SAENREDAM, HUYGENS AND THE UtreCHT BULL

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For Professor H. W. Janson

In a four-line Latin poem, Constantijn Huygens invites us to consider the iconological structure of a painting by Pieter Saenredam. The painting, an interior of the lost Utrecht Mariakerk with staffage (fig. 1) was one that Huygens himself owned, and likely commissioned. The Mariakerk is also the poem’s subject. In the foreground of both works of art stands the relief of a bull that once decorated the nave-side colone-tette of the Mariakerk’s second northern pier. Huygens attaches profound religious significance to this image and what it stands for1. Does Saenredam?

In order to accept the invitation and try to answer the question, the little-known associations of the relief and its altogether forgotten genesis will be reviewed. Then the theme’s treatment by Saenredam and Huygens will be compared as will another example of such a parallel in their respective works. Finally, a new problem in the study of religious imagery in 17th-century Holland will be discussed.

I. The relief

Framed in black, a mouse-gray young bull seen in right profile raises his legs over green waves, the left one pointed forward, the right back. His tail arches up and fore. His head is turned to face the beholder. Below the frame, a two-line inscription in Gothic letters reads:

Accipe posteritas quod per tua secula narres
Taurinis cutibus fundo solidata columna est.

(Accept, posterity, that which you may tell through the ages: the column is grounded on the hides of bulls.)

For the past 500 years, the Utrecht Mariakerk has been suffering mutilation and dismemberment at the hands of the community that built it. All that survives today is a recently restored cloister — now used as a parking lot — and a handful of building fragments stored in the Utrecht Centraal Museum. The only ones of these on display are the column drums that bear the relief and inscription depicted by Saenredam2 (fig. 2).

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1. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum 2099; exhibition catalogue Pieter Jansz. Saenredam, Utrecht 1961 (herself cited as exhib. cat. Saenredam), 212–13, nr. 149. For another occurrence of the relief in a Saenredam painting, see below, Part II. It appears indistinctly in one drawing (Utrecht, Municipal Archives Id 4:4; exhib. cat. Saenredam, 224, nr. 161). The poem is treated below, Part II.

2. Catalogus van het Historisch Museum der Stad (Utrecht), Utrecht 1928, 217, nr. 1383. The inscribed date MXCIX on the topmost drum is not observed by Saenredam in his one surviving drawing (1636) that shows the relief (see above, note 1), a good indication that it did not yet exist in 1636. [Experience generally bears out the just and bravely concise remark of Neil Maclauren, The Dutch School (National Gallery Catalogue), London 1960, 379: Saenredam ‘reproduce[s] buildings with fidelity that is to say in his drawings; in his pictures accuracy is often modified for compositional reasons’. However, see below, notes 16 and 44.] It is first recorded around 1790 in a pencil sketch by C. van Hardenbergh (Utrecht, Mun. Arch. Id 5:16). The date 1099 is the year of death of Bishop Conrad, founder of the Mariakerk (see below).

For a history of the church with some documents, see the article of the former Utrecht archivist
Fig. 1  Pieter Saenredam,
Interior of Utrecht Mariakerk seen from west, 1641
They were removed from the 15th-century choir in 1844, when, having outlived its usefulness as a concert-hall, it was torn down to make way for the Theatre of Arts and Sciences. The fragments had been moved to the choir from their original position in the nave in 1815, while the 11th-century nave was being dismantled to reclaim its 18,500 guilders' worth of materials.

The moment of the relief's creation remains unknown. The earliest notice of it that could be found occurs in one of the notes inserted by Petrus Montanus in the 1612 edition of Guicciardini's *Description of all the Netherlands* translated in Dutch:

*It was a great wonder when the foundations of the Church of Our Lady were being dug that the site of a well was struck upon which it was impossible to build; neither could it be filled in with stones or other material, everything sinking into it (as we read also of the temple of Diana); but at last it was lined with ox-hides upon which a firm foundation could be laid. To the memory of which these Latin verses were made: Accipe poster-itas, quod post tua secula narres, Taurinis cutibus fundo solidata columna est*.3


By limiting his explanation to the engineering side of the story, Petrus Montanus was ignoring the dramatic riches available to him in the unabridged version inscribed on the eastern faces of the western crossing piers of the Mariakerk itself. The 48-line Latin poem to be seen there was first published in 1592 (see note 6), then in 1617 by Lambert van der Burch, the Mariakerk’s deacon4. The story in brief: Bishop Conrad of Utrecht, old teacher of Emperor Henry IV of the Holy Roman Empire, accompanied Henry on an Italian campaign in 1081. Milan was sacked, and as the Church of the Virgin went up in flames, Henry, in deep grief over his inadvertant trespass, accepted (or solicited) an offer from Conrad to build an equally glorious church of the Virgin in Utrecht5. Upon his return, Conrad set to work. When the building was well under way, a spring was struck where one of the columns must stand. All else having failed, the bishop jumped at the offer of a ‘boorish Frisian’ named Pleberus to fix a foundation, agreeing to an exorbitant fee and to the condition that the technique used remain a secret. But the bishop had had mental reservation, as soon appeared: before work was begun, he bribed the Frisian’s son to find out the secret. With the help of his mother, bouwen mocht noch stoppen kunde met steenen noch andere materialen alles daer in sinkende (dieglichts wy oock van den Tempel van Diana lessen) maer ten lesten met Ossen hyuden beleyt wert ende daer op het fondament gesteelt vastecheydt maecte. Tot welcker gedachtenisse dese Latijnsche veersen gemaect zijn: Accipe... 
The ‘temple of Diana’ is most likely the temple of Artemis at Ephesus, whose soggy foundations, Pliny says (Natural History, 36: 95), were stabilized with layers of charcoal and - not ox-hides, but- fleece. Ed. Detlensen, Berlin 1873, V, 172–3: ‘in solo id palustri fecere, nec terrae motus sentiret aut hiatus timeret, rursus ne in lubrico atque instabili fundamenta tantaee molis locaturat, calcatis ea substravere carbonibus, dein vellerribus lanae’. This quotation was located for me by the late Prof. Dr. J. H. Jongkees of the Archaeological Institute, Utrecht and by Prof. Bluma Trell of New York Univ., whose kind help with the antique area of this study was of great value.
The tale is told of at least two other Dutch churches, the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam (De Katholieke bouwwereld, XX[1952-3], nr. 6) and the St. Janskerk in ’s-Hertogenbosch (L. E. Bosch, ‘Het gebouw voor kunsten en wetenschappen, voorheen de Mariokerk’, Utrechtse volks-almanah, 1844, 03–104, 99–100; Jan Mosmans, De St. Janskerk te ’s-Hertogenbosch, ’s-Hertogenbosch 1931, I, 386–7; both cite older literature) that are grounded on ox- or bulls’ hides. Bosch believes the story; Mosmans is skeptical, citing the rationalist refutation of H. Knipperberg, who relates the legend to a pre-Christian practice of sitting on an ox-hide at a crossroads on New Year’s Day to learn what the coming year has in store. The connection lacks force, however.

A closer legendary tie between hides and church columns is found in the German folk belief that the devil sits on a column in the church recording the names of sinners on a bull’s hide. In at least one version the devil is said to be visible only to a child free of sin, so favored by God that he can walk on water, a further dim bond to the unsinkable Utrecht bull (Lutz Röhrich, Erzählungen des späten Mittelalters... Bern 1962, I, 113–23). Of all rationalizing etiologies, however, the one I prefer is that the bull’s hide placed under a column to make it stand fast is a recollection of sacrificial animals (humans? see below, note 6), commonly thrown into building foundations ‘to give strength and stability to the building’ (J. G. Frazer, The Golden Bough: Taboo and the perils of the soul, London 1935, 89 ff.).

The varieti reading of the inscription is one of a few current in the literature; see below, note 16. The form in which I quote it in the text above is the correct reading, except that I have extended the run-on last words, which read: columnat.

4. *Aedis Divae Mariae Virginis in civitate Ultraiectensi admiranda origo*, Utrecht 1617. Copy at Utrecht, Mun. Arch. 1947. Van der Burch precedes the inscription with a long paraphrase of its contents. The Latin of the inscription, whose data and authorship remain unknown, may be found readily in the exhibit, cat. Saenredam, 221–2, nr. 158. The text given there, read from Saenredam’s painted copy, is identical to the version Van der Burch gives, transcribed from the legend itself, long lost. This is eloquent testimony to the talent for precision of Van der Burch, Saenredam, and Mr. H. J. de Smelt, the uncredited author of the exemplary Saenredam catalogue. To him I extend thanks for his kind help during the preparation of this article.

5. The suggestion that the Mariakerk is modelled after a Milanese prototype occurs in varying forms in many of the earlier sources. And in fact the church does copy the bay system and atrium of San Ambrogio as well as other features of Lombard Romanesque architecture nearly unique in northern Europe (see Ernst Gall, ‘Die Marienkirche in Utrecht und Klosterneuburg’, Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft, 1923, 24–41). Henry’s Italian campaign of 1081 is a fact, though the attack on Milan is not. Even so, the insistence of the sources that the Mariakerk owes its raison d’etre and its form to Conrad’s ‘visit’ deserves to be taken seriously. An incunabulum of the historiography of Italian-northern artistic relations, in addition to a well-documented example of the thing itself, is waiting to be studied.
the son's work was quickly done, and the bishop learned that the hides of bulls would provide a stable foundation. He made use of the secret without paying Pleberus. But the Frisian took revenge. One day, after prayers, he stabbed Bishop Conrad to death. It is this story that is commemorated not only by the inscription in the crossing, which does not mention the bulls' hides, but also by the one under the relief in the nave, devoted exclusively to the bulls' hides.

The relief seems antique in inspiration. Similar aggressive bulls occur on Gaul coins of the 10th and 12th imperatorships of Augustus and on Sicilian and Magna Graecia issues of the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C., such as the Thrurium coin illustrated (fig. 3).

6. The strata of the story may be distinguished by following its development in medieval and modern sources. There is actually a kernel of fact buried in the legend. The annals of the Mariakerk, composed around 1138, contain this entry for 1099: 'Bishop Conrad is murdered' ('Cunradus episcopus interfectus est'); S. Muller, 'Drie Utrechtsche kroniekejes voor Beka's tijd', Bijdragen en mededelingen van het Historisch Genootschap, XI (1888), 460–506, 475. The refreshing brevity of this account was not suffered to last long. A contemporary hand adds: '... miserably, by the knife of a certain plebeian, just when he came home to pray after singing Mass' ('a quodam plebeio cultello miserabiliter, eodem momento postquam missam cantaverat et ad domum vix venerat').

The only other authentic details that may be learned from 12th-century sources are the murder's date and the plebeian's having been in business (Annales Disibodenbergenses, given in J. F. Böhmer, ed. Fontes Krerun Germanicarum, Stuttgart 1843, III, 198: '1099. Cunradus Traiectensis episcopus quarta feria pasce a negociatore Fresco crudeler occiditur').

After 1200 the story is enriched with literary embellishments and borrowings from folk-tales. The unreliable Utrecht chronicler Johannes de Bek(a) (1350; first edition, Franeker 1612; second, Utrecht 1643) dubs the Frisian Pleberus, plainly a misreading of 'plebeio' – plebeian, of the annals of 1138 – as 'plebero', which could only be a proper name, and makes him Conrad's architect, supplying along the way many other of the narrative elements we already know. (Since Conrad was buried in the Mariakerk's nave, calling the building's architect his murderer immediately relates the story to tales of human sacrifice at foundation rituals. Only somewhat less grim a relative of Pleberus is the dwarf Rumpelstiltsken, another boorish genius, who performed a technical miracle only to be cheated out of his exorbitant fee and into suicide because he couldn't keep quiet. That Pleberus is required, in some versions, to fix the column at pain of death for failure, implies a roughly Rumpelstiltsken's kin.) But the Frisian's secret, the technique used to stop the spring, is kept by Beka, a sure sign that he didn't know it.

(More medieval versions of the story may be found in C. Fijnacker Hordijk, Lijsten der Utrecht schen predalen voor 1300, Groningen 1911; and M. S. P. Ernst, Histoire du Limbourg, Liège 1852, VII, 4.)

The next major historian of Utrecht, Wilhelm Heda, was, on the other hand, a writer of admirable skepticism. (His work, written in 1521, is published together with Beka's in the editions of 1612 and 1643.) He rejected the plainly fanciful motives for Conrad's murder in favor of far more reasonable ones, as attested by the facts as Beka's (1612 ed., 301). By now the original circumstances had become irretrievable even to a most careful historian. A less scrupulous man than Heda composed the long Mariakerk inscription, and another, van der Burch, finally supplied the detail of the bulls' hides, perhaps derived from some 's-Hertogenbosch story, or even made up because of the relief of a bull on one of the columns, which may have been put up for some altogether different reason, though here the pun boggles. But it renders the pun incoherent to publish in Latin and in translation the whole long inscription without mentioning the bulls' hides at all as late as 1591 and 1601 (Die chronycke van Holland, Zeeerland ende Vriesland, Dordrecht, 2d ed. and its French trans., respectively; the first, of 1517, lacks the Mariakerk legend). For the sequel, see below, note 10.

7. For examples, see H. A. Grueber, Coins of the Roman Republic in the British Museum, London 1910, III, pl. cviii and passim.

8. Mr. Martin Price of the British Museum Department of Coins and Medals kindly provided the cast from which the illustration was made. I am further indebted to him for his valuable expert assistance in discussing with me the various possible antique sources for the bull motif.

Grueber's theory of the Thurmull bull's association with water (1, 217; note 1) relates, through a Greek pun, the bull's rushing with the rushing of the waters of the fountain after which the city was named, an uncanny repetition of the Utrecht bull-fountain syndrome. Grueber's hypothesis seems to be at fault, though. The bull of the coins does not rush, but performs the action described by Pliny: '... their chief threat is in their forefront: a bull stands glowing with wrath, bending back either fore foot in turn and splashing up the sand against his belly – it is the only animal that gords itself into passion by these means' (Natural History, 7: 70; Loeb trans. by H. Rackham, London etc. 1940, III, 127). It remains possible, though, that the carver of the Utrecht bull shared Grueber's hypothesis, which is not so obscure, after all. The sculptor misread the antique source to raise both the bull's legs into the air, in an impossible position that is a compromise between the 'glowing' Thurmull bull and a rushing one.
The latter more likely than the former are the relief’s model, since the bulls on the Greek coins, while striking a pose rather similar to that of the Utrecht bull, are moreover associated with bodies of water! Fishes occur very frequently in the exergues of such coins, and in some an indistinct image, perhaps standing for a lake or spring, lies beneath the bull’s forelegs just as green waves wash the forelegs of the Utrecht bull.

The most—indeed, the only—reluctant writer on the subject of the relief is the Utrecht humanist Arnoldus Buchelius (Aernout van Buchell; 1575-1641): 'For this story’s accuracy [Pleberus and the bull’s hide, etc.] one can only rely on the authorities; the morass, at least, is attested by the existence of a bull carved on the column, though later, by the skill of Scorel, who was a canon there, and by this distich after the antique: *Accipe...*’9. Although it was not published until 1643, perhaps a full century after the putative event, Buchelius’ attribution of the relief to Jan van Scorel merits consideration. In itself there is nothing unlikely about the attribution. The style of the relief is not unlike that of other sculptures in antique style found in Scorel’s painted work, though a close stylistic comparison of two such unequal samples is not to be attempted except under duress.

Buchelius enlightens us concerning the inscription as well. ‘After the antique’, he calls it in the note quoted above. This undocumented reference is vague and may have gone forever unchecked. But in another book of his, a manuscript description of the Utrecht churches, Buchelius repeats himself, and there his remark was glossed by an unknown benefactor of about 165010. The footnote leads to Joseph Scaliger’s

The coins involved were certainly known in the 16th century. See Hubertus Golzius, *Sicilia et Magna Graecia...*, Bruges 1576, pl. XXXI. Golzius also tells of the fountain Thurium (ibidem, 284), so all the materials upon which Gruener based his theory were known at the time. If the carving of the bull was Jan van Scorel (see text), the obscurity of these references need not trouble us. Before coming to the Mariakerk, he was Adrian VI’s curator of antiquities.

9. *Fides hujus narrationis sit penes actores, voraginis saltem iudicium extat Taurus columnae incisus, sed a posteris, est enim a Scorelli ibidem Canonici arte, cum hoc, ab antiquitate translato disticho*. Buchelius was the editor of the 1643 Utrecht edition of Beka and Heda. This quotation is from his copious and extremely helpful commentary, 44. One would endorse the attribution to Scorel more energetically were it not for Buchelius’ reservations in another place (see following note).

10. *Monumenta passim in templis ac monasteris Trajectinae urbis atque agri inventa*, Utrecht, Mun. Arch. 1840. The ms. is an important source and an extremely attractive book, decorated with Buchelius’ own accurate and charming drawings in colored ink. My thanks go to the archivist, Mr. Struyck, and Messrs. Graafhuis, Andries, and de Vries, for their patient help. Fol. 56a: ‘...cuius rei [the hide legend] memoriam medio fere in templo conservat tauri effigies columnae imposita ex Scorelli, ut fertur designatione, cui subscripti huius versus leguntur Accipe...’. (It is the phrase ‘after Scorel’s design, so they say’ that rob the attribution of the support of Buchelius’ expert knowledge: he is merely reporting a tradition he did not, as it appears, entirely trust.) The marginal glossator adds: ‘hic versiculi ex antiqua inscr: Fort: Praenest: sumpti vide lib: V vet: poet: catal: a Scal: ed: pag: 229’. This notation represents the highest point in historical accuracy ever reached by writers on the relief, even though it gets the page number wrong (it should be 222-23; see text for the full reference).

In a contemporary broadsheet the Mariakerk inscriptions are made available in Dutch translation for the benefit of unlearned tourists (J. van Gaudekamp, *D’oorspronkelijke stichting der herke van Ste. Marie t’Utrecht etc.*, Utrecht 1658; copy at Utrecht, Mun. Arch. 1948). The Dutch version of hexameter is ingeniously performed; to rival it in English one would need to be a Long-fellow. *Nakomeling neem aan, ’t zijt uwse tijd verteld: Op steren-huwen staat de pijler vast gesteelt.* Van Gaudekamp adds nothing to the inscriptions’ texts, nor does he enlighten us concerning their origins.

From then on, there is no question of truth to the texts, let alone enlightenment. The writers apply greater and greater craft to the tellings of the tale, the literary climax being reached simultaneously as the historical and irremediably corrupt version of J. van Lennep, his story *De Friesche Bouwmeester*, from *Onze voorouders* (1838). Another legendary Utrechter, the ‘whitebread child’, is syncretistically subsumed by Pleberus’ son, and other merrily use is made of the materials. In 1815, when the column was dismantled, interest in the story was so
Catalecta Virgili et aliorum poetaarum latinorum veterum (Leiden 1617); a poem printed there, taken from a 23-line inscription found at the temple of Fortuna in Praeneste, contains these lines:

_Accipe Posteritas, quod per tua saecula narres._

TAURINUS cari iussus pietate parentis...¹¹

We see at once that the Utrecht humanist who borrowed this line to immortalize the bull story was making a pun. Scaliger capitalizes Taurinus in his edition of the inscription because it is a proper name: Taurinus, son of Titus Caesius, who had an image of Fortuna set up in his parents' honor, and the poem written and inscribed. In Utrecht one line is borrowed from Praeneste intact, but the following line lends only its initial word, delftly altered from _Taurinus_ to the adjective form of Lat. _tauri_, bulls, _taurinis_. The rest of the line is newly composed to round out a couplet that fits the rare occasion.

The occasion is even rarer, though, than we have seen so far. For the couplet seems to postdate the relief, and refer not only to the old scandal, but to a very new one as well. There is a subtle but still jarring contrast between the styles of the classicizing relief and the gothicizing inscription, suggesting that they may have been carved by different hands, perhaps even at different times. We have already noticed that only in 1612 and 1617 is the inscription mentioned in print. In those years Utrecht was the center of a new religious controversy, one of the most important ones of the century; and the events of those years suggest a remarkable candidate for authorship of the inscription.

Arminianism was the issue¹². The Leiden professors Gomarus and Arminius had quarrelled throughout the first decade of the 17th century over points of Calvinist dogma. Arminius was a ‘liberal’ Calvinist, who believed, for example, that man is not damned until he is born. He aroused most antagonism, however, by his wish to see revised the central documents of Netherlands Reformed creed, the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism. After Arminius’ death in 1609, the aggravation increased. His followers, feeling the need to fix their position (Arminius himself was constantly developing his ideas), drew up in 1610 an Arminian manifesto, the Remonstrance, and, taking from it their name of Remonstrants, joined fight with Gomarus and the now Contra-Remonstrants.

The first stage of the Remonstrant experiment was conducted in Utrecht. Probably on account of its liberalism and the religious equilibrium between its 50% of Catholics and 50% of Protestants, it was chosen as the stage for a test case. The Remonstrant keen that traces of the bulls’ hides were sought. (The same was done at St. Janskerk in ’s-Hertogenbosch in 1840 and in the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam in 1952! See literature cited above, note 3.) When none was found, history was accused of the cheat (likewise in 1840 and 1952).

A full bibliographical history of the legend is not required here. But a listing of some of the scholarly modern sources will be helpful to anyone wishing to pursue this interesting matter: _Batavia Sacra_, Antwerp 1716, II; _Van Heusen en Van Rijn, Historie ofte beschryving va’l Utrecht-sche bijden_, Leiden 1719; Antonius Matthaeus, a.o., _De rebus Ultrajectinis_, The Hague 1740; V. J. Blondeel, _Beschrijving der stad Utrecht_, Utrecht 1757; _Tydschrift voor geschiedenis, oude- en modern monumenten en statistiek van Utrecht_, I (1853); _Utrechtsche volks-almanak_, 1844 and 1868; Johannes van Lieftard, _Utrechts oudheid..._. Utrecht 1857, I; _De bouwwereld, XIII_ (1914); J. R. W. Sinninghe, _Utrechtsche Sagenboek_, Zutphen 1938; G. A. Evers, _Utrechtsche overleveringen uit de middeleeuwen_, Utrecht 1914; and publications mentioned in other notes.

¹¹ _Corpus inscriptionum latinorum_, XIV, 297, nr. 2852. The inscription, now in Rome, Palazzo dei Conservatori, is first recorded in the collection of Cardinal Marco Barbo (d. 1496), and was published frequently during the 16th century, though not in Holland.

¹². See A. W. Harrison, _Arminianism_, London 1937.
leaders urged to action a liberal young preacher who had come to Utrecht in 1605, recommended by Uitenbogaert, the author of the Remonstrance. His name was Jacobus Taurinus. The experiment ended tragically. Utrecht harbored Taurinus for eight increasingly violent years, while city after Dutch city turned its Remonstrants out. The year 1618 saw the end of the first round: in July, the Orange Stadholder Maurits appeared before the city and converted it to Contra-Remonstrantism by show of arms; the Synod of Dordrecht, which predestined Remonstrantism to damnation even before it was called, convened in November; in September, in Antwerp, the banished Taurinus had already died. 

During the years in which he preached in Utrecht, Taurinus was always under attack from Gomarists. An agent of theirs, the scandalmonger Vincent van Drielenburch, published broadsheets against him, ridiculing him under the nickname ‘the Utrecht bull’ and ‘that person with the hide of a bull,’ employing the pun with which we are already familiar. Now ‘the Utrecht bull’ applies as well to the Mariakerk relief as to Taurinus, and there is little doubt that Drielenburch had some such comparison in mind. Is it not tempting to assume that Jacobus Taurinus composed these lines, which serve at one and the same time as a tribute to the legendary bull already carved on the column and as a retort to Drielenburch? For the lines may be read in two ways: 

Accept, posterity, that which you may tell through the ages: the column is grounded on the hides of bulls, 

or, 

Accept, posterity, that... the column is grounded on Taurinus’ hide, 

a gesture of simultaneous self-mocking and self-glorification. 

Joseph Scaliger, who first published the antique source of the inscription in Holland, was Taurinus’ teacher at Leiden. Scaliger may first have pointed out this ancient name-sake of his to Taurinus, who then put his learning to compound – if obscure – advantage, as we have seen. Between 1605, when he came to Utrecht, and 1612, when the couplet first is published as a feature of the Mariakerk, Taurinus managed to have the lines inscribed under the bull. 

But even if this reconstructed incident never took place, even if the double meaning of the inscription is only a charming coincidence, and the inscription was already up when Taurinus came to Utrecht, the preacher and the other Utrecht bull were now inevitably associated. As long as Taurinus’ memory survived in Utrecht, the relief called it to mind.

14. For ‘Utrechtschen stier’ see Rogge, 106-7. The other epithet comes in van Drielenburch’s broadsheet Cläre wederlegginghe vande valsche bewijsredenen tegen Vincent van Drielenburch... (copy in Utrecht, Univ. Lib.). In point ten of his defense, which attacks Taurinus by name throughout, mention is made of ‘den Persoon in den Stieren huyt’ in a context that makes it certain he is being referred to again. Drielenburch’s use of both names, evoking respectively a whole bull and a bull’s hide only, leaves no doubt that his puns appealed to the Utrecht audience’s knowledge of the Mariakerk relief and legend. 

Van Drielenburch seems to have been insane; at any rate he was such an unpleasant character that he was expelled from Utrecht in 1613 even though his uncle was one of its burgomasters! He carried on his evil practice in Amsterdam.  
15. I apologize at once for a slight liberty. The line’s second reading is ‘Taurinus’ hides’. But the alternative, Lat. ‘Taurini cute’, would have ravaged the meter. 
16. The violence of Taurinus’ end would only have lent macabre justification to the lines’ prophecy. In any case, it is not surprising that Montanus, Van der Burch, and Buchelius all elect
In 1636, the year Saenredam first drew the bull, and in 1641, when he last painted it, Taurinus' memory was very much alive. By 1630 a working tolerance was achieved by the Remonstrants, and they began preaching again. The Utrecht community was led in the late 1630's and '40's by Petrus Taurinus, Jacobus' son (b. 1615; the pun in his name is too good to be true, so I will ignore it). He too was attacked and publicly castigated by the now Contra-Remonstrant authorities of Utrecht.

Summary: The relief is rich in historical associations. Its first referent is the hide for which it stands *totus pro parte*, a wonderful and tragic instrument of the church's foundation. In the second place, it alludes, whether designely or not, to the Utrecht martyr Taurinus. Further, it is a document of Utrecht humanism, uniting in artistic and literary form the results of researches in medieval archaeology and classical philology while establishing between the ancient and modern worlds—a 'typological' relation characteristic of Renaissance humanism. If any, all, or none of these aspects of the Utrecht bull will help us to understand its depiction by Saenredam remains now to be seen.

to read the inscription only one way: none of them was a controversialist, and the subject was one that simply could not be discussed peacefully.

One more piece of evidence may be noted before we let the matter go. If Taurinus did have the inscription put up between 1605 and 1612, the antique source of it would not yet have been published by Scaliger (posthumously, in the event). Those not fortunate enough to hear Scaliger's lectures would most likely learn the inscription from Franciscus Schottus, *Itinerari italicæ rerumque romanarum*, Antwerp 1600, 425, the previous publication of it closest to home and most recent. As it happens, Schottus favored an alternate (mistaken) reading of one of the words in the line that concerns us, 'post tua' for 'per tua'. This variant is the one reported by Montanus in 1612 as standing in Utrecht! See above, note 3. It may be that Montanus heard of the incident from the humanist grapevine, and, checking the line's source before publishing it himself, 'corrected' the 'per' he didn't know was Scaliger's 'to Schottus' 'post'. Van der Burch, on the spot, gives the correct reading. Buchelius' versions, 'quae post haec' in the published notes on Bek's and 'quae post tua sacellum narret' in his ms. description of the Utrecht churches (where that most learned hand of c. 1650 shows itself modest as well by correcting Buchelius between the lines and not scratching his errors out) can be explained only by a more elaborate hypothesis. On Saenredam's drawing of the Pieterskerk in Utrecht, dated 22. Augustus 1636 (Utrecht, Mun. Arch. Ib 4.4; exhib. cat. Saenredam, 237, nr. 175) an inscription on the triumphal arch reads:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AVG. 24</th>
<th>remote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>accipe posteritas haec quae Jacere</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insapiens Sacrilegio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lividus hostili tormento hec habilia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ex pacis arce cantaber</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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december 24

The inscription refers to a cannonball that hung by a chain from the church's triumphal arch. This tool of thoughtless sacrilege had been fired from the Vredenburg castle by a Spanish defender during the siege of December, 1577--January, 1578, and had damaged the church organ. The inscription looks like a sign painter's first try. The words 'remota' and 'fregit' lie outside the frame, while a false 'u' in *Jacere* is corrected above the line. The date 'december 24' is written straight across the soffit of the arch, with no adjustment for its curve. No trace of the inscription has been found in the church in its current restoration. We must be in the presence of that most rare creature, a fictive detail in a Saenredam drawing. The tentative explanation that suggests itself is this: Saenredam made his drawing on August 22, 1636, then showed it to Buchelius two days later. The old humanist felt the crying need of an inscription to accompany the suspended cannonball, and composed one on the spot, modelled after that other Utrecht commemorative inscription of the Mariakerk, or rather his faulty recollection of it. Saenredam drew it in at his dictation, getting *Jacere* wrong and failing to organize the lines properly. In lieu of a title he simply put the date, AVG. 24, above the inscription. Thereafter, Buchelius' citations of the Mariakerk inscription were colored by his own Pieterskerk invention.
II. The paintings

Two of the views Pieter Saenredam painted in the Utrecht Mariakerk include a glimpse of the bull relief (17) (figs. 1 and 4). In both paintings care is taken that the inscription be legible and the relief plainly displayed (18). Moreover, staffage figures, painted in by Pieter Post (19), call our attention to the relief by their attention to it. In both paintings the group is identical: a hand-holding couple and a second woman (see note 26). The configuration of couple and relief cannot be regarded as an accident. If the group's link with the relief seems tentative in the 1638 painting, it is stated most emphatically in that of 1641. This is readily explained: the staffage in the earlier painting was not painted in until the early 40's (20). But it is not a mere afterthought. It can be regarded

18. A curious application of Maclaren's rule (see above, note 2) meets us here. In Saenredam's drawing for the 1638 painting (Utrecht, Mun. Arch. Id. 4.4; exhib. cat. Saenredam, 224-5, nr. 161) the inscription is rendered as it is seen from such a distance — as a blur. In the painting, for iconographic reasons, it is made legible (see below).
19. This has been established with a certainty quite rare in such matters by S. J. Gudlaugsson, 'Aanvullingen omtrent Pieter Post's werkzaamheid als schilder', Oud Holland, LXIX (1954), 59-71, 68; for Post, see M. D. Ozinga, s.v., Thieme-Becker, XXVII, 298-9.
20. Dr. Gudlaugsson was kind enough to report his attribution to Pieter Post of the staffage in a number of Saenredam paintings not mentioned in his article. These are exhib. cat. Saenredam nrs. 158, 160, and 164. The staffage in nrs. 35 and 38, among others, he is inclined to attribute to Saenredam himself (cf. the attributions made to Saenredam by P. T. A. Swillens, Pieter Janzoon Saenredam, Amsterdam 1935, 55-6; his group includes figures probably by Saenredam along with others by Post and a late 17th-century hand). Of the 1638 view in the Mariakerk, nr. 160, Dr. Gudlaugsson is certain that the staffage was

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Fig. 4 Pieter Saenredam, Interior of Utrecht Mariakerk seen from south, 1638

Brunswick, Herzog-Anton-Ulrich-Museum
as a first attempt to pose a couple as spectators of the relief. When the result turned out to lack force, the new composition of 1641 was planned. From Saenredam’s drawings of the Mariakerk another view of the carved column was selected, in which the relief stands well toward the foreground, though it is not seen frontally. The new view enabled the painters to relate the couple and relief far more effectively and purposefully (fig. 5), and to place them in a vital position in the painting. Descent into depth is delayed by this heavy repoussoir group; and once his eye is caught, the beholder is invariably inspired to look over the shoulders of the couple and study the relief.

This deliberate heightening of the relief’s pictorial and psychological importance by Saenredam and Post is not readily understood on the basis of the material we gathered at such length in Part I. The couple’s attitude of devotion before the relief, anything but that of the ordinary tourist, makes even less sense in the light of what we know. It may be that the traditional view of art historians – that Saenredam staffage doesn’t matter – is justified, and the couple is a mere picturesque accessory.

As it happens, we are not bound to accept this negative dictum. Saenredam and Post seem not to have been the only men to have had a hand in the painting’s creation, and more may be learned from the third man.

Constantijn Huygens seems to have commissioned the painting21. He was not a passive sort of patron, but was himself a planner of iconographic programs and a theoretician of art and architecture22. And he had special ideas about the Utrecht Mariakerk and its relief. We learn of these from a poem he came to write in 1649:

not painted in before the early ’40’s, a conclusion that I had already reached on quite other grounds than his (see text).

21. It came to the national collections from Constantijn Huygens’ house, destroyed in 1877 to make way for the Ministry of Justice. It is presently displayed without two strips that extended it top and left. Although I have never seen the strips, I assume they are demonstrably not by Saenredam, otherwise the Rijksmuseum would not have removed them. I do not know what evidence there is to support the claim that the picture served as a chimney-piece in Huygens’ house (see exhib. cat. Saenredam, 213), but there is no reason to doubt that Huygens commissioned the painting, and the internal evidence presented here fairly establishes the fact, I believe. In the description written preparatory to the house’s auction in 1827 (when the state bought it for no more than f 20,000) one reads: ‘... above the doors are two more valuable paintings, one showing Moses taken from the water by Pharaoh’s daughter, exceptionally well painted by Spreeuwen and the other the interior of the Mariakerk in Utrecht, by F. Saenredam’; quoted by J. C. van der Muelen, ‘Een Hollandsch huis uit de 16de eeuw’, Haagsch Jaarboekje, 1889, 67–84, 76. Huygens seems to have owned another Saenredam painting of the Mariakerk (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum 2097; exhib. cat. Saenredam, 216–7, nr. 153; this was bought by a private collector in 1827, and came to the national collections in 1875 by purchase). Huygens’ eye for what we call the Romanesque (as early as 1620, Huygens wrote of the architecture of Mainz, ‘mais à l’éclesiastique, quasi comme à Utrecht’; he certainly was thinking of the Romanesque monuments of both cities; quoted by S. Muller, o.c. [note 2], 198) was developed through his search for Vitruvius in his own work, we may speculate (see following note).

22. Such a triple authorship is rendered likely by the circumstances of the painting’s creation as we reconstructed it above. If Huygens commissioned the 1641 painting, he also had the staffage in the 1638 view executed and its inscription made legible – by Post, not Saenredam, as a glance at the rounded letters will tell (cf. figs. 5 and 6). A quick attempt to sketch a picture of the intellectual relations between the three men will help fill in the background of this collaboration, an occurrence that may be less unusual than it appears at first.

Saenredam has left nearly nothing in writing. One letter of his survives, written, nicely enough, to Huygens (De Briefwisseling van Constantijn Huygens, ed. J. A. Worp, The Hague 1911–17, IV, 479, nr. 4818; Swillens, o.c. [note 20], 143). In it he thanks Huygens for bringing his work to the attention of young Prince Willem II at the unexpected occasion of his actually showing some interest in painting. ‘I am very happy to hear that His Highness is beginning to take enjoyment in paintings and that he would like to see my latest groote kerch ...’. The last words may mean either ‘large church interior’ or ‘painting of the Grote Kerk in Haarlem’. Prof. Van Gelder kindly allows me to mention here his – assuredly just – opinion that the painting referred to in this letter of May 22, 1648 is none other than Saenredam’s largest surviving painting, which also depicts the Grote Kerk in Haarlem – the panel dated February 27, 1648 in the Marquess of Bute Collection,
Fig. 5 Detail of fig. 1

Fig. 6 Detail of fig. 4

Fig. 7 Hendrick van Steenwyck, Marriage in a church London, National Gallery
Mount Stuart, Rothesay, Isle of Bute. The painting seems to have been bought not by the Prince, but by a burgomaster of Amsterdam, Andries de Graeff. The States of Holland in turn bought it from him in 1660 in order to include it in the 'Dutch Gift' to Charles II. See Denis Mahon, ‘Notes on the ‘Dutch Gift' to Charles II', Burlington Magazine, XCI(1949), 303-5, 304, notes 20-1; 349-50; and his Letter, ibidem, XCII(1950), 238. If Saenredam indeed made the painting with an eye toward Orange consumption, its unusual size and sumptuousness are finally accounted for. But the letter tells us nothing about Saenredam’s thought. Saenredam’s collaboration with Pieter Post throughout the 1630’s (see Gudlaugsson, o.c. [note 19]) is evidence of his contact with the most serious artistic theoreticians in Holland. Post was the protégé of Huygens, and his chief assistant in matters of art and architecture. Huygens’ importance as an architect and designer of iconographic schemes is only now being discovered (see the exciting new ideas of Katharine Fremantle, The Baroque Town Hall of Amsterdam, Utrecht 1959, of G. Kamphuis, ‘Constantijn Huygens, bouwheer van bouwmeester?’, Oud Holland, LXXVII(1962), 151–80, and of Th. H. Lunsingh Scheurleer, ‘Beeldhouwwerk in Huygens’ Haagse huis’, ibidem, 181–205). But it can already be said with assurance that Post was working under the chief theoretician of the new classic architecture, whose chief practitioner was Jacob van Campen, himself a brilliant student of theory. If the insights into their art offered by the writers mentioned may be summarized in a word, we may say that the new architecture of the 1630’s and ’40’s was designed and executed with such strict intellectual precision allied with formal unity of such classic character that the inconsequent decorative elaboration of the previous and subsequent styles, the tenacious monster of Netherlandish architecture, was totally defeated in a handful of outstanding monuments. Post may have been the only artist of his time to be trained to such an integrated intellectual and formal approach to art, an approach that the older men had to discover each for himself. Saenredam deserves inclusion in this group. Not only do the qualities of his painting, as compared with the earlier style of architectural painting, demand explanation in terms of similarly rigorous intellectual purification of his own genre, but in his personal life as well he was associated with the most serious of the new classicists. Practically the only people we know him to have known in the ’30’s and ’40’s, besides Post, are Huygens and van Campen. (The friendly, album amicorum type portrait van Campen did of Saenredam [exhib. cat. Saenredam, 305, nr. 246] is dated 1628; Saenredam’s letter to Huygens, 1648.) Thus, a Saenredam painting commissioned by Huygens and executed with the help of Post that shows peculiarities of content not to be found in most of Saenredam’s work is not unreasonably investigated as the product of all three men, with Huygens suggesting iconological specifications.
The church of Holy Mary, where catechism is told to novices. It matters little, posteriory, nor need you tell the ages that this column stands based upon a springlet in the ground; What matters more is that within these columns [in the church] the Savior himself edifies souls – not stones – from eternal springs.

Huygens' poem offers itself as an alternative inscription to that carved below the Mariakerk relief (see above, 69), and a rival one. Its first distich excuses posteriory from the needless obligation to tell the ages of the local freak, a column standing on a spring; the second distich charges her with a responsibility to consider not what is local and freakish about the Mariakerk, but the universal and truly supernatural. The material edification of the church matters little, its spiritual edification counts for all.

Turning back to the painting, we are not quite so mystified anymore by the devotion paid to the relief. In the solemnity of the couple’s stance the picture is communicating the poem’s disparagement of the inscription’s pettiness and its recommendation of the relief’s catechetical function. Clearly the couple esteem the relief at Huygens’ valuation of it – a sign of the ‘eternal springs’ through which God edifies the church.

The religious commitment Huygens brought to the relief’s study was Calvinist, and Contra-Remonstrant. We can go further in accounting for the image of church worship he coins here by recalling the metaphors with which Calvin had dealt with ‘love’ and ‘edification’ and their ecclesiastical meanings.

... All who are framed together in Christ are the temple of God. There is first required a fitting together, that believers may comprehend and accommodate themselves either to other by mutual communication; otherwise there would not be a building, but a confused mass. The chief symmetry consists in unity of faith. Next follows progress or increase. Those who are not so united in faith and love as to progress in Christ, have a profane building, which has nothing in common with the temple of God.

The architectural metaphor lends itself to extended application. It certainly seems to have been applied in the painting of 1641. The couple’s architectonic stance, their being ‘framed together’, make of them the temple of God. ‘United in faith and love’ as they are, they stand to progress or increase, which is the same, we shall see, as being edified by God: instructed and built up. The other staffing figures in the church, in their random placing and inconsequent behavior, are ‘not ... a building, but a confused mass’. They are not ‘united in faith and love’, and so they ‘have a profane building, which has nothing in common with the temple of God’. Above the head of the Mariakerk loungers, in the painted cloth of honor for a long-gone saint’s statue, can be barely made out the inscription

hier int hui[is],

23. De gedichten van Constantijn Huygens, ed. J. A. Worp, Groningen 1892–99, IV, 146. The poem is one of a series on Utrecht’s sights.

which reads in Calvin’s two senses: ‘here in the house of God’ of the couple; ‘here at home’ of the others.

The overall conceit of Huygens’ poem is only clear now: in saying that teaching is more important than building he was playing on the two senses of Lat. *instruât*: teaches and builds, spiritual and material edification (to take advantage of a similarly ambivalent English word). The painting bypasses the poem’s contrast, and makes of the couple that is being edified a figure of the church fabric and the spiritual church.

The ‘progress in Christ’ that may be accomplished by those ‘united in faith and love’ is described thus by Calvin:25

*...The Church is built up by love: to the edifying of itself. This means that no increase is of use which does not correspond to the whole body. That man is mistaken who desires his own separate growth. For what would it profit a leg or an arm if it grew to an enormous size, or for the mouth to be stretched wider? It would merely be afflicted with a harmful tumour. So if we wish to be considered in Christ, let no man be anything for himself.*

25 Calvin, o.c. (note 24), 185, on Ephesians 4: 16, Christ, ‘from whom the whole body fitly framed and knit together through every joint of the supply, according to the working in the measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love.

(Huygens’ writings on his own house [see Kamphuis, o.c. (note 22)] sound suspiciously like Paul’s and Calvin’s on the church. He seems to regard a successful formal solution as a sort of moral triumph. His architecture may be profitably studied from such a viewpoint.)

Paul’s architectural metaphor here, as usual, is at the service of the cause of ecclesiastical unity, a cause that somehow co-existed in Huygens’ values with his partisanship. If the reader will follow what may seem an impossible digression, the painting’s full range of statements on the subject can be reconstructed.

Huygens’ famous loyalty to the House of Orange extended to matters of religion – one avoids saying matters of conscience – and he stood constantly behind its Contra-Remonstrantism. The question arises: if it was not Taurinus’ Remonstrantism that Huygens esteemed, what made him honor the man by placing in his home the tribute to his memory the Mariakerk painting was? Such a personal matter can hardly be documented in the usual way, and it is in a distinctly experimental spirit that I offer the following solution.

Only chance spared Huygens from having to help drive Taurinus out of Utrecht on July 31, 1618. On June 7 he had left for England with Dudley Carleton (the English ambassador; target of Taurinus’ famous anonymous booklet *Weegschiet*). But his father and his elder brother Maurits did help the Prince root the Remonstrants out of Utrecht, and Constantijn lent a hand after his return (in hope of coming by one of the vacated offices, it seems; see Dagboek van Constantijn Huygens, ed. J. H. W. Unger, Amsterdam 1885, 2–3, 9).

The Huygens’ can hardly have been altogether happy in their work. One of Prince Maurits’ major aims, and one which he succeeded in accomplishing, was to establish the ascendency of Orange in religious affairs by breaking the influence of the old families, then wielded by Uitenbogaert (see H. C. Rogge, *Johannes Wtenbogaert en zijn tijd*, Amsterdam 1875, II, passim). Uitenbogaert was an old friend of Constantijn’s father, and was particularly close to Constantijn all his life (see Constantijn’s autobiography of 1629–31, translated in Dutch from Latin by A. M. Kan, *De jeugd van Constantijn Huygens*, Rotterdam etc. 1946, 30–1). Constantijn wrote to Uitenbogaert early in 1619, sending him for criticism a copy of some poems he published. Uitenbogaert was in exile, condemned by the Synod of Dordrecht. Huygens not only expresses regret over Uitenbogaert’s absence, but speaks with hatred and contempt of his persecutors in Huygens’ own party.

*Pléent à Dieu qu’avec le repos de nos consciences et le bien de cet esat puissies vous encour aujourd’hui être nombré de ce rang [of Huygens’ present teachers], et que les auteurs de ces pétulantes nouvelles [Uitenbogaert’s condemnation] eussent en la main seiche premier que de vous envier à la cordeille de leurs pénitieux desseins. J’en déteste les mauvais principes et en regrette les pitoyables effets ...*

The ‘mauvais principes’ must be those of religious intolerance, Huygens’ hatred of which led him to write his mournful *Concordia discors* in 1617, a plea for peaceful co-existence between Protestants and Catholics.

In his frequent visits to Utrecht in 1616–17, when Uitenbogaert practically lived there, Huygens had every chance to meet Taurinus. Taurinus was Uitenbogaert’s special charge. Uitenbogaert had brought him to Utrecht in 1605, had worked with him for 13 years to further Remonstrantism, Uitenbogaert’s own cause, and was watching the man being hounded to death – on his account, he must have felt. Taurinus’ fight for religious tolerance must at least have made Huygens feel some admiration for him (see H. J. Mispelblom Beyer, *Tolerantie en fanatism*, Arnhem 1948, 78–9; and Joseph Lecler, S. J., *Histoire de la tolérance au siècle de la réforme*, Paris 1955, II, 257–77; the sad fact remains that Huygens, who was willing to co-exist with Catholics, still chased Remonstrants, while Taurinus, claiming for himself the right to be tolerated, would deny it to
self, but let us all be whatever we are for others. This is accomplished by love; and where love does not reign, there is no edification of the Church, but a mere scattering.

Catholics). Taurinus’ book of 1616, Onderlinge verdraagsaamheydt (Mutual tolerance; for title-page, see fig. 10), is one of the earliest books to defend the principle.

Two months after Huygens’ party most intolerantly drove Taurinus out of Utrecht (to find asylum in Catholic Antwerp) the man died of sheer exhaustion just as he reached safety, in the arms of Uitenbogaert. Who knows how deeply this ‘pitiable efft’ of intolerance – partly his own – may have pained Huygens?

In 1641 Huygens and Uitenbogaert were still close. Huygens did not forget to send the ancient man a copy of his book on the organ (see note 34) for criticism. Uitenbogaert’s exceedingly touching reply supports Huygens’ position warmly (Briefwisseling, III, 146, nr. 2646; 150, nr. 2653).

Another memento of Taurinus is discovered if we look closely at the Mariakerk painting of 1641. The joined hands of the couple, displayed so prominently in Saenredam’s painting before Taurinus’ ‘cenotaph’, are a reminder of the emblem – joined hands with an arrow-pierced heart – that served as printer’s mark in Taurinus’ book Mutual tolerance (fig. 10). An emblem of amicitia or concordia, it was no doubt chosen specially for that edition. (Its model may well have been some such coin as the Flemish issue of 1589, joined hands with a heart and crown, CUM PIETATE CONCORDIA; see Gerard van Loon, Beschrijving der Nederlandsche historiepenningen, The Hague 1723, I, 409). Marital and political as well as religious concordia are emblemized thus (certainly no emblemist was ever happier than the one who put joined hands on the reverse of an Albert and Isabella issue of 1600; see van Loon, o.c., I, 544); he was so successful that the coin seems to have been used ever afterwards as a ‘trouw-penning’, a marriage coin; see L. Knappert, ‘De gereformeerde kerk in haren strijd om het wettig huwelijk’, Nederlandisch archief voor kergheschiedenis, n.s. II [1903], 231; he cites ‘Oude tijden, 1669, 168’.

The explanation for the choice of a hand-holding couple as audience to the bull relief offered in the text is based upon the symbolism of ecclesiastical unity, a cause Huygens and Taurinus once shared, though in opposition. Can it be that the iconological motif is accompanied for Huygens by the tragic memory of Taurinus’ death in the cause of ‘unity’? (The painting views the disparate – Romanesque and Gothic – elements of the Mariakerk joined in one structure, a unique viewpoint for Saenredam. Does its choice speak too of peaceful ecclesiastical co-existence?) Is the painting’s theme, dedicated to Taurinus as it were, a belated gesture of concord and amity with the long-dead enemy?

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Thus, the couple’s growth in love dedicated to God is the Church’s growth. The couple’s love as Saenredam shows it and their ‘edification by the Savior himself’ as Huygens tells of it are not independent of each other. Each finds its precondition and its very meaning in the other, so that they cannot be – and have not been – understood, except mutually. We may now read the picture as it was ‘written’: the couple, joined in love and faith, see in the Mariakerk relief a sign not of material edification (the column standing over a spring), but spiritual edification (the church’s – thus, their own – by Christ). The spring whose existence is attested by the relief is not a fountain of water, but the eternal fons, the church’s very foundation.

The Mariakerk couple are not the only staffage figures in Saenredam’s oeuvre to study a symbol of the eternal fons in church. In his ‘Organ Concert in the Haarlem Bawokerk’ of 1636, with staffage by Saenredam, a swordsman stands in the nave, his fist clenched, his step arrested, and his gaze lifted to a majestic image of the risen Christ – the fons resurrectionis itself (fig. 11). The metaphor of the painting is not

26. The couple is likely supposed to be marrying. The second woman is difficult to explain other than as a witness. (Dr. Van Thiel’s suggestion to me that the bull relief may have been Utrecht’s ‘Bocca della verità’ for wedding couples is charming; though I have not found any evidence in support of the hypothesis, it deserves to be kept in mind.) The whole group is borrowed by Pieter Post from a rare type of Flemish marriage picture, e.g. Hendrick van Steenwyck’s tiny panel in London (Nat. Gal. 4040; fig. 7; it may be the effigy of a similar picture Saenredam shows us hung over the entrance to the Mariakerk’s choir in his drawing of the exterior [Utrecht, Mun. Arch. Id 3, 27; exhib. cat. Saenredam, 211, nr. 148; fig. 8]. S. Muller, o. c. (note 2), 199–200, calls the picture a sign-post for the wood-workers’ guild, which used the church’s choir as a showroom since 1619. The two explanations are not mutually exclusive. The figures in that diminutive picture are placed very much as in the Steenwyck. The eventual source of the wedding-couple-seen-from-behind-with-witness may well be Jan van Eyck’s famous mirror-image in the London Arnolfini portrait (fig. 9). Even that difficult detail – the man’s holding the woman’s left hand in his right – is first found there. See Erwin Panofsky, ‘Jan van Eyck’s Arnolfini portrait’, Burlington Magazine, LXIV (1934), 117–27. The Reformers’ demotion of marriage from its sacramental status wrought no change in its practice. Weddings ‘in facie ecclesiae’ were still encouraged as an antidote to secret marriages (see L. Knappert, o. c. (note 25), 228), but any form of marriage agreement between adults still had a claim to validity. In 17th-century Holland marriage enjoyed perhaps greater prestige than ever commanded in any other place or time. The marital bond was regarded more seriously than ever as the very cement of society, state, and church. The marriage in the Mariakerk also recalls the bond between Christ and the church (a sort of ‘Annunciation in the church, humanized’). ‘Christ has appointed the same order between husband and wife as He holds with His church’ (Calvin, o. c. (note 24), 205). Thus, in the Saenredam paintings of the Mariakerk, an emblem of human love is imposed over a symbol of the bond of divine love, the column of the church over the spring of Christ.

(If it is indeed a marriage we see, Saenredam and Huygens may well be exploiting the bull’s main emblematic attribute to the Renaissance, temperance [see I. P. Valerianus, Hieroglyphica, Basle 1550, fol. 22b for a picturesque explanation]. Calvin, Institutions de la religion chrétienne, Geneva 1588, 186: ‘Maintenant si les gens mariés reconnaissent que leur compagnie est benite de Dieu, cela les doit admonester de ne la point contaminer par intemperance dissolve.’)

27. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum 2096; exhib. cat. Saenredam, 82–3, nr. 38. For the staffage attribution see above, note 20. The organ shutters were painted by Frederick Hoon in 1465, as was recently discovered by Dr. Vente and discussed by Prof. Bruyn [M. A. Vente, ‘Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van het vroegere grote orgel in de St. Bavo en zijn bespelers tot 1650’, exhib. cat. Nederlandse orgelpracht, Haarlem 1961, 1–34; J. Bruyn, ‘Frederick Hoon anno 1465’, Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum, XI (1963), 31–8]. The all-important link between the Mariakerk fons and the Haarlem one was pointed out to me by Mrs. Looke Jeimke of the Kunsthistorisch Instituut, Utrecht, to whom I am indebted for many more of this paper’s ideas than it would be possible to acknowledge. Students of the fons, catechumens, are not necessarily candidates for baptism, though that sacrament is never far from mind (see below, note 45; thanks to his readings in patristic literature, Huygens seems to have been very much aware of the relation between the fons vitae and baptism exposed to our generation in the classic article by Paul A. Underwood, ‘The fountain of life in manuscripts of the gospels’, Dumbarton Oaks papers, V (1959), 41–138). As Augustine says, a convert’s thirst for the grace of the holy font’s waters is not quenched by baptism, just as his thirst for Christian instruction is not quenched by any amount of study. Thus, catechumenate may be regarded as the chronic condition of the elect. See Augustine’s commentary on Psalms 41 (42): 1, ‘As the hart panteth after the waters...’; Migne, Pat. Lat., XXXVI, 404. 85
Fig. 11  Pieter Saenredam, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum
Interior of Haarlem Bavoerk seen from north, 1636
that architectural one of the Mariakerk interior. It is exactly the swordsman’s being alone with Christ that distinguishes him. ‘The fellowship of Christ brings even greater security [than just assuring man grace]. For what is to be more desired than that our life dwell with the very fountain of life?’28. All the other figures are in pairs, engaged in intercourse exclusively human. The essence of the distinction is stated clearly and economically in the contrast between the pious swordsman and the dallying couple in the arcade above his head, thus:

The ‘use’ of Christ’s sacrifice, in the words of the Heidelberg Catechism, is that

the old man in us is crucified, interred, and buried with him, nor do evil lust and carnal desire reign in us afterwards29.

The couple behind the ‘Resurrection’ make their peace with the ‘old Adam’; the swordsman joins in fellowship with the ‘new’30.

It has not been sufficiently realized that the Haarlem painting is an occasional

28. Calvin, o.c. (note 24), 346–7, on Colossians, 3 : 3. ‘For ye are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God’. The swordsman’s pose is quite that of Capt. Banning Cock seen from the side, a matter that deserves further investigation. I have no doubt that many more of the details in these paintings than I have deciphered bear significant meaning.

29. De Nederlandsche biechtboeken geschreven, ed. J. N. Bakhuizen van den Brink, Amsterdam 1940, 166:

Q. 43. Quid praeterea capimus commodi ex sacrificio et morte Christi?
R. Quod virtute eius mortis veius noster homo una cum eo crucifixitur, interimittur ac sepultur, ne pravae cupiditates et desideria carnis posthac in nobis regnant, sed non ipsos e hostiam gratitudinis offeramus.

30. This metaphor is one of the oldest and most common in Christian writing. But Calvin’s insistence on it makes of something its own. The ‘new life’ enjoyed by the elect is theirs strictly by virtue of Christ’s resurrection, and that resurrection is the only perfect object of Christian contemplation. The Heidelberg Catechism, o.c. (note 29), 168:

Q. 45. Quid novus prodest resurrectio Christi?
R. ... nos iam quoque eius potentia ad novam vitam excitat.

Calvin, o.c. (note 24), 333, on Colossians 2 : 12. ‘Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead’: ‘We are not only engrafted into Christ’s death’, he says, ‘but we also rise to newness of life’ ... He adds, by faith: ‘for unquestionably it is by this that we receive what is offered to us in baptism. But what faith? That in His efficacy or operation; by which he means that faith is founded upon the power of God. As, however, faith does not wander in a confused and undefined (as they say) contemplation of the divine power, he declares what efficacy it ought to consider — that by which He raised Christ from the dead’.

The Bavokerk painting’s staffage is placed suggestively not only in relation to the organ shutter but to the candelabrum. This piece of church furniture, which often symbolized the heavenly Jerusalem, is guarded in the Bavokerk by a tiny judging angel, holding a sword and scales; he is barely visible in our illustration, but plainly to be seen in the painting. If the angel separates the elect from the damned, the swordsman is not alone: the mother and children in the foreground is also engaged in well. The woman occurs in other paintings with staffage by Saenredam (exhib. cat. Saenredam nrs. 35, 46, 156, 164) and seems to have a definite meaning (perhaps the church herself, ‘mother of believers’?), though this could not be determined. Her predecessor in Antwerp architectural painting was a beggar woman (e.g., Hendrick van Steenwyck’s work of 1615 in London, Nat. Gal. 2204), which she is not. At any rate, she is the only figure in the painting not alluded to in the Huygens description given above in the text.

If the swordsman performs the perfect Christian contemplation, the Mariakerk couple performs the perfect act of Christian devotion. Aside from the sacraments, the only ‘work’ whose efficacy Calvin admits is love, the couple’s own attribute. And they seem as well to be expressly characterized as ‘new men’. The last word of the poem’s title, The church of Holy Mary, where catechism is told to noviti, is a problem. In its old use the word meant ‘new members of a religious order’ clearly not what Huygens had in mind. Since the older Christian ideal of virginity was rejected, marriage was the highest achievement of which man was capable, in this area: the married man ‘imitated God’ better than the celibate, despite appearances (see above, note 26). I believe Huygens meant noviti to be read not as ‘novices’, but ‘new ones’, partakers of vita nova. Speaking of the union of faith, Calvin says

However much the two might differ in their former condition, in Christ they have become one man. And it is not for nothing that he adds, into one new man.

O.C. [note 24], 151, on Ephesians 2 : 15. The Mariakerk couple’s bond is one of faith as well as love. Not only do they become one flesh, but they become one new man. (See also note 25.)
piece. Concerts of this kind were a novelty in the city, begun in 163431. When the town council consented to allow organ concerts, they were taking a stand on an issue that had been brought back into open and heated debate that very year. Gisbertus Voetius, just appointed professor of theology in Utrecht, took as the thesis of one of his first orations 'that the music of organs forms neither part of public worship nor adornment to it'32, and launched a full-scale campaign to silence the church organs. Public organ concerts were a disgrace, and using organs during worship was idolatrous.

Saenredam himself seems to have been an 'Orgelist', as the 'Contra-orgelists' dubbed their opponents. In 1630 he complied with Jacob van Campen's request to provide measured drawings of the organ at Alkmaar's Grote Kerk to help van Campen restore it33. A 'Contra-orgelist' would not have co-operated. There were many Dutchmen who wanted to see adopted the more liberal practice of England, where organ music was an accepted feature of worship.

Their spokesman was Constantijn Huygens. In his book *Use or non-use of the organ in the churches of the United Netherlands* he pleads for the re-introduction of the organ into sacred use and its elimination from secular use in church34. The 'Orgelists' too were offended by the public concerts. But even in the midst of general depravity, Huygens claimed, the organ dealt all holiness to the holy. Keeping an eye on Saenredam's description of the Bavokerk concert, let us read Huygens' word-painting of such an event:

*Evenings at six o'clock, the idle and the busy are summoned to the churches by the majestic sound of organ pipes. The idle know their corners for meeting and behave there, God knows, much more as though they were in a gathering of mockers than in a place of holy contemplation. What goes on there between young blood, under the grace of dark corners,*

31. M. A. Vente, o. c. (note 27), 128 (English summary):

... the Haarlem town-council received on June 21st, 1634 a petition from many 'musicians and amateurs of this said laudable art' asking to be able to hear the organ played if possible daily and not only just before and after the service on Sundays. The council consented.

The relation between the organ-concert controversies and contemporary painting was noticed by W. S. Heckscher, *Rembrandt's 'Anatomy of Dr. Nicolaas Tulp'*, New York 1958, 28 and 127, note 21. This passage and its footnote were the starting point for the present study. Prof. Heckscher's kind help during its preparation compounds my debt to him.

32. Quoted in Frits Noske, 'Rondom het orgeltraject van Constantijn Huygens', *Tijdschrift voor muziekwetenschap*, XVII (1955), 278–300, 296: 'Musicam organicam, nec parum, nec appendicem esse Cultus publici'. Voetius reviewed the controversy (with some failings and distortions of memory) in the appropriate *appendix apologetica* in his *Politica ecclesiastica*, Amsterdam 1663, 1, 592 fl. For an historical survey of the organ question, see N. C. Kist, 'Het kerkelijke orgel-gebruik bijzonder in Nederland', *Archief voor kerkelijke geschiedenis* etc., X (1849), 189–304. Antagonism to organs in church service was not an innovation of the Reformers, nor was it ever made a point of Calvinist dogma. But it did become a typical attitude of right-wing Calvinists, who enjoyed making doctrinal capital of the differences in usage that came to distinguish the church of Geneva from that of Rome.

33. Exhibit cat. Saenredam, 45–6, nr. 9.

34. *Gebruyck van ongebruyck van 't orgel in de kerken der Vereenigde Nederlanden*, Leiden 1641; Amsterdam 1659. The re-edition by D. J. N. van der Pauw [Rotterdam 1937] is cited and quoted here. The *schema* of Huygens' introductory section makes his approach clear:

1. *French and other churches: non-use.*

Later on, he heads a short section:

The best way: churchly use after the English model.

is dreadful to think about. The organ meanwhile speaks of all holiness. Holiness? Yes: the organist, the [attentive] listener, and the organ all feel it equally. The busy walk along, really as if to the exchange, everyone to his own affairs.35

The concurrences between the two descriptions are so striking that we can only conclude they are getting on to the same point. Not only is the image of the risen Christ an object of the swordsmans holy contemplation, but he also participates in ‘orgelistic’ holiness by listening to the organ’s ‘...ZANGEN EN GEESTELYCKE LIEDEBRENKEN’36.

There is every likelihood that Saenredam and Huygens planned this painting together too. Not only is its illustrative example – the organ concert – another of Huygens’ particular concerns, but the iconological structure of the painting parallels that of the Mariakerk view of 1641, the one that hung in Huygens’ house. In both the state of grace of various men is emblemized by their relation to the fons resurrectionis37 within the church, the elect absorbed in its contemplation, the others ignoring it38.

Calvin’s theology of grace and election has here inspired art, as it was seldom able to do, with its vision of the salvation of God’s elect. In Saenredam’s churches, as in Calvin’s world, men are known by their fruits: those alienated from God’s life are capable only of idleness, vanity, lasciviousness, evil talk. The signs of grace are there,

35. O. c. (note 34), 16: ‘Des Avonds om sess uren roept men legede ende onledige ter Kerchen, met een statig gheschall van Orgel-pijpen. De ledige weten haere hoeken van ontmoedinge, ende stelender sich ter neder, God weet, veel meer als ende vergaderinghe der spotteren, dan als ende plaetse van heilige aendacht. Wat daer wijders om gaat, tusschen jonger bloed, onder de gunst van donkere hoeken, ende een ghestadigh geluid, is naer te denchen. Het Orgel onderwisschen spreeckt alle heilighed daeronder: Heilighed? Iae; daer d’Orgellis, de Toe hoorder en ’t Orgel t’ samen evenwel ghevoelens af hebben. D’onledige loopender mede toe; namentich, als tot haer Handel-Borse; yder naer zijn bedrijf.’

36. The inscription on the Haarlem organ, in part (exhib. cat. Saenredam, 83, nr. 38; 107, nr. 66).

It has not yet been pointed out, as far as I know, that the full inscription is very likely from Colossians 3: 16, which reads in the Staten Bible (the Dutch Authorized Version, of 1619): ‘Leert en vermaeet elckander met psalmen en lofsangeren en gheestelycke liedekens (‘teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs’), but which may be phrased in the slightly different Haarlem way in some earlier translation. Organ inscriptions often furnish arguments for Huygens’ side, and he did not miss the chance to use them: ‘on most of our organs it is written in large letters that they are serviceable unto, made and paid for [our new song, our Dutch Te Deum]; why do we belie our own written legends with misuse or non-use?’ (Het staat meest altijd d’Orgelen met groote Letteren geschreven, datse daer toe dienstigh, daer toe gemaecct ende bekostigh zijn: Waerom beliegen wij onze opschriften met misbruyck off ongehebruyck?’). O. c. (note 34), 48.

37. The bull is not an inappropriate image of the fons resurrectionis. The ‘young bull without blemish’ is the perfect sacrifice of Leviticus, and the type of Christ the Savior (J. J. M. Timmers, Symboliek en iconographie der Christelijke kunst, Roermond etc. 1947, 760, § 1765).

The images of the fons exploited by Saenredam have this further in common: each illustrates a triumph of spirit over matter in an organism compounded of the two. The Mariakerk column standing over a spring in the one case; in the other a resurrected Christ in a type of representation that insists on Christ’s defeat of matter while still in the flesh: he rises through the coffin lid, not bothering to open it (see Bruny, o. c. [note 27]; may I add that the city gate behind the head of Christ makes a typological reference to Samson carrying off the gates of Gaza, a comparison that underlines the triumph over matter in the whole ‘Resurrection’).

The head of Goliath hanging from the organ, a common enough appendage (or suspendage) to Dutch organs, not only alludes to the women’s song for David, but in showing off his triumph typologizes the harrowing of hell and, simultaneously, Christ’s defeat over the devil (Timmers, o. c., 299, § 623; 98, § 143), making of itself a fitting footnote to the ‘Resurrection’ above and to Saenredam’s iconology of salvation.

38. In both writings of Huygens we compared with paintings of Saenredam, we find Huygens composmg epigrammatic descriptions apparently done ‘naer het leven’ but actually modelled after prior descriptions by Saenredam. Yet most of Saenredam’s paintings seem devoid of iconological significance; Huygens, therefore, must have planned these paintings (and some others not discussed here) with Saenredam or Saenredam and Post. The exact mode of collaboration remains unknown, and it is still surprising that in both the present cases Saenredam’s paintings precede Huygens’ writings, by five and eight years respectively.
but it is only that minority of elect who are transfixed in their compulsive study, drawn through irresistible grace to manifest their holiness by gazing ever into the waters of their redemption.

The manner in which Saenredam fixes man’s spiritual and temporal locus in these works of art by plotting his relation to other men and to God is the most sublime way in which the 17th century’s technique of ‘ordinance’ can be applied or conceived. The technique as it is used by Saenredam achieves effects similar to Eyckian ‘disguised symbolism’, though the subject is not the symbol but its discovery – an active, as contrasted with the passive Eyckian moment. Thus, the beholder, especially the modern iconologist, must identify himself with Saenredam’s attentive observers: they are performing, from their privileged standpoint, nearly the very analysis laid before the reader in the section here ended.

III. Introduction to the image problem

Part II raises one outstanding question: how did Saenredam and Huygens, both Calvinists, come to assign such positive metaphysical value to images of God? Were they not bound to regard the Bavo- and Mariakerk worshippers as idolators? Apparently not. The abbreviated attempt to account for their attitude that follows here is not intended as a definitive solution, but only as an anticipation of the direction of future research.

We know more about the religious principles of Huygens, at least, than that he was a Calvinist. His book on the organ is partly a work of theology, in which he develops a certain moral standard for the proper use of material objects. While the ‘Contra-orgelists’ regarded the organ as a material tool whose only conceivable effect on man’s spiritual state is degrading, Huygens recognized a pair of possibilities for matter, and for the organ. While agreeing that profane matter can only lower man, Huygens felt that matter dedicated properly to the worship of God could raise him. On these grounds he attacks church concerts outside the service as ferociously as Voetius does, while insisting almost desperately on the instrument’s ‘churchly use’ (see above, note 34).

It is easy to see that this principle invites broader application than only to church organs. In particular, it seems to apply immediately to church decorations as well. The Reformers’ reasons for banishing pictures from church were in effect the same as those for silencing the organ. (The violence of the attacks on images, and the comparative toleration enjoyed by organs – which were commonly destroyed in the southern, seldom in the northern Netherlands during the period of iconoclasm – was a phenomenon

39. ‘... the term “ordinance” stemmed ultimately from the scholastic word ordó, by which Aquinas understood “the grouping of the creaturæ in relation to one another and in turn to God” (“ordo creaturarum ad inuicum, et ordó creaturarum ad Deum”). Heckscher, o.c. (note 31), 16.

40. For Huygens’ Calvinism, see above, note 23. Saenredam registered as a member of the Reformed Church in Haarlem in 1651 (see Swillens, o.c. [note 20], 142)

41. ‘In 1523 Zwingli had excluded all music from the service of worship on the basis of a threefold argument drawn from Scripture: (1) God had not explicitly commanded it; (2) Christ had instructed men to pray individually and in private; and (3) Saint Paul had urged men to pray to God in their hearts. Two years later Zwingli now adduces virtually the same threefold argument for the denial of any pedagogical value to images: (1) ‘God has not told us to teach from pictures, but from His Word’; (2) ‘If teaching with images assists toward a knowledge of faith, then there is no doubt that Christ would have taught us to make images’; and (3) ‘the holy apostles have forbidden us to have idols’’. Charles Garside, Jr., Zwingli and the arts, New Haven etc. 1966, 173. I hope this very
of the popular imagination, nothing more.) If Huygens believed that organs can yet be used without offense to Calvin’s principles, may he not have believed the same of images? It seems he did. Though the vehemence of the debate over music promised that any discussion of images would be bloody, and he forebore defending them, he does admit his theoretical responsibility:

Where have we now come? And where not? I say to myself, if one really wants to avoid all adornment of God’s word [see note 41], should one not find the same offense [as in concerts of secular music in church] in the gilt tables suffered to stand on the columns and walls of our churches where the Lord’s commandments and other sayings are executed with fancy curlicues? Is the holy not displayed there together with the profane? And is the pleasure of our eyes not as seductive as that of our ears? This is not beside the point, nor is it unworthy of consideration. But, as I said elsewhere, one abuse cannot cleanse the other: and now we’re talking about the ears.

The implication is clear. Church decoration should be subjected to the same sort of purification as Huygens proposes for church music: it should be brought to the highest standard of spirituality of which it is capable, not relegated to the lowest. Notice that it is not figural representation that Huygens condemned, though such was to be found in the Dutch churches. It is unnecessary elaboration he abhors, taking license with scriptural precepts, using a holy occasion as a pretext for profane display. Art genuinely dedicated to edifying ends can contain no offense, to Huygens.

The Mariakerk painting of 1641 illustrates the proper and improper use of art in church, following Huygens’ principle. There are two forms of decoration: elaborate

important book, which, to my regret, reached me only late in the preparation of this paper, will inspire more research of its own high quality on the Reformation and art.

42. Huygens manages to find himself in agreement with Calvin. When Calvin inveighs against ‘the dead organ’, Huygens says ‘and so we agree, for I fight for the living’, o.c. (note 34), 29.


Saenredam’s 1644 view in the Utrecht Buurkerk comes to mind at once (London, Nat. Gal. 1806; fig. 12). Exactly such a decorative plaque of the Law appears there along with an escutcheon and a mourning tablet, which Huygens deplores in the section ‘elsewhere’, 12–13. Below it is one of the famous ‘children’s drawings’, that of the vier heemskinderen, the sons of Aymon on the magic horse Bayard (Maclaren, l.c. [note 2]; exhib. cat. Saenredam, 185–6, nr. 127). One may conjecture that an example of a similar contrast meets us here: that between the sanctimonious and the simple. In his book, Huygens quotes ‘anthropological’ apologies for music from Boethius (‘one sees that even the youngest children are pleased by sweet song’, 32), Aristotle, and others. Perhaps the children’s drawings are an ‘anthropological’ apology for church art. No one would condemn the child’s innocent devotion of his talents to representational art in church. Why should the equally innocent art of an adult be so condemned? Whenever Saenredam includes children’s drawings in his paintings, his signature stands by them. Does he mean to tell us something about the spirit in which his works are created? The Turks strolling in the background underscore the issue: iconoclastic disdain for images, they remind us, is the mark of the Moslem, a being alienated from God. Calvin: ‘the Church is like a city of which all believers are the inhabitants, joined with each other by a mutual kinship; but unbelievers are foreigners’ (o.c. [note 24], 358, on Colossians 4: 5).

Whether or not a picture is overtly ‘religious’ it may be executed with intent to praise God. Portraiture in Zwiggl’s Zurich was considered the representation ‘not of saints but of real men and women, “living images made by God and not by the hands of men”’; Garside, o.c. (note 41), 182, quoting from Leo Jud, Katechismen. Churches, according to Huygens, quoting Bernard, were holy too, by virtue of God’s dwelling in us and our dwelling in them: ‘Yes, holiness dwells in... these stones, because your bodies do’ (o.c. (note 34), 14). Saenredam’s paintings of churches, with and without staffage and children’s drawings, may be viewed with greater insight with such a thought in mind.

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Fig. 12  Pieter Saenredam, Intermediate of Utrecht Buurkerk seen from north, 1644

London, National Gallery
imitation tapestries, cloths of honor for statues of saints long ago destroyed as idols (a judgment Huygens doubtless shared) and the simple painted relief of a bull. That the unaffected relief merits religious devotion as a ‘solemn symbol of the grace of God’ we see in the picture; it is only the fancy decorations Huygens condemns.

The iconoclastic desecrations of the 16th century were a shock from which the Netherlands did not recover for a long time. In the middle of the 17th century we find Constantijn Huygens probing toward a new standard for dignified religious art. And Pieter Saenredam, though he joined only rarely with Huygens to fashion outright declarations of art’s instrumentality in man’s relation with God, devoted his life’s work to laying before our eyes ‘the holiness in stones’.

44. The cloths of honor were certainly not so well-preserved in 1636 as Saenredam shows them here. His drawings of the Mariakerk, all done in his single Utrecht drawing campaign of 1636, give other situations, some including the sculptured canopies of the destroyed images.

45. Calvin on Ephesians 5: 32, ‘Baptism and the Lord’s Supper [only] are appointed as solemn symbols of the grace of God, to declare and represent something spiritual’; o.c. (note 24), 210. It is no accident, then, that the fons, the source of the waters of baptism, was seized upon by Huygens and Saenredam as the image worthy of devotion. (John of Damascus, too, in his famous defense of Christian images, makes a special case out for the fons: ‘I do venerate that residue of matter that contributes to my salvation’… was Calvary not material?… It is holy, I say, that monument, that spring of our resurrection’ [‘fons resurrectionis’; Opera omnia, Paris 1712, I. 313-4].) Not only does it represent the most favorable possible spirit-matter ratio in the earthly mixture, but it was created by God exactly to ‘represent something spiritual.’ Thus, it is not the sacraments themselves, but each man’s ability to grasp their significance (as we see in the paintings) that saves. The sacraments present the grace of God both to the good and to the bad; nor do they deceive in promising the grace of the Holy Spirit; believers receive what is offered. By rejecting it, the ungodly render the offer unprofitable to themselves, but they cannot destroy the faithfulness of God and the true meaning of the sacrament’: Calvin, o.c. (note 24), 68-9, on Galatians 3: 27, ‘For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ’.

Of course, Calvin was speaking of baptism as an image. Images of baptism are at one further remove (idem for the Zurich portraits of note 43), though a psychologically, if not theologically, negligible one. Voetius felt that the organ issue was dangerous, that it tempted men like Huygens to take positions, in all theological naïveté, which tended to undermine the basis of Calvinism. Perhaps he was right. Despite his proud anti-Catholicism, Huygens’ love for art seemed to be leading him to a more daring compromise on the ‘dignity of matter’ than he would have cared to admit to himself. His friend René Descartes, congratulating him on the organ book (Descartes’ letter was, understandably, not among those solicited judgments Huygens published in Response prudentum… Leiden 1641), treated the book’s subject as if it were a delightfully clever pretext to seduce Calvinists toward compromise with Rome. With Descartes for a friend, Huygens did not need Voetius for an enemy. Briefwisseling, III, 95, nr. 2590: ‘… pour vos raisons, je puis dire qu’elles sont si fortes et si bien choisies, que vous persuadez entièrement au lecteur tout ce que vous avez téémonié vouloir prouver; ce que j’avoue icy avec moins de scrupule, à cause que je n’y ay rien remarqué qui ne s’accorde avec nostre Eglise. Et pour les épithètes que vous nous donnez cependant en divers endroits, je ne croy pas que nous devions nous en offenser davantage qu’un serviteur s’offense, quand sa maîtresse l’appelle schelm, pour se vanger d’un baiser qu’il luy a pris, ou plustost pour couvrir la petite honte qu’elle a de le luy avoir octroyé. Il est vray que ce baiser n’avance gueres, et je voudrois qu’en nous disant de telles injures, vous eussiez aussi bien deduit tous les points qui pourroient servir à rejoindre Geneve avec Rome. Mais pour ce que l’orgue est l’instrument le plus propre de tout pour commencer de bons accords, permettez à mon zele de dire icy omen accipio, sur ce que vous l’avez choisie pour sujet’.

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