodied all that the Oranjezaal stood for: aristocracy over middle-class Republicanism, Protestantism, and unification of northern and southern values and political status. For the Oranges, and specifically for the recently deceased Frederick Henry, the reunification of the northern and southern parts of the Netherlands was of critical importance, and their stated reason for not wanting the Eighty Years' War to come to an end. In fact, the Oranges had a vested interest in the continuation of the war, as it was only in wartime that the Prince of Orange, traditionally the Stadthouder, had an official role of power, as general of the Republic's army. Amsterdam's government, which bore the vast majority of the financial burden of the war, was instrumental in ending the war in spite of Orangist dissent in 1648, shortly before the planning and building of the Oranjezaal. Thus, the melding of Flemish and Dutch painting styles would have been seen at this time as a very clear and pointed statement not only about the reunification of north and south, but also, and more critically about Orange claims to power and heavy opposition to the Republican government.

¹² On the Oranjezaal, see: J.G. van Gelder, "De schilders van de Oranjezaal", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 1 (1948), 119-164, Hanna Peter-Raupp, *Die Ikonographie des Oranjezaal* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1980); Beatrijs Brenninkmeijer de Rooij, "Notities betreffende de decoratie van de Oranjezaal in Huis ten Bosch," *Oud Holland* 96.3 (1982), 133-190; Quentin Buvelot, "Ontwerpen voor geschilderde decoratieprogrammas," in *Jacob van Campen: Het klassieke ideal in de Gouden Eeuw*, eds. Jacobine Huisken, Koen Ottenheim, and Gary Schwartz, (Amsterdam: Architectura & Natura Pers; Stichting Koninklijk Paleis te Amsterdam, 1995), 132-141.

¹³ Buvelot, "Ontwerpen," 138.

¹⁴ Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 5-14.

commission arguably placed a great deal more restrictions and demands on the artists than even Quattrocento noblemen did.

The Amsterdam town hall, which is the subject of the next chapter, is the most important and famous example of commissioned art in the Dutch Republic. This massive undertaking bears an unusual resemblance to the Oranjezaal commission, a point which I will discuss further later in this chapter. At this point, it suffices to point out that the town hall building was designed by one of the Oranjezaal's organizers, Jacob van Campen, who also developed its artistic program, including sculpture both inside and on the façade, and the painting cycles that covered the walls and ceilings of the building's interior. Here, too, there is evidence of tight control over the iconography, style, and composition of the thousands of works of art created for the building.¹⁵

In the Dutch Republic, then, commissioned art, though relatively rare, was controlled in terms of iconography, style, and composition to an unusual degree. Again, this is not to say that I forfeit the input or agency of the commissioned artists. Rather, I would like to draw attention to the collaborative¹⁶ nature of the texts, prints, and other images under discussion in the chapter. I will also, however, limit my discussion of these works of art whenever possible to the aspects that were most clearly and easily prescribed by the commissioner as discussed here: iconography, style and composition. It must also be said that the political beliefs¹⁷, and of course financial interests, of the artists discussed in this chapter were closely allied with those of their commissioners, and thus to a certain extent, it can be assumed that the ideology underlying the wishes of the commissioners was understood and shared by the artists themselves.

This brings up the issue of how I define and understand the role of ideology in the making and viewing of these images. The purpose of this chapter to explore the ways in which a variety of texts and images speak about and define Amsterdam, and what types of beliefs, interests, and anxieties underlie those acts of definition and formation. The entirely constructed nature of the pictured city is of course central here, and I likewise believe in the active and creative power of that construction, in spite of or perhaps precisely because of its at times highly precarious relationship to the physical city it claimed to embody. Thus, to a certain extent I treat the images and texts here as physical manifestations of official ideology, specifically with regards to the definition of civic identity. That this official ideology was meant to be normative and prescriptive is suggested by the fact that the version of Amsterdam presented by officially-sanctioned or commissioned prints, texts, or buildings was by far the most widely-distributed and publicly-consumed understanding of Amsterdam during the second half of the century. I argue that the pictured city superceded even the physical city in the breadth and conceptual importance of its presentation of what Amsterdam looked like and was to be understood. The pictured city therefore provides an unusually well-defined arena for considering ideology and identity from the top down in the Dutch Republic.

¹⁵ So tight was that control that it famously led to the dismissal of Rembrandt himself. The most convincing reading of this episode is: Margaret Carroll, "Civic Ideology and its Subversion: Rembrandt's *Oath of Claudius Civilis*", *Art History* 9 (1986), 8-35.

¹⁶ For instance, Baxandall, *Painting and Experience*; and Harry Berger Jr., "Fictions of the Pose: Facing the Gaze of Early Modern Portraiture," *Representations* 46 (Spring 1994), 87-120.

¹⁷ Rembrandt's Orangist views are convincingly related to the style and subject matter of his paintings in: Carroll, "Civic Ideology and its Subversion," 21. On the patronage of Prince of Orange Frederick Henry and his wife, Amalia Solms, by far the most prolific art patrons in the Dutch Republic, see: Peter van der Ploeg and Carola Vermeeren, eds, *Princely Patrons: The Collection of Frederick Henry of Orange and Amalia of Solms in The Hague* (Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, 1997), especially 34-60.

Is this chapter a purely iconographic exercise? I am indeed interested in what certain texts and images attempt to say about the city, but I am less concerned with the meaning behind particular motifs than with what formal qualities are consistently ascribed to Amsterdam across the various works of art in question. My formalism, however, is of course wedded in this chapter to a concern with, if not necessarily the intentionality behind specific formal qualities, a desire on the part of the Amsterdam leaders to make their city appear to look and signify in a specific way. The meaning of that content are thus at issue here, but only insofar as they are produced and conveyed formally.

Lastly, I would like to highlight the importance of medium in this chapter. The pictured city was overwhelmingly produced in print, always including text and more often than not images as well. The other medium favored by the Amsterdam officials was of course architecture. Clearly, they produced far fewer works of architecture than print, but it might be argued that the visual impact and public visibility of architecture at the very least rivaled that of print. It should also be noted that the printed output of the government overwhelmingly took architecture as its subject matter. Paintings form a far smaller and less visible portion of the pictured city, and they were always associated with an architectural program, and were therefore understood to be part of the overall decorative program of the building, which also included extensive, and more visible, sculpture. I do not want to treat this as purely a necessity of the way in which official commissions worked, but as meaningful in its own right. Whether or not the fact that official commissions were so heavily weighed towards print and architecture was simply a practical issue, it had a major impact on what the pictured city looked like and what it came to represent. I will return to the issue of medium later in this chapter, but for now let it suffice to say that it is an issue that should always be at the forefront of considerations of the formal qualities I discuss throughout this chapter.

The Missing Canal Belt: A Brief History of Amsterdam's Construction, 1630-1672

Amsterdam's distinctive horse shoe-shaped canal belt would seem an appropriate place to begin a dissertation about Amsterdam during the Golden Age, when those canals were constructed. However, this is not a dissertation about Amsterdam, and in any event that canal belt did not exist for most of the period under discussion here, at least not in the physical city of Amsterdam. But the canal belt that now so defines the appearance and character of the city did in fact exist as a plan in progress. This section will briefly discuss both the construction plans for the city and how those plans were or were not carried out in actual construction.

From 1585, with the fall of Antwerp to the Spanish, to 1660, Amsterdam's population tripled from 25,000 to 200,000 inhabitants.¹⁸ In just the last years of the sixteenth century, Amsterdam took in about 30,000 immigrants from the Southern Netherlands.¹⁹ The Southern Netherlands' "catastrophic hemorrhage"²⁰ of Protestant skilled laborers was the result of both religious differences that became more pronounced and untenable with the Revolt of the Protestant northern part of the Netherlands in 1568, and the Dutch blockading of the Scheldt

¹⁸ Hubert Nusteling, "The Population of Amsterdam and the Golden Age," in *Rome-Amsterdam: Two Growing Cities in Seventeenth-Century Europe*, Eeds. Peter van Kessel and Elisja Schulte (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1997), 74-75.

¹⁹ Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477-1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 309.

²⁰ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 308.

River, Antwerp's crucial access point to the international trade that had made Antwerp one of the most important and wealthy cities in the world in the sixteenth century.

It was therefore not simply the need for new and stronger fortifications created by the Eighty Years' War that made the construction of new walls of vital importance to Amsterdam, but also the staggering increase of population. The city was expanded in four largely distinct stages: in 1585 and 1596 new ramparts were built and the city was enlarged on its eastern side; in 1613 the first half of the canal belt was begun, and the second half began construction in 1660. What these dates do not necessarily reveal is how long each of these stages actually took, suggesting as they do, when listed serially, that construction began and was completed quickly. In fact, it should come as no surprise that this was far from the case. For instance, the building and development of the canal belt lasted continuously from 1613 until about 1672, and was not in fact fully developed until the late eighteenth century.²¹ Not only was the construction of walls and new canals going on more or less continuously throughout the entire seventeenth century in Amsterdam, the scale of that construction cannot be understated. All told, the city's physical size increased fivefold in the course of a century.²² Furthermore, construction, while constantly in evidence, was not constantly moving forward. Rather, construction of both new canals and building plots, and buildings themselves, moved in fits and starts, responding, as it still does today, to the vagaries of war, credit, and taste²³.

The city government was, of course, in charge of the planning, financing, carrying out, and control of the use of these massive projects of urban development. While the 1585 extension was intended largely as a necessary defensive measure after Amsterdam joined the Revolt, the other three extensions answered to the ever-increasing population and international standing of the city. The city government determined the need for extension, and then the location where it would best be put to use, hired the architect and workers, planned the size of the lots, paid for the construction, and then produced ordinances that were meant to determine how the new spaces were to be used.²⁴

While the practical needs of Amsterdam's thousands of new inhabitants clearly played a predominant role in the decision to increase the area of the city, the self-interest of the members of the ruling Regent class must not be overlooked. Scholarship on urban planning in the Dutch Republic has increasingly emphasized the extent to which sheer personal financial gain underlay many of the decisions about where the city would be extended and how that land would be used once completed.²⁵

It should not be assumed, however, that the government was always entirely successful at realizing this goal. The city government may have controlled every aspect of the planning and construction of the new parts of the city, but when it came to the usage of these new areas, the

²¹ Jannes de Haan, "The Greatness and Difficulty of the Work," in *The Canals of Amsterdam*, eds. Paul Spies et al. (The Hague: SDU Uitgeverij, 1993), 43.

²² Jaap Evert Abrahamse, *De grote uitleg van Amsterdam* (Bussum: Uitgeverij Thoth, 2010), 12.

²³ A. Knotter, "De 17e-eeuwse uitbreidingen: Bouwactiviteit in etappes," in *Amsterdam in kaarten: Verandering van de stad in view eeuwen cartografie*, eds. W.F. Heinemeijer, M.F. Wagenaar, et al. (Antwerp: Zomer & Keuning, 1986), 44-45.

²⁴ Ed Taverne, *In 't land van het belofte* (Maarssen: Gary Schwartz, 1978), 166-167.

²⁵ De Haan, "The Greatness and Difficulty of the Work," 38; P.J. van Oosterom, *Een goed begin, de vergroting van Amsterdam 1609-1615* (thesis, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, 1985), 5, 20.

city council swiftly and at times decisively lost its hold, though not for lack of trying²⁶. Perhaps one of the most astonishing examples of the city's largely untold history of appeasement of unruly portions of the population concerns the incorporation of the Jordaan district into the city during the extension of 1613, which also saw the building of the rigidly-controlled canal belt. The Jordaan is usually described as a new district built to accommodate the middle classes, artisans, and practitioners of industries deemed too dangerous or otherwise offensive to be located near the wealthier parts of the city.²⁷ In fact, the Jordaan was an already extant illegal suburb that consisted of middle and lower class people essentially squatting outside the city walls.²⁸ It was not lack of concern on the part of the city council about how the new district would look, as is often assumed, that led to the unusual groundplan of this district, which strikes the contemporaneous canal belt at an acute angle, following as it does the medieval drainage ditches of the fields outside the city. Instead, as with the entire business of the incorporation of the Jordaan, this was simply an act of swift appeasement that resulted from the government's uneasiness about the reaction of the perhaps unruly inhabitants of this area to the razing or remaking of their homes and district.²⁹

It was not simply the lower classes that the city council had to contend with, but also the wealthy merchants and other business owners who could afford to buy the expensive new plots in the canal belt. The city council had shrewdly and inventively attempted to determine the upscale and residential character of the canal belt by fixing the size of the plots at a generous, and thus expensive, 30 feet wide and 190 feet deep, and further restricted the height of the buildings to be built on these plots to 110 feet, and strictly forbade the splitting of lots with alleys or lanes in an effort to stave off purchasers using the plots to build smaller apartments and cheaper residences.³⁰ This attempt at regulation of privately³¹ owned property to such a marked degree was highly usual in early modern Europe. But while the extent and specificity of the city government's regulations for the usage of urban space indicate a desire for strict control over the city's appearance and character, they also suggest, perhaps more poignantly, the impossibility of such a task. Such regulations of the minutest type only serve to underscore the regularity with and extent to which rules and regulations were undermined and flouted by the city's inhabitants.³²

²⁶ On illegal housing outside the city walls in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, see: M.F. Wagenaar, "Buitentimmeren: Amsterdam treedt buiten zijn wallen," in *Amsterdam in kaarten: Verandering van de stad in view eeuwen cartografie*, eds. W.F. Heinemeijer, M.F. Wagenaar, et al. (Antwerp: Zomer & Keuning, 1986), 20-21.

²⁷ For example: de Haan, "The Greatness and Difficulty of the Work," 40-41; Koen Ottenheym, "The Amsterdam Ring of Canals: City Planning and Architecture," in *Rome-Amsterdam*, eds. Peter van Kessel and Elisja Schulte (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1997), 39.

²⁸ Abrahamse, *De grote uitleg van Amsterdam*, 227-228.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Ottenheym, "The Amsterdam Ring of Canals," 39-40.

³¹ In this instance, I use the term "private property" simply to refer to privately owned homes. It should be noted that in early modern Amsterdam, as in many cities in early modern Europe, the home was also a place of business. On the separation of private and public spaces in early modern Amsterdam, see: Renee Kistemaker, "The Public and the Private: Public Space in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam," trans. Wendy Shattes, in *The Public and the Private in Dutch Culture of the Golden Age*, ed. Arthur Wheelock and Adele Seeff (London; Cranbury, NJ; Mississauga, Ontario: Associated University Press, 2000), 17-22. On the development of the idea of property in early modern Europe, see: John Brewer and Susan Staves eds., *Early Modern Conceptions of Property* (London: Routledge, 1996).

³² Taverne, *In 't land van belofte*, 166-167; de Haan, "The Greatness and Difficulty of the Work," 40.

The 1630s saw a sudden and sharp increase in public construction projects undertaken or approved by the Amsterdam city government. While the material I discuss in this dissertation dates from about mid-century, it is important to keep in mind that construction that had begun before 1648 was a recent and vital part of the imaginary that produced the images and texts under discussion. Between 1632 and 1639, the following public institutions were built or renovated: a university (the Athenaeum Illustre), a library, theater, anatomy theater, and botanical gardens.³³ Plans for the new town hall itself were undertaken in the 1630s as well.³⁴ In the course of the seventeenth century, Amsterdam saw the construction or renovation of sixty nine public buildings, compared to, according to Wagenaar, just nine in the sixteenth century³⁵. Compare this to the new or renovated public buildings in Haarlem and Leiden (the second largest city in the Dutch Republic) in the seventeenth century, respectively seven and eleven. All of these structures were explicitly open to the public. Public establishments such as these were far from common in the rest of Europe, and even in the rest of the Dutch Republic, and thus would have taken on a status as especially visible and well-known to Amsterdam burghers.³⁶ In other words, buildings and institutions that were to a great extent publicly funded and controlled (i.e., as opposed to “public houses,” or pubs) that were expressly open to the public would have been functional and lived elements of the city, rather than facades that allowed no substantial interaction or any possibility of entrance.

Up until this point, the only major public spaces were churches, markets, fairs, and open squares. All of these spaces, of course, play an important role in seventeenth-century Dutch painting and prints. Early modern markets and especially fairs are now well-known spaces of controlled transgression and identity formation, in addition to and entirely bound up with financial transaction.³⁷ The sudden addition of so many spaces to this repertoire that required, largely at odds with the traditional public arenas, a certain sense of decorum and conduct, would have only increased the visibility of these spaces within the collective imagination as new, strange, and notable.³⁸

³³ Marjolein ‘t Hart, “The glorious city: monumentalism and public space in seventeenth-century Amsterdam,” in *Urban Achievement in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Patrick O’Brien (Cambridge: New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 137-138.

³⁴ Katherine Fremantle, *The Baroque Town Hall of Amsterdam* (Utrecht: Haentjens Dekker & Gumbert, 1959), 24.

³⁵ Jan Wagenaar, *Hedendaagsche historie, of tegenwoordige staat van alle volkeren, vervolgende de beschryving der Vereenigde Nederlanden...*, vols. 4-8 (Amsterdam: Issaac Tirion, 1742-44). Cited in Maarten Prak, “The Market for Architecture in Holland, 1500-1815,” in *The Birth of Modern Europe: Culture and Economy, 1400-1800*, ed. Laura Cruz and Joel Moky (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), 42-43.

³⁶ See: Koen Ottenheim et al. eds., *Public Buildings in Early Modern Europe* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010).

³⁷ The classic works on early modern public transgression at the market and the carnival are: Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky, 1965 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009); and Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986). More specifically about the Netherlands, there is quite a lot of work about the market and fair as spaces of transgression, mostly focusing on peasants. For example: Svetlana Alpers, “Bruegel’s Festive Peasants,” *Simiolus* 6.3/4 (1972-1973), 163-176; Paul Vandenbroek, “Verbeeck’s Peasant Weddings,” *Simiolus* 14.2 (1984), 79-124; Lisa Rosenthal, “Fairtime Folly and the Taming of Transgression: Adriaen Van Ostade’s Prints of Peasant Festivity,” in *Images of Women in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art: Domesticity and the Representation of the Peasant*, ed. P. Phagan (Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia, 1996), 27-39.

³⁸ Heidi de Mare, “The Domestic Boundary as Ritual Area in Seventeenth-Century Holland,” in *Urban Rituals in Italy and the Netherlands*, ed. Heidi de Mare and Anna Voss (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1993), 128; Elizabeth Honig, “The Space of Gender in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting,” in *Looking at Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art: Realism Reconsidered*, ed. Wayne Franits (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 186-199.

Amsterdam at mid-century was thus a city that was at once overflowing with new types of structures, new social institutions, and new formulations of public space and movement, and yet also a place in which everyday urban experience was determined both visually and physically by construction and incompleteness. This combination of novelty, and continuous and disruptive large-scale construction should probably be understood as the predominant experience of the city, rather than the common (in both the popular and the scholarly spheres) understanding of Amsterdam during the seventeenth century as a space simply of great power, wealth, and modernity. The issue of Amsterdam's incredible physical growth seems more often than not to be unaccompanied by any mention of what, logically, must be its companion: constant construction. I will return to this issue as regards the scholarly representation of seventeenth-century Amsterdam at the end of this chapter.

The Pictured City: Themes and Metaphors

In the previous section, I discussed the types of construction projects that comprised mid-seventeenth-century official urban development. Now I would like to move on to considering the works of art that together formed what I term the pictured city, or the version of the concept of Amsterdam as a physical entity that the Amsterdam city officials formulated through their commissions. In this section, I discuss these works of art and the formal characteristics and themes that they emphasize. I argue that the representations of Amsterdam distributed by the city's leaders consistently emphasize their non-coercive and non-political status, the wholeness and unity of the city, the new and modern over the present or past, abstraction, and finally, related to but distinct from the first quality, the descriptive, objective, and disinterested character of the representation.

The only paintings under consideration are ones that were specifically commissioned as part of the decorative program of public and city government-funded buildings. They might to a certain extent thus be viewed as part of the architecture I will discuss, which included the town hall, the canal ring, and many of the buildings and projects discussed in the section above, including the plans for these structures. Engravings make up the bulk of my material here, and they include maps, news sheets, allegorical prints, city panoramas, and prints of individual buildings. These works of art are quite varied, but it is precisely their apparent diversity that makes their consistency so remarkable. All of these works of art also have in common the fact that they can be considered public. The buildings were all open to the public, and the prints and printed texts were produced for the open market.

This group of images and texts were virtually the only point of contact between burghers and the ruling class of the city, with the sole and notable exception of the laws that governed life within the city. These works of art thus provide an extremely important opportunity to consider how the government spoke to its citizens, what concerns were tantamount, and what representation of contemporary life and civic identity was familiar to both the ruling elite and average, largely disenfranchised Amsterdam citizen.

The fact that the government spoke to the burgher overwhelmingly in terms of the representation of the contemporary urban fabric is of critical importance, and should not be taken for granted. As Rose Marie San Juan has shown, in the case of Rome, the point of contact between the official and the citizen was dominated by the explicitly prescriptive and regulatory. The *bandi*, printed regulations and laws posted by civic authorities throughout the city in public spaces, were among the most important and common points of contact between the government

and the people³⁹. As San Juan explains, *bandi* “addressed all sectors of the population and served to regulate and control virtually all aspects of urban life.”⁴⁰ The *bandi* spoke in no uncertain terms of which behaviors were allowed when and where, and perhaps more importantly, of those that were not allowed, specifically in public spaces.

In contrast, Amsterdam’s leaders spoke to commoners overwhelmingly in terms of seemingly non-prescriptive, purely descriptive representations of public space. The ostensible benignity of this point of contact was, perhaps, one of its most ingenious and effective qualities. As this chapter shows, the production of the pictured city by Amsterdam’s leaders was an extremely serious business, and the stakes were far higher than the descriptive and laudatory appearance of their means might at first suggest. Indeed, the contrast between the means of Rome’s *bandi* and Amsterdam’s prints of beautiful views of the city is only placed into starker relief by the similarity of their ends. Whereas Rome’s government sought to prescribe behavior and control and limit movement throughout the city through explicit regulatory proclamations, Amsterdam’s governors used subtler means to determine citizens’ understanding of the very nature of the space and possibility of movement within their city. That is, the Amsterdam governors’ program took a step backwards from that of Rome’s government by attempting to control movement and public behavior by redefining what the city actually was, and what that space looked like.

This choice of seemingly harmless or non-regulatory material as the voice of the government with regards to the status of the city was an ingenious means of entrenching and determining civic behavior and defining how the city should be understood by Amsterdam’s citizens. Rather than resorting to the much more explicitly regulatory means used in Rome, Amsterdam’s government, technically only one city council among equals within a Republican government, chose not to make its presence so menacingly felt. Amsterdam’s governors present themselves as proud, civic-minded patrons of the arts, and are praised by their collaborating artists as such. The burgomasters were publicly mentioned almost exclusively in the form of laudatory inscriptions at the beginning of texts and at the bottom of prints dedicated to (and more often than not funded by) the city leaders. At times these inscriptions included the names of the sitting burgomasters, but more often they refer to the leaders as a group, implying the timeless and unchanging nature of the qualities inherent in the office itself, rather than in particular individuals. The dedicatory inscription (in both Latin and Dutch) at the bottom of the 1662 map of Amsterdam that will be the subject of the rest of this chapter is an example of the language of these inscriptions in general: “NOBILISSIMIS, AMPLISSIMIS ET PRUDENTISSIMIS DOMINIS. (**Figure 1.1**) While certainly not humble, the fact that the burgomasters did not technically make these statements about themselves, and more importantly, because these types of inscriptions were only found on prints or other works of art that appeared to simply laud the city, rather than press the burgomaster’s agenda, suggests that the burgomasters were sensitive to the ways in which they spoke to Amsterdammers.

The apparently proud, edificatory, and aesthetically-minded character of the public output of the Amsterdam government served to make the advancement of a particular idea of the city seem both beneficent and shared with the common citizenry. This method of spreading a politically-motivated message from on high to the populace shares much in common with more well-known cases of political propaganda. Propaganda is the product of a theory of statecraft that contends that the populace, particularly within a fascist regime, will respond more positively

³⁹ Rose Marie San Juan, *Rome: A City Out of Print* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 23-55.

⁴⁰ San Juan, *Rome*, 25-26.

and readily to persuasion rather than explicit coercion.⁴¹ In particular, propagandistic methods tend to favor new and popular forms of media and attractive and popular aesthetic styles and modes.⁴² The usage of brightly-colored posters with simple graphics during World War II to encourage adherence to wartime rationing in the United States appealed at a particular cultural moment when product advertising was increasing in visibility and popularity.⁴³ At the same time, Nazi Germany relied on film to glamorize the Nazi regime, distract from the realities of wartime through escapist imagery, and create a sense of participation and racial and cultural pride at a time when film was swiftly becoming the most popular form of entertainment.⁴⁴

While all states and governments inevitably engage in propaganda in one form or another, Amsterdam's government, and the Dutch Republic in general, is not usually associated with deliberate attempts at enforcing specific beliefs through the deployment of subtle or misleading means, beyond those aimed outwards, presenting an image of the Republic as wealthy, proud, and victorious in the face of overwhelming odds. But propaganda's most important audience is always the domestic one, and while Amsterdam was at odds with other forces within the Republic in addition to being beset by warfare from outside the Republic, the city government aimed its version of Amsterdam at its own citizens, as well as the rest of the Republic and the international community. It was the Amsterdam resident, of course, who could most readily identify with and read the signs of this material. It is largely assumed in the scholarly literature that the government's representation of Amsterdam was on the one hand simply a reflection and augmentation of civic pride on the behalf of Amsterdam's residents⁴⁵, and on the other hand a powerful statement of might and capital meant to strike fear and admiration into those outside the city who might seek to undermine or attack the city. While there can be little doubt that such aims were in the minds of Amsterdam's leaders, I would also argue that they had more specific interests with regards to the understanding of the city by its citizens. The rest of this section considers those interests in relation to consistently deployed formal qualities.

A characteristic shared by all of the representations of Amsterdam put out by the city government is their emphasis on totality. Partial views or representations have virtually no place in this output. The desire to represent the whole in every representation of the city was highly unusual in early modern Europe, and the extraordinary character of this desire will be placed into

⁴¹ Nicholas Cull, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopedia, 1500 to the Present* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2003); Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2006).

⁴² Richard Taylor, *Film Propaganda: Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany* (London; New York: IB. Tauris, 1998).

⁴³ James Aulich, *War Posters: Weapons of Mass Communication* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2007).

⁴⁴ Anthony Rhodes and Victor Margolin, eds., *Propaganda: The Art of Persuasion, World War II* (Secaucus, N.J.: Wellfleet Press, 1987); Susan Bachrach and Steven Luckert, *State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda* (Washington, D.C.; New York: United States Holocaust Museum; W.W. Norton, 2009).

⁴⁵ This has tended to be almost the exclusive stance taken in art historical literature (almost always through a discussion of landscape) that deals with seventeenth-century Dutch politics and collective identity. A few examples out of many: Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches* (New York: Knopf, 1987), particularly 51-125; Simon Schama, "Dutch Landscapes: Culture as Foreground," in *Masters of Seventeenth-Century Landscape*, ed. Peter Sutton (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1987), for instance 79-80; Ann Jensen Adams, "Competing Communities in the 'Great Bog of Europe': Identity and Seventeenth-Century Dutch Landscape Painting," in *Landscape and Power*, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 38; Catherine Levesque, *Journey Through the Landscape in Seventeenth-Century Holland* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); Huigen Leeftang, "Dutch Landscape, the Urban View: Haarlem and its Environs in Literature and Art," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 48 (1997).

starker relief in the rest of the chapters of this dissertation. The consistency with which the partial view is literally marginalized or excised all together cannot be overlooked, particularly when viewed in light of the discussion in the previous section of this chapter of the near continuous change on a major scale that Amsterdam was experiencing. What constituted the very borders of the city was for most of the seventeenth century very much a matter of debate.

The city government's most explicit and well-known example of this marked tendency towards the all-encompassing representation is the new town hall, designed by Jacob van Campen. **(Figure 1.2)** Van Campen's design for the new town hall was undertaken in 1648 as a tribute to the Peace of Münster that ended the Eighty Years War, very much in favor of the Dutch Republic, but much more notably of Amsterdam itself.⁴⁶ The building was officially inaugurated with extensive celebrations in 1655, seven years after the laying of the building's cornerstone. On the day of these celebrations, however, the entire second story of the building was still incomplete, the entire structure was under scaffolding, and construction would not in fact be completed for another decade.⁴⁷ The painting program that was an integral component of Jacob van Campen's original plan for the building would not be finished until 1705.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, the building's inauguration was publicly celebrated in a manner that appeared to blatantly ignore the reality of incompleteness that was plainly visible to the entire government and the crowds of citizens who watched the festivities from the Dam Square. The festivities were preceded by services in the Oudekerk and the Nieuwekerk.⁴⁹ After services, all of the members of the city government processed from the Nieuwekerk to the new town hall in order of importance, entered their respective chambers before meeting again for a feast in the burgomaster's chambers. At the feast, the city government was met and feted by representatives of all of the city's companies. The public inauguration of the building thus emphasized order, hierarchy, and totality of representation in the persons who physically embodied all parts of the city government and all parts of Amsterdam's citizenry. The public nature of the enactment of these events, including the public procession from church to town hall, and the witnessing of the feast by representatives of Amsterdam's citizens, was a vital element of the official performance of commemoration and initiation, precisely because the building was far from complete. The public was made a part of and thus a party to the celebration, and therefore lent their tacit approval of the new building as complete and functioning, open for business.

The celebrations were reinforced by a multitude of celebratory poems and allegorical images that were distributed as engravings shortly after the event. The most famous product of the celebrations was probably Joost van den Vondel's long celebratory poem *Inwyding van 't Stadthuis t' Amsterdam* (*Dedication of the Town Hall of Amsterdam*), which he dedicated to the

⁴⁶ Eymert-Jan Goossens, "De Vredestempel: Het Amsterdamse stadspaleos uit 1648," in *1648: Vrede van Munster feit en verbeelding*, ed. Jacques Dane (Zwolle: Wanders Uitgevers, 1998), 204-223.

⁴⁷ Renee Kistemaker, *Amsterdam, the Golden Age, 1275-1795*, trans. Paul Foulkes (New York: Abbeville Press, 1983), 100.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ In the Nieuwekerk, the town hall's next-door neighbor, the preacher took as his text for the inauguration of the town hall Psalm 30, a song for the rededication of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. The choice of this Psalm publicly and unequivocally declared the hoped-for status and import of the new town hall as a beacon and centerpiece of the Christian world. Although the choice of this particular Psalm seems politically sound, the preaching of such a message in a church must have struck the more orthodox members of the congregation as somewhat inappropriate, particularly in light of the disputes that had already arisen about the troubling message that seemed to be suggested by the fact that the new town hall was clearly on the way to literally overshadowing the Nieuwekerk, which had before construction indisputably dominated the Dam.

city fathers when it was published on the occasion of the official dedication of the building. In addition to describing the exterior of the building, Vondel also described the entire painting program in detail and at length, despite the fact that it would not be completed for more than fifty years. The poem thus reinforced the statement made by the public festivities surrounding the official opening of the building by describing, as an apparent first-hand witness, the interior appearance of the building that the public would not have been able to see, even had it been completed. But even the section of the poem that describes the exterior of the building clearly magics away the unavoidable scaffolding and incompleteness of the building's facades. Thus, while Vondel's descriptions of the interior decoration of the town hall might appear at first to be a clever bit of deception about the degree of completion of the building, the fact that the exterior, visibly incomplete to any casual onlooker, is described in the same manner suggests that something more complicated is occurring here. This is not so much an act of deception as a concerted effort to market and popularize the *idea* of the town hall rather than any physical reality. The identity of the town hall from the very beginning of its planning had been not only about might and splendor, but perhaps even more importantly about completion and totality. It could not thus be represented or even seen as incomplete because the building lacked any purpose or identity under such circumstances. Whether or not the town hall was physically complete, it must always be represented as such.

The entire town hall, building, floor plan, sculptural and paintings programs, had been designed by Jacob van Campen as a microcosm. The rigid classicism and symmetry of the building was not simply a matter of taste as is often assumed, but also of philosophical and political thought. Van Campen based his design on the work of Vitruvius, and adopted the Roman architects' belief that perfection lay in the proportions of the human male body. (**Figure 1.3**) Through his study of the work of the Spanish Jesuit architect and mathematician Juan Bautista Villalpando⁵⁰, van Campen Christianized Vitruvius' concept by designing the town hall in the image of Villalpando's Vitruvian-based reconstruction of the Temple of Solomon, a project Villalpando undertook with the support of Philip II of Spain in the 1570s.⁵¹ (**Figure 1.4**) Proportion, harmony, and perfect balance were thus the most important and characteristic elements of the building's design, both inside and out. The town hall centered on the public Burgerzaal, or Citizens' Hall, which was designed based on the proportions of the male human body, and its measurements as well as its entire painting and sculptural program were meant to contribute to its role as the perfect microcosm, an ideal mirror of God's entire creation. (**Figure 1.5 & 1.6**) The rooms that emanated outwards from the Burgerzaal and its galleries each served a specific function within the city government, such as the treasury, the secretary, and the magistrates' court. Sculptural elements throughout the Burgerzaal and its public galleries represented the four elements, the nine planets, and the months of the year with personifications and their characteristic attributes. The floor of the Burgerzaal was to be inlaid with the two hemispheres of the globe, and the ceiling was to have painted on it accurate representations of the stars as seen from each hemisphere. The offices that radiated off the central body of the Burgerzaal were integrated into these cosmic schema as representations of the necessary organs

⁵⁰ For a more thorough discussion of van Campen's study of Vitruvius and Villalpando, see: Eymert-Jan Goosens, *Treasure Wrought by Chisel and Brush* (Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, 1996), 15-19.

⁵¹ For more on Villalpando and his reconstruction of the Temple of Solomon in relation to seventeenth-century architecture, see: Koenraad van Cleempoel, "The Escorial as an Example of the 'New Architecture of the New Christian Antiquity,'" in *Memory and Oblivion*, eds. W. Reinink and J. Stumpel (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999), 663-670; Helen Roseneau, *Vision of the Temple: The Image of the Temple in Judaism and Christianity* (London: Oresko, 1979).

of the government. **(Figure 1.7)** On every level, then, the imagery and layout of the public areas of the Town Hall were meant to echo the human body as a microcosm of the universe.

The exterior sculptural program reinforced this idea of the Town Hall, and indeed made more explicit the implications of the Burgerzaal: Amsterdam was the center of the universe, and the perfect representation of all that the world held. The tympanum above the Dam-facing (east) entrance to the Town Hall contains a depiction of the “Amsterdam Maid” receiving tribute from the sea gods and goddesses. **(Figures 1.8 & 1.9)** The tympanum on the rear, west-facing façade depicts personifications of the four known continents paying tribute to Amsterdam. **(Figures 1.10 & 1.11)** Above the tympanum is a bronze statue of Atlas holding up the globe. **(Figure 1.12)** The corners of the two tympana were crowned with statues representing the four virtues, and the dome atop the building was meant to include statues of the eight points of the compass. **(Figure 1.13)** The façade sculptural program publicly and unambiguously stated that Amsterdam is the center of the world, and rules and demands tribute, respect, and perhaps most importantly, wealth, from all of the seas and lands of the world. The reliance here and in the Burgerzaal on Renaissance systems of ordering the natural world must be seen not merely an exercise in hubris, but equally a statement of completion and comprehensiveness.

One of the most widely-circulated representations of the town hall was Jacob van der Ulft’s etching of the Dam that dates to between 1648 and 1652. **(Figure 1.14)** The print depicts the completed town hall and a new, very tall tower on the Nieuwekerk. The town hall of course was far from complete at this point, and the tower on the church was never built. It is believed that van der Ulft was commissioned by the city government to produce this print in order to gain support from Amsterdam citizens for the project, since it would be their taxes that would pay for the construction.⁵² While there is little reason to doubt such a possibility, seen within the context of a general and strong emphasis on totality and completion, this print powerfully expresses the government’s concern that Amsterdam, and particularly this building which was to be its crown jewel, be represented, understood and experienced as complete and whole. Van der Ulft’s print does not suggest what the future may hold, but declares that this is the Dam, this is Amsterdam, this is how it should be understood. Van der Ulft’s inclusion of crowds of Amsterdammers in the Dam Square going about their daily business not only suggests that the new building is good for business, but also serves to encompass the viewer within its vision of the city. The view of the Dam as the location of fashionable citizens conducting important business on an international scale was clearly meant to flatter a sense of inclusion within a productive, wealthy, and important civic body. Thus, while the vision of Amsterdam produced by this print never came into physical being, it served to inculcate an idea of urban identity and of possibility in the minds of Amsterdam’s citizens. The hyperbolic Latin text beneath the image of the Dam only served to underscore its flattering tone, describing the town hall as “without match in Europe,” and the Dam as the place to which the world sends all of its wealth.⁵³

Completion and totality are clearly at stake on a much greater scale in representations of the city as a whole. Besides the representations of the town hall discussed above, the city government for the most part only commissioned and had distributed representations of the city

⁵² Jan Peeters, *Royal Palace of Amsterdam in Paintings of the Golden Age* (Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, 1997), 41.

⁵³ “Veni Spectator, pasce oculos in hâc brevi Tabellâ, animoque perambula Forum Amstelodamense, Civium, Incolarum Exterarumq; gentium frequentiâ mirabile: Considera Hospes peregrine Curiam, opus vastum, et elegantissima Symetria stupendum, an habeat Europa parem: hic Themidis Sacrum, Secretiq; urbis reconditorium est: En Templum novum Illustri cum Turre sub nomine S. Catharinae Pietati Religioniq; dicatum : Deniq; Libram, in quâ quidquid habet Oriens, et utrumq; Limen Oceani mittit quotidie appenditur, tantaq; Mercium abundantia stipatur, ut Totius Orbis opes in hanc urbem Confluxisse videantur / R. & J. Ottens Exc.”

as a whole. This is itself highly significant. The Amsterdam government was apparently uninterested in representations of parts or fragments of the city, again with the notable exception of the town hall, which in any event was conceptualized as the city of Amsterdam, the Dutch Republic, and the entire world in miniature. In light of the reality of constant construction and disruption that in fact characterized life in the physical city, the exclusion of representations of fragments or sections of the city takes on a greater significance and visibility, if only because of the sharp contrast between physical reality and representation.

Furthermore, the type of view favored by the most common type of image associated with the city government, the map, always took a point of view that was impossible for any person to experience: the bird's eye view⁵⁴. The bird's eye view had been the characteristic view of the city since Cornelis Anthoniszoon's 1538 painting of the city. **(Figure 2.13)** Svetlana Alpers has discussed this painting cum map as a prime example of the Dutch art of describing.⁵⁵ Indeed, Cornelis' painting seems to have initiated within Amsterdam a long history of representations of the city that seem to at once deny a privileged viewer, and claim the passive presentation by the artist as a transparent intermediary of something that already existed and need only be captured by his skill. In the context of my discussion of the Amsterdam city leaders' usage of seemingly unmediated representations of the city, the coercive possibilities of such a model of representation should be evident.

While Alpers defined the Dutch "art of describing" as an alternative to the explicitly coercive and instrumental one-point perspective-determined art of the Italian Renaissance, we might here recognize the ways in which the very mode of assumed passivity could easily be turned to the manipulation and confusion of the relationship between representation and reality. Implicitly comparing Italian and Dutch art, Alpers writes that "[Dutch] pictures document or represent behavior. They are descriptive rather than prescriptive."⁵⁶ But if Dutch art is understood to show rather than tell, Dutch representation's relationship to a physical reality must be taken for granted. More disturbingly, Dutch realist art must be viewed as, if not quite unmotivated, than at least disinterested in affecting, manipulating, or determining the behavior of viewers within or in relation to that physical referent. Of course Alpers was well aware of the fact that the passivity of Dutch art was only a mode, not a reality of how it was made. I would only like to point out that, while early modern viewers, and particularly Dutch ones, would have been sophisticated enough to understand the facts of representation, the descriptive mode could also act instrumentally, if not in its actual representation, than in the types of claims it made about the world. It is of course precisely the surface effect of neutrality and passivity that makes the Dutch descriptive mode so insidious, so treacherous. This becomes a particularly acute problem in Dutch representations of the peoples and places of the world beyond Western Europe, which, if understood as descriptive rather than coercive, would only serve to further reinscribe Eurocentric, colonially-motivated ideas about non-European cultures.⁵⁷ Misrepresentation, or motivated selective representation, when applied to an audience's everyday reality at least allows

⁵⁴ On the fantasy of the bird's eye (or God's eye) view, see de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 92; Christian Jacob, *The Sovereign Map: Theoretical Approaches in Cartography*, trans. Tom Conley (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 1.

⁵⁵ Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 119-168.

⁵⁶ Alpers, *The Art of Describing*, xxvii.

⁵⁷ Alpers writes that "the mapped history can offer a detached or perhaps even a culturally unbiased view of what is to be known in the world. The Dutch record of their short-lived colony in Brazil is an extraordinary case in point." Alpers, *The Art of Describing*, 163.

for a variety of responses or understanding of veracity. Whereas the typical Italian painting, with its coercive model of viewing, makes explicit its reliance upon, and therefore choice of, the viewer to participate in the work of art's fiction, Dutch works of art, as understood by Alpers, replaced the blatant distinction between the experienced world and the pictured world with an alluring fiction of parity between the two, a fiction that could shape the world *outside* the image, rather than simply constructing a temporary and circumscribed world within the image (a world left behind when the viewer steps away from the painting's ideal viewing position), and therefore had the ability to *more* effectively prescribe behavior than Italian art⁵⁸. It is not a mode of art that refuses to coerce so much as a mode of art that conceals its coercion, a form of coercion which, in the case of the art under discussion in this chapter, was aimed at resignifying and even reshaping the urban experience of people living in Amsterdam.

Cornelis Anthoniszoon designed and had published a twelve-piece woodblock print after his bird's eye view painting in 1544. (**Figure 1.15**) This print might be seen as the progenitor of virtually all of the maps of Amsterdam that were to follow.⁵⁹ While Jacopo de Barbari's famous woodcut map of Venice from 1500 must have influenced the 1538 painting, Anthoniszoon's print was the earliest bird's eye view representation of a city in northern Europe, and the next northern European bird's eye view city image was a 1561 woodcut of London attributed to Ralph Agas. (**Figures 1.16 & 1.17**) The London woodcut, however, only brings further into relief the unusual qualities of the Anthoniszoon print. While the Agas print seems arbitrarily framed and bounded, the map of Amsterdam is framed and centered around a distinct form. With its emphasis on enframing, the simplification and abstraction of the shape of the city, the strong distinction between densely-populated urban and unpopulated but worked fields outside the city, and its inclusion of ships, the Anthoniszoon print anticipates all of the major features that would distinguish maps of Amsterdam in the mid-seventeenth century. Another notable characteristic of this map that is carried well into the seventeenth century is its distinct lack of navigational function. The Anthoniszoon map, like virtually all of those to follow, entirely lacks this practical purpose for which most city maps are now understood to have been made. This was certainly not unusual in the early modern period, but I emphasize the fact that the cartographic representation of Amsterdam was, from the beginning, primarily of decorative or informational purpose only insofar as it gave an overview of the shape and plan of the city. Mapping did not occur on the level of the streets and canals, but always from almost directly above. This vision of the city was well-suited to the city government, not least because it very neatly avoided the street-level reality of fragmentation, construction, and destruction.

By the mid-seventeenth century, therefore, the city fathers had a firmly established, even canonical, representation of the city to work with. I would go so far as to argue that both Amsterdam's residents as well as outsiders might have understood the appearance of the city largely from the impossible bird's eye view, not unlike we still do today. The bird's eye view, in fact, had lost its status as impossible quite swiftly, and it became the iconic vision of Amsterdam by the early seventeenth century. That is, one of the most common visions and understandings of the city was one that was physically, but no longer conceptually, impossible.

⁵⁸ Some potent examples of how this aspect of Dutch art has functioned in relation to the extra-European world, see K. Zandvliet, *Mapping for Money: Maps, plans, and topographic paintings and their role in Dutch overseas expansion during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (Amsterdam: Batavian Lion International, 1998) and Peter Mason, "Portrayal & Betrayal: The Colonial Gaze in Seventeenth-Century Brazil," *Culture and History* 6 (1989), 37-62.

⁵⁹ On Anthoniszoon's painting, see Alpers, *The Art of Describing*, 157.

Maps also allowed the city to be understood in an idealized yet seemingly accurate state. Given what I am arguing in this chapter, it should come as no surprise that official maps (and even mapped plans) never represented the physical city in its current state of incompleteness, but instead always filled in the areas that existed only in plan, to the point where the shape of the city took on its current characteristic horseshoe shape in representation nearly half a century before it had actually become a reality.

The map designed by Daniel Stalpaert⁶⁰, Amsterdam's city architect (i.e. essentially the official city planner), and engraved by Julius Milheuser in 1662 at the behest of the city government is the map most closely controlled by the city government. (**Figure 1.1**) Text below the map declares in Dutch⁶¹ and Latin⁶² that the map is dedicated "to the most noble, most exalted, and most learned gentlemen", which is to say the burgomasters of Amsterdam, who are listed in full. Made of nine sheets, it is the second largest early modern map of Amsterdam, at 137 by 161 centimeters.⁶³ It is described as a "map of the old and new parts of the city of Amsterdam, showing all of her public buildings with the old parts represented in brown and the new in black; the new section begins beyond the old wall which is drawn in stippled lines."⁶⁴ While the map distinguishes between the old and new parts of the city, it de-emphasizes the break between the two parts in every possible way. The stippled lines showing the old wall, which by the map's description designates the border between the old and new sections, is barely visible, and literally pales quite markedly in comparison with the stiff dark lines that designate the new wall. The fact that the map, unlike Anthoniszoon's, only includes public buildings helps diminish the distinction between the heavily populated "old" area of the city and the non-existent and building-less new section without resorting to the imaginative creation of buildings for the new area. The map goes so far as to provide names of streets and canals in the new section, just as it does for the existent streets and canals of the old section, and all of them are assigned numbers on the map and key below. Boats of various types, sizes, and purposes ply the old canals, as well as the imagined ones. The careful symmetry of all of the elements that enframe the map itself also serves to detract from the splitting of the city into old and new sections by providing a dominant and competing bilateral break. All of the map's texts are repeated twice, on the right in Latin and on the left in Dutch.

What distinction between the old and new does occur tends to assign the new, as yet non-existent, sections of the city a more substantive form than that of the old. The stippling used for the "old," which is to say current, wall not only makes it difficult to make out, but also implies (in the language of the diagrammatic) non-existence, either in the sense of an earlier layer of a palimpsest, or of something that has not yet come into being. Stippling designates something that exists only theoretically or in the imagination or memory. It reduces the city walls, which were at this point around sixty years old, to the status of ruin or even footprint. On the other hand, the planned walls are depicted in strong, dark lines, with the wide moat that was to follow the lines of the new wall adding even more visual prominence. The dark shading of the edges of the moat, presumably suggesting water, in fact only serves to abstract and outline the

⁶⁰ On Daniel Stalpaert, see Gea van Essen, "Daniel Stalpaert (1615-1676) stadsarchitect van Amsterdam en de Amsterdamse stadsfabriek in de periode 1647 tot 1676," *Bulletin—KNOB* 99.4 (2000), 101-120.

⁶¹ "AEN DE WELEDELES, GROOTACHTBARE, WELWYSE, EN HOOGH-GELEERDE HEEREN"

⁶² "NOBILISSIMIS, AMPLISSIMIS ET PRUDENTISSIMIS DOMINIS"

⁶³ Bakker et al., *Het aanzien van Amsterdam*, 110.

⁶⁴ "PLATTE-GRONDT VAN DE OUDE EN NIEUWE ROYINGE DER STEDE AMSTERDAM, aangewesen met alle haere publike Gebouwen waer van de oude roying in 't bruyn en de nieuwe in 't bleeck wort uytgebeelt; de nieuwe begint daer de oude wal met gstipte linien is getekent."

fortifications. The fortified walls in the most up-to-date style are the most abstracted and inorganic forms in the print, and they stand out as the stark division between the white emptiness of the fields outside the city and the rigidly designed urban space within. The wall and moat visually reinforce the iconic and yet unrealized horseshoe shape of the city by enframing and enclosing it. The emphasis on the walls would have had a perhaps even more important purpose at this point, as the Republic, and particularly Amsterdam itself, was on the verge of war with both France and England. The map's emphasis on Amsterdam's up-to-date and strong fortifications, which again did not in fact yet exist, was clearly meant to convey that the city was safe from attack. The non-existent walls take on the extremely important role of promising protection, if in concept and representation alone. This speaks to the gravity and significance of the role designated to representation by the city government. The image acts as an advertisement of the government's ability to protect the city and its inhabitants.

Furthermore, the clear designation in the title of the map of an "old" and "new" part of the city, referring to the non-existent section as the "new" and the actually inhabited section as the "old" was itself a meaningful and even bold misrepresentation of the status of the planned extension of the city, particularly in light of the other formal elements I have discussed here. The play of time and reality in this map is masterfully and subtly parsed here. Not only does the map depict as concrete that which existed only in concept and plan, it uses the formal means of the engraving and coloration to make the "new" sections appear more concrete, more real than the "old", in fact current, section of the city. The physically non-existent, whose status was conceptual and theoretical, what was in fact a representation of the future, here takes on a reality status that explicitly overtakes the present reality. The map manages to make the present, and what indeed would be "present" for nearly fifty more years, into the obsolete, the past, the old. The map naturalizes that which did not yet exist while turning what was in actuality the present into a degraded and virtually extinct past. As the future becomes the present, and the present becomes a ghost and a ruin, present and past become elided. Thus, the present takes on a highly precarious position, and it appears in the space of the map to exist only insofar as the future iteration of the city can be accepted as, in fact, the present. The present, indeed physical reality itself, shifts constantly here between future and past, and is never allowed to rest anywhere in between. With its distinctions between the "new" and the "old" parts of the city, Stalpaert's map denies the possibility of any meaningful present.

In 1664, Daniel Stalpaert designed another map of Amsterdam representing the last extension of Amsterdam. (**Figure 1.18**) This map, published by Nicolaes Visscher I and engraved by Pieter Henrickszoon Schut E.A. in 33 sheets (123 x 140 cm), was, though slightly smaller than the 1662 map, a much more lavish affair. The map itself, though the central element of the work, is greatly reduced in size and competes with decorative and descriptive elements that enframe it in two tiers. The map proper also now included (at the bottom) a profile of the city framed by putti, garlands, Miverva and Juno, and the map keys are now on scrolls held by putti. Just outside the map are twelve separately framed and captioned images. Eight of these, on the top and bottom of the map, depict views of the most important buildings in Amsterdam; notably, all but two of these, representing the Dam with the new Town Hall and the Beurs, the city's stock exchange, are churches. The other four images, on the left and right of the map, depict the city from bird's eye view the various stages of its extension. The outer border of the engraving consists of a long and closely-printed text description of the history and buildings of Amsterdam, in Latin on the left, Dutch on the bottom, and French on the right. At the top is an elaborate scroll inscribed "AMSTELODAMUM" and surrounded by garlands held by

numerous putti. While the only coloring in the 1662 map was brown and black, to distinguish between the old and new sections of the city, the 1664 map was intended to be colored, like the example discussed here.

The apparently purely descriptive and informational intent of the 1662 map becomes clear when placed in relation to the more decorative map of 1664. Of course, both maps do work that far outreaches their ostensible purposes. I have already argued that the 1662 map places the status of the present into question by upending the formal conventions for representing physical structures. The 1664 map plays with time in a yet more intricate if somewhat less subtle manner. While the 1662 map seems to imply that the past is available to us only insofar as it physically imprints the ground of the city, and thus fits into a somewhat abstracted version of that city, the 1664 map explicitly includes the past in a variety of different forms. The 1664 map also, like Borges' famous Chinese encyclopedia, seems to present the city in all of its many guises, describing it from all possible angles with little concern about overlap or contradiction. The decorative function of the map suggests that its intended audience was domestic (i.e. for the private home), and was probably meant to be displayed on a wall.⁶⁵ Although undoubtedly an expensive print, it would have been a relatively inexpensive alternative to a painting, and, if we may take paintings of domestic interiors as any kind of evidence of domestic habits⁶⁶, a map such as this was a common or at least meaningful addition to the décor of the most public spaces of a bourgeois household. This intended function might explain why the Dutch text of the description of the city lies at the bottom of the map, where it would be most easily read by a viewer. It might be assumed, then, that the text itself, though minutely printed, was indeed meant to be legible, along with the various images of the city. All of this is to say that the map's decorative function did not necessarily preclude engagement with the various elements of the print separately, and with a certain amount of attention. This is important to note because it meant that, like Borges' Chinese encyclopedia, the map could be viewed both as a whole and in parts as a representation of Amsterdam. The map's decorative function must be understood to have to a certain extent actually amplified the descriptive and informational qualities that are so apparent in the 1662 map.

The top row of images includes the future town hall and de Keyser's Beurs, interspersed with profiles of the early fourteenth-century Oude Kerk and the Nieuwe Kerk, the town hall's neighbor, which had originally been built in the fifteenth century as a second parish church to relieve some of the burden placed on the Oude Kerk, the city's first parish church. In 1645, the Nieuwe Kerk burned down almost completely, but was largely restored by 1648 in its original Gothic style.⁶⁷ (**Figures 1.19 & 1.20**) The Nieuwe Kerk, alone among the buildings represented in the top and bottom rows of the image, is represented a second time, as the neighbor of the new Town Hall. The four churches along the bottom border of the central map depict, from left to right, the Zuiderkerk (Hendrick de Keyser, 1603-1611), the Westerkerk (Hendrick de Keyser, 1620-1631), the Noorderkerk (Hendrick and Pieter de Keyser, 1620-1623), and the Nieuwezijds Kapel (1347). The map thus contains representations of three churches that were originally

⁶⁵ See Bärbel Hedinger, *Karten in Bildern: zur Ikonographie der Wandkarte in holländischen Interieurgemälden des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1986).

⁶⁶ Mariet Westermann, *Art and Home: Dutch Interiors in the Age of Rembrandt* (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2001).

⁶⁷ See Bevers Holm, "Der unvollendete gotische Turm der Amsterdamer Nieuwe Kerk aus dem Jahre 1645," *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* 22 (1989); Thomas von der Dunk, "Hoe klassiek is de gothiek?: Jacob van Campen en de toren van de Nieuwe Kerk te Amsterdam : een nieuwe benadering van een oude kwestie," *Jaarboek van het Genootschap Amstelodamum* 85 (1993), 49-90.

Catholic and were converted into Protestant churches in the seventeenth century, and three churches, all built by Hendrick de Keyser, designed expressly as Protestant churches.

Not only are the town hall and the Beurs differentiated from the rest of the representations of buildings as the only non-churches, they are also depicted in a manner clearly deviating from the other six images. (**Figure 1.21**) Even a cursory glance captures the divergent character of these two images in a print that takes diversity and variety as one of its major formal qualities. The town hall is depicted from much further away than the other buildings, perhaps because the image is actually a representation of not just the town hall, but of the entire Dam and the other buildings that it contained. This is itself an important divergence from the other images, which only depict single buildings, centrally and in profile (again, as to the profile, with the exception of the Beurs). The Beurs on the other hand is depicted not from groundlevel like all of the other images, including the Dam, but from above. The obvious explanation is that the town hall could only be seen in full from this distance, since the Dam was a relatively cramped space that famously did not offer any clear views of the entire massive town hall, and the Beurs' interesting and characteristic architectural elements did not include its façade so much as its interior two-story courtyard. Yet these both seem to me to be unhelpful explanations. The town hall did not even exist at this point, thus the particular view with which it was represented was of little consequence, since the entire image is a fantasy. The Beurs on the other hand, designed by Hendrick de Keyser and built from 1608 to 1613, is here represented in what is essentially a copy of Claes Jansz. Visscher's print from just after the building was completed.

It might be more relevant that both of the spaces depicted in these two aberrant images are not only relatively secular, but more specifically are places closely and almost exclusively associated with financial transactions. While financial transactions are clearly occurring in front of some of the churches, for instance the Noorderkerk, the town hall and the Beurs alone were dedicated sites that were purpose built for business. The map, then, emphasizes functional differences at the expense of structural uniformity, thus creating yet another internal subset within the map's seemingly endless system of categorization and recategorization, every image contributing to multiple sets, some of which might at first appear to be mutually exclusive.

The 1662 map defines Amsterdam as an integrated whole by emphasizing continuity and connection between the current and the future parts of the city. On the other hand, the 1664 map offers a sense of the wholeness and integrity of a fragmented and disrupted city through its deployment of multiplicity, repetition, and variety. These two strategies may have been aimed at somewhat different audiences, but their effects were intended to be the same. Despite the fact that the 1664 map is made up of many different parts in conflicting modes and formats, the separate parts are not fragments that together form a greater whole. One of the benefits of this type of format, which consists of multiple separately framed images arranged in a hierarchical framing manner on a single page is that it actually allows, despite the subordination of some images to others, each image to retain a certain level of autonomy and totality without sacrificing overall compositional integrity. Each of the pictorial elements of the print, and certainly the text, could have and indeed did at times stand alone, or as part of completely different types of arrangements. We have already seen, for instance, how the image in the upper left-hand corner of the Dam and the new town hall was widely distributed at the same time independently as an engraving, and of course the central map had been published in 1662 without any of the same elements attached to it.

Each element of the print offers a complete, delimited, and potentially independent representation of Amsterdam. Each element is carefully framed and isolated from its neighbors,

and all of the compositions are given their own captions and keys. Perhaps more importantly, each representation is clearly centered and depicted from a particular perspective. For instance, the maps representing the extensions of the city plan are described with variations on the bird's eye view, and begin as noticeably angled, though still centered, in the map representing Amsterdam in 1342, and become progressively more directly overhead, culminating in the pleasing symmetry and perfect flatness of the central, most current map. As we have already seen, the Beurs and the Dam are also clearly differentiated from the other representations of buildings by the angle at which they are represented. The independence of the various elements is emphasized, but also allowed to become subordinated to other images of groupings, ones that shift and change, if not *ad infinitum*, than certainly more constantly than at first appears evident⁶⁸. Thus the images of churches and the Beurs and Dam together form a grouping displaying the city's main public buildings, but each building might also be followed through its replication or absence throughout the maps depicting Amsterdam's extensions, or picked out in distant profile in the panorama of the whole city seen from the Ij at the bottom of the main map, and also serve as illustrations of the written description of the city at the bottom of the sheet. What is always held constant is that these groupings are closed and understood to be complete. Each of the images here is in itself framed and representative of the whole city, and also belongs to various strings of images that are themselves complete representations of the city from a different point of view. And of course, all of the images or representations add up together to present Amsterdam in a manner that at least strongly suggests that nothing has been left out, that it has been viewed, studied, and presented from every possible angle.

The 1664 map's encyclopedic eclecticism and description is closely related to the exactly contemporary phenomenon of the city description book. Between 1661 and 1665, no fewer than seven book-length descriptions of Amsterdam were published.⁶⁹ Melchior Fokkens produced an illustrated description of Amsterdam in 1662, and his book was followed by books by Philipp von Zesen and Olfert Dapper a year later.⁷⁰ In 1664 alone, three Amsterdam descriptions were published, two of which were apparently pirated from other original editions, and in 1665 Tobias van Domselaer produced a compilation of both old and new material. This remarkable output of what was largely redundant material coincided with the first years of the final extension of Amsterdam, which began in 1663. There is little doubt that there is a connection between these two facts. That this was the case is supported by the fact that without exception, each of these books was dedicated to the city leaders.⁷¹ These books took Amsterdam in all of its guises, except of course those that might reflect poorly on the city, as their subject. While other cities in the Dutch Republic were the subject of similar city descriptions, Amsterdam inspired far more than any other city.⁷² These books were not intended to be guidebooks, although copies were

⁶⁸ This string of conceptual, verbal, aesthetic, and physical connections is very similar to what Honig discusses in relation to the Georg Heinz *Kunstkammer* paintings. Elizabeth Honig, "Making Sense of Things," *RES* 34 (Fall 1998), 178.

⁶⁹ On the earlier history of Dutch city descriptions in both Amsterdam and other cities in the Dutch Republic, see Eco Haitsma Mulier, "De eerste Hollandse stadsbeschrijvingen uit de zeventiende eeuw," *De zeventiende eeuw* 9.2 (1993), 97-116.

⁷⁰ Eco Haitsma Mulier, "The Image of Amsterdam in Seventeenth-Century Descriptions," in *Rome-Amsterdam: Two Growing Cities in Seventeenth-Century Europe*, ed. Peter van Kessel and Elisja Schulte (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1997), 14.

⁷¹ Mulier, "The Image of Amsterdam," 15.

⁷² Haitsma Mulier, "The Image of Amsterdam," 13-14.

owned by people who did not live in the Dutch Republic.⁷³ Amsterdam description books should probably be seen as closer in spirit and function to the atlases of various parts of the world that were popular during the early modern period throughout Europe, and which were indeed more often than not printed in the Netherlands.⁷⁴ Rather than providing information about places to be visited, then, these books instead functioned essentially as encomiastic (and therefore highly selective) encyclopedias of information about the history, architecture, residents, and art of Amsterdam.

These books tended to follow the same structure and usually began by placing Amsterdam in geographical and historical context with regards to the rest of the Dutch Republic, then describing the location of the city and its relationship to its countryside and suburbs. Next, the etymology of Amsterdam's name is discussed, followed by a survey of the city's physical development and expansion, a description of its walls and gates, a history of sieges and wars, a list of Amsterdam's legal privileges within the Republic, and descriptions of the major public structures, including streets, canals, churches, charitable institutions, and town hall. The books then discuss industry and trade within the city, a description of the formation of the city's government, and biographies of notable past and present citizens of Amsterdam, including burgomasters and artists. As this list of the elements of an Amsterdam description suggests, the narrative tended to start outwards, physically, politically, geographically, and conceptually, and moved inwards. A discussion of the Republic as a whole gives way to a description of Amsterdam's outlying areas, then its cities, and finally we end up within the city itself, moving from streets and buildings to industry and lastly to the city's residents.

This movement from exteriority to interiority, from geography and history to buildings and biography, is an effective narrative device that brings the reader/viewer towards an increasingly intimate, groundlevel, and personal relationship with the city. At the same time, it ensures that the reader/viewer internalizes a broad view of Amsterdam as an abstracted entity seen from the outside, even from above, in a manner analogous to the bird's eye view map of Amsterdam, before being "allowed" to enter into a more bodily or human-scale relationship to it. Alienation must precede integration into or assimilation of the actual urban interior of the walls of the city. The inclusion of a discussion of suburbs and surrounding countryside at all, let alone at the beginning, must be considered in this context.⁷⁵ The countryside here acts largely as a barrier that must be crossed before entrance to the city is granted. The language of the description of the city's outlying areas might be compared to the manner in which those same areas are depicted in Stalpaert's 1662 map of Amsterdam. While not quite the *terra incognita*

⁷³ Rome, on the other hand, largely lacked city description books but was the subject of many guidebooks, which developed out of the long-standing pilgrim guidebook. On the development of the illustrated guidebook in Rome in the early modern period, see San Juan, *Rome*, 57-93. On the relationship between guidebooks, the Grand Tour, and the development of cityscapes, see Stuart Blumin, *The Encompassing City* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 56.

⁷⁴ On the publishing of printed maps and atlases in Amsterdam, see Cornelis Koeman, "Atlas Cartography in the Low Countries in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries," in *Images of the World: The Atlas Through History*, John A. Wolter and Ronald E. Grim, eds. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1997), 73-107.

⁷⁵ Certainly, convincing economic considerations might be ascribed here, such as the dependence on the city on the country for crops and wealth, and the fact that most of the city's most wealthy and thus important citizens drew some of their prestige from owning country homes in the city's outlying areas. However, the descriptions of the countryside tend to focus not on industry or farming, but on the picturesque qualities of the villages, landscape, and manor houses to be found there. To be sure, the descriptions of country houses offer a sop to the amour-propre of the city leaders, but in general, the descriptions of the countryside and suburbs seem to contribute very little to our understanding of the city itself.

that it would become in slightly later maps, the fields beyond the theoretical walls of the city are barely parsed, and their lack of consequence, at least within the context of the map, is suggested by the fact that the fields almost entirely lack human habitation, and instead are dotted here and there with cows, which though far more familiar than the grotesque and fantastical characters that usually decorated the *Terra Incognita* of early modern maps of exotic and unknown parts of the globe, they certainly offer a similar sense to the viewer that the artist had little time to devote to the description of places deemed unimportant or simply unknown. The city's wall and moat stand, particularly given the fact of their novelty (to the point of existing only, indeed, on paper), as an ineffable, unbreachable partition between this described yet excluded area and the city proper. Inside and outside are, if both represented, clearly divided and of absolutely of unequal and distinct status. But it is the wall, and thus what lies immediately outside of it, that in fact determines and defines what Amsterdam itself is, and what it constitutes. In both Stalpaert's map and in the city descriptions, the countryside serves as a framing device that delimits a defined area, thus claiming to represent a discrete entity, one that is whole and complete and capable of being effortlessly packaged in an equally discrete, and portable, decorative, possessable object that is available for purchase.

Thus one might say that the emphasis in official images of the city on completion and wholeness was not only an issue of glossing over or erasing a reality of incompleteness and fragmentation, but also of delimitation and possessing. Completion, delimitation, and possession defined the appearance of the city in official representations, whether textual or visual, in spite of a physical reality that utterly denied those very possibilities on a daily basis. The pictured city was presented as something that was knowable, possessable financially and physically, as well as conceptually. Large and important though Amsterdam was, it is here presented as ultimately knowable and conceivable as a complete entity. The inside and the outside were equally well defined, and as such there could be no confusion as to what the city was and what it included and excluded. For the city government, this representation of the city served to allay very real fears about the protection of the city from outside forces, whether national or international, at a time when the city's fortifications were highly vulnerable, since the very threats from outside necessitated a long period of liminality in a shift between old and new fortifications⁷⁶. But these images also attempted to confront fears about what constituted a citizen and what did not, who belonged and who did not, and encompassing all of the above, the difference between Amsterdammers and everyone else. At a time when the physical boundaries of the city were shifting and evolving on a massive scale, Amsterdam's government implemented an aggressive though subtle campaign of defining and fixing those borders in print.

As I have already discussed, the point at which those borders were fixed was in the future and as yet only physically existed in the very works of art under discussion in this chapter. I would like now to return to the issue of time and futuricity in the official representation of Amsterdam. We have already seen how van der Ulft's engraving of the as-yet-unfinished town hall and Stalpaert's 1662 map of Amsterdam manipulate narrative time to produce a particular understanding of the city. While the 1662 map implies a developmental model of time through its dismissal and consignment of the present to the past, the 1664 map more explicitly pushes a linear developmental model of history through its multiple narratives that tell the same story in a variety of different guises.

⁷⁶ On the history of early modern European fortification, see Martha Pollak, *Cities at War in Early Modern Europe* (New York; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

The multiplication of ways of representing and understanding Amsterdam that we see in the 1664 print made for a more explicit representation of time through its apparent excess of historicization and contextualization of the most current extension of the city. While the 1662 map satisfied itself with a slight differentiation in color between “new” and “old,” and an implicit collapsing of past, present and future into what was essentially a fantastical version of the present status of the city, the 1664 map appears to pay due attention to the development of the city over time. Not only does the print include a long text description and history of Amsterdam, the four smaller maps showing earlier extensions of the city and even the eight representations of Amsterdam’s main public buildings seem to offer context and a sense of development through time of the city. The images of buildings depict a stylistic and historical range of architecture that would have been immediately recognizable to any educated early modern viewer, and particularly one who was from the Dutch Republic. The range of buildings even includes, like the central map, a representation of the future: the image in the upper left-hand corner was taken from Jacob van der Ulft’s engraving (or possibly from the gouache of 1653, also by van der Ulft) of what the as-yet-unbuilt town hall and Nieuwe Kerk tower would look like, as discussed above. **(Figure 1.14)** The version here takes a slightly more distanced viewpoint, and the figures populating the Dam are changed somewhat. Notably, this speculative image of the town hall is integrated into the frame of images depicting extant buildings so fully that only someone familiar with the contemporary appearance of Amsterdam could be expected to note the discrepancy in time. The image’s caption makes no reference to the still only conceptual status of what is represented. The other buildings framing the central map include the Beurs, which is a key example of the “Amsterdam Renaissance” style of architecture that de Keyser was instrumental in developing in the first decades of the seventeenth century.

The multiplicity of images and types of images in this print means that not only diversity, but replication are notable features of the print as a whole. All of the buildings represented in the top and bottom rows of the map reappear numerous times, as I discussed above. The replication of buildings and spaces that occurs in this large print has the curious effect of at once offering stable points (particularly the Oude Kerk, the only structure that is depicted in all five maps [and the sixth smaller map of the city in 1342, in the corner of the map depicting Amsterdam in 1400], and the only structure that therefore is understood to be a part of the urban history of Amsterdam as it is framed in this print) throughout the maps, and thus by extension the history of Amsterdam, and simultaneously highlighting the rapidly changing status and stature of structures, as the physical size of the various buildings literally shrinks in these images, as the overall size of the city increases. Thus, the Oude Kerk stands out clearly as the only tall building in the map of 1400, but in the central map, it is difficult to locate. **(Figures 1.22-1.26)**

Replication allows for comparison of not only relative size, but also of actual appearance. Oddly, the Nieuwe Kerk is represented with little consistency throughout the entire print: while in the image of the Town Hall, it is represented with its huge tower that would never in fact be built, in the image of the Nieuwe Kerk standing alone in profile in the upper right hand corner, it is depicted as it actually appeared in 1664, without the tower. Compounding the confusion, the tower is again depicted in the city profile at the bottom of the central map, and it stands as the highest point in the city. But in the central map itself, the tower is again absent. All of this is to say that while this print appears to make, unlike the 1662 map, explicit references to the parsing out of development and history, the serial aspect of the print actually lends a sense of development that is often contradictory. However, we might also view this as a canny intermixing of the present and the future, giving both equal representational status. To an

outsider, it would be virtually impossible to determine what in fact represented the present physical reality of the church from the information provided by the print. An Amsterdammer, on the other hand, would have been well aware of both the reality and the discrepancy. Nevertheless, the map's insistent imbedding of architectural wonders that did not yet exist within a multiplicity of closed networks that offer an encyclopedic and supposedly complete representation grants them a factual status that transcends the fact of their physical non-existence. The print's explicit rendering of the historical development of Amsterdam through the enframing maps, its careful delineation, separation, and historicization of the stages of that development, contextualizes the other images as present, marking them as at once part of that history and yet very much part of a contemporary physical reality. The inclusion of numerous human figures in contemporary dress in all of the images of buildings makes the present-day status of these representations unmistakable. As in the 1662 map, that present is here understood to encompass what was future, and in the case of the Nieuwe Kerk tower, never to be. The developmental and historicized model that the 1664 print embraces only serves to make more convincing the collapsing of present and future. While the past is explicitly referred to here, it is clearly subordinated to the present and future, and it serves only to contextualize the new.

Official representations of Amsterdam consistently bring what existed only in concept and plan into a sort of public, physical existence that mimicked the public, physical status of an actual building. While in some cases, we might understand this to be an attempt to publicize and garner support for the government's construction plans⁷⁷, we must also consider the ways in which these images posit the future as not simply inevitable and inescapable, but actually already present. These images go to great lengths to seamlessly embed the conceptual structures within detailed renderings of the present physical reality of the city. Their captions downplay or completely ignore the futurity and conceptual status of what they represent by using the distinction between new and old, if any distinction is made at all. The representation of the unbuilt town hall and Nieuwe Kerk tower in the 1664 Stalpaert map, for instance, is captioned only "Town hall, weigh house, and the Amsterdam market, otherwise known as the Dam."⁷⁸ These official images of Amsterdam serve to give structures that existed only in concept a physical status within the public eye, and further embedded that status within the public imaginary by seamlessly intermingling it with a highly flattering representation of Amsterdam's past and present.

While the official representation of Amsterdam took care to flatter the amour propre of the Amsterdam resident, it likewise deployed distancing effects that went hand in hand with its comprehensive and delimited view. The comprehensive and framed representation of the whole thus made Amsterdam knowable and possessable, but at the cost of placing the viewer in an often irreconcilable and alienated position in relation to the city. The impossible bird's eye view employed in the two Stalpaert maps, while by this time an iconic representation of the city, emphatically denied any sort of physical relationship between viewer and viewed. Although it might be argued that this sort of view actually places the viewer in a highly privileged, even divine, position, in relation to the city, it cannot be denied that this comes at the cost of even the illusion of inclusion within this supposedly imminently knowable and possessable city.

⁷⁷ This has been consistently argued in relation to the van der Ulft print, as well as in relation to the 1662 Stalpaert map. Peeters, *Royal Palace of Amsterdam in Paintings*, 41; Boudewijn Bakker et al ed, *Het aanzien van Amsterdam*, 110.

⁷⁸ "STADT-HUYS, WAEGH en MARKT van Amsteldam, anders genaemt den DAM."

Amsterdam description books, too, utilize point of view and perspective to alienate the viewer before allowing the reader within the city itself. The narrative structure of these books ensures that the reader must go pass all of the physical and conceptual spaces that surround and separate Amsterdam from the rest of the world in a range of concentric circles, including politics (the Dutch Republic), history, geography, countryside, suburbs, moats, and finally walls. Knowledge of the city thus requires even a citizen of Amsterdam to come from outside, to divest himself of his identity as Amsterdammer. To be able to know Amsterdam, it is necessary to first be relegated outsider. This alienation effect serves to strip the viewer/reader of preconceptions about any aspect of the city before he is allowed inside the city walls, thereby ensuring that the representation of the city offered by the book can be the comprehensive, the true, the proper version of the city. Alienation is eventually followed by inclusion in the process of reading these books, and that inclusion is certainly made to be flattering, but it comes with the burden of a total representation of the city that does not allow for variation or opinion. The completeness and delimitation offered by the encyclopedic description creates a closed system that must be accepted in total. While the description book has been understood almost exclusively as a flattering image of the self for Amsterdam citizens, its structure ensured that the viewer/reader must first be divested of his own interpretation of Amsterdam before being fed a specific and official version, as version that was clearly meant to entirely replace the viewer's personal or experienced Amsterdam.

The panoramic profile representation of Amsterdam across the Ij river at the bottom of the 1664 central map utilizes a completely different but also distancing view of the city. This image does seem to offer the possibility of bodily inclusion, by placing us on the shore of the river near a group of well-dressed burghers who are getting into a boat. Nevertheless, the view of the city itself is clearly alienated from the viewer, not least because of the exaggeration of the breadth of the Ij. Here, as in the map above, Amsterdam is possessable only optically. Svetlana Alpers' discussion of the Dutch "art of describing" as privileging a passive, non-coercive relationship between viewer and representation is useful to consider here. Alpers considers the distancing effect of the type I have related here to the bird's eye view map of Amsterdam and the profile panorama as perhaps the most characteristic or plain example of the refusal of the Dutch image to appear to pander to the viewer in the way that Italian Renaissance paintings did and the priority of the represented and the representation over the viewer. Both of the images I am discussing here are excellent representation of what Alpers is arguing, but we also need to consider the other side of the image's distancing of the viewer, which is to say its ability to both make something large and unwieldy (a city) into a framed object/icon captured and fixed on paper, and to alienate the viewer from the very thing that image appears to promise possession of. Alpers might argue that that is precisely the point: that Dutch images repulse possession and the privilege of the viewer. However, it is important to keep in mind just how little a bird's eye view map, for instance, would have been considered a momentary capture of a world seen or experienced. The distancing of the viewer that is intrinsic to Alpers' idea of the Dutch image must also be considered in its more sinister garb, as alienation and exclusion.

De Certeau's description of a person viewing New York City from the top of the World Trade Center is apropos to this discussion: "His elevation transfigures him into a voyeur. It puts him at a distance. It transforms the bewitching world by which one was 'possessed' into a text that lies before one's eyes. It allows one to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a god. The exaltation of a scopic and Gnostic drive: the fiction of knowledge is related to this lust to be

a viewpoint and nothing more.”⁷⁹ Here, de Certeau describes the flattering and appealing nature of the God’s eye view, while acknowledging its fictionality, and the fact that the feeling of omnipotence or possession produced by this seemingly privileged view is simply the fulfillment of a desire to possess through an encompassing view that preexisted the means of satisfying that desire. De Certeau argues that while the panoramic view of a city flatters the viewer, it necessitates a suspension of disbelief that actually alienates the viewer from the city which he believes he can know and possess through what is in fact only a “ ‘theoretical’ (that is, visual) simulacrum, in short a picture.”⁸⁰ In a period before the bird’s eye view was actually possible, this alienation between the totalizing image of the city and the actual experience of the city would have been much more extreme. The combination created by these official images of the flattering and the alienating was a potent mix that allowed the government to give its citizens an appealing sense of possession and involvement within the city, while ensuring that those same citizens were more inclined to accept the version of Amsterdam that the government saw fit to promote.

Medium: Print and Architecture, Coercion and Monumentalism

The role of print in the early modern period is generally associated with the egalitarian and the popular.⁸¹ The basic facts of the production of books and prints with a printing press, in addition to the history of the press itself, make it quite clear why this might be the case. Particularly in the Dutch Republic, print might be expected to have played an important role in the dissemination of culture, thought, and politics to a broad audience. The vital importance of the printing press to the Protestant Reformation⁸², to widespread literacy⁸³, and to the broadening and strengthening of the middle class⁸⁴ suggests that it would hold a special place within Dutch culture⁸⁵. Indeed, Amsterdam in particular was a highly important center during the seventeenth century for the publication of books, including highly controversial and often illegal ones, for a domestic as well as international audience.⁸⁶ Amsterdam was a world-renowned producer of

⁷⁹ De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 92.

⁸⁰ De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 93.

⁸¹ The classic work is Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (New York; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). Eisenstein’s understanding of the advent of print as directly implicated in virtually all of the major revolutions of the sixteenth century has been widely influential, and print’s hugely important role in the development of modern society is usually taken for granted. David McKitterick offers an alternative view, arguing that both the technical and social changes now associated with print actually occurred much more slowly and only fully took hold in the nineteenth century. David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450-1830* (New York; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁸² J.D. Fudge, *Commerce and Print in the Early Reformation* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007)

⁸³ For instance, Marshall McLuhan, *Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967); Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

⁸⁴ Alain Boreau ed., *The Culture of Print: Power and the Uses of Print in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

⁸⁵ The role of print in advertising Dutch political dissident views during and after the Revolt has dominated the discussion of the politicized print in the Dutch Republic. See for instance: Alisdair Duke, “Posters, Pamphlets and Prints: The ways and means of disseminating dissident opinions on the eve of the Dutch Revolt,” *Dutch Crossing* 27.1 (Summer 2003), 23-44; Andrew Sawyer, “Medium and Message: Political Prints in the Dutch Republic, 1569-1632,” in *Public Opinion and Changing Identities in the Early Modern Netherlands*, ed. Judith Pollman and Andrew Spicer (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), 163-187.

⁸⁶ For a survey of printing and publishing in Amsterdam, see Paul Hoftijzer, “Metropolis of print: the Amsterdam book trade in the seventeenth century,” in *Urban Achievement in Early Modern Europe: Golden Ages in Antwerp*,

beautiful and accurate maps of every corner of the known world.⁸⁷ Both the indisputably crucial role played by print in popular revolution and in the development of the middle class, as well as the basic aspects of its material form that continued to make print by far the most effective tool for the dissemination of information by a person or group with relatively little means and little access to consolidated power, have made print difficult to detach from the popular and non-official context. Scholarship in both art history and book studies has consistently touted print's subversive, at times revolutionary and radical, uses.

However, if the print could be a powerful tool of the officially disenfranchised, it might of course be an equally powerful tool for the elite or the government itself. The usage of printed media by the government or by other figures of authority has garnered far less attention in scholarship than its usage by those without such access to power or authority.⁸⁸ As this chapter has argued, the Amsterdam city government, composed of the richest and most powerful men in the entire Dutch Republic, gave print an important, if unusual, role within its campaign to reconfigure or resignify the city. The very qualities that make print such a vital tool for the dissemination of the popular made it an appealing and effective tool for the government's own concerns: print was inexpensive, highly reproducible, easy to circulate, relatively easy and quick to produce, and had a broad audience that cut across classes. It is my contention here that it was the contemporary association of print with the popular, in fact, that made this medium appealing to the government. That is to say, Amsterdam's government recognized that its role was technically quite limited, and that its rule depended to a certain extent on the orderliness and good behavior of its citizens. Just as the beautiful and expensive new canals could only retain their status as elite and desirable if the regulations controlling behavior, business, and construction were strictly followed, the rest of the city could swiftly collapse into chaos if movement throughout and thus the understanding of the city was itself not defined and followed in a particular manner.

Many of the qualities I discussed in this chapter's third section as characterizing the official representation of the city are the very qualities that the formal and material qualities of the print could more successfully produce than other media. The graphic quality of the engraving in particular was ideally suited to producing the line-driven and geometrically-inclined forms of the maps that molded the city into symmetrical, tidy, and enclosed spaces. The graphic form was often brought to the brink of abstraction, particularly, of course, in the maps, and in doing so, print allowed for both clarity of form and the alienation of the body of the viewer. It likewise contributed to the viewer's sense of the image as objectively conveying large amounts of information with minimal intervention by interested parties. As I discussed above, the majority of the printed material distributed by or with the implicit support of Amsterdam's government tended towards informational rather than explicitly regulatory or polemical material.

If print made it possible for the pictured city to enter the homes and personal ownership of ordinary Amsterdam citizens, architecture and urbanism, as controlled by Amsterdam's governing powers, gave the pictured city a hold within the physical space of the city. Nevertheless, we must keep in mind that the distinction between how print and architecture functioned is largely an issue of material and medium, not necessarily of reality status. Each

Amsterdam and London, ed. Patrick O'Brien et al. (New York; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 249-263.

⁸⁷ Paul van den Brink and Jan Werner eds., *Gesneden en gedrukt in de Kaverstraat: De kaarten- en atlassen drukkerij in Amsterdam tot in de 19e eeuw* (Utrecht: H&S, HES Uitgevers, 1989).

⁸⁸ An important exception is San Juan's 2001 *Rome: A City Out of Print*.

medium allowed the Amsterdam government to represent and recreate the city as they wanted it to be understood in different ways, but ultimately, both print and architecture were utilized to formulate the same idea of the city, as complete, modern, accessible and knowable. While print utilized the engraved line, implied narrative or linear time, and its relatively small and possessable format, Amsterdam public architecture and urban space enveloped the citizen within a model of urban life that disregarded dissent and conflict, and cloaked even quite recent history in a revived, pristine, and homogenous version of ancient Roman splendor.

It is also important to note here that again, while architecture and urban development had a concrete position within the physical fabric of the city, and print remained staunchly in the arena of representation, that architecture and print were profoundly intertwined, and continually intervened within both the physical and mental status of each other. New architecture clearly cropped up repeatedly in official Amsterdam print imagery and text, and indeed was, as this chapter has shown, its primary and almost exclusive subject matter. But actual architectural construction and design must also be understood in terms of the influence brought to bear upon it by the way in which the city was represented in print. As we have already seen, architecture cropped up first as representation in print, often long before coming into physical existence within the city itself. There is a well-known history of the representation of non-existent or heavily manipulated architecture or urban scenes. The most famous examples come from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, most notably Piranesi. However, the images I have discussed here represent construction that was actually planned, whereas the great majority of prints and paintings that show non-existent architecture are clearly fantastical, and do not represent anything that was ever planned or extant.⁸⁹ We must therefore keep in mind the strangeness and complexity of the relationship between the persistent representation of not-yet completed or built structures, and the physical structures themselves. The fact that many of the most important physical structures built in the second half of the seventeenth century in Amsterdam existed first and for quite a long time in print, before ever obtaining a complete physical existence. The strangeness is exacerbated again by the status of these representations as being far from fantastical; the fact that the prints were produced at the behest of the same governing body that obtained the plans for and oversaw the building of the physical structures meant that the relationship between representation and actual structure was extremely close.

What is the effect of the fact that many buildings and structures in Amsterdam existed in print long before they were complete in physical form? On the one hand, this allowed the physical buildings to exist in the imaginary as completed long before they were a physical fact. The messy reality of these buildings as being under construction for decades could be somewhat alleviated by the clear understanding of and familiarity with the intended appearance of these structures long before that appearance could become a physical reality. On the other hand, the tangible gap between representation and physical reality made for a strange and even laughable disjunction between how citizens were expected to experience the city and daily experience itself, exacerbated by the fact that, as we have seen, the government sought to elide the distinction between plan and reality in printed representations themselves. The lapse in time between representation and physical structure or presence within the city created an odd situation in which a building or space could become familiar and a part of the fabric of the city long before it was completed, or even begun in some instances. We need to recognize, therefore, an unusually strong and at times symbiotic and at other times combative relationship between

⁸⁹ Jörg Garms, "Architectural Painting: Fantasy and Caprice," in *The Triumph of the Baroque: Architecture in Europe 1600-1750*, ed. Henry A. Millon (New York: Rizzoli, 1999).

printed representation and architecture within the framework of official, governmental production.

What effect did this have on the consumption of both print and the space and structures of the city itself? Clearly, the government believed that the two vastly different media could reinforce and stand in powerfully for one another. As I have argued throughout this chapter, Amsterdam's leaders emphasized an image of the city as complete and homogenous. The practical realities of large-scale construction made such an image impossible to realize in the realm of the physical city, and therefore, the government relied increasingly upon beautiful printed representations that appealed to civic pride with a representation of the city as modern and complete, a fantasy of Amsterdam as no longer under construction, and perfectly planned and realized.

And yet it would seem that precisely those qualities of the actual physical space of the city that were emphasized in the construction of the city during the second half of the seventeenth century were most difficult to convey in a medium like print. Indeed, urbanism during this period in Amsterdam emphasized monumentality, materiality, and the experience of massive space and emptiness. Certainly print was able to capture all of these characteristics to a certain extent, but it was the architecture of the physical city that of course bore the greatest responsibility for imprinting a new experience of Amsterdam as monumental and physically impressive upon its residents and visitors. Control over architecture and other public urban construction was of course one of the most important and influential tools at the disposal of Amsterdam's governing bodies, and as I have hinted at, they lost no time in periods of political strife or controversy to wield the power of construction to serve their needs. The ability to manipulate not only architecture but space itself within the city, and even the definition of what constituted the physical borders of the city, is a power that it would be difficult to overstate.

Historical Background to the Pictured City

At this point, I would like to briefly consider some of the possible political, cultural, and economic reasons behind the making of the pictured city. As I have argued, the pictured city began to be constructed during the 1630s and grew significantly around mid century. During the 1630s, Amsterdam's leaders began what must be considered a public building campaign (see section two) that included the construction or remodeling of the homes of numerous public institutions, generally in what is called the Dutch Classicist style. During the 1630s, Amsterdam found itself increasingly at odds with the House of Orange. Stadhouder Frederick Henry, son of William the Silent, was an extremely popular leader amongst not only the nobility, but also the working class, and the disenfranchised in general.⁹⁰ Frederick Henry, as the symbolic leader of the Northern Provinces, but in reality technically only an elected leader of the Northern Netherlands' military, had taken his popularity and military successes as an impetus to more and more overt attempts at obtaining dynastic rights for his family⁹¹. This made the House of Orange in many ways Amsterdam's greatest enemy, as the war had likewise increased the importance and wealth of the city to the point where it was almost single-handedly financing the war against Spain. In the face of a real threat posed not simply from without but also from within, Amsterdam suddenly took on a series of high profile building projects that were clearly meant to

⁹⁰ Jan Joseph Poelhekke, *Frederik Hendrik, Prins van Oranje: een biografisch drieluik* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1978), 130-132.

⁹¹ Herbert Rowen, *The Princes of Orange: The Stadholders in the Dutch Republic* (New York; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 66-67, 71.

be concrete evidence of the power, wealth, and public role played by Amsterdam's governing bodies.⁹² I argued above that the Town Hall was probably a direct response to the overt dynastic message of the Oranjezaal of the Huis ten Bosch in The Hague, completed by Frederick Henry's widow Amalia van Solms, only a year or so before the building of the Town Hall in Amsterdam. Amsterdam was by far the most powerful city in not only the province of Holland, but in the entire Republic, despite the fact that it was technically only one city amongst many. The city's wealth meant that it wielded far more power in the States General than all of the other provinces put together.⁹³ However, in the public imagination, the Prince of Orange continued to hold pride of place, and if the House of Orange were to succeed in gaining a hereditary claim to the Stadhoudership in all of the Provinces, Amsterdam's power would have been greatly diminished, in spite of its wealth. It was thus of the utmost importance that Amsterdam present a powerful façade to the Northern Netherlands, as well as the rest of the world. The ending of the Eighty Years' War in 1648 was bitterly fought by the House of Orange, which saw the unification of the Northern and Southern Netherlands as the only proper end to the war, as it was that unification that would have gained an enormous amount of acclaim for the Oranges, traditionally the military leaders of the Netherlands.⁹⁴

Furthermore, it was during the second half of the seventeenth century that the Regent class, from which virtually all members of Amsterdam's government came, underwent major changes. The second half of the century saw the decline of the Regent class, as they left urban mercantile business in favor of real estate interests in the countryside, distancing themselves ever more from the middle class.⁹⁵ As the Regents' power declined, their self-promoting representation of Amsterdam as an astonishingly modern, controlled, and homogenous city became more important. The image they created of Amsterdam as the earliest example of a monumental centrally-planned urban space, popularized by Lewis Mumford, and largely accepted throughout the twentieth century, has been revealed to be little more than a pleasing fiction⁹⁶, undoubtedly deliberately created by the images I have discussed in this chapter. While the canal belt was probably the project over which the city had the most control, even this project was undermined at every turn by speculators and other private citizens who managed to get around virtually every one of the government's numerous and to this point largely unheard of restrictions on private usage of the land set aside for the canal belt.⁹⁷

The city also had to contend with nearly constant attack from Great Britain and France during the second half of the century as well. The Dutch Republic's wealth and power could not go unchecked by other European powers, and as Amsterdam held the Republic's purse strings, it was likewise Amsterdam that bore the brunt of the attacks and the responsibility for the outcome of the wars. The prints distributed at the behest of the government thus needed to strive hard to represent Amsterdam as well protected, wealthy, and powerful.

The Pictured City Versus the Physical City

I have devoted this chapter largely to a discussion of what I term the "pictured city," and the physical city of Amsterdam plays virtually no role, except as a foil to the pictured city.

⁹² 't Hart, "The glorious city," 137.

⁹³ Kistemaker, *Amsterdam*, 52-53.

⁹⁴ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 539-542.

⁹⁵ Jan de Vries, *The Dutch Rural Economy in the Golden Age, 1500-1700* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 532-536.

⁹⁶ Taverne, *In 't Land van de Beloofte*, 112-116.

⁹⁷ Taverne, *In 't Land van de Beloofte*, 166.

While this might seem simply appropriate to an art historical project, I have attempted here to argue that the pictured city was not simply a representation of the physical city of Amsterdam, but was an alternative reality itself. In part, we can see this from the way in which the makers of the pictured city presented it in such a way as to undermine or at least elide the distinctions between representation and physical reality. However, I would now like to probe the extent to which the pictured city existed outside of representation and could have taken on a reality status beyond the intentions of its makers.

The pictured city was by far the most common version of the city that reached people outside of Amsterdam itself. For those who had no access to the physical city, such as foreigners or even people living in the Dutch Republic but outside of Amsterdam, print and printed text were essentially the only source of information about the city, and it was the images and texts that were in one way or another directly connected to Amsterdam's government that were most widely distributed.⁹⁸ Because these images tend not to make clear reference to the fact that much of what is represented did not in fact physically exist yet, there was no direct way in which someone unfamiliar with the complexities of Amsterdam construction could have understood what was physically real and what was simply projected or created. In spite of the city government's apparent desire to publicize their plans for the physical remaking of Amsterdam, their output makes virtually no direct reference to the fact of construction, and rather, as we have seen, emphasizes a potentially misleading commingling of physical fact and fiction. It must therefore be assumed that for people unable to visit Amsterdam, the pictured city was indeed the physical, the true city. In this way, representation did indeed replace physical reality and took on a reality status that by necessity far outweighed what we might now call the "actual" appearance of the city.

Part of the success of this group of works at replacing physical reality with representation must be seen to derive from their media and mode. There has been an increasing interest in the last few decades in the early modern understanding of certain types of prints, and how they might function within, in particular, the context of scientific study.⁹⁹ These studies have emphasized the fact that prints could often stand in for physical specimens. For instance, Claudia Swan has argued that engravings of plants were given a similar epistemological status within collections with actual plant specimens themselves, and engravings were often included in collections in lieu of specimens that were either too expensive or otherwise impossible to possess in physical reality.¹⁰⁰ The same has been argued for representations of animals and even famous artworks. There has been little study of the role of maps or representations of cities in the same context, probably because there was never any question of possessing the physical specimens that are so represented. However, given that representations of geographic locations were also important parts of encyclopedic or otherwise scientific early modern collections, it is highly probable that they were understood in similar ways to representations of single specimens as stand-ins for a crucial part of the world that was otherwise impossible to include within the

⁹⁸ Deirdre Carasso, "Kroniek van het Amsterdamse stadsporet 1540-1740," *Het aanzien van Amsterdam*, ed. Boudewijn Bakker et al. (Bussum; Amsterdam: Thoth; Stadsarchief, 2007), 51-52.

⁹⁹ Peter Parshall, "Imago Contrafacta: Images and Facts in the Northern Renaissance," *Art History* 16.4 (1993), 554-579; Christopher Wood, "'Curious pictures' and the art of description," *Word & Image* 11.4 (Oct.-Dec. 1995), 332-352; Susan Dackerman, "Introduction: Prints as Instruments," in *Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Susan Dackerman (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Art Museums; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 19-35.

¹⁰⁰ Claudia Swan, "*Ad Vivum, Naer Het Leven*, from the Life: Defining a Mode of Representation," *Word & Image* 11.4 (Oct.-Dec. 1995), 369.

collection. This is further suggested by the non-narrative, abstracted, and grid-like format emphasized in all of the representation of the city distributed by the government. If we compare images published at the behest of the government with those distributed independently, we can see a marked favoring in the independent prints for narrative and incidental detail that are totally absent from the “official” representations. Even Visscher’s colorful and eclectic 1664 map of Amsterdam actually totally lacks narrative or incidental details. The human figures that are included are either purely allegorical, or stand in for virtuous and industrious behavior appropriate to the location, rather than incidental representations of citizens going about their business. The narrative elements in the city description books likewise shun the incidental in favor of a recounting of specific historical events or biographies of well-known residents. The official images deliberately turn away from details or qualities that would make them appear narrative or specific, in favor of the generalized and abstracted, just as prints of animals and plant specimens did in the early modern period. Like the prints of animals and plants, the official images of Amsterdam favor flattened or voided backgrounds and views of the object at hand that de-emphasize specificity and emphasize sameness between specimens, thereby removing as many different factors as possible to allow for comparison. All of this is to argue that the pictured city, though it existed only in printed representation, was likely understood as equal in reality status to the physical city.

The inconsistencies within even a single print, such as the 1664 Visscher map, in the representation of one building suggests the extent to which even the maker of the image seems to have confused or collapsed physical reality with future plan or representation. This brings up the question of the extent to which and in what capacities the pictured city might have taken on a reality status for Amsterdammers themselves. In many recent projects about print culture in other European cities, the argument has been that indeed, representation in print clearly was intended to and did in fact affect the relationship between citizen and actual city.¹⁰¹

There can be little question that, in the case of the images under discussion here, the pictured city was an idealized version of the city, or perhaps more correctly, a physical manifestation of an idealized *concept* of Amsterdam, and as such was meant to take on such a reality status. Whether we assume that that reality status was simply one of a desired or intended future, or, more troublingly, a replacement for the present itself, it is clear that the intention behind these images was the elision of the present physical reality of the city in favor of a controlled and cleaned up version. The image of the city presented by the city fathers was highly gratifying to the *amour propre* of the Amsterdammer, as it was meant to be, and in this sense, it must have been difficult to resist understanding the city in this flattering light. However, as the rest of this dissertation will argue, many residents of the city were neither convinced nor pleased by this version of the city, and produced their own representations of the city that implicitly undermined or denied the claim of the pictured city to any sort of privileged status as real or even favorable.

I would like to end by pointing out that the pictured city has been by far the most successful at replacing physical reality in both the popular imagination and perhaps more surprisingly in the scholarly mind from the nineteenth century to the present. The vision of Amsterdam created by the government has been accepted in its entirety by many writers on Amsterdam and the Dutch Republic during the Golden Age. Mumford was probably the most

¹⁰¹ San Juan, *Rome*; Bronwen Wilson, *The World in Venice: Print, the City and Early Modern Identity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); Joseph Monteyne, *The Printed Image in Early Modern London: Urban Space, Visual Representation, and Social Exchange* (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007).

influential progenitor of the idea of Amsterdam as representing one of the earliest instances of centralized city planning in Europe.¹⁰² In the “Commercial Expansion and Urban Dissolution” chapter of his famous 1961 *The City in History*, Mumford included a section called “Amsterdam’s Exemplary Contrast.” This title alone provides ample evidence of Mumford’s stance on seventeenth-century Amsterdam, a city whose history of development as he understood it exemplified an ideal combination of organic growth, cooperative decision-making, and, interestingly, the subordination of economic needs to community. Mumford uses Amsterdam, a city he refers to as “capitalism’s one outstanding urban achievement,”¹⁰³ as the antitype to early modern London, which is characterized for him as a dreadful example of the ills of urban sprawl and economic interests prevailing over social concerns. Writing about the development of Dutch cities in the late sixteenth century, he writes: “Within this system of collective action and orderly restraint, the dynamic forces of capitalism operated, almost in spite of themselves, toward a public end. Amsterdam for this reason might be taken as a striking example of the value of a mixed economy, in which public and private enterprise complement each other.”¹⁰⁴ Arguing that the pleasingly symmetrical and functional canal belt began to “reveal” itself throughout the course of the first half of the seventeenth century, Mumford temptingly implies that the city’s eventual form was always imminent, simply waiting for the appropriate moment and the gently guiding hand of city planners to emerge. What he refers to, seemingly *su generis*, as the “Plan of the Three Canals,” was, through the hand of Daniel Stalpaert, “translated...from an image on paper to a many-dimensional social reality.”¹⁰⁵ He goes on to write that, “the order created by the Plan of the Three Canals remained in advance of any other urban planning, taken as a whole, for three centuries.”¹⁰⁶

Continually using the terminology of unity, order, and plan, Mumford was perhaps the single most influential figure in creating the idea that persists today of Amsterdam as a model of very early city planning. Under the heading “Organic Planning,” Mumford illustrates his claims about Amsterdam with four early modern maps of the progressive stages of Amsterdam’s development from to the 1660 expansion. (**Figure 1.27**) Notably, the last image, representing the final version of the city’s canals, is none other than Daniel Stalpaert’s 1662 map.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² Lewis Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, Its Prospects* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1961), 444.

¹⁰³ Mumford, *The City in History*, 439.

¹⁰⁴ Mumford, *The City in History*, 440.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 442.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 443.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Graphic Section III, Plate 36 (between pages 318 and 319).

Chapter 2

“On the Town hall to Be”: Subversive Memory and Ambivalent Narratives at the Amsterdam Town Hall

On the morning of July 7, 1652, the people of Amsterdam woke to a city center in ruins. Ashes, burnt government documents, gutted buildings, and the smell of smoke filled what the day before had been the crowded central square of Amsterdam. At two o'clock in the morning, the dilapidated fifteenth-century town hall had burned down, witnessed by hundreds of gawking spectators. Although the new Amsterdam Town hall had already been under construction for almost four years by the time the old building was destroyed, in the minds of those who saw it, this eighth wonder of the world was understood to have been born out of the ashes of its medieval predecessor. The other side of this story of acts of nature and God was the controversial and deliberate demolition of a large portion of the city center to make way for the new town hall. In fact, the old town hall was in the process of being demolished when it was destroyed by fire. Thus, the story of Jacob van Campen's massive Amsterdam Town hall effectively begins with a spectacle of mutilation and the loss of civic history and memory, through the destruction of long-standing buildings, the organic layout of the urban space, and the city's archive of official papers documenting the oftentimes tedious minutiae of Amsterdam's past.

This narrative of Amsterdam's new Town hall could not be further from its characterization in the previous chapter. As designed by Jacob van Campen to the specifications of the city council, the new Town hall was meant to be a perfect microcosm of the world, complete with a repetitive and unsubtle allegorical program that would leave no room for misinterpretation, or any form of interpretation at all. While its central hall was to serve as a public space for Amsterdam citizens, it was not intended to include the public in its construction of meaning; rather, the presence of the public simply completed the Citizens' Hall's iconography, placing man-as-microcosm at the center of a building-as-microcosm. The Town hall was the most obviously artificial form of what I argued in the previous chapter to be a consistent program on the part of the city government of creating a version of the city that could stand in for physical reality. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that this building became perhaps the most contested subject in Dutch seventeenth-century representation. It was the overdetermined nature of the Town hall that made it so vulnerable to reinterpretation once it was appropriated by its public. As I will discuss in this chapter, the Town hall's intricate iconography was attacked even before specific plans for the building had been solicited. It thus provides a key example of the vulnerability of the city government's propagandistic program of commissioning art to alternative readings.

The destruction of the old town hall by fire was one of the most popular subjects of paintings and prints in Amsterdam during the period of the building of the new Town hall. The proliferation of images of the old and new town halls began immediately after the fire, and the visual and literary history of the new building was, from the beginning, dominated by the narrative of the destruction of the old one. To frame the construction of the new Town hall in relation to the fire is to enact another sort of devastation on the building, an effective (subtle and inadvertent though it may be) form of remuneration for the official loss of communal history and memory. For such an authoritatively and systematically controlled program as that designed by Jacob van Campen and the powerful Amsterdam burgomasters to be so susceptible to alternative, unofficial narratives suggests a widespread refusal of officially sanctioned and implemented

structures of communal civic identity, in favor of messier, more popular forms of collective memory.

In most modern accounts of the new Town hall, the building's prehistory is duly noted: the fire in the old town hall is briefly mentioned as a rather vague starting point for the new building, confusingly implying either that the destruction of the old town hall was the impetus for the building of the new, or that it in fact had very little to do with the later building at all. In either case, neither the controversies surrounding the project, nor the effect that this history had on the memories that Amsterdammers must have brought with them when they looked at the new Town hall, has been given adequate attention. While chapter one discussed how the city councilors intended the Town hall to be seen and understood, this chapter considers the ways in which it was actually interpreted by its public, insofar as we can tell from contemporary representations of the building. Here I will address the interplay between space, memory, and spectator around the new Amsterdam town hall, now the Royal Palace, considering the new town hall in relation to its prehistory and the representation of that history in contemporary images in order to regain a sense of how the building entered into the cultural imagination in ways that were entirely outside of, and often antagonistic to, the intentions of its planners. I argue that the building's identity, which in turn became a sign for the identity of the city of Amsterdam, was formed not only through the complicated program organized and designed by Jacob van Campen, but also in relation to the building's repeated appropriation by viewers into public narratives of destruction, loss, and novelty, even before its construction began. No public monument on this scale could ever succeed at speaking in an unceasingly unequivocal manner to its audience, and even before ground was broken on this project, alternative narratives had already begun to fracture the monolithic face of the proposed town hall, and to complicate the building's official rhetoric of peace, prosperity, and absolute harmony.

The triumphant yet grimly official and intentionally intimidating façade of the new town hall was itself an attempt to obliterate certain versions of the past and replace them with a newer, tidier, and unambiguous statement of Amsterdam's might, wealth, and civic values as deriving from clearly delineated classical and biblical precedents. But this building, despite the claims made for it by its designers, did not appear miraculously in the midst of a historical void. It was to be built on the same spot where the center of Amsterdam's city government had stood for centuries: on the Dam, the town square in the center of the city, next to the imposing Nieuwe Kerk. In January of 1639, almost a decade before the specific details of the new building were even considered, the Amsterdam town council had begun to discuss the need for a new town hall. The council decreed that "as the town hall is relatively dilapidated in many places, and to such an extent that it is feared that at some time or another an accident might occur, one could well imagine that rather than [repairing] the old building we make a new one."¹⁰⁸ Since the building as it stood in 1639 was a mishmash of structural elements dating from as far back as the early fifteenth century, when the town hall was initially built, this was by no means a surprising conclusion to reach.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, it was widely complained that the building was far too

¹⁰⁸ "...alzoohet stadthuys vrij wat bouwvalligh is tot veele plaetsen, zulx datter t'eenen of t'anderen tyde eenigh ongeluck uyt gevreesd worden te zullen ontstaan, off men oock zoude konnen goet vinden, in plaets van 't selve een nieuw te doen maecken..." Gemeentearchief Amsterdam, Resolutiën der Vroedschap, 28 Januar 1639, fol. 229. Quoted and translated in: Eymert-Jan Goosens, "Monuments to Peace in the Netherlands," in *1648: War and Peace in Europe*, vol. 1, ed. Klauss Bussmann and Heinz Schilling (Münster: Westfälisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Münster, 1998), 630, f. 5.

¹⁰⁹ On the history of the old town hall and its development between the early 1400s and 1652, see: Utrecht, *Catalogue Raisonné of the works by Pieter Jansz. Saenredam* (Utrecht: Centraal Museum, 1961), 50-52.

cramped and lacked enough rooms to accommodate all of the various functions of the city government.¹¹⁰

The demolition of the old town hall was thus expected for at least thirteen years before the building burned down early on July 7, 1652. The planned demolition of the old town hall was just one part of the larger destruction of the entire western side of the Dam facing the Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal that was required to make room for the huge new building, and to allow for a wider space in front of the town hall so that it could be properly viewed from the Dam. **(Figures 1, 2)** On January 20, 1648, the first of the 13,659 twelve meter-long piles that were required to support Van Campen's building were sunk into the marshy bed upon which Amsterdam was built¹¹¹, and on the twenty-ninth of that October, the building's cornerstone was laid at the site.

Because the condemned town hall was still the functioning center of the city government while the new building was being planned and partially built, it was not scheduled for destruction until some time after the rest of the western end of the Dam had been leveled. The new town hall had thus already been under construction for nearly five years by the time the old building burned down in 1652. The cause of the fire was unknown, although it was suspected by many to be the work of arsonists, and the burgomasters, fearful of looting, called out the guard to protect the city.¹¹² It was noted that although the flames of the fire were blown by the wind towards the new building's scaffolding, it was left untouched and there were no casualties.¹¹³ The destruction of the old town hall did not have any concrete effect on the construction of the new building, besides making the job of the demolitionists somewhat swifter.

The new town hall was officially inaugurated with much pomp and circumstance on the twenty-ninth of July, 1655. After hearing a sermon at the Nieuwe Kerk about the rededication of the Temple of Jerusalem, the entire city government processed in hierarchical order out of the church and into the town hall, and speeches, well-wishing, feasts, and copious imbibing of wine followed.¹¹⁴ Despite all of the official celebratory activities, the entire second story of the two-story town hall was still unfinished¹¹⁵, and the entire building was still under scaffolding. Construction on the building would not, in fact, be completed for another ten years, and Van Campen's decorative program was finished only in 1705, some fifty-seven years after he designed the building and its program.¹¹⁶

This chapter will not venture inside the town hall, nor does it seek to provide a comprehensive analysis of the building's exterior program. This chapter is not about the Amsterdam town hall. Or rather, it is not about the town hall as a physical, historical structure, but about the multiple town halls and the many narratives of the town hall that the actual building and its history inspired. In largely avoiding the specifics of the building's design, this study is an apparently perverse addition to the discussion of the Amsterdam town hall. It is a testament to the careful planning and complex iconography that Jacob van Campen created in tandem with the city council that all of the literature on the new town hall has focused

¹¹⁰ Renee Kistemaker and Roelof van Gelder, *Amsterdam: The Golden Age 1275-1795*, trans. Paul Foulkes (NY: Abbeville Press, 1983), 100.

¹¹¹ Kraaij, "Royal Palace," 12.

¹¹² Gary Schwartz, *The Dutch World of Painting* (Maarsse: Uitgeverij Gary Schwartz, 1986), 40.

¹¹³ Willem Frijhoff and Maarten Prak, eds., *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: SUN, 2004), 297.

¹¹⁴ The detailed description of these events was recorded by Bontemantel in the minutes of the city council. It is quoted and translated in Fremantle, *The Baroque Town Hall of Amsterdam*, 1-2.

¹¹⁵ Kistemaker and Van Gelder, *Amsterdam*, 100.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

exclusively on the complicated history of the construction of the building, and the details of Jacob van Campen's architectural and decorative program. Because that program is so extensive and rich, scholars have been absorbed in making sense of the numerous details of the design.¹¹⁷ The city council was extremely successful at controlling the reception of the new town hall, to the extent that it continues today to be read precisely as they had intended.

I suggest that only by moving away from an automatic acceptance of the primacy of the building's official iconographic program in the formation of its meaning for and effect on its viewers can we begin to acknowledge and study the ways in which the town hall was actually experienced by its visitors, and how it entered into the imaginations and lives of the Amsterdammers for whom the building was both an anomalous and a habitual presence.

Narratives of Destruction

The history of the seventeenth-century Amsterdam town hall does not begin with the ceremonial placing of its cornerstone in 1648, nor with the laying of its foundation, or, for that matter, with any act of building at all. As with all large-scale urban planning projects, this one began with destruction; namely, the demolition of an entire section of densely-massed buildings on the west side of the Dam. In two maps of the city of Amsterdam by Balthazar Florisz, the first dating from 1625, the second from 1657, the dramatic destruction that took place on the Dam is both illustrated and reenacted: one can imagine the engraver physically removing the section of the plate illustrating the crowded group of buildings on the side of the Dam bordering the Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal, and replacing it with a much emptier Dam dominated by the new building. (**Figures 2.1 & 2.2**) Despite the great pride with which Amsterdammers came to view their new town hall, the plan met with resistance and controversy when it was proposed¹¹⁸, and the financial drain that this huge project entailed continued to be a problem long after the building itself had been completed, leaving many parts of the decorative program unfinished to this day.¹¹⁹

That Amsterdammers were, from the beginning, highly sensitive to the troubling ways in which the building be more than a straightforward expression of local pride is suggested by a surprisingly prescient poem by the satirical poet Mattheus Gansneb Tegnagel. When the basic outlines of the proposed building became public in 1640, Tegnagel composed "On the Town hall to Be," in which he described the project as an exercise in hubris on the part of the arrogant burgomasters: "Wealth and art, master and servant/Together build a Temple to God-given

¹¹⁷ Fremantle focuses on the architecture and the sculptural elements, while Buchbinder-Green's dissertation was an attempt to fill in the blanks left by Fremantle's deliberate exclusion of a discussion of the painted decoration from her study. Fremantle, *The Baroque Town Hall of Amsterdam*; Barbara Green-Buchbinder, "The Painted Decoration of the Town Hall of Amsterdam," dissertation (Northwestern University, 1974). Authors of shorter studies have focused largely on the peace and civic iconography of the program, and the political reasons on the part of the burgomasters for choosing such iconography. For instance, Goossens, *Treasure Wrought by Chisel and Brush* and "Monuments to Peace in the Netherlands"; Marloes Huiskamp, "De Tachtigjarige oorlog en de Vrede van Munster," *Zeventiende Eeuw* vol. 13, no. 1 (1997), 335-46; Jan Baptist Bedaux, "In Search for Simplicity," in *Polyanthea*, ed. Karl-Ludwig Selig (The Hague: Van der Heijden, 1993), 37-41.

¹¹⁸ Goossens, *Treasure Wrought by Chisel and Brush*, 9.

¹¹⁹ Among the planned decorative elements that were never completed were the statues of the eight cardinal directions that were meant to decorate the cupola, the infamous Batavian painting series in the galleries of the Burgerzaal, the triptych painting of the Last Judgment in the Vierschaar, and the paintings in the arches in Burgerzaal's galleries.

right.”¹²⁰ Tegnagel’s anticipation of Jacob van Campen’s town hall and its intended status as the new Temple of Solomon is not as accidental as it may appear. Long before Jacob van Campen had begun the design that would eventually be built on the Dam, Tegnagel, and presumably others, had grasped that the new building would be an expression of civic might and authority. Tegnagel’s poem would be completely reversed by Vondel’s official dedicatory poem on the new town hall, in which he describes the imposing new appearance of the Dam as a reflection of collective civic glory by comparing it favorably to the most celebrated foreign and classical examples of comparable public spaces:

An undeniable symbol / Of majesty and power, illustrious to see / The Dam does not yield before St. Mark’s Square / Or even the Field of Mars, so famous among the ancients, / Who saw Rome in its power and at the height of its splendor, / When Caesar’s successor, Augustus, in complete peace / Rode up the sacred capitol in his triumph.¹²¹

While Tegnagel’s intent is supposedly satirical, his tone is by no means trivial: he turns on its head the apparently benign desire on the part of the burgomasters to build a structure that would declare Amsterdam’s financial, cultural, and political might to the world, and implies instead that the authority that the building will declare would be actively aimed at and implemented against not only outsiders, but the citizens of Amsterdam itself. His words suggest an acute sense of how quickly governmental power and dominance could be turned against the very people who are supposedly its beneficiaries.

Marvin Trachtenberg has written that “in urbanistic practice, the production of spatial order in preexisting urban settings contains a core of disorder in the form of massive architectural devastation.”¹²² And when the agent of that destruction is, as it was in the case of the Amsterdam town hall, the civic government, the narrative of appropriation and destruction is both localized and institutionalized, at once a personal and an official devastation. The “presence of absence”¹²³ would have been apparent not simply in the mass of the new building itself, but also, perhaps most potently and poignantly, in the vastness of the Dam, cleared as it was to make room for both the building and its sightlines.¹²⁴ That is, the western part of the Dam was cleared to accommodate a large swathe of empty space to allow the town hall’s monumental presence to be more dramatically felt and viewed. The demolition of the buildings retained an almost concrete presence on the Dam, in the form of the void surrounding the town hall. The dramatic expansion of the space around the town hall is evident in the Florisz. maps, and also in many of the paintings that illustrate the new town hall.

¹²⁰ “Op het Toekomende Raedhuis. De Rijkdom, en de konst, die meester, deeze knecht,/Zijn uit op Tempelbouw voor ‘t Goddelijke recht.” Mattheus Gansneb Tegnagel, *Alle werken*, ed. J.J. Oversteegen (Amsterdam: Athenaeum, 1969), 292.

¹²¹ “Uit ‘s merckvelts navelpunte, is geen onkenbaer teiken/Van majesteit, en might, die nu doorluchtigh blijckt,/Naerdien de Dam in name Sint Markus plaets niet wijckt,/Noch zelf het velt van Mars, zoo wyt befaemt by d’ouden,/Die Rome, in zijne kracht en middaghglans, aenschouden,/Toen, Cezars erfgenaem, August, in vollen vre,/Het heiligh Kapitoel in zijn triomfe oree.” Vondel, *Inwydinge van ‘t Stadhtuis ‘t Amsterdam*, 1655.

¹²² Marvin Trachtenberg, *Dominion of the Eye* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 249.

¹²³ Trachtenberg, *Dominion of the Eye*, 250.

¹²⁴ Joseph Connors’ fascinating study of baroque urbanism in Rome discusses strategies of *Visualisierung*, or the “engineering of visual prominence through the adjustment of facades and corners and the opening of streets and piazzas,” as controlled by either successful or broken alliances between various groups of patrons. Connors’ focus on the politics of empty space is helpful in the context of the Amsterdam t89), 207-94.

If the drama of systematic and deliberate demolition inspired anger, the burning of the old town hall in 1652 provoked nostalgia and spectatorship. Because the old town hall was in the process of being demolished when it was destroyed by fire, it was in a sense destroyed twice over. It may be argued that its spectacular devastation by fire obscured its initial fate, but the rumors of arson that surrounded the event suggest otherwise. Regardless, the city's demolition project and the fire became enfolded into one another, forming a narrative in which destruction was the foundation of the new town hall, and by extension of the new Republic itself. This would have been appropriate, as the town hall was designed as a tribute to the 1648 Peace of Munster, making it a living memorial to both the Peace and to the war for independence whose official and triumphant end it signified. The public's fascination with the fire is attested to by the many paintings and prints of it and its aftermath. Images of the fire in progress emphasize the spectacular nature of the event, juxtaposing the bright flames against the billowing smoke and dark night sky.

What is perhaps most interesting about these images is their inclusion of numerous human figures calmly standing around, watching the building burn, from the Dam, from rooftops, and from boats on the canal. (**Figures 2.3 & 2.4**) These figures are not mere witnesses, but, quite specifically, spectators. It is only in images of the fire itself that spectators of the town hall building are represented: in images of the intact old town hall or of the new building, all of the figures are almost ostentatiously unconcerned about the building that is their backdrop, and they appear to take no notice of it. An etching by Jan de Baen and an engraving by Jan van der Heyden depict all of the figures engaged either in combatting the fire's destruction, or running away from it in terror. (**Figure 2.5 & 2.6**) In paintings of the fire, however, there are always clusters of figures conspicuously doing nothing but watching the destruction of the building. (**Figures 2.3 & 2.4**) These figures are always depicted at the edges of the paintings, closer to the space of the viewer than any other figures or objects. In Beerstraten's painting, boats full of figures line the bottom edge of the canvas. (**Figure 2.3**) Perhaps they are coming to assist the fire fighters, but most of the figures are depicted simply looking in the direction of the fire, rather than making any visible contribution to the fire fighting. Lining the banks of the canal are numerous figures whose status as passive spectators is clear: they include children and women among their ranks, and they stand back from the action surrounding the fire, in poses that of conspicuous repose, like the men standing in *contrapposto* on the bank to the left of the center boat's mast. Gerrit Lundens' painting juxtaposes the loose poses of the many spectators with the rigidity of the bucket line on the one, and the bent bodies of the fire fighters running towards the fire. (**Figure 2.4**) Many of the witnesses are clearly pointing towards the fire, and some wrangle children and chat with their wives. With their backs to us, these literally marginal figures are actually quite central to the function, meaning, and composition of these paintings. They echo our status as viewers, and provide us with proxies through which to experience the event for ourselves. They provide the viewer with an eyewitness status while never allowing us to move from mild titillation to real fear. For even these represented viewers appear entirely composed, quite unlike the figures in prints of the fire.

The prints, presumably made and distributed very soon after the event, emphasize the chaos and danger surrounding the fire. In the paintings, even the fire fighters appear composed and generally upright, and the ranks of figures are well-organized, but the figures in the prints are depicted in much more dynamic poses and are engaged in more dramatic actions. In de Baen's etching, figures flee to left and right, and there is no bucket line, but rather dispersed figures carrying buckets in multiple directions. (**Figure 2.5**) The prints emphasize narrative and drama,

while the paintings place far more emphasis on witnesses and the spectacle of the burning building itself. Thus, while the prints depict the excitement and labor of the event itself, the paintings seem to point towards the relatively favorable outcome of the event, suggesting as they do the good management of the fire fighting, as if no one was ever really worried that the fire would get out of hand. The paintings, furthermore, rather than simply representing the spectacle of the event, allow the viewer to experience the spectacle through the viewer proxies. In the paintings, then, the event is important and worth viewing in a painting precisely because it was witnessed, and the appeal of the painting is not simply its ability to convey information about the event, but its capacity to make the viewer re-experience the event, but from a comfortable distance, one that is made more marked through the paintings' reconstruction of the event after the fact as something rather less dangerous and more under control than it probably was.

Paintings of other Dutch disasters take an entirely different approach to the events they depict. Prints and paintings of shipwrecks, floods, fires, and attacks on villages and cities by soldiers resemble the prints of the burning of the old town hall, in that they do not include any spectators, and emphasize the danger and chaos of the events. In a painting of the explosion of the Delft powder magazine, which occurred just two years after the burning of the Amsterdam town hall, Egbert van der Poel depicts no spectators; all of the figures are running away from the explosion, attempting to help other figures, or have been badly injured. (**Figure 2.7**) Likewise, in Willem Schellinks' painting of the disastrous breach of the St. Anthonis dike in 1651, all of the figures are directly threatened by and responding actively to the flooding. (**Figure 2.8**) Perhaps unsurprisingly, Dutch paintings of disasters tend to focus on the danger of and the dramatic responses of bystanders to the event. The paintings of the destruction of the old town hall, however, stand apart. The fire in the old town hall, unlike these other events, was understood as inextricably linked to the building of the new town hall, whether that latter event was viewed with pride or dismay. The paintings of the old town hall fire thus downplay the drama of the event, as the outcome was relatively mild, and the fire itself was in many a precursor to the more important event of the building of the new town hall.

Images representing the burning of the old town hall are only the most direct visual manifestation of its destruction. While rarely depicted before the 1640s, once discussions of the building's dilapidation and plans for a new town hall to replace it began in earnest, the old building started to appear in numerous images.¹²⁵ Even after the building's destruction, retrospective images of the building became very popular. These images participate in the same narrative as explicit representations of the fire. Here, however, the emphasis shifts from spectacle to nostalgia.¹²⁶ That the old town hall had already come to represent the history and age of the city around the time it was scheduled for destruction is suggested by a remark made by Caspar van Baerle, a professor at the Atheneum, on the occasion of Marie de' Medici's visit to Amsterdam in 1638: "Its antiquity and dilapidation lend the building a certain venerableness. A city which is otherwise so splendidly built shows here how simple she was of old."¹²⁷ Probably dating from the mid-fifteenth century, the town hall that served Amsterdam in the first half of the seventeenth century was itself the result of a rebuilding that took place after the town hall burnt down for the second time in its history.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Carry van Lakerveld ed., *Opkomst en bloei* (Amsterdam: Landshoff, 1977), 202.

¹²⁶ As Gary Schwartz put it, "Amsterdam was shocked into an attack of civic nostalgia." Schwartz, *The Dutch World of Painting*, 46.

¹²⁷ Schwartz, *The Dutch World of Painting*, 40.

¹²⁸ Utrecht, *Saenredam*, 50-52

These images, many of which date to after the destruction of the building, present their subject with an unmistakable sense of nostalgia for the historic, if ramshackle and slightly homely, structure that would soon disappear or had already been lost. Abraham Beerstraten's painting, dating to the 1650s (and potentially made after the fire), depicts the roof of the tower as it had appeared between 1615 and 1640, at least ten years before this image was actually painted.¹²⁹ (**Figure 2.9**) Copied from old drawings or prints of the building, many of the paintings of the old town hall were, like Beerstraten's, part of the rush to commemorate this building that had stood at the center of city politics for as long as anyone living could remember.

The tower as it stood just before the entire structure burned down is more accurately represented in the most famous painting of the old town hall, a work by Pieter Saenredam signed and dated 1657. (**Figure 2.10**) While Saenredam's image seems at first glance less steeped in the rosy glow of nostalgia than Beerstraten's painting with its warm, brushy rendering, and snow- and sun-dappled buildings, the painting is actually a more explicit rendering of loss and the passage of time than is Beerstraten's image. An inscription on the front step of the tribunal (the triple-arched portion of the building) states: "This is the old town hall of the city of Amsterdam, which burned down in the year 1652 on the 7th of July in three hours time without more [and no more]"¹³⁰. While this inscription clearly marks this otherwise straightforward architectural rendering (in the style of Saenredam's images of church interiors) immediately as a memorial image, a second inscription, larger and more visible, on the awning of the section of the building just to the right of the tribunal's third arch, makes the commemorative function of the painting more evident: "Pieter Saenredam, drew this first after life with all of its colors in the year 1641. And painted this in the year 1657."¹³¹ The image explicitly records its own relationship and that of its maker to the original building. Not only does the rhetoric of "naar het leven"¹³² serve to convince the viewer of the image's accuracy, it also relates and commemorates Saenredam's own physical presence before the building. Both inscriptions emphasize the before and after, the previous and the current, presence and absence, and the narratives of vision, drawing, and destruction that draw the elements of each pair together.

Saenredam's old town hall's ramshackle appearance takes on another valence altogether when seen in its original context: his picture was purchased by the Amsterdam government to hang with a pendant of the new town hall as it was to appear when completed, by the artist Jan van der Uft¹³³. (**Figure 2.11**) Both paintings were of the same size and framed in ebony. They hung, notably, in no less than the Burgomasters' Chamber, where the four city leaders met four times a week to discuss the governance of the city¹³⁴. While Saenredam's painting alone could be read as a nostalgic record of a lost past, its pairing with van der Uft's prospective painting suggests that it was meant to be understood as not only a record, but also a foil to the newer, more impressive present. Hung within the very building it was replaced by, and furthermore paired with a representation of that newer structure, Saenredam's decaying and old-fashioned

¹²⁹ Schwartz, *The Dutch World of Painting*, 39.

¹³⁰ "Dit is het oude Raethuijs der Stadt Amsterdam, welck afbrande int jaer 1652 den 7 julij in 3 uren tyts sonder meer."

¹³¹ "Pieter Saenredam, Heeft dit eerst nar 't Leeven Geteeckent met al sijn Coleuren int Jaer 1641. En dit geschildert int jaer 1657"

¹³² There has been quite a bit written on the rhetoric of "naar het leven." Some examples are: Swan, "*Ad vivum, naer het leven*"; Parshall, "*Imago Contrafacta*."

¹³³ Jan van Dyck, *Kunst- en historiekundige beschryving en aanmerkingen over alle de schilderyen op het stadhuis te Amsterdam* (Amsterdam 1758), 111.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

town hall, along with his inscriptions, anchor the old town hall unmistakably to a past that has been improved upon and modernized. But time functions strangely here: both images were completed around the same time, and yet neither represents anything present (cf. Daniel Stalpaert 1662 map Figure 1.1). Saenredam's was retrospective, though it claims to be after life, and van der Ulft's image represented the future, a future never to be attained. This reversal of the meaning of Saenredam's painting of the old town hall, from nostalgic memorial to the old building to evidence of the inferiority of the old building to the new, can be accounted for simply by a shift in audience and context. It is here that style is at issue once again: the government's favoring of classicism over the rough would have made this issue all the more serious, juxtaposing the old building's Gothic style with the classicism of the new building. Displayed at the physical and symbolic center of the city government, these two paintings were meant to make an unmistakable statement about the superiority of the new over the old.

Another astonishing representation inspired by the loss of the old town hall is Jan Micker's *Bird's Eye View of Amsterdam*, which though resembling a city map, is in fact as strong a reversal of the official maps as possible. (**Figure 2.12**) Highlighted by a ray of sunlight breaking through the clouds is the late Gothic old town hall. Inhabiting a much smaller Dam square, the old town hall is depicted with remarkable detail, crowded on two sides by the red roofs of neatly arrayed smaller structures. To the right is the Nieuwe Kerk, by far the largest structure in the image.

Painted in 1652, Micker's retrospective image depicts Amsterdam as it would have appeared before the city's third major expansion in 1585. Micker probably based his painting on a woodcut print designed by Cornelis Anthonisz after his own 1538 painting of the same subject¹³⁵. (**Figures 1.15 & 2.13**) Micker's painting so closely resembles in composition and concept Cornelis' print and painting, that it is tempting to describe the later painting as a copy or update of the earlier work. Yet Micker's painting diverges significantly from Cornelis' print in terms of style, viewpoint, and, it might even be said, genre. Mimicking changes that Cornelis' made between his painting and the print¹³⁶, Micker shifted the viewpoint to more directly above the city, greatly reducing the amount of the surrounding fields and countryside visible around the city's characteristic horseshoe shape. Micker's viewpoint is actually more directly parallel to the ground than in the woodcut, which is made clearest by his elimination of the horizon, which, along with glimpses of the sky, is still evident in Cornelis' print (although somewhat reduced in size and emphasis from his painting). The change in viewpoint brings Micker's painting even closer to the way in which Amsterdam was typically depicted in printed maps by the seventeenth century. Nevertheless, Micker makes significant moves away from the conventions of early modern cartography in the clever ways in which he manages to retain and comment upon some of the aspects of Cornelis' print that he does not directly copy. The clouds that provide an important decorative and allegorical element in the woodcut serve to suggest a sense of depth in Micker's painting. Micker removes the clouds themselves and simultaneously gives them a far more prominent role in his painting: no longer confined to the outer edges of the image, the clouds take center stage by casting shadows across the entire surface of the painting. Micker transforms Cornelis' clouds into indices of their presence, and uses them to, paradoxically,

¹³⁵ Norbert E. Middelkoop and Judith van Gent, *De Oude Meesters van de stad Amsterdam*. Schilderijen tot 1800 (Bussum: Uitgeverij Thoth, 2008), 278, f. 8.

¹³⁶ It is unknown whether or not Micker had seen Cornelis' painting, or was only familiar with the map. Here, I am simply arguing that Micker makes changes to the print that are similar to those that Cornelis made when making his own painting. Those similarities might very well be coincidental.

increase a sense of vertical depth and space while also drawing attention to the picture plane. Similarly, Micker transforms the text that was rather unceremoniously added to Cornelis' map with little attempt at integrating it into the rest of the image's perspective, into a *trompe l'oeil* scroll on the bottom right-hand corner of his painting. Again, this change both increases the painting's sense of spatial recession and emphasizes the flat surface of the canvas. Micker even takes Amsterdam's coat of arms, held by Neptune in Cornelis' map, and applies it at the very center of the top of his painting, making no attempt to integrate it into his painting's illusionistic space. Micker seems to be playing with the flattening, schematic conventions of the printed map, applying them to and then subverting them through the medium of painting.

The most significant difference between Micker and Cornelis' representations of Amsterdam, however, is the date at which each was made. Cornelis' painting and print were representations of contemporary Amsterdam. Micker, on the other hand, by changing only formal aspects of Cornelis' composition and leaving the topography of the city exactly the same, actually created something quite different from Cornelis. In other words, it is precisely because Micker changes none of the content of his model that the genre, function, and temporal status of the later image shifted markedly away from Cornelis' map. Micker transformed Cornelis' map of Amsterdam into something approaching history painting in content: Cornelis' present has become Micker's past. Yet the image's play between flatness and depth, cartographic convention and hallmarks of Dutch landscape painting, mirror and enhance the painting's flickering status between past and present, preventing it from resting solidly in one state or the other. Unlike most post-fire representations of the old town, Micker's image does not draw attention to its retrospective nature, whether through text (as with Saenredam's painting) or by means of emphasizing the slightly ruined quality of the building, as in Beerstraten's painting. Rather, Micker's old town hall is represented as it was almost seventy years earlier and bathed in sunlight, and sharply delineated. Micker thus seems to make the building, and Amsterdam more generally, newer and tidier, ironically by drawing his viewers back into the past. Micker's image peculiarly transforms what should be nostalgia or retrospection into a sort of replacement present.

Like Micker, Claes Jansz. Visscher probably used Cornelis' woodcut map to depict Amsterdam in 1482 in the borders of his intricate 1664 decorative map. (Figure 1.18) Unlike Visscher's map, however, Micker's took great care to depict seemingly every red-roofed structure, no matter how small or otherwise insignificant, meticulously individuating each building. Visscher's map reduces these same structures to a flat wash of roof red pigment, making it appear to the uninitiated viewer that the city was almost totally unbuilt, apart from a few large civic and religious structures. This abstraction of private buildings in a map that otherwise declares its illustrative rather than purely diagrammatic function serves to underscore the significance of the city's large public structures and the utter insignificance of the domestic and private. Furthermore, in Visscher's map, the abstracted structures are formally equated with the non-existent, unpopulated sections of the city in the central map, which represent the projected last extension of the city in the second half of the seventeenth century. More curious still, the map that depicts Amsterdam in 1400, directly above the map after Cornelis, represents Amsterdam as more built up and populated than in the later image, by virtue of its inclusion of anonymous structures as well as well-known ones. Visscher's map thus emphasizes the old town hall by placing it in the midst of a void, bringing to mind Balthazar Florisz.' map of the blank Dam with which this section began. Unlike these maps' formally enacted demolition, Micker's

painting resurrects the absent by drawing attention to the old town hall within its urban context, rather than representing it as an isolated curiosity of a lost past.

Once the new building was actually completed, depictions of the old town hall became less common. Representations of the new town hall usually emphasize and often exaggerate the massiveness of the building. Gerrit Adriaensz. Berckheyde's many paintings of the town hall with a now iconic frontal view that gives his images a panoramic quality are the most often reproduced representations of the town hall (**Figures 2.14 & 2.15**). These images convey the immense scale of the building by allowing it to fill most of the picture plane, and by reducing the large Nieuwe Kerk to a cowering, physically overshadowed, fragment. But it is the group of images that represent the town hall from a dramatic oblique angle that seems to most fully communicate the looming, almost authoritarian impression that made the building stand out for Amsterdammers, who had never experienced anything approaching this building's magnitude or austerity.¹³⁷ (**Figures 2.16 & 2.17**) Some of these paintings, while conveying a sense of pride in this new symbol of Amsterdam's wealth and power, also suggest a desire on the part of its viewers to somehow come to terms with and contain or restrain the massiveness of this building. There is an ominous quality of some of these deeply shadowed oblique images.

In the face of the town hall's overwhelming mass, we can now return to and better understand certain concrete examples of opposition to the town hall plan as it was presented to the public in the years surrounding the laying of the cornerstone. Resistance came not only from those who opposed the demolition of this densely-populated area of the city center, but also from a faction of apparently devout Calvinists who objected to the sacrilegious excess of this profane building, which would overshadow the Nieuwe Kerk, its neighbor on the Dam.¹³⁸ As we have seen in paintings of the Dam after the completion of the town hall, the building literally as well as figuratively cast the Nieuwe Kerk in total shadow (**Figure 2.14-2.17**). That some of these paintings of the hall, especially those by Berckheyde, might have been deliberate statements of sympathy for the anti-Nieuwe Kerk faction has been suggested by many art historians.¹³⁹ Deemed a "token against Pompous Worldly Halls,"¹⁴⁰ the Nieuwe Kerk was viewed by this faction of the town hall project's opponents as the last bulwark against secular dominance on the Dam. The town hall was seen as a real threat to the influence and prestige of the church, and plans for the project were only allowed to go ahead once a deal was struck with Calvinist leaders whereby the Nieuwe Kerk, damaged by fire in 1645, would obtain a steeple higher than the town hall's tower, a reconstruction of the church's organ by Jacob van Campen and Artus Quellinus, and an entrance directly onto the Dam.¹⁴¹ It was of course no coincidence that each of these elements of the church's reconstruction was specifically and directly related to the planned

¹³⁷ 't Hart has placed the town hall within the historical context of a general policy of monumentalism in Amsterdam: "...from the 1630s, Amsterdam definitively went on its own specific monumentalist route, inspired by Roman classicist ideals and spurred on by political rivalries with the state...one of the most notable achievements of the seventeenth-century burgomasters was to endow Amsterdam with the physical form that expressed its powers." 't Hart, "The Glorious City," 149.

¹³⁸ 't Hart, "The Glorious City," 141; W. Kuyper, *Dutch Classicist Architecture* (Delft: Delft University Press, 1980), 74.

¹³⁹ These authors have suggested that evidence for this lies in part in Berckheyde's consistent choice to make the town hall taller than the Nieuwe Kerk. Gary Schwartz, *Rembrandt* (London: Penguin Books, 1985), 265; Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches*, 118-19; Cynthia Lawrence, *Gerrit Berckheyde* (Doornspijk: Davaco Publishers, 1991), 54.

¹⁴⁰ 't Hart, "The Glorious City," 141.

¹⁴¹ 't Hart, "The Glorious City," 141; The steeple as it was meant to appear can be seen in van der Ulft's print and De Bie's painting, but it was not in fact ever finished. Peeters et al., *The Royal Palace*, 41.

program of the town hall, creating a sort of *quid pro quo* whereby the old, established building yielded its objections to each element in the new (in fact yet-to-be-built) structure as a comparable one was ceded to the church. Calvinist objections to the new town hall, by so specifically focusing on concrete, material solutions to the most public and visible problems that the building would face in opposition to the new town hall, suggest that the danger posed by this new, secular building was fully manifested in its formal qualities and its monumental physical presence. While the old town hall was entirely unobjectionable, the new town hall presented a threat to piety and the dominance of the church in civic life.

These objections to the secular dominance represented by the town hall were far from the only negative reactions to the building. They were, however, the only objections that were powerful enough to have a concrete effect on the actual appearance of the new town hall and the Dam. But as I have argued in this section, representations of the old and new town hall in their various states offered different, often negative, interpretations of the new town hall, many of them long before the building was completed. I will return to depictions of the exterior of the town hall in the next chapter, where I will discuss the representation of the town hall as a ruin. These images of the town hall in ruins offer perhaps the most complicated critique of the new building. The paintings and prints I have discussed so far provide evidence of the multiple and at times contradictory narratives about the town hall, its meaning, and its history that existed alongside the building itself, which, as I discussed in Chapter 1, was intended to foreclose upon such alternative readings.

Who Owns the Town hall?

All of the images I have discussed so far are cityscapes or architectural paintings. The depiction of the new town hall was not, however, confined to these genres. In fact, the new town hall was probably depicted more often in the seventeenth century in works of art where it was *not* the main subject than in the types of images this chapter has dealt with so far. Particularly in the 1670s, when the building had finally been completed and some of the ornately decorated rooms had been opened to the public, the town hall and its interior began to crop up in the background of numerous portraits, self-portraits, genre paintings, history paintings, and even animal paintings. Whereas the new town hall was invested with conflicting narratives about communal history and identity by the cityscape and architectural paintings discussed above, these other paintings subordinated the building to narratives that were not about the communal or the historical. Shrinking, fracturing, and reworking the town hall, these images alternatively subvert and exploit the building's iconography, making it into a supplement to private or otherwise personal narratives of status, wealth and identity.

Portraits and self-portraits that included references to the new town hall used the building as an attribute that pointed to the sitter's connection either to its construction or to its symbolic status as the center of Amsterdam's government. In all of these cases, the sitter was invested in the official reading of the town hall, differentiating these paintings from most of the works discussed so far. Nevertheless, they offer the most concrete version of the tendency of these images to miniaturize, fragment, and appropriate the town hall into personal and private narratives. These works ostentatiously incorporate the town hall into the sitter's identity, making the building into an attribute that reveals the subject's status, values, and profession. The massive town hall is also subordinated to the sitter's body, in a reversal of the building's standard depiction as dwarfing all human activity.

Nicolaes Maes' 1679 portrait of Amsterdam municipal secretary and later burgomaster, Cornelis Munter, includes two references to the new town hall. **(Figure 2.18)** In the lower left-hand corner of the painting, a relief from above the doorway to the secretary's office in the town hall has been transformed by Maes into a shadowed, possibly wood, table upon which are strewn signed and sealed official documents and record books, presumably part of the sitter's work as secretary¹⁴². Munter, posed in a studiedly casual manner, rests his right arm upon one of the books. In addition to his pose, Munter's hair and rich velvet robes, and the loose manner in which Maes has painted him, are all characteristic of a growing taste for all things French in the late seventeenth century amongst the upper middle class.¹⁴³ In large part due to the late stadholder Frederick Henry and his wife Amalia van Solms, who greatly favored French design, a gentle French classicism became popular beyond their court, and came to connote wealth, status, and good taste. The town hall itself was closely bound up with this shift in upper middle class taste, even as the Oranges and Amsterdam's ruling class were increasingly at odds during the second half of the seventeenth century. Every aspect of Munter's portrait, from the artist and painterly style, to clothing, pose and setting, were carefully chosen to convey a sense of the sitter's importance and high status, and the town hall, peeking from behind his left shoulder, was yet another symbol of wealth and taste added to all the rest. Thus, while the town hall is included to refer to Munter's official and public relationship to the city government, it may also be seen as a more general statement about the sitter's private identity. Partial views of the building's exterior and its interior sculptural program are made equivalent to iridescent green velvets, delicate hand gestures, lace collars, gold embroidery, thick curls, and loose brushwork.

In a 1670 portrait of Michiel Servaesz. Nouts, Amsterdam municipal musician, and player of the town hall's carillon, by Lodewijk van der Helst, the town hall plays a more specific and economical role than in Maes's painting of Munter¹⁴⁴. **(Figure 2.19)** Only the bell tower, the location of the carillon that Nouts played, and part of the western pediment and roof are visible. The tip of the cornet that Nouts holds emerges directly next to the bell tower on the picture plane, and his right thumb, resting upon the brass instrument, points directly up to it as well. The exterior of the town hall has been reduced here to the minimum required to convey the identity of the building and Nouts' relationship to it.

Like the portrait of Nouts, a painting attributed to Michiel van Musscher of the famous cartographer Joan Blaeu includes only a small fragment of the town hall to convey his relationship to the city government. **(Figure 2.20)** A marble sculpture of Justice by Artus Quellinus, which faces the magistrates' benches in the town hall's tribunal, is represented behind Blaeu's right shoulder. From there, it signals Blaeu's role as an Amsterdam magistrate. While the Justice sculpture might seem a rather subtle allusion to the town hall, not only were the designs for the interior sculptural program well known, but the tribunal was the one room in the town hall that was plainly visible from the exterior of the building. This small, narrow room is almost entirely lined in ornately carved marble, and is visible through large arched windows on the ground floor Dam-facing façade. It was in the tribunal that the death sentence was

¹⁴² Peeters, *The Royal Palace*, 53-54.

¹⁴³ Willem Frijhoff, "The Princely Court at The Hague: a National and European Perspective," in *Princely Display*, eds. Marika Kebluse and Jori Zijlmans (Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, 1997), 15-16.

¹⁴⁴ Peeters, *The Royal Palace*, 55-56.

pronounced, and it was expected that the public would witness sentencing through the windows.¹⁴⁵

Both the Blaeu and Nouts portraits do not so much distill the town hall to a representative portion as selectively cull from it what was relevant to the identity of the sitter. In the case of Blaeu's portrait, the town hall is only a part of his identity: Blaeu stands between the sculpture of Justice and a celestial globe, upon which he places a compass. It is towards the globe, in fact, that Blaeu gestures, and it is the globe that is directly lit and placed in the foreground, while Justice resides in shadow in the background of the painting. Representing Blaeu in his dual roles of cartographer and magistrate, Musscher's painting reduces the town hall to a symbol of Blaeu's secondary occupation. All three of these portraits subordinate the town hall, and the community and government it was meant to stand for, to the personal identities of men who could claim some connection to it. These portraits expose the vulnerability of the town hall to not only public and communal redefinition, but also to personal interests and narratives that could reduce it to a mere attribute.

Like these portraits, genre paintings that used the interior and exterior of the new town hall suggest an interest on the part of the painters and their presumed market in the building's strong connotations of high class and taste. The town hall could indeed provide an elevated setting for the daily life of ordinary middle class citizens, if only temporarily and partially. Business and gossip of all kinds occurred on the Dam in front of the building daily, posters and advertisements were tacked on to the town hall's lower walls, death sentences were witnessed through windows, and parades and festivals circulated around the building. Most unusually, the largest and most spectacular room in the building was open to Amsterdam's citizens, and was indeed named for them. The Citizens' Hall was symbolically located at the very center of the building, on the second floor. In the Hall and its galleries middle class men and women could circulate and interact with one another in a setting that was far removed from any other aspect of their daily lives. An unusual series of paintings by genre painters took to an extreme the public nature of the Citizens' Hall. These artists, including Pieter de Hooch and Gabriel Metsu, created images that understand the town hall to be so public that it could be imagined as, in fact, private. Investing this consummately public and civic building with the trappings of bourgeois Dutch domestic life, they remade the town hall into a space that could be lived in and possessed.

When Pieter de Hooch moved from Delft to Amsterdam, his bourgeois domestic scenes became more sumptuous, responding in part to the shift in taste towards the international aristocratic style, as well as to a wealthier clientele.¹⁴⁶ An image that diverges particularly far from his Delft images is a painting of a group of wealthy young people playing music on a terrace. (**Figure 2.21**) In the center background, an abbreviated yet clearly recognizable version of the new town hall emerges out of a wooded park.¹⁴⁷ While most of de Hooch's Delft genre paintings take place in a typical urban Dutch bourgeois home, this painting locates the musicians in a far more luxurious country house setting. Furthermore, the velvet-draped colonnaded outdoor terrace would have been understood as an Italianate fantasy rather than typical or even possible Dutch country house architecture. By transporting the Amsterdam town hall to such a setting, de Hooch both accentuated the stylistic novelty of the town hall, and attempted to

¹⁴⁵ Katharine Fremantle, "The Open Vierschaar of Amsterdam's Seventeenth-Century Town hall as a Setting for the City's Justice," *Oud Holland* 77.3/4 (1962), 210-211.

¹⁴⁶ Martha Hollander, "Pieter de Hooch's revisions of the Amsterdam Town hall," in *The Built Surface*, ed. Christy Anderson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 211.

¹⁴⁷ Peter C. Sutton, *Pieter de Hooch, 1629-1684* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 56-57.

integrate it into an appropriate setting. That is to say, de Hooch's genre fantasy suggests that at least one way to make sense of the town hall was to place it in a totally different setting. The town hall's style and iconography, which were carefully planned to convey a set of specific civic, historical, and communal values, have been appropriated to communicate aristocratic, private, and even foreign interests. De Hooch reveals the instability of the town hall's language by exploiting it for his own purposes: the austere classical lines of the building no longer connote Roman Republican values, but rather awareness of current international taste; and the town hall's massive size reveals personal wealth and status rather than civic wealth and might.

De Hooch transforms the town hall into something to be privately owned and to be lived in and around, just like the far more modest homes he depicted in Delft. His relocation of the building from the political and economic center of Amsterdam (which was itself the center of the province of Holland, and in terms of wealth and political might, of the Dutch Republic itself) to the countryside also represents a significant symbolic shift from the center of civic and national politics to a retreat from urban life and cares. De Hooch thus to a certain extent characterizes private life and ownership as a rejection of the very civic-mindedness and communal self-definition that was so integral to the iconography and style of the town hall.

In another painting of a group of Dutch bourgeois men and women playing music, de Hooch once again transforms the town hall, into a decidedly private setting. (**Figure 2.22**) This time, de Hooch moves his musical party into a room with a painting of *Jethro Advising Moses* by Jan van Bronchorst that hung above the south mantel in the Council Chamber of the new town hall.¹⁴⁸ The Council Chamber was where the burgomasters' advisory council met.

Notwithstanding the markedly more ornate décor and costumes, the composition largely resembles other domestic genre scenes by de Hooch and his fellow Delft painters of similar subjects. De Hooch added a bed and other furnishings that would not have been in the Council Chamber, not to mention the dog and the maid and children visible through a door in the background, to make it clear that we are looking at a private home, and not the town hall. Moving his group inside a space that makes reference to the town hall, de Hooch integrated the public and the private more completely than in the exterior view, allowing his private citizens to actually live inside the building, rather than residing next door to it. What was, in his painting of the exterior, to a certain extent a fantasy of haute bourgeois life, has become a more familiar, more likely representation of the everyday lives of his urban customers. In both cases, though, the harmony that the musical group could be read to represent is mirrored in de Hooch's artful integration of what should be totally irreconcilable. In contrast, a painting by Gabriel Metsu of a family in a room inspired by one of the town hall's chambers, is somewhat less successful in turning the grand space into a believable domestic interior.¹⁴⁹ (**Figure 2.23**)

But just as Dutch genre scenes often hinted at something more complicated beneath the surface of seemingly genteel interactions, the viewer's knowledge of de Hooch's model would have provided a tension that was invisible to anyone unfamiliar with the town hall. The most famous building in the Dutch Republic from before construction even began, the town hall was an inescapable presence, particularly amongst the clientele to which de Hooch's Amsterdam paintings catered. What might appear to be a modern viewer to be a harmonious image would

¹⁴⁸ Peeters, *The Royal Palace*, 74.

¹⁴⁹ According to Waiboer, Metsu's painting includes the chimney from the Oud Raadszaal, although the painting above it has been changed, and the distinctive marble floor from the town hall. Adriaan E. Waiboer, *Gabriel Metsu: life and work: a catalogue raisonné* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 94-95. Also see: Walter Liedtke, *Dutch Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, Vol 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 463-69.

have likely struck its intended viewers with the strangeness of de Hooch's vision of domestic life. His viewers would have been fully aware of de Hooch's juxtaposition of two very different aspects of Dutch society. De Hooch's paintings suggest both the fantasy of the integration of the public and private, and the incommensurability of civic and domestic interests. The apparent harmony of these images would have been significantly tempered by the viewer's actual experience of Amsterdam.

Martha Hollander has argued that de Hooch's paintings of burghers inside the town hall are, like the church interior paintings by the Delft painters Gerard Houckgeest and Emanuel de Witte, about the relationship between "individual and communal consciousness," which is made manifest by the contrast between the mundane activities of the figures and the massive and ornate architecture that is their setting.¹⁵⁰ I would argue that such a formal contrast was part of, and even secondary to, the viewer's recognition of de Hooch's model and his transformation of it into something utterly different. Hollander excludes works like the musical company painting discussed above from her argument, characterizing them as using the "town hall style" only, and therefore not explicit renderings of the town hall. De Hooch, and other artists, painted many more depictions of domestic interiors that include fewer and less grand elements from the town hall than the *Musical Company*. (**Figures 2.24 & 2.25**) It was precisely the subtlety of these references that encouraged and rewarded the game of recognizing his allusions.

De Hooch completed at least two paintings that, unlike the above works, seem to depict the town hall *qua* town hall, rather than transforming it into a private home. These works not only suggest that de Hooch assumed his audience would be well aware of his borrowings from the town hall in the previous works I have discussed, they also illustrate how subtle were the changes that de Hooch made in order to transform the town hall into a private home. (**Figures 2.26 & 2.27**) While the inhabitants are quite similar, de Hooch made small changes in viewpoint, figures, activity, and furnishings to transform the public into the private. Taking a broader view revealed the great height of the ceilings and therefore the non-domestic scale of the rooms, and leaving out furnishings helped to accentuate the austerity of the classicizing architecture.¹⁵¹ The figures all stand and circulate, emphasizing the transient nature of their presence in this space, rather than their proprietary comfort.

De Hooch's painting of yet another musical company is a strange hybrid of the previous groups I have discussed and the town hall *qua* town hall paintings. (**Figure 2.28**) This painting combines the wider view of the latter type of image, as well as its emphasis on the grand classicizing architecture, with the flirtatious, casual behavior characteristic of a domestic scene. The paradox that was supplied by the viewer's knowledge of the town hall is made visible within the painting itself: this is not domestic architecture, nor are these people behaving as they should in a public space. De Hooch's placement of Raphael's *School of Athens* fresco in the lunette in the background puts to rest any notion that this might be a private space. Placing a figure group that adheres to the conventions of genre painting amidst unmistakable references to both the Amsterdam town hall and the Stanza della Segnatura, de Hooch's painting thematizes the uneasy relationship between conceptions of privacy and property on the one hand, and civic identity on the other. The awkwardness of de Hooch's composition derives from the awkwardness of the bringing together of private behavior and public spaces. De Hooch's painting is both about and formally characterized by the lack of harmony between its parts. De Hooch's favoring of the

¹⁵⁰ Hollander, "Pieter de Hooch's revisions of the Amsterdam Town hall," 219.

¹⁵¹ See Sutton, *Pieter de Hooch*, 1980, 31-32.

subject of musical companies in his paintings that use the town hall in various ways draws attention through counter example to the dissonance that actually marks these works.¹⁵²

The old town hall was never, to my knowledge, dislocated from its urban setting into genre paintings, history paintings, or portraits. In fact, very few public buildings, with the exception of churches, were ever used in non-landscape or cityscape painting in the Dutch Republic. Why, then, did Jacob van Campen's town hall inspire so much exportation from the urban landscape to the domestic and personal? One answer is that the classicism of the town hall quickly became a symbol of high status and wealth in the Dutch Republic, and thus ambitious patrons and canny artists unsurprisingly flattered themselves and their customers through association with the famous building. However, this group of images can be understood as participating in a more explicit version of the kind of reappropriation of the public and the communal that characterized the works in the first section of this chapter. The paintings and prints in the first section of this chapter placed the town hall at the center of multiple narratives that undermined the official iconography of the building. These works of art appropriated the exterior of the town hall and made it a part of competing versions of Amsterdam's recent history. The paintings I have discussed in this section likewise appropriated the new town hall, but they did so by exploiting, rather than by offering alternatives to, the iconography of the building.

Monument, Memory, and Authenticity: The Royal Palace Today

While the constant wrangling over how the town hall should be read during the second half of the seventeenth century could be expected, what is perhaps more surprising is the extent to which the same disputes over meaning and ownership continue today. The new town hall, now the Royal Palace, recently underwent a major renovation, both inside and out. The refurbishing of the interior included a complete restoration of the ceiling of the Burgerzaal, as well as of many of the wall and ceiling paintings from the seventeenth century, which had been entirely painted over by the twentieth century, as well as extensive cleaning and the removal of much of the decoration and furniture added in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. By contrast, the exterior of the Royal Palace, the renovation of which began after the completion of the interior, was only cleaned, and small touches of gilt were added to the tympana. It was, however, the renovation of the exterior that excited by far the most controversy within the media and the scholarly community. As in the seventeenth century, the interior of the town hall seems to inspire less concern about the ways in which it is defined and represented than the exterior, the iconic status of which made it more susceptible to both fame and appropriation. The debate over the cleaning of the exterior of the Royal Palace reveals the continued relevance of the questions of identity, ownership, authenticity, and authority that so defined the representation of the town hall in the seventeenth century.

A 2009 article in the Dutch daily newspaper, *Het Parool*, was headed by a photoshopped image of the building's main façade, split down the middle, the left side blindingly white, and the right side striated and brown. (**Figure 2.29**) The white side clearly represented the way the building would look, according to the newspaper, after the cleaning, while the right side was what the Royal Palace actually looked like in 2009, discolored by centuries of pollution and weathering. While the photo itself could be equally read as either an argument in favor of or

¹⁵² On the role of music in Dutch painting, see: Peter Fischer, *Music in Paintings of the Low Countries* (Amsterdam: Swets & Zeitlinger, 1975); Roy Sonnema, "Musical Indulgence and Pleasurable Sound in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art," in *Art and Music in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Katherine McIver (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 333-349.

against the cleaning, the first line of the article left the reader with little doubt as to the paper's position: "Does the palace on the Dam have to be transformed into a flashy white jewel or can it be restored with respect?"¹⁵³ The restored side of the building in the image was meant to be read as tacky and ostentatious. The article goes on to reference "experts" who claim that the cleaning will actually damage the building, and furthermore "shows no respect to the building."¹⁵⁴ Both the restoration project's leaders and its main critics made claims to respecting and being faithful to the original (seventeenth-century) vision of the building and its makers, and thus the question was which vision was "correct," both sides implying that the other side was mistaken. Both sides, too, understood the need to balance authenticity and the long history of the building itself.

The issues of taste and respect that wind through this article and other such criticisms¹⁵⁵ are strongly reminiscent of the types of objections that were voiced during the planning and building of the town hall in the seventeenth century. Now as then, various parties argued over what the building meant, and how it should be seen and used. But I would argue that in the seventeenth century, the painters under discussion here were more tolerant of the building's multivalency, and its openness to a variety of interpretations. It was indeed that openness that allowed these artists to create versions of the town hall that in many cases greatly conflicted with the official iconography of the building. It is particularly evident in the rhetoric of the May 27 *Parool* article that "respect" for the building actually refers to conservation of the then (in 2009) familiar appearance of the building: "Experts on memorials find that, after 350 years of 'showing respect to the building,' the palace façade would be better left unaffected."¹⁵⁶ The article goes on to say that these experts believe that the cleaning would, in addition to damaging the façade, also lead to a "distorted light coloring, which would make it look like a brand new building."¹⁵⁷ This argument brings up what has long been the central question that haunts any restoration: should restorers attempt to recapture a monument's original appearance, or are the changes wrought by time upon the monument of at least as much importance? The Royal Palace restoration's critics clearly favored the latter, but again, their rhetoric also suggests a strong conservative streak that appears to be uncomfortable with any major change in the appearance of a building that they are used to seeing and experiencing in a particular way. While at first glance, their objections seem to argue against the fetishization of intention and historical accuracy, the critics of the restoration actually replaced one correct way of seeing the Royal Palace with another. The other concern, that the cleaning of the exterior would damage the building by making the stone porous and weak, poignantly if unintentionally illustrates their fear of the openness of the building to new and different readings that stray too far from what they believe is the "correct" version of the building.

¹⁵³ "Moet het paleis op de Dam tot een wit pronkjeweel omgetoverd of met respect gerestaureerd worden?" Ton Damen, "Frisse lik verf over paleis op de Dam?", *Het Parool*, May 27, 2009.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, "geen respect voor het monument toont."

¹⁵⁵ Gary Schwartz, "Cleaning the Eighth Wonder of the World," *Schwartzlist* May 10, 2011.

¹⁵⁶ "Monumentdeskundigen vinden dat, na 350 jaar 'respect voor het monument getoond te hebben', de paleisgevel beter onaangetast kan blijven." Ton Damen, "Frisse lik verf over paleis op de Dam?"

¹⁵⁷ "Bovendien kan het reinigen leiden tot een geforceerd lichte kleur, waardoor het een fonkelnieuw gebouw lijkt." *Ibid.*

Chapter 3

Aestheticizing Obsolescence: Urban Modernization and the Memorialization of Loss

The previous two chapters dealt with new construction in Amsterdam in the second half of the seventeenth century, and the representation of the new and the hypothetical. This chapter will focus more explicitly on futuricity as a stimulus to thinking about and representing “pastness,” or that which is implied to be, but might not actually be, an authentic past. I will discuss these issues in relation to the growth in popularity of the representation of ruins amongst Amsterdam artists around the mid-seventeenth century. It is no coincidence, as I will argue, that ruin imagery became popular just as the city government was implementing wide-scale plans for the modernization of the city, in tandem with the government’s campaign waged in publicize that modernization.

Because our current scholarly and anecdotal understanding of ruins is largely determined by the Romantic notion of the ruin, one of the purposes of this chapter will be to interrogate the extent to which the early modern ruin, and particularly the Dutch ruin (which is never ancient), can be described and understood with the dominant terminology for dealing with ruins. Historical, yet not necessarily historicist, anticipatory but not fantastic, political and yet not always nostalgic, the early modern Dutch ruin in representation is easy to misinterpret, but its structural similarity to the modern, Romantic ruin is misleading. The first part of this chapter will show how pervasive the Romantic definition of the ruin is in the discussion of early modern ruins and ruin imagery, and will argue that this model is insufficient for the analysis of these objects.

The second part of this chapter will turn to paintings, prints, and drawings of new buildings in Amsterdam that are depicted in various states of ruin or oblivion. Because of its centrality to the Amsterdam city government’s patronage, the new town hall and its environs were the focus of most of these images. The specificity of these images, and the ruins they depict, is antithetical to the universalizing reading of the Romantic ruin, and, as I will argue, it was precisely the specificity of the history and experience of these locations that motivated the making of viewing of these works of art.

The Romantic Early Modern Ruin?

The still dominant, Romantic reading of ruins has close ties to Dutch seventeenth-century painting, and to the artists I discuss in this chapter in particular. Most notably, Joshua Reynolds and Goethe were particularly interested in Ruisdael’s *Jewish Cemetery*, and indeed were at least in part responsible for the resurgence of interest in the artist in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹⁵⁸ (Figure 3.8) Indeed, Ruisdael’s ruins seemed to serve as the *Ur*-Romantic ruins for both writers, seemingly representing so well the struggle between nature and culture, the discovery of meaning in base materialism, and the sublimity of a personified natural world. It should come as no surprise that it is for moody ruins that Ruisdael is best known today, rather than for the more mundane scenes of city and countryside with which he made his name in the seventeenth century. Furthermore, the Romantic adoption of Ruisdael must be seen as part of a broader methodological problem that makes it so difficult for us to disentangle the early modern ruin from the Romantic ruin, which still so fully governs how we understand ruins today.

¹⁵⁸ On the influence of Goethe and Reynolds on the “rediscovery” of Ruisdael in the nineteenth century, see: Seymour Slive, *Jacob van Ruisdael: Master of Landscape* (London: Royal Academy of Art, 2005), 24-26, 84-86

Goethe's reading of *The Jewish Cemetery* is paradigmatic of the way in which pre-Romantic ruins continue to be read today:

The third picture is devoted entirely to the past and contains no reflection of life in the present. It is known as *The Cemetery* and that is what it depicts. Even the gravestones in their ruined state point to something more than the past: they are monuments of themselves...But the viewer is then surprised when he sees, or rather surmises, new and more monuments far in the background, and mourners gathering around them—as if the past had nothing to bequeath but mortality.¹⁵⁹

Goethe's language here, which for large sections of the text seems to imply that the narrator has actually entered into the world of the painting, rather than providing a description of a painting, is quite typical of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century readings of images of ruins.

In a description of paintings by the French artist Hubert Robert in his *Salon of 1767*, Diderot states that the artist's best paintings of ruins actually transcend representation: "One doesn't think of art, one simply admires, and with the same admiration as that evoked by nature itself."¹⁶⁰ This sort of language has continued into scholarly discussions of ruins in art in the 20th and 21st centuries. Essays by Michael Roth and Charles Merewether in the 1998 Getty catalog of a show on modern ruins consistently tend to collapse depicted and depiction when discussing works of art that represent ruins¹⁶¹. Even when discussing particular representations of ruins, they tend to consider the works of art as themselves ruins, without ever, it would seem, meaning to do so.

The Romantics saw the ruin as an essential symbol of all of their most important values, being physical remnants of the passage of time¹⁶². They saw the ruin as both a melancholy remnant of a totally lost past, and a disturbing reminder of man's helplessness in the face of an all-powerful nature. The ruin was thus a tool and a prompt for meditating upon one's own place in history, as well as personal and cultural mortality. The primarily egocentric role of the Romantic ruin is what motivated the collapsing of ruin and ruin representation for many 18th- and 19th-century writers, and for scholars today. This historicist reading of the ruin has furthermore become so dominant that many scholars neglect to fully understand it as a historical phenomenon that is not necessarily relevant before the eighteenth century.

For Georg Simmel, as for Goethe, the ruin, and more generally destruction and decay, both represents and is the physical evidence of, the terrifying sublimity of nature. According to Simmel, the ruin is a sublime subversion of man's coercion of (natural) matter. It is in the ruin that "nature has transformed the work of art into material for her own expression, as she had

¹⁵⁹ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Ruisdael as Poet," (1816) in *Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. John Gearey et al., trans. by Ellen von Nardroff and Ernest H. von Nardroff (New York: Suhrkamp Publishers, 1986), 64.

¹⁶⁰ Denis Diderot, *The Salon of 1767*, (1767), in *Diderot on Art, Volume II*, ed. and trans. John Goodman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 216.

¹⁶¹ Michael Roth, ed., *Irresistible Decay: Ruins Reclaimed* (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1997).

¹⁶² On the Romantic ruin, see: Ingrid G. Daemmrich, "The Ruins Motif as Artistic Device in French Literature, Part II," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 31, no. 1 (Autumn 1972), 31-41; Günter Hartmann, *Die Ruine im Landschaftsgarten: Ihre Bedeutung für den frühen Historismus und die Landschaftsmalerei der Romantik* (Worms: Werner'sche Verlag, 1981)

previously served as material for art.”¹⁶³ For Simmel, the ruin may be one of the most subversive things imaginable, in his construction of the world as determined by a dialectic of culture (“spirit”) and nature (raw matter): “According to the cosmic order, the hierarchy of nature and spirit usually shows nature as the substructure..., the raw material, or semifinished product; the spirit, as the definitively formative and crowning element.”¹⁶⁴ The subordination of nature to culture that defines the normal order is exposed in the ruin to be an illusion. This exposure is, for Simmel, precisely the source of the ruin’s tragic appeal to us: we recognize through the ruin’s status that “destruction here is not something senselessly coming from the outside but rather the realization of a tendency inherent in the deepest layer of existence of the destroyed.”¹⁶⁵ It is thus in the ruin that Simmel sees culture and nature (the “two world potencies” which he describes as, respectively, “the striving upward and the sinking downward”) most resolved to one another: they are no longer in tension or conflict, but “working serenely together.”¹⁶⁶ In a similar vein, Huysman wrote on destruction and ruins that, “One will become aware that fire is the essential artist of our time and that, so pitiful when raw, the architecture of the century becomes tremendous, almost superb, when cooked.”¹⁶⁷ Huysman’s distinction between architecture as “raw” and the ruin as “cooked” cannot help but evoke Lévi-Strauss’s identical terminology in reference to the development of culture. For Huysman as well, “cooked” clearly suggests the socialized and the cultural. More wittily and less seriously than Simmel, Huysman reverses the normal order of things in his language, giving nature (fire) creative agency and the product’s of man’s labor (architecture) the status of mere matter. The ruin thus seems to somehow present a more advanced state of culture than the merely monumental, even as it relies on natural destruction. This may be because the ruin’s disclosure of matter’s essential dynamism foretells the future that inevitably befalls all human manipulations of natural matter. As Simmel tells us, natural matter’s inertia and submission are only ever momentary, and thus an illusion. I will return to the issue of future and its relation to the ruin below.

Underlying all of these writings on ruins, there is a surprisingly forceful positioning of the ruin as a radical alternative to the coercive aspect that has come to characterize the monument in the wake of the twentieth-century’s numerous examples of the egregious deployment of public art towards fascist ends, and a concomitant indictment of the monumental as one of the most fundamentally flawed projects of culture. In particular, the ruin is taken by these writers to be a radical alternative to the monument’s claims to permanence. As not simply the physical trace of time’s acting upon manmade things at some historical moment, but even further, the index of the *continuing* passage of time, the ruin may not even be best understood as solely a solid thing, so much as a dynamic incursion into the material world. That is, the ruin is more of a concept than an actual thing in the world. If the coercive nature of the monument is produced by the maker’s desire to be outlived by his or her highly specific, usually political, intentional iconography, then the ruin, which by its very nature erases the maker’s intentionality, itself seems to thematize and expose the pathetic emptiness and futility of the hopes for

¹⁶³ Georg Simmel, “The Ruin,” (1919), in *Georg Simmel, 1858-1918: A Collection of Essays*, ed. Kurt W. Wolff, trans. by David Kettler, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1959), 262.

¹⁶⁴ Simmel, “The Ruin,” 262

¹⁶⁵ Simmel, “The Ruin,” 263

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ J.K. Huysmans, “Le muse des arts décoratifs et l’architecture cuite” (1886) in *Certains* (Paris, Union Générale d’éditions, 1975), 393-99, quoted and translated in Philippe Junod, “The Future in the Past: Note on the Anticipatory Ruin,” *Oppositions* 26 (1984), 57.

permanence that determines the monument's status. Perhaps, these writers might suggest, every monument is a ruin, whether or not it is actually perceived or employed as such by its audience. The real distinction between the ruin and the monument, then, is determined entirely by what it is about the object that we value and pay attention to.

Merewether, too, considers the ruin to be the monument's antitype. It is specifically the ruin's status as void and trace of loss, rather than positive matter, that makes the ruin the monument's other. While the monument is the result of a building up of matter by the artist, the ruin is breaking apart of that matter, an index of destruction and time, rather than a new structure implicating human creative impetus. Rather than replacing loss with, for example, a war monument as an aestheticizing stand-in, the ruin is itself the trace of loss. While the monument seeks to replace loss with something concrete, the ruin preserves and acknowledges absence, and by refusing its viewers any sort of completion or completeness, the ruin is a more effective tool for mourning. This is particularly the case for Merewether in relation to the ruins that result from manmade disaster. Referring to Freud's influence on Daniel Libeskind and Lebbeus Woods, Merewether writes: "they think that the past cannot be erased, and that build over the place of ruins would be a suppression and denial of what has come to pass. Their work refutes the domestication of violence and the obliteration of history, seeking to frame what is missing—a void or the space of loss."¹⁶⁸ This can be accomplished only by "an anti-monument that seeks to expose the history by which it has been produced."¹⁶⁹ The ruin thus once again most successfully brings to attention the fact that it is the very lack of intentionality behind the creation of the ruin that allows it to speak more eloquently, and more honestly, about the position of man vis-à-vis the world, than any intentional monument produced by man.

All of these writers are thus also interested in establishing that the ruin was, indeed, once a monument. The argument for a total break between ruin and monument is fundamentally dependant on the status of the ruin as a transformed version of the monument. Again, while this may seem paradoxical, it is precisely the evolutionary relationship between the two that allows them to occupy such diametrically opposed positions in all of these works. Every ruin was once a monument, and it is this "once-ness" that is so telling. Simmel in particular is at pains to drive home the fact that the ruin is an entirely new entity from what it once was. He writes: "there has emerged a new whole, a characteristic unity... a new meaning seizes on this incident, comprehending it and its spiritual form in a unity which is no longer grounded in human purposiveness, but in that depth where human purposiveness and the working of non-conscious natural forces grow from their common root."¹⁷⁰ Thus, it would be improper to speak of the ruin as incomplete or lacking a unity of form (as Merewether does), because the ruin is not so much a decayed building, as a completely new entity, with its own standards for completeness of form, which encompass its irregular appearance. For Simmel, it is the fact that the ruin, once a monument that displayed man's subjection of nature (as raw matter) to himself (as spirit), now completely reverses that order, making something man created into matter with which nature creates, that is so poetic and eloquent. That is, as monument becomes ruin, slave becomes master. This separation of the monument from its own decay is tied, again, to the Romantics, whose fully historicist reading of the ruin meant that matter could be detached from its history and development.

¹⁶⁸ Charles Merewether, "Traces of Loss," in *Irresistible Decay: Ruins Reclaimed*, ed. Michael S. Roth (Los Angeles, CA, 1997), 33.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ Simmel, "The Ruin," 260

Attempts to wrest the early modern ruin from the grip of romantic interpretation are surprisingly rare. In many cases, writers acknowledge that early modern ruins pre-date the Romantic reading, but that they nevertheless “anticipate” the emotional and melancholic register of later ruin imagery. Paul Zucker writes of seventeenth-century images of ruins, in contrast to Renaissance ruins: “The combination of destroyed architectural elements with bushes and other plants growing out of the stone, and their contrast of living and moving human beings—as ‘staffage’ under the pretext of telling a religious or mythological story—mirror clearly the mood, the appeal to emotional sensitiveness that later on should be called Romanticism.”¹⁷¹ In addition to its blatant anachronism, this quote contains a more subtle attempt to remake the early modern ruin as proto-Romantic: by describing the actual content of the image as mere pretext, Zucker implies that the seventeenth-century works of art he discusses are also proto-abstract.

In one of the only studies devoted largely to seventeenth-century Dutch ruin imagery, Susan Kuretsky less directly relates her subject matter to the Romantic. Instead, Kuretsky performs a perhaps even more uneasy form of anachronism by immediately falling into the present tense when discussing ruin subject matter. Like Diderot and Goethe, Kuretsky offers her own “Reflections on Ruins,” while implying that those reflections are those of the Dutch artists that are her apparent subject matter. Discussing a 1616 etching by Willem Buyteweche, she writes:

Yet the spell cast both by actual sites and by artists’ representations of them involves more than notions of *memento mori*, for ruins are not simply the remains of lost wholes. The transformation that divests a structure of its original appearance and purpose produces a new entity with equal—or even greater—resonance or meaning. Ruins are creations of time and circumstance, for the very processes that erode or destroy a physical structure are those that remake it on different terms.¹⁷²

Here, Kuretsky, seemingly unconsciously, collapses represented and representation, past and present, Buyteweche and herself. Buyteweche’s ruins are implied to have the power to push 21st-century viewers into melancholic reflections on their own society. Kuretsky’s essay thus implies the very thing that Diderot and Goethe explicitly declare. If even an article such as Kuretsky’s, which seeks to place Dutch seventeenth-century ruin imagery within its historical, cultural, and political context, can fall into the Romantic trap so quickly, it should come as no surprise that this type of discussion is quite common.

Even those scholars who do not write about early modern ruins in explicitly or even implicitly Romantic terms are nevertheless wary of providing an alternative reading, and instead, attempt to side-step the issue altogether by trying to steer clear of interpretation entirely. There are no books or articles dedicated to the early modern ruin, in stark contrast to the publishing history of the modern ruin. When scholars do discuss the early modern ruin, they do so with extreme caution, tending to avoid the issue of meaning or interpretation, and instead understanding the ruins as little more than subject matter, prop, and aesthetic pretext, not unlike those scholars, like Zucker, who understand early modern ruins as proto-Romantic.

¹⁷¹ Paul Zucker, “Ruins. An Aesthetic Hybrid,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 20.2 (Winter, 1961), 122.

¹⁷² Susan Kuretsky, “Dutch Ruins: Time and Transformation,” in *Time and Transformation in 17th-century Dutch Art*, ed. Susan Kuretsky (Poughkeepsie, NY: Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, 2005), 17-18.

Leonard Barkan is the most notable exemption. In his *Unearthing the Past*, he argued that it was incompleteness that the Renaissance appreciated about not only what it unearthed, but about the very art that was produced during the Renaissance itself. Archaeology as a developing discipline plays a key role in his considerations of the historical discovery of the past, which might, by extension, be seen as the discovery of the self, as Barkan implies. Barkan writes that the Renaissance fully implicated itself and its own modernity within the structure of history's eternal pastness. He argues that antique ruins already "[arrived] out of the earth with almost autochthonic independence" in the Renaissance¹⁷³. On the one hand, then, Barkan seems to imply that the Renaissance totally lacked a historicist viewpoint, making present and new, as they did, every ruin that emerged from the ground. On the other hand, his argument that unearthed classical ruins could be appreciated as ruins, and not simply as incomplete vestiges of a specific past to be apprehended, suggests precisely the type of relationship to ruins that many scholars identify as specifically eighteenth century in origin. Barkan's nuanced reading of the Renaissance suggests that it was precisely the Renaissance ability to make modern and entirely present the things of the past that allows there to exist an appreciation of the fragment in its own right, and not merely as an incomplete vestige of a past that wants to be known.

In contrast to Barkan, Philippe Junod, in an article on the eighteenth-century ruin, sees the Renaissance ruin as fundamentally pre-historicist, and thus, by extension, pre-modern. Junod characterizes a historicist view as fundamentally about the apprehension of distance. The precise attitude towards that distance is a major way in which different post-Renaissance periods can be defined. Junod marks the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as the beginnings of "a new way of living the time of history."¹⁷⁴ It is during this period that the "anticipation of decrepitude is a way of making relative the present," which is to say that they saw the "translation of the archaeological perspective toward the future."¹⁷⁵ While the Renaissance appreciated the ruin, in his view, as an incomplete remembrance, or a mere pretext for a meditation on a distanced history and the fall of empires, the eighteenth century began to value the ruin as possessing an autonomous existence, and became the site for the celebration of a generalized sense of the irretrievability of the past. This was taken even further in the nineteenth century with the advent of the "anticipatory ruin," which suggested that the archaeological was finally coming into its own. That is, for Junod, archaeology could reach full development only once the historicist view had reached its radical final point, in which the present itself can be distanced and presented as irretrievable. Junod thus sees the early modern ruin as essentially subject matter, and little else. Ironically, given that Junod is clearly using the early modern ruin as an antitype to prove the importance of the eighteenth-century ruin, it is here that his argument dovetails with the way in which early modernists now tend to discuss seventeenth-century ruin imagery.

Both Junod and Barkan thus appear to break with Panofsky over the role of the Renaissance in the development of historical consciousness: while Panofsky sees the Renaissance as a breaking with the medieval lack of distance between antiquity and the present, Barkan argues that antiquity still retains a real connection to the present, and the unearthed antiquity was a concrete player in a confrontation and dialogue between the past and the present. On the other hand, Junod seems to disagree on a simpler level, arguing as he does that Panofsky's concept of the birth of objectivity in the Renaissance is "too imperative an example, in that it credits the Renaissance with a progressive phenomenon that will come much later."

¹⁷³ Leonard Barkan, *Unearthing the Past* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), xxxii.

¹⁷⁴ Junod, "The Future in the Past," 43.

¹⁷⁵ Junod, "The Future in the Past," 56.

(Junod 45) For Barkan, in contrast to Junod, it is precisely the lack of distancing between the Renaissance viewer and the unearthed antiquity that places the Renaissance at the beginning of a fundamental change in western thought: the birth of aesthetics. Thus, while an objective distancing between past and present is not yet available, the dynamic Renaissance relationship with antiquity allowed for a different kind of objectivity or distancing, that between history and appearance, otherwise known as aesthetics. According to Barkan, one of the key developments of modernity was directly related to the Renaissance understanding of ruins.

In her 2000 *The Vision of Rome in Late Renaissance Florence*, Margaret McGowan writes that “the significance of the fragment or the ruin lay in its referential power.”¹⁷⁶ While her argument initially sounds closely related to Barkan’s, McGowan actually pulls back from Barkan’s more radical reading of the Renaissance interest in the ruin, and largely refrains from arguing for the greater implications of the Renaissance “urge to reconstruct.” Essential for Barkan is the fact that antiquities could be appreciated in their own right, and not merely in terms of their iconography or the texts to which they refer. They were not received as historical artifacts, but as art, as aesthetic objects independent of a particular history or narrative text.

When Renaissance artists look at works in the tradition of their own Christian civilization, whether religious or secular, they see a complex picture of the origins of their own society. Such art radiates meaning by reflecting the society’s past. Excavated works seem by comparison almost nonrepresentational. Their alienness and the fragmentary nature of their exhumation create a new arena for art as independent from clear denotation, artistic conventions, conceptual significance, and sociological function. What does that leave?...The discovery of the great fragments of ancient art puts Renaissance artists in mind of--art¹⁷⁷.

McGowan, on the other hand, locates the value of ruined antiquities in their ability to reference a specific time and place, and by extension, to allow viewers and contemplators to imagine the restoration of the classical past in the Renaissance present. While McGowan argues for the “creative power of ruins,” her study essentially contends that antiquities were valuable in the Renaissance because they demonstrated what the highly valued classical past was like. In this sense, McGowan, unlike Barkan, does not actually attempt to analyze what ruins meant or implied about the Renaissance relationship to the past.

The Problem of Dutch Ruins

While Barkan’s reading of classical ruins in relation to Italian Renaissance art is productive and original, breaking from the Romantic version of ruins, it is not necessarily helpful in the case of Dutch ruins and ruin culture. The Netherlands obviously provide an entirely different history of ruins than Rome, which is the almost exclusive topic of discussions of early modern ruins. The Netherlands lacked any classical ruins, perhaps to its chagrin. In the seventeenth century, the Dutch Republic attempted to find connections between the fledgling state and Roman occupied-Netherlands. In particular, the government sought to draw parallels between the Dutch Revolt and the revolt of the Batavians (a Germanic tribe) against the Romans,

¹⁷⁶ Margaret McGowan, *The Vision of Rome in Late Renaissance Florence* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2000), 129.

¹⁷⁷ Barkan, *Unearthing the Past*, xxxii

known to the Dutch through Tacitus.¹⁷⁸ But the physical evidence for the Roman occupation was scarce, and did not include a great many monumental ruins, and certainly no ruins of classical art or important architecture. The most well-known and most often represented ruins were actually the remains of far more recent late medieval buildings. Given the preoccupation in the seventeenth century with the Dutch Republic's ties to the Roman past, it is striking how rarely Roman ruins were represented by Dutch artists, particularly in contrast to the huge popularity of representations of medieval ruins amongst the Dutch. I will discuss possible reasons for this later in this chapter, but for now, it will suffice to say that this disparity was perhaps politically motivated.

In addition to lacking notable millennia-old ruins, the Dutch Republic largely lacked ruins that were formed in the gradual manner of classical ruins. The most popular Dutch ruins had become ruins only in the sixteenth and even early seventeenth centuries. Most of the ruins that were depicted by Dutch artists were of medieval buildings destroyed during the war with Spain. Among the most important of these monuments were the thirteenth-century Castle Brederode and Huis ter Kleef, both blown up by the Spanish during the Siege of Haarlem of 1572-73, and the eleventh-century Egmond Castle near Alkmaar, destroyed by order of William of Orange to prevent the Spanish from occupying it in 1574. Other notable ruins of this type were the early twelfth-century Rijnsburg Abbey near Leiden, also destroyed in 1573; the fourteenth-century Castle Spangen near Rotterdam, burned by the Spanish in 1572; the late fourteenth-century Ubbergen Castle near Nijmegen, destroyed by locals in 1582 to prevent it from falling into Spanish hands; the fifteenth-century Carthusian monastery of Delft, destroyed by Delft citizens in 1573¹⁷⁹.

Straying even further from classical ruins was a new tendency after 1648 to depict relatively new or otherwise intact urban monuments as ruins. One of the most popular of such monuments was the Montelbaanstoren in Amsterdam. The tower was a remnant of the city's old medieval walls, but it had been converted into a belfry tower in 1606 by city architect Hendrick de Keyser. Rembrandt and other artists chose, at mid-century, to completely omit the new spire and depict it instead as a medieval ruin. Rembrandt's numerous "from life" drawings of the new city wall and bulwarks surrounding the city also tended to artificially advance the state of decay of the wall and its many windmills. Jacob van Ruisdael famously prematurely decayed headstones from the Jewish burial ground in Ouderkerk near Amsterdam in his *Jewish Cemetery*, which also included the ruins of Egmond Castle in one of its versions. Ruisdael was, along with Rembrandt, one of the artists who most consistently depicted degraded urban monuments, while conspicuously avoiding some of the most important and well-known building projects undertaken by the city. Ruisdael literally turns his back on the new town hall in his many drawings and paintings of the urban space of Amsterdam, and depicts instead older monuments, such as the medieval Waag, while completely ignoring the recently finished new town hall, just a few meters away. This tendency among urban artists to afflict or altogether ignore the new, urban, and monumental, even in "from life" sketches, suggests that the more well-known depiction of country ruins should be discussed within the context of the urban.

This presents a far greater problem for wresting the Dutch ruin from the Romantic reading than is the case with the classical ruin. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century artists and

¹⁷⁸ Tacitus, *Histories* 4.14-15. On the interest in the Batavians in the Dutch Republic, see I. Schöffer, "The Batavian Myth during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries", in *Britain and the Netherlands v. 5*, ed. J.S. Bromley (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1975), 78-101.

¹⁷⁹ For more on these ruins, see A.G. Schulte, ed., *Ruines in Nederland* (Zwolle: Wanders Uitgevers, 1997).

writers, like the Dutch, tended to be more interested in relatively recent ruins, and in many cases, ruins that did not yet exist. Hubert Robert, known as “Robert des ruines,” so closely associated was he with ruinous subject matter, famously depicted the Grand Galerie of the Louvre as a ruined sculpture gallery in 1796. (Figure 0.2) Not only was the Grand Galerie in a far from ruinous state at the time he made this painting, it had not even been turned into a display space for art yet.¹⁸⁰ In fact, this painting’s pendant was another depiction of the Grand Galerie, but this time of it as a new art gallery. (Figure 3.1) In 1789, he had depicted the Grand Galerie as a painting gallery, but one in which every work of art depicted ruins. (Figure 3.2) Robert was clearly interested in drawing connections between the melancholic nobility of the fall of ancient Rome and the “future history” of France. Amongst the decaying ruins, he has even interpolated stock figures of picturesque Roman peasants, familiar from Robert’s own paintings of contemporary Rome. Robert’s paintings provide a typical, if unusually literal, late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century interpretation of ruins, suggesting that their value was in providing the material for contemplation of the precariousness and grandeur of one’s own society.

Caspar David Friedrich’s ruin paintings seem to bear an even closer relationship to Dutch ruin paintings, and in particular to works by Ruisdael. Gothic ruins, dark forests, dramatic clouds, and even broken gravestones are closely associated with both artists. Friedrich, like many other Romantic artists, including Turner, were influenced by Ruisdael’s landscapes, and it is in large part due to those artists’ interest that the earlier artist’s work is so well-known today. However, the Romantic adoption of many of the tropes of seventeenth-century Dutch landscape painting has also contributed to our current difficulty in viewing these works apart from the Romantic baggage attached to them by artists like Friedrich and Goethe.

Writing about the *Jewish Cemetery*, Joseph Koerner, in his study of Friedrich, states that “it evinces in us not only a solemn mood, but a religious conviction of ‘the vanity and evanescence of all human things.’ Yet such a picture does not constitute allegory. It simply awakens sentiments already associated with Ruisdael’s motif as it would exist in nature—a graveyard in a sublime setting—and the intensity of the evocation alone is the artist’s proper achievement.”¹⁸¹ Koerner here implies the universality, and thus ahistoricity, of what amounts to the Romantic reading of ruins as sublime and melancholic. The circularity of many of even the most astute readings of both Ruisdael and Friedrich, is well illustrated by Koerner’s interpretation, which explains the appeal of Ruisdael to Friedrich by means of Ruisdael’s ability to capture the inherently Romantic aspect of nature in his pre-Romantic painting.

Even Seymour Slive, the leading expert of Ruisdael, cannot resist a melancholic allegorical reading of Ruisdael’s *Jewish Cemetery*. Slive is very careful to avoid any overtly Romantic references in his reading, and is scrupulous in his separation of later interpretations from a historical reading of the painting. Yet in taking for granted the allegorical reading of this painting, Slive still manages to fall under the spell of the Romantic.

Both pictures [referring to the two versions of the *Jewish Cemetery*] are among the rare landscapes by the artists that were painted with a deliberate allegorical intent. The combination of their conspicuous tombs, ruins, large dead beeches, broken tree trunks and a small waterfall alludes to the transience of all life and the ultimate futility of

¹⁸⁰ For more on Robert’s ruins, see Nina Dubin, *Futures and Ruins: Eighteenth-Century Paris and the Art of Hubert Robert* (Los Angeles, Ca.: Getty Research Institute, 2010), 152-56.

¹⁸¹ Joseph Koerner, *Caspar David Friedrich and the subject of landscape* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), 125.

humankind's endeavors, a common theme in seventeenth-century Dutch art. On the other hand, the burst of light that breaks through the ravaging clouds of each painting, their rainbows and the luxuriant growth that contrasts with the dead trees offer a promise of hope and renewed life. Their allegorical content has been recognized by virtually every author who has discussed them since they entered the literature early in the nineteenth century...¹⁸²

While it is true that *vanitas* imagery was popular in Dutch seventeenth-century art, it is notable that the motifs he draws out from this painting (most of which are present in many of Ruisdael's other works) as specifically allegorical are precisely those elements that would become hallmarks of Romantic ruin imagery. Furthermore, the language he uses to describe those elements is unmistakably Romantic. And how does Slive distinguish between the "deliberate allegorical content" of the *Jewish Cemetery* paintings and the presumably absent or unintentional allegorical content of Ruisdael's other landscapes that are full of dead trees, ruins, and waterfalls? This is another example of the circular and anachronistic reasoning that depends upon the later reading of these works by the Romantics, whose values were initially inspired by works like Ruisdael's. The later interest in the *Jewish Cemetery*, and the particulars of that interest, continue to color current scholarly interpretations of the paintings, making these works either exceptional within Ruisdael's oeuvre (as they are for Slive), or evidence of a far more pervasive hidden allegorical content in his work¹⁸³.

One must also question why the particular pictorial elements picked out as significant in the *Jewish Cemetery* (ruins, dead trees, waterfalls, clouds) point towards a more deliberate allegorical content than other elements. Slive and many other scholars point towards Dutch emblem books as evidence of the deeper meaning that contemporary viewers were supposedly meant to find beneath the seemingly purely descriptive surface of works of art. One problem is that the Dutch were so prolific in their emblem-making, that virtually every element in a Dutch painting could be said to have allegorical content. Again, it is likely only because the particular elements in the *Jewish Cemetery* came to be of special significance in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that we now understand those very elements to be "more meaningful" than other objects, like grass, shadows, rivers, and trees.

A larger question, then, is whether or not iconography provides the only way of dealing with images that include ruins. Alpers, of course, has offered a critique of the iconographic reading of Dutch art that continues to reverberate today. There is, as we have seen, no doubt that these images were read as containing deeper significance in later periods, and as proponents of the "hidden symbolism" approach to Dutch art (and clearly influenced by Erwin Panofsky), most notably Eddy de Jongh, have convincingly argued, emblems certainly provided a cultural context in which Dutch seventeenth-century viewers would have seen and understood these works of

¹⁸² Seymour Slive, *Jacob van Ruisdael. A complete catalogue of his paintings, drawings, and etchings* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 181.

¹⁸³ Walford argues that the iconography of many of Ruisdael's paintings can be explained by his religious beliefs. E. John Walford, *Jacob van Ruisdael and the Perception of Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991). Also see: F.J. Duparc, "Het Joodse kerkhof van Jacob van Ruisdael," *Antiek CVI/4* (Nov. 1981), 225-230; Iouryi Kouznetsov, "Sur le symbolisme dans les paysages de Jacob van Ruisdael," *Bulletin du Musée National de Varsovie* 14, 1-4 (1973), 31-41; Ernst Scheyer, "The Iconography of Jacob van Ruisdael's Cemetery," *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts* LV/3 (1977), 133-146.

art.¹⁸⁴ But it is also clear that those elements, and readings of those elements, attended to by the Romantics are perhaps unavoidably favored over others.

Historical and Political Context for Midcentury Dutch Ruins

In order to find a way out from under the ubiquitous Romantic reading of the Dutch early modern ruin, we need to first consider its historical and political context. By looking at the context for the making of Dutch ruin images, we can begin to separate them from the universalist generalities favored by the Romantics. But connecting these works of art to specific contexts might also allow them to serve as a case study in the function and meaning of the early modern ruin; considering the circumstances of their making reveals a new model for understanding what might have been appealing or useful about the representation of ruins.

Another problem for the understanding of the Dutch ruin imagery is the fact that Dutch artists produced depictions of ruins at two distinct points in the seventeenth century, and these images tend to be collapsed with each other. During the Twelve Years' Truce, Dutch ruin imagery proliferated, almost exclusively in print and drawing. In particular, artists from Haarlem produced numerous graphic representations of local Dutch ruins. These ruin images had a major impact on both the production and the consumption of the ruin paintings, drawings, and prints from Amsterdam artists at midcentury. Yet we need to attend to the significant differences between the intention, formal appearance, and historical and political context of the early seventeenth-century and the midcentury ruin images. These two sets of ruins become a major part of Dutch art at the two most significant moments in the birth of the Dutch Republic as a political entity: the earlier images coincide with the Twelve Years' Truce, which began with the first formal recognition of the Republic by foreign states and the later images appear shortly after the recognition of the Republic by the Spanish themselves in 1648, with the Treaty of Münster, which ended the Eighty Years' War.¹⁸⁵ At both moments, the ruins depicted were local and recent (Medieval buildings ruined intentionally during the late sixteenth century, as opposed to ancient).

However, the differences between these two groups of images are perhaps more significant. While the early seventeenth-century ruin images were exclusively rural, depicted as decayed by time (signaled through softened edges and plants growing out of cracks and grooves), and the subject of contemplation of tourists, the midcentury images often take urban ruins as their subject, and emphasize recent destruction and spectacle or devastation. Furthermore, the movement of ruin imagery to large-scale painting from print and drawing should not be underestimated. While it is certainly likely, even unavoidable, that the early seventeenth-century prints paved the way for paintings of ruins, one must also take into account both the forty or so year lag between the two, and the very different scale of ambition and financial investment represented by these two media. Furthermore, while the paintings draw from some of the visual conventions of the prints, the content, form, and audience for the two were quite different. By collapsing these two moments of ruin image production, we have failed to account for the changing function and register of these images, which in turn has made it far harder to escape the idea of a single ruin iconography.

¹⁸⁴ Eddy de Jongh, *Kwesties van betekenis: thema en motief in de Nederlandse schilderkunst van de zeventiende eeuw* (Leiden: Primavera Pers, 1995).

¹⁸⁵ On the relationship between the earlier prints of Dutch ruins and the early history of the Dutch Republic, see: Levesque, *Journey Through the Landscape*, esp. 109-110.

As I argued in Chapter 1, Amsterdam's government used its considerable resources to represent the city as a modern, international (i.e. neo-classical), and tightly controlled urban space, through its deployment of print, commissioned painted cycles, and architecture. The city's representation of itself as Rome resurrected at the height of its Republican past was likely intended to be read in contrast to contemporary Catholic Rome and its urban spaces cluttered with ruins, decadent Baroque structures, and the detritus of construction. In the midst of this rhetoric of newness and completion in direct contrast to the rubble and mess at the heart of the Catholic Church, paintings, prints, and drawings of contemporary Amsterdam as itself strewn with ruins and unfinished buildings would have been seen as at best an alternative to, and at worst a criticism of the city government's version of Amsterdam. It might be argued that these artists were presenting the city as having a history as old and venerable as former outposts of the Roman Empire, but this, too, would have been read as antithetical to the ways in which the city government intended for Amsterdam to be understood. By placing Amsterdam in the company of contemporary Rome, rather than a fantasy of Republican Rome in all its glory, by appropriating Rome's ruination rather than its pristine past, these images undermined the city government's vision of Amsterdam as a privileged city of the future, and as Republican Rome's true successor.

The depiction of contemporary Amsterdam in ruins would have defaulted into a pointed and antithetical stance to the official representation of the city precisely because they seemed to more accurately represent the physical reality of life in the city. What the city government's campaign to depict Amsterdam as pristine, whole, and neo-Roman was at pains to obscure was the long-term and massive upheaval of public spaces that it entailed. Modernization, then as now, entailed a type of centrally-planned and wholesale destruction and construction that was largely unheard of up until this point. Rome was undergoing a similar rebuilding effort at precisely the same moment, but while Rome's urban development was funded and designed by a diverse group of patrons, notably the Church and wealthy private citizens, the renovation of Amsterdam was organized by the civic government.¹⁸⁶ Amsterdam's urban development was therefore far more centralized and, in many ways, more far-reaching. The expansion and development of Amsterdam's canal ring by the city government was a very early example of systematic city planning in Europe. Not until the Haussmannization of Paris do we see in Europe any urban development approaching the scale of Amsterdam's in the mid-seventeenth century.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ On the renovation of Rome under Pope Alexander VII in the mid-seventeenth century, see: Richard Krautheimer, *The Rome of Alexander VII, 1655-1667* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985); Dorothy Metzger Habel, *The Urban Development of Rome in the Age of Alexander VII* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Aloisio Antinori, *La magnificenza e l'utile: progetto urbano e monarchia papale nella Roma del Seicento* (Rome: Gangemi, 2008). On the important role of the construction of fountains and aqueducts on the development of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Rome, see: Katherine Wentworth Rinne, *The Waters of Rome: aqueducts, fountains, and the birth of the Baroque city* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010). On the role of "the public" on the development of Baroque Rome, see: San Juan, *Rome: A City Out of Print*; and Dorothy Metzger Habel, *"When All of Rome Was Under Construction": The Building Process in Baroque Rome* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State Press, 2013).

¹⁸⁷ On Haussmannization, see: Françoise Boudon, "La 'Haussmannisation' du centre de Paris: le nouveau parcellaire," *Storia della città* 5 (1977), 34-53; Roger Kain, "Napoleon I and urban planning Paris," *Connoisseur* 197.791 (Jan 1978), 44-51; Pier Poala Penzo, *Parigi dopo Haussmann: urbanistica e politica alla fine dell'Ottocento (1871-1900)* (Florence: Alinea editrice, 1990); Jean Des Cars and Pierre Pino, *Paris—Haussmann* (Paris: Edition du Pavillon de l' Arsenal: Picard, 1991); David Jordan, *Transforming Paris: The Life and Labors of Baron Haussmann* (New York: Free Press, 1995); Christopher Mead, "Urban contingency and the problem of

The Canal Belt development was, furthermore, an unusual case of the government attempting to control the use of private space and property. Thus, the government controlled not only the location, shape, and scale of the Canal Belt overall, but also the very character and function of the district: the type, size, and function of privately-built architecture, the class of people that could reside there, and the kinds of commerce that could take place were all controlled by regulations the city put in place even before the sale of the empty lots, the size of which, too, had been predetermined by the government.¹⁸⁸ The *keuren*, or ordinances, passed by the city government regulating the Canal Belt were unusually extensive and minutely detailed, and as such must be among the earliest documents of the types of urban regulations and building codes that we see today. These *keuren* regulated the minimum and maximum size of each lot of land, the height, width, and building material of the buildings placed on those lots, the depth of the backyard, and the type, size and placement of porches and awnings on the façade of the buildings.¹⁸⁹

Plots were strictly forbidden from being subdivided, undoubtedly in order to prevent lower-income and smaller homes from being built. The Canal Belt was, from the outset, envisioned as the home of the city's elite, and a showcase of the city's wealth, prestige, sophistication, and international taste. As such, the city did everything it could to prevent any but the very wealthiest people from moving into the Canal Belt district. The plots themselves were very large, and thus extremely expensive. Because subdivision was not allowed, people were prevented from pooling their resources in order to purchase an otherwise prohibitively large and expensive plot of land. The city also required that each plot have a garden, further controlling not only the character and appearance of the Canal Belt properties, but also, once again, foiling any attempts to construct second buildings behind the structures that fronted the canals. All of these regulations were, notably, conditions of sale of the plots of land: if you were unwilling to abide by these ordinances, you were not allowed to purchase a plot.¹⁹⁰

Other ordinances controlled the types of business that could be housed in the Canal Belt. It was a longtime common practice in Europe to quarantine smelly or dangerous industry from the rest of the city, and tanners, for instance, were often relegated to the outer limits of the city.¹⁹¹ In Amsterdam's Canal Belt, these types of regulations were placed in writing and taken much further, particularly as the Canal Belt expansion entered into its final phases. Prohibited from practicing their trade in this area were "smiths, stonemasons, stone merchants, timber merchants...cooper and *others who do labor upon the Anvil*. Breweries, malting houses, soap works, sugar refineries, glassworks, renderers' works, whalebone factories, oil and whale-oil

representation in Second Empire Paris," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 54.2 (June 1995), 138-174; Heath Massey Schenker, "Parks and politics during the Second Empire in Paris," *Landscape Journal* 14.2 (Oct 1995), 201-219; Jean-François Chevrier, "Mobilité urbaine et theater métropolitain," *Cahiers de la recherche architecturale* 41 (1997); Eric Fournier, *Paris en ruines: du Paris Haussmannien au Paris communard* (Paris: Imago, 2008). On urban development in Paris, see: David van Zanten, *Building Paris: architectural institutions and the transformation of the French capital, 1830-1870* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Christopher Curtis Mead, *Making modern Paris: Victor Baltard's Central Markets and the urban practice of architecture* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012);

¹⁸⁸Haan, "The Greatness and Difficulty of the Work, 39-40.

¹⁸⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰W.F. Heinemeijer et al., *Amsterdam in kaarten. Verandering van de stad in vier eeuwen cartografie* (Antwerp: Zomer & Keuning, 1987), 116.

¹⁹¹The classics on the separation of the abject or filthy from society, see: Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*; Mary Douglas, *Purity and danger: an analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo* (London: Routledge, 1966); Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*.

works, trades using ‘hot pressure vats’, camphor vermilion vats, oil-seed crushers and wax smelters” were also prohibited.¹⁹² This list suggests that, as the city government felt its way through the process of controlling the use of private property, it found it necessary to become increasingly specific about what was prohibited in the wealthy canal district. The *keuren* were also often redundant in terms of what they allowed and disallowed (as seen above), suggesting that its regulations were continually circumvented.

The increasing specificity of the city’s building regulations hint at the government’s difficulties in preserving the intended character of this area, and thus provide an early case study of the challenges civic regulation of private property. The government attempted to determine the character of the area through its control of the initial development of the area: through a scale of very high prices that increased from the Prinsengracht through the Herengracht, they sought to ensure that the quality and size of structures, and the wealth of their residents, would likewise increase as the canals approached the (public) center of the city; and the very specific *keuren* were conditions of sale. While the development of the Canal Belt was presented as a means to accommodate the massive increase in the city’s population in the first half of the century, this large, central, and time- and capital-consuming project was reserved, through prohibitively high costs and regulations, for a very small, very wealthy sector of the population, literally marginalizing the lower classes from a newly-defined city center.¹⁹³

As the increasing specificity of the *keuren* indicate, the government was constantly coming up against buyers who followed the letter but not the spirit of the ordinances. The specificity of the ordinances increased as the government encountered more and more challenges to the unspoken but implicit intended function of the canal ring district. There is evidence that those with the resources to buy into the area fought against the regulation of their property by finding often ingenious ways around the city’s ordinances. In 1614, a brewer purchased plots of land in the canal district and began building a malting complex. While his neighbors complained, and the city council threatened to demolish the complex, nothing was actually done, since there were at that time no regulations explicitly banning such a structure or the unpleasant industry that took place within it.¹⁹⁴ As we have seen, both breweries and malting houses would be explicitly forbidden by 1663.¹⁹⁵

The Canal Belt, which was under construction more or less continuously from 1612 through 1663, required an enormous expenditure of city funds, more than fifty years of disruption and construction, the razing of many homes lying outside the old walls of the city, and the expropriation of land previously outside the city’s jurisdiction, all to benefit a very small portion of the population, in a district whose area would eventually come close to exceeding that of the rest of the city put together. As we have already seen, resistance to various parts of the development of the city in the mid-seventeenth century came from all sides, including those who had no explicit financial stake in any of these building projects. We saw in Chapter 2 how the new Town Hall, the most visible and well-known part of the city’s renovation, was heavily criticized by burghers whose homes were razed in order to make room for the new building and its sight lines, by writers and artists, and by some of the town councilors themselves. Perhaps

¹⁹² Heinemeijer et al., *Amsterdam in kaarten*, 45.

¹⁹³ Haan, “The Greatness and Difficulty of the Work”, 39-40.

¹⁹⁴ Haan, “The Greatness and Difficulty of the Work”, 40; Taverne, *In ‘t land van belofte*, 166-67.

¹⁹⁵ I.H. van Eeghen, *Vier eeuwen Herengracht. Geveltenkeningen van alle huizen aan de gracht, twee historische overzichten en de beschrijving van elk pand met zijn eigenaars en bewoners* (Amsterdam: Stadsdrukkerij, 1967), 121, 124-125.

more strikingly, the Jordaan district, which is discussed in the literature as an area of the city built alongside the Canal Belt to accommodate craftsmen, was actually, according to Jaap Evert Abrahamse's research, the direct result of the city council's inability to control the illegal appropriation and use of land outside the old city walls. Rather than a district designed and built by the city, the Jordaan was an illegal suburb whose residents essentially gained squatter's rights to continue living in their homes built along the drainage ditches directly outside the city (which is why the streets and canals in this area do not run parallel to the Canal Belt). In order to avoid public unrest, the government opted to simply build the new fortifications around the area, in effect making it a legal part of the city of Amsterdam.¹⁹⁶

The Town Hall in Ruins

After considering Amsterdam's long history of continuous demolition and construction, it might now seem unsurprising, even unavoidable, that many Amsterdam artists began to depict within Amsterdam and its environs around mid-century. However, we have seen the great lengths to which the city government went to avoid depicting the construction, let alone destruction, that the expansion and renovation of the city required. Dutch artists were not subject to any imperative, biological, cultural or otherwise, to depict what was there, no matter how invested in the everyday, contemporary scene they might appear to be. In fact, just as the city government commissioned works of art that avoided or simply excised the old, decrepit, in between, or ruined, the artists discussed in this chapter just as willfully avoided the depiction of new buildings or fantasies of completed structures in favor of incompleteness, decay, and future fantasies of the destruction of the new. The ruin images I discuss in this chapter therefore offer a surprisingly neat reversal of the city government's commissioning practices.

Looking at these ruin images in the context of both the government's program of commissioning and the development of the city itself suggests that these ruin images cannot be productively read as exclusively or even necessarily partially about either nostalgia or historicism. Instead, we can see them as offering alternative versions of collective history and urban identity. Attending to the historical, social, and political contexts of these images allows us to understand not simply what they might have meant, or been intended to mean, but also, and this is my interest here, how they might have been understood to operate, aside from the intentions of the artist, within a particular social and historical milieu. While in this section I will discuss various theories that propose some type of resistance on the level of intention in the making of these ruin images, I want to emphasize that an excavation of intention is not necessary to understanding that these images would have likely been read as resistant or at least alternative within this context, and that the radicality of their difference from the official image of Amsterdam, in content, style, and form, would have been visible to their audience.

The images that I will discuss can be categorized into four groups: the town hall, disaster ruins, suburban ruins, and future ruins. There is some overlap between these groups, particularly with representations of the town hall. In spite of their many differences, all of the images represent ruins of identifiable structures or in identifiable locations from either Amsterdam or its environs. This is notable because there was also a strong tradition in the Dutch Republic or representing shabby, often inhabited, humble structures in generically rustic settings. In the first decades of the seventeenth century, Abraham Bloemaert, Jacques de Gheyn II, and Pieter Molijn produced numerous drawings and prints of dilapidated rural buildings falling into disrepair, not unlike their peasant tenants. Often these types of images had biblical subjects, even while their

¹⁹⁶Abrahamse, *De grote uitleg*, 75-76.

settings were distinctly (if generically) contemporary and Dutch. Towards midcentury, Jan van Goyen and Isack van Ostade made a living painting similar subjects for the open market. Ruisdael and Rembrandt likewise produced numerous paintings, in the case of the former, and etchings and drawings in the case of the latter, depicting semi-ruined rustic domestic architecture.

The specificity and identifiability of these ruined structures and their location, therefore, set the images in this chapter apart from most other Dutch ruin paintings, and many ruin prints. As I discussed in Chapter 2, many images of the old and new town halls were made in the wake of the burning down of the old building. While this might seem inevitable, we should keep in mind the rarity of early modern paintings depicting buildings under construction or recently ruined by destruction. Likewise, we saw that the city government did not commission paintings or prints depicting the town hall fire; instead, they commissioned Pieter Saenredam to paint a retrospective image of the old town hall as it would have appeared before it burned down. **(Figure 2.10)** Emphasizing the decrepit nature of the old building, Saenredam's painting functioned as both a record of what had been replaced and as a defense of the supposedly irrefutable superiority of the new building, whose "portrait," painted by Jan van der Ulft, served as its pendant. **(Figure 2.11)** Furthermore, van der Ulft's painting depicted the new town hall as it would appear in the future, when completed, and threw into further relief what then emerges as the semi-ruinous state of the old building.

The old town hall, then, registers multiple absence: Saenredam's painting was the ghost of the building that survived only in memory, it functioned to define the future building in the negative, and, with his written inscription on the façade of the building, Saenredam's own former presence is recorded. The careful representation of the old building's crumbling façade, cracked and mismatched columns, missing woodwork, worn masonry complete with weeds growing out of it, uneven shingles, troublingly large number of metal struts holding together the stones of the façade, warped and stained roof, and even burghers slumped indecorously out front, directly contrasts with the lapidary precision with which Saenredam recorded these very details. The ruinous state of the building served in this context not so much as a monument to loss, but to the necessity of modernization and improvement. The painting provides excellent visual proof, particularly in light of the contract-like testament to the accuracy of his vision inscribed on the surface of the painting itself, of the logic the town hall used to justify the steep costs of building a new town hall: "as the town hall is relatively dilapidated in many places, and to such an extent that it is feared that at some time or another an accident might occur, one could well imagine that rather than [repairing] the old building we make a new one."¹⁹⁷ Van der Ulft's pendant of the future appearance of the Dam describes a far more bustling commercial center: Saenredam's loafing burghers are replaced with men and women from all over the world actively participating in trade, and the worn old town hall now looks old-fashioned, disordered, and insignificant next to the austere and monumental new building designed in the most contemporary international classicizing style. Thus, the closest the city government came to commissioning an image of Amsterdam in ruin was partially an act of disavowal, a statement of what had been replaced, rejected, and left behind. Ruination is only, in this instance, a sign of outmodedness, failure, and even physical danger.

¹⁹⁷ "...alzoohet stadthuijs vrij wat bouwvalligh is tot veele plaetsen, zulx datter t'eenen of t'anderen tyde eenigh ongeluck uyt gevreesd worden te zullen ontstaan, off men oock zoude konnen goedt vinden, inplaets van 't selve een nieuw te doen maecken..." Gemeentearchief Amsterdam, Resolutiën der Vroedschap, 28 Januar 1639, fol. 229. Quoted and translated in: Goosens, "Monuments to Peace in the Netherlands," 630, f. 5.

In contrast, Jan Beerstraten's many drawings and paintings of the old town hall offer a perhaps more nuanced reading of the relationship between the old and the new town hall. **(Figure 3.3)** In a drawing that depicts the remains of the old town hall the morning after the fire that destroyed it, we view the scene from across the Damrak. The building at this point has become an actual ruin, rather than what we might call the functioning ruin of Saenredam's painting. Beerstraten carefully depicts what remained of the town hall in the wake of the fire, only the bell tower and a shell of the first and ground floors of the main structure. He also includes the crowds of people who had come to gawk at the smoking remains of the building the next day. Barely visible behind the empty space where an addition to the town hall once stood are lightly sketched lines that might be the poorly erased evidence of a composition that was moved slightly to the right, or the ghosts of the building that once stood there, or perhaps simply time-inflicted wear to the paper itself. What these lines actually depict is the new town hall, which was rising behind the old building and would have been visible from Beerstraten's viewpoint. They depict the scaffolding that surrounded what little of the new building had gone up at that point. Adding to the confusion already wrought by the lightness of his marks here is the way in which the lines of the background scaffolding seem to meet up almost perfectly with the lines that make up the window frames of the free-standing façade of the ruined building to the right of the bell tower in the middle ground. The merging on the picture plane of the building coming into being with the building that has been destroyed points to the structural similarities between construction and destruction so movingly depicted by Pieter Bruegel in his *Tower of Babel*. **(Figure 3.4)** Beerstraten's drawing both collapses the distinction between the statuses of the two buildings, and reverses the distinction made by the Saenredam-van der Ulft pendants; the old town hall becomes far more monumental, consequential, and historically important than the barely visible fledgling new town hall that appears here to be the ghost and the absence. Fully ruined, rather than slowly decaying, the old building now gains all of the status, consequence, and even aesthetic value that it previously lacked. It is the old town hall that is now worthy of depiction in its own right, a status mirrored in the drawing itself by the crowds of people Beerstraten whose abundance Beerstraten was careful to emphasize.

When Beerstraten decided to make a painting after his drawing, perhaps many years later, he changed the subject and narrative. **(Figure 2.3)** His undated painting was clearly made after this drawing or one very similar to it, but rather than depicting the smoldering ruins of the old town hall, he chose to show the building in the intermediary stage, actually in the midst of burning down. Beerstraten transformed what could at first glance be easily mistaken for a straightforward cityscape into a history painting of a contemporary subject. Certainly, one can imagine that the fire itself would have been a more appealing and exciting subject for a relatively expensive painting than the comparatively dull morning after scene of gawking Amsterdammers. However, what is interesting here is the way in which Beerstraten reverses time in order to give back to the town hall some of its structural integrity that is lost in the drawing. Thus, the roof of the main building has suddenly returned, although flames are just about to burst out from it; the bell tower is aglow with fire only in its upper stories, and the structure to the right now obscures the scaffolding of the new town hall that is visible in the drawing. Many of the gawking onlookers have now been transformed into a bucket brigade, caught in the midst of what we know to be a vain attempt to save the building and its contents. Perhaps most poignant of all are the empty ladders that bear witness in the drawing to the failure of this attempt, which are, in the painting, being clung to by people trying to save the city's paper archive. Notably, Beerstraten included an even more subtle representation of the new town hall than in the drawing, this time

in the form of a tiny portion of scaffolding in the far right background. What had appeared to be erased lines in the drawing were transformed in the painting into what look like lines incised into the paint surface. The tiny, yet sharp, bright white lines thus seem to take on at once more and less visibility than in the drawing: they appear more deliberate, but are simultaneously further marginalized in scale and placement. This a detail that is easily missed, and even more readily misread, and as such, it serves to separate its audience into ones who are from Amsterdam, or at least very familiar with it, and those who are not. Furthermore, those who had seen the building in ruin in the days following the fire would have been able to read backwards from what they had seen (the ruin) to the semi-imagined scene of partial, in progress ruin depicted by Beerstraten, and back to the functional ruin of the old building before it was destroyed. Making this all the more likely was the fact that images of all stages of the old town hall's history were circulating in the city simultaneously. Beerstraten's two images become narratives of the making of ruins, a process read in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as invisible, exceedingly slow, and ineluctably linked to nature and time, but here represented as something visible and the direct effect of a violent cause. The ruin of the town hall literally makes possible Beerstraten's history painting, which is based on his study of the building's ruins. Ruination is linked to narratives that go both backwards and forwards in time, depicting even the future as ruin, or at least, as born out of ruin. Ruin is not here a mark of failure or obsolescence, as the city government would have it, but as the progenitor of a communal history, the fulcrum upon which the past and the future pivot.

Beerstraten made another painting of the old town hall, but this time, his painting was of the ruins themselves. **(Figure 3.5)** This painting, also undated, depicts the ruins of the bell tower from a different direction than we saw in the images discussed above. The painting shows the tower from the back, and the distinctive façade of the main structure is no longer visible. This is a highly unusual angle, and I do not know of any other image of the old town hall depicted from this direction, probably because, as is the case here, the building is all but unrecognizable from this view. Beerstraten's painting further obscures the identity of his ruin by barely representing any of the other highly recognizable buildings in the area by taking a very close view of the structure. The one building he does show is the Waag, which is depicted at an oblique angle, in deep shadow, and cut off by the left side of the frame. Whereas one might assume that an artist attempting to sell a painting of a famous location and event on the open market would want to make his subject as clear as possible (and indeed, this is the case with all of the other depictions surrounding the fire that I am aware of), Beerstraten seems to go out of his way to disguise the identity of the ruins.

Comparing Beerstraten's painting to a sketch with a similar composition but made from an oblique frontal angle, we can see what a dramatic a change in the recognizability of the structure's identity is wrought by a shift in viewpoint. **(Figure 3.6)** The viewpoint taken in the drawing is itself very rare, but both the location and the structure are readily identifiable. By shifting his point of view to the back of the former town hall, Beerstraten removes from the equation the many well-known still-standing buildings that surrounded it on all sides except the back, as well as the structure's façade. The reason there were no buildings behind the old town hall was, of course, because they had all been cleared to make room for the new town hall. Thus, Beerstraten here depicted the old town hall as it would have been seen from the new town hall. But again, the identity and presence respectively of each structure have been elided as fully as possible while preserving topographical accuracy. Why would Beerstraten both obscure the identity of his subject and yet simultaneously maintain topographical accuracy? One clue might

come from the structure's striking similarity to one of the most famous Dutch ruins, the Castle Egmond.¹⁹⁸ The angle Beerstraten chose exploits what is actually a superficial resemblance between the two ruins: a tower attached to a lower horizontally extending structure with three arched openings. **(Figure 3.7)** It bears a particularly strong resemblance to the way in which Ruisdael depicted Castle Egmond's ruins in his *Detroit Jewish Cemetery*. **(Figure 3.8)** Perhaps more to the point, many of the most well-known ruins in the Dutch Republic had roughly the same basic format of a medieval tower with lower structures extending to one side or another. Examples include Huis ter Kleef, Castle Spangen, the Pellecussen Gate, Koningsveld, and Huis ter Merwede, all of which would have been known from early 17th-century Dutch prints. In fact, nearly all of Jan van de Velde's *Eighteen Landscapes and Ruins* etchings from 1615 include ruins with this basic structure. **(Figures 3.9)** All of these ruins were medieval structures, either castles or religious structures, and mostly in the countryside, that were ruined not through the slow and steady passage of time, but in acts of sudden and calculated violence, when Dutch rebels burned them down in order to prevent Spanish soldiers from occupying and exploiting them. Dutch monumental countryside ruins thus had at least a triple historical valence, evoking a (false) ancient past through resemblance to classical ruins, a medieval past, and the events of a rebellion that had only very recently officially come to an end and was the foundation of the Dutch Republic as a state. Add to this all of the other meanings that had accreted to these ruins through ruin tourism, the contemporary vogue for country homes, and the popularity of ruin prints themselves, and it becomes clear that Beerstraten could bring to the old town hall ruins far more weighty allusions than it could carry on its own through his obfuscation of its identity.

And yet any viewer who would have seen Beerstraten's painting on the market in Amsterdam would have also been able to quickly to determine the subject. Differences from the rural ruins are readily apparent, and it becomes clear that this is a painting of urban ruins: the sloping roofs and pointed chimneys of canal houses alongside ship masts and sails fill the background of the image, and workers digging through the rubble populate the mid-ground, while rubble, rather than the plants that soften the edges of long-standing ruins, fills the entire foreground. I would argue, however, that these elements that mark this first as an urban ruin and secondly as the ruins of the old town hall of Amsterdam emerge in time, and that they become visible only after the eye is first drawn to the ruin itself. Beerstraten silhouettes the contours of the ruined tower against the cloudy sky and casts certain edges of the ruins in light, while obscuring everything in the background and mid-ground, and particularly the Waag, in shadow. It is only in the process of extended viewing that the elements that help identify this ruin as the old town hall. All of the allusions that the initially unidentified ruin evokes are thus able to accrete to what then emerges as an extremely important part of Amsterdam history and communal identity. Beerstraten's image is carefully poised between subsuming the ruins of the old town hall into a more generalized Dutch past and referring to the specifics of a relatively recent moment in local history. I will return to the multivalent character of these allusions at the end of this chapter, but for now I want to emphasize that Beerstraten's painting is far more complicated than it first appears, and that complexity, which unfolds in time for the viewer,

¹⁹⁸ Occupied by Spanish troops in 1573-1574, and destroyed by the Prince of Orange to prevent the Spanish from using it as shelter again, Castle Egmond was a recognizable element of the Dutch landscape that was an important material reminder of the Eighty Years' War. For the history of Castle Egmond, see: A.C.M. Burger, *Het Kasteel van Egmond* (Schoorl: Pirola, 1988). On Dutch ruins in Dutch art, see: Susan Kuretsky, ed., *Time and Transformation* (Poughkeepsie, NY: Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, 2005), esp. Kuretsky essay "Dutch Ruins: Time and Transformation," 17-62 and Erik Löffler essay "Ruins in the Netherlands: The Present Situation," 96-110.

positioned the ruins of the town hall, and the viewer as well, at the intersection of a variety of highly potent narratives about urban identity that are as far from the city government's fetishization of futuricity and its attendant definition of the past as obsolete and irrelevant.

Rembrandt also sketched the ruins of the old town hall, and, uncharacteristically, inscribed his drawing: "the town hall of Amsterdam seen from the Waag/ when it had burnt down/ on July 9 1652/ Rembrandt van Rijn."¹⁹⁹ Taking care to include not only a date and signature, but also the direction from which he took his view, Rembrandt makes his status as witness impossible to miss, wrapping his text around the top of the town hall's bell tower. Rembrandt's view, like Beerstraten's, places the tower at the center of his image and at a slight angle, allowing it to push towards the picture plane. While Rembrandt depicts the town hall from a different angle, he, too, seems to exploit a similarity between the tower and the ruins of Castle Egmond. The emphasis on evidence of personal witnessing that characterizes many of the drawings, prints, paintings, and written narratives surrounding the old town hall suggests the historical and cultural significance of not only the building itself, but also of the many narratives of nostalgia, loss, modernization, and change that the burning of the old town hall inspired. Rembrandt, like many of the other artists discussed here, seemed to feel the need to lay personal claim to a familiarity with the now lost building.

The last set of images of the town hall in ruins actually depict the construction, rather than the destruction, of the building, but as we saw with Beerstraten's drawing and painting of the old town hall with the barely visible new town hall rising in its scaffolding in the background, these two seemingly antithetical moments in the life of a building are actually complexly entangled and interwoven. These images are notable, not only because the representation of actual buildings under construction was highly unusual in the early modern period, but also because of the history of ruin and destruction that marked the location on which the scaffolded town hall stood. That is, the new town hall under construction stood in the same position as the old town hall that had been so often represented as a ruin or in the midst of being destroyed by far. The ruinous nature of the construction of the new building would have been underlined by the palimpsest that was its location: this history was present in the collective memory of Amsterdammers, as well as physically present in the many paintings, prints, and drawings that were produced throughout the seventeenth century after the burning down of the old building. Furthermore, the fact that the new building was under construction even as the old town burned down, coupled with the cynical rumors and jokes that the city government intentionally set the old building on fire to save on the costs of tearing it down, assured that the new town hall's identity would always be bound to the destruction of the old. The images of the old town hall that became so popular only once it burned down further underlined the ruinous origins of the new building. The depiction of the construction of the new town hall, therefore, might be seen as not so much a representation of modernization and newness, as a complex reinscription of the history of this location.

There is a surprisingly large number of representations of the town hall under construction. It is well to keep in mind that the building was officially inaugurated and opened before it was completed. In fact, the town hall was unfinished for such a long time that it must have entered into the cultural imagination as two almost entirely separate structures: one covered with an intricate network of scaffolding, lacking a roof, and viewed in a continuous, though slow-paced, serial manner; the other a monumental, entirely symmetrical structure designed to be

¹⁹⁹ "vand waech afte sien stats huis van Amsterdam/ doent afgebrandt was/ den 9 Julij 1652/ Rembrandt van rijjn"

the perfect and complete mirror of God's creation.²⁰⁰ Its symbolic program, as conceived by Jacob van Campen, was entirely incompatible with the building under construction. Despite being in use, its intricate, carefully thought-out, and immensely serious program could not make sense or become activated before its completion.

A painting of the Dam attributed to Johannes Lingelbach follows the general composition of the most common type of representation of the Dam, showing the new town hall in the background, the Waag in the middle ground, and groups of burghers, foreigners, workers, dogs, horses, and children participating in trade or mild mayhem. **(Figure 3.10)** The new town hall, as in all of those images, is still the main subject, its façade brightly lit and unshadowed, and our view of it almost completely unobstructed, thanks to the broad stretch of unoccupied land cleared by the city to allow for this very view. Yet the town hall is under scaffolding, and its most distinctive features, its tympanum, roof, cupola, and bell tower have yet to be built. Perhaps even more troubling to a viewer accustomed to the appearance of the buildings of the Dam is the strangely elongated and inaccurate representation of the proportions of the town hall, Waag, and Nieuwe Kerk: all three buildings are depicted as far taller than they actually were, and the town hall looks particularly attenuated, even delicate. Whereas many artists, like Berckheyde and van der Heyden, tended to shrink the Waag and Nieuwe Kerk in order to exaggerate the massive scale of the town hall and allow the entire façade to be visible, Lingelbach did the opposite, making the town hall appear smaller next to the solid Gothic bulk of the Waag and the church. Paradoxically, the shrinking of the town hall might have been the result of the artist attempting to exaggerate the scale of the building by using perspective to imply that it stood much further back than it actually did. The town hall thus appears simultaneously massive and miniaturized. Its incompleteness only adds to this paradox, as it allows for the possibility that the building is far from finished, and the viewer is left to imagine just how tall it will eventually be. As with representations of ruins, the monumental scale of the fragments that stand amplifies rather than diminishes the potential scale and significance of the complete structure that once stood or eventually will stand. The incompleteness of the structure, whether the result of ruin or construction, leaves a space for the viewer to imagine what is missing and why. In the case of images of the new town hall under construction, those projections would have been tempered by the ruins and destruction that had so spectacularly made way for the new building.

Furthermore, Lingelbach's painting was made after van der Ulft's print of the Dam with the completed new town hall and Nieuwe Kerk tower (never to be built) that was commissioned and circulated by the city government to publicize and garner support for the costly building projects. **(Figure 3.11)** This was the very print that he based his painted pendant to Saenredam's painting of the old town hall, both of which were commissioned by the city government and hung in the new town hall, as discussed above. **(Figures 2.10 & 2.11)** Lingelbach's painting stands in as the middle (although presumably unanticipated) term between Saenredam's retroactive representation of the old town hall and van der Ulft's anticipatory painting of the planned but not yet completed new town hall and Nieuwe Kerk tower. Lingelbach's exaggeration of the scale of the Dam (and in particular the distance from the Damrak to the Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal—that is, the distance between the foreground and the background) comes from van der Ulft's print. However, the comparison of the two images makes clear the many changes that Lingelbach made to what the basic composition of van der Ulft's print. Lingelbach further exaggerated the depth of the Dam by lowering the horizon line and showing far more of the foreground canal. It is also clear that the massive scale of the Waag and the

²⁰⁰ Goosens, *Treasure Wrought by Chisel and Brush*, 16-17.

Nieuwekerk, and the attendant diminishing of the town hall (the size of which Lingelbach did not change in relation to the other two buildings) were changes wrought by Lingelbach.

Lingelbach's town hall is depicted far more inaccurately than van der Ulft's, despite the fact that the former was presumably working from what he had actually seen and the latter was working from a plan for something not yet completed. Lingelbach's painting, therefore, stands in an odd relationship both to van der Ulft's print, which it brings back to the present tense, and to the contemporary reality of the space of the Dam, which Lingelbach's image represents less accurately than van der Ulft's. Lingelbach diminishes the town hall, in scale, monumentality, and even in terms of style, for his shifts in the proportions of the building do a great deal of damage to the very careful measurements that had been made to ensure a thoroughly classicizing building by its planners. Lingelbach's changes to a widely circulated image of the (future) Dam have the effect of simultaneously weakening the print's claims to accuracy, and the aesthetic integrity and monumentality of the town hall that is so proudly publicized by van der Ulft. The town hall classicizing aesthetic appears weak and diminished next to the gothic bulk of the Waag and the Nieuwekerk, and even the relatively humble step-gabled houses that line the Dam.

Doing further damage to the integrity of the new town hall was of course Lingelbach's reversal of time in van der Ulft's print, bringing the building back to its present state of incompleteness, depicting it in the midst of construction and partially covered with scaffolding. The scaffolding is represented by a series of single lines of brown paint applied to the surface of the canvas. The lines have a stark linear quality that starkly contrasts with the execution of the rest of the painting. They are brushy but uniform stripes of a single tone of brown that bear no resemblance to the carefully concealed brushstrokes of the rest of the painting. Even from a distance, they do not resolve into scaffolding or even representation, and instead look like crossed lines that adhere only to the surface of the painting and not to the surface of the building under construction. The diagonals that apparently served as the scaffolding's frame seem to meet up on the painted surface without regard for the structure of the building. This has the effect of erasure of the *representation* of the structure, rather than scaffolding upon the *represented* structure. In Lingelbach's painting, the diminishment of the town hall goes hand in hand with its incompleteness. The image's reversal of the time of van der Ulft's print likewise is equated with the reversal of van der Ulft's elevation of the aesthetic status and import of the town hall. Lingelbach takes a composition that was meant to celebrate and advertise the integrity of the new town hall and turns its idealism back on itself, suggesting through juxtaposition the inaccuracy of a vision that in fact was in many ways more accurate than his seemingly present-tense painting. Lingelbach's painting of the town hall under construction thus intricately intertwines past, present, and future in image and in spatial experience in such a way that contemporaneity and lived reality become confused with fantasy and inaccuracy. The idea of the new town hall and the painting itself become ruins, fragments of different times and conceptions of space that fail to add up to anything resembling spatial experience.

Ruin made the old town hall worthy of depiction, both for the city government and for independent artists: before it burned down, there were very few depictions of it in print or painting, whereas in the wake of the fire, many artists made it their subject. The difference between the depictions commissioned by the city government and those made by independent artists was the type of subject the old building became: for the government, it became a negative proof of the necessity of modernization, whereas for most artists working outside of government commission, its destruction made it notable in its own right, either as a symbol of a piece of communal history, or as a sublime remnant that seemed to elevate humble, everyday urban

experience into something potentially greater and more monumental. For Lingelbach, however, the history of the old and new town halls and of their representation, equally bound up in the movement back and forth between past, present, and future, made the accurate representation of the new town hall, and the possibility that the building itself could ever escape its own incompleteness, impossible.

Ruisdael's Strategies of Resistance

After this sustained discussion of little-known Amsterdam artists, I would like to now turn to Jacob van Ruisdael. It is my contention that Ruisdael's far more well-known images of ruins cannot be fully understood without the context of both Amsterdam's history of construction (and resistance to it) and the many other ruin images that proliferated at the same time they were working. I have discussed how Lingelbach and Beerstraten made choices in the representation of well-known buildings that at first appear either perverse or merely aesthetically motivated. Those choices, however, served to reinscribe the representation of the Dam with its many layers of history, and in so doing to reveal the multivalence and complexity of both public spaces and the collective experience of those spaces. In returning to this most symbolically important place its past and present, and the concomitant accretion of different materialities and statuses, these images participate, whether intentionally or not, in the formation of an alternative version of public space and memory to that provided by the city government itself.

Ruisdael's depictions of Amsterdam seem to take on an even more visibly resistant stance than the works I have discussed so far. His depictions of Amsterdam fall into three categories, depictions of the Dam, panoramic views of the city from the countryside (or, in one case from inside Amsterdam itself), and paintings of ruins just outside Amsterdam. There is a strange tension between these three groups of images, and what are apparently major inconsistencies. Looking at these images of quite different composition, mood, and even visual logic together, however, reveals the ways in which Ruisdael uses differences in size and attention to draw disparate elements of the urban landscape into productive dialogue about what cities are and how they function.

Ruisdael's consistent focus on a single location in the city, the Dam, was unusual. All of the other cityscape painters I have discussed in this dissertation chose various locations as the subjects of their representations of a single city. Ruisdael, however, almost exclusively depicted the Dam in his non-panoramic representations of Amsterdam. Because Ruisdael was painting the Dam just after the completion of the construction of the new town hall, this does not initially sound strange. But the focus with which he depicted the Dam alone makes the manner in which he depicted it all the more surprising: he represented the Dam without ever depicting the new town hall. As we have seen, the new building was precisely the point of depicting the Dam for all of the other artists I have discussed. Ruisdael, however, literally turns his, and the viewer's, backs to that building.

Ruisdael's views of the Dam focus on the Waag, the medieval weigh house, or the Damrak, the interior harbor of the Amstel river to which good could be brought directly to the Dam, the center of commerce in Amsterdam (hence the weigh house and the stock exchange). In a Gemäldegalerie painting of the Dam, the sky characteristically takes up two thirds of the height of the horizontal canvas, but the Waag looms large over the low horizon line. **(Figure 3.12)** Ruisdael exaggerated the size of the Waag by shrinking the tower of the Oude Kerk and the building directly to the left of the Waag. Comparison between the painting and what was likely a preparatory drawing for it makes Ruisdael's shifts in relative scale clear. **(Figures 3.13).**

Ruisdael, furthermore, chose an unusual viewpoint that exaggerates the scale of the Waag. The very low horizon line, and the diagonal thrust of the vanishing point, together with Ruisdael's choice of a viewing position from which no other large buildings are visible in the fore- or middleground.

The Waag was, by this point, commonly depicted in paintings of the Dam by other artists, but with one major exception: it was almost always shown in relation to the new town hall. A curious characteristic of some images of the Dam is their seeming preoccupation with the Waag, the city's medieval weighing house. While this could be explained simply in terms of its unavoidable presence in many of the more popular sightlines for viewing the Dam and the new Town Hall, I find this argument spurious and reductive. Nearly every image of the new Town Hall resorted to some form of perspectival or spatial manipulation, and representations of the old town hall are quite adept at avoiding the Waag altogether. While Berkheyde and Van der Heyden, the artists clearly most taken with the Town Hall's monumentality, easily avoid representing the Waag, many other artists give it unusual weight in their representations. Lingelbach dwarfs the unfinished building with the hugely exaggerated proportions of the Waag, which makes ants of the people crowded around it in the middleground. (**Figure 3.10**) In another painting by Lingelbach, the Dam literally marginalizes the scaffolded Town Hall, while the Waag takes center stage (**Figure 3.14**). With its vaguely Gothic form somewhat reminiscent of the old town hall, the Waag perhaps served as the receiving end of a displacement of nostalgia for or memory of the destroyed medieval town hall.

Ruisdael's choice to eliminate the town hall from his view altogether characteristically takes this common stance towards the Waag and its relationship to the new town hall further, and adds new layers of reference, history, and allusion. His focused attention on the weigh house and the harbor clearly places the practice of trade on the Dam in the spotlight. It has been argued that Ruisdael's many paintings of the Haarlem skyline viewed across the vast bleaching fields outside the city walls allude to the central importance of the linen trade to that city's identity and status.²⁰¹ With his Dam paintings, Ruisdael likewise blended seemingly innocent anecdotal details of everyday life into beautiful views of urban spaces in such a way that the role of commerce in the well-being of the city is completely naturalized. In the Dam paintings, that well-being is allied with a denial of the major changes that had recently occurred to this area, changes that were directly related to both commerce and civic identity. And yet the presence of the new town hall directly behind the painter and, by extension, the viewer, is palpable through its absence. Any burgher living in the Dutch Republic, and perhaps anyone else with the financial means to purchase a painting by Ruisdael, would have been aware of the new town hall. Ruisdael's excision of that extremely well-known structure provides his paintings with originality and novelty, but it also manages to draw more attention to the missing building. It is in this sense that Ruisdael's Dam images function like the images of ruins I discussed above: like paintings of the ruins of the old town hall and the new town hall under construction, Ruisdael's paintings take the Dam out of time, moving the viewer to compare the image presented to them with their own experience and knowledge of that space and its history. Both the new and the old town hall are able to coexist more immediately in the viewer's relationship to Ruisdael's paintings because while his views make the town hall so ostentatiously absent that it might have been one of the first things a viewer would have noticed, the absence of the building actually means that, at least at first glance, we could be looking at the Dam at almost any time in the

²⁰¹ Linda Stone-Ferrier, "Views of Haarlem: A Reconsideration of Ruisdael and Rembrandt," *Art Bulletin* 67.3 (Sept. 1985), 418-436.

seventeenth century. The old town hall could still be standing, it could be a ruin, or the new town hall could be under construction, completed, or even falling into ruin again. Ruisdael's paintings of the Dam leave space for the viewer to decide what time he or she is looking at, and thus makes unavoidable the very flickering of time that characterized the ruin paintings. While the fashions of the burghers in the foreground would have served as clues, the viewer is still left to match up the image with what is not represented. The Waag functions at once as a stylistic stand-in for the old town hall, and as a structure that had remained largely unchanged throughout the fraught seventeenth-century history of this space. Ruisdael's focused attention on the Waag and the harbor, and the trade that happens around both, suggests that the constant in Amsterdam's history and identity was, in fact, commerce. But it equally suggests by extension the instability of the rest of this space.

Ruisdael turned his back to the Town Hall with still greater ferocity and complexity with a drawing and painting of Amsterdam. Ruisdael represented a panorama of the city of Amsterdam from the top of the unfinished Town Hall, the building itself is barely visible, and it is represented only by a tumble of fragments and discarded sticks and stones. **(Figures 3.15 & 3.16)** In both of these images, it is uncertain whether we are looking at a ruin or a construction site. Ruisdael's drawing in particular seems to suggest that it is a ruin. Ruisdael's painting and his preparatory, presumably "naar het leven," drawing for it seem to best reveal the uncertainty and equivocation with which Amsterdammers approached their new Town Hall. Like his painting of the Waag, Ruisdael's *Panorama* is notable precisely because it does not directly represent the Town Hall. Here, however, Ruisdael's ambivalence is even more pronounced, for the "from life" drawing bears an inscription on its verso that states that it was "Drawn from the roof of the burnt-out Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam, facing the River Ij."²⁰² Nevertheless, it has been convincingly argued that the style of the drawing is inconsistent with Ruisdael's work from around 1647 when the Nieuwe Kerk was being restored, and appears to more likely date from around 1665, in which case he must have made the drawing from atop the unfinished Town Hall.²⁰³ It was often the case that images that explicitly assert their eyewitness veracity used the "after life" marker to lend artificial authenticity to at times patently falsified images.²⁰⁴ What would compel Ruisdael to misrepresent the status of his image? Ruisdael's inscription on the back of his drawing signals a deliberate and concerted rejection of the primacy and authority of the new Town Hall, even as it relies on the physical might and literal status of that building to generate this panoramic view of the city. Ruisdael's image of Amsterdam thus both rejects and internalizes the Town Hall's relentless rhetoric of dominance and submission. No images better capture both the public resistance to and inescapable fascination with the new Amsterdam Town Hall.

These two images, of indeterminate and unstable viewing point, encapsulate many of the problems with understanding Dutch seventeenth-century art. The topographical accuracy of the drawing and the painting are easily verifiable for modern viewers, and furthermore, the artist has explicitly (and verbally) signaled the "from life" quality of his drawing and, by extension, the painting that resulted from it. Of course, both images are characterized by the mundanity and anecdotal quality characteristic of the observed and the "merely" described. However, potential

²⁰² Peeters, *The Royal Palace*, 86.

²⁰³ Jakob Rosenberg, *Jacob van Ruisdael* (Berlin: B. Cassirer, 1928), 113, no. 2; Slive, *Jacob van Ruisdael* 2001, 493; Peeters, *The Royal Palace*, 86.

²⁰⁴ There has been quite a bit written on the rhetoric of "naar het leven." Some examples are: Swan, "*Ad vivum, naer het leven*"; Parshall, "*Imago Contrafacta*."

misdirection or even deceit underlies the very statement that assures the viewer of the first-hand observation and accuracy.

The only extant work that might be attributable²⁰⁵ to Ruisdael that depicts the new town hall as more than a tiny profile on the horizon is a drawing that, notably, depicts the driving of the large wooden piles that formed the foundation of the town hall (and every other building built in Amsterdam). (**Figure 3.17**) In other words, the town hall, such as it is, is largely unidentifiable and depicted in such a way that it appears to be a ruin. Like his drawing and painting from the top of the town hall, what little we can see of the new building can easily be mistaken for the remnants of destruction or natural ruination. Construction, in Ruisdael's depictions of Amsterdam, is especially hard to distinguish from destruction and ruin.

Ruisdael's *Jewish Cemetery*, which has been this chapter's looming absence, cannot be fully understood outside of the context of the rest of Ruisdael's images of ruins, or "ruin time," and those by other Amsterdam cityscape artists. (**Figures 3.8 & 3.18**) *The Jewish Cemetery*, the main subject of which is the Portuguese-Jewish Cemetery at Oudekerk on the Amstel, situated about eight kilometers outside Amsterdam, is by far the most well-known of Ruisdael's paintings, but we can now see that the complicated interplay of time, history, and architecture that characterizes it is a constant theme in his other depictions of Amsterdam, as well as that of paintings by much less well-known artists in Amsterdam. In addition to the two versions of the *Jewish Cemetery* (Detroit and Dresden), Ruisdael completed two highly finished drawings of the tombstones that appear in the paintings. (**Figures 3.19 & 3.20**) The tombs in the two paintings resemble those in one of the drawings very closely, with the exception of the strangely shaped tomb at the far left of both paintings, which, in the drawing, is part of the same group as the rest of the tombs. Otherwise, the shape, viewing angle, and general state of mild disrepair is entirely consistent between the drawings and the paintings.

The slightly decrepit appearance of the tombstones in a cemetery that was still in use at the time is magnified by the inclusion in both paintings of well-known Dutch ruins that, needless to say, were imported by Ruisdael to the *Jewish Cemetery* from elsewhere in the Dutch countryside. Both paintings include the very famous ruins of Castle Egmond, an 11th-century fortified castle that was destroyed and rebuilt twice before being demolished deliberately on the orders of William I in 1573 in order to prevent it from being used by Spanish troops.²⁰⁶ The Detroit version, the much larger of the two, shows the castle from the distinctive angle we saw Beerstraten exploit in his painting of the ruins of the old town hall above, while the Dresden version included the ruin in the same location, but the ruin itself is turned 180 degrees. (**Figure 9**) Both paintings further amplify the ruinous quality of the site with the inclusion of dead trees, broken branches, and overgrown foliage. Furthermore, the rainbow, dramatic lighting, and storm clouds that dominate the atmosphere of both versions have made it virtually impossible for scholars from the nineteenth century until today to escape the allegorical reading of these paintings as *memento mori*. Even Slive, who vigorously rejects the allegorical reading of most of Ruisdael's other works writes that:

Both pictures are among the rare landscapes by the artist that were painted with a deliberately allegorical intent. The combination of their conspicuous tombs,

²⁰⁵ This drawing is generally attributed to the Dutch landscape painter Jan van Kessel (1641-80), but many, including Slive and Davies, attribute the drawing to Ruisdael on stylistic grounds. Alice I. Davies, *Jan van Kessel (1641-1680)* (Doornspijk: Davaco, 1992), no. d3; Slive, *Jacob van Ruisdael* (2001), 504.

²⁰⁶ On the history of Castle Egmond, see: Burger, *Het Kasteel van Egmond*; Schulte, *Ruïnes in Nederland*, 232-236

ruins, large dead beeches, broken tree trunks, and a small waterfall alludes to the transience of all life and the ultimate futility of humankind's endeavors... On the other hand, the burst of light that breaks through the ravaging clouds of each painting, their rainbows and the luxuriant growth that contrasts with the dead trees offer a promise of hope and renewed life. Their allegorical content has been recognized by virtually every author who has discussed them *since they entered the literature early in the nineteenth century*, but there has been neither unanimous approbation of these overtly moralizing landscapes nor a consensus on their meaning or the mood they evoke.²⁰⁷ (emphasis mine)

It is undeniable that the *Jewish Cemetery* paintings both include multiple symbols of the transience of time and life, well-known from Dutch emblem books. However, the *Jewish Cemetery* paintings were part of a general taste for depictions of local, often urban or suburban, ruins at this time in the Dutch Republic. If we can detach ruins from what is clearly a Romantic assumption that all ruins are by definition melancholy and symbolic of death and the passage of time, we remove from this equation surely the details most central to the *memento mori*/allegorical reading of these works. As we have seen, specific ruins were depicted around mid-century in the Dutch Republic for many different reasons, including local pride, an interest in history, the recording of recent events, and even as a response to a taste for spectacle. While none of these reasons for depicting ruins excludes the nostalgic/*memento mori*/melancholy reading, they do put the universal application of that type of reading to any work of art containing particular elements into question.

Furthermore, Slive's own discussion of the paintings' supposed allegorical content/intent betrays the historically-specific, and thus possibly anachronistic quality, of this reading. Slive uses the fact that the allegorical aspect of these works has been "recognized by virtually every author who has discussed them" as partial proof of the correctness of this view, and yet he immediately qualifies this statement by the addition of the glanced over, but very telling, "since they entered the literature early in the nineteenth century."²⁰⁸ Slive, like virtually every other author who has discussed these paintings, is further augmenting the accuracy of this claim, not with any kind of proof from the period itself, but with the authority of famous Romantic aestheticians like Goethe and Constable. The circularity of this logic is patent, but it is also very common in the literature on the *Jewish Cemetery*. That the *Jewish Cemetery* paintings were not considered particularly exceptional within Ruisdael's oeuvre until Goethe (and thus had not "entered the literature" until "early in the nineteenth century") lends further credence to the idea that these paintings might more productively be viewed within the context of the types of ruin images I have discussed in this chapter.

Ruisdael's *Jewish Cemetery* paintings do indeed stand out from the ruin images I have discussed so far, but not because they are particularly melancholic. Rather, these paintings characteristically add another layer of allusion and complexity to what was already a rather multivalent subject matter for painting. By combining long-standing, famous ruins with well-known narratives of instant ruination closely allied with a key moment in national history (Castle Egmond) with relatively modern structures that had begun to decay naturally (the tombstones from the Portuguese-Jewish Cemetery at Oudekerk), observation of a specific locale (the cemetery) with the clearly recognizable alteration of that place through the inclusion of another

²⁰⁷ Slive, *Jacob van Ruisdael*, 181.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

well-known but displaced monument (Castle Egmond) and the addition of fantastic natural scenery, Ruisdael's paintings use the viewer's knowledge of place and history to move him or her constantly back and forth between different relationships to time and place. While viewers unfamiliar with Castle Egmond and the cemetery might be able to understand Ruisdael's paintings as consistent and well-integrated, the types of viewers for whom these paintings were made would have likely been well-aware of Ruisdael's plays with reality. I contend that the *Jewish Cemetery* paintings, to an even greater extent than the other ruin images I have discussed, could have functioned not as *memento mori*, but as spurs to the imagination of the viewer, tools for pushing the viewer into an experience of the palimpsestic nature of public spaces. In other words, the disparate elements that we now view Ruisdael as seamlessly intermingling would probably have been understood by those who were familiar with the sites as disruptive, not as integrated or unified. Dutch ruins were not simply formally incomplete and disruptive/disrupted, but they also functioned as prompts to the viewer to recognize the incompleteness and multivalence of place as well.

Conclusion

The images of ruins I have discussed in this chapter cannot be read as merely, primarily, or perhaps even partially as triggers to general musing on loss, melancholy, and nostalgia as they were understood by the Romantics. All of these ruins, and indeed the majority of Dutch paintings and prints of ruins in the seventeenth century, depict very specific locations. Indeed, their value was largely tied to their representation of famous ruins with well-known and fairly recent ties to the history of the Dutch Republic. Furthermore, I have argued that these images functioned within a set of specific historical and cultural circumstances, and relied a great deal on the knowledge and experience of their viewers of these locations. These images were not about universal experiences, nor were they primarily meant to serve as triggers for generalized experiences of nostalgia or awareness of death. Rather, these images used ruins and identifiable sites of hyper attention to immerse the viewer in the complexity of place and communal history and experience. In so doing, these paintings, prints, and drawings went against the grain of official forms of identity, place, and history that were monolithic, linear, and tidy. Ruins, and the spaces they occupied, belie the city government's version of history and identity as unified and neat, and reveled in the untidiness and hauntedness of place, and the multidirectionality of time and the experience of it. The ruins' incompleteness and suspension between states allowed viewers to see locations they experienced every day and the images that depict them as flickering between past, present, and future, between destruction, decay, novelty, and absence. Place, and the depiction of place, was, in these images and for their viewers an experience that was constantly shifting between times and states, rather than a stable entity that would be the same for all citizens, as the Amsterdam city government would have it.

Chapter Four

Fear Commodified: Invention, Spectacle, and Violence in the Work of Jan van der Heyden

Let us begin with two images. The first is a light-filled oil painting that depicts in lapidary detail a canal with the red brick, step-gabled facades of a series of buildings largely concealed by trees, sprinkled with extras of a sort familiar from any number of Dutch seventeenth-century genre paintings: a woman in an apron with her sleeves pulled up fishes something out of the canal with a young child by her side, two men and a woman float by in a little boat in the wake of a couple of swans, a woman leans out of her house, a pair of wealthy women in black stroll, men converse on a bridge (**Figure 4.1**). This is recognizably Amsterdam, and all is as we expect it to be.

Our next image, though an engraving, appears at first glance to depict a very similar scene to that of the painting (**Figure 4.2**). We recognize a similar interest in the painstaking articulation of every single brick and leaf. Once again, step-gabled brick buildings, a canal, a tree-lined sidewalk. Even some of the same characters seem to be present: the woman by the canal has misplaced her child, but she still carries her long stick and bucket, the bourgeois ladies are still walking together, men gossip, women wait on their stoops. But when our gaze shifts upwards from street-level, we notice there is something amiss with the building in the center of the print. A few panes of glass have been replaced by blank holes, brick is smeared with black, wooden shutters are mangled or missing altogether, and at the top of the building, the most sinister detail yet: we can look through the top window not into the building's interior, but right back out to the sky. The building has been ravaged by fire, and the entire interior has presumably been consumed. We realize that what we had read previously as idle gossip and leisurely strolls are actually uneasy conversations, consolation offered by neighbors, and gawking passersby.

How is one meant to reconcile the disparate interests demonstrated by these two images, both of which make such concerted efforts to convey particular notions of the experience of living in late seventeenth-century Amsterdam? Both of these works of art are, of course, by the same artist: Jan van der Heyden. The painting was probably made for the open market, and the print was from van der Heyden's *Firebook*, a history *cum* advertisement for the artist's newly invented fire pump and hose. But how did he get from one to the other, and indeed, which image came first? Which version of the city has precedence here? It is too easy, particularly given the way in which I have presented these two images, to write for ourselves a linear, uni-directional narrative of entropic decay. Nevertheless, this is a promising starting point: scholars have never considered the relationship between van der Heyden's many paintings of contemporary Amsterdam, and his engravings of Amsterdam in his *Firebook*. It is the basic contention of this chapter that neither van der Heyden's paintings nor his engravings can be properly understood without understanding how they worked together to form narratives, amplify and distort the initial meaning of one another, and engage van der Heyden's audience in the active work of making sense of both his art and the city.

I argue that together, van der Heyden's Amsterdam cityscape paintings and his engravings of Amsterdam fires form a potent warning about the possibilities of the destruction of private and public property. By ingeniously implicating his (wealthy) audience and their own property within his images' implied narratives of devastation and destruction, he turns his audience into the lynchpin of the mechanics of his images of Amsterdam. The work of van der Heyden's art, then, resides in the intricacies of the relationship between painting, print, and

audience. In so doing, his oeuvre constitutes a new idea of destruction and event as fundamentally without emblematic meaning or a relationship to divine will as it had previously been understood.

In spite of van der Heyden's reliance on the patronage of the city government, his story represents a complete reversal of the Burgomasters' patronage, as discussed in Chapter 1. Van der Heyden, in the form of his *Firebook*, gave back to the city government an alternative and ruinous version of the city. It is at this point that destruction finally enters into the official story of Amsterdam's identity, but it does so only by way of van der Heyden's veiled threats. The city finally validates an idea of Amsterdam as far from pristine and whole, if only to protect the integrity of the physical city. The Burgomasters' patronage of van der Heyden is the one moment that we see them moving away from their previous practice of repudiating the idea of Amsterdam as ruined. It is thus also an important moment when the city leaders allow the needs of the actual city to supersede those of the imagined city.

Jan van der Heyden was born in Gorkum in 1637, and moved with his family to Amsterdam when he was nine. Houbraken tells us that van der Heyden trained as a *glasschryver*, a glassmaker or glass painter, probably with his older brother Goris, who started a business making and selling mirrors in 1651.²⁰⁹ Some of van der Heyden's earliest painted works were *verre eglomisé*, or glass painted in reverse order (from highlight to ground) and then displayed smooth side up.²¹⁰ According to Houbraken, van der Heyden worked as a painter from 1660²¹¹, and a year later, his marriage records state painter as his profession. His earliest dated paintings, from 1663, already possess the technique, subject matter, and composition of his later work, suggesting that he had probably started painting somewhat earlier.²¹² It also appears that he continued to work in the mirror business.²¹³ C.G. 't Hooft suggested that the painter of mostly Italianate cityscapes, Jacob van der Ulft, was van der Heyden's painting master, as van der Ulft came from Gorchem, eventually moved to Amsterdam, and was, according to Houbraken, an important glass painter.²¹⁴ Van der Heyden would go on to paint almost exclusively landscapes, cityscapes, and other paintings of buildings.²¹⁵

Van der Heyden died in 1712 a very wealthy man, with a large collection of both his own paintings and those of his contemporaries, including Jacob van Ruisdael, Gerard ter Borch, Govaert Flinck, and Jan Lievens.²¹⁶ But his wealth derived not from his painting, or from the glassmaking business, but rather from his pursuits in the realm of technology and invention. While van der Heyden's career as a painter is only sparsely documented, the archive provides much more information about his inventions, since he not only published multiple books explaining them, he also was extremely successful at marketing and putting them to use on a large scale. Both of his major inventions, street lamps and fire hoses, ingeniously combined not only a new variant of a particular technology, but perhaps more importantly, new methods of

²⁰⁹ Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlandsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, vol. 3 (The Hague, 1721), 80.

²¹⁰ Abraham Bredius, "Twee schilderijen op glas van Jan van der Heyden," *Oud Holland* 31 (1913), 25.

²¹¹ Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh*, vol. 3, 1721, 80.

²¹² Peter C. Sutton, "The Art of Jan van der Heyden," in *Jan van der Heyden*, ed. Peter C. Sutton (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2006), 34-35.

²¹³ Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh*, vol. 2, 196.

²¹⁴ C.G. 't Hooft, *Amsterdamsche stadsgezichten van Jan van der Heyden* (Amsterdam, 1912), 8.

²¹⁵ The only exceptions are a few strange and sophisticated still lifes from late in his career. The most interesting are wide views of objects in studies, which always include large books, globes, and Asian textiles.

²¹⁶ Abraham Bredius, "De nalatenschap van Jan van der Heyden," *Oud Holland* 30 (1912), 130.

managing this technology more efficiently on the large scale required by a city of Amsterdam's size and importance. Van der Heyden was clearly an extremely talented businessman. Beginning in 1669 the city government put up 2,556 of van der Heyden's new streetlamps, and implemented his detailed specifications for the organization of lamp lighting in Amsterdam, naming him, furthermore, "overseer and director of the lanterns lit at night" (*opsigter en directeur des bij nacht lichtende lantarens*), making him responsible for the operation of the entire system.²¹⁷ Not only were his system and lamps adopted in other cities in the Dutch Republic, his guidelines were also implemented in Berlin in 1682.²¹⁸ In 1671, van der Heyden and his brother Nicolaas received a patent for a new fire hose, and in 1673 they were named by the city "supervisors of the city fire pumps and fire equipment" (*opsienders van stadts brandspuiten en brantsgereetschap*). After Nicolaas' death, Jan took on his son as his partner, and together they published the *Description of the Recently Invented and Patented Fire Engines with Water Hoses and the Method of Fighting Fires Now Used in Amsterdam* (*Beschrijving Der nieuwlijks uitgevonden en geocetrojeerde Slang-Brand-Spuiten...*), with multiple engravings by Jan the Elder.

My own brief overview of the life and career of Jan van der Heyden has reenacted the basic and apparently inevitable separation of his two professions, painter and inventor. While normally this might not pose any problems for the art historian, in van der Heyden's case, it does, because he produced art in both areas of his life. As this chapter will argue, we must view van der Heyden as an artist who understood painting and technological invention as not merely deeply intertwined, but one and the same. An accomplished painter and engraver, van der Heyden's oeuvre is strangely and strictly compartmentalized: van der Heyden never produced an engraving that was not associated with one of his inventions, and never made a painting that depicted fire or destruction. This odd distinction has not been discussed in the van der Heyden literature, and yet it nevertheless seems to have had an effect on the scholarship on him, exacerbating the marked tendency to avoid discussing the cityscape paintings and the fire engravings in the same breath. Instead, they are separated into different chapters. The fire engravings are implied to be secondary to the invention they merely illustrate, and assumed to have been made after inventing had taken over as van der Heyden's primary interest. In other words, art historians almost discount the prints and the *Firebook*, even as they acknowledge the skill van der Heyden deployed as a print designer, as if the prints represent a betrayal of his initial identity as a pure artist.

Van der Heyden's status as an inventor has moreover led him to be taken far less seriously than an artist of his influence, skill, and vision would otherwise merit, marking him more as a curiosity than as a serious artist. This is a very modern view of the artist that has no place in discussions of the early modern period, during which artists rarely made their livings at art alone. Although this is widely understood and acknowledged, van der Heyden's great success and fame in another field (invention) has made him appear to us as a sort of super dilettante, highly skilled in multiple areas, and thus not to be taken entirely seriously. Even monographs on the artist, while proclaiming his great importance as an artist, seem not to know what to do with his status as a highly successful businessman and inventor. Peter Sutton's magnificent catalog for the 2006 Bruce Museum's Jan van der Heyden show has separate essays on "The Art of Jan van der Heyden," in which he does not discuss his engravings at all, and on

²¹⁷ Breen, "Jan van der Heyden," 1913, 70-71.

²¹⁸ Sutton, "Jan van der Heyden," 23.

“Jan van der Heyden’s Inventions.”²¹⁹ In Sutton’s own introductory biography of the artist, the entire second half of the essay is exclusively devoted to van der Heyden’s life as an inventor, ending with a discussion of his unusual wealth and the inventory of his impressive art collection, subtly implying that van der Heyden at the end of his life had stopped producing art, and merely consumed it.²²⁰ Sutton does, however, make some allowances, and the very end of the essay attempts abruptly to redeem van der Heyden, but ultimately reinforces the sense that the artist devolved into a dilettante: “...we know that van der Heyden was still painting at age seventy-four, in the final year of his life. Still lifes thus bracket his career as among the earliest and last dated works known to us.”²²¹

A second, and perhaps more sophisticated, difficulty with understanding van der Heyden’s career in full is the apparently major distinction between the ways in which he represented Amsterdam in his paintings and in his prints. Van der Heyden’s paintings have been discussed far more than his prints, and his cityscapes (which make up the bulk of his painted oeuvre) have been understood exclusively as laudatory and idealizing, if inaccurate. The celebratory character of his cityscapes, particularly those depicting Amsterdam, is largely taken for granted. The scholarship on Dutch art has in the last thirty years or so discussed virtually all seventeenth-century Dutch landscapes and cityscapes, across all media, as expressions of national or local pride in the newly or soon-to-be formed Dutch Republic.²²² Van der Heyden’s beautiful paintings of Amsterdam, then, have been understood in this way as well. They are celebrations of Amsterdam’s unique beauty, and marketed towards proud Amsterdam citizens, or tourists wanting to take away a souvenir of their visit to the city.

According to current scholarship, what sets van der Heyden’s paintings apart from those of other cityscape painters is his propensity for manipulation and inaccuracy in the depiction of real places. This interpretation is, as the rest of this dissertation has discussed, a symptom of a major problem in the study of Dutch art, as it takes for granted as the starting point of these images some physical referent to which the image can be compared for accuracy. Van der Heyden stands out because he “manipulates” reality to suit his own (laudatory) ends. Thus, we write of van der Heyden “taking extensive liberties in rearranging the topography of his subjects,” “despite the sense of unrelieved objectivity in all his cityscapes, and the accuracy of many.”²²³ Scholars assume that van der Heyden did this to make more pleasing compositions.²²⁴ A lot of energy has been put into proving the inaccuracies of his many cityscapes by comparing them to the city itself. Given this popular view of van der Heyden’s cityscape paintings, it should come as no surprise that his horrifying prints of Amsterdam on fire and in ruins have not been assimilated into a more general discussion of his representation of the city.

²¹⁹ Sutton, *Jan van der Heyden*.

²²⁰ Sutton, “A Life in Full,” 26.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² There are far too many sources to be named (because, again, it could be said to encompass almost all discussions of Dutch landscape and cityscape paintings, prints, and drawings). Some examples are: David Freedberg, *Dutch Landscape Prints of the Seventeenth Century* (London: British Museum Publications, 1980); Schama, “Dutch Landscape: Culture as Foreground”; Levesque, *Journey Through Landscape*; Leeftang, “Dutch Landscape: the Urban View.”

²²³ Richard J. Wattenmaker, “Introduction,” in *The Dutch Cityscape in the 17th Century and its Sources* (Amsterdam: Amsterdams Historisch Museum, 1977), 30.

²²⁴ For instance, Blumin characterizes his cityscapes as follows: “Many are canal-scenes, in which important, identifiable buildings are blended into a more general and picturesque representation of city life.” Blumin, *The Encompassing City*, 78.

Working at the end of the seventeenth century in Amsterdam, Jan van der Heyden marks a major shift away from the concerns that I have discussed so far in this dissertation. That shift was symptomatic of much larger changes in early modern Europe in general. Van der Heyden's career represents a shift away from generalized and collective dissent to a personal and individualized economic argument. While van der Heyden's paintings of Amsterdam have been read overwhelmingly as proud celebrations of his hometown, they are not about collective identity at all. This is not to say that I read van der Heyden as a cynical proto-capitalist only out for personal gain. It is simply that with van der Heyden, the representation of the city has more to do with personal property and commodities than with group identity.

This dissertation has concerned itself with the reimagining of Amsterdam in a variety of divergent representational forms, and it is Jan van der Heyden's oeuvre that presents the most explicit, complete, and systematic version of reimagining here. He appropriates, subverts, and perverts Amsterdam more than any of the artists under discussion here. While van der Heyden might therefore be understood to have moved the furthest away from the official version of the city, his work bizarrely resolves everything, from fire to ruins, back into the official narrative of the city as pure, complete, and untouchable. With Jan van der Heyden, then, we seem to have come full circle. But van der Heyden was by no means an uncritical consumer of a particular idea of Amsterdam shopped around by the city government. He gives us the official narrative with a major difference: the idealized city formulated by the Burgomasters in prints, maps, and plans was entirely contingent upon van der Heyden himself. Otherwise, the absolute opposite would become reality: crime, fire and their attendant economic devastation would overtake Amsterdam without his interventions.

Imagination and Manipulation

Reimagining the real was a central concern of Jan van der Heyden in all of his work. This has been discussed extensively in relation to his cityscapes, and here I would like to consider how van der Heyden manipulates reality and to what ends. Working exclusively in landscape, cityscape, and still life painting, van der Heyden made more explicit forays into the reconfiguration of the real than most Dutch artists. More notably, he seems to have made a concerted effort to make his manipulations of the cityscape increasingly invisible to the viewer, and I believe it is this aspect of his art that has made his divergences from physical reality, which was, as this dissertation has argued, a hallmark of all representations of the city, of such interest to art historians. In other words, as with Dutch painting in general, his cityscapes' convincing realism has made scholars seek to unmask it while simultaneously reifying the very realism they believe they are giving the lie to.

What sets van der Heyden's manipulations of the real from that of other Dutch artists is the way in which he seems to function like an architect and city planner, or alternatively, as if he were arranging a table of objects for a still life. He takes very well-known structures and scrambles them, putting them next to buildings that did not exist, or next to ones that did exist but were from some other part of the city. He deconstructs buildings and reorders bits and pieces of them, producing in the end something that convinces his viewers that it is a real street in a real city, even a particular neighborhood within a city. Van der Heyden's work, then, appears to take place not only on the canvas, but also with the fabric of the city itself as his medium. It is in this sense that van der Heyden's cityscapes seem paradoxically to encourage a reading of them as "realistic" or transparent to their referent. They may be imagined, but they are imaginings based solidly in something concrete that we can even now track down and evaluate.

These paintings thus encourage the irresistible urge of the historian of Dutch art to compare image to reality. Every one of van der Heyden's cityscapes has led to a (usually not too difficult) search for its exact model, and then a comparison to the modern site, ending with a discussion of what has been excluded, changed, imagined, or added. We can take as an example the painting with which this chapter started. The Bruce Museum catalog titles it *Herengracht, Amsterdam, Viewed from the Leliegracht*.²²⁵ The title is a modern creation (and one that is entirely consistent with the type always given to Dutch cityscapes), as the work would not have had a formal title at all when it was painted and sold. The title's specificity evokes both the apparent faithfulness of the artist to his model, and the diligence of the art historian in tracking down that precise model and comparing it to the painting. The catalog entry begins: "Seen from the Leliegracht at the eye level of someone in a boat on the canal, the entire foreground is filled with the water of the Herengracht canal. On the right the bricks and quoins of the canal's retaining wall rise to an iron hand rail, and the tree-lined bank sweeps back to the left toward the Warmoesgracht."²²⁶ The language here, as in virtually any art historical description of one of van der Heyden's cityscapes, collapses the painting with the physical city. However, the entry goes on, however, to say: "The scene is *inspired* by an elegant stretch of the Herengracht...None of these paintings offers a *faithful* representation of the site but all *evoke* the grandeur of patrician houses that line the canal and the stately beauty of the setting. [emphasis mine]"²²⁷ There is a strange tension between the assumption that this is depiction of *this* exact spot, and the sudden statement of mere inspiration, of a lack of "faithful representation." It is van der Heyden's own treatment of the fabric of the actual city as his medium that makes such an apparently contradictory reading possible, and indeed inescapable.

Van der Heyden's paintings of Amsterdam always provide a sufficient number of recognizable or characteristic structures and detail to make it clear that we are looking at Amsterdam, yet rarely did he go beyond these gentle reminders of what he was representing. The only exceptions were his two paintings of the Dam with the new Town Hall at an oblique angle (**Figures 2.16 & 2.17**). Even when he does include a recognizable Amsterdam structure, it is almost always just a part, the rest obscured by more generic buildings. He never represented a well-known building straight on, and very rarely from a characteristic or iconic view (again, the exception being the two Dam paintings). In one of his canal views, the old-fashioned and slightly shabby tower of the Oude Kerk is visible behind a red brick step-gabled house, while the rest of the church is largely obscured by trees and other structures (**Figure 4.3**).

Van der Heyden's tendency to obscure rather than emphasize the identity of specific locations is put into relief when his paintings are compared to those of his contemporary, Berckheyde. We have already seen, in chapter two, the differences between van der Heyden and Berckheyde's depictions of the new Town Hall of Amsterdam: while Berckheyde typically attempted to capture as much of the façade and the rest of the Dam as possible, paying fastidious attention to architectural detail, van der Heyden often chose almost perverse angles, at times centering an image on the space between important buildings. In their depictions of Amsterdam canal scenes, the differences between the two artists are exacerbated. Not only was Berckheyde much more faithful to the actual buildings in a particular spot he chose to paint than was van der Heyden, he was also clearly much more interested in conveying as much information as possible about the appearance of the buildings he depicted. While van der Heyden obscures most of the

²²⁵ Sutton, *Jan van der Heyden*, 144.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

buildings along his canal with trees and is careful to include incidental details of people going about their daily business, Berckheyde omits trees altogether, and uses light and shadow not to dapple water and foliage, but to dramatically set off certain buildings and draw out their architectural details (**Figures 4.1 and 4.4**). Berckheyde's paintings convince us of their faithfulness to the real with their precision, detail, and seeming lack of intervention or affect. Van der Heyden's paintings do something quite different: they ask his viewers to be convinced by the "sense" or character of a particular area, and by van der Heyden's deep understanding of that character that allows him to intervene in our imagining of the physical place, remaking the model itself. Furthermore, Berckheyde, like all of the other Dutch cityscape painters, apart from van der Heyden, painted almost exclusively well-known buildings that housed important institutions. Berckheyde's subjects, then, would have not only been highly recognizable, but their meaning and value would have been relatively specific and attached to them.

Still stranger than van der Heyden's resistance to representing buildings in a typical manner was his refusal to depict any location without making often substantial additions and subtractions from whatever section of the city he purports to be depicting. Manipulations of viewpoint and angle were common in cityscape painting, but usually only insofar as they allowed a building or scene to be more clearly seen. It was very common in Dutch architectural and cityscape painting, for instance, to manipulate perspective in order to widen the view to allow more buildings to be included, to dramatize a scene, to exaggerate the size of an important structure, or to demonstrate the strange properties of pictorial perspective. Berckheyde's many paintings of Haarlem's Grote Markt are an example of all of these functions of optical manipulation (**Figure 4.5**). These sorts of changes served generally to make a well-known scene a slightly elevated version of itself, rather than something else altogether. Van der Heyden went much further: he opted to offer the sense of a place rather than a record of a specific location.

All of this begs the question of whether or not we should even understand van der Heyden's images as cityscapes in the same sense as Berckheyde's more concretely faithful ones. Should these paintings be considered imaginary cityscapes or even architectural fantasies? This question is difficult because van der Heyden's oeuvre embraces a continuum of relationships between painting and referent. He made paintings that place well-known structures in entirely made-up surroundings, pictures that took equally famous buildings and changed parts of them, and yet others that took parts of those buildings and attached them to other structures. He created entirely fictional urban settings, and others that recall a particular city but are entirely invented. These types of works, however, are differentiated from his Amsterdam paintings in a variety of ways. First of all, his more imaginary paintings never bear any resemblance to cities in the Dutch Republic, and tend instead to show Germanic or Italianate locales (**Figures 4.6 & 4.7**). Related is his tendency in these works to include ruins, dilapidated structures, and picturesque beggars, all hallmarks of Dutch Italianate painting. His Amsterdam cityscapes noticeably lack all of these types of details. Furthermore, they were sold in Amsterdam and marketed to people who either lived in or were visiting Amsterdam.²²⁸

Why, then, did van der Heyden construct his paintings of Amsterdam in this way? Given his interest in more standard imaginary city scenes, why did van der Heyden apply his talent at mixing and matching, inventing and changing, to a city that he and his buyers knew so

²²⁸ Famously, one of van der Heyden's paintings of the Amsterdam Town Hall was purchased by Cosimo de' Medici when he visited the city. He attempted to purchase a second work to serve as a pendant, but van der Heyden responded that he was too busy to paint anything new for him. Arjan de Koomen, "Een Hollandse schilder, een Italiaanse prins en een perspectiefprobleem," *Kunstlicht* 12 (1991), 31-32.

concretely? Van der Heyden was exceptional not because he was not completely faithful to his model, but because he managed at once to depict Amsterdam and reinvent it. There is an unmistakable boldness behind his choice to take highly recognizable structures and areas and make them into something entirely his own. In so doing, van der Heyden acted as architect, city planner, and painter in one, and thus resignified and reordered daily spatial experience for both himself and his Amsterdam-dwelling customers. While the burgomasters attempted to obscure a difficult and messy present with a vision of the future, and the many representations of the town hall entrenched that structure in a series of competing narratives that expanded backwards and forwards, van der Heyden's invented Amsterdam was a more subtle and personal affair: his paintings tell us what he thinks the city should look like, how it should be experienced, but not really how it could ever be. These buildings are not configured in this way, those people do not live here, that structure does not exist and will not be built. But as lovingly rumbled and lived in as his buildings and canals appear, these are still idealized representations, but idealized in highly personal and aesthetic terms. This is what Amsterdam would be like if van der Heyden were not simply a painter, and yet in painting them, van der Heyden could not help but change the way he and his viewers experienced and understood the actual city.

While my discussion has seemed to denigrate the art historical activity of comparing Dutch paintings to their subjects in the real world, such comparison between image and subject is, I think, strangely relevant in the case of Jan van der Heyden. I would argue that it was precisely the divergences of van der Heyden's cityscapes from either cityscape painting convention, or from the city itself, that made his paintings appealing to his Amsterdam audience. The buyers of his paintings were well aware of the inconsistencies between van der Heyden's paintings and the city in which they lived, and we might infer that they engaged in an activity of comparison quite similar to that of art historians. But for van der Heyden's customers, it was more likely that this was understood as a pleasurable game, rather than an attempt to catch the artist out. Van der Heyden's paintings have been understood as driven by a desire to capture the essence of a place, and to make it as aesthetically pleasing as possible, but I think they should also be seen as witty and playful conversations with his audience. It is difficult to understand a painting such as van der Heyden's depiction of an Amsterdam canal with the tower of the church of Veere, a city far from Amsterdam in Zeeland, rising in the middle ground without imagining it at least in part as an amusing joke between painter and audience (**Figure 4.8**).

These sorts of visual games, which seem to us now to be more reminiscent of puzzles printed in children's magazines, have been discussed by historians within the quite serious contexts of Christian Medieval devotional literature and art, and sixteenth-century humanist circles. In the case of fifteenth-century devotional painting and literature, these types of "games" most often took the form of peculiar inconsistencies and disruptions that served to draw the interlocutor beyond representation and narrative into a realm of deeper and more abstract contemplation. These strange moments could be formal anomalies or objects that do not belong or otherwise draw too much attention to themselves. For instance, Georges Didi-Huberman has described representations of marble, depicted resolutely without regard for spatial recession, throughout Fra Angelico's fresco cycle for the convent of San Marco, Florence, as *dissemblances*, or seeming lapses in representational integrity that needle the viewer out of his passive consumption of the image. Didi-Huberman argues that these passages of dissemblance were intended to signal to the viewer a detour away from narrative and towards exegesis and

“figures that are not valued for what they represent visibly, but for what they show visually, beyond their aspect, as indexes of the mystery.”²²⁹

In a related study, Reindert Falkenburg has considered the role of symbolic objects in the Mérode Altarpiece. Falkenburg turns to vernacular devotional texts as a source not for specific symbolic references, but for the type of free-form, associative mode of vision that he believes was prompted by this type of devotional painting. Falkenburg likens the Mérode Altarpiece to a vernacular meditation manual that was intended to help its readers to internalize complex concepts and mental qualities associated with Christ and the Virgin Mary by pondering the relationships between minutely described commonplace objects.²³⁰ In the text and the image, the reader/viewer follows a meandering path of associations and relationships between detailed and highly visual descriptions of common objects.

While Didi-Huberman and Falkenburg’s examples seem extraordinarily far from van der Heyden’s Amsterdam cityscapes, the adoption and adaptation of these rhetorical procedures and methods by humanists in the sixteenth century provide a convincing link between medieval devotion and seventeenth-century play in secular landscape and cityscape painting. One example is provided by the culture of the *convivium*, or humanist banquet. As Jeanneret and others have discussed, the *convivium* was an occasion not only for ribaldry and gluttony, but also for the demonstration of wit and rhetoric.²³¹ Paintings of foodstuffs, markets, and banquets, like those of Pieter Aertsen probably hung in the banquet rooms in which *convivia* took place, and they would have been understood as more than decoration, serving as stimulants not only to appetite, but also to discussion and good-natured rivalry. Strange plays of scale, passages that were difficult to make out, complicated iconography, even seeming errors (*errata*), similar to those in Fran Angelico’s paintings, are characteristic of Aertsen’s paintings, and are difficult to account for outside of the context of the communal viewing and discussing of artworks amongst highly educated friends trained in the classical rhetorical arts that also informed the more serious (and solitary) “play” of devotional paintings.²³²

Van der Heyden’s manipulations of the fabric of Amsterdam’s physical reality should be viewed in light of this long, mostly northern, tradition of rhetorical play that rested upon and demonstrated the erudition, wit, familiarity with art, and worldliness of the viewer, rather than understanding it as simply the result of the artist exercising his prerogative to make his subjects more picturesque. Van der Heyden’s cityscapes include strange crystalline passages, particularly his bricks and foliage, of what we would now call hyper-realism inserted in the midst of his generally more mild naturalism (**Figure 4.9**). So notable were his bricks and leaves that by the eighteenth century, it was claimed that he possessed some secret or magic technique.²³³ He remained much more well-known in the nineteenth century than he is today, in large part due to his bricks.²³⁴ His distracting bricks and leaves might be read as a mere novelty, but novelty itself

²²⁹ Georges Didi-Huberman, *Fra Angelico*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 6-7.

²³⁰ Reindert Falkenburg, “The Household of the Soul,” in *Early Netherlandish Painting at the Crossroads*, ed. Maryan Ainsworth, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 6-7.

²³¹ Michel Jeanneret, *A Feast of Words: Banquets and Table Talk in the Renaissance*, trans. Jeremy Whiteley and Emma Hughes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

²³² On Aertsen and his awareness of his audience, see: Elizabeth Honig, *Painting and the Market in Early Modern Antwerp* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 19-52; and Charlotte Houghton, “This Was Tomorrow,” *Art Bulletin* 86, 2 (2004), 277-300.

²³³ I will discuss this in more depth later in this chapter. See Sutton, “The Art of Jan van der Heyden,” 36-37.

²³⁴ See comments on van der Heyden collected in Sutton, *Jan van der Heyden*, 241-244.

was highly prized in humanist rhetoric, and could be understood to play a similar role for van der Heyden's canny collectors. The activity of art historians industriously comparing van der Heyden's paintings to their presumed counterpart in the modern city of Amsterdam, are not far from the approach of his seventeenth-century audience. It is difficult to consider a painting like the canal with the Veere Church tower and not try to figure out where exactly in Amsterdam this is (**Figure 4.8**). The fact that art historians generally agree that it does not actually depict any place in Amsterdam at all (not even barring the presence of the Veere tower) only adds to the ingenuity of the game it encourages its viewers to play.²³⁵

Van der Heyden could also leverage his audience's knowledge of the relatively new Dutch genres of cityscape and architectural painting to make his paintings more appealing and complex. Knowing that his paintings would be compared to the many other works with similar subjects circulating throughout Amsterdam at the time, including prints and paintings, he could bring the peculiarities of his own images into relief. Not only did this allow him to stand out in an over-saturated market, it also allowed his paintings more overtly and successfully to declare their imaginary status. By manipulating and exploiting the quickly established conventions of the cityscape genre, van der Heyden relied upon his audiences' canniness about painting to allow his images to do their imaginative work. His paintings stood against the real, rather than claiming a direct relationship to something represented. Van der Heyden made Amsterdam anew, and asked his viewers actively to partake of his version of the city through the pleasurable activity of comparison and consternation.

Narratives of Destruction: Paranoia and Fear as Marketing Tools

If van der Heyden's cityscape paintings relied on the viewer's previous knowledge of both place and painting, his *Firebook* depended on its audience's familiarity with peculiarly northern art forms: the city description book and hell and destruction imagery. While these two art forms seem as though they could not be further apart, van der Heyden combines them to create a highly original, and highly threatening, advertisement for his newly invented fire hose. This section explores how van der Heyden subverted the tropes of the city description book and rewrote the history of Amsterdam, as well as his own personal history, to reinscribe these narratives within a system of fear, paranoia, and threat.

Jan van der Heyden wrote and published his *Firebook* in 1690 with a single audience in mind: the city government of Amsterdam. He aimed high, but he had had experience with marketing and selling his inventions to the burgomasters before, particularly with the implementation of his lighting scheme in 1669.²³⁶ He went on to publish his first book, on his invention and his methods for lighting the streets, in 1679. Thus, when he published the *Firebook* a decade later, he was well-equipped to deal with the needs of the city leaders, and he clearly understood how best to sell them on the need to adopt both his patented invention and his precise system for large-scale firefighting in the city.

Van der Heyden presented his *Firebook* as a work set forth not necessarily to advertise, but to inform. Most of the book is taken up with a history of fires in Amsterdam and how they were fought. So detailed are these descriptions that the *Firebook* is today the most important source on early modern fire fighting. Yet it becomes clear quite quickly that this is the book's primary concern. Money, and particularly the loss of money, is the driving interest in the

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 142.

²³⁶ J.C. Breen, "Jan van der Heyden," *Jaarboek der Vereeniging Amsterdam* 11 (1913), 45-46.

Firebook. For instance, the description of a 1669 fire at a sugar refinery on the Laurier Canal is followed by this account:

The damage to the owner of the sugar refinery, who lost almost all he possessed and who was so upset that he only survived this accident for a few days, amounted according to a report by his widow

to buildings	65,000 gulden
to sugar and other goods	130,000 gulden
total	195,000 gulden ²³⁷

Each chapter, dedicated to fires fought with various types of technology, ends with a complete reckoning of the losses of all of the previously discussed fires, spelling out in stark financial terms just how costly poorly-fought fires in Amsterdam could be.

Here are the costs of all the preceding fires:

the damages of the first fire amounted to	195,000 gulden
the damages of the second fire amounted to	50,000 gulden
the damages of the third fire amounted to	80,000 gulden
the damages of the fourth fire amounted to	94,000 gulden
the damages of the fifth fire amounted to	5,000 gulden
the damages of the sixth fire amounted to	5,000 gulden
the damages of the seventh fire amounted to	150,000 gulden
the damages of the eighth fire amounted to	382,000 gulden
the damages of the ninth fire amounted to	11,630 gulden
the damages of the tenth fire amounted to	30,500 gulden

So the whole amount of damage suffered in the three years while only the old fire engines and fire fighting equipment were used

through eleven fires amounted to	1,024,130 gulden
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This amounts to 341,376 gulden annually.²³⁸

²³⁷ Jan van der Heyden and Jan van der Heyden II, *Beschryving der nieuwlyks uitgevonden en geotrojeerde slang-brand-spuiten en hare wyze van brand-blussen, tegenwoordig binnen Amsterdam in gebruik zynde* (Amsterdam, 1690), 12-13. In footnotes, the book title will be abbreviated as *Slang-brand-spuiten*. All translations of text from the *Slang-brand-spuiten* book are by Lettie Stibbe Multhauf from: Lettie Stibbe Multhauf, trans. *Van der Heyden: A Description of Fire Engines with Water Hoses and the Method of Fighting Fires Now Used in Amsterdam*. Canton: Science History Publications, 1996. “De schaade van den eigenaar der Zuiker-bakkerij, die by na al’t zyne verloor en zo zeer ontstelt was geweest da thy dit ongeluk maar weinig daagen overleesde, bedroeg vol-gens bericht en opgeeving van zyn Weduwe, aa nhuizinge omtrent—6500 guld.

	130000 guld.
en over zulx te zamen	195000 guld.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 18. “Hier bygevoegt zynde de schaadens van de voorgaande branden volgens het gene aldaar is aangewezen, naamentlyk,

Van der Heyden understood the impact of the content and the form of his text, using repetition and format to reinforce a sense of the major economic loss through property damage entailed by poorly controlled fires in Amsterdam. He ingeniously makes a case for his own fire hose and method simply by juxtaposing, in a stark and detached tone, the financial losses due to fires fought by varying methods. In the last chapter of the history section, van der Heyden ends with the same format as the other chapters, but here, the final tally for forty fires fought using only van der Heyden's hoses and method, amounted to a total of only 18,353 gulden, a startling drop from the previous chapters. His only concession to his own interests is that he then tabulates the losses per year, which he neglects to do in the other chapters, leaving the final reckoning to be 3,670 gulden per year. So consistent is van der Heyden's interest in the economic aspects of fire that there are very few mentions of death or even injury in the *Firebook*. The death of the sugar refinery owner in the example above is a rare exception, but even in this instance, van der Heyden's attributes his death to despair over the loss of his property.

In chapter one I discussed the city government's own ploys for marketing and publicizing their version of Amsterdam, as well as expensive tax-supported building campaigns. Government-commissioned maps and prints, and city description books that were not directly commissioned but were dedicated to and published by authors with close ties to the burgomasters, all served to circulate a particular vision of Amsterdam: its history, values, and appearance. Unsurprisingly, what all of these works had in common was a highly laudatory and entirely whitewashed representation of the city, presenting Amsterdam as a unified city without conflict or strife. Van der Heyden was in the peculiar position of having as his audience the city government itself, which otherwise was generally on the side of production, rather than consumption, of large-scale marketing practices. It can be no coincidence therefore that van der Heyden's *Firebook* hews so closely in its methods and form to the types of "advertising" favored by the city government. Using the history of Amsterdam and prints of the city's public and private structures, van der Heyden exploited, and then ultimately turned on themselves, the city government's marketing ploys, while successfully selling his products to the very institution he subverted.

The nine book-length descriptions of Amsterdam published between 1661 and 1693 were remarkably consistent in their content and format, to the point that the genre was continually beset with well-founded accusations of plagiarism and outright piracy.²³⁹ Profusely illustrated with engravings of important monuments throughout the city, often done by prominent artists, these Amsterdam description books were one of the most important ways in which the city government controlled and circulated an official version of the city's history, identity, and even appearance. Published in just this period, van der Heyden's *Firebook* used many of the recently entrenched conventions of the genre in ways that must have resonated with the city fathers to whom both his book and all Amsterdam description books were dedicated. Covering many areas of the city, including important commercial and manufacturing areas, residential zones, and major public monuments, the *Firebook*, like the city descriptions, provided what amounted to a

de schaade van den eersten brand, ----- 195000 guld.
[tweeden, derde,, vierden, vyfden, zesden, sevenden, achtsten, negenden, tienden] Zo beloopt de gehele schade die in deeze drie Jaren, dat de Oude Spuiten en Blus-gereetschappen binnen Amsterdam volkomen complete zyn geweest, of wel door elf branden uit de zelve, weird geleeden-1024130 guld.”
²³⁹ Mulier, "The Image of Amsterdam," 14.

historical-topographical overview of the city, one studded with engravings of the structures described. While basic though these similarities may seem, it must be remembered that the city description as a genre was quite young, and it offered the first book-length collection of information about a contemporary city.

Van der Heyden's *Firebook* used an implied comparison to city description books and other histories and descriptions of the city to remake Amsterdam's history into a string of financially devastating disasters, its fabric into a landscape of loss, ruin, and potential destruction, its psychological terrain into a fearscape of inevitable calamity. A proud description and large engraving of the new Town Hall, the "Eighth Wonder of the World," is replaced in van der Heyden's book with a dramatic nighttime view of the old town hall engulfed in a massive conflagration, Amsterdammers manning a useless bucket brigade. An account of the layout of the city becomes a detailed description of an invention and how it will put out the unavoidable fires that will destroy the city in the near and distant future. The entire book rests, in fact, on the premise that fire and destruction are unavoidable. Prevention for van der Heyden is very much beside the point (and no surprise, since without fires, he would have been out of business), and is utterly absent from his account. Van der Heyden thus implies that the best possible outcome, provided by his new methods, is the reduction of financial loss from destruction by fire. As with van der Heyden's cityscape paintings, the viewer took on the burden of activating the *Firebook* through making these sorts of connections, between the *Firebook* and the city description books, and between the *Firebook* and the city itself. Narratives were formed in the space of the viewer, as well as in the book. In the case of the *Firebook*, those narratives were ones of fear and paranoia. Van der Heyden's book implied through example alone just how close one's property was to total destruction.

The *Firebook's* tone, distinctly deadpan and almost dry in its careful delineation of destruction and loss of property, served to assure van der Heyden's audience that his book was not self-serving or dishonest in its facts. But it also manages to distinguish his book and its implied neutrality and therefore honesty from the city description books, which were unabashedly laudatory, often gushing in tone, and entirely void of mention of anything that put the city in a remotely negative light. Van der Heyden constantly emphasizes truth and disinterestedness throughout the *Firebook*. Even in the dedication to the burgomasters that starts the book, van der Heyden is at pains to make this point clear: "To find the true difference beyond doubt, we have in every instance added the amount of damages as given to us by the interested parties themselves, who surely were the most reliable."²⁴⁰ Once again, property is the overriding concern, and van der Heyden emphasizes his methods of conveying truth. He goes on in Part Two, the history section of the book, to say:

In providing these accounts we will use all possible circumspection and will not only fully describe the incidents, but we will also note their dates and locations, so that nobody with any semblance of reason can doubt the truthfulness of our story. And if anybody is inclined to question their truth, we will gladly provide him with all convenience, opportunity, and inducement.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Van der Heyden, *Slang-brand-spuiten*, II, "En om 't waare verschil ontwijflijk te vinden, de geleede schaaide volgens opgeeven der Geintresserden zelve, 't zeekerste dat men kan hebben, t'elkens daar neeven gevoegt."

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 8. "Hier in zullenwe alle mogelyke omzichtigheid gebruiken, en niet alleen de gevallen, met al het geene daar in is aan te merken, verhaalen, maar ook tyd en plaatze aanwyzen; ten einde dat niemant, met eenige schyn van

Van der Heyden's reconfiguring of the history and terrain of Amsterdam as littered with large-scale property destruction and financial loss, completely unmentioned in all of the Amsterdam city descriptions, powerfully illustrated the limits and interests of those texts.

The one moment in the *Firebook* when van der Heyden allows his personal experience into the narrative is presented as another form of proof. When van der Heyden was fifteen years old, he witnessed first-hand the destruction by fire of the old town hall of Amsterdam. He begins the first chapter of the second part of the *Firebook*: "The oldest fire which we can recall and which, like all the following ones, we have seen ourselves, was the fire at the old city hall of this city which took place on 7 July 1652, about two hours after midnight."²⁴² He goes on to describe in detail the precise (and faulty) manner in which the fire was unsuccessfully fought, and concludes that, "This is the usual course of events in fires and even here, under the most advantageous circumstances...the entire city hall burned to the ground with everything attached to it. No part of it was saved and nothing remained standing... There was hardly time to bring papers and the most valuable items to safety. Everything else burned. Money from the exchange was melted into great lumps."²⁴³ This long passage glosses over the fact that, unlike the mostly much later fires described in the rest of the book, van der Heyden was only fifteen at the time he witnessed this fire and almost certainly did not note at the time, let alone record, all of the details of how the fire was fought. Van der Heyden recasts his own autobiography here, making himself not only eyewitness to the spectacle of the fire, but also eyewitness to the precise details of how and why the attempts to stop the fire failed.

Van der Heyden perpetrates a more bizarre act of historical revisionism in his engraving of the fire at the old town hall (**Figure 4.10**). His dramatic rendering of the fire lighting up the shell of the old town hall shows us, from the area marked A to B, the large unruly crowd and bucket line that van der Heyden states marked the actual event. But from B to C, on the far right side of the print, van der Heyden also included his own fire hose and engine. He writes that he included this blatantly anachronistic detail "to show the difference."²⁴⁴ Van der Heyden thus inserted himself into the narrative of this infamous event, and quite literally inserted his own invention into what he claims to be an eyewitness visual account of the fire. Historical (and even personal) narrative in the *Firebook*, quite unlike its status in the city description books, is elastic, susceptible to revision, and ongoing.

Mining the Northern Tradition of Hell Imagery

If city description books provided an anti-type for van der Heyden's *Firebook*, another well-known and much older northern tradition, hell and disaster paintings, amplified the *Firebook*'s effect through a more direct comparison. Van der Heyden more openly courted fear

reden, aan de oprechtheit van ons verhaal zou kunnen twyffelen: en ook om dat, zo iemand echter genegenheit mochte hebben om de waarheid daar van nader te onderzoeken, wy hem gaarne alle gemak, gelegenheit en aanleiding daar toe zouden verschaffen."

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 9. "Op deeze wyze gedroeg het zich gemeenelyk by de branden: en hier, daar alle geleegenheeden wenschelyk, 't gebou van steen en geen fel brandende stoffen by waren, branden 't gehele Stadhuis met alles watter aan vast was tot de grond toe af...Men had nalyk tyd om de papieren, en 't geen daar 't meest aangeleegen was, te bergen, de rest verbrande; de gelden van de Wisselbank smolten veel aan groote klompen, die naderhand uit de puinhoopen gehaalt wierden..."

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, caption to figure 2. "Uitbeelding vant verschilder der begraamheden van d'Oude en Nieuwe Brandspuiten, ten gebruik van brand blussen..."

and paranoia by exploiting a formal and narrative similarity between his engravings for the *Firebook* and well-established and popular northern hellscape image tradition.

Depictions of hell and punishment were far more well-established in the north than in Italy or Spain. Some of the earliest and best-known examples were not individual paintings, but wings or large passages of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century altarpieces depicting subjects like the Temptation of St. Anthony, the Last Judgment, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. While Italian artists certainly depicted these types of subjects, northern images developed a reputation for being particularly detailed and gruesome. Northern images also tended to place greater emphasis on the trappings and landscape of hell or hell on earth, and as a result fire, mutilation, and ruin were far more prevalent in Netherlandish images. Comparing, for instance, Bosch's hell panel from his *Last Judgment* triptych to Signorelli's late fifteenth-century *Damned Cast Into Hell*, we can see that far greater attention is paid by Bosch to the flames and attendant black smoke of hell, and the ways fire can torture and mutilate the human body and architecture (**Figures 4.11** and **4.12**). Signorelli includes hellfire, but it is far to the left of the fresco and so quietly depicted that it almost melds into the bodies of the damned that are closest to it, making the flames relatively difficult to distinguish from the mass of well-muscled bodies that are clearly the central concern of this image. In contrast, the entire upper third of Bosch's panel is dedicated to numerous distinct areas of carefully highlighted bright flames that shoot up into the sky and utterly destroy the very landscape itself. Fire in Netherlandish paintings serves not simply as a symbol or marker of hell, as it largely does in Italian painting, but is itself a significant player in the depicted destruction and suffering.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Bruegel family was well known in part for their Boschian representations of hell and hell on earth. Pieter Bruegel's c. 1652 *Dulle Griet* was clearly inspired by Bosch, whose bizarre hellscapes influenced northern artists well into the seventeenth century (**Figure 4.13**). While flames take up only the upper quarter of the panel's surface, they drive the palette of the entire painting, and appear to provide the only source of illumination for the whole scene of Mad Meg and her army of female peasants pillaging hell. Once again, fire, architectural ruin, and gruesome bodily torture are the hallmarks of the northern version of hell. In fifteenth- and sixteenth-century hellscape paintings, fire is inextricably linked to the destruction of architecture and the pain and humiliation of human bodies.

Closer in time to van der Heyden's *Firebook* were popular Dutch prints of contemporary disasters and the depredations of war. In particular, Dutch prints of war subjects often included representations of fire, while disaster prints tended to focus on the floods that were such a prevalent concern of the Dutch. Romeyn de Hooghe's engraving of the 1672 destruction of the villages of Bodegraven and Zwammerdam by the French is just one example of the many very popular prints by the famous engraver that described in meticulous detail the atrocities of war (**Figure 4.14**). Men are impaled, women are raped, babies are skewered, and all the while, buildings are engulfed by angry flames. While the style and composition of de Hooghe's print is influenced by artists like Rubens or Poussin, the narrative and the combination of architectural destruction and the delineation of the myriad ways in which the human body can be tortured and rent, harkens back to the examples of Bosch and Bruegel.

It is into this tradition of images of horrific bodily violence coupled with flame-engulfed buildings that van der Heyden's *Firebook* entered in the late seventeenth century. Notably lacking from van der Heyden's images, however, are human bodies in distress. I will discuss this in the next section, but at this point, it is enough to note that van der Heyden has moved the architecture front and center. His images nevertheless must still be understood within the

context of these types of images. The depiction of fire was very popular in the Netherlands, but it was restricted to subjects of hell, punishment, and large-scale disaster, all of which emphasized the painful destruction of human life as well as architecture. Van der Heyden exploited an irresistible comparison between his engravings of events that involved relatively little loss of human life, and paintings and prints whose very subject matter was punishment, pain, and loss. The images to which van der Heyden's prints would be compared combined horror, fear, and spectacle into a potent brew that both appealed to and repulsed their viewers. If city description books provided van der Heyden with a counter example, these earlier images made the threat implicit in his prints more potent. The tradition of gruesome fire imagery provided the *Firebook* prints with a readymade visual framework that would allow them to immediately resonate with complex and deeply-felt longstanding associations.

It is, I think, no coincidence that the prints from the *Firebook* that do contain many human figures are strikingly similar to prints like Romeyn de Hooghe's. Van der Heyden's crowds of people attempting to fight fire bear an uncanny resemblance to de Hooghe's rampaging French soldiers attacking innocent Dutch people: chaos reigns supreme, and bodies melt into one another untidily and press in every possible direction, bodies fall, arms flail, hands hold sinister-looking tools, men climb into burning buildings (**Figures 4.10 and 4.15**). What finally distinguishes de Hooghe's cruel soldiers intent on destruction from van der Heyden's brave men attempting to stop destruction are mere details: hoses, buckets, and engines, the simple tools of fire fighting. But these details are impossible to read or understand without the benefit of van der Heyden's narrative and careful explanation, often accompanied by a key, of what exactly is happening. Only by reading the caption and the rest of the text can the viewer truly distinguish destruction from protection at the hands of man. It is notable that these images that appear so similar to de Hooghe's only occur in the first two chapters of the *Firebook's* history of Amsterdam fires. These are the chapters that describe fires not fought with van der Heyden's improved fire engine and hose. The last two chapters of this section, which describe fires that were fought since the fire engine was invented, include far fewer human figures. In fact, the last chapter of this section, which describes "fires which occurred since only the new fire engines with hoses have been used," includes only two prints of actual fires, the other six images showing only the calm aftermath of the fire (**Figures 4.2, 4.17 & 4.18**). Even an image that shows a fire in progress emphasizes the calm and orderly nature of fire fighting under the new system, in marked contrast to how human figures were represented in prints illustrating fires fought before van der Heyden's invention (**Figures 4.16, 4.17, & 4.19**). In other words, van der Heyden invites direct comparison between the northern tradition of hellfire representations and his prints only to describe fires that preceded his invention. It was of course in van der Heyden's best interest to elicit fear in his viewers through strong associations with representations of punishment and abuse when describing what happened before van der Heyden came on the scene.

From Divine Will to Human Error

In distinguishing between the outcome of accidental fires in Amsterdam based on fire fighting method, van der Heyden's *Firebook* was a radical departure from the representation in text and image of fire in the European tradition. While the types of images that provided precedents for van der Heyden's prints inevitably associated fire and its destructive powers with punishment or inhuman cruelty, the *Firebook* clearly presents destruction by fire as entirely void of symbolic meaning, and certainly unrelated to divine will. Rather than punishment, the

Firebook implies, destruction by fire is the logical and largely avoidable outcome of ignorance and mismanagement.

In both the Old and the New Testament, hell's landscape is only sketchily described, and fire is generally the only thing specifically mentioned, whether in regards to the makeup of hell or the nature of punishment that occurs there. Revelations characteristically provides the most thorough description of hell, describing it as a "lake of fire and sulphur where the beast and the false prophet had been flung, there to be tormented day and night for ever." (Revelations 20:10) Fire is not only characteristic of punishment in hell, but is explicitly described as having been sent from heaven to torment and punish those in hell. (Revelations 20:9) It should therefore come as no surprise that fire is included in virtually every medieval and early modern European representation of hell. Northern artists, probably responding to popular theology, greatly expanded upon the repertoire of torture and bodily punishment available in the underworld, but fire continued to be the most important marker of hell. Fire therefore symbolized punishment for sin sent directly from God.

While it should come as no surprise that fire was understood as divine retribution in representations of hell, contemporary fire and destruction were also read as punishment or judgment from God well into the seventeenth century. In the Dutch Republic, narratives of divine intervention, whether in the form of punishment or grace, accumulated around disasters and war. As I discussed in chapter two, many people read God's judgment, both positive and negative, into the burning of the old town hall and the "miraculous" lack of major damage to the partially built new Town Hall just a few feet away. The explosion of the Delft powder magazine in 1654 also inspired both accounts of miraculous survival (most famously, an infant that was supposedly found days later in the wreckage of a house, totally unharmed and still sitting happily in her high chair) and readings of the explosion as a sign of the coming end of days. Dirck van Bleyswijk's city description of Delft from 1667 collected many of these anecdotes, and he seemed to come down on the side of those who believed the explosion was an act of God when he quoted St. Peter: "But the day of the Lord shall come as a thief, in which the heavens shall pass away with great violence, and the elements shall be melted with heat, and the earth and the works which are in it, shall be burnt up."²⁴⁵ Even de Hooghe's print of the French destroying Bodegraven and Zwammerdam clearly draws parallels between biblical narratives (most notably the Massacre of the Innocents) and this contemporary event, reading the biblical as a prefiguration of the present-day.

Viewing and reading van der Heyden's *Firebook* in the context of images and narratives that read extreme catastrophes as meaningful and motivated, it swiftly becomes clear that van der Heyden is forging a new path in his reading and representation of such events. Van der Heyden's patent comes directly after the dedication that opens the book and begins by explaining the importance of the invention: "With these fire hoses, all fires, however violent and unapproachable they might appear, could be completely extinguished with incredible speed."²⁴⁶ While such a statement would be expected, given that the *Firebook* was essentially an advertisement, its staunch refusal to allow fire to be read as truly dangerous or uncontrollable is a bold statement, particularly at the start of a book that goes on carefully to describe numerous local fires that were in fact quite destructive. Furthermore, the Great Fire of London had occurred less than thirty years earlier, and continued to hold an important place in the Dutch

²⁴⁵ Dirck van Bleyswijk, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft...* vol. 2 (Delft, 1667), 631

²⁴⁶ Van der Heyden, *Slang-brand-sputten*, VI. "...door welke Slang-brand-sputten, alle Branden, hoe heevig ende ongenaakbaar di sonden mogen voorkomen, met ongelooffelijke spoet, geheel seker uytgebluscht werden"

imaginary.²⁴⁷ Even when van der Heyden discusses major devastation by fire, however, he is always careful to clarify that the causes were human error. In most of the cases he recounts, a careless act initially starts the fire. Van der Heyden seems in many cases to take pleasure in minutely detailing narratives of mundane stupidity that led to spectacular financial loss, as in his account of a 1654 fire on the Spui:

A forgotten candle started the fire in the attic, and when the renderer, who by his carelessness had often been in danger, noticed the fire he tried, as he had managed before, to quench the fire by throwing a mattress on top of it. But this time he had the misfortune to slip on the grease; he fell backwards with the mattress, and before he could save himself the fire had taken the upper hand.²⁴⁸

A candle, a mattress, a slip, and a careless fool: these very simple props, which sound like the set-up to a joke, resulted in the complete destruction of five houses and a grease rendering works, and the death of the fool himself. Stories like this simultaneously manage to frighten readers about the ease with which devastating fires can be started (and thus the impossibility of preventing fires from starting), and completely to place the onus of the destruction on human error. There can be no meaning read into the cause of this fire, as the author has managed to pinpoint precisely how it started.

The main challenge in suppressing fires, however, was not, according to van der Heyden, actually human stupidity (although it certainly exacerbated the problem). Rather, the inferiority of fire fighting methods and tools are blamed in van der Heyden's account. Prior to the implementation of van der Heyden's system and the complete adoption of his fire hose and engine, the predominant method for fighting fires in Europe was with bucket brigades and hooks

²⁴⁷ Occurring in the midst of the Second Anglo-Dutch War, the 1666 Great London Fire, which decimated large swathes of private and public property, was almost immediately linked in the public imagination with the Dutch and the French, who, it was rumored, had been responsible for the devastating fire. Neil Hanson, *The Dreadful Judgment* (London; NY: Doubleday, 2001), 142-143; Adrian Tinniswood, *By Permission of Heaven: The Story of the Great Fire of London* (NY: Riverhead Books, 2004), 145-6; *The London Gazette* (London, noted that "Divers Strangers, Dutch and French were, during the fire, apprehended, upon suspicion that they contributed mischievously to it, who are all imprisoned, and Informations prepared to make severe inquisition here upon by my Lord Chief Justice Keeling..." *London Gazette*, September 10, 1666. An English poem from 1667 states that, "Is't still unknown from whence our ruine came,/Whether from Hell, *France, Rome, or Amsterdam?*" (British Library 82.i.8.[13.]) The fire was widely viewed in the Dutch Republic as divine retribution, or at least well-deserved just desserts, for the so-called Holmes' Bonfire, the burning of the Dutch town of West-Terschelling in August of the same year. Joost van den Vondel, in his perhaps not entirely sincerely titled poem on the Great London Fire, "Lament at the horrific destruction of London" ("Jammerklaght over de gruwsame verwoesting van Londen"), gloated, "Their fire cry sounds suddenly quite different from their previous yells/Of your triumphant celebration, so delighted/Over the laments of the Dutch." ("Hun 'brantkreet' klinkt opens heel anders dan voorheen het schreeuwen/Van uw triomfffeest, zoo verheugt/Om 't jammren van den Nederlander.") Joost van den Vondel, *Jammerklaght over de gruwsame verwoesting van Londen* (Amsterdam: Abraham de Wees, 1666). It might also be noted that many of the prints and paintings of the fire and its aftermath were by Dutch artists.

²⁴⁸ Van der Heyden, *Slang-brand-spuiten*, 10. "Den brand onstond op de smeersolder door een vergeeste kaars; en den Smeersmelter, die meermaalen door zyn onvoorzichtigheit in gevaar was geweest, den brand verneemende, meendenze wederom, gelyk hem voor heen wel gelukt was met het opwerpen van een bed te dempen: maar hy had deeze reis het ongeluk, dat zyn voeten op het glibberige smeer uitschietende, hy met het bed achter over viel; en den brand, eer hy zich kon redden, te ver de overhand nam."

and ladders.²⁴⁹ According to van der Heyden, not only was this old system inefficient, it was itself potentially even more destructive than the fire itself. Again, van der Heyden downplays fire as a destructive force, describing it as something inevitable that need not ever be seriously damaging to property.

However, the tools that until now generally have been used to fight fires do not have the required capability. This is shown not only by the frequency of fires and the immeasurable amounts of damage which are daily caused by them, but it is also an unfailing sign of their weakness and ineffectiveness that often after they have been used with great trouble and energy in an effort to diminish the fire it has still been necessary to demolish houses and walls, or, what is even worse, to explode them with gunpowder in order to cut off the fire. Truly, they are remedies that destroy and damage as much as the fire itself...²⁵⁰

In his account of perhaps the most famous fire in Amsterdam history, the burning of the old town hall, van der Heyden notes that, “There was plenty of space on all sides. Since it was in the center of the city there was an abundance of people, buckets, and ladders, and there was no lack of diligence by the citizenry which willingly did its duty to save this place, with which they were all concerned.”²⁵¹ As his readers knew only too well, the outcome was devastating. He continues, “This is the usual course of events in fires and even here, under the most advantageous circumstances...the entire city hall burned to the ground with everything attached to it.”²⁵² In other words, using such inferior tools, there is nothing that can be done, no matter the good intentions and ideal circumstances surrounding a fire.

About half of the *Firebook* is taken up with accounts of how helpless people are in the face of fire, and many passages are blatantly fear mongering. A very long section of the chapter describing the old fire engines, for instance, begins by referring to a print of an imaginary fire that demonstrates how the old fire engine was used, and explaining what it depicts. Yet it swiftly transitions into a long and detailed future-tense imagining of the destruction of the depicted building. Van der Heyden narrates a totally imaginary event in a manner that implicates his own readers within the narrative. He asks his readers to imagine themselves into the nightmare scene he paints:

²⁴⁹ “Firefighting in Amsterdam in the Seventeenth Century,” *Duits Quarterly* 12 (1968), 10-16.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1. “Maar dat de gereetschaapen, welke tot noch toe alom tot de brandblussing gebruikt zyn, de vereiste bequaamheit niet hebben, blykt niet minder uit de dezelve voorvallen, en onnoemelyke schaadens die daghelyx daar by geleeden worden. ’t Is ook een onseilbaar blyk van haar zwakheit en kleine uitwerking datmen meeft, of genoegsaam altyt, naar alle vlyt en moeite daar meede is aangewent om den brand te lessen, noch endling zyn toevlugt moet neemen tot het omverhaalen van huizen en geevels; of wel, dat noch erger is, dezelve met Buskruit doen opspringen, om de branden af t snyden. Waarlyk middelen die zo wel ernielen en schaade doen als de brande zelve...”

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 9. “Men had hier alle zyden ruimten, Menschen, Emmers en Leeren, wyl het te midden van de Stadt was, in overvloed; en ’t ontbrak aan geen iever van de Burgery, die willig haar devoir deeden om deeze plaats, daar het algemeen aangeleegen was, te redden.”

²⁵² *Ibid.* “Op deeze wyze gedroeg het zich gemeenelyk by de branden: en hier, daar alle geleegentheeden wenschelyk, ’t gebou van steen en geen fel brandende stoffen by waren, branden ’t gehele Stadhuis met alles watter aan vast was tot de grond toe af...”

They will wait patiently until the fire advances so far that flames break out through the windows. Then they will start to squirt water against the front wall to keep it standing to act as a barrier behind which the fire can safely attack the neighboring houses and everything else standing behind it, until the beams and anchors burn through, the front wall collapses, and, unless they had escaped in time, will crush the engines and the people...Consequently the fire jumps without resistance from house to house and the engines and people are forced to draw back from house to house to escape the fire...²⁵³

What van der Heyden makes abundantly clear is that his narratives of the total lack of control and power in the face of urban fire are meant to frighten his readers, but only to demonstrate how easily such a hopeless situation can be entirely turned around. Van der Heyden himself was, of course, the answer to all of the city's problems with fire.

Van der Heyden ends his history of Amsterdam's conflagrations with an account of a very recent fire, which took place on an anchored ship in the East India shipyard at Oostenburg (an island in Amsterdam on which the East India Company based its shipbuilding). This was a rather unusual fire with which to end his account for a number of reasons: it was the only non-building fire discussed in the book, and although it was fought with van der Heyden's fire engines and hoses, it was not entirely successfully brought under control. Furthermore, he uses the narrative of this ship, which seems to have simply caught on fire for unknown reasons, to segue into a discussion of how his engines could prevent damage from fire ships. Fire ships, low-quality (at times purpose-built) ships filled with combustibles and steered into enemy fleets and set on fire, were an incredibly destructive weapon in naval battle and almost impossible to combat. The English and the Dutch were particularly adept at deploying fire ships in naval battle, and had relatively recently inflicted serious damage on each other's fleets during the Anglo-Dutch Wars.²⁵⁴ It was, therefore, a topical and sensitive subject for the Dutch at this point, and practical solutions to the problem of fire ships were a high priority to a nation whose dominance of world trade was contingent upon the success of their naval fleet. Van der Heyden concludes by stating that, "It was now clear that a ship immersed in flames and covered with pitch and tar could be saved as easily as a building on land... We found many reasons to conclude more firmly than ever (which we mention in passing) that with this invention, when placed properly on warships, the danger of fire ships to the nation's fleet could be averted."²⁵⁵ The Oostenburg fire was certainly not caused by a fire ship, but van der Heyden nevertheless

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 4. "en dan wachtemen met gedult, tot den brand zo verre geavanceert was, dat de vlam ook e voorvensteren uitfloeg; wanneer men gelykelyk aan't Spuiten viel, de geevel bluste, en als een schutsel, waar achter den brand veilig de buurhuizen en al't geene'er achter stond aantaste, staande hield, zo lang tot de balken en ankers losgebrand zynde, de de zelve neerstorte, en zo men niet tydig genoeg week, de Spuiten en menschen verpletterde... en de Spuiten en menschen zyn even eens, aar maate datze verzwaart en haar met het overstorten van losbrandende geevels dreigt, genoodzaakt van huis tot huis te rug te wijken en't gevaar te ontvluchten."

²⁵⁴ J.R. Jones, *The Anglo-Dutch Wars of the Seventeenth Century* (London; New York: Longman, 1996), 44; and Peter Kirsch, *Fireship: The Terror Weapon of the Age of Sail* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2009).

²⁵⁵ Van der Heyden, *Slang-brand-spuiten*, 43. "Ondertussen zach men dat een Schip, door en weer door in brand staande, schoon 't beteerd is, eeven zo licht blusselijk is als landgebouwen; of wel gemakelijker om dat me 't water dicht by de hand heeft. En wy vonden groote reeden, om vaster als oydt te befluyten ('t welkwe alleen in 't voor by gaan zullen aanmerken) dat men zeekerlyk door dit middel, 't zelve ordentelijk in de Scheepen van Oorloge gelaast zijnde, het effect der branden, van 't Lands Vloot zou kunnen afweeren..."

uses it as an example of just how important his invention and accompanying instructions for its deployment were, not only to private citizens, but to the entire Dutch Republic.

Van der Heyden explains that the fire was not initially successfully fought because his instructions were not properly followed, and that once he was on the scene, “We immediately had the fire engines placed alongside the ship and the hoses put to work by the few assigned men who had come along. At this point the fire was instantly halted without progressing further... The fire was fought so skillfully and quickly that in less than a quarter of an hour men could climb into the burning flames and sparks in the hold and between the ribs... It is crystal clear that if the men had not occupied themselves with futile and vain work... not one fourth of the damage would have been suffered.”²⁵⁶ Van der Heyden makes clear here that the invention is not enough, and that his own administration of the system of fire fighting is fundamentally important. Even in the case of a fire that is badly managed and in unfavorable circumstances van der Heyden is able entirely to turn around the anticipated outcome. Ending with a fire that was only partially controlled allowed van der Heyden to condense his overall narrative of the devastating and frightening history of urban fire prior to his intervention, and the post-van der Heyden situation in which fire is entirely controllable and therefore not to be feared.

Play Between Media

Both van der Heyden’s paintings and his engravings encourage and even depend upon connections made by his audience between his work and well-known texts and images from the northern tradition. His works of art in both media were activated by the mental work of his viewers, and meaning and effect were not intended to reside fully in the works, but rather in the spaces between old and new, tradition and innovation, model and emulation. But van der Heyden’s appropriation and exploitation of works of art and their valences was not restricted to the products of other artists. His paintings and his prints draw their effect and meaning from one another. It is the play between media within his own oeuvre that van der Heyden art exploited.

A strange fact of van der Heyden’s art production that has not, to my knowledge, ever been discussed in the scholarly literature, is his strict separation by medium of his “pristine” cityscapes from his images of fire, ruin, and destruction. As far as we are aware, van der Heyden never painted architecture on fire or recently destroyed²⁵⁷. He likewise never made a print of anything at all that was *not* on fire, recently destroyed, or otherwise directly related to fire and its prevention. Given the incredible popularity of both prints and paintings of recent disasters, ruins, and fires, as discussed in the previous two chapters, the usual explanation that such subjects were too strange or unpopular for treatment in painting but could be experimented with in print, certainly is not credible. Furthermore, van der Heyden was unusually talented at designing prints, and his engravings for the *Firebook*, which managed to be both painterly and well-versed in the manipulation of line, composition, and viewpoint, surpassed in quality many of the prints that were being produced and sold as independent works at the time.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.* “Deeze dedenwe daadelijk aan de booven zijde van ’t Schip plaatzen, en de Spuiten door eenige weynige geaffecteerdens, die ’er meede gekomen waaren, ter gang brengen. Doen wierd daadelijk, den brand, zonder datze zeedert iets verder quam, gestuit... En de blussing vorderde zo vaardig en prompt dat men, in veel minder dan een quartieuruurs, met de Spuit-pypen en Slangen tot in ’t brandende Schip, en op het tweede verdek klom, om de overige vlam en vonken over al in ’t ruim en tussen de inhouten uit te blussen... En ’t is zonneklaar dat, zo men zich niet met vergeefs en t’ eenemaal vruchteloos werk had bezich behouden, maar daadlijk de spuiten te werk gesteld en de blussing bevorderd hadn, niet het vierde deel van de schaade waar geleeden.”

²⁵⁷ The exception being ancient ruins that appear in some of his imaginary, vaguely Roman, city paintings.

Where van der Heyden's skill at designing prints came from we do not know, but one clue might lie in the detailed and extremely meticulous preparatory drawings he made for his prints. Even when compared to preparatory drawings by artists like Pieter Saenredam, who were heavily invested in nailing down viewpoint, perspective, architectural detail, and spatial relationships, van der Heyden's drawings often look like the work of an architect or city planner, rather than an artist (**Figures 4.20 & 4.21**). Van der Heyden, furthermore, appears to have been committed to an incredibly laborious process in the preparation of his engravings. We can start to unearth parts of this process from the wide variety of types of preparatory studies he completed for each print. In addition to the beautiful and highly finished pen and ink drawings that were virtually identical to the finished engravings and were therefore likely the models from which he directly worked, we have much smaller sketches of ruins that appear to have been done on the spot; ruled drawings that show the bare outlines of architecture, figures, and trees against numbered grids, which are likely perspective studies; studies that include only architecture and none of the lively details that would later appear in the final prints; and counterproofs that contain only the ghost of the architecture, and yet fully articulated figures gossiping and standing in doorways (**Figures 4.22 & 4.23**). It is likely that van der Heyden's process for making his engravings was similar to how he produced his cityscape paintings, and the one study for his paintings that is extant suggests that this was the case (**Figure 4.24**). This study (actually a counterproof of the original drawing) closely resembles the ruled drawings that we can assume are an intermediary stage in the production of his designs. All of this suggests that van der Heyden's working method was well-suited to the process of designing prints.

Another curious aspect of van der Heyden's working method that sheds light on the relationship between his paintings and prints is his usage of engraving plates in his cityscape paintings. The turn of the century Dutch artist and biographer Arnold Houbraken says: "It is still believed that he had a special grasp of painting, or had invented a way, that seems impossible to all who know how to use the brush, to accomplish things beyond the ordinary way of painting."²⁵⁸ The Dutch writer J. Campo. Weyerman wrote in 1729 that, "It is so impossible to understand what method he used to be able to paint the aforementioned works in so detailed a manner [so exhaustively], that all of the connoisseurs must unanimously confess that the clever artist must have an 'art secret'."²⁵⁹ Well into the nineteenth century, van der Heyden would enjoy a level of fame, largely because of his "art secret," that he certainly does not today. We now know that his "secret" was a series of metal plates, etched with patterns of bricks and leaves, which he would print onto a piece of paper, and then quickly press against the area of the painting that required the pattern, leaving the still-wet ink on the surface of the painting.²⁶⁰ Van der Heyden, therefore, was already exploiting printing in the production of his paintings, at times quite directly.

The strict separation of subject matter and medium in van der Heyden's oeuvre is therefore at once more significant and less extreme than it first appears. Both his prints and his

²⁵⁸ "Waar omtrent men nu nog gelooft, dat hy een byzondere konstgreep, of middle heft uitgevonden gehad, om dat het aan allen die het gebruik van 't penceel kennen, onmogelyk schynt dat het op de gewone wyze van schilderen geschieden kan." Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh*, 81.

²⁵⁹ "Het is onbegrijpelijk op wat voor een wijze hy die voornoemde voorwerpen zo uytvoeriglyk heft weeten to schilderen, want dat die schrandere Konstenaar daar toe een konstgeheim had, moeten all de Konstkeners eenpaariglyk bekennen." J.C. Weyerman, *De Levens-Beschryvingen der nederlandsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, vol. 2 (The Hague, 1729), 391.

²⁶⁰ Arie Wallert, "Refined Techniques or Special Tricks," in *Jan van der Heyden*, ed. Peter Sutton (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2006), 98-99.

paintings of Amsterdam utilized similar techniques and preparatory methods. Yet it is the similarity that puts into relief all the more the distinct separation of subject matter by medium. It is little wonder, then, that van der Heyden's cityscape paintings have unanimously been read as proud and laudatory representations of beautiful places: not a hint of ruin or destruction enters into his cityscapes, despite the popularity of these themes at the time he was painting. Likewise, his *Firebook* prints have certainly never been read as celebratory, nor as anything, for that matter, beyond the descriptive and informative. It is precisely this total separation, however, that is central to the ability of his paintings and prints of Amsterdam to work together to form a broader statement of cause and event.

Van der Heyden's pristine Amsterdam cityscapes and his engravings of the very same cityscape on fire or in ruin together produced a disturbing narrative of before and after that implicated the viewer's own property within its nightmarish scenario. The link between the paintings and the prints, of course, was the viewer. The strict distinction based on medium left a space for the viewer/customer to create and enter into any number of narratives or imagined connections between various works of art. By separating the pristine from the ruined into separate media, van der Heyden ensured that his narrative remained open. In other words, had his cityscape paintings contained reference to destruction, a narrative of the proximity of domestic bliss to utter loss would have been contained and specific. Separation by medium, on the other hand, ensured that this connection existed only in the present, and was totally personal to the particular viewer. This space for the viewer allowed room for speculation, paranoia, and invention. Van der Heyden created an open text that was never closed, but constantly being rewritten by his viewers. Rather than offering narratives of loss and destruction, van der Heyden provides his viewers and patrons with the material for formulating them on their own, making the resulting narratives far more personal. Van der Heyden requires his viewers to do the work of producing meaning. The separation of subject matter and medium in van der Heyden's representations of Amsterdam allowed space, in other words, for imagination. Van der Heyden was himself unusually interested in the remaking of the spaces around him, and his representations of Amsterdam likewise elicited his audience's impulse to imagine and remake the city.

The Violence of Disclosure: Domesticity and Privacy

Jan van der Heyden's tranquil Amsterdam cityscape paintings appear to have much in common with the more well-known domestic interior paintings mastered in Delft by painters such as Vermeer, Pieter de Hooch, and Emanuel de Witte. Like his Delft contemporaries, van der Heyden painted scenes of urban bourgeois domestic life in carefully articulated architectural spaces. The play of light and shadow, the manipulation of perspective, the inclusion of numerous figures participating in the mundane activities of daily life, a fixation on private property and life, and the description of familiar details of characteristically Dutch life and architecture were all major shared concerns. Van der Heyden painted at least four views of Delft, and they bear some resemblance to the exterior paintings of both Vermeer and de Hooch, although van der Heyden's viewpoint is characteristically much wider (**Figures 4.25 & 4.26**).

The most obvious difference between van der Heyden and the Delft masters is, of course, the favored physical location of their scenes of urban bliss: van der Heyden never painted domestic interiors while the Delft painters were much more interested in the interiors of (usually private) buildings, or the private courtyards behind them. While this difference seems obvious and perhaps uninteresting, I believe it points to a much more important disparity between these

artists. Not only did van der Heyden's viewpoint never stray inside the bourgeois urban homes he painted so diligently from the outside, he also refused his viewers any sense at all of what was happening inside those homes. While de Hooch and Vermeer's paintings concerned themselves with the revelation of the small-scale dramas and mysteries of private domestic life, van der Heyden staunchly repulsed the very same curiosity that the Delft painters courted. Even Vermeer, who so famously allowed his female figures to retain a sense of opacity and privacy, allowed his viewers to study the hidden daily life of women, while hinting at the ever more private spaces of women's interiors. Van der Heyden, in contrast, is ever staunch in his refusal to allow his viewers to see inside private homes. His windows are without exception blank and opaque. They allow no access to us at all, whereas the Delft painters' windows, seen from the inside, exist for the precise opposite function, to allow in illumination, and therefore to reveal and to articulate all of the aspects of private domestic life laid before us (**Figure 4.27**). For van der Heyden, what happens inside private homes is never laid bare. Domesticity is only ever visible in van der Heyden's paintings outdoors, on the banks of the canals. It is here that van der Heyden delights in the minutiae of everyday life, providing his viewers with the same dogs, naughty children, attentive mothers, lazy maids, and well-dressed gentleman callers that the Delft painters depict inside private homes.

The only time van der Heyden painted the interiors of private homes was in his late still lifes (**Figure 4.28**). As exceptions, these works only further underscore van der Heyden's refusal to reveal private life in paint: so fundamentally removed in character, intent, meaning, valence, and appearance are they from the Delft painters' interiors that they put into question whether we should even consider these interiors at all. They do, however, show a substantially broader interior view than virtually any other Dutch still lifes, which, by definition, focused exclusively on a group of objects on a table, with the space of the room that contains them barely articulated at all, and usually almost entirely obscured by dramatic shadows that served to focus all attention on the objects at hand. Van der Heyden, on the other hand, pulls back substantially, allowing much more of the containing space to be visible. Chairs, bookshelves, even fireplaces, flesh out the space of these rooms, drawing attention away from the rich objects that spread across cloth-draped tables depicted, characteristically (for Dutch still life) with a lack of concern for proper foreshortening. Van der Heyden, then, was not entirely averse to showing us private interiors, and even appears to have moved firmly against tradition in bringing private space into the still life genre. And yet these paintings could hardly be more dissimilar to the Delft painters' interiors. Even when van der Heyden ventures inside, he refuses to reveal anything about private life, and certainly nothing at all about the daily life of women, the almost exclusive subject matter of the Delft painters. If these are anyone's spaces, they are those of wealthy and educated men, and not of their wives. In this sense, then, these rooms might not even be considered private at all, as they would be identified as representations of a wealthy man's collection or study; both spaces, while in private homes, would have been areas of the semi-public sharing of ideas and objects between men.

It is only van der Heyden's engravings for his *Firebook* that reveal the private spaces of bourgeois Amsterdam homes. But they do so as the result of narratives of the destruction of those very spaces. The most spectacular engraving in the *Firebook* depicts a cross section of an imaginary home that was typical in layout and contents of the elegant and expensive double canal houses owned by the very men who were the audience for the book (**Figure 4.29**). Flames engulf the entire house, but rather than obscuring or totally destroying its contents, they illuminate them, allowing us as curious and horrified voyeurs to make out the portraits, history

paintings, and maps that hang on the walls, the china on the mantel, books in the study, wavy-legged chairs, even the marital bed. This print resembles nothing so much as the incredibly ornate and intricate dollhouses owned by very wealthy Dutch women in the late seventeenth century, exactly contemporary to van der Heyden's *Firebook* (Figure 4.30). These "cabinet houses" were often designed to mimic the homes of their owners, and included miniature and very fine reproductions of the art and furniture that actually decorated their houses.²⁶¹ These dollhouses were not mere playthings, but rather allowed their female owners to exercise a physical, if imaginary, control over the contents, decoration, and functioning of their homes.

In a poem written by Margaretha Godewyck about her cabinet house called "On My Garden of Silk," the possibilities that vision opens up for women are evident.

However much Cassius flaunts and boasts of all his fruit,
Grown outside Rome and on the banks of the Tiber,
However much Lucullus prizes his flowers, plants, and shoots,
His fruit, his tree, his seeds, his garden,
All of this can be driven away by a gust of wind or a shower,
So that the flower withers and the ripe fruit suffocates.
But my garden of silk is everlasting.
My fruit the eager eye but not the mouth will refresh.
No spider, no worm, no caterpillar can harm my trees,
My flowers are as green in winter as in summer,
My cherries always red, my apples, my pears
They will always stay flawless and nourish the eyes.²⁶²

Godewyck continually repeats the first person possessive in order to underscore the ability of the optical address of the objects of her dollhouse to endow her own creation with an eternal life that outlasts the works of even the great figures of Roman antiquity. Vision is the highly positive force that allows Godewyck perpetually to assert and reinforce her power over and ownership of this miniature world.

While the dollhouses' anatomization of the domestic space allowed women visually to possess and order an entire perfect domestic universe, and was therefore a source of both pleasure and power, it was evidently a much more problematic type of disclosure for their husbands. An object that could be viewed as an alternative to, or even a comment upon, these

²⁶¹ On Dutch dollhouses, see: Samuel Muller, *Holländische patrizierhäuser* (Utrecht: Oosthoek, 1909); Jan Pijzel-Dommisse, *Het hollandse pronkpoppenhuis* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2000); Susan Broomhall, "Imagined Domesticities in Early Modern Dutch Dolls' Houses," *Parergon* 24.7 (2007), 49-68; and Michelle Moseley-Christian, "Seventeenth-Century Pronk Poppenhuisen: Domestic Space and the Ritual Function of Dutch Dollhouses for Women," *Home Cultures* 7.3 (Nov. 2010), 341-363.

²⁶² "Op myne thuyn van syde

Hoe seer dat Crassus pronckt en stoft op al sijn fruyten/Gewassen buyten Roôm en aen het Tybers stof,/Hoe seer Lucullus pryst sijn bloemen, planten, spruyten,/Sijn ooft, sijn boom-gewas, sijn za'en, sijn braven hof,/Dit alles kan een wint, een buy en vlaegh verdrijven,/Soodat de bloem verdort en't rijpe fruyt verstickt./Maer mynen hof van syde die sal gedurigh blyven./Mijn fruyt het greetigh ooghe, maer niet de mond verquict./Geen spin, geen worm, geen rups en kan mijn boomen deeren,/Mijn bloemtjes somers sijn en 's winters even groen,/ kerssen altyd root, mijn appelen, mijn peeren/Sijn altyt even gaef, sy konnen 't ooghe voen." Margaretha Godewyck quoted in: Esther Singleton, *Dutch and Flemish Furniture* (New York: McClure, Philips & Co., 1907), 174-75.

dollhouses is Samuel van Hoogstraten's mid-seventeenth-century peepbox²⁶³ (**Figure 4.31**). The peepbox was so-named because the viewer was meant to look through one of two small holes on either side of the box, revealing what looks like a perfect three-dimensional likeness of a typical Dutch domestic interior. Like the dollhouses, the peepbox was a wooden box that, like a theater stage, had three walls and a fourth side, facing the "audience," that could be removed to reveal what the box contained. Both the dollhouses and Hoogstraten's peepbox contained a representation of a wealthy urban domestic interior with all of its trappings. The major difference between the dollhouse and the peepbox was that opening the dollhouse revealed a pristine version of domestic life, while removing the front wall of the peepbox revealed only confusion and fragmentation (**Figure 4.32**). The peepbox created a jolting disjunction between what one sees through the peephole and the revelation of the fact that it was all an illusion, an illusion no less that was constructed from a violent, even grotesque, disarticulation of the familiar world of domesticity and private life and property. For Hoogstraten and his male audience, the home was meant to be a space of reassurance, but it often ended up being the source of anxieties about sexuality and privacy.²⁶⁴ Vision is at once pleasurable and dangerous. It allows the male viewer to look into a world from which he was bodily excluded, but it also suggested the possibility that other men could be visually impinging on the sanctity of their own wives and homes. The type of total visual disclosure that the Dutch cabinet house theatricalized was a major source of apprehension for men at the same time that it served the interests and fantasies of the women who owned the dollhouses.

If Hoogstraten's peepbox suggests, perhaps playfully, that the disclosure of private spaces puts domestic and marital status at risk, van der Heyden's engraving of a far more ornate house in flames takes this point to its extreme conclusion. The disturbing aspects of such a picture of the domestic revealed to the male viewer is made quite explicit by the fact that we are privy to this view only because the house is in the process of being violently destroyed. In comparing Godewyck's poem and van der Heyden's engraving, the vast discrepancies between the female and male understandings of the power of vision in relation to the domestic space become quite unmistakable. For the female viewer, vision connoted agency and possession, things that were usually quite far from the everyday reality of the Dutch housewife. But for her husband, vision was the potential source of the destruction of the domestic space that could easily cause the comforting reassurance of the home to go up into flames. Like a far more extreme version of the movement between peephole and the removal of the front wall of Hoogstraten's peepbox, the viewer's imagining of the relationship between van der Heyden's beautiful cityscape paintings and his engravings of Amsterdam on fire served to make clear that the revelation of domestic activity was tantamount to, and indeed could be the horrific result of, destruction.

Conclusion

With the Amsterdam city government's adoption of Jan van der Heyden's fire fighting schemes, the relationship between official and unofficial representations of the ruined city had finally merged. But this is not to say that I read van der Heyden as buying into or submitting to the values and demands of the official. To the contrary, van der Heyden's success was the result

²⁶³ On Dutch peepboxes, see: Susan Koslow, "De wonderlijke Perspectyfkas: An Aspect of Seventeenth Century Dutch Painting," *Oud Holland* 82: 1-2 (1967), 35-56.

²⁶⁴ Brusati discusses Hoogstraten's peepbox and the sexually charged nature of vision that is thematized by that box. Celeste Brusati, *Artifice and Illusion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 169-217.

of the city government's acceptance of what had previously been an alternative and subversive vision of Amsterdam. Through the threat that emerged from the interplay between his cityscape paintings and his *Firebook*, van der Heyden forced the government to validate an image of the city as damaged and incomplete.

The material in this final chapter thus represents a complete reversal of the situation in described in the first chapter. In Chapter 1, I argued that the city government's patronage should be seen as a unified body of work that formed a consistent image of Amsterdam as modern and pristine, an image that bore little resemblance to the reality of the physical city. Despite their precarious relationship to the actual physical environment of mid- to late-seventeenth-century Amsterdam, the architecture, paintings, maps, and other prints commissioned by or otherwise closely tied to the city's governing bodies, art historians and historians alike have taken these works of art as evidence of the appearance of the city, and, more problematically, of the experience of the city by people living in and visiting Amsterdam. This study has attempted to reveal on the one hand, the complete constructedness of the modern view of Golden Age Amsterdam and its reliance on official propaganda whose political motivations were, in the seventeenth-century, apparent, and on the other hand, the many alternative ways of describing, understanding, experiencing, and imagining Amsterdam that existed alongside the official version of the city, which I discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

The city's adoption of van der Heyden's fire hose and firefighting procedures finally validated the image of Amsterdam as ruined, but only, in the end, in order to guard against future threats to the intactness of the city. Thus, we cannot read this as a capitulation on the part of the city government to alternative definitions of Amsterdam identity, history, and aesthetics. But it is, more importantly for this dissertation, the one moment when we see the city government finally moving away from its previous practices of repudiating ruin and destruction. It is, furthermore, the one moment when the city government finally allows the physical city to take precedence over the city it imagined. This represents, therefore, the exception that illustrates just how vitally important imagined versions of Amsterdam were in the seventeenth century; what we might term the "merely" imagined or "merely" represented city played a major role in the development of the physical city, and perhaps an even greater role in peoples' experiences of Amsterdam in the seventeenth century.

Coda

“A World of Wonders in One Closet Shut”²⁶⁵

In the last years of his life, Jan van der Heyden completed a series of paintings that ventured inside buildings, rather than dwelling on their impenetrable exteriors. (Figures 4.28, 5.1, & 5.2) These paintings of corners of rooms, which I briefly discussed in the last chapter, bear little resemblance to seventeenth-century Dutch interior paintings. These paintings are curiously airless, particularly compared to van der Heyden’s more well-known cityscape paintings, which seem to breathe; they contain no human figures, and, more importantly, no windows or doors. These spaces are hermetically sealed, around these objects as well as the viewer. While van der Heyden’s cityscapes are generally bloodless and dispassionate in their meticulous (at times actually mechanical) detail, these paintings of interiors go much further. The paintings of interiors van der Heyden would have known by Delft painters, like Pieter de Hooch, who had moved to Amsterdam in 1661, were characterized by natural light flooding airy box-like domestic or public spaces punctured by numerous doors and windows that create a syncopated rhythm across the surfaces of the paintings. (Figures 2.22-2.25 & 4.27)

These paintings repeat, in slightly varying arrangements and compositions, the same objects: a matched pair of globes, both terrestrial and celestial; Joan Blaeu’s atlas; a bright red embroidered silk cloth from China; spears from Asia; a red damask-covered dark wood chair; an intricate tortoise shell and ebony *Kunstschränk* topped with two porcelain bowls. These claustrophobic depictions of interiors are furnished almost exclusively with objects that would have been conspicuous to their original viewers, late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century wealthy Amsterdam burghers, as the products of Dutch colonial and trade ventures throughout the world. Van der Heyden’s paintings most clearly gesture outwards when they are at their most insular.

I conclude with these images because they are emblems of a major aspect of Amsterdam that this dissertation has otherwise sidestepped: the definition of local identity through contact with the rest of the world. Amsterdam played a crucial role in the seventeenth-century global market, as well as in the printing and dissemination of books and maps throughout the world. The Dutch East and West Indies Companies were based in Amsterdam in the seventeenth century, and they had an enormous impact on the Dutch labor market.²⁶⁶ Merchants and bankers from across Europe and Asia congregated in the Dam and the nearby stock exchange, and goods from seemingly every corner of the globe were stored in massive warehouses throughout the city, brought in or waiting to be carried out by Dutch merchant ships that sailed to and from Africa, Asia, and the Americas.

Many of the images I have discussed in this dissertation bear clear traces of the global. Van der Heyden’s still life/interiors are, to our eyes, the most explicit in their address of the world beyond the Dutch Republic. The new town hall’s iconographic program is heavily laden with references to the rest of the world, starting with the pediment on the building’s western façade, which depicts personifications of the four known continents with exotic animals as their attributes, and accompanied by slave-like figures dragging bales and baskets of goods, all paying homage to the Maid of Amsterdam, sitting on a ship with her foot resting on a globe. (Figures 1.10 & 1.11) The floor of the Citizens’ Hall was inlaid with representations of the eastern and

²⁶⁵ This quote comes from the epitaph on the tomb of the English collector John Tradescant.

²⁶⁶ Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), esp. 461-463, 642-645.

western hemispheres, and personifications of the Four Continents in marble lined the walls above. (Figures 1.5 & 1.6) Most of the prints and paintings of the exterior of the new town hall included figures in turbans and fur-lined caps doing business with Dutch burghers on the Dam. (Figures 1.19, 2.11, 2.14, 2.15, 3.10, 3.14 & 5.3) Portraits and genre paintings that borrowed elements of the new town hall often included Persian rugs as table coverings. (Figures 2.21-2.28) Decorative maps of the city generally included allegorical representations of the continents or the seas paying homage to Amsterdam, as in Visscher and Stalpaert's 1664 map, which depicts, in the lower left-hand corner of the most current map of the city, a group of putti personifications of the continents bringing treasures, including bars of silver and an elephant tusk, as offerings to the shield of Amsterdam. (Figures 1.26 & 5.4) Van der Heyden's *Firebook* includes an engraving dominated by a Dutch East Indies ship partially destroyed by fire, perched in a dry dock in front of the massive VOC warehouse on the island of Oostenburg. (Figure 5.5)

Historians of early modern art have become inured to details like these, which we tend to almost immediately dismiss as transparent markers of trade or allegorical bombast. But I point to them in order to draw attention to their integration into these consummately local scenes, scenes I have described as being, critically, about the specificity of time, place, and experience. So well integrated do they seem, indeed, that art historians today feel little need to comment upon them. What art historians tend to now dismiss as signifiers of generalized exoticism would have had concrete and very specific resonances and connotations in the real world.²⁶⁷ The extent to which those traces would have been viewed as conspicuous or fully integrated is an important issue that demands attention that I cannot give to it here. I would like, however, to mention Byron Hamann's argument that these types of details spoke more forcefully in the cultural context in which these works of art were made to circulate than they do today, and that we cannot fully understand these paintings and prints without also understanding what the people viewing them would have known about these details.²⁶⁸ The colonial and mercantile systems that allowed people and goods from all over the world to become mere details in these representations of Amsterdam were so much a part of the local that they could enter into these representations in such unassuming ways.

It is, perhaps, unusual to end a dissertation by discussing what has been omitted, but I believe it is appropriate to gesture towards the future of this project at this point. This dissertation is an exploration of the local, strictly defined. The future incarnation of this project will open outwards, and will consider the crucial impact of the global economy and Dutch colonial ventures in South America, Africa, and Southeast Asia on the way that local identity was expressed through the visual culture of the Dutch Republic. Thus, the expansion of this topic will mimic to a certain extent the expansion of the local identity of the average Amsterdam burgher, who never actually left Amsterdam, but found that his definition of the local needed to come, somehow, to accommodate the world far beyond the city walls.

²⁶⁷ The most complete art historical study of the commodities found in Dutch still life paintings is: Julie Berger Hochstrasser, *Still Life and Trade in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

²⁶⁸ Byron Hamann, "The Mirrors of *Las Meninas*: Cochineal, Silver, and Clay," *Art Bulletin* XCII, no. 1-2 (March-June 2010), 6-35.

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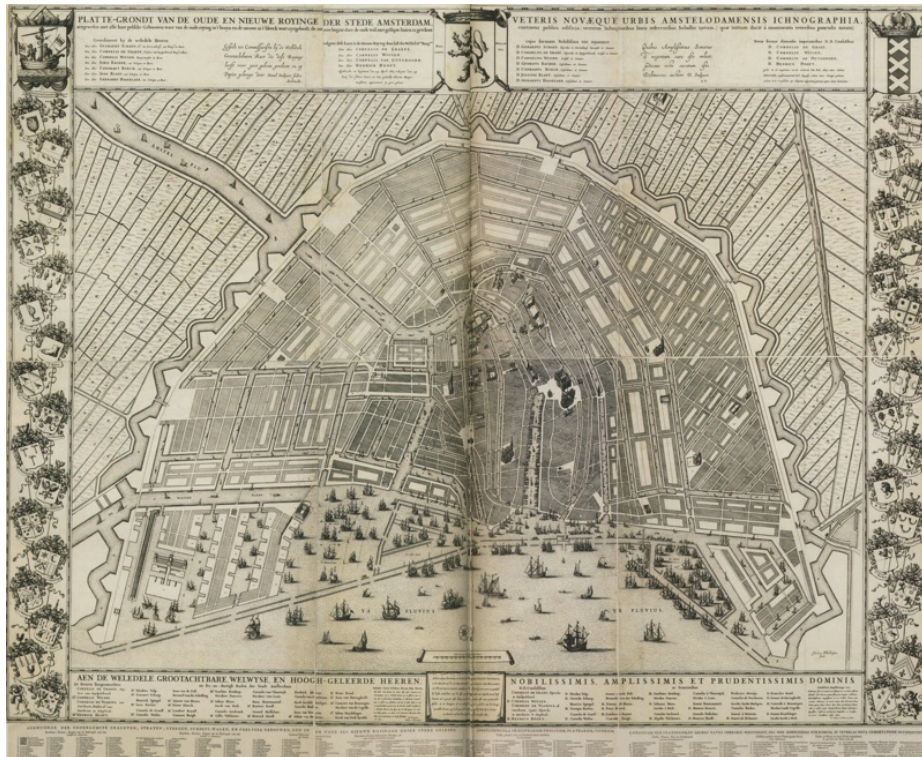


Figure 1.1: Daniël Stalpaert (designer and publisher) and Julius Milheuser (engraver), *Map of Amsterdam with Extension*, 1662, engraving on 9 sheets, 137 x 161 cm. Amsterdam, Stadsarchief Amsterdam.

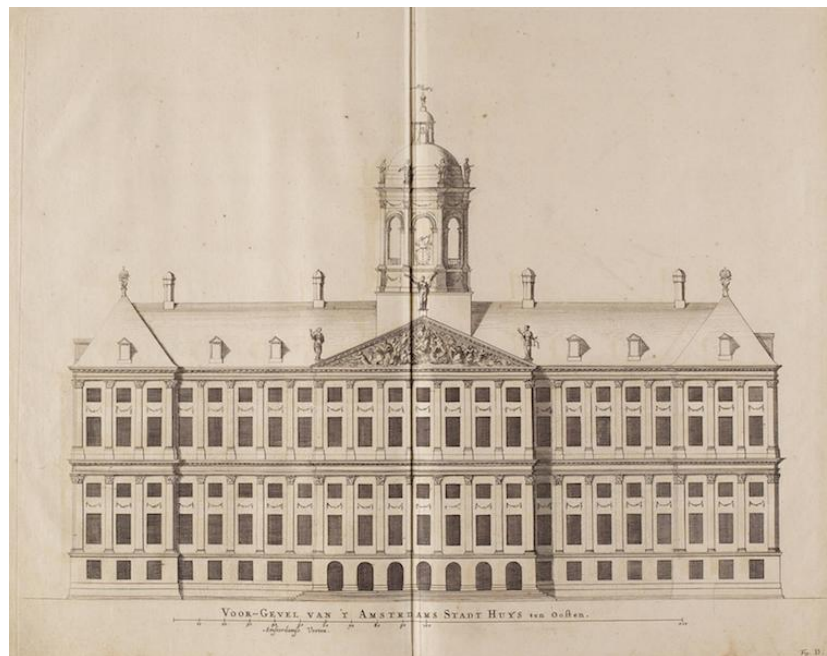


Figure 1.2: Jacob van Campen (designer), Jacob Vennekool (engraver), Dancker Danckerts (publisher); *Amsterdam Town Hall Front Elevation*, 1661, engraving. From *Afbeelding van 't Stadt Huys van Amsterdam*, Amsterdam 1661.

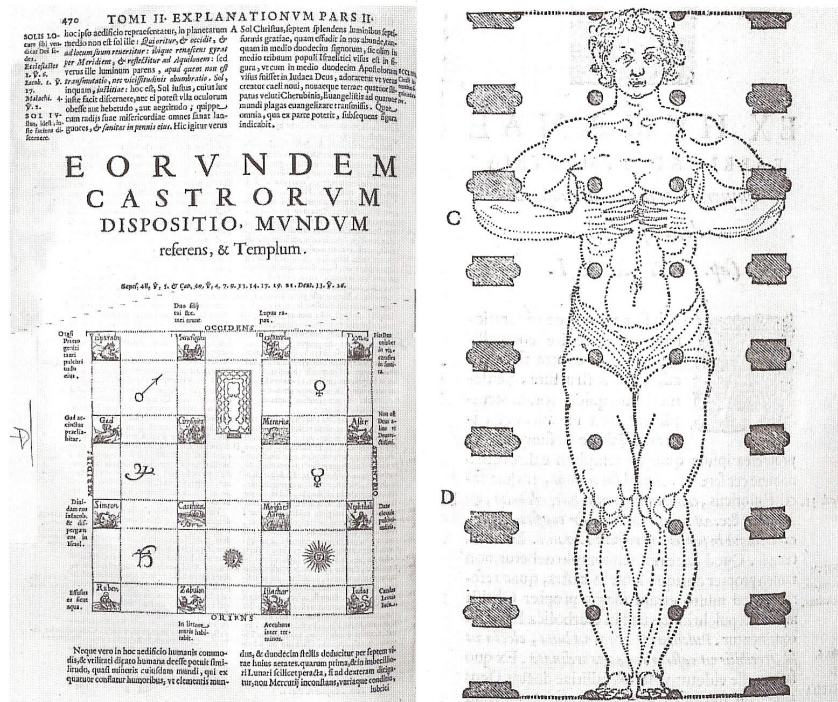


Figure 1.3: Page from Juan Bautista Villalpando and Hironymo Prado, *In Ezechielem explanations et apparatus urbis ac temple Hierosolymitani*, Rome, engraving, 1596-1604.



Figure 1.4: Title page of volume 3, Juan Bautista Villalpando and Hironymo Prado, *In Ezechielem explanations et apparatus urbis ac temple Hierosolymitani*, Rome, engraving, 1604.

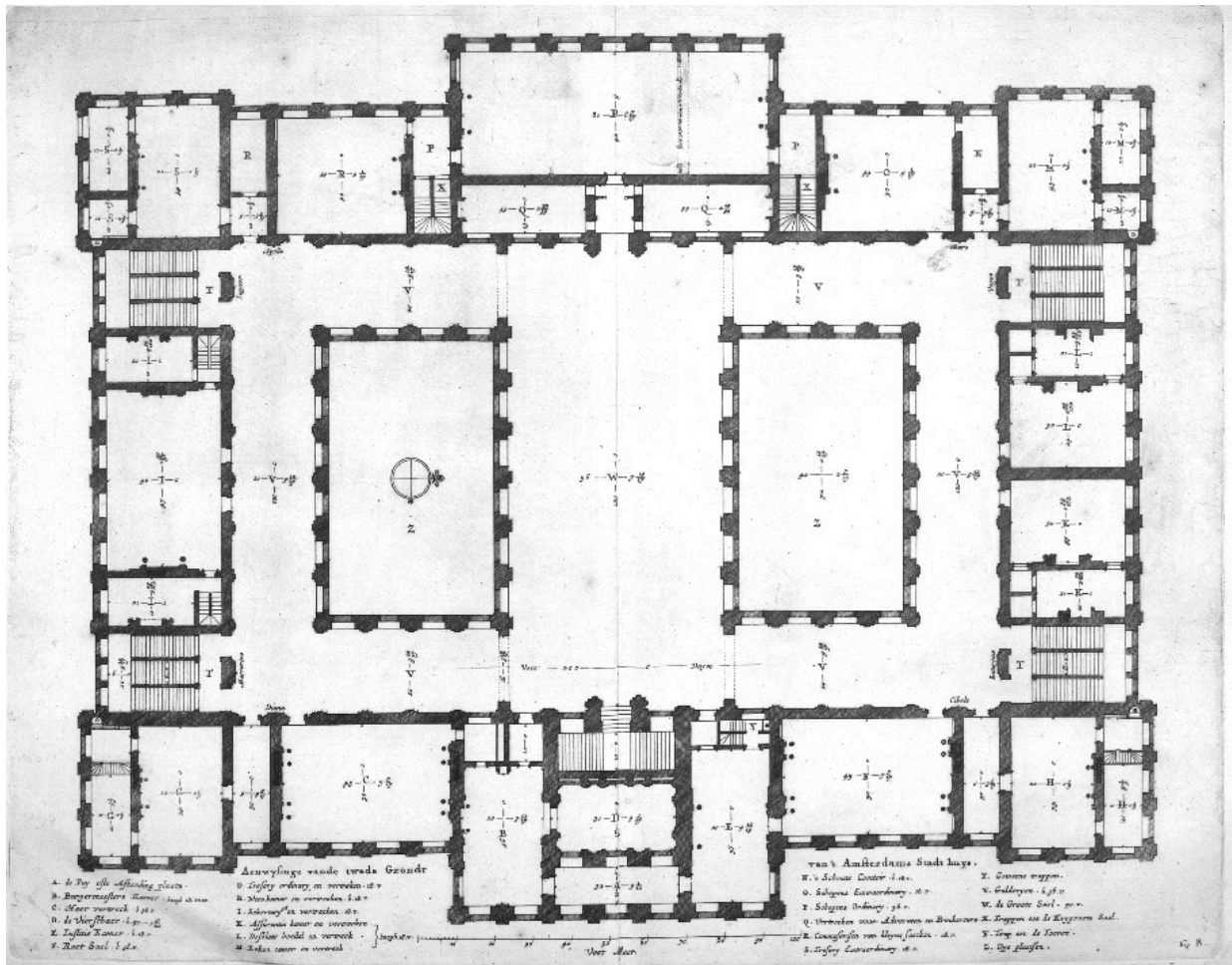


Figure 1.7: Jacob van Campen (designer), Jacob Vennekool (engraver), Dancker Danckerts (publisher); Amsterdam Town Hall Floorplan, 1661, engraving.
 From *Afbeelding van 't Stadt Huys van Amsterdam*, Amsterdam 1661.



Figure 1.8: Jacob van Campen (designer), Jacob Vennekool (engraver), Dancker Danckerts (publisher); Amsterdam Town Hall East Tympanum, 1661, engraving. From *Afbeelding van 't Stadt Huys van Amsterdam*, Amsterdam 1661.

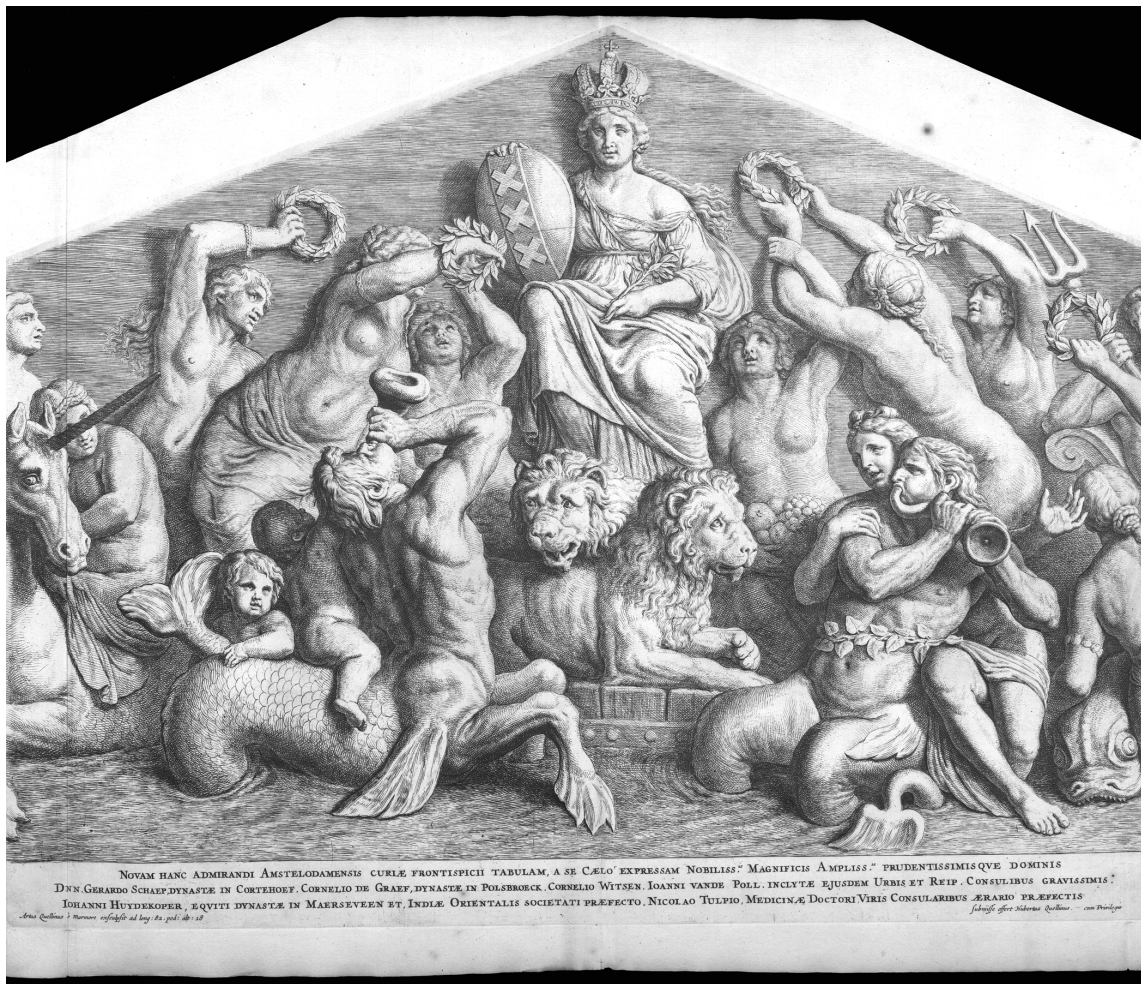


Figure 1.9: Detail of Figure 1.8



Figure 1.10: Jacob van Campen (designer), Jacob Vennekool (engraver), Da ncker Danckerts (publisher); Amsterdam Town Hall West Tympanum, 1661, engraving. From *Afbeelding van 't Stadt Huys van Amsterdam*, Amsterdam 1661.



Figure 1.11: Detail of Figure 1.10



Figure 1.12: Artus Quellinus I, Atlas above West Tympanum, bronze, Amsterdam, Royal Palace.



Figure 1.13: Artus Quellinus I, Four Virtues, bronze. Amsterdam, Royal Palace.



Figure 1.14: Jacob van der Ulft, *Dam Square*, 1650, etching.

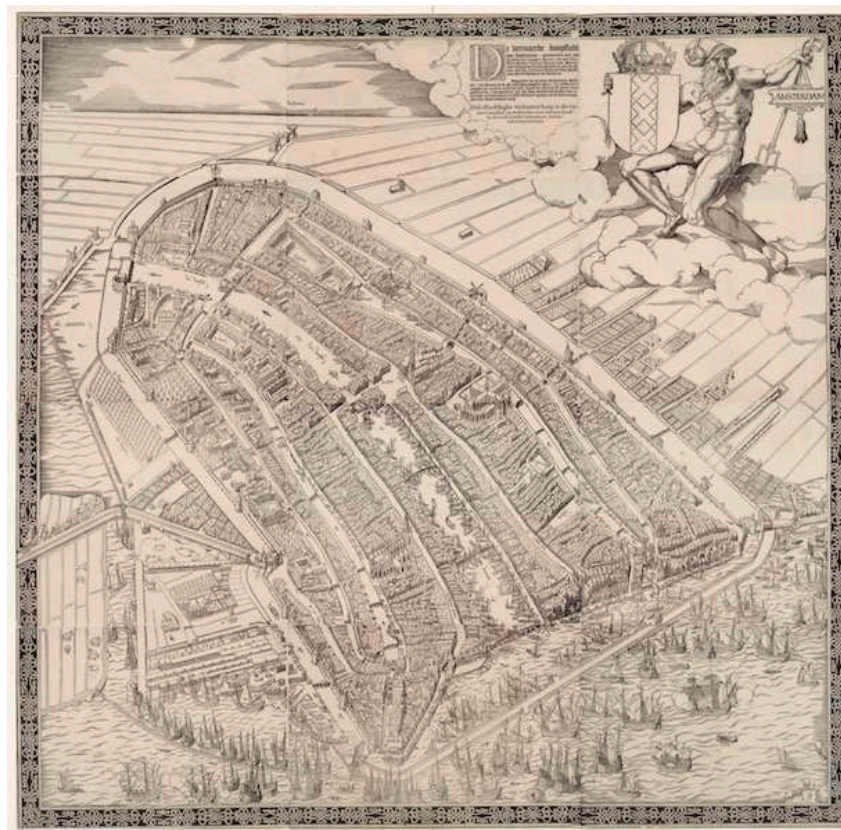


Figure 1.15: Cornelis Anthonisz., *Amsterdam Map*, 1544, engraving.



Figure 1.16: Jacopo de' Barbari, Map of Venice, 1600, woodcut.



Figure 1.17: Unknown, Agas Map of London from 1561, woodcut.



Figure 1.18: Nicolaes Visscher after Daniël Stalpaert, *Figurative Map of Amsterdam*, 1664 etching and engraving, 123 x 140 cm. Universitäts- und Landesbibliothk Darmstadt, Darmstadt.



Figure 1.19: Detail of Figure 1.18



Figure 1.20: Detail of Figure 1.18, Dam



Figure 1.21: Detail of Figure 1.18, Beurs



Figure 1.22: Detail of Figure 1.18; 1342 and 1400 maps of Amsterdam

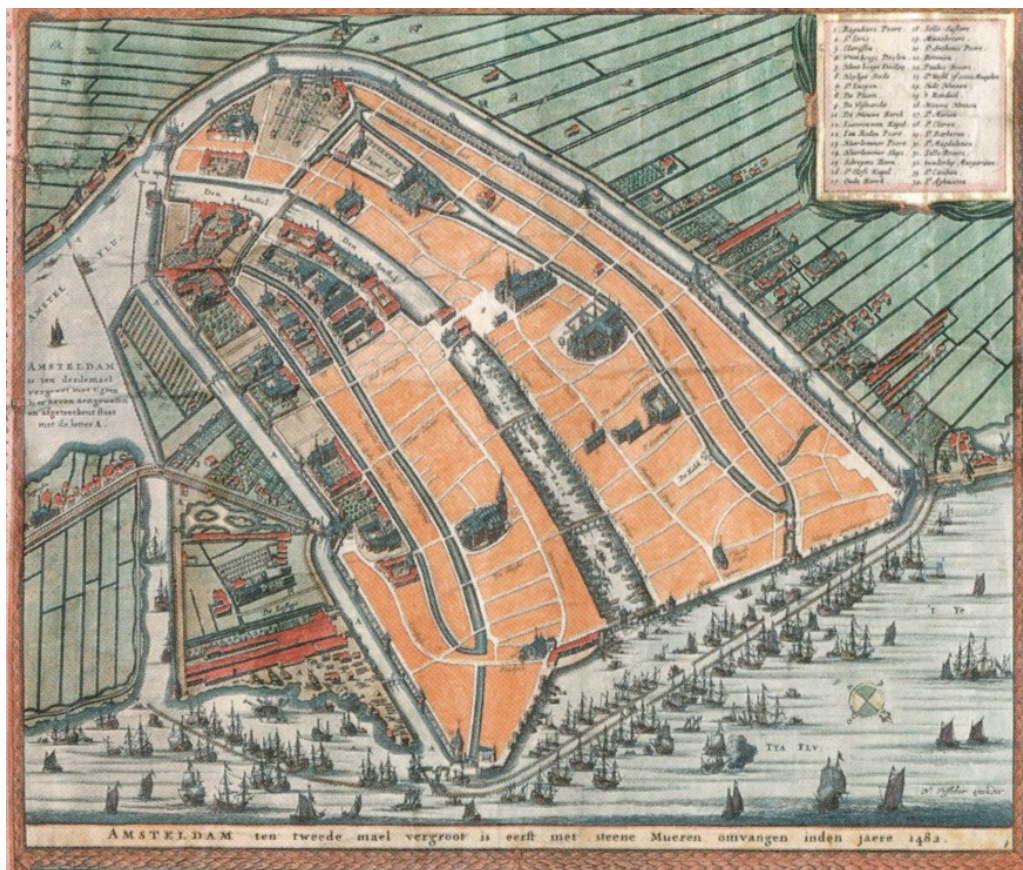


Figure 1.23: Detail of Figure 1.18; 1482 map of Amsterdam



Figure 1.24: Detail of Figure 1.18; 1585 map of Amsterdam



Figure 1.25: Detail of Figure 1.18l 1612 map of Amsterdam



Figure 1.26: Detail of Figure 1.18; 1664 map of Amsterdam

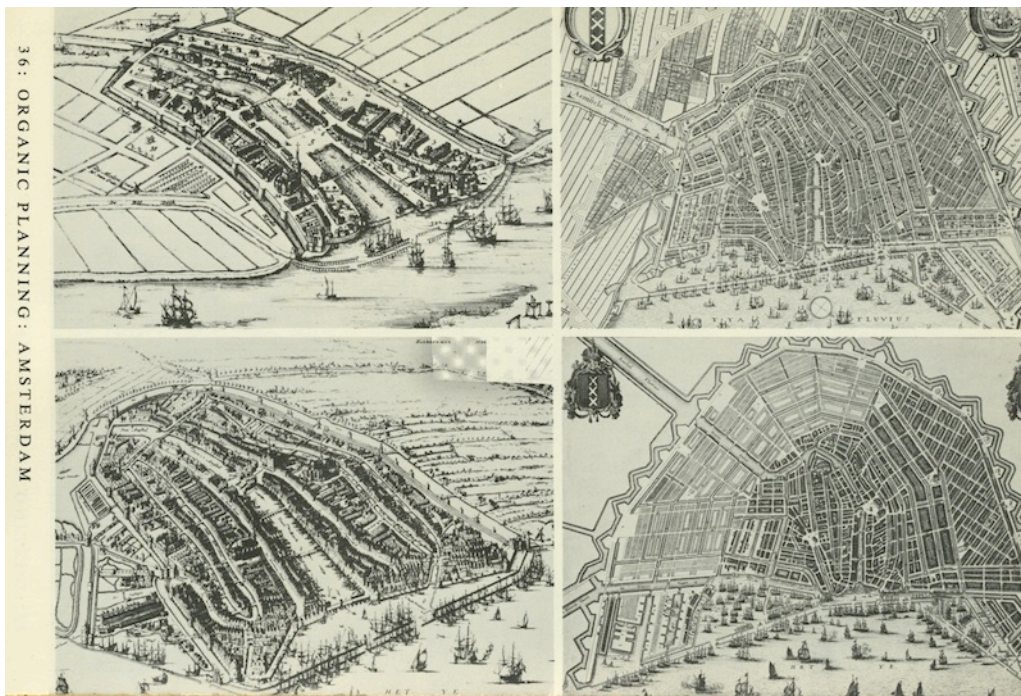


Figure 1.27: From Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1961), Graphic Section III, Plate 36 (between pages 318 and 319).

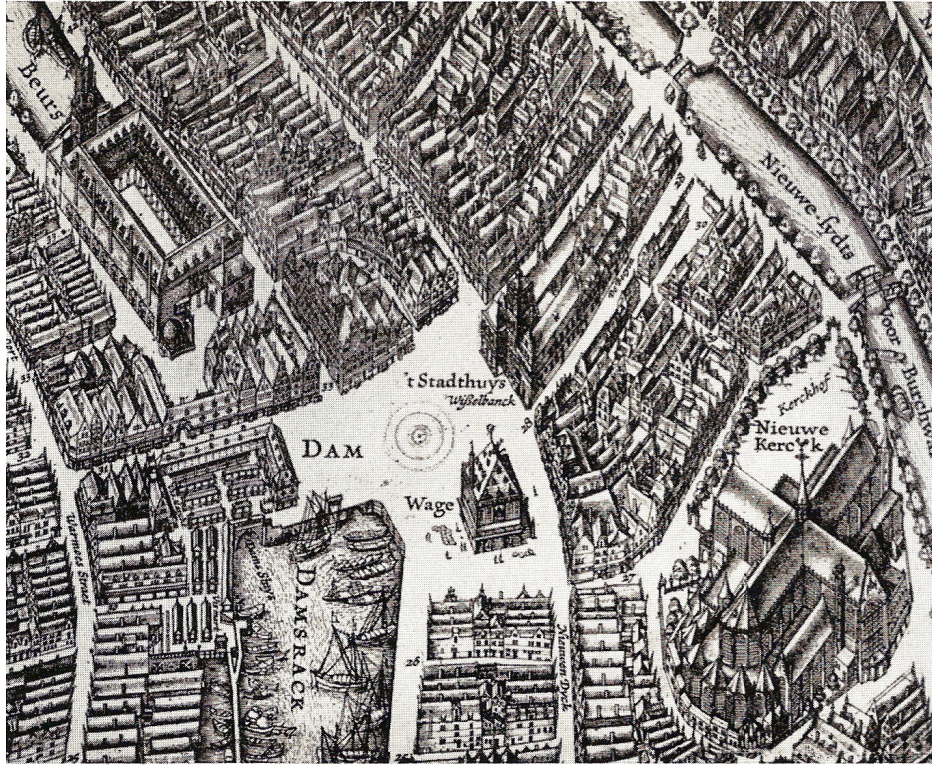


Figure 2.1: Balthazar Florisz., detail of map of Amsterdam, 1625, engraving.

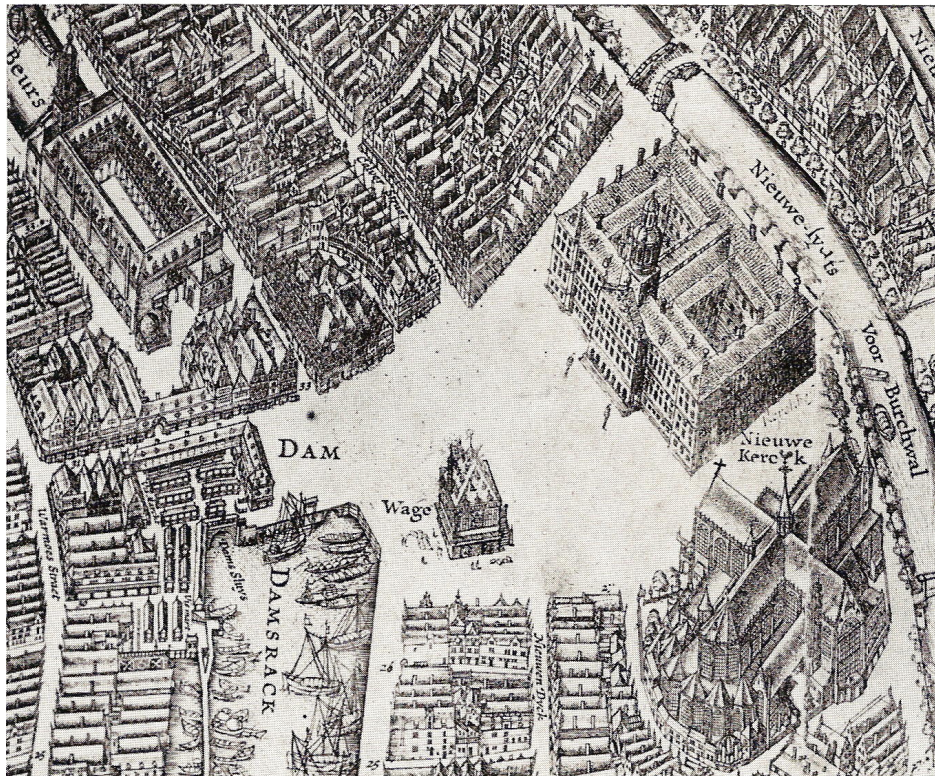


Figure 2.2: Balthazar Florisz., detail of map of Amsterdam, 1657, engraving.



Figure 2.3: Jan Abrahamsz. Beerstraten, *The Fire at the old Town Hall in Amsterdam*, oil on panel, 1652?. Amsterdam, Amsterdam Historisch Museum.



Figure 2.4: Gerrit Lundens, *The Fire in the old Town Hall in Amsterdam*, oil on panel, 1652?. Amsterdam, Amsterdam Museum.



Figure 2.5: Jan de Baen, *Burning of the old town hall, Amsterdam, 1652*, etching.



Figure 2.6: Jan van der Heyden, *Burning of the Old Town Hall, Firebook*, engraving.



Figure 2.7: Egbert van der Poel, *View of Delft with Explosion*, 1654, oil on canvas. Delft, Museum het Prinsenhof.



Figure 2.8: Willem Schellincks, *Breach of the St. Anthonisdijk 1651*, oil on canvas. Amsterdam, Amsterdam Museum.



Figure 2.9: Jan Abrahamsz. Beerstraten, *The Dam with the Old Town Hall in Snow*, 1650s, oil on panel. Amsterdam, Amsterdam Museum.



Figure 2.10: Pieter Saenredam, *The Old Amsterdam Town Hall*, 1657, oil on panel. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.



Figure 2.11: Jan van der Ulft, *The Dam with the New Town Hall*, 1653, oil on panel. Amsterdam, Amsterdam Museum.



Figure 2.12: Jan Christiaensz. Micker, *Bird's Eye View of Amsterdam*, c. 1652, oil on panel. Amsterdam, Amsterdam Museum.



Figure 2.13: Cornelis Anthonisz., *Bird's Eye View of Amsterdam*, 1538, oil on panel. Amsterdam, Amsterdam Museum.



Figure 2.14: Gerrit Adriaensz. Berckheyde, *The Town Hall*, 1672, oil on canvas. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

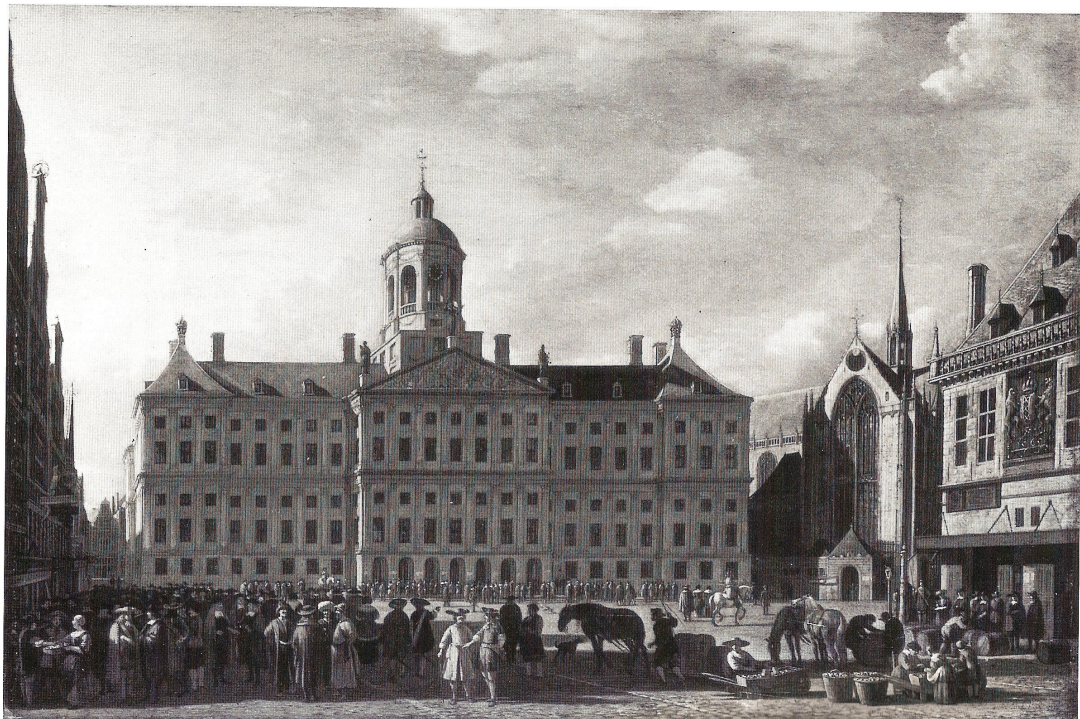


Figure 2.15: Gerrit Berckheyde, *The Town Hall*, 1673, oil on canvas. Amsterdam, Amsterdam Museum.



Figure 2.16: Jan van der Heyden, *Dam Square*, 1667, oil on canvas.
Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi.



Figure 2.17: Gerrit Berckheyde, *The Town Hall and Nieuwe Kerk*, c. 1674, oil on canvas.
Cambridge, The Fitzwilliam Museum.



Figure 2.18: Nicolaes Maes, *Portrait of Cornelis Munter (?)*, 1679, oil on canvas. Amsterdam, Amsterdam Museum.



Figure 2.19: Lodewijk van der Helst, *Portrait of Michiel Servaes Nouts*, 1670, oil on canvas. Amsterdam, Amsterdam Museum.



Figure 2.20: Attributed to Michiel van Musscher, *Portrait of Joan Blaeu*, oil on canvas. The Netherlands, private collection.



Figure 2.21: Pieter de Hooch, *Musicians on a Terrace*, oil on canvas. USA, private collection.



Figure 2.22: Pieter de Hooch, *Musicians in the Town Hall*, oil on canvas. Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art.



Figure 2.23: Gabriel Metsu, *Visit to the Nursery*, 1661, oil on canvas. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 2.24: Pieter de Hooch, *Musical Party*, 1675, oil on canvas. Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art.

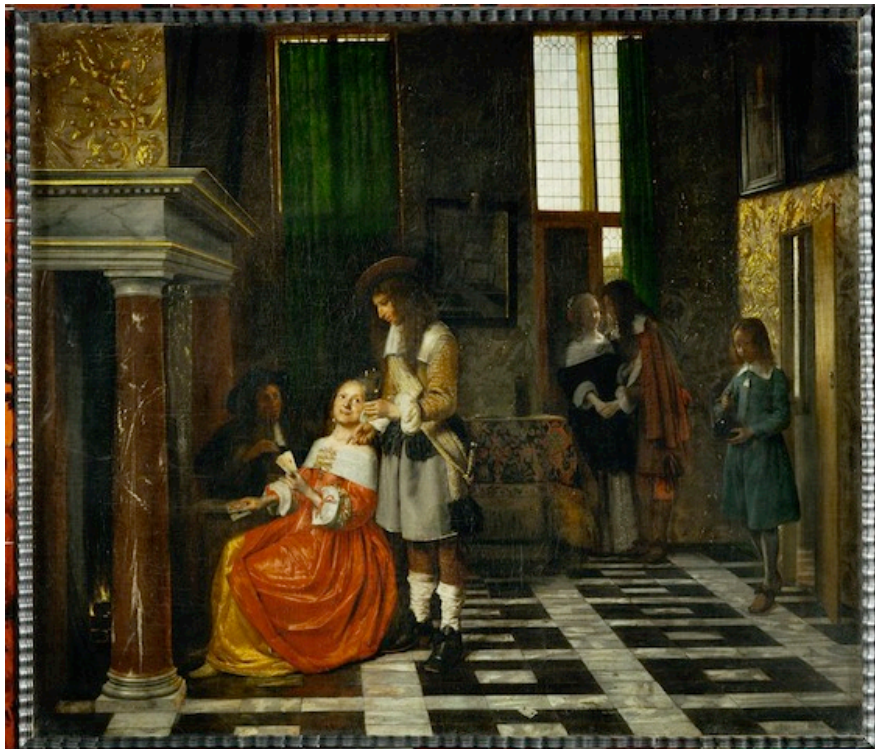


Figure 2.25: Pieter de Hooch, *Card Players*, 1665, oil on canvas. Paris, Louvre Museum.



Figure 2.26: Pieter de Hooch, *Visitors to the Citizens' Hall*, oil on canvas. Strasbourg, Strasbourg Musée des Beaux-Arts.



Figure 2.27: Pieter de Hooch, *Visitors in the Burgomasters' Chamber*, oil on canvas. Lugano, Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection.



Figure 2.28: Pieter de Hooch, *Musical Party*, oil on canvas. Leipzig, Museum der bildenden Künste.



Figure 2.29: Photoshopped photo of the Amsterdam Royal Palace, *Het Parool* June 18 2009.



Figure 3.1: Hubert Robert, *Design for the Grand Galerie of the Louvre*, 1796, oil on canvas, Paris, Louvre



Figure 3.2: Hubert Robert, *Imaginary View of the Grand Galerie of the Louvre*, 1789, oil on canvas. Paris, Louvre.



Figure 3.3: Jan Beerstraten, *Old Town Hall After Fire*, 1652, drawing. Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet.



Figure 3.4: Pieter Bruegel, *Tower of Babel*, c. 1563, oil on panel. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.



Figure 3.5: Jan Beerstraten, *Old Town Hall Ruins*, c. 1652, oil on canvas. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.



Figure 3.6: Jan Beerstraten, *Ruins of the Old Town Hall*, 1652, drawing. Amsterdam, Amsterdam Museum.



Figure 3.7: Jacob van Ruisdael, *Castle Egmond Ruins*, 1650-53, oil on canvas. Chicago, Chicago Art Institute.



Figure 3.8: Jacob van Ruisdael, *Jewish Cemetery*, c. 1654/55, oil on canvas. Detroit, Detroit Institute of Arts.

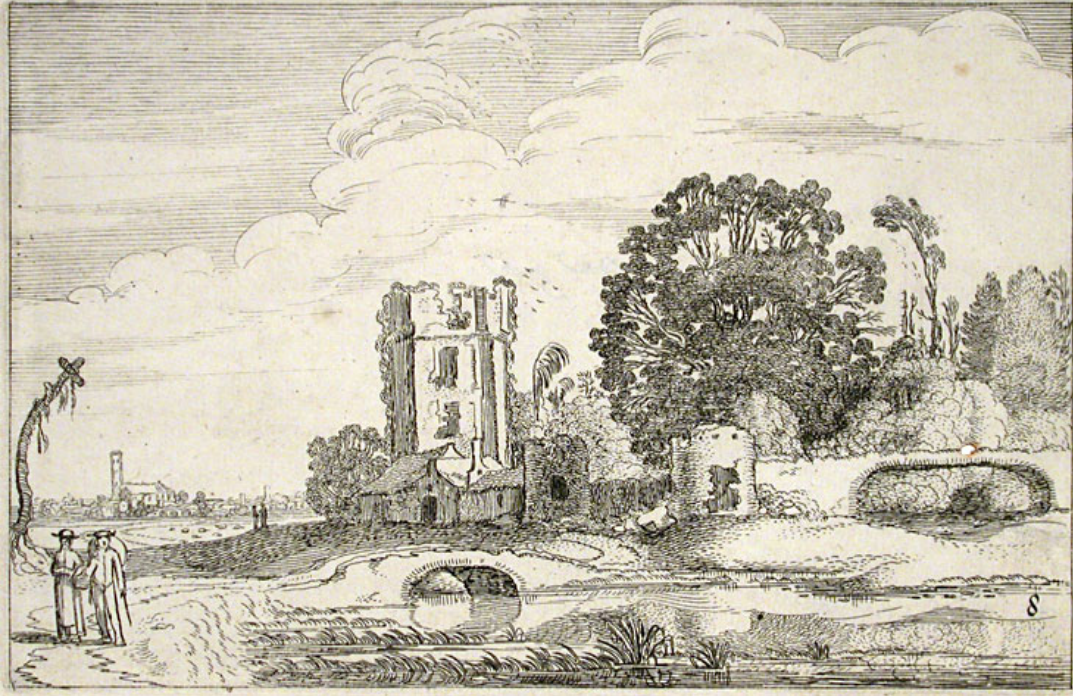


Figure 3.9: Jan van de Velde, Huis ter Kleef from *Eighteen Landscapes and Ruins*, 1615, etching.



Figure 3.10: Johannes Lingelbach after van der Ulft, *The Dam with the Town Hall Under Construction*, oil on canvas. Amsterdam, Amsterdam Museum.



Figure 3.11: Jan van der Ulft, *Dam Square with Design of Town Hall and Design of Nieuwe Kerk*, 1650, etching.



Figure 3.12: Jacob van Ruisdael, *The Dam with Waag*, c. 1670, oil on canvas. Berlin, Gemäldegalerie.



Figure 3.13: Jacob van Ruisdael, *View of the Dam with the Waag*, black chalk, gray wash. Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts.



Figure 3.14: Johannes Lingelbach, *Dam Square with Town Hall Under Construction*, oil on canvas. Amsterdam, Amsterdam Museum.



Figure 3.15: Jacob van Ruisdael, *Panoramic View of Amsterdam and the Ij*, black chalk and gray wash. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.



Figure 3.16: Jacob van Ruisdael, *Panoramic View of Amsterdam and the Ij*, oil on canvas. England, Private Collection.

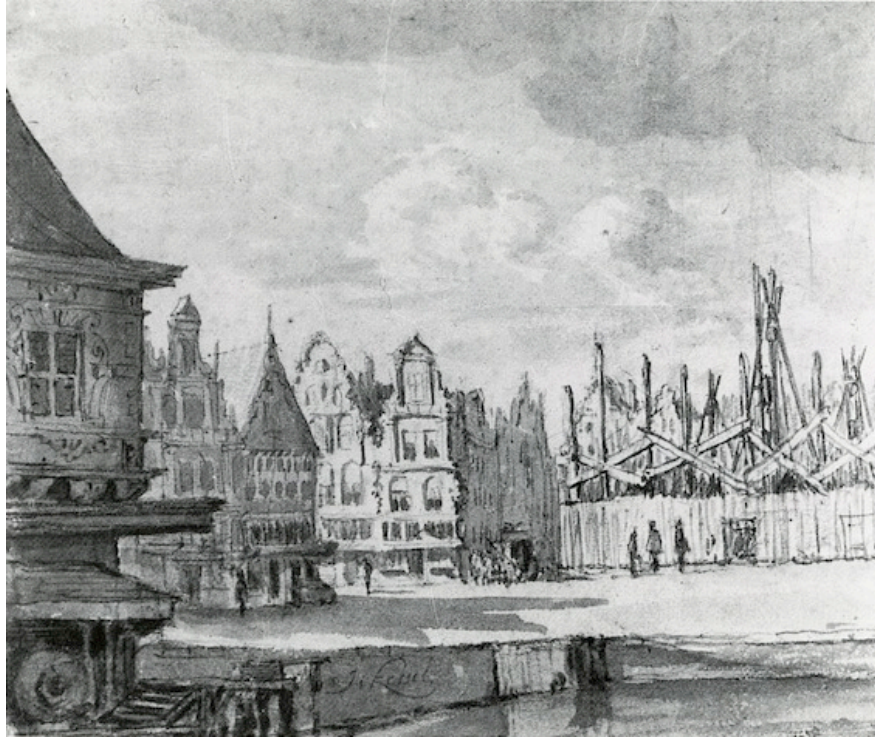


Figure 3.17: Jacob van Ruisdael or Jan van Kessel, *Driving of the Piles for the New Town Hall*, black chalk and gray wash. Amsterdam, Municipal Archives.



Figure 3.18: Jacob van Ruisdael, *Jewish Cemetery*, oil on canvas. Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen.



Figure 3.19: Jacob van Ruisdael, *The Portuguese-Jewish Cemetery at Oudekerk on the Amstel*, black chalk, pen, gray wash. Haarlem, Teyler Museum.



Figure 3.20: Jacob van Ruisdael, *The Portuguese-Jewish Cemetery at Oudekerk on the Amstel*, black chalk, pen, gray wash. Haarlem, Teyler Museum.



Figure 4.1: Jan van der Heyden, *Herengracht Viewed from the Leliegracht*, oil on canvas. Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum.

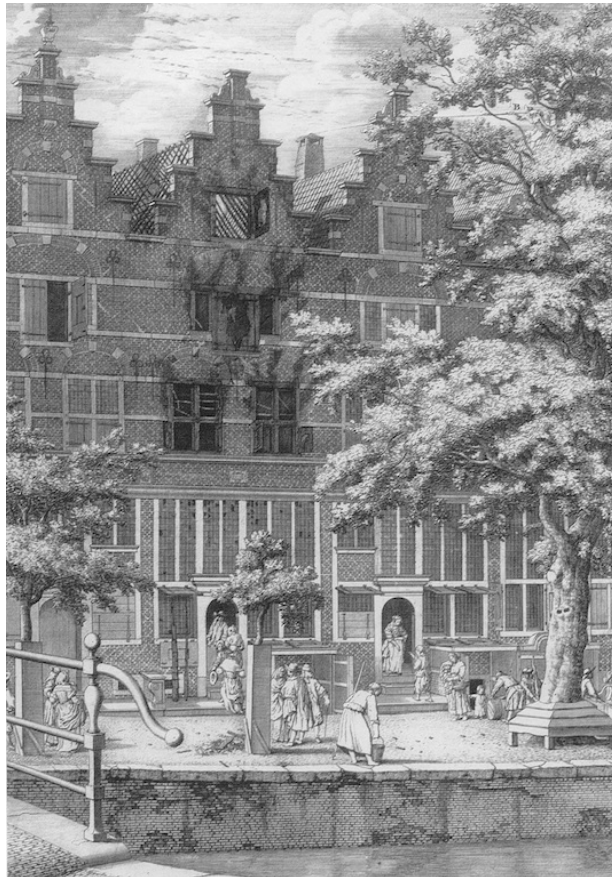


Figure 4.2: Jan van der Heyden, *Herengracht House Fire April 1683*, engraving, *Firebook*



Figure 4.3: Jan van der Heyden, *Oudezijds Voorburgwal with Oude Kerk*, 1670, oil on canvas. The Hague, Mauritshuis.



Figure 4.4: Gerrit Berckheyde, *Bend in the Herengracht from Vijzelstraat*, 1671, oil on canvas. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.



Figure 4.5: Gerrit Berckheyde, *Grote Markt, Haarlem*, c. 1670-75, oil on canvas. Brussels, Musée Royaux.



Figure 4.6: Jan van der Heyden, *Imaginary Cityscape*, oil on canvas. London, National Gallery.



Figure 4.7: Jan van der Heyden, *Imaginary Cityscape with Buildings Inspired by Cologne Structures*, oil on canvas.
Private Collection.



Figure 4.8: Jan van der Heyden, *Amsterdam Canal with Church of Veere*, oil on canvas.
Washington, D.C., National Gallery.

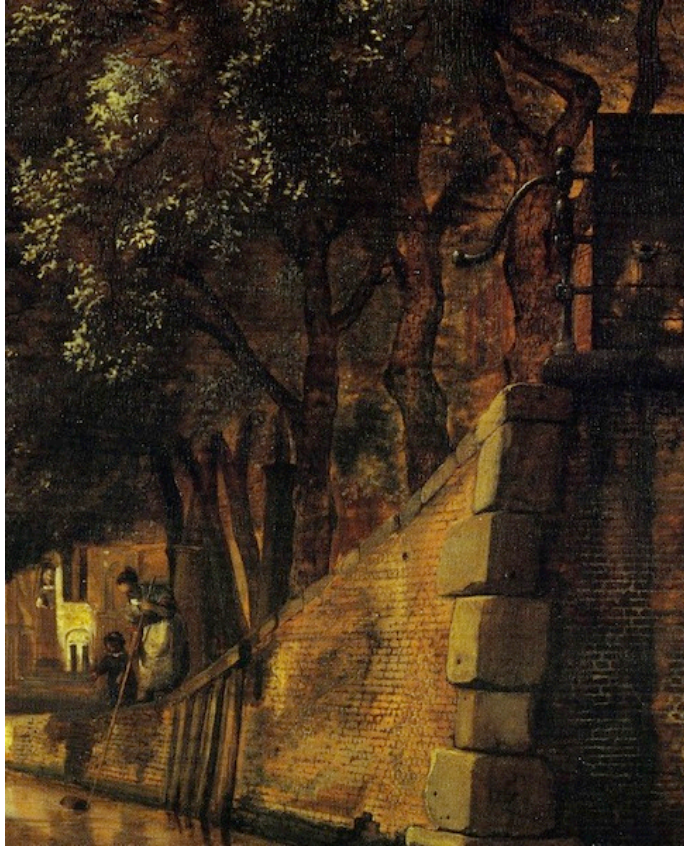


Figure 4.9: Detail of Figure 1



Figure 4.10: Jan van der Heyden, Old Amsterdam Town Hall on Fire, engraving, *Firebook*.



Figure 4.11: Hieronymus Bosch, *The Last Judgment* (detail), oil on wood, c. 1482. Vienna, Academy of Fine Arts.



Figure 4.12: Luca Signorelli, *Damned Cast Into Hell*, fresco, 1499-1502. Orvieto, Chapel of San Brizio, Duomo.



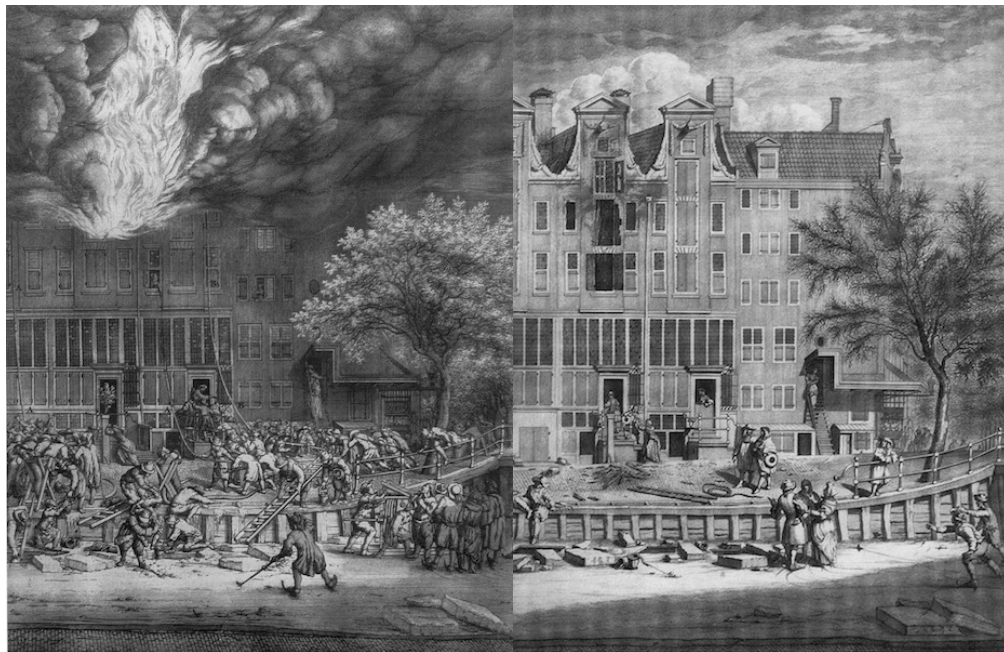
Figure 4.13: Pieter Bruegel, *Dulle Griet*, c. 1562, oil on panel.



Figure 4.15: Romeyn de Hooghe, *Destruction of Bodegraven and Zwammerdam by French*, 1672, etching.



Figure 4.16: Jan van der Heyden, Fire in Oude Schans in 1658, engraving, *Firebook*.



Figures 4.17 and 4.18: Jan van der Heyden, Fire on Leidse Canal in 1684, In Progress and Aftermath, engravings, *Firebook*.

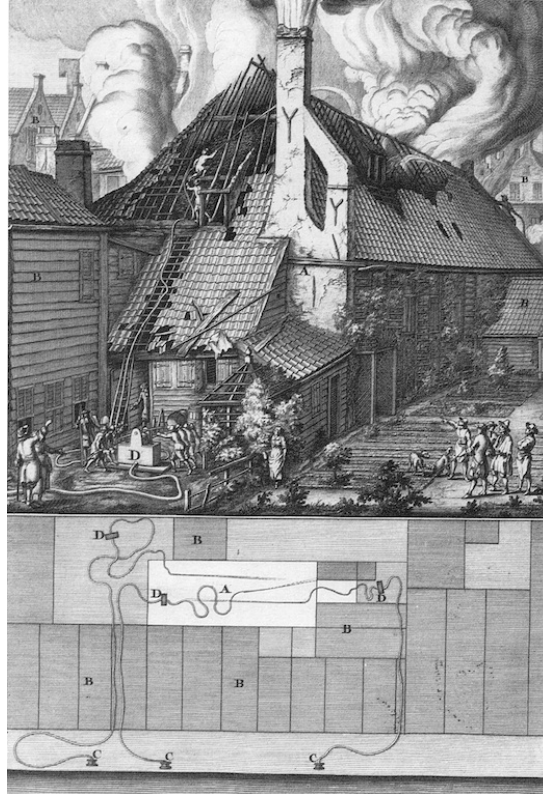
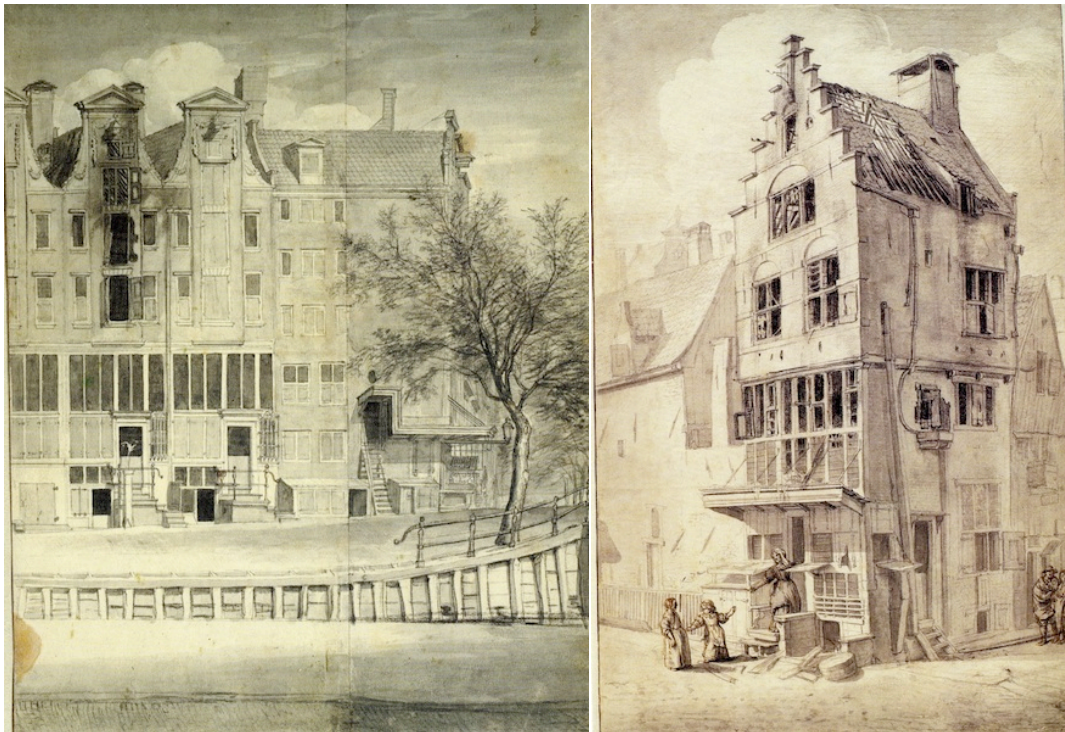
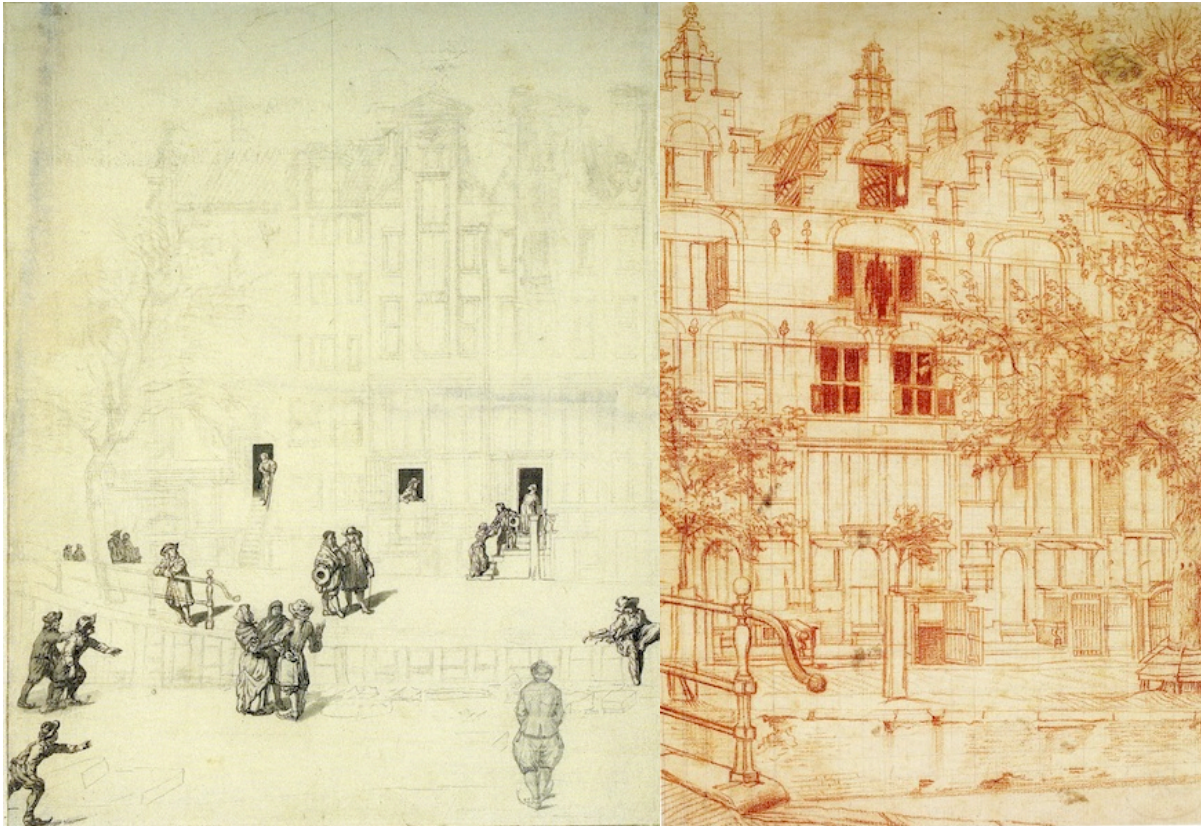


Figure 4.19: Jan van der Heyden, *Aftermath of a Fire in the Bruinvis soapery of 18 April 1682*, engraving, *Firebook*.



Figures 4.20 and 4.21: Jan van der Heyden, drawings for *Firebook* engravings. Rijksprentenkabinet & Amsterdams Historisch Museum.



Figures 4.22 and 4.23: Jan van der Heyden, drawings for *Firebook* engravings. Rijksprentenkabinet & Amsterdams Historisch Museum.



Figure 4.24: Jan van der Heyden, counterproof drawing for Figure 3. The Hague, Mauritshuis.



Figure 4.25: Jan van der Heyden, *View of Delft*, c. 1660, oil on canvas. Detroit, Detroit Institute of Art.



Figure 4.26: Johannes Vermeer, *Little Street*, c. 1657, oil on canvas. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.



Figure 4.27: Pieter Janssens Elinga, *Woman Reading*, c. 1665, oil on canvas. Frankfurt, Städel Museum.



Figure 4.28: Jan van der Heyden, *Still Life*, 1711, oil on canvas. Madrid, Thyssen-Bornemisza.

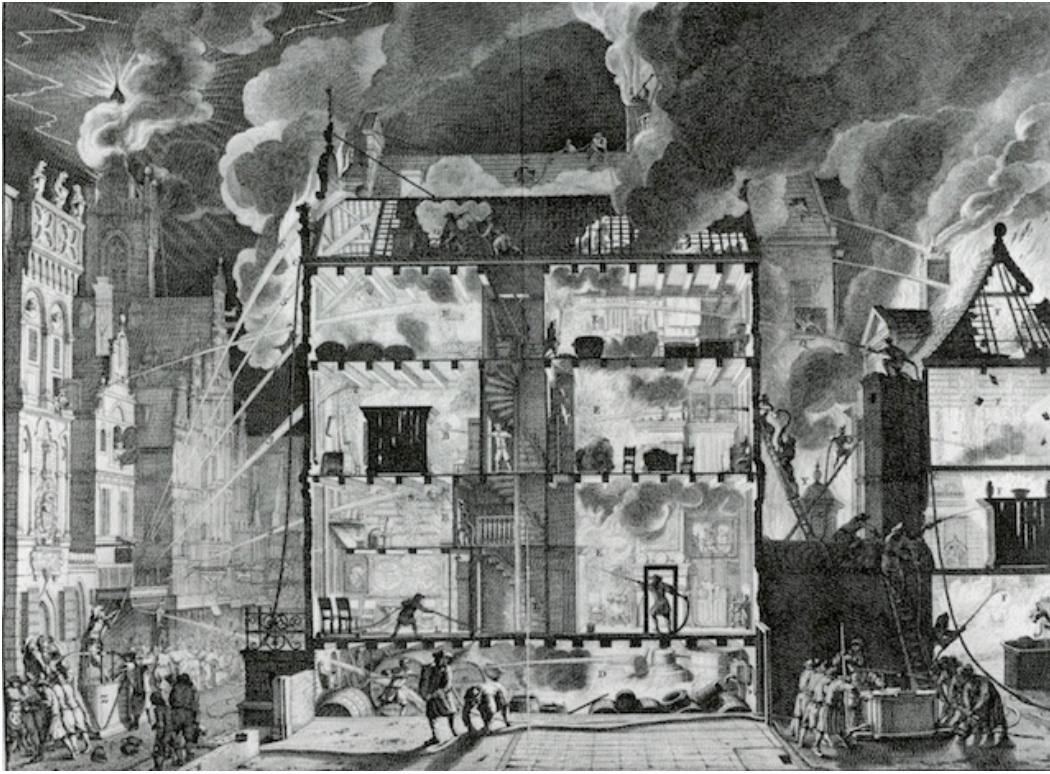


Figure 4.29: Jan van der Heyden, engraving for *Firebook*.



Figure 4.30: Petronella Oortman's dollhouse, c. 1686-1710, oak cabinet veneered with tortoiseshell and tin. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

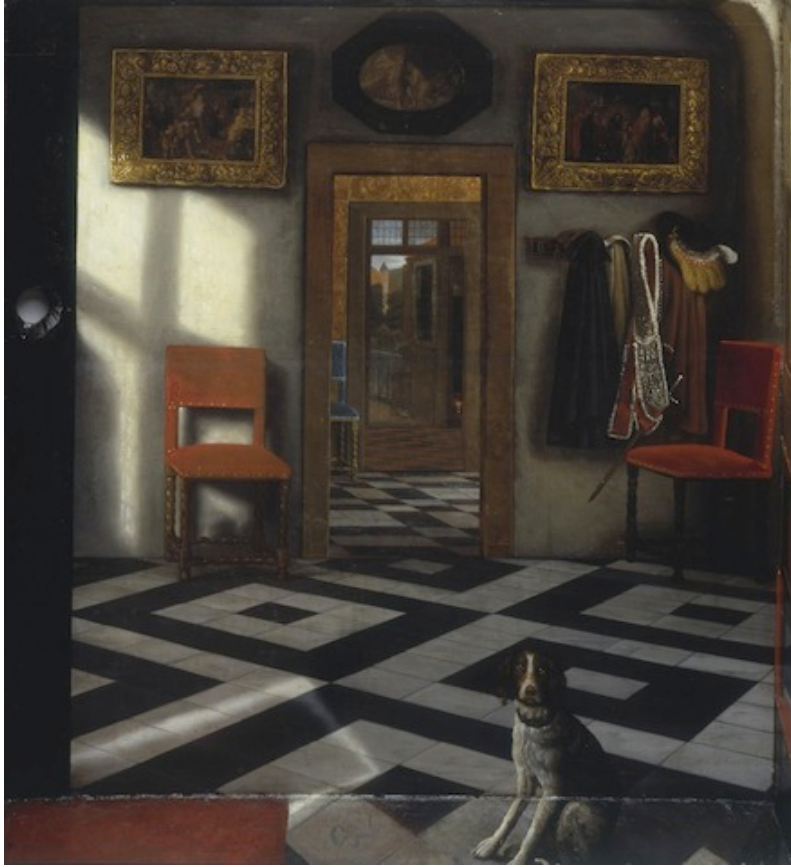


Figure 4.31: Samuel van Hoogstraten, *Peepbox*, c. 1655, oil on wood.
London, National Gallery.



Figure 4.32: Samuel van Hoogstraten, *Peepbox seen from front*, c. 1655.
London, National Gallery.



Figure 5.1: Jan van der Heyden, *Corner of a Study*, 1712, oil on canvas.
Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts.

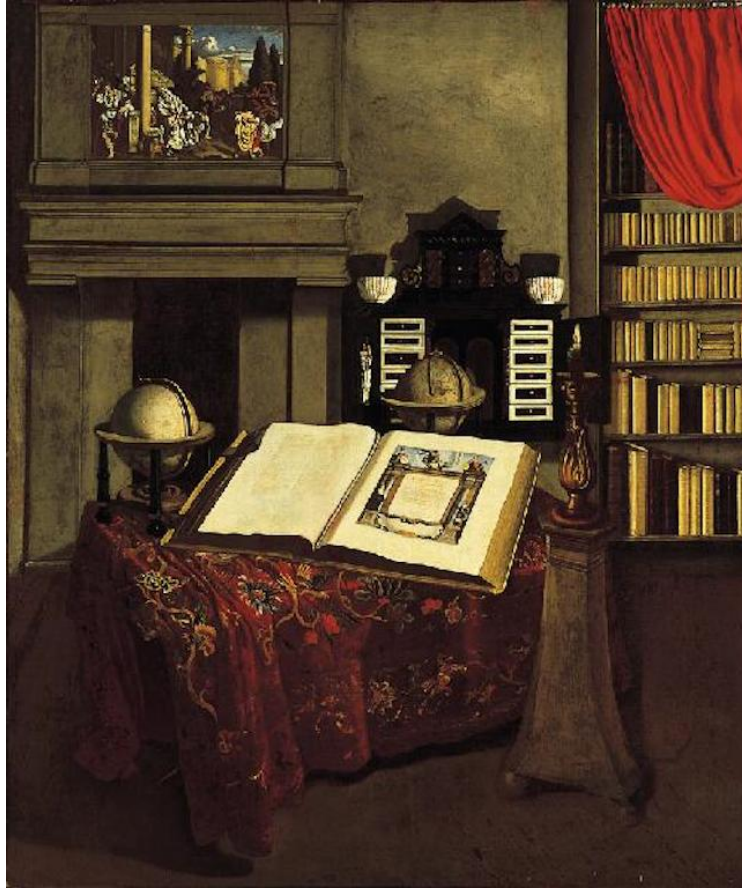


Figure 5.2: Jan van der Heyden, *Still Life*, 1711, oil on canvas. Pasadena, The Norton Simon Foundation.



Figure 5.3: Detail of Figure 2.14



Figure 5.5: Detail of Figure 1.26



Figure 5.6: Jan van der Heyden, VOC ship damaged by fire at the wharf on the island of Oostenburg, 1690, pen and brown ink, brush and gray ink, over graphite or black chalk. Amsterdam, Koninklijk Oudheidkundig Genootschap.