

BRUEGEL AND BEYOND

Daan van Heesch, Sarah Van Ooteghem
& Joris Van Grieken (eds.)

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Netherlandish Drawings in
the Royal Library of Belgium
1500-1800



6	Foreword
10	Introduction: The Arduous Formation of a Collection
28	List of Artists
29	Note to the Reader
31	Catalogue
372	Bibliography
388	Index
392	Colophon

No fewer than 4,500 of the 25,000 drawings held in the Print Room of the Royal Library of Belgium (KBR) were created by artists born before 1800. For the first time in the institution's history, KBR's splendid collection of 'old masters' has been studied in its entirety. The result of this research is this lavishly illustrated overview of drawings by Flemish and Dutch masters from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century contained in KBR's collections.

The cornerstone of the study was the *Drawings on Web* research project, financed by the Belgian Science Policy Office (BELSPO) in the framework of the AGORA programme. This project, started in 2012, saw KBR's old-master drawings inventoried, digitalised and made available online. During the project, KBR enjoyed the assistance of experts from the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium in Brussels, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, and the Fondation Custodia - Collection Frits Lugt in Paris, as well as some (inter-) national specialists in the field. A generous financial contribution from an American donor made it possible to conduct more in-depth research and to present the results in the present book.

Various other partners too provided support that led to fruitful initiatives involving the collection of old-master drawings. Between 2016 and 2019, the FINGERPRINT project, also financed by BELSPO, performed a thorough art-technological examination of the drawings by Pieter Bruegel I. The results of this research, together with the drawings themselves, were presented at two prestigious exhibitions commemorating the 450th anniversary of the master's death. The first was *Bruegel – The Hand of the Master* at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna in 2018-19, followed by the exhibition *Bruegel in Black and White* at the Royal Library of Belgium itself.

Over the years the collection gained some very interesting pieces. The Heritage Fund of the King Baudouin Foundation gave two important works on long-term loan: an album with thirteen preliminary drawings from the *Emblemata Evangelica* print series by Southern Netherlandish artist Hans Bol and an album from 1721 by Richard van Orley containing no fewer than 86 drawings illustrating the history of Telemachus. KBR bought some pieces itself too, such as an exceptional copy of a lost work by Pieter Bruegel I and a monumental landscape drawing attributed to Lucas Achtschellinck.

The Royal Library of Belgium not only wants to fully study and make available the heritage entrusted to it; as a repository library, it also prides itself on providing optimal conservation conditions and sustainable material management to its collections. Thanks to the support of the King Baudouin Foundation's Manoël de la Serna Fund, a wide selection of drawings was restored thoroughly: almost 400 sheets received a conservation treatment and were remounted.

To end, I want to thank all the specialists involved and our numerous partners for their valuable contributions and fruitful collaboration.





THE ARDUOUS FORMATION OF A COLLECTION

‘The drawings of the old masters can unquestionably be counted among the most precious possessions of a print room.’

(Herman Liebaers in Brussels 1967, p. vii)

Prelude

Drawings were collected early in the Southern Netherlands. Initially, they belonged to the treasured legacy of painters. There are indications that Rogier van der Weyden (1399/1400-64) passed his drawings on to his heirs. Archival evidence confirms that Dieric Bouts (c. 1410-75) and Vrancke van der Stockt (1420-95) did the same.¹ A court case between Gerard David (c. 1455-1523) and his pupil Ambrosius Benson (c. 1495-1550) reveals that drawings were also lent out between artists.² Albums containing drawings or sketches often remained in use in studios for generations.³

Before long, not only artists but also art lovers and collectors came to appreciate drawings for their artistic and art-historical value. In his palace in Brussels and his country house Cantecroy near Antwerp, Cardinal Granvelle (1517-86), chancellor of Emperor Charles V (1500-58), kept an extensive collection of drawings by Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) he had probably purchased from the artist's heirs in 1543.⁴ From the second half of the sixteenth century, in addition to paintings and prints, we sporadically find drawings in Antwerp estate inventories.⁵ In portrayals of *kunstkamers*, or art cabinets, a genre that developed in Antwerp in the late sixteenth century, they can sometimes be seen as loose sheets or preserved in albums.⁶ Along with prints, they are presented somewhat casually on a table amidst other curiosities. Until deep into the eighteenth century, collectors tended to prefer meticulously finished drawings. Detailed preparatory drawings for prints, for instance, were popular collector's items (e.g. cats. 6 and 9). Presumably, artists responded to this demand by executing their preliminary studies with the utmost care.

Virtuoso engravers such as Johannes Wierix (1549-c. 1620) produced what are known as 'pennestukjes' for this market. These were precious collector's items executed on vellum that imitated the artist's virtuoso engraving style in pen (cat. 26). The *stucxkens van verlichterije*, or cabinet miniatures, were also typical of the *kunstkamers*. These precious little paintings on vellum have their roots in book illumination. Both the Mechelen artist Hans Bol (1534-93) and Joris Hoefnagel (1542-1600?) of Antwerp were pivotal in developing this genre (cats. 15, 17 and 18).

Hoefnagel is also known to have actively collected drawings, including, remarkably, sheets attributed to older Netherlandish masters such as Hugo van der Goes (1430/40-82), Joachim Patinir (1475/80-1524) and Pieter Bruegel I (1526/30-69; cat. 11).⁷ In 1593, in a letter to his friend Abraham Ortelius (1527-98), he wrote: 'I continue to collect drawings in my art album, arriving at as many as 300 master's hands, all good and principal ones.'⁸ This demonstrates Hoefnagel's interest in the creative and technical accomplishment of individual artists, an extremely early example of collecting drawings according to art-historical criteria, a practice that may have been based on the *Libro de' disegni* by Giorgio Vasari (1511-74).⁹

Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) also amassed an outstanding collection of drawings by older masters that he and his students used as study material. He did not shy

away from retouching these drawings.¹⁰ For a long time, drawings were seen as highly valued artistic assets that in artist families were passed down from one generation to another. Rubens, for instance, included a clause in his will stipulating that his own drawings may only be sold if none of his descendants opt for a career as a painter.¹¹ When the drawings were finally auctioned in 1657, most were bought by the Antwerp canon and art dealer Johannes Philippus Happaert (d. 1686). In turn, he sold a large number to the London-based Flemish painter Prosper Henricus Lankrink (1628-92), with which a portion of Rubens' drawings immediately disappeared abroad (cat. 50).

Over the next three centuries, this trend continued relentlessly, causing Michiel Plomp, in an essay about collecting Rubens' drawings, to note: 'Ironically Rubens' native soil can't boast of any major holdings of the artist's drawings or those of his pupils.'¹² From what follows, it will appear that this observation also applies to almost every draughtsman of greater or lesser stature from our regions.

In the seventeenth century, Antwerp continued to play a significant role in the art market. By the end of the century, however, the Southern Netherlands were clearly overshadowed by neighbouring countries, where affluent collectors avidly purchased art that appeared on the market here and bolstered the auction houses in centres such as Paris, Amsterdam and London. The thirst of the rich and powerful for collecting drawings clearly intensified as the seventeenth century progressed.¹³ In the Low Countries, Antoon Triest (1577-1657), Bishop of Ghent, was one of the earliest known collectors with an interest in drawings.¹⁴

In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a number of large collections which will attain a near-legendary status were formed in our neighbouring countries. In France, these are the collections of wealthy financiers such as Everhard Jabach (1618-95)¹⁵ and Pierre Crozat (1665-1740; cat. 70).¹⁶ In England, the tone was set by not only the nobility but, for a considerable time, also artists such as Sir Peter Lely (1618-80) and Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830; cat. 70).¹⁷ The Dutch Republic had an extremely rich tradition of private collectors, of whom Cornelis Ploos van Amstel (1726-98) is undoubtedly the best known (see cats. 23, 60 and 65).¹⁸ In the Southern Netherlands, primarily in the Austrian period, a somewhat more modest collecting culture evolved. Worthy of mention are the collections of Philippe François de Mérode-Montfort, Prince de Rubempré (1669-1742),¹⁹ Franz-Ernst von Salm-Reifferscheid, Bishop of Tournai (1698-1770),²⁰ and Johann Karl Philipp, Count of Cobenzl, Minister Plenipotentiary in the Austrian Netherlands (1712-70). The latter acquired a large part of Von Reifferscheid's drawings and later sold his entire collection to Catherine the Great of Russia (1729-96). It formed the nucleus of the drawings collection of the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg.²¹ Also notable but under-researched is the drawings of Canon Pierre Wouters (1702-99), who, for a time, was head of the Bibliothèque de Bourgogne.²² In the Prince-Bishopric of Liège, another cleric, the erudite Canon Henri Hamal (1744-1820), was building a notable collection.²³

One of the finest collections was, without doubt, that of Charles-Antoine-Joseph-Lamoral de Ligne (1759-92).²⁴ The young prince collected work from all schools and owned an exquisite selection of works by Raphael (1483-1520) and Michelangelo (1475-1564).²⁵ The collection was later purchased in its entirety by the former Governor of the Austrian Netherlands, Albert of Saksen-Teschen (1738-1822), who had shown an interest in local art collections since taking office in 1781.²⁶ Saksen-Teschen also made important acquisitions in Brussels. At the auction of James Hazard (1748-87), for instance, he purchased sheets for a considerable sum.²⁷ Later, in 1797 – when he had already fled to Vienna – he bought drawings and prints for no less than 23,870.46 fl. from the Brussels art dealer Joseph Zanna (1759-1807).²⁸ Today, his collection forms the basis of the Albertina, the Viennese museum that bears his name.

From the Bibliothèque de Bourgogne to the Royal Library of Belgium

The history of the Royal Library of Belgium dates back to the middle of the sixteenth century. In 1559 it was decided to bring together all the books owned by the Habsburgs in the Low Countries in the Coudenberg Palace in Brussels. This *Librairie de Bourgogne* took its name from the Burgundian ancestors of Philip II (1527-98), who, over the course of the previous century, had collected valuable manuscripts that became the core of the library. Prints or drawings were never among the collecting areas.

After its inception, the library lay dormant. In the Austrian era, the situation improved somewhat thanks to the efforts of the aforementioned Johann Karl Philipp, Count of Cobenzl. The institution opened to the public and relocated to more fitting premises in the Domus Isabellae near the Palace on the Coudenberg. In this period, there were no special collections, and the holdings were limited to manuscripts and printed books. The cabinet miniature by Joris Hoefnagel (cat. 17) that was acquired by happenstance in 1832 fitted in well with the collection of illuminated manuscripts which was already considered to be one of the richest in Europe. In the absence of administrative archives or inventories from this period, we owe the remarkable account of the acquisition of this work of art to Edouard Fétis (1812-1909), who only recorded it decades later:

‘In 1832, an Englishman who had resided for some time in one of the hotels in Brussels, left without settling his account, as is sometimes the case, and in lieu pledged a smoke-stained miniature. The host did not think much of this pledge; but for want of anything better he accepted it. When the Englishman failed to pay his debt at the appointed time, the hotel owner approached the curator of manuscripts of the Bibliothèque de Bourgogne, and offered him the said miniature in return for the outstanding sum for which it was pledged. The deal was concluded, and a propitious one at that, for it put our public collections in possession of an admirable painting by Joris Hoefnagel (...).’²⁹

The work was not transferred to the Print Room until 1985, making it the earliest traceable acquisition in the drawings collection today.

The Royal Library of Belgium was officially founded in 1837. The manuscript collection of the Bibliothèque de Bourgogne formed the second section of the new national library. The first section housed the printed works that had been added to the Bibliothèque de Bourgogne over the centuries. These holdings were soon enriched with manuscripts and books from the collection of the Ghent bibliophile Charles van Hulthem (1764-1832).³⁰ In 1842, the state acquired the library of the city of Brussels. The core of this collection was assembled by Charles Antoine de La Serna-Santander (1752-1813) for the École centrale, founded in 1797.³¹ For this he was able to draw on the library of the defunct University of Louvain and on numerous monastic libraries.³² These comprised albums containing mainly Antwerp prints from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, mostly originating from the libraries and infirmaries of Jesuit monasteries. In a copy of the *Evangelicae Historiae Imagines* (1593), preparatory drawings are bound opposite engraved illustrations and texts (cat. 25). With these works, the seeds of a collection of prints and drawings were sown.

Frédéric de Reiffenberg (1837-50)

It was Frédéric de Reiffenberg (1795-1850), the first chief librarian of the Royal Library of Belgium, who initiated the broadening of the collection of works on paper. The original plan was to expand the existing holdings of prints. Drawings were also purchased when the occasion arose.³³ In 1846, the collection of Charles De Bremmaecker (1801-44) was auctioned. He was the nephew and heir of Charles van Hulthem, whose manuscripts and books had been acquired for the Royal Library of Belgium as early as 1837. However, over 30,000 prints and drawings from the Van Hulthem collection remained in the possession of his heir.³⁴ At the auction, De Reiffenberg succeeded in buying 2,377 prints and drawings for the library.

Due to the lack of a register of acquisitions from this period, the works in question can only be indirectly identified. Most are preserved on their original mounts (fig. 1).³⁵ In contrast to the often grandiose attributions to great masters, these are often mediocre copies and third-class works. Despite being apprenticed to Petrus Norbertus van Reysschoot (1738-95; cat. 96) and studying the great Paris collections, Van Hulthem was evidently no great connoisseur. Nevertheless, fascinating sheets, particularly by Flemish and Dutch masters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, were also purchased from his collection (cf. fig. 1, cats. 51, 59, 74, 92 and 98).

Fig. 1

Theodor Boeijermans, *Putto Drawing a Temple on an Escutcheon Surrounded by Four Allegorical Female Figures*, 1670
Pen and brown ink, brown-red wash, heightened with white gouache, squared for transfer in black chalk, 402 x 287 mm
Brussels, KBR, inv. R-2009-24774



Pieter Bruegel, (The)

1. 2009 - 14974

VENTE DE DRESDEN

Bruegel



Fig. 2
François-Joseph Navez,
Portrait of Louis Alvin, 1841
Oil on canvas, 69.5 x 51.3 cm
Brussels, Royal Museums
of Fine Arts of Belgium,
inv. 10130

Louis Alvin (1850-75)

Upon De Reiffenberg's death, Louis Alvin (1806-87) was appointed chief curator of the Royal Library of Belgium (fig. 2). He personally presided over the expansion of the Print Room, which became an independent section in 1851. A chronological register of new acquisitions was also kept from then on.

The prime objective was clearly to expand the print collection. In the mid nineteenth century, the collections were still internationally focused. Considerable sums were lavished on purchasing prints by German and Dutch masters such as Dürer, Martin Schongauer (1430/50-91), Lucas van Leyden (1494-1533) and Rembrandt (1606/07-69). There was little interest in the systematic acquisition of old drawings. The few drawings that were acquired are mainly historical views of locations in Belgium, a part of the collection that will be supplemented consistently over the next century and a half (fig. 3).³⁶

There was no decision to enhance this portion of the holdings on the basis of the old-master drawings in the Van Hulthem/De Bremmaecker collection. The lack of resources could explain why drawings were not acquired systematically, although Alvin leaves no record to this effect. As a scholar, he focused on the prints of the Wierix brothers, while Henri Hymans (1836-1912), appointed his assistant in 1857, was interested in the prints after Rubens. In innumerable other publications, Hymans expressed a broad interest in Southern Netherlandish printmaking from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century. This may clarify why connoisseurship in the field of drawing remained underdeveloped in Belgium. Moreover, the young nation lacked reference collections – private as well as public – that could serve as a foundation to deepen this expertise. The relatively scarce resources allocated by the fledgling democracy were also funnelled into the more democratic art of engraving, the roots of which were suspected to lie within national borders.³⁷



Fig. 3
Paul Vitzthumb, *View of 'Château Charles', 'Maison de plaisance' of Charles Alexander of Lorraine in Hoogvorst near Tervuren, c. 1780/82*
Pen and grey ink,
watercolours, 256 x 429 mm
Brussels, KBR, inv. S.II 25856



Fig. 8
Ferdinand-Joseph Derons,
View of the Manor
House of Stuyvenberg in
Laken near Brussels, 1733
Pen and grey ink, grey wash
and graphite, 309 x 399 mm
Brussels, KBR, inv. S.III 5977

The collection of Baron Adalbert von Lanna (1836-1909) in Prague was considered at the time to be one of the most significant private collections of old-master drawings.⁴² After his death, it was auctioned by Gutekunst in Stuttgart. Van Bastelaer managed to acquire a number of superb sheets for the Royal Library of Belgium, including the *Justitia* by Bruegel (cat. 9) and the sheet with *Beggars and Cripples* (cat. 3). At that time, this work was also considered to be a Bruegel drawing. Also bought at this auction were sheets by Hans Bol, Jan Brueghel I (cat. 43) and Jacob de Wit (1695-1754) (cat. 94). The auction included Goltzius' *Lumpsucker* as well, but it would not join the collection until 1954 (cat. 31).

On the eve of World War I, the Print Room had expanded considerably, and the collection of drawings had been further enlarged with a number of important Flemish and Dutch sheets (cats. 56, 76 and 80). The works purchased at the Coster and Von Lanna auctions finally laid the foundation for a collection of drawings by Netherlandish masters of the long sixteenth century. A number of these sheets were clearly related to prints, which had always been the Print Room's key collection area.

In the same period, more specifically in 1911, Jacqueline Gertrude Marie Mahie (1842-1917), the widow of Knight Jean de Grez (1837-1910), followed her husband's wishes and gifted a collection of 4,250 drawings from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century to the Belgian state. Finding a home in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium two years later, the drawings today comprise the core of the museum's Drawing Room.⁴³ In 1914 Mahie donated another 5,000 prints and a dozen drawings to the Print Room of the Royal Library of Belgium.

When René Van Bastelaer fled Belgium at the outbreak of World War I, librarian Louis Hissette (b. 1885) took charge during his years of absence. Hissette had a keen interest and expertise in the field of topography. Throughout the war, purchases were, of necessity, limited to domestic auctions and private individuals such as Canon Edmond Puissant (1860-1934) from Mons (cats. 86 and 95). Acquisitions were guided by the parameters that had been sketched out in previous decades, although Hissette's personal interest may shine through here and there. For instance, an important collection of drawings primarily by Ferdinand-Joseph Derons (1700-62) and Paul Vitzthumb (1751-1838) depicting views of Brussels and its environs were acquired at a 1917 auction (fig. 8). Among them was a sheet by Denijs van Alsloot (c. 1570-c. 1626) showing the famous fountain *Manneken pis* (cat. 52).

Drawings from the studios of several prominent Antwerp sculptor/architects were regularly purchased in small groups from the first decades of the twentieth century onwards.⁴⁴ Among the regular acquisitions were, for example, ensembles of drawings by the Verbruggen family and other similar late seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century masters (fig. 9). For a long time, there was scant interest in this sort of drawings, which ranged from sketches to more finished presentation drawings of altars, funerary monuments, ecclesiastical furniture and architectural projects. Apparently, they remained in the hands of the descendants



Fig. 9
Hendrik-Frans Verbruggen,
*Design for the Funerary
Monument of Gerardus Knyff,
44th Abbot of the St. Michael's
Abbey in Antwerp, 1685*
Graphite, pen and washes in
brown and grey, 395 x 266 mm
Brussels, KBR, inv. F 6981

of sculptors and a scattering of enthusiasts until well into the nineteenth century, largely escaping the attention of foreign collectors and public collections. This rather extensive sub-collection is beyond the scope of this book but will, we hope, be the subject of more in-depth study and a publication at a later stage.⁴⁵

Although resources remained relatively limited and prints continued to be the main focus, a number of fascinating purchases were nonetheless made in the interwar period. The emphasis is clearly on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century artists from the Southern Netherlands. Sheets attributed to Cornelis Schut I (1597-1659; cat. 67) and Adam van Noort (1561-1641; cat. 48) were bought in 1919. When the Abbott collection was auctioned at Fiévez in Brussels in 1922, one of the works purchased was a sheet attributed to Michiel Coxcie (1499-1592) that was recently reattributed to Maarten van Heemskerck (1498-1574; cat. 5). In the years that followed the 1922 auction, sheets by Crispijn van den Broeck (1523/24-90/91; cat. 22), Pieter de Jode (1570-1634; cat. 61) and Victor Boucquet (1619-77; cat. 75) enriched the collection.

From time to time, Dutch and (purportedly) Italian drawings are purchased. A sheet that was then ascribed to Parmigianino (1503-40) was bought from Nathan Spiro in The Hague (cat. 36). A drawing by Nicolaas Verkolje (1673-1746; cat. 93) and a *Lot and His Daughters*, attributed to Paolo Farinati (1524-1606), were also purchased from the same dealer. Recent research has firmly anchored this sheet in the oeuvre of Karel van Mander (1548-1606; cat. 30).

Louis Lebeer (1930-60)

Louis Lebeer (1895-1986), who succeeded Van Bastelaer in 1930, continued his active and consistent acquisitions policy with regard to old-master drawings. Many sheets tie into Lebeer's research, which, like that of his predecessor, focused on Pieter Bruegel I and Flemish printmaking from the sixteenth century. In 1936, Lebeer acquired a sheet by Johannes Wierix (cat. 26) and no fewer than three works by Hans Bol (*cf.* cats. 13 and 15). In the same year, a second cabinet miniature by Joris Hoefnagel was added to the collection (cat. 18). In 1938 Lebeer managed in one fell swoop to expand the holdings with a series of sheets by Johannes Stradanus (1523-1605; cat. 27) and to augment the collection of topographical drawings with a sketch by Constantijn Huygens II (1629-97) purchased from H.J. Holgen in Amsterdam (cat. 78). The same dealer also provided a *Nativity of Mary*, a drawing from the distinguished collections of Peter Lely (1618-80) and William Esdaile (1758-1837) which is today attributed to Giovanni Francesco Penni (1488-1528/30). It is one of the few important Italian sheets in the collection (*fig.* 10).⁴⁶

During the war years Lebeer remained on post, but few noteworthy acquisitions took place. After the war, however, a number of works were purchased from private collectors in Brussels: the *Design for a Tazza* by Frans Pourbus I (1545/46-81; cat. 21), the *Blazon of the Antwerp Chamber of Rhetoric De Goudbloem* (cat. 19), a cabinet miniature of a *Village Fair* by Hans Bol (cat. 15), a *Bird-Nester* by David Vinckboons (1576-c. 1632; cat. 41) and an album with drawings by Albert Flamen (c. 1620-after 1669; cat. 85). The magisterial *Lumpsucker* by Goltzius from the Von Lanna collection finally entered the holdings (cat. 31) via a New York dealer in 1954. Towards the end of Lebeer's career, an extensive collection of drawings after works by Primaticcio in Paris and surroundings, commissioned by Rubens, was acquired, works which are today attributed to Abraham van Diepenbeeck (1596-1679; cat. 63). This acquisition heralded a slight shift in the focus of the collection from the sixteenth century to the Flemish seventeenth-century school.

The 1960s and 1970s

These years are characterised by a highly ambitious and purposeful acquisitions policy, also in the field of drawings by old masters. The economic boom that commenced in the 1950s undoubtedly provided solid financing. Marie Mauquoy-Hendrickx (b. 1906), who was already working in the Print Room under Lebeer, succeeded him in 1960.⁴⁷ Because of her work on the *Iconography* of Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641), her field of expertise was Rubens, his contemporaries and his followers. The two drawings by Rubens that the Print Room acquired in the 1960s are among the most important purchases in the field of old-master drawings (cats. 49-50). At last, the most important Flemish painter of the seventeenth century was represented in the national Print Room with authentic drawings.

Furthermore, sheets were acquired by Jan Brueghel I (cat. 44), Willem van Nieulandt II (1584-1634; cat. 38), Jacques Jordaens (1593-1678; cats. 69-72), Antoon Sallaert (1594-1650; cat. 53), Cornelis Schut (1597-1655; cat. 66), Anthony van Dyck (cat. 58), Theodoor van Thulden (cat. 68), Pieter Crijnse Volmarijn (c. 1629-79; cat. 73), Adriaen Frans Boudewijns (1644-1719; cat. 83) and Richard van Orley (1663-1732; cat. 90). At the same time, the collection of Southern Netherlandish drawings from the sixteenth century continued to take shape with sheets by the Monogrammist WL (cat. 12), Pieter de Kempeneer (1503-c. 1580; cat. 28), Frans Floris (1517-70; cats. 7-8), Maerten de Vos (1532-1603; cat. 24), Ambrosius Francken (c. 1544/45-1618; cat. 29) and Otto van Veen (1556-1629; cat. 47).

There was also interest in works by less prominent and often unknown hands, but with a clear (art-)historical importance for the Belgian provinces. Among them are the famous drawings portraying the festivities in the castle of Binche on the occasion of the visit of Charles V and his son Philip (cat. 4). In the same year, the large pen drawing *Marriage of Maximilian of Austria and Mary of Burgundy* was acquired from Paul Prouté in Paris (cat. 20).

Fig. 10
Giovanni Francesco Penni, *The Birth of Mary*
Pen and brown ink, brown wash,
heightened with white gouache, squared for
transfer in black chalk,
320 x 211 mm
Brussels, KBR,
inv. S.IV 40016



List of Artists

Florian Abel: 20
Lucas Achtschellinck: 82
Denijs van Alsloot: 52
Anonymous (Netherlandish): 1, 4
Jacques d'Arthois: 81
Hendrick Bloemaert: 60
Hans Bol: 13-15
Follower of Jheronimus Bosch: 3
Philips van den Bossche: 46
Victor Boucquet: 75
Adriaen Frans Boudewijns: 83
Crispijn van den Broeck: 22-23
Pieter Bruegel I: 9-10
Follower of Pieter Bruegel I: 11
Jan Brueghel I: 43-44
Circle of Jan Brueghel I: 45
Cornelis Cort: 16
Abraham van Diepenbeeck: 63-65
Louis Fabritius Dubourg: 91
Anthony van Dyck: 58
Justus van Egmont: 74
Charles Eisen: 97
Albert Flamen: 85
Frans Floris: 7-8
Ambrosius Francken I: 29
Jan Anton Garemijn: 95
Abraham Genoels: 84
Jacques de Gheyn II: 35
Hendrik Gijsmans: 37
Hendrick Goltzius: 31-34
Josua de Grave: 79
Gerard van Groeningen: 19
Maarten van Heemskerck: 5-6
Joris Hoefnagel: 17-18
Gillis Claesz. de Hondecoeter: 56
Arnold Houbraken: 89
Constantijn Huygens II: 78
Pieter de Jode I: 61-62
Jacques Jordaens: 69-72
Pieter de Kempeneer: 28
Godfried Maes: 86-87
Karel van Mander: 30
Master of the Egmont Albums: 36
Master of the Hermitage Sketchbook: 59
Monogrammist BR: 57
Monogrammist WL: 12
Adrien de Montigny: 39
Willem van Nieulandt II: 38
Gerard van Nijmegen: 98
(Anonymous artist after) Adam van Noort: 48
Richard van Orley: 90
Pseudo-Aert Ortkens: 2
Adriaen van Ostade: 76
Bernardino Passeri: 25
Frans Pourbus I: 21
Abraham Rademaker: 92
Petrus Norbertus Van Reysschoot: 96
Peter Paul Rubens: 49-50
Cornelis Saftleven: 77
Antoon Sallaert: 53
Roelandt Savery: 40
Daniël Schellinks: 80
Cornelis Schut I: 66-67
Pieter Soutman: 51
Johannes Stradanus: 27
Theodoor van Thulden: 68
Philip Tideman: 88
Otto van Veen: 47
Esaias van de Velde: 54
Nicolaas Verkolje: 93
David Vinckboons I: 41-42
Pieter Crijnse Volmarijn: 73
Maerten de Vos: 24-25
Sebastiaan Vrancx: 55
Johannes Wierix: 26
Jacob de Wit: 94

Note to the Reader

All drawings discussed in the catalogue of this publication belong to the Royal Library of Belgium (KBR) and are depicted to actual size as far as possible. They were selected on the basis of their quality and their representativeness for a specific artist, genre, type or school. An effort was made to strike a balance between well-known and frequently published masterpieces, and works by lesser-known masters that have often never been published before. Among them are several new attributions.

Roughly three centuries lie between the oldest and youngest drawings discussed in this book; they were all made by masters working in the early modern period (c. 1500-1800). Because neo-classicism continued well into the nineteenth century, sheets belonging to this artistic movement were not included in the selection.

The Flemish and Dutch schools are best represented in the Department of Prints and Drawings at KBR. The number and consistency of the sheets from other European schools are proportionally lower. Therefore, it was decided to limit the selection to masters from, or working in, the Low Countries. The department also has an extensive collection of drawings by sculptors, mainly by Antwerp and Brussels masters and their workshops from the period 1650-1750. As they deserve a separate study, these works have not been dealt with in this book.

In the *Provenance* section, the earliest known owner is given first, followed by subsequent owners and ending with the current inventory number. For some drawings the provenance could not be determined. It probably concerns early acquisitions from the first half of the nineteenth century (see *Introduction*). When available, collectors' marks are referred to by their 'Lugt' numbers (see www.marquesdecollections.fr).

The *Literature* section gives as complete a picture of the relevant literature as possible, although it was not possible to include all references for the most widely published works. References to publications that appeared at the occasion of exhibitions are only mentioned in the *Exhibitions* section. Full bibliographic references can be found in the *Bibliography* section. In cases where the drawings have not been exhibited and/or published before, the relevant sections are omitted.

Watermarks and chain-lines could not be systematically studied and were only sporadically recorded. This is partly because many drawings have been pasted in full so that no watermark and/or chain-lines are visible. In those cases, the *Watermark* section is also omitted.

Authors

AVH	Anouk Van Hooydonk
BV	Brecht Vanoppen
ChD	Charles Dumas
DvH	Daan van Heesch
FdC	François de Callataÿ
GJvdS	Gert Jan van der Sman
GL	Ger Luijten
GvdH	Guus van den Hout
HB	Hans Buijs
HV	Hans Vlieghe
IMV	Ilja M. Veldman
JPH	Jean-Philippe Huys
JR	Julie Rooryck
JST	Jane Shoaf Turner
JVG	Joris Van Grieken
LN	Lieneke Nijkamp
MB	Maarten Bassens
ML	Marjolein Leesberg
MR	Marleen Ram
MS	Marijn Schapelhouman
OK	Oliver Kik
PS	Peter Schatborn
PV	Prisca Valckeneers
RS	Ruben Suykerbuyk
SA	Stijn Alsteens
SH	Stefaan Hautekeete
SVO	Sarah Van Ooteghem
SvS	Sabine van Sprang
VD	Virginie D'haene
YB	Yvonne Bleyerveld



CATALOGUE

1. ANONYMOUS (NETHERLANDISH)

Sheet from a Sketchbook with an Unidentified Castle and Late-Gothic Architectural Details

c. 1520

Metalpoint on white prepared paper (laid down), 130 x 175 mm

Inscribed in metalpoint, at left of the central building: *v(e)n(st)re* (abbreviation of the Dutch word for window?); below the right part of the central building: *w(...)stre(n or m)*; annotated on the old mount, at lower left below drawing, in pen and brown ink: *I. Breugel*

Provenance: Jean-Alexandre Werry (1777-1847), Brussels; acquired from his heirs in 1898; inv. S.II 86076

This small, delicate drawing is executed in metalpoint on specially prepared paper. The format, technique and character of the drawing indicate that the sheet comes from a sketchbook used outdoors to make studies *naar het leven*, or 'after life'.¹ In this regard, the sheet bears similarities with the famous silverpoint sketchbook that Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) used during his stay in the Netherlands in 1520-21.² A metalpoint sketchbook belonging to Hans Baldung Grien (1484/85-1545) has remained intact.³ Despite analogies with these German examples, there are strong indications that this sheet originated in the first third of the sixteenth century in the Southern Netherlands.

The drawing consists of two clearly distinguishable parts. On the left we see a detailed drawing of a castle that unfortunately has yet to be identified. Behind the gatehouse extends a wing with a stepped gable and a crenelated corner turret on the left. The cross-window a little to the right indicates the building's residential function. In the background on the right is a tall tower that is probably a keep. It has a hexagonal stair turret and a crenelated rampart topped by a high hipped roof. A covered defensive wall with embrasures is discernible between the adjacent wing with stepped gable to the right and the gatehouse. In the foreground on the left, timber structures can also be clearly seen, as well as sections of wall. The similarities with surviving aristocratic residences from the late Middle Ages in the Southern Netherlands suggest that this castle may have been located somewhere in Brabant or Flanders.⁴ The masterful rendering of texture and light – with a low sun casting long shadows on the roofs – testifies to excellent draughtsmanship.

The sketches on the right are of a different character. The architecture is a mixture of late Gothic elements found in the Southern Netherlands until about 1540. Although akin to existing buildings such as Leuven's town hall, the Palace of the Great Council in Mechelen or the Sablon Church in Brussels, the architecture is probably partly imaginary. The fragmentary, rudimentary nature of the architectural elements differs considerably from the neat, highly geometrical architectural drawings of the period. Therefore, it is unlikely that the author of this sheet was an architect or master mason.

As far as we know, this is the only metalpoint drawing with topographical and architectural elements drawn from nature that is known from the Low Countries. Other examples are in pen.⁵ As such, this sheet is a unique witness to a type of drawing that might have been common in this region during this era.⁶ Due to a lack of comparison material, it is currently impossible to identify the location or artist.

(JVG & OK)

1 Van Camp 2015, p. 145.

2 See Nesselrath 2021 with further literature.

3 Karlsruhe, Kunsthalle, inv. VIII 1062; see Martin 1950 and kunsthalle-karlsruhe.de/kunstwerke/Hans-Baldung/Das-Karlsruher-Skizzenbuch/C846D6274EA5B030B109C09DA87D795D.

4 Compare with Dopéré/Ubregts 1991 (including Male, gatehouse; Laarne, keep with stair tower, Bossenstein, residential wing with corner turrets; the general structure of the whole – gatehouse, connecting walls, keep with side wings – is similar to Westerlo).

5 See, for example, Van Regteren-Altena 1964 (*View of Saint Peter's Abbey in Ghent*, before 1534, present whereabouts unknown); Buck 2001, cat. I.3v (attributed to Lieven van Lathem,

Cityscape with the Hof van Sint-Baafs in Ghent, Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. KdZ 1975); Bevers 1998 and Van Heesch 2014 (*Antwerp sketchbook*, c. 1530-45, Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. 79 C 2); Stefaan Hautekeete in Brussels 2000, cat. 36 (*Errera Album*, c. 1520-40, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, inv. 4630); Van Tuinen/Meuwissen 2014 and Meuwissen 2017 (Cornelis Anthonisz., *Berlin Sketchbook*, c. 1520-35, Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. 79 C 2a).

6 An intact sketchbook in metalpoint in the collection of the Rijksmuseum (inv. RP-T-1939-78) is of a later date (1587) and can be attributed to the circle of Hendrick Goltzius. See Washington/London 2015, p. 173, pl. 65.



Anonymous, Sheet from a Sketchbook with an Unidentified Castle and Late-Gothic Architectural Details, c. 1520

2. PSEUDO-AERT ORTKENS

ACTIVE C. 1510 – C. 1540

The Murder of Herkinbald's Nephew

Pen and brown ink, 245 mm diameter

Recto, at lower middle within framing lines, in pen and brown ink: *meester Rogier fecit*; verso, in pen and brown ink: *no*; in graphite: *en.-*; on the old mount, in pen and brown ink: *Anonyme proche de Dirk Vellaert van Star, Histoire de Herkenbald / Roger van der Weyden (?)*; in graphite: *Vente Nyland, chez Muller à Amsterdam 1896*

Provenance: acquired at the Nyland and Royaards sale, Amsterdam (Frederik Muller & Co, 24-26 November 1896), lot 1099; inv. S.II 81859 (KBR mark on verso, not in Lugt)

Literature: Cetto 1966, pp. 145-46; Boon 1992, pp. 295-96, note 5; Wayment 1998, pp. 81, 100, no. 21, note 17; Leuven 2009, under cat. 3; Bern/Bruges/Vienna 2009, p. 203

Exhibitions: Bruges 2016-17, pp. 71, 73, 196, cat. 36

The Death of Lucretia

Pen and brown ink, 225 mm diameter

Verso, in pen and brown ink: *n° 15*; in graphite: *en.-*; on the old mount, in pen and brown ink: *Anonyme proche de Dirk Vellaert van Star / (Jacob van Amsterdam ?)*; in graphite: *Histoire de Lucrece / (Vente Nyland, chez Muller à Amsterdam 1896)* and *Aert Ortkens?*

Provenance: acquired at the Nyland and Royaards sale, Amsterdam (Frederik Muller & Co, 24-26 November 1896), lot 1100; inv. S.II 81860 (KBR mark on verso, not in Lugt)

Literature: Wayment 1998, p. 100, note 17, no. 10 (inv. erroneously given as S.II 51360); Boon 1992, p. 295, under no. 162

The identity of the maker of these two sheets remains shrouded in mystery. Belonging to a group of designs for glass roundels, they are usually considered as part of the oeuvre of a certain Aert Ortkens (c. 1475-1540), a glass painter from Nijmegen who was brought to the fore in 1917 by Max Friedländer.¹ However, over the years the oeuvre attributed to Ortkens has become so extensive that it seems likely that they are not by a single hand but probably the work of several artists. This has led to numerous attempts to define subgroups, with or without the addition of a provisional name. Hilary Wayment, for example, saw it fit to link some of the drawings to the Mechelen artists Adriaen and Peter van den Houte.² The two glass studies in the KBR collection were attributed to the latter.³ However, this proved unconvincing, prompting Karel G. Boon to suggest another group under the provisional name Pseudo-Aert Ortkens. This category brings together small-scale design sketches for glass roundels which were probably produced in a workshop in Brussels in the first decades of the sixteenth century. The drawings from this group are typified by eyes that are so heavily accentuated they appear to be closed and fingers that look rather crooked. Here and there, the hard folds in the drapery are overworked, and the abundant hatching in the compositions is composed of a jumble of short pen strokes. The glass designs in the KBR collection belong to the latter group and can, according to Boon, be considered early work by Pseudo-Ortkens.⁴

The first design shows the Brabant duke Herkinbald on his deathbed. As recounted in the early thirteenth century by Caesarius of Heisterbach, this judge single-handedly cut the throat of his nephew, who had violated a woman. The iconography is intended as an *exemplum* of justice. The inscription 'meester Rogier fecit', at the bottom of the sheet, does not indicate the maker of the drawing, but refers to the source of inspiration for the composition. In 1439 Rogier van der Weyden (1399/1400-64) had produced four panels with scenes from the legends of Trajan and Herkinbald for the Brussels Town Hall. Although these paintings were destroyed in the French bombardment of 1695, the scenes are still known today from a tapestry copy in Bern.⁵ The glass roundel design of Pseudo-Ortkens in KBR shows a very similar composition to the first Herkinbald episode by Van der Weyden. The continuation of the legend, in which Herkinbald miraculously receives a host on his tongue after refusing to confess his deed to a bishop, is found in a design for a glass roundel by Pseudo-Ortkens in the Rijksmuseum.⁶

The second drawing in KBR depicts the story of the virtuous Lucretia, a legendary noblewoman of ancient Rome. Brutally dishonoured by Prince Tarquinius, she commits suicide before her husband's eyes. While a sheet by Pseudo-Ortkens in the Musée Bonnat in Bayonne portrays the rape scene,⁷ the glass design in Brussels focuses on the scene that follows: the moment when Lucretia's husband finds his dying wife. This last portrayal can be found, unchanged, in a corresponding glass roundel in the Victoria & Albert Museum (fig. 1).⁸

(MB)



Fig. 1.
Here attributed to Pseudo
Aert-Ortkens, *The Death
of Lucretia*, c. 1475-1540
Glass roundel, approx.
24 cm diameter
London, Victoria & Albert
Museum, inv. 1236-1855

1 For overviews of the historiography, see Wayment 1967, pp. 172-79 and Boon 1992, pp. 292-93.

2 Wayment 1967-69.

3 Wayment 1998, pp. 81-82.

4 Boon 1992, p. 295, under no. 162.

5 Bern/Bruges/Vienna 2009, p. 203.

6 Inv. RP-T-1959-3. See Boon 1978, vol. 1, p. 139,

no. 385; vol. 2, p. 147; Leuven 2009, under cat. 3, ill. 3.3.

7 Inv. 1492. See Bonnat 1926, no. 29; Wayment 1998, p. 100, note 17, no. 8.

8 Two freer copies can be found in Saint Nicholas' Church in Dundalk (Ireland) and in Felbrigg Hall in Norfolk (England). See Cole 1988, p. 386, under no. 7c+d.

3. FOLLOWER OF JHERONIMUS BOSCH

Model Sheet with Cripples and Beggars

c. 1520-40

Pen and brown ink, over lighter preparatory drawing in pen, partly traced and washed with brush in a grey-brown colour at a later date; later outlined with pen and dark-brown ink, 265 x 199 mm

Bottom left in a different hand:
BRVEGEL 1558

Watermark: lily in escutcheon and below the letter 't' (cf. Piccard 1961-96, vol. 13, III, 1556-1621)

Provenance: Freiherr von Freyberg-Eisenberg; his sale, Montmorillon (Munich), 7 February 1853, lot 2428; Wilhelm Koller (d. 1871), Vienna; his sale, Vienna, 5 February 1872 and following days, lot 64; Adalbert von Lanna (1836-1909), Prague; acquired at his sale, Stuttgart (Gutkunst), 6-11 May 1910, lot 123; inv. S.II 133708

Literature: Gutkunst 1910, no. 123; Van Bastelaer 1924, p. 3; Benesch 1932, pp. 1-3; Tolnay 1937, p. 112, no. 10; Baldass 1937, p. 20; Baldass 1943, pp. 77, 79, 87-89, 253; Combe 1946, pp. 46, 98; Combe 1957, pp. 50, 100; Baldass 1959, pp. 67, 245; Grossmann 1959, p. 345; Tolnay 1965, vol. 1, fig. p. 320, vol. 2, p. 390, no. 10; Lemmens/Taverne 1967-68, pp. 83, 87; Baldass 1968, pp. 195, 197, 203; Arndt 1968, p. 10; Grossmann 1973, p. 148; Van Beuningen 1973, p. 36; de Pauw-de Veen 1979, pp. 149-58; Müller Hofstede 1976, p. 39; Vandenbroeck 1987, p. 59; Gibson 1996, p. 161; Mielke 1996a, p. 88, no. A-47; Koreny/Pokorny 2001, pp. 1-42, no. 4; Vandenbroeck 2002, pp. 59-64; Pokorny 2003, pp. 296-99; Koreny 2012, pp. 300-03, no. 28; Van Grieken 2014; Madrid 2016, under cat. 34; Saint Louis 2015, under cat. 2

Exhibitions: Paris 1935, cat. 155; Rotterdam 1936, cat. 22; Brussels 1937-38, cat. 8; Rotterdam/Paris 1948-50, cat. 4; Paris 1949, cat. 25; 's-Hertogenbosch 1967, cat. 49; Rotterdam 2001, cat. 7.2; Leuven/Paris 2013, cat. 60; Brussels 2014; 's-Hertogenbosch 2016, cat. 30; Budapest 2022



Follower of Jheronimus Bosch, *Model Sheet with Cripples and Beggars*, c. 1520-40

A group of some thirty figures populates this sheet. Most get about on crutches and stilts, are deformed, and appear to be missing limbs. Their faces have been reduced to caricatures, and the interaction between the figures suggests falsehood, malice, cunning, laziness and intemperance. The sharp-eyed viewer can see through the pretended deficiency as a trick. The utensils also have a symbolic meaning in this context. The numerous musical instruments not only serve the purpose of begging but also symbolise the debauched and useless pastimes and entertainments of these marginalised, work-shy reprobates. The pitchers suggest excessive alcohol consumption and visits to the tavern; the ladle intemperance and extravagance. The bellows, which only produce air, symbolise empty-headedness, boastfulness and debauchery. Because it is used to fan the flames of a hearth fire, it is also worn by rioters and troublemakers.¹

This drawing has no overarching iconographic theme. There is no clear compositional coherence between the groups. It is a *Musterblatt*, a sample sheet of marginal figures. The drawing was actually used as a model sheet. A tapestry woven in Brussels, of which the oldest documented edition dates from before 1542, shows the figure with the harp in the foreground in reverse (fig. 1).²

Fig. 1
Brussels workshop
after Jheronimus Bosch,
The Feast of Saint Martin,
before 1560
Gold, silver, silk and
wool, 296 x 364 cm
Real Monasterio de San
Lorenzo de El Escorial,
inv. 1005803)



A pendant sheet in the Albertina in Vienna was executed by the same hand (fig. 2). It has recently been suggested that the Vienna and the Brussels sheets originally formed one sheet that was later cut.³ In any case, a few clues make it clear that both sheets were used in the same milieu for some time. The tapestry also shows two beggars from the Vienna sheet. Moreover, both drawings feature small circular markings above the heads of several figures. What these markings exactly mean cannot be determined at present, but they undoubtedly date from the time when the sheets were still used together. They were probably no longer in the possession of the same owner around 1570. In that year at the earliest, Volcxken Diericx (c. 1525-1600) – widow of Hieronymus Cock (1518-70) – published an engraving in Antwerp on which most of the figures of the Vienna sheet were reproduced in a slightly different arrangement.⁴ This engraving bears the inscription ‘Jer. Boss’che luent’ and appeared together with a pendant that shows Bosch-inspired fantasy figures. This may indicate that the unknown designer or engraver had access to the Vienna drawing and other sources unknown today, but not the Brussels sheet.

Like the Vienna sheet, the faded drawing was partially reworked in the past, which obscures the original loose and virtuoso drawing style, especially at the bottom. The partly faded signature ‘BRVEGEL’ and the date 1558 in the lower left corner are also later additions. They probably date from after Bruegel’s death, when he was widely known as a ‘second Bosch’. The attribution to Bruegel was defended until the 1970s, despite the fact that Benesch attributed the drawings in Brussels and Vienna to Bosch as early as 1932, followed by Baldass and Tolnay, among others. A definitive shift in favour of Bosch and his circle came about on the basis of stylistic and material criteria. Mielke drew attention to the watermark associated with paper used in the late fifteenth century. This makes a much earlier date plausible and convinced Mielke to attribute the work to Bosch himself. Mielke’s study of Bruegel’s drawings made it clear that the drawing certainly does not belong in his oeuvre.⁵ After an in-depth study of all sheets related to Bosch, Koreny identified only a very small core of drawings as Bosch’s own works. The other sheets are regarded as studio work or attributed to anonymous followers. He considers the Brussels and Viennese sheets – partly on the basis of their affinity with the tapestry from before 1542 – as works made by followers of Bosch from the period 1520-40.⁶

(JVG)



Fig. 2
Follower of Jheronimus Bosch, *Beggars and Cripples*
Pen in ochre ink, brush and grey wash, traced with pen in grey ink, 285 x 208 mm
Vienna, Albertina Museum, inv. 7798

1 Bax 1948, pp. 172-73. The bellows are further associated with female genitalia and with sexual intemperance. However, this connotation seems of less importance in this context.

2 A lost series of tapestries with the same iconography is described in a French royal inventory in 1542. See Schneebalg-Perelman 1971, pp. 263-64, 289-90. The set, preserved in Madrid, is probably a re-edition of the same

cartoons. It probably comes from the collection of Cardinal Granvelle. See Vandebroek 2009 with references to earlier literature.

3 Koreny 2012 pp. 300-01.

4 Riggs 1977, no. 19; Leuven/Paris 2013, cat. 59; Saint Louis 2015, cat. 2.

5 Mielke 1996a, p. 88, no. A-47.

6 Koreny 2012, pp. 300-03, no. 28.

4. ANONYMOUS (NETHERLANDISH)

The Great Hall of Binche Palace; verso: Two Sketches of a Chimney or a Portico

c. 1549

Pen and brown ink, grey-brown wash, watercolour, bodycolour and gold paint; verso: brown ink, 395 x 374 mm

The 'Enchanted Room' of Binche Palace

c. 1549

Pen and brown ink, grey-brown wash, watercolour, bodycolour and gold paint, 410 x 385 mm

Provenance: Sir Berkeley Lucy (1672-1759); his grandson Andrew Berkeley Drummond (1755-1833); his grandson Cyril Augustus Drummond, Cadland (1873-1945); acquired at sale, London (Christie's), 10 July 1970; inv. F 12930 and F 12931 (verso: Lugt 260)

Literature: Van Put 1939-40; Popham 1939-40; Marlier 1966, p. 305; KBR *Acquisitions* 1970, pp. 34-38; Brussels 1985b, vol. 1, p. 353; Mons 1985, p. 196; Didier 2000, pl. 1; De Jonge/Ottenheym 2007, p. 73, fig. 75; Jonckheere 2013, pp. 31, 33, 87; Madrid 2014, pp. 31-33; Rijks 2019, pp. 143-44; García Pérez 2020, pp. 72-73, 90-91

Exhibitions: Brussels 1975, cat. 190a; Utrecht/'s-Hertogenbosch 1993, cat. 213-14; Sint-Niklaas 1994, fig. 123; San Lorenzo de El Escorial 1998, cat. 109; Ghent 1999, cat. 88-89; Leuven 2013, pp. 72-75; Aachen 2020, cat. 52-53



Anonymous, *The Great Hall of Binche Palace*, c. 1549

Colophon

Editing

Daan van Heesch
Sarah Van Ooteghem
Joris Van Grieken

Project management

Daan van Heesch
Sarah Van Ooteghem

Texts

Stijn Alsteens, Maarten Bassens,
Yvonne Bleyerveld, Hans Buijs, François
de Callataÿ, Virginie D'haene, Charles
Dumas, Stefaan Hautekeete, Jean-
Philippe Huys, Oliver Kik, Marjolein
Leesberg, Ger Luijten, Lieneke Nijkamp,
Marleen Ram, Julie Rooryck, Marijn
Schapelhouman, Peter Schatborn,
Ruben Suykerbuyk, Jane Shoaf Turner,
Prisca Valckeneers, Guus van den
Hout, Gert Jan van der Sman, Joris
Van Grieken, Daan van Heesch, Anouk
Van Hooydonk, Sarah Van Ooteghem,
Sabine van Sprang, Brecht Vanoppen,
Ilja M. Veldman and Hans Vlieghe

Translation

Lisa Holden
Michael Lomax (cats. 52-53, 86-87)

Copy-editing

Xavier De Jonge

Coordination Hannibal Books

Beatrice De Keyzer
Hadewych Van den Bossche

Graphic design

Tim Bisschop

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