

Noordnederlandse kunst 1525 - 1580

RIJKS MUSEUM  
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# *Kunst*

## voor de beeldenstorm

cataloogus

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Staatsuitgeverij  
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1986



## Art and iconoclasm, 1525-1580 The case of the Northern Netherlands

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### 1 Theory: the question of images

By 1525 the main lines of the argument about images that was to torment Europe for the rest of the century were already firmly drawn. The consequences of the argument had their epicentre in the Netherlands; but the rumblings and tremors would be felt in areas that covered a vast radius, from the northernmost reaches of Scandinavia to the straits of Gibraltar and Messina, from the British isles in the West to Magyar Hungary and onward into the Balkans in the East.<sup>1</sup> Almost everyone now acknowledges that if there was any single phenomenon that may be said to mark the commencement of the Revolt of the Netherlands, it was the great iconoclastic events of August, September and October 1566.<sup>2</sup> But it is all too often forgotten that the real target of these events – however they may be explained in terms of social, religious and economic motives – were images: paintings, sculptures, stained glass, prints; and that in the very period covered by this exhibition (but especially in the second and third quarters of 1566) the long-standing arguments about the use and validity of images, both in the churches and outside them, had come to a sudden and threatening head. This is the critical background to the present exhibition, along with a further equally revealing but in fact more painful issue: What actually happened to the images in 1566 and in the sporadic outbursts of iconoclasm in the 1570s, and why were they attacked? From the very beginning of the century until his death in 1534, Erasmus expressed some of the most pertinent aspects of the problem of the use of both secular and sacred imagery. Like many others, he criticized provocative imagery and nudity in art; he objected to drunken or riotous behaviour in the presence of images (especially on saints' days and other religious festivals);<sup>3</sup> he was gravely concerned about the exploitation of paintings and sculptures for gain (in the same way that holy relics were exploited); and he had deep reservations about the way in which images were allowed to come in the way of more direct relations between man and God. It was preferable to pray to him and to implore him without the mediation of images, relics, and saints in general.<sup>4</sup> In these respects Erasmus was no different from many other Christian humanists: he had no real wish to break with Catholicism, though he saw the abuses of the established Church and of its ministers all too clearly. But his criticism was firmer in its overall moral stance while at the same time more benign and genial. It was more learned, better articulated and more widely read – despite the persistent but unsuccessful attempts to suppress his works. More serious and substantive allegations than these, however, were made by the three great reformers, as well as by a host of minor and usually more virulent writers, like Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt in Wittenberg and Ludwig Hätzer, the Mennonite from Zurich.<sup>5</sup> The basic arguments against images – especially religious images – were old. They dated to the days of early

Christianity (a fact which appealed to the Reformers of the sixteenth century), but they were rehearsed in an infinitude of variations throughout the great Byzantine iconoclastic controversy of the eighth and ninth centuries.<sup>6</sup> The arguments against images included the notion that since God and Christ were divine and uncircumscribable, it was impossible – or sacrilegious – to attempt to represent them in material and circumscribed form; that the very materiality of the image led to a variety of forms of concupiscence of the senses; that devotion to images in some way obstructed real and direct devotion to saints; that one was dangerously liable to confuse image with prototype, to venerate the image itself, rather than what it represented; that it was better to have the living image of Christ and his saints in one's mind and heart than to make dead images of them; and so on.<sup>7</sup> The most telling arguments in their favour, in the early days, were these: one could have images precisely because of the incarnation of Christ. The fact that he was made incarnate enabled one to make real images of him. The honour paid to an image referred directly back to its prototype,<sup>8</sup> and finally – as Gregory the Great was to put it a little later – images were the books of the illiterate.<sup>9</sup> Those who could not read would learn the scriptures and the mysteries of the faith by seeing them represented around them. It would be hard to overrate the historical significance of this particular argument. Then, in the middle ages, the three-fold notion that images served to instruct, edify and strengthen the memory was emphasized and elaborated;<sup>10</sup> so was the ultimately platonic idea that the material sign could help the ordinary human mind to ascend to the spiritual.<sup>11</sup> But at the same time the feeling grew that images could be abused. Not only were they improperly used for financial gain, they also proliferated excessively, rather like relics. Too much money was spent on paintings and sculptures rather than investing in the real images of God, the living poor.<sup>12</sup> It was just these arguments, with additions, refinements and satirical adornments that were to be repeated over and over again throughout the sixteenth century, from the highest to the lowest levels, in the great princely and royal courts and in the humblest sermons. To us, many of these arguments may seem technical and theological, but it is not hard to imagine their crucial relevance in an age when criticism of the malpractices of the church led swiftly to much more fundamental christological and ontological issues. The practical side of these momentous questions was embodied in the church's use of religious imagery – which ranged so visibly from sumptuous adornment to the cheaply propagandistic, from unimaginably splendid altarpieces to scruffy broadsheets. And the issues came to a head in the periodic outbursts of iconoclasm, from isolated acts in the first two decades of the sixteenth century to the great German and Swiss movements of the twenties and thirties, the English and Scottish one of the forties, the occasional French ones of the fifties and early sixties, and the



culminating cataclysm of the Netherlandish experiences of 1566. Of all the great reformers, Luther was the most benign on the subject of images. He was horrified by the outbreak on iconoclasm instigated by his follower Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt in Wittenberg in 1522. For Luther, the key text from the Decalogue 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth' was to be understood as part of the first commandment, and was to be taken specifically in conjunction with the insistence that 'Thou shalt have no other God before me'. But in his catechetical writings, and in subsequent Lutheran catechisms the injunction on graven images was, in fact, omitted. Whereas for men like Karlstadt, the first commandment implied that one should have no images in churches (or, for that matter, in private houses), Luther's primary concern was with the abuse of religious imagery. He saw the positive use of illustration both in biblical and in other texts, as a means of instructing the faithful; he was tolerant of religious imagery in churches (although he preferred narrative subjects to devotional ones), and he does not seem to have worried too much about secular forms of imagery, whether public or private.<sup>13</sup>

What he did object to was the excessive money spent on adorning churches, and the motives for doing so – such as the assumption that the more expensive the material image, the higher the spiritual reward. This kind of implicit belief roused the full force of Luther's ire; it was self-evidently better to spend one's money on clothing the poor.<sup>14</sup> From his earliest writings on, Luther returned to these issues, which one might generally subsume under the problem of the relationship between the proper use of images and their abuse. The latter was tantamount to idolatry. In addition to the issues noted above, which he began to adumbrate in 1514–15, Luther soon made it clear that everyday Christian practice had come to lay too much emphasis on the cult of saints at the expense of man's direct relationship with God. This relationship, between image worship and the cult of saints, would recur with increasing intensity throughout the century. Images, as he repeatedly reminded his readers, were in the end no more than mere wood and stone. The fullest discussion of images comes in the tract *Wider die himmlischen Propheten von Bildern und Sakramenten* (*Against the heavenly Prophets in the matter of Images and Sacraments*) of 1524–25, where Luther takes his clearest stance on the use of images for the purposes of remembrance and better understanding of the scriptures, and where he insists that if there were to be any iconoclasm, it had better be carried out in an orderly fashion, and by order of the proper authorities.<sup>15</sup> The issue recurred in the most practical sense with the events of 1566 in the Netherlands. In 1525, the very year of the completion of the *Heavenly Prophets*, the three 'Godless Painters' of Nurnberg – Georg Pencz and Barthel and Sebald Beham – were expelled from the town for their radical Protestant sympathies, thus providing us with one of the earliest instances of the espousal by artists of views which at first sight might seem wholly antithetical to their calling.<sup>16</sup> In the same year Ludwig Hatzler published his radical and apparently very popular booklet against images entitled *Ein Urtheil Gottes... wie man sich mit allen gotzen und bildnissen halten soll*,<sup>17</sup> isolated outbreaks of iconoclasm

took place throughout the German-speaking countries; and following the final removal of images from Zurich churches in the previous year, Huldrych Zwingli gave his views on images most fully in *Ein Antwort, Valentin Compar gegeben* (Compar's initial critique of Zwingli's views is unfortunately now lost). The great Swiss reformer was far less sanguine about images than Luther, and his views about them were perhaps to be most influential of all for the future development of the reformation. For him, as for the other Swiss reformers, the Decalogue comprised the full biblical text, and thus included the whole of the injunction against graven images.

But in the *Answer to Valentin Compar*, Zwingli assembled his views into a massive indictment against representational art. Men were not supposed either to worship or to serve images. There were far too many of them in churches and in private places. They led directly to idolatry. Instead of worshipping God, men worshipped strange gods, Abgotter. Images were external, material phenomena, leading to false belief, and therefore were no more than idols, Gotzen. They were not to be tolerated, unless they were strictly confined to the narrative representation of historical events. In *Eine kurze christliche Einleitung* (*A brief Christian Introduction*), Zwingli had said that these were allowed outside churches, so long as they did not give rise to reverence; but for ecclesiastical, liturgical, and any kind of spiritual purpose they were entirely irrelevant, if not downright idolatrous. When the images were finally removed from the churches of Zurich, Zwingli rejoiced in the beauty of their whiteness.<sup>18</sup>

The views of Luther and Zwingli were taken up and modified by a host of other reformed writers including Melancthon, Bugenhagen, Oecolampadius, and Bullinger, to say nothing of the lesser minds like Karlstadt, Hatzler, Thomas Muntzer, Leo Jud and any number of minor figures. There is no space to go into the refinements – or the vulgarities – they brought to bear on the great debate about images, but it is worth recalling them simply as further indices of the widespread dissemination, from one corner of Europe to the other, of the kinds of views we have been outlining. Whether published in book or in pamphlet form, whether heard in sermons in the greatest churches, in barns, or in the open air, few people, regardless of class, could have escaped them; so that everyone had some sense of the image question, and no one would have been left untouched by the grand debate about their institutional, spiritual, economic or even social status. The last of the great reformers to write extensively about images was Calvin. His key contribution to the debate may well lie in his insistence that the injunction against graven images in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 was not only an integral part of the Decalogue (contrary to Catholic and early Lutheran thought) but constituted the substance of the second commandment. For Calvin there was no doubt about the biblical injunction against graven images; and it remained universally valid.<sup>19</sup> Calvin was also more scathing and more satirical about the uses and abuses of images, particularly religious ones. He knew how to poke fun at the standard Catholic justifications of religious imagery, including the way in which early and only apparently authentic documents and councils were used to bolster the antiquity of the use of pictured images in churches. The proliferation of images was as meretricious as

the absurd multiplication of relics, and in some cases the problem was identical: he challenged his readers to consider how many paintings they knew to have been reputedly painted by St. Luke, and pointed to devotions to images of clearly apocryphal saints. How could images which were so misleading serve as books of the illiterate? Or so unbecoming? After all, prostitutes in their bordellos were often more decently attired than images of the Virgin in the temples of the Papists. Christian images-worship had become no better than pagan image worship. Men and women could only be misled by the sensual materiality of images; better to hear and to attend to the pure word of God.<sup>20</sup> These kinds of views were not only disseminated throughout the Netherlands by the early 1560s, they were also reproduced and modified – either substantially or only very slightly – in any number of treatises and sermons. I have concentrated on them because it was precisely these writers who informed and stimulated all the others. But let us examine the Netherlandish situation, especially the North Netherlandish situation, at closer quarters. For the whole period we have been examining the problem of images was not only topical but crucial: by the time resentment against the Spanish Catholic regime came to a boiling-point in the early 1560s, the image question had reached its most critical stage too. It provided every one of those travelling preachers<sup>21</sup> who purveyed the doctrines of Luther, Zwingli or Calvin in one form or another with a target that may have been theoretical and theological at its core but was all too visible and mutely assailable in every corner of the Netherlands. If Erasmus's criticism of the use of images grew out of his characteristically keen observation of their misuse, and of people's folly in investing too much in them both spiritually and economically, there were other writers in the Netherlands whose criticism were considerably more severe and whose arguments agreed with the main lines of Reformed thought. In the course of the 1520s, the anonymous author of pamphlet *Van den Propheet Baruch* took the apocryphal prophet Baruch's attacks on the idolatry of the Babylonians as the pretext for a sustained and passionate attack on what he saw as the idolatry of his own times. He did not mince his words, transforming a basically Lutheran outlook into something much more vehement: 'Ende en is niet een groote sotheyt, dat yemant meyndt dat die heylighen gheerne souden hebben dat men haer beelden besocht, die houte ende steenen zijn.... Daer wort nu alsoo groote affgoderije mede ghedaen, als oyt metten afgoden der Heydenen.... Ende nu si doot zijn, soo besoectmense, soo behangtmense met silver gout ende fluweel, ende costelicken cleynodien, als si dies niet en behoeven. Ende die ander levende arme heylighen, diet behoeven, die laetmen naect ende bloot in hongher ende dorst gaen'.<sup>22</sup> ('Is it not great folly that someone should suppose that the saints would be pleased to have their images visited, that are only wood and stone.... Even greater idolatry is now committed than ever was the case with the idols of the Heathen.... And now that the saints are dead we visit them, and adorn them with silver, gold and velvet and precious jewels – even though they do not need them. It is the other poor living saints who need them, and whom we allow to go naked, hungry and thirsty....'). Such blunt versions of well-known views would be repeated ad infinitum from one side of the Netherlands to the other. We find them in the Dutch



translation of Balthasar Friberger's tract on the subject of 1524,<sup>23</sup> in the Lutheran *Refutacie vant Salve Regina* of the same year<sup>24</sup>, and in the straightforward Zwinglianism of the well known Hague schoolmaster and writer, Willem Grapheus. In seeking consolation from the wooden statues of saints, Grapheus claimed, 'wl overtreden dat eerste gebot gods, dat ons verblet alle vreemde Goden, ende dat we ooc geen gelickenissen noch beelden maken en solden' ('we break God's first commandment that forbids all strange Gods and that we should not make any likenesses or images').<sup>25</sup> Much more violent notions are expressed in a Calvinist tract first published in Norwich in 1550: in commenting on the daily superstition of image-worship, the author sarcastically observes that 'want die beelden so langhe als sy inde beeltsnijders winkel zijn, so en connen sy geen miraculen doen, tot der tijt toe datse dese fijne ghesellen ghebrocht hebben in haer hoerachtiche kercke, ende die cruyden dewijie si zijn onder de goutsmitshanden, so en is daer gheen heillcheyt in, maer alse dese ypocriten die eens gevinghert hebben, dan moeten die bonet daer voor af nemen ende die knien buyyghen, ende sy gaen daer achter bleetende ende crijschende achter haer valsche goden'.<sup>26</sup> ('as long as images remain in the sculptor's workshop they cannot do any miracles, until the time that these fine fellows have brought them into the whorish church; the same applies to the crucifixes in the goldsmiths shop, when they have no holiness in them; but as soon as these hypocrites finger them, they take off their bonnets and kneel and bow before them, and they go bleating and screaming after their false gods'). In his *Apologia of vant schouwender afgoderije* of about 1545, the Anabaptist Dirk Philipsz, attacked the service of idolatrous images by drawing parallels from the Old Testament, such as the destruction of idols by Josiah and Elijah.<sup>27</sup> Parallels like these were frequently to be drawn, from now on until well after the iconoclasm of 1566, and especially those which demonstrated – as, for example, the Josiah story was taken to do – the rightfulness of the removal of images by official and lawful authorities.<sup>28</sup> These views were commonplace. If one could not read them, one could be sure to hear them in the sermons of the ministers. If the attitudes of Angelus Merula, the attractively broad-minded priest from Heenvliet are only known from his *Verantwoording* of 1553 (images could serve as the 'libri idiotarum', but the money spent on them was better spent on the poor),<sup>29</sup> then we also know that the Dordrecht priest Marinus Everswaert was obliged to renounce before his former parishioners the view 'dat de beelden der Heiligen anders niets doen dan de kerken versieren, gelijk tin koper, metaal of ander hulstraad het huis versiert' ('that the statues of the saints do nothing but decorate the churches just as tin, copper, metal, and other household materials decorate the house').<sup>30</sup> The next year Cornelis van der Heyden published his *Corte Instrukce ende Onderwijs* in which he expressed views almost as moderate as those of Merula; his concern, like that of Erasmus, was less with their use than with their abuse. One should neither misbehave like Turks, heathen and heathen when carrying them in procession, nor expect too much from them in times of danger, nor adore them excessively or ostentatiously.<sup>31</sup> The issue was clearly a live one: but as the Norwich pamphlet suggests, it threatened at any point to

become dangerously provocative. In the same year as the appearance of the *Corte Instrukce* (in 1554), Jan Gerritsz. Verstege (= Johannes Anastasius Veluanus), the erstwhile pastor of Garderen, published the most radical and sustained attack on images yet, in the book entitled *Der Leken Wechwyser*.<sup>32</sup> Hardly any time at all elapsed before it was being eagerly bought in Harderwijk; the next year it was translated from the Gelders dialect into Dutch, and new editions would appear with considerable frequency between 1591 and 1632.<sup>33</sup> But it is of course the early editions which interest us here. The work could not have been more scathing in its condemnation of all images, and in the programmatic advocacy of their removal. People who by then may have been contemplating the purification of churches to make them suitable for Protestant worship of one form or another would have found their manifesto in a work like this; and the unequivocal expression of hostility to the Catholic use of images would have given them courage, support and – in all likelihood – a further pretext for the destruction of images. In the course of his book, Verstege was unsparing in his attack both on the cult of saints and the use of image in perpetuating it. Not a single early church father, he maintained (wrongly), advocated that saints be honoured in this way; and he caustically observed that the Gregorian dictum that paintings were the books of the illiterate was invalid, since it was nowhere to be found in scripture. But the main recommendation regarding images in the *Leken Wechwyser* were avowedly 'evangelical' and wholly pragmatic: 'Wair dat gepredickte evangell nyt helpt, dar sullen gene beelden helpen. 2 War dat evangeli angenomen & gelovet wurt, dar zynt oick gene beelden nodich. 3 War dat evangeli nyt gepredickte wurt, dair zynt sie gantz scadellicke affgoden. 4 War die beelden affgoden zynt, dar sal men se uyt den Tempelen werpen ende verbranden. 5 Synt sie noch geen affgoden, nochtannich ist nut, dat sie al uyt gewerpen unde verbrandt werden, want sie kunnen ons nimmer baten, mar gering elendich schaden under grote affgoden werden, als mennichmal is befonden in seer iamerlycke manyren'.<sup>34</sup> (Where the preaching of the Gospel does not help, no images will help either. Where the Gospel is accepted and believed, no images are necessary. Where the Gospel is not preached, they are pernicious idols. Where images are idols, they should be thrown out of the temples and burnt. Even if they are not idols, it is right to throw them out and burn them, since they can never help us and only wreak pernicious damage and become great idols, as has often happened in very bad ways.) One could hardly imagine a better rallying-cry for all those who wished to purify the churches and make them fit for the preaching of God's word. Verstege put the sentiment with rather disingenuous fervour: 'Dit alles diep angemerckt, is na myn kleyne verstant nyt wel muelgelyck, dat rechte evangellsche herten, in den gereformierden Tempelen, noch aide grove gotzen laten blyven, off nyuwen laten maken muegen'.<sup>35</sup> (Taking all this deeply into consideration, it just does not seem possible to my limited understanding that truly evangelical hearts could allow all the gross idols to stay or have new ones made'). The best thing would be to limit the decoration of churches to the writing of edifying proverbs on the walls (in large letters), or to leave them completely white.<sup>36</sup> Everything else was popish, Babylonian abuse. If these were the

notions which people were hearing from local pastors, from travelling preachers or buying in pamphlet form, they could not have missed them in their other cultural manifestation either. Amongst the most well-known mockers of the abuse of images within the Catholic Church (usually in the form of a sniping anti-clericalism) were the 'rederijkers', whose plays and presentations abounded with negative references to images. Sometimes the sentiments they expressed were wholly Erasmian, but as the century wore on, they became more direct and more scathing – despite the frequent placards, from the thirties on, which were issued in an attempt to curb their outspokenness.<sup>37</sup> All across the Low Countries, but especially in the South, they performed plays and recited poetry, often on grand popular occasions like the 'Landjuweelen' in Ghent in 1539 and in Antwerp in 1561.<sup>38</sup> Already in 1533 an Amsterdam Chamber of Rhetoricians was sentenced to make a Roman pilgrimage for having produced a play on the subject of Daniel and Bel (Daniel 14:2-21), with its trenchant reference to the destruction of idolatrous pagan images, and – perhaps more significantly at that time – to the killing of the priests of Bel, in the form of the mockery of contemporary clergy.<sup>39</sup> Another Amsterdam play, the *Tafelspel van Drij Personagien* of 1557, insisted that the greatest of all sins was idolatry and the God put a curse on all those who made likenesses,<sup>40</sup> while in the following year the image question was discussed in a dialogue between 'Godlyke Wijse' ['Godly Sage'] and 'Weereltsche Gheleerde' ['Worldly Scholar'].<sup>41</sup> The former maintained that the image worshippers took away the honour rightly due to God alone by praying to blocks of gold, wood, silver, and stone; the latter rebuffed him by recalling the Gregorian argument and by claiming that the veneration of images with candles and so on were merely outward signs; 'Godly Sage' accused 'Worldly Scholar' and his ilk of deceiving the world into blatant idolatry.<sup>42</sup> So much for the Catholic and even the Erasmian stances.... In 1562, 1564 and 1565, in the crucial years just before iconoclasm, the Antwerp Chamber of Rhetoricians known as the 'Violieren' produced an Apostle play by its subsequently well-known dean, Willem van Haecht. The play gives us some sense of the climate of cultural disapprobation in which all art of the Netherlands is to be placed in these years. It opens with a painter still busy painting the set. A Calvinist appears, and petulantly tells him that he is wasting his time making pictures forbidden by God; they were all idols.<sup>43</sup> The painter responds by saying that the Calvinist had misunderstood the prohibition: it pertained only to the adoration of images, and not to their use as decoration. If they were adored or worshipped he would rather they were destroyed. But God must have given him his talents for some purpose, and there were always the cases of Bazaleel and Oholiab, the Cherubim on the Ark, and the Brazen Serpent as precedents for divinely sanctioned artistic activity.<sup>44</sup> There were worse forms of idolatry than images, such as greed. All this, as van Haecht himself acknowledged, was consistent with the Lutheran attitude on images; and he made his own position on the matter clear when he named his Calvinist protagonist – whose position on the subject was somewhat overdrawn – 'Vernuft en Blind' ('ingenious and Blind').<sup>45</sup> We may pause for a moment to consider at least one of the most significant implications of van Haecht's play. The guilds most closely associated with the Cham-



bers of Rhetoric were those of the Painters, and here, as in several other of their plays, the very validity of their calling and their production were being substantively questioned if not actually mocked. In van Haecht's own piece a painter is actually at the centre of the discussion. Although he defends his calling against the more radical iconoclastic stance, it is worth nothing that he admits (or is forced by the circumstances to admit) that if his productions were worshipped he would rather destroy them.<sup>46</sup> All this in a play that was produced three times in the four years before the great outbreak of iconoclasm in 1566 that was to destroy the works of so many painters and undermine the possibilities of patronage for many years to come. What insecurity about their calling – at the very least – such attitudes must have generated! It is against this broad cultural background – and I have omitted vernacular poetry and songs such as the Anabaptist *Liedeken van Vrage ende Antwoort* of 1556,<sup>47</sup> and *Het blyckt nu alle daghen* of 1560,<sup>48</sup> as well as an Amsterdam song published in that year and again in 1582,<sup>49</sup> to say nothing of the many references to images in the 'geuzenliederen'<sup>50</sup> – that we must begin considering the increasing numbers of actual outbreaks of iconoclasm. Initially they were isolated instances, but evidence that they were more than a passing problem comes from very early on in the period.

On 29 April 1522, an anti-heretical edict included a severe injunction against the destruction or removal of images and portraits in honour and memory of God, the Virgin and the Saints.<sup>51</sup> That was the year of the destruction of images in Wittenberg, and iconoclasm soon became a widespread phenomenon throughout Germany. News of such events travelled swiftly to the Netherlands, through preachers, pamphlets, tracts and travellers. If there was any single group whose active hostility to images was clear from an early date it was the Anabaptists. The sight of an image of the Virgin being carried in procession in Delft was too much for David Jorisz. on Ascension Day 1528, who disrupted the solemnity of the occasion by shouting abuse at all involved, even the priests.<sup>52</sup> Six years later his co-religionists tried to assume control of Amsterdam, while in that year Jan Matthijs of Haarlem and Jan van Leiden supervised the violent and sustained attack on images in the millenaristic community they set up in Munster, across the border in Germany.<sup>53</sup> Meanwhile iconoclasm was spreading still further into Germany, in Switzerland, in Bohemia and was soon to take on semi-legalized form in England and Scotland. By the 1550s and early 1560s the problem had become acute in France as well, and the official authorities of the Catholic Church realized they could no longer evade the core of the problem. From Luther's famous opponent Johannes Eck on, many Catholic theologians and writers – and even some poets, like the Flemish poetess Anna Bijns – had polemicized against the Protestant attitudes to images, but now the time had come to formulate an official position.<sup>54</sup> If the Church was to do anything at all about the continued assault – both polemical and real – against images, then it had to have an impregnable position on which to fall back (that it failed ultimately to do so is not part of our story). The need for that position must have been made all the more apparent not only by recent events in France, but also by the rapid development of Protestant theological positions on the matter, such as

the brilliantly concise one in the Heidelberg Catechism of 1562:  
 'XCVI Vraghe. Wat heyscht God in tweede ghebodt? Antwoorde. Dat wy God in gheenderley wijse afbeelden noch op gheen ander wijse vereeren dan hij in sijn Woordt bevolen heeft.  
 XCVII Vraghe. Machmen dan ganschelick gheen beelden maken? Antwoorde. God en en mach in geenderley wijse afgebeeldet werden. Maer de creaturen, al ist dat die connen afgebeeldet werden, soo verbiedt doch God haer beeldenisse te maken ende te hebben, on die te vereeren oft God daerdoor te dienen.  
 XCVIII Vraghe. Mer soudemen de beelden inden kercken, als boecken der leecken niet moghen lijdten? Antwoorde. Neent; want wy en moet niet wijser zijn dan Godt, dewelcke sijne Christenen niet door stomme beelden, maer door de levendighe verkon dinghe sijns woordt wil onderwesen hebben.'<sup>55</sup>  
 ('Question 96: What does God require in the second commandment? That we in nowise make any image of God, nor worship him in any way than he has commanded in his word.  
 Question 97: Should one therefore make no images at all? God can and should not be portrayed in any way; but as for his creatures, although they may indeed be portrayed, yet God still forbids one to make or have images of them, in order to worship him or by them to serve him.  
 Question 98: But may not pictures be tolerated in the churches as the laymen's books? No. For we should not be wiser than God who does not wish to have his Christianity taught by dumb images, but rather by the living preaching of his word.')  
 'Stomme beelden' ('Dumb images') was something to reckon with. Of all the Protestant confessions, this is the one that gained the widest currency in the Netherlands, and almost immediately. In the very year of its formulation it was translated into Dutch. Petrus Dathenus appended another translation of it to his Dutch version of the Psalms in 1566. It was officially adopted by the Convent of Wesel in 1568, by the Synod of Emden in 1571 and by the national Synod of The Hague in 1587; and along with the *Confessio Belgica* it became the basic creed of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands. This is the confession that entered Dutch Protestant thought at a time when the nation was struggling to dissociate itself from everything associated with Spain, and when images themselves turned out to be the clearest focus for the beginnings of the Revolt. The ideas encapsulated in the Heidelberg Confession became part of the mainstream of Dutch Calvinism, but their implications were to be much more deeply felt. They became part of the common theological stock of the Netherlands; and almost everyone knew them. But we have moved ahead too swiftly. Not surprisingly, in the very year in which the Heidelberg delegates assembled, the delegates to the greatest Council in Christendom, the Council of Trent, came to the realization that the Catholic Church urgently needed a unified stance on the subject of images. There had been plenty of individual defenders of the Church's position in the face of the Protestant attacks, but the time had come to provide an official definition. Worried by recent outbreaks of iconoclasm in France, a group of French delegates exercised just sufficient pressure to ensure the passage of a decree on religious imagery at the very last session of the Council, on 3 and 4 December 1563.<sup>56</sup> Perhaps it was simply

that there was not enough time, and the Council was exhausted after eighteen years of deliberation – but it was a case of too little too late. Instead of dealing with the substantive matters raised by one Protestant writer after the other, the Council preferred to deal with the problem of abuses. It is as though the basic issue were beyond discussion; there was nothing wrong with images themselves, it seemed to be saying, nor indeed with the principles of their use. Admittedly they could be misused; and it was to this issue that the Council addressed itself. Mistakenly the delegates must have felt that by dealing with the problem of abuse they could deflate Protestant criticism; nothing then could have been farther from the case. The decree began with a traditional restatement of the value of the invocation and intercession of the saints and of the veneration of their relics. Images were to be retained in churches because the honour shown to them referred to the prototypes they represented. People could be 'instructed and confirmed in the articles of faith' by means of 'the stories of the mysteries of our redemption portrayed in painting and statues' (as opposed to the preaching and reading of scripture alone, as advocated by the Calvinists).<sup>57</sup> After a restatement of medieval views of the exemplary value of images of the saints, it swiftly moved on to the matter of abuse. It explicitly forbade any 'representation of false doctrine and such as might be of grave error to the uneducated'. Besides the elimination of all superstition and 'filthy quest for gain', all lasciviousness was to be avoided, 'so that images shall not be painted with seductive charm, or the celebration of saints days and the visitation of relics be perverted by the people into boisterous festivities and drunkenness.'<sup>58</sup> In the final section of its decree, the Council set out to ensure the avoidance of abuses in the future, and it gave instructions for the ecclesiastical supervision of art that were to be taken up in any number of local synods in the immediately following years. No new or unusual images were to be set up without the prior approval of the bishop, who also had to give official approval for the acceptance of new miracles and relics. Disputes were to be referred to theologians, and if any doubtful or graver abuse needed to be eradicated, the matter was to await synodal decision, and ultimately that of the Pope.<sup>59</sup> All this may well have had considerable effects for later Catholic art, both in and outside the Netherlands; but for the time being the decree on images formulated by the Council of Trent was like a straw in the gathering wind. The images had been swept out of one German town after another; in France the Protestant forces were still causing trouble, while England had a new Queen, who would swiftly provide sympathetic asylum to Netherlandish opponents of Catholicism. The Netherlands was wavering and ready to fall; and the doctrines which the Council of Trent had so laboured to refute were everywhere in the air. Nothing could avert the impending catastrophe – least of all a group of aging clerics meeting in a cold and provincial town on the north-eastern borders of Italy.

## 2 Action: iconoclasm in the Netherlands

On 5 April 1566 three hundred armed members of the Compromise of the Nobility under the leadership of the Count of Brederode presented their momentous Request to the Regent of the Netherlands at her palace in Brussels. A member of the



court derisively referred to them as 'Les Gueux', and the name stuck. But Margaret of Parma could not dismiss the beggars so lightly, and in the face of their demands for the moderation of the placards and the abolition of the inquisition she was obliged to instruct the magistrates to be more lenient in their treatment of heretics. But the so-called 'Moderation' of 9 April with which Margaret responded to the nobles' Request did little to quieten the growing unrest.<sup>61</sup> Nothing seemed to be able to stop the proliferation of Calvinist preachers all over the country, and if they were not Calvinists they were of every other conceivable Reformed persuasion. Wherever they could find a space they performed communion, baptised infants, or held their sermons. Because of the large number attending them, the sermons were most frequently held in the open air, and by the time Margaret forbade them in her placard of 3 July 1566 they could not be stopped.<sup>61</sup>

Tension mounted, the sermons – the so-called 'hagepreken' – were held under armed guard, the crowds grew, and the demands for their own Protestant places of worship were redoubled with ever greater fervour.<sup>62</sup> Preachers poured into the county, from France, from Germany, from Switzerland and from England; and on 10 August 1566 at Steenvoorde in the South-Western corner of Flanders, following an inflammatory sermon by the former hatmaker Sebastian Matte, twenty or so members of the audience rushed to the convent and smashed all its images.<sup>63</sup>

The leader there was Jacob de Buyzere, a former Augustinian monk who had turned preacher, and like Matte was also from Leper and a recently returned exile from England. Within the next three days they proceeded to Bailleul and Poperinghe, in each case preaching sermons and leading an increasingly large group of iconoclasts in the destruction of local images.<sup>64</sup> The pattern of preparation and destruction was now established and the storm swept on. By the time it reached Antwerp on Tuesday 20 August<sup>65</sup> the revolt was fully under way, and few towns could be sure that they would be spared the consequences of the iconoclastic fury. Almost everywhere there is evidence of the role of preachers and of the fact that at least some if not all the iconoclasts were hired and organized according to some preliminary plan – whether by preacher, local nobleman, local reformed community or any combination acting in concert. The instances of spontaneous mob activity (despite the allegations of contemporary historians) are rare, and most come after news from Antwerp and elsewhere had been carried to the North and East.<sup>66</sup> The news fanned out in every direction. We will concentrate on what happened in the North Netherlands, but let us not forget that it affected the Southern areas of the country as well, and that the kinds of art on display in the present exhibition were at risk in those places too. Indeed, what happened at the Abbey of Marchiennes near Douai, where some of the most splendid altarpieces by Jan van Scorel (cat. 109) were spirited away just in time, provides an exemplary and sad case of the connexion between image-problem, sermon, and image-destruction. One day after hearing of the purification of the churches in Antwerp, the Tournai iconoclasts sacked the churches of their city; they then moved on to the province of Douai and upon entering the Abbey of Marchiennes gave out their usual rallying cry of 'Vive les Gueux'. A leader called for silence

and at his instigation the assembled group began to sing Daniel Marot's rhymed version of the Ten Commandments: its second strophe could not have been more explicit:

Tailler ne te feras image  
De quelque chose que ce soit  
Si honneur lui fais ou hommage  
Ton Dieu jalouse en recolt

And then, as if possessed, they attacked the images. An hour later the whole church interior was destroyed.<sup>67</sup>

These, then, were the main elements in the drama: preachers, who prepared the way for iconoclasm, if they did not actually participate in it; their sermons, many of which contained specific references to the idolatry constituted by the images of the Roman Church (or, as they preferred to call it, the whore of Babylon, the Antichrist, and so on); hired bands (except in a few places in the North, where iconoclasm does indeed appear to have been spontaneous); the demand for Protestant places of worship, preferably in existing churches which had been purified of their adornments, even whitewashed; the diligent efforts of churchwardens and other church officials to spirit away the best images and decorations before the arrival of the iconoclasts (many of the works in the present exhibition were spared in this way); the frequent attempt of town councils to close the churches and put them under armed guard, so that they could be protected from the disorderly onslaught of the iconoclasts; sometimes iconoclasm was prevented altogether, and sometimes the images were removed in an orderly way, under more or less official supervision. The only significant difference between North and South was that in the North there were more instances of second occurrences of iconoclasm in October; and that the appearance of the Sea Beggars in the coastal towns often meant still further cases of the sacking and looting of churches during the early seventies – to say nothing of the marauding militia who tested and ransacked any number of places for the rest of the decade.

Barely had the news from Antwerp reached Middelburg and Breda – on 21-22 August – when iconoclasm broke out there too, before spreading to the surrounding villages and towns.<sup>68</sup> In 's-Hertogenbosch it began on the 22nd.

On 23 August nearby Heusden was affected, but so was Amsterdam. Iconoclasm did not proceed in any direct line from one centre to another (although in some local instances bands of iconoclasts spread out to surrounding areas), it occurred in sporadic outbreaks all across the country (Fig. 3). Delft and Utrecht were smitten on 24 August, The Hague and Leiden on the 25th. On that day too the churches of Eindhoven and Helmond were purified.

On 26 August the iconoclasts got the upper hand in Den Briel and Heenvliet; by the 27th they had already begun in Weert in Limburg; and on 2 September they were at Alkmaar. Four days later they entered the churches in Leeuwarden, but in a comparatively orderly manner, in that town the preachers refused to conduct services until the churches had been whitewashed.<sup>69</sup>

For a variety of reasons it took until 14 September before the images at Culemborg were removed; this was the same day on which Winsum was affected. On 16 September there was iconoclasm at Batenburg in the East; on 18 September in Groningen and the 'Ommelanden' in the North. Three days later, on 21 September, iconoclasts appeared

at Elburg, and the day after at Harderwijk. On 25 September the Count of Brederode removed the images in Vianen to his castle, and by the time the storm reached Venio in the South East on 5 October, Delft was undergoing a second attempt at purification. Asperen was only affected on 8 October, by which time Den Briel was suffering again, before finally being plundered by the 'watergeuzen' in 1572 – who simply completed what the iconoclasts had begun five years earlier. It is a frightening catalogue; and even though one can point to cases such as those of Dordrecht and Gouda (where no preachings were held at all) or Haarlem, Rotterdam, Amersfoort, Arnhem, Nijmegen, and Zutphen (where the local authorities were successful in preventing iconoclasm), the details of destruction give one considerable pause for thought. How could one hope to form anything but the most fragmentary picture of an artistic heritage decimated in the course not just of a few months, but largely in those few brutal days in 1566? And what survived then would remain at the mercy of repeated attacks by soldiers and other plunderers for at least a decade. One can only wonder at what was left. The grim story has its positive and cheering moments too, as we shall see, but by and large we can agree with those later writers who could not find sufficient terms to express their horror at the loss of art occasioned by the 'rasende', 'woedende', 'ontzinnighe' and 'const-vijandighe' iconoclasts, as Karel van Mander was so graphically to describe them less than half a century later.<sup>70</sup>

A huge amount has been written about the course of iconoclasm in each of these places, and considerable discussion has been devoted to the issues of the extent of organization in each case, of the role of local nobility (like Brederode and Culemborg), or that of William of Orange (who was frequently appealed to in the hope that he might stave off excesses of iconoclasm or violence), the social status of the iconoclasts, their numbers, the role of the preachers, the element of spontaneity in the initial outbursts, as well as the whole complex issue of motivation and the relationship with the social, political and economic events of 1566.<sup>71</sup> Since this essay has been written in the context of artistic production and thought about art in the period between 1525 and 1580 there is no need to examine the pressures on an already irascible population by the grain shortage of late 1565 early 1566;<sup>72</sup> or the reorganization of the Netherlandish bishops and the consequent fear of the inquisition; or the unhelpful attitude – to say the least – of the Regent of the Netherlands and – ultimately – the King of Spain. Here, as we consider the main outbreaks of iconoclasm in the North, in the very period that events were lead to the establishment of an independent Netherlands, let us concentrate on those details that bear largely on the relations between art and social act, between thinking about art and actual event.

As soon as they heard the news from Antwerp on 21 August a number of people gathered in St. Martin's in Middelburg. Swiftly they began to break the images. The two burgomasters arrived and successfully appealed to the iconoclasts to leave the church, despite the presence of some who vehemently wished to follow the Antwerp example. Meanwhile the consistory was planning a more systematic form of iconoclasm. The next day a proclamation was issued against the destruction of images and the harming of priests and clerics. But



already a crowd had gathered in front of the church, and with a cry of 'Vivent les gueux', assailed its images. Within a few hours the images in the three parish churches, five cloisters and a beguinage had been destroyed. The high altarpiece of the abbey was saved as a result of the intervention of the magistrate. Then the iconoclasts moved to the Arnemuiden, and set about their work with the help of members of the local population. From Middelburg and from Vlissingen iconoclasts spread out, and left a trail of destruction over the whole of the island of Walcheren.<sup>73</sup> The chain of events is entirely typical.

In Breda the destruction was terrible; and here, in the cry of a prominent citizen as he led the iconoclasts in the Church of Our Lady, we have some measure of the pitch of sentiment against images: 'Smijt alles uit dit pesthuis naar buiten' ('Throw everything from this plague-house outside'). And then they destroyed the images according to an apparently predetermined plan.<sup>74</sup> As for 's-Hertogenbosch, we have considerable evidence for the activity, from the end of July on, of a preacher called Cornelis van Diest. There were attempts to stop him, but he nevertheless managed to enter the gates and began preaching. Almost immediately afterwards, on the evening of 22 August, a group gathered in St. Jans; they sang a psalm in front of the rood screen; and then began to smash the images until the 'schutters' finally arrived and closed the church. Much was thereby saved. But the remaining churches and cloisters were severely hit, and on 24 August the first sermon was held in the purified Cathedral. Still the reformed party was not satisfied, and they demanded four more chapels for their services. As in so many places the storm was soon stilled; at least for a while, since when the townspeople heard of the possibility of the introduction of the inquisition there, a renewed and really remorseless outbreak of iconoclasm swept through the churches and cloisters of the town.<sup>75</sup>

In Amsterdam there had been a large number of sermons, and the situation was so tense that Brederode urgently requested Orange to come to the town and put it in order. On the very next morning (23 August) a group of merchants appeared in front of the Stock Exchange in the Warmoesstraat with several pieces of marble and alabaster, purportedly from some of the freshly destroyed altarpieces in Antwerp Cathedral. Not surprisingly, this alarmed the burgomasters, who immediately instructed the clergy of the Nieuwe Kerk to remove and hide as much as they could of their church furnishings.<sup>76</sup> Much of our evidence for the events of these days comes from the eyewitness account of Laurens Jacobsz. Reael, who, despite his Protestant sympathies and the likelihood that he was actually present at the onset of at least iconoclastic outburst himself, made no bones of his deep antipathy to the wanton violence of the iconoclasts and – indeed – to the whole process of destruction. This apparently inconsistent stance is characteristic of the authors of any number of contemporary accounts; but it is entirely consistent with that strand of Erasmian thought that we find in Reael himself and in so many other of the leading figures in the drama of those days. Here is Reael's graphic description of the removal of precious objects for safekeeping: 'Door dese waerschouwinge sach men de geestelijke personen bij de straet geloopen, dragende uut de kerck alle haer juwelen, als kelcken, ciboria en misgewaden: dit geschiede principael ontrent 11

uren voormiddach, als alle de ambachtslieden gewoon sijn naer maeltijt te gaan' ('As a result of this warning, one could see the clergy in the street, carrying all their jewels out of the church, such as chalices, ciboria and vestments for the mass; this mainly took place around 11 o'clock in the morning, when the craftsmen were accustomed to go to their meals.').<sup>77</sup> What happened here, as in many other places, was that attempts were made to remove and hide the best works of art; but by now it was to little avail.

A large group of men and women had gathered in the Nieuwe Kerk, but there, fortunately, 'veel goede burgers hebben met veel goede woorden het voick uut de kerck gekregen en de kerck vast toegesloten' ('by means of many good words a number of good citizens got the people out of their church, and closed the church shut.').<sup>78</sup> The Oude Kerk, on the other hand, suffered badly. There a grain-carrier called Jasper took exception to an inscription on a glass panel: 'siet daer hanc in dat glazen bordeken dat gruwelicke en godlasteriecke gedicht' ('look - there's a horrible and blasphemous poem hanging on that glass plate.'). he exclaimed, and smashed it to the ground.<sup>79</sup> Upon hearing the noise a group of youths started throwing stones at the paintings and sculptures, and began to pull them down. Fortunately, some pictures had already been removed from the church. The 'schutters' were sent there, but the imagebreaking grew more fiery yet. Finally the iconoclasts were appeased, and the church was closed.<sup>80</sup> On 2 September, as elsewhere in the country, an official placard arrived from Brussels (it was dated 25 August!) forbidding further iconoclasm under pain of death and confiscation, and insisting on the immediate repair of the churches and their furnishings.<sup>81</sup>

But the lull was only temporary. Further violent assaults on images followed later in the month. On 26 September, the cloister of the Friars Minor was attacked 'met een wonderlijcke furie' ('with astonishing fury'),<sup>82</sup> while on the next day the Carthusian monastery was similarly invaded. But there, after destroying some glass pictures and books, the crowd was persuaded to go home.<sup>83</sup> Here as elsewhere the Friars Minor suffered particularly, for reasons that are still not entirely clear, but possibly because of their close association with the town government and their reported role in the investigation of heresy.

In Delft women were in the forefront of the attack on the Minderbroeders,<sup>84</sup> but there the Oude – and the Nieuwe Kerk were most gravely at risk. Images that had not been spirited away in time were destroyed, although in the Nieuwe Kerk the magistrate finally managed to persuade the iconoclasts to stop, and to prevent them from burning the objects they had dragged to the market-place.<sup>85</sup> The overall result of these two horrifying waves of iconoclasm, however, was to deprive the churches of town of their most significant furnishings – and especially the pictures, organs, and glass. As van Bleyswijk was to comment of the Oude Kerk one century later: 'De resterende Ornamenten en Cieraden die in dese Kerck wel eer aenschouwt ende gesien werde en waer mede sy aldermeest pronckte ende verciert was bestonden in overprachtige Altaren, uytnemende Schilderyen en Tafereelen, kostelijke geschilderde Glazen, magnifycke Orgalen en soo voorts alle meest in de Beeld-stormeryen vernielt, geruyneert of geschonden; het hooge Autaer dese Kerke was in de furie soodanigen aengetast ende

verdestruert dat niet dan een Romp was overgebleven' ('the remaining ornaments and adornments which could previously be seen in this church, and with which it was so shingly adorned, consisted of sumptuous altars, outstanding paintings and pictures, precious stained glass, magnificent organs and so on. Most of these were destroyed, ruined, and damaged in the outbreaks of iconoclasm. The High Altar of this church was so assailed and destroyed in the fury that only the core of it survived.').<sup>86</sup>

In Utrecht iconoclasm was immediately preceded by two characteristic events: first by the Protestants' demand for places of worship of their own; and second by a sermon just outside the town gates, here by a preacher called 'Scheie Gerrit'. When members of the reformed party met, they agreed that 'de afgriselijckhey van de beelden' ('the frightfulness of the images') should be removed from the churches, but promised to deposit these and other treasures in the Town Hall.<sup>87</sup> The official investigation (of 1567) into the events of these days – here as elsewhere – provides us with ample evidence of the widespread and often impetuously violent destruction in the town.<sup>88</sup> It also provides insight into one of the many personal casualties of those days, in its prolonged investigation into the stance and action of Adriaen de Wael van Vronensteyn. Despite his repeated (and apparently justified) insistence that he adhered to the Old Faith, and despite his attempts to moderate iconoclastic activity, he was finally executed. In St. Gertrude's, for example – where there is definite evidence of an attempt at systematic and complete destruction – he angrily shouted at those iconoclasts who were trying to break some windows (presumably with painted glass): 'Ghy schelmen, wat wilt dij doen? Dat en sijn ymmers gheen beelden' ('you rascals, what do you want to do? They aren't pictures after all.').<sup>89</sup> A vigorous altercation ensued – but the glass was saved. There was much else that he managed to save, including the vaulting of the church itself. Since it had figures of the apostles painted on it, De Wael tried another approach: 'Wat wilt ghij doen? Laet staen, men sel een schilder comen ende laten die beelden uutstrijcken' ('What do you want to do? Leave it alone, we will have a painter come and paint the images out'); and was successful.<sup>90</sup> But Utrecht suffered badly, and the iconoclasts did their work in the Buurkerk, the Mariakerk, St. Nicholas's, St. Gertrude's, the cloisters of the Dominicans and the Friars Minor – and probably St. James's too.<sup>91</sup> Iconoclasm in Leiden on 25 August was almost as frenzied and as random. A few days earlier the local rhetoricians had publicly derided the use of images, and when the iconoclasts got started, men, women and children apparently ran in and out of the churches to the cry of 'ook hier moet gebeuren wat elders geschied is' ('what has happened elsewhere must be done here too').<sup>92</sup> Although St. Peter's was put under armed guard in the nick of time, the church of Our Lady, St. Pancras, and even the chapter house of St. Pancras were attacked; so, as usual, were the Friars Minor. In many places – probably most – theft of objects from the ransacked churches was expressly forbidden (whether by the preachers, the local nobleman, or the organizers of the iconoclasts); but here in Leiden, although the Council does appear to have allowed guilds and families to remove their altars and paintings to safety,<sup>93</sup> parts of altars and other church furnishings



were transported to public places and offered for sale. There appears to have been considerable and promiscuous thievery,<sup>94</sup> whereas elsewhere the penalties were often severe.

What happened in The Hague, on the other hand, was quite different. After an initial spurt of unrest, the churches were methodically stripped. Two days after issuing an ordinance forbidding the destruction of images on 23 August, the President of the Provincial Council of Holland ordered that the images be removed from the town's churches 'met alder stillicheyt sonder commocoy' ('in all tranquillity and without disturbance'), and saw to it that twelve men were paid seven 'stuivers' each to do the necessary work, while the 'schutters' guarded and locked each church.<sup>95</sup>

These are the poles of iconoclasm in 1566: on the one hand, disorderly destruction, plundering and theft, with motives that were violent or mercenary; on the other hand, controlled and sometimes systematic iconoclasm, often for sound theological reasons, with little if any theft and some saving on the grounds of the artistic merit of particular works of art. We cannot examine every outbreak of iconoclasm here, but there are a few further details that are both symptomatic and telling.

Den Briel, for example, offers further instances of supervised iconoclasm (on the day after it struck Leiden and The Hague). It was one of those towns where the range of reformed beliefs was strikingly broad, from Anabaptism to pure Calvinism, and where it is not always easy to identify the particular grouping to which individuals belonged.<sup>96</sup> Here the main churches – St. Catherine's and the Maerlant Church – were closed in time, and thus were spared the worst of the onslaught; but the remainder were more or less severely assailed. In the cloister of the Poor Clares, Pieter Michiels gave specific instructions as to which images should be spared and which not, while after the destruction in the cloisters and convents two of the foremost Protestants (one man and one woman) appeared 'omme tebeziene oft de bellestorminge te rechte geschiet ende volcommen was'.<sup>97</sup> Indeed, they were heard enthusiastically to proclaim: 'God sij gelooft dat dees verre gecommen es want het moeste aldus geschien'.<sup>98</sup> This kind of blunt and unreasoning justification was also offered by Sem Jansz. of Monnikendam, when he asserted that those who attacked the images and shattered them were simply doing God's will.<sup>99</sup> How could one provide an argument against folkishly apodeictic assertions such as these? Perhaps the iconoclasts knew that; and even as sophisticated an intelligence as Marnix van Sint Aldegonde could claim of the Antwerp iconoclasm that it must obviously have been the will of God, since otherwise how could so few people have achieved (sic!) so much in so short a time.<sup>100</sup> Such determinist views of the destruction of images were not uncommon; and for a short time some people held images very cheap indeed.

Den Briel itself offers the spectacle of some very odd but telling behaviour on the part of the local rhetoricians (who, one might have thought, would have been better disposed to pictures and sculptures than the following suggests). On Ash Wednesday in 1567 they gathered in their chamber in the local town hall, where five images from the St. Roch altar, as well as a chest with some liturgical accessories, had been brought for safekeeping. A kind of kangaroo court for images now seems to have taken place. With staff and missal in hand, Huych

Quirijnsz. pronounced judgment on the St. Roch images and the other objects. Thereupon the rhetoricians took them and threw them into the fire. All the while they sang refrains and chanted psalms, as if to mock the Holy Communion itself.<sup>101</sup>

As in so many other places, the council of Den Briel sent for advice and help from the Prince of Orange before the actual outbreak of iconoclasm, while the local Protestants clearly had contacts with the widely subversive Count of Brederode.<sup>102</sup> If Brederode was not uninfluential here then the actions of Floris van Pallandt, Count of Culemborg could not have been more overt.<sup>103</sup> One would have thought that at least one of the most pressing reasons for iconoclasm was absent in Culemborg, since the Count allowed the local Protestants to hold services in his castle.<sup>104</sup> But iconoclasm did break out on 7 September, in a small chapel in the town. The Count issued an edict forbidding any destruction in churches and cemeteries; but at the same time he authorized the removal of all exterior images 'in goede en stille manieren'.<sup>105</sup> Less than a week later he was less circumspect and issued instructions to destroy the images in his town – in which process he participated himself. Having wrecked most of the churches and chapels in Culemborg, the small group of iconoclasts (which included two local noblemen) spread out into the neighbouring region. Three of the richest iconoclasts (along with four others) had already participated in the outbreak at Utrecht.<sup>106</sup>

Bedum near Groningen offers the case – often encountered elsewhere – of the participation of the local priest in taking down the images.<sup>107</sup> In Loppersum nearby and in Groningen itself the school masters took part.<sup>108</sup> They too, one feels might have known better or acted with more restraint. Was it the excitement of emotional release, the outward show of new commitments, the display of long pent-up resentments or genuine theological antipathy that lay at the root of such behaviour? Any combination is possible, even for the learned or half-learned. One cannot simply blame the ignorant mob or the rude 'gespuys'.

In Venlo the reformed community demanded the use of the cloister of Trans Cedron for their services; the magistrates refused; and the preacher Leonardus held a sermon there; and iconoclasm immediately erupted.<sup>109</sup> In the meantime officials of the parish church of St. Martin and the four deans of the merchants guild helped dismantle the altars – although even there (according to eyewitness reports) some out-of-towners were present.<sup>110</sup> Members of the shoemakers guild participated in the destruction at St. Nicholas.<sup>111</sup> In the Trans Cedron cloister the images were either burned or smeared with oil.<sup>112</sup> By and large, however, the main towns of Gelderland and the Overkwartier were spared and it would be superfluous to go into details of the kind we have already encountered for places like Elburg and Harderwijk.<sup>113</sup> Later on, in 1578-79, we find extremely aggressive forms of church purification in Gelderland by the troops of John of Nassau.<sup>114</sup> From the many possible examples from Limburg, we need recount only two of the most telling. In Maastricht the iconoclasts replied to the churchwardens of St. Matthias when they tried to stop them from destroying the main crucifix there (the painting of the Virgin from the choir had already been burnt); it had to be smashed, since this was the most idolatrous object in the whole church: 'dat tselve cruys was die meeste affgoderije

die in de kercke was'.<sup>115</sup> Sometimes the iconoclasts knew what they were doing.

No more vivid picture of the kinds of exchange that took place on the eve of iconoclastic outbursts could be offered than the case of Weert. An extraordinary contemporary account by a nun tells of the events of 27-30 August when the images were destroyed in the town and its vicinity:

'Maer dat voick tierde en maeckte soo bijster gerught met roepen, singen en spotten, dat men den geuzen paep, heer Thomassen, niet verstaan konde. Sij kloterden met de klompen, sij riepen d'een tot d'ander: toet! d'ander riepen: gij llegt het al wat gij seght! de derde riepen: coeckoeck! sommige riepen saemenderhandt: De swarten duyvel staet hier op den preekstoel!' ('but the crowd raved and made such a loud noise with their shouting and singing and mocking that one could not understand the beggars' pope, Mr Thomasz. They jumped around in their clogs, they called one to the other 'toet!'; the other shouted 'everything you say is a lie', a third person shouted 'coeckoeck!' and some all shouted together: 'The black devil is standing on the pulpit here!')<sup>116</sup>

Frivolity and fury went hand in hand.

Asperen was only affected on 8 October. There Wessel van Boetselaer ordered the churches to be stripped. Willem van Zuylen van Nyevelt, 'drost' of Culemborg (who had already destroyed his own family chapel) arrived with a preacher and half a dozen soldiers whom he placed around the churches and cloisters. Thus guarded, the iconoclasts could then range free and do their work of destruction untroubled by zealous wardens or other officials.<sup>117</sup> And so one could continue the sorry tale.... Much more unusual than these lamentable events – lamentable at least for art – were the cases of the towns which escaped iconoclasm altogether. Haarlem is perhaps the most notable example, for there there were repeated demands for Protestant places of worship. The requests were at least partly met; but if there was one figure who may be said to have prevented the worst of the storm from affecting Haarlem it was Dirk Volckertszoon Coornhert.<sup>118</sup> Despite the threat of his efforts being grossly misunderstood (as we learn from the sustained inquiry of 1567 into his activities in August and September 1566), and at considerable risk to himself, Coornhert managed to stave off the demands for iconoclasm; he made repeated and sometimes clandestine attempts to reach the Prince of Orange in order to invoke his help in those critical days – and all this despite his evident lack of sympathy with the Catholic use of images. For Coornhert, even if images were misused or abused, there could still be no justification for their disorderly removal; and this, along with his distaste for civil unrest, must have lain at the roots of his strenuous and ultimately successful efforts.<sup>119</sup>

Like Haarlem, Nijmegen was spared any form of organized or large-scale iconoclasm; but even so it was necessary to send two commissioners to investigate what happened there in 1566.<sup>120</sup> After all, along with Roermond, Venio and Zaitbommel, Nijmegen was one of the 'mauvaises villes' of Gelderland; and what seems to have happened there on 23-25 September 1566 was clearly quite enough to justify its reputation (along with its evident sympathy for several of the preachers it harboured). There was nothing which one might call an iconoclastic movement there, no concerted or even spontaneous group assault, but rather a few isola-



ted incidents – all of which provide eloquent testimony to individual hostility to images in general and Roman image-worship in particular. Isolated incidents like these must be taken into account as we learn to accept the modern interpretation of iconoclasm in the Netherlands as organized and non-spontaneous deliberate work. Thus on the night of 24–25 September, two brothers damaged the railings around the Crucifixion scene in the churchyard of St. Stephen's, as well as the image of the Virgin there. On the same evening there seems to have been a particular disturbance around the Kraanpoort, from which the statue of St. Christopher was dislodged and thrown to the ground. So was the statue of St. Anthony in the churchyard of the same name.<sup>121</sup> The testimony gathered for Nijmegen is rich in detail, and thus we have a report of the words of the very man – Adriaen Rijckens – was along with his brother is reported to have removed the crown of the statue of the Virgin in the churchyard of St. Stephen's. 'Die hoeren to Coelen dragen sodanige croen wanneer sy omgeleydt worden, ghy hebbet lange genoech gedragen' ('The whores of Cologne wear these kinds of crowns when they are carried around; and you've worn it for long enough') he is said to have cried as he did the brazen deed.<sup>122</sup> Into what disrespect images had fallen; how they had lost their aura! Of course there had always been people who knew that images were no more than painted pieces of wood and stone; but now, for a very brief period, there were socially sanctioned ways of proving just that, and of demonstrating the futility of believing that they were anything more. Art in the service of the Church would indeed reclaim some of its aura; but art in the Netherlands could never be founded on the same premises again. The consequences were not immediately apparent, but they were momentous. If there were no other justification for an exhibition covering this period of revolution and revision, this alone would be sufficient.

Already in November 1567 the Council of Troubles issued instructions about the repair of churches; but on 14 February, 1568 the Duke of Alva sent a 'missyve' throughout the Netherlands in which he instructed that all the damaged or destroyed churches and cloisters should be rebuilt and repaired.<sup>123</sup> In the South, his instructions were almost universally adhered to – if not immediately, then eventually – as soon as finances and other resources permitted. In the North, of course, many of the churches remained white, purified and Protestant. But apart from the wretched plundering of the 'watergeuzen' in the 1570s, and cases such as the destruction in Amsterdam's Nieuwe Kerk in 1578, or the vandalism of Jan of Nassau's troops in Gelderland at the end of that year, the events of August, September and October 1566 were never to be repeated again. The iconoclastic wave subsided with surprising suddenness. But if one thought that its effects were only temporary, one would be hopelessly wrong. It is the task of neither this essay nor the exhibition as a whole to assess the long term significance of iconoclasm; but let us look more closely at the short term effects. We have given some indication of the extent and range of the damage in 1566, but have not so far referred much to identifiable works of art. Let us look at a few of the details which can be reclaimed, and at some of the immediate consequences for the great debate about images, that grand theoretical issue which

was so dramatically overtaken by the real crisis that it had played so crucial a role in generating.

### 3 Suffering: the destruction of art

The records of the large-scale investigations introduced by Margaret of Parma and the Duke of Alva into the events of 1566 are absorbing and horrifying. They are full of mutual incrimination, exaggeration and grudge-bearing; the informers had a field day. From the testimony delivered to his commissioners we gain some idea – indeed, a most vivid one – of the deprivations wrought by the iconoclasts and the consequences of their excesses. We learn of the extent of the damage and the range and variety of the participants; but what we barely learn from these records at all are the names of the precise works affected by the events of 1566. The most one can hope for is the specification of a subject and a location, but the names of artists are rarely if ever mentioned. Even the medium of particular works is frequently omitted. After all, the aim of Alva's inquiries was to gauge the scale of civil unrest, to identify its protagonists and to reintroduce some measure of order; it was not to make an inventory of lost objects. Thus we may get some sense of the overall effects of the emptying of the churches, and of their literal purification as a result of whitewashing and the replacement of stained glass with figures by plain glass. This was always an easy and expansive step to take, as – to take one out of very many possible examples – the Count of Culemborg did in 1566 and again in 1578: 'Dye heere van Kuyllenborch heef zijn kerck gans doir laten wytten...In dye glaessen siin uitgenomen, dair hillichgen in waeren, ind ander glaesse daer weer yn geset sonder hillichgen klaer glaesse' ('The Lord of Culemborg has let his church to be completely whitewashed. In some windows glass which contained saints was removed, in others they were replaced by clear glass without saints on them. ...')<sup>124</sup> and everywhere we have evidence of the painting of texts – say the Ten Commandments – directly over the whitewash (and sometimes even on the very surfaces of altarpieces).<sup>125</sup> But for the names of artists whose works were affected, we must either use deduction (since we know from other sources where specific works were located, and we usually know which churches were affected), or archaeological evidence; or – most significantly – the evidence of local chroniclers and writers on art. There are some works where the damage is such that one can only assume that it occurred during the events of the 1560s and 1570s. Amongst these one should probably include works of art such as the polyptych of *The seven works of mercy* by the Master of Alkmaar, dating from 1504 and therefore one of the limited number of major works by a North Netherlandish artist to have survived almost 'in toto' from the period immediately preceding that covered by the present exhibition.<sup>126</sup> Recent restoration has revealed that the work was mutilated in an evidently purposeful way – many of the slashes were clearly directed against the eyes of the clerics, for example – to such an extent that we are provided with eloquent testimony to the kinds of basic and emotional hostility to images that must so often have underlain the organized iconoclastic attacks (Fig. 4).<sup>127</sup> Similarly, and the remarkably vivid portrait from Toledo of Jacob Cornelisz. and his wife by their son Dirk Jacobsz. (cat. 74), there is evidence of considerable damage to the picture,

but especially to the eyes.<sup>128</sup> Was this one of those standard attempts to deprive an image of its apparent life (and the picture here is very lifelike indeed) by striking out those same organs that, above all, evince its vitality?<sup>129</sup> In any event, as in the case of the polyptych by the Master of Alkmaar, it reminds us that whatever the social and economic motives of the iconoclasts, their behaviour may at least in part have depended on rawer psychological impulses.<sup>130</sup>

Altogether instructive in the paradigmatic quality of its fate is the first great masterpiece of North Netherlandish art in the period covered by this exhibition, Lucas van Leyden's great *Last judgment* triptych (Leiden, Lakenhal) of 1526–27 (Fig. 5). On the eve of iconoclasm in Leiden in 1566 it was probably taken for safekeeping from St. Peter's, along with other works from the church, to the Hospital of St. James (in general, throughout the North and South Netherlands there seems to have been some sense – highly erratic or non-existent though it may have been in places – of the importance of the major works and of the need to save them). In 1527 it was transferred to the St. Catherine's hospital, before finally being taken to the townhall in 1577. On 11 September of that year the painter Isaac Claesz. van Swanenburgh and another were paid for their expenses in effecting the last move.<sup>131</sup> Can it have been Swanenburgh or was it some coarser painter who afterwards covered the offending figure of God the Father – only restored to his rightful place by the restoration of 1935 – at the top of the central panel? And when were the Hebrew letters for Jehovah painted there (Fig. 6a, b)?<sup>132</sup> The matter must remain uncertain, but the fate of that figure reminds us again of the way in which altarpieces were not only wholly overpainted – van Mander gives at least one drastic example in his life of Hugo van der Goes<sup>133</sup> – but also selectively so. Certainly, in the eyes of most Protestants, the representation of the divine, the unmaterial and the uncircumscribable in the person of God the Father constituted one of the worst offences of Catholic art. It would not be an agreeable task to count the number of times such figures were removed or censored.<sup>134</sup> Perhaps the best overall picture of the effects of iconoclasm on specific works of art is to be found, not surprisingly, in the great historian of Dutch and Flemish art, Karel van Mander. Although *Het Schilderboek* was published in 1604<sup>135</sup>, almost forty years after the first outbreak of iconoclasm, we have every reason to take his testimony seriously (though there are lapses, as in his dating the destruction of images in Gouda to 1566, rather than to 1572 and his exaggeration what actually was destroyed there). Apart from anything else, van Mander was himself a Protestant emigré from Flanders (who left the country after painting one altarpiece for the church in Courtrai)<sup>136</sup> and one might have thought that he had no need to overstate the case against the deprivations of those who were, broadly speaking, his co-religionists (unless, of course, he was concerned to distinguish his own Mennonite attitudes from those of other Protestants). Indeed he goes to considerable lengths to disown them, to repudiate their violent deeds, and to make his opinion of their acts known in no uncertain terms. Every time he speaks of the iconoclasts he refers to them in terms such as 'rasend', 'woedend', 'onverstandigh', 'uysinnigh', 'ontsinnigh', 'const-vijandigh', 'woest', 'blind', 'oproerigh' ('ra-



ginge', 'furious', 'stupid', 'crazy', 'senseless', 'hostile to art', 'wild', 'blind', 'riotous') and so on and so on.<sup>137</sup> It is not at all surprising to find the rueful reflection that many of the works by Pleter Aertsen were destroyed 'tot jammer der kunst door het wraet onverstandt' ('a tragic loss to art through raving stupidity').<sup>138</sup> Amongst these was the High Altar of the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam, with a *Nativity* on the centre panel and an *Annunciation*, *Circumcision* and *Adoration of the magi* on the wings; a *Martyrdom of St. Catherine* was apparently represented on the reverse. Delft had been particularly rich in works by Aertsen: the Carthusian monastery had a *Crucifixion* triptych by him, with a *Nativity* and an *Adoration of the magi* on the wings and *Four evangelists* on the exterior; while the Nieuwe Kerk had an *Adoration of the magi* on the High Altar, with an *Ecce Homo* 'en soo yet anders' on the wings.<sup>139</sup> All, according to van Mander, were lost; but it is worth noting that two of the *Evangelists* from Delft altarpiece survive (Prinsenhof, Delft), along with an *Adoration of the magi* and a fragment of the *Nativity* (cat. 230-31 and 229).

Yet another *Crucifixion* altarpiece by Aertsen used to be in Warmenhuysen in North Holland, and this is what happened to it: 'Dit werck als A° 1566. t'ghe-meen in zijn raserije was, wiert in stucken geslaghen met bijen, alhoewel de Vrouw van Sonneveldt t'Alckmaer daer voor boodt 100. pondt: want alsooment uyt de Kerck bracht om haer te leveren vielen de Boeren als uyt sinnigh daer op en brachten die schoon Const te niet.'<sup>140</sup> ('Even though the window of Sonneveldt from Alkmaar offered 100 pounds for it, this work was smashed to pieces with axes when the people were raving in 1566; for when it was being brought from the church to deliver it to her, the peasants mindlessly fell upon it and brought the beautiful work of art to nothing'.) Although it may well have been part of Van Mander's 'programme' to stress the opposition between culture (as represented by painting) and non-culture, the sequence of events is one that we may recognize from contemporary chronicles. No wonder that van Mander tells how Aertsen despaired and dangerously lost his temper with the iconoclasts: 'Pleter was dickwils ongeduldigh dat zijn dinghen die hij de Weerelt tot gedachtnis meenden laten, soo te meten wierden ghebracht, ghebruyckende dickwils met sulcke Const-vijandlghe groote woorden tot sijn eyghen ghevaer oft perijckel.'<sup>141</sup> ('Pleter was frequently angry that the works which he had intended to leave to the world for posterity were thus brought to nothing, and he frequently used strong words with these enemies of art to his own danger and peril.') Aertsen must have been desperate when he saw what was happening to his works – to say nothing of how he must have feared for his livelihood in a country which at least momentarily appeared so hostile to art.

It was, of course, not only a matter of hostility, but also of the general precariousness and fragility of the situation. Thus van Mander reports that after the surrender of Haarlem in 1572 the Spaniards obtained many of Heemskerck's works – already terribly decimated by iconoclasm – 'onder decksel ven te willen coopen, en nae Spaengien gesonden'<sup>142</sup> ('under the pretence of wishing to buy them and sent to Spain'); in the same town the great *Crucifixion* by Geertgen tot St. Jans, which had formerly stood over the high altar of St. John's, was destroyed, along with one of its wings. The remain-

ing wing (now one of the chief glories of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna) was sawn in two and could be seen in the Hall of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem.<sup>143</sup> The Regular Canons outside Haarlem also owned some works by Geertgen (unfortunately unspecified by van Mander), and these too were destroyed, either by soldiers or by the iconoclasts.<sup>144</sup>

All this in a town which, as we have seen, was one of the few usually assumed to have been free from iconoclasm. The doubt as to whether works were lost in 1566 or as a result of later military depredations is entirely characteristic – and justified. One cannot always attribute loss or destruction to the dramatic days of 1566. Then there were other disasters, like the great fire of 1576, in which many paintings by Jan Mostaert were said to have been lost.<sup>145</sup> It is not only our picture of sixteenth century Netherlandish painting that is seriously mutilated because of the events of these years; our view of its fifteenth century predecessors is equally deficient, for the same sad reason.

In Amsterdam van Mander records the loss of Jacob Cornelisz. van Oostsanen's apparently very beautiful *Descent from the cross* as well as the same artist's *Seven works of mercy* from the Oude Kerk (some fragments he reported to have seen at the home of Cornelis Suycker in Haarlem).<sup>146</sup> Equally distressing was the loss – save one small fragment to be seen in the Doelen – of Dirk Barentsz. *Fall of the rebel angels* 'met veelderley naeckten, seer uyt nemende ghehandelt' ('with many kinds of nudes, really outstandingly done') (cat. 250)<sup>147</sup>, to say nothing of Anthonis Blocklandt's altarpiece of *The death and burial of St. Francis*, which disappeared from the church of the Friars Minor.<sup>148</sup> All this lost in addition to the works of Aertsen cited above, to the grave loss of Heemskerck's paintings, and several works by Jan van Scorel.

Scorel, Heemskerck and Blocklandt are three of the major figures in this exhibition whose work was seriously decimated by iconoclasm. So was Jan Vermeyen, whose paintings in Brussels – and especially in St. Gudule – were either destroyed or removed 'door d'uytsinnighe beeldstorminghe' ('by the mad iconoclasm').<sup>149</sup> With Scorel, van Mander records the loss of some of his prime works in the following way: 'Maer dat te beclaghen is veel zijn ander dinghen, t'Crucifix t'Amsterdam, de schoon deuren t'Utrecht in S. Marlen, oock een schoon Tafel ter Goude, bij hem in zijnen besondersten Tijd en Fleur ghedaen, werden A° 1566 van het ontsinnighe ghemeen ghebroken en verbrandt, met noch veel meer fraey dinghen' ('But what is lamentable is the fact that many of his other works – the *Crucifixion* in Amsterdam, the beautiful wings in St. Mary's in Utrecht, as well as a beautiful panel in Gouda, done by him in his very best period and at the height of his abilities – were smashed and burned in 1566 by the senseless common people, along with many more fine things').<sup>150</sup> In the case of Blocklandt he is a little more specific: he laments the loss of several beautiful altarpieces in Delft including the one mentioned above; but he is mistaken in recording the loss of the outstanding *Martyrdom of St. James* from Gouda, since it is still preserved in the same town (Fig. 7).<sup>151</sup> Then he goes on to note that there was a large altarpiece of the *Assumption of the Virgin* at the home of 'Jofvrouw van Honthorst dicht achter den Dom' ('Jofvrouw van Honthorst just behind the Cathedral')

in Utrecht.<sup>152</sup> How it got there we may only guess; but fortunately it survives in the Parish Church of Bingen (see vol. i, fig. 258). The following passage in the life of Blocklandt gives one a poignant sense of the difficulty of coming to an adequate assessment of the work of artists like him, given the effects of iconoclasm: 'Dese schoon dinghen zijn meest door blinden ijver en onverstandlghe raserije in de oproerlghe Beeldtstorminghe vernielt, en door Barbarischen handen den ooghen der Const-lievenden naecomers berooft soo datter weynich is overghebleven' ('These beautiful things were mostly destroyed by blind zeal and stupid violence in the riotous iconoclasm, and stolen from the eyes of art-loving posterity by barbaric hands, to such an extent that very little has remained').<sup>153</sup> For all its bluntness of tone, the passage may stand as a motto for the present essay and, indeed, for the exhibition as a whole.

We now know that the destruction was not always 'barbarisch' and 'onverstandigh'; indeed van Mander records with barely veiled pride how many works were saved, both in the North and South Netherlands. These included Cornelis Engebrechtz. Marlenpoel altarpieces, which were spirited away to the safety of the Town Hall in Leiden (and hung too high, according to van Mander, to be properly appreciated).<sup>154</sup> But by the large, as we have seen, he goes to elaborate lengths, despite his Protestant affiliations, to distance himself from the acts of the iconoclasts. So do the later local chroniclers who supplement the information provided by van Mander. Unfortunately we do have to depend on seventeenth century sources for this kind of specific information. Only rarely are there found archival documents like the proud and unusually specific one of around 1568 describing the paintings by Mabuse formerly on the High Altar of the Abbey of Middelburg;<sup>155</sup> and there are no equivalents in the North to the remarkable contemporary account by Marcus van Vaernewijck of Ghent, who provides us with so much first-hand information about destruction and saving in the Southern Netherlands in 1566.<sup>156</sup> We do of course have some less specific contemporary chroniclers, like Reael, but they are not, on the whole, especially interested in art. By the time we come to Oudenhoven's 1649 *Beschryvinghe der stad ende meyerie van 's-Hertogenbosch*, however, the information is valuable indeed. Thus he records in detail the loss of a number of works by Hieronymus Bosch and by Jan van Scorel from the St. John's church there,<sup>157</sup> and we no longer rub our eyes when we read how the unusual high altarpiece by Bosch was replaced by the Ten Commandments written in gold letters.<sup>158</sup> By the time Oudenhoven was writing, this is just the sort of thing that was happening in England, on much larger scale, and for the second time in a hundred years.<sup>159</sup> Dirck van Bleywijck is the other seventeenth century town chronicler who provides us with a considerable amount of information about iconoclasm. In his *Beschrijvinge der Stadt Delft* of 1667 he not only excerpts a considerable amount from van Mander but also draws on a number of contemporary documents and records to which he had gained access. Thus he provides details of the way in which a significant number of ornaments, silver and metalware were saved from the churches and cloisters of the town,<sup>160</sup> and on occasion he is even able to correct van Mander – as in his insistence that the painting by Pleter Aertsen mentioned by Van Man-



der as having stood on the high altar of the Nieuwe Kerk did not stand there but elsewhere in the church.<sup>161</sup> The High Altar was in fact a complex *Crucifixion* polyptych by Jan van Scorel, which Bleyswijck describes with considerable care: *The Crucifixion with the thieves* had on the one wing an *Entry into Jerusalem* and on the other a *Resurrection*; on the reverse of these was a *Baptism of Christ*, the next set of wings (covering the ones just mentioned) had a *Preaching* and a *Decoliation of John the Baptist*; while on the reverse of these was a *Sacrifice of Isaac* and *The history of the 11000 virgins*.<sup>162</sup> As if daunted by the prospect of enumerating in similar detail the remaining works which had been destroyed, he now simply refers to another source for the loss of paintings by Frans Floris, Maarten van Heemskerck and Anthonie Blocklandt.<sup>163</sup> The consequences of iconoclasm for art were lamentable and clear; he even invokes reformed authority as he summarizes the damage to such a large number of works, 'alle welke rariteiten gelijk die meerendeels de rasend Kerckplunderinghe nevens andere kostelijckheden en Juweelen sonder onderscheyt jammerlijck heeft vernielt (want sulcks self van onse Gereformeerde Theologanten ten hoogste werdt gheimprobeert) soo is oock te beklaghen soo weynigh recht bescheyt van soo groot een schat voor de konst-lievende is over gebleven alleenlijck eenige weynige over geblevene en gesalveerde stucken en brocken van dese uytmuntendheden siet men noch heden ten dage in Burgemeesteren Raedt Camer te pronck hangende'.<sup>164</sup>

In our previous sections we have already reproduced Bleyswijck's very similar sentiments on the dreadful effects of iconoclasm on the Oude Kerk in Delft; but after referring to the fact that only the core ('romp') of the High Altar remained there, he proceeded to tell of the splendid new altarpiece by Willem Danielsz. van Tetrode which was almost immediately commissioned to replace it.<sup>165</sup> That work was commissioned in March 1568 for the huge sum of 1600 'Carolusgulden'; but it was never completed. Payments run until 1572,<sup>166</sup> and then the town suffered new troubles. This may be all too typical of the disturbed state of the Netherlands during these years, but the very fact of the new commission, and the classicizing splendor of what was actually made by Tetrode (unfortunately lost in the great fire of 1654)<sup>167</sup> raises one of the most profound questions of the period as a whole. Despite the deprivations of the iconoclasts, and despite the unrest thus caused in the hearts and minds of artists, iconoclasm did not sound the death knell of Dutch art, as might have been expected. On the contrary: it inaugurated a period of unparalleled innovation. To some extent this may have been sparked by the way in which both Protestants (as van Bleyswijck suggested) and Catholics united in condemning the iconoclasts. The groundswell in favour of art grew on both sides. One year after the events of 1566 and in direct response to them, the pastor of the Oude Kerk, Martinus Duncanus published his *Cort Onderscheyt tusschen Godlijcke ende Afgodissche Beelden*.<sup>168</sup> Although significantly in the vernacular and although it enjoyed the accolade of two reprintings, the book is filled with extremely traditional arguments in favour of images buttressed by an armoury of biblical quotations; and, as its title suggests – it deflected the theological arguments underlying the iconoclast position by suggesting the elimination of abuses, rather than

dealing with the fundamental issues at stake.<sup>169</sup> In the end, a book like this – just as the even more traditional *De vetustissimo sacrarum imaginum usu* published in the same year by Frederick Schenck van Toutenburg, the future Archbishop of Utrecht – was irrelevant.<sup>170</sup>

If church art was no longer to flourish in the way it had before, every other form and genre seems to have been newly inspired. Van Mander himself may have bewailed the effects of iconoclasm in no uncertain terms, but as soon as he arrived in Haarlem in 1579 he joined a group of fellow painters and sculptors who seem to have taken what had so recently happened as an opportunity to rethink the very bases of their art, and to produce new forms and new styles. The situation in the Southern Netherlands must then have seemed even bleaker. Perhaps there the consequences of iconoclasm were even worse; and the application of the Council of Trent's recommendation for the ecclesiastical supervision of art cannot have helped. It is true that one of the immediate results of iconoclasm in 1566 was the publication, in the Southern Netherlands, of a great spate of treatises in favour of images – but only ostensibly in favour.<sup>171</sup> In fact, in their attempt to purify images of misuse and abuse (whether actual or potential), many of them turned out to be inordinately prescriptive and censorious. Artists in the South cannot but have been unnerved by phenomena like these; but in the North their situation was, for the time being at least, rather more encouraging. This may have had more to do with the security and stability offered them by their new and newly independent homeland, and with the growing mood of confidence in the country at large, then with the direct effects of iconoclasm. But without the challenge offered by the whole question of images and by the terrible consequences it so briefly had, the course of Dutch art would have been entirely different.

#### 4 Significance: the image question in art

This period, like every other, leaves many enigmas behind. Among the questions that relate directly to the objects and concerns of the present exhibition is this: to what extent are the controversies and events we have been discussing reflected in visual form in the years between 1525 and 1585? The issue is not at all as simple or as clear as one might expect.

Two monuments, both published by Hessel Miedema,<sup>172</sup> could by their very nature not be included in the present exhibition, but should nevertheless claim our attention. The first is a large-scale structure that can obviously not be moved, and is typical of the kind of monument that must once have existed in much greater abundance than now (Fig. 8). The second is a kind of low-level pictorial performance on the vaulting of a church that was typically covered over with a layer of plaster and whitewash until its recent recovery (Fig. 9). Both monuments could not be more representative of the more ordinary kinds of art in the period before iconoclasm – so much of which is now lost – than those largely prestigious objects represented in the present exhibition. They are thus paradigmatic not only in their stylistic range, from the workaday to the comparatively distinguished, but also and above all in their iconography, which reveals the dialectic between Catholicism and Reformed belief in all its tension – even though the monuments were for at

least notionally Catholic places. They point to the acute difficulty of defining the doctrinal, theological and fideistic stance implicit in so many of the objects produced before and during iconoclasm. The first of these monuments is the roodscreen-like gallery known as the 'kraak' in the Reformed (Hervormde) church at Oosterend in Friesland (Fig. 8); it is in wood and is dated 1554.<sup>173</sup> The ornamental elements of this work clearly derive from the latest Antwerp fashions, like the strapwork popularized by Cornelis Floris; but what is of concern to us here are the notable figurative subjects and the vernacular texts above the gallery and below the scenes. The texts derive from a Bible published by Jacob van Liesvelt in Antwerp in the 1530s.<sup>174</sup> While Liesvelt only fell foul of the inquisition for the marginal illustration of his 1542 edition of the Bible (which was not used by the artist of the 'kraak') and was executed in 1545, we must nevertheless confront the possibility of reformed influence here.

In a general way the use of the vernacular does point, implicitly at least, to the desire for a more direct relationship between laity and scripture; but by this time the phenomenon was not especially unusual. What is unusual is the iconography of the scenes on the 'kraak'. There are eleven subjects from the Old Testament (of which 8 are derived from the Books of Kings) and only 7 from the New.<sup>175</sup> Some of the scenes are taken from the Liesvelt Bible of 1538, while others are clearly based on illustrations in Bibles such as those published in Antwerp in 1533-34 by Willem Vorsterman (placed on the Index of forbidden books in 1546) and by Hendrick Peetersen in Middelburg in 1541.<sup>176</sup> The Old Testament subjects include ones which had rarely been represented before, such as *The angel routing the Assyrians*, *Josiah called to the throne*, *Joab killing Amasa*, *David's last words*, *David writing a letter to Joab*, and – as an exceptional representation from the apocryphal book of Daniel – *Daniel unmasking the priests of Bel*.<sup>177</sup> Most unexpectedly, the Old Testament scenes do not stand in typological relationship to the New Testament ones; rather, as Miedema noted, they are exemplary. They emphasize the directness of God's relationship with Man and the role of Christ as Redeemer. This is how Miedema characterized the iconography of the 'kraak' as a whole:

'de scenes geven blijk van een zeer levendige belangstelling voor de moderne bijbelvertalingen, een belangstelling die geen behoefte meer heeft aan traditionele liturgische of typologische formules maar die duidelijke nadruk legt op het exemplarische karakter van bijbelverhalen waar een directe relatie tussen God en de mens blijkt' ('the scenes provide evidence of a very lively interest in the modern translations of the bible, an interest that no longer has any need for traditional liturgical or typological formulas, but which places clear emphasis on the exemplary nature of those biblical stories in which a direct relation between God and man is apparent').<sup>178</sup>

But, as he rightly cautioned:

'Het zou voorbarig zijn, deze nieuwe ikonographie te interpreteren als reformatoisch; wel lijkt het waarschijnlijk dat het verlaten van de typologie voor een veel directe exemplarische ikonographie samenhangt met de nieuwe directe vroomheid waarin de hervorming tot stand zou komen, maar waarbij eerder de naam van Erasmus dan die van Luther moet worden genoemd' ('It would be rash to



call this new iconography reformation iconography. It seems more likely that the abandoning of typology for a much more direct exemplary iconography is connected with the new direct piety in which the reformation had its origins, but which should rather be associated with the name of Erasmus than with Luther.<sup>179</sup>

The whole issue of the relationship between iconography and religious beliefs could hardly have been more judiciously put; but before moving on let us reflect on the appearance of just one subject which has already been found in an Amsterdam play of 1533 and will feature again – the story of Daniel and the Priests of Bel.<sup>180</sup> Although no more prominently placed than any other of the scenes on the 'kraak', and although not particularly legible from below, it does raise this particular question: what, if any, is the relationship between the increasing criticism of the idolatrous and misguided use of images on the one hand, and a subject which shows the revealing of the trick by which false priests led people into the idolatrous worship of the image of Bel on the other?<sup>181</sup> This is indeed an unusual subject to represent, but we should not push the parallel too far. Even if a relationship is assumed, there is nothing to prevent it from being seen in terms of the context so judiciously described by Miedema; and the same applies to other obviously relevant but less unusual subjects such as *Christ driving the moneychangers from the Temple*.<sup>182</sup>

The issue of purification comes to the fore in the case of the recently revealed paintings on the vault and pillars of the Grote Kerk at Harderwijk (Fig. 9).<sup>183</sup> These wonderfully robust and simple decorations of 1561-62 are accompanied by text derived from a number of different contemporary Bibles, including the Vorsterman Bible of 1528.<sup>184</sup> But the subjects, once again, are most unusual. Part of the decoration is traditional enough, with typological parallels between Old and New Testament, and a comparatively straightforward *Last judgment*. But the Last Judgment theme is expanded in an extraordinary way: it is followed by representations of *The works of mercy* (necessary for salvation) and by figures showing the absence of Mercy (which leads to damnation); then by nine female figures representing the Beatitudes, with a series of figures showing the vices (including some marked 'NOTA BENE') opposite them; and finally the Wise and Foolish Virgins.<sup>185</sup>

All this, as Miedema observed, marks a notable break with Catholic tradition: the compiler of the programme may well have had Protestant leanings. At the same time there seems to be a clear desire to avoid the blatantly heretical. In its rejection of traditional formulae and the clear need to return to the original sources, attitude and preferences here may broadly be described as humanist. 'Aan die voorkeur, eerder dan reformatorische, is ook de ikonographie van Harderwijk toe te schrijven. Maar het direkte verband met de hervorming is hiermee, meen ik, wel duidelijk' ('The iconography at Harderwijk is to be ascribed to this preference, rather to the reforming one. But in this I believe the direct connection with the reformation to be clearly apparent').<sup>186</sup> Almost exactly the same might be said of two of the most famous artists of the Reformation, Durer and Holbein.

Once again, Miedema exercises a just and prudent caution; but once again we should not omit the immediate context of the commission. The town council of Harderwijk had long been known for its

heretical tendencies and Protestant sympathies. Around 1563 it actually carried out a minor iconoclasm in the Grote Kerk by ordering the purification of the altars under the leadership of heretical preachers.<sup>187</sup> And it was just this council which little over one year earlier had commissioned the remarkably untraditional cycle of paintings in the main church of their town.

The question of Protestant influence, then, is by no means straightforward; but are there any works which reflect the image question – and, indeed, iconoclasm itself – more directly? Once again the question yields no easy answers.

Amongst the works in the present exhibition, consider the well-known case of Lucas van Leyden's *Adoration of the golden calf* (cat. 37). Here is a painting which represents the corruption of the Israelites in the Wilderness following their erection of the Golden Calf, exactly the same theme used by the polemicists to illustrate the corruption that inevitably follows idolatry.<sup>188</sup> Moses went up to Sinai to receive the tables of the law; and abandoning their true God, the children of Israel erected the image of a false one. The parallel with reformed criticism could hardly be more striking; but was the parallel intended? It is hard to imagine that in the context we have been describing the significance of such a subject would have been lost. But there is a further puzzle: if one were to paint a subject that was implicitly critical of the idolatry of Christians (and of Catholicism in particular) why should one do it in the form of precisely the kind of object that was usually attacked? indeed, the work appears to have the form of a small altarpiece, although it is unlikely to have been used as such (despite the usual translation of Van Mander's 'kasken' as 'small altarpiece').<sup>189</sup> One cannot assume that the picture is an example of intentional irony on the part of the painter, and that he deliberately made an object on which he painted a subject which implicitly undermined it; but what then are we to make of the subject? Certainly it was new (at least on pictures); but how topical was it? And to what extent – if at all – would it have been read in terms of the debate about images?

The same questions arise in the case of a number of further objects; and not only of paintings. The small panel in Hampton Court for a long time given to Lucas van Leyden but now more accurately attributed to the Master of the Sermon in the Church shows *St. Sebastian and the priest Poiycarp at the sickbed of the Prefect Chromatius*; but in the background of the picture is a scene of iconoclasm (Fig. 10).<sup>190</sup> It shows the destruction, authorized by Chromatius himself, of a sumptuous idol in the adjoining chamber; whereupon the formerly idolatrous Roman Prefect was cured.<sup>191</sup> Did a subject such as this have any topical reference? We cannot be certain; indeed, if we were, one would have to think of the implications of all those representations of the Flight into Egypt which show the collapse of an idol (almost always in the background) as a result of the imminence of Christ; and it is unlikely that many of these falling Egyptian idols – if any at all – would have been explicitly intended to be understood as allusions to the idolatrous use of Christian images – though there is no question that some of them might have been read in this way, whatever the intentions of their authors. And what are the implications and overtones of representations of *The idolatry of Solomon*, as, for example, in the triptych of around 1525 owned by a Zierikzee

burgomaster (Fig. 11)<sup>192</sup> and in many other paintings, glass panels and prints?<sup>193</sup> Similarly, if one looks at the problem from the other side of the debate, one cannot tell whether the representation of the *Brazen serpent* (cat. 138) would have carried overtones of the Catholic defence of images. There was no shortage of pro-image writers who pointed to that particular salvific use of a representation<sup>194</sup> – just as there was no shortage of writers, in either camp, who fiercely denied the relevance of Old Testament examples and proscriptions. Questions like these accumulate still further and acquire considerable urgency in the case of a number of printed images after designs by Maarten van Heemskerck. For all their marvellous stylistic innovations, Heemskerck's paintings of religious subjects were done for straightforwardly Catholic patrons, and their iconography – aside from a few possible cases of Protestant influence – seems doctrinally and thematically sound. But with several of his print series the situation is much more complex. In the first place we should remember that they reached not only a much wider audience than the paintings, but may well have been intended to cater to specific segments of the market for prints and propaganda – whatever Heemskerck's own views. Perhaps the most interesting series in this respect are those which deal with some of the most dramatic instances of Old Testament idolatry and of the overthrow of pagan idol worship by just rulers (even though few of them form part of the usual repertoire). They were published in the years immediately before and after the tumultuous events of 1566. In them, the idols could hardly have been more clearly represented, their adoration more crassly shown or their destruction more paradigmatically suggested. The most striking of the series are *The history of Bel and the dragon* designed in 1564 and published by Hieronymus Cock in the following year, *The history of Ahab and Elijah* engraved and published by Phillip Galle, *The history of Athaliah* engraved by Harmen Muller after drawings dated 1567, and *The history of Josiah* by Galle after studies dated 1569.<sup>195</sup> How, in 1565, when the Bel series was first published, could prints such as those showing the vast and ugly image of Bel (which the priests used so cleverly to hoodwink and trick the people) not have been seen as an incitement to iconoclasm – or at least as an allusion to the greedy exploitativeness of the idolatrous clergy (Fig. 12)?<sup>196</sup> And how could anyone have avoided taking the scene showing the systematic destruction of the Temple of Bel and of its contents (with the child urinating on a fallen bust in the corner) as the logical outcome of the behaviour so graphically exemplified in the preceding prints of the series (Fig. 13)?<sup>197</sup>

Such images are followed after 1566 by the repeated representation of huge idols and patently false priests, of the massacre of the priests and destruction of images by righteous rulers? Take as examples the opening scenes with the idols in *The history Ahab*,<sup>198</sup> *The destruction of the house of Baal* in the Athaliah series (Fig. 14),<sup>199</sup> or the magnificent and sustained commentary on the false use of images and their removal by the king in *The history of Josiah*, which reaches its height in four prints showing violent and vigorous iconoclasm achieved by means of hammers, ropes, fires and axes (eg. Fig. 15, 16 and 17).<sup>200</sup> Who could fail to see the topical relevance of such works? Then there is the question of why Heemskerck should have



chosen to represent the priests of Bel in the earlier series as tonsured monks: is this simply anti-clerical, or is it more tendentious than that – particularly in the light of the abundantly evident idolatry of these priests and their rightful overthrow?<sup>201</sup> Certainly almost every one of these series contain scenes of the slaughter of idolatrous priests. These are not the only allusions to idolatry and to iconoclasm in Heemskerck's work; there are a number more. And yet for 22 years before he died in 1574 Heemskerck was churchwarden of St. Bavo's in Haarlem;<sup>202</sup> in the *Clades Iudaeorum* series he represented the destruction of the Temples of Jerusalem by Nebuzaradan again by Titus (destruction by enemies of the true religion);<sup>203</sup> and he was a close friend of Dirck Volckertsz. Coornhert, who more than anyone else appears to have staved off serious iconoclasm in Haarlem.<sup>204</sup> Could it be that in prints like these Heemskerck was not actually advocating the destruction of images, but rather suggesting that if the churches were to be purified, then the process should only be carried out at the behest of the rightful authorities – an idea that is frequent not only in the major Reformation writers, but also in Coornhert himself.<sup>205</sup> One of the most striking features of all the prints noted above is the emphasis on the presence of the ruler (or the prophet) at each of the major iconoclastic events. But whether this puts these images closer to Catholic attitudes or rather to those of Luther or Calvin must still remain unclear. The most likely possibility is that the stance is to be aligned with that broad Erasmian strain in Dutch culture to which we have already alluded. We now know, as a result of the work of Iija Veldman that if there was any artist at this time who might be called humanist – both in the narrow and the broad senses – it was Heemskerck;<sup>206</sup> and in this respect we may well want to come to similar conclusions as those which Miedema arrived at in the case of the vastly different objects in Oosterend and Harderwijk. For all that, there is certainly a strong sense in these works by Heemskerck of the potential idolatrousness – at least – of images. If there were any images of the sixteenth century which seem to be making a statement in favour of iconoclasm it is these; could it be that the artist is here only insisting on the right way of going about it?

It will be apparent from the abundance of questions raised here how difficult it is to come to specific conclusions either about particular attitudes or about the precise nature of the relationship between topical issues and subject matter. If anything, this is simply an indication of the richly textured context of thought about images and their value during the whole period covered by the exhibition. If it were easier to unravel single strands then the fabric would be less rich than it palpably is, and one would be less given to insist on the importance of viewing all images of the period in the context we have been describing. There are of course a number of images of a polemical or satirical nature whose import is not unclear at all; but these – perhaps interestingly – seem to come mostly from the Southern Netherlands. It may simply be a question of survival, but one looks in vain for prints like Marcus Gheeraerts' remarkable *Allegory of iconoclasm* (Fig. 18) or the engraving of 1566 headed 't is al verloren, ghebeden oft ghescheten; ick heb de beste canse ghestreken, 1566' (Fig. 19). The first shows a monstrous face-like landscape, on which are scattered a variety of scenes showing the abuse

of the sacraments and other aspects of Catholic devotion; above is the pope, surrounded by monks and bishops, and fastooned with indulgences, rosaries and the like, while below the accoutrements of the liturgy (including many images) are being smashed to bits or carted away to destruction.<sup>207</sup> The second print shows the removal and destruction of images (in the left background), while on the right a devil carries the cross and other Catholic insignia ('want alle dees cremekie hoort den duyvel toe' ('because all this stuff belongs to the devil') reads the inscription). Below the devil, monks and bishops worship the pope as the whore of Babylon seated atop a seven-headed beast on an altar.<sup>208</sup> One assumes there must have been many others like these; but unfortunately we are left with the more ambiguous kinds of imagery. Perhaps it was simply safer to leave the matter ambiguous; or perhaps it was the effectiveness of the censors that eliminated the more explicit and the more blatantly subversive visual commentaries.

There is one artist in whom all these questions come together – and yet remain elusively and frustratingly unanswered: Pieter Aertsen. Despite the attention devoted to him in the last fifteen years – most notably by Jan Emmens – the whole question of how it is that Aertsen came to paint his remarkable kitchen and genre-pieces (cf. cat. 225-28) has still not been entirely resolved.<sup>209</sup> One can do no more than speculate on the possibility that at least part of the motivation (quite possibly unconscious) may have been as a result of impatience with traditional forms of religious art; and that the motivation may well have sprung from the influence of Protestant ideas about such forms and their functions.<sup>210</sup> But we cannot know the answers to these questions until we have more biographical information (especially concerning the reasons for his return from Antwerp to Amsterdam in 1556) and further insight into the kinds of works he produced after 1566, when commissions for altarpieces were dramatically limited. Certainly we know of his deep and unsurprising exasperation at the destruction of his works in that year and after.<sup>211</sup> But what are we to make of the wholly surprising painting of *The idolatry of Nebuchadnezzar* now in Rotterdam (Fig. 20)?<sup>212</sup> Here is a work which shows the massive and clearly idolatrous image erected by the King of Babylon, while in the background, unmistakably, are the three holy children – Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego – who were prepared to die for their opposition to the idol which so offensively dominated the scene and is so grossly venerated there.<sup>213</sup> It is hard to imagine how the topical significance of the scene could have gone unnoticed by anyone in the Netherlands in the years covered by this exhibition (and the same subject was also represented in print by Heemskerck);<sup>214</sup> but we are still left with the puzzle of how more precisely a work such as this would have been read and for whom it could have been painted. Perhaps it would be as well not to push the possibility of topical reference too far, since exactly the same subject was painted by Aertsen's son, Pieter Pietersz., for the Haarlem Guild of Bakers (cat. 229) – for whom the subject was oddly, indeed perversely, appropriate – in 1575.<sup>215</sup> But those were different times... We still know too little about Pieter Aertsen. His work seems to pose in acute form many of the questions suggested in this last section of our discussion. Even if the case of Aertsen fails to provide the answers, no one could deny the extraor-

dinary pertinence of the kinds of issues generated in the great debated around him, and in the cataclysmic events from which he suffered. They are pertinent to our understanding of Dutch history, pertinent to our understanding of Dutch art, and pertinent to the very roots of the way in which we think about all art. In the period between 1525 and 1580 every doubt that had ever been raised about the artistic endeavour was aired and then subjected to the most critical scrutiny imaginable. Every aspect of the validity and the worth of art was raised and raised again; it was debated, discussed and argued, in countless treatises, sermons and polemics. In The Netherlands these momentous debates coincided with extraordinary social and political pressures, to culminate in a brief but fierce assault on images. What resulted, astonishingly, was not resignation and defeat, but rather a sustained and extraordinarily imaginative reevaluation of the Dutch artistic tradition. If ever there was a period that testifies most eloquently to commitment in the face of criticism it is this one. One might have thought that the controversies about images would wither the roots of art, or that iconoclasm would remove the evidence of its growth; but that did not happen at all. Not only did art survive; it flourished. It built innovatively on the past and prepared the way for a magnificently inventive future. But it would be wrong to see the period between 1525 and 1580 solely in terms of transition: its achievements, as this exhibition so eloquently testifies, stand wholly on their own.

<sup>1</sup> The only general survey still remains the unsatisfactory and superficial book by Von Vegh 1915. For more recent attempts at different kinds of overview, see Freedberg 1977 and Freedberg 1986, as well as the excellent selection of essays in Warnke 1973.

<sup>2</sup> Scheerder 1974 provides a sound but all too brief general survey. De Jong 1974 provides a good summary in a small compass. For good assessments of the general problems and issues involved, see Dierickx 1966, Freedberg 1973 and the excellent study by Duke/Kolff 1969, which although comparatively local gives the reader the best possible impression of the main historiographic and sociological issues.

<sup>3</sup> On these particular aspects of Erasmus' criticism, with the relevant sources, see Freedberg 1971.

<sup>4</sup> For these and other aspects of Erasmus' attitude to art, see, inter alia, Giese 1935, p. 257-79, Panofsky 1969, p. 200-27, and Moxey 1977A, p. 122-26.

<sup>5</sup> For the best overview of the reformation debate, see Von Campenhausen 1960. Karlstadt's *Von Abtuhung der Bilder* (Wittenberg, 1522) is available in the edition by H. Lietzmann (Bonn, 1911). For Hazer and his 1525 booklet entitled *Ein Urteil Gottes...wie man sich mit allen gotzen und bildnussen halten soll*, see n. 17 below.

<sup>6</sup> The literature on Byzantine iconoclasm is now vast. A good compendium of information, with a useful bibliography and selection of texts is provided by Bryer/Herrin 1977.

<sup>7</sup> For the best discussions of these arguments, see Von Campenhausen 1952, and Kitzinger 1954.

<sup>8</sup> The argument comes of course from St. Basil, and is to be found in the course of his discussion of the essential unity of the Trinity in the *De Spiritu Sancto*, XVIII, 45



(PG XXII, col. 149C), and is stimulatingly discussed by Ladner 1953, p. 3-33, as well as by Kitzinger 1954, p. 91.

<sup>9</sup> The classic Gregorian position is to be found in the famous letter to Serenus, Bishop of Marseilles (who had removed the images from the churches in his diocese), PL LXVII, cols. 1027-28.

<sup>10</sup> For the middle ages in general, see Kollwitz 1957, p. 109-38. The threefold argument is to be found in one of its classic forms in Thomas Aquinas, *Commentarium super libros sententiarum, Commentum in Librum III*, dist. 9, art. 2, qu. 2, a passage that is practically never correctly cited.

For Thomas's full statement and further discussion, with other medieval parallels, see Freedberg 1982, p. 149, n. 53.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. St. Bonaventure in the *Itinerarium mentis ad deum*, II, 11 'Signa divinitus data... (vel picturae; simulacra et spectacula)... sunt exemplaria vel potius exemplata, proposita mentibus aditus rudibus et sensibilibus, ut per sensibilia, quae vident, transferantur ad intelligibilia, quae non vident, tamquam per signa ad signata'. See the nice outline of the semiotic implications of these ideas in Sukale 1977, p. 188-89.

<sup>12</sup> The classic position here is to be found in St. Bernard's often cited letter to the Abbot William of St. Thierry, *Apologia ad Gulielmum Sancti Theoderici Abbatem*, PL CLXXXII, cols. 915-17, with its trenchant opposition of the refulgent but superfluous adornment of the churches to the real needs of the poor. For the relevant passages as well as some of the main Reformation derivations, see Freedberg 1982, p. 149-50, n. 56.

<sup>13</sup> The best and fullest discussion of Luther on the Decalogue is to be found in Stirm 1977, p. 17-23; on Luther's views on iconoclasm and on Karlstadt, see p. 24-58 there. A general appraisal of the relations between Luther and art, as well as his position in the image controversy is provided by Christensen 1979, who also has a useful bibliography of the preceding general works on the subject. See also Von Campenhausen 1959.

<sup>14</sup> As, for example in the *Sermon on Indulgences* of 1518, the Sermon of 12 March, 1522, the letter to Count Ernest of Saxony (WA I, p. 236, WA X-3, p. 32, WA Br. X, p. 558) and in many other places including the *Commentary on Deuteronomy* of 1529 (eg. WA I, p. 556, 598). See too Stirm 1977, p. 57 (with further sources in Luther), Christensen 1979, p. 42-65 and Baxandall 1980, p. 88-93.

<sup>15</sup> For these positions, see the works cited in the previous note. For the particular issue of the need for iconoclasm to be carried out by the proper authorities, see Christensen 1979, p. 49-50, as well as p. 71, 75-76, 80 and n. 28, 119 and 205 below.

<sup>16</sup> For all its overt ideological interests, still see Zschelletschky 1975.

<sup>17</sup> On Hätzer and his booklet, see Garside 1960, p. 20-36.

<sup>18</sup> For the views of Zwingli, see, in addition to the pioneering articles by Von Campenhausen in 1959 and 1960, Garside 1966 and the excellent analysis in Stirm 1977, p. 138-60. Both Garside's book and that of Christensen cited in n. 13-15 above suffer from too general a view of the problem and an inadequate use of the appropriate documentary sources.

<sup>19</sup> Stirm 1977, especially p. 166-80.

<sup>20</sup> For most of these attitudes and ideas, see the marvellously sustained assault in the *Institution de la religion chrétienne* (1560), book I, chapter XI.

<sup>21</sup> The literature on the preachers is vast,

but a useful guide to their role and to the literature on them is provided by Mack Crew 1978. For an attempt to assess the relationship between the kinds of ideas about images that might have been purveyed by the preachers and the actual outbreak of iconoclasm, see Freedberg 1976.

<sup>22</sup> BRN I, p. 261 and 271. For the references in this and the next paragraph, I am indebted to Moxey 1977A, p. 144-48.

<sup>23</sup> *Articulen van Balthasar Friberger*, in BRN I, p. 122. The work appears on the 1950 Index.

<sup>24</sup> Published by Sebastian Heyden in Nürnberg in 1524.

<sup>25</sup> The passage is taken from Grapheus's *Troost ende Spiegel der Siecken* and is reproduced in BRN I, p. 188. The *Troost ende Spiegel der Siecken* first appeared in 1525, and then again in 1531 and 1557; inevitably it found its way onto the Indices of 1550 and 1576.

<sup>26</sup> BRN I, p. 416. The work concerned is *Den Val der Roomsche Kercken*, which after its first appearance in Norwich in 1550 was re-edited in London in 1553, Emden, 1556 and Antwerp, 1561 – before appearing on the Index of 1570.

<sup>27</sup> BRN X, p. 191-92.

<sup>28</sup> For more on the significance of Old Testament subjects like these, involving idolatry and the destruction of idols, see Saunders 1978-79, especially p. 64-69 and 73-80. Cf. also the discussion of the appearance of subjects like these in the works of Maarten van Heemskerck on p. 79-80 below.

<sup>29</sup> *De Verantwoording van Angelus Merula*, ed. I.M.J. Hoog, Leiden (1897), p. 56-57, 131-32, 161. For recent new material on Angelus Merula (recte Engel Willemsz.), see Troost/Woltjer 1972, p. 321-32 with appropriate references to the earlier studies on him).

<sup>30</sup> This is the modern Dutch orthography given by Kronenbrug 1911, VII, p. 59, from the *Revocatie ende abjuratie van H. Marino Everswaert, vicepastoor eertyts vander nywer kerk tot Dortrecht* of 1533.

<sup>31</sup> For the text of van der Heyden's pamphlet (which appeared on the lists of forbidden books of 1550 and 1569), see BRN IV, 19-21. The particular sentiment expressed here occurs on p. 19. On van der Heyden himself, see F. Pijper in BRN IV, p. 3-19.

<sup>32</sup> On Versteeghe, see F. Pijper in BRN IV, p. 79-123. The text of *De Leken Wechwyser* is reproduced in BRN IV, p. 123-363.

<sup>33</sup> For the editions and translations of *De Leken Wechwyser*, see BRN IV, p. 117-18.

<sup>34</sup> Ibidem, p. 289.

<sup>35</sup> Ibidem, p. 289.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. (continuation of previous passage): 'Men mocht die tempelen mit treffelicken historien uyt hilliger schrift laten bemalen, wil men figuren hebben. Off alleen schone spruoken, met grote letteren an die mouren laten schryven unde gar wit sonder figuren laten blyven.'

<sup>37</sup> On these aspects of the rederijers' plays, see Loosjes 1909, p. 246-90; Enno van Gelder 1959, especially p. 23-27 and 59-86.

<sup>38</sup> The literature on the *Landjuwelen* is substantial, but for a useful general overview, see Steenberghe 1952 with a good bibliography of earlier works on the subject (and on the Rederijers generally) on p. 215-19. For the few anti-image allusions at the *Landjuweel* of 1539, see Moxey 1977A, p. 153.

<sup>39</sup> Ellerbroek-Fortuin 1937, p. 26; for the reappearance of this subject and more on its possible significance, see the discussion of the 'kraak' of Oosterend and of

Maarten van Heemskerck's representations in print form on p. 79 and 80 above, with notes. See also Saunders 1978-79, p. 76 for further Bel references in poetry and songs.

<sup>40</sup> Ellerbroek-Fortuin 1937, p. 190.

<sup>41</sup> *Een Tafelspel van twee personagien, te weten de weereltsche gheleerde ende godlijke wijze, om te spelen voor een christelijke congregatie*, published in Ellerbroek-Fortuin 1937, p. 196-211.

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem, p. 201-02. For the plays and songs in this and the next three paragraphs, I am once again indebted to Moxey 1977A, especially p. 148-163 (which, along with p. 144-48, as cited in n. 22 above, appear in almost exactly the same form in Moxey 1977B, p. 148-62).

<sup>43</sup> 'Maer mij dunckt gij doet al verloren pijnje,/aen dees gemaelde belden van godt verboden... het sijn al afgoden', as in De Vooyts 1928, p. 191-92. For the rest of this prologue to the *Second Apostel Play* by van Haecht, see p. 191-97. De Vooyts, p. 29-30 plausibly suggests that while the painter, like van Haecht himself, appears to have adopted a Lutheran position on these matters, his opponent is presumably to be regarded a Calvinist.

<sup>44</sup> Ibidem, p. 40-41. These are exactly the precedents that appear in any number of pro-image treatises, especially the Catholic ones – as, for example, in at least one work which will appear later in this discussion (cf. p. 78 above): M. Duncanus (recte Donk), *Een cort onderscheyt tuschen Godlycke end afgodische beelden*, Antwerp 1567 (second ed. 1579), fo. Avii v-Aviii r.

<sup>45</sup> Ibidem, p. 40; on Van Haecht's affiliation and beliefs, see p. 20-37.

<sup>46</sup> 'Ick en ben ick saeg liever mijn werck versleten,/mijns hertsen secreten kent godt de heere./tmoet ver van mij sijn dat ik met lof en eere./sou laeten aenbidden mijn constich verven/...', Ibidem, p. 41.

<sup>47</sup> Published in *Een Lietboeckken tracterende van den Offer des Heeren*, 1563 and available in BRN H, p. 601.

<sup>48</sup> Wieder 1900, p. 83.

<sup>49</sup> *Veelderhande Liedekens*, Amsterdam 1582, p. 138.

<sup>50</sup> As, for example, in Kuiper/Leendertz 1924, I, p. 52.

<sup>51</sup> Cited by De Hoop Scheffer 1886, p. 357.

<sup>52</sup> De Hoop Scheffer 1873, H, p. 541-42.

<sup>53</sup> On the extraordinary iconoclasm in Munster, see Warnke, 'Durchbrochene Geschichte? Die Bildersturme der Wiedertäufer in Munster, 1534/1535', in Warnke 1973, p. 65-98.

<sup>54</sup> Eck's views may, for example, be found in the fifteenth chapter of his *Enchiridion*, Ingolstadt 1529; but his position was clear from as early as 1522, when he published his response to Karlstadt's Von Abtuhung der Bilder and the Wittenberg iconoclasm. It was entitled *De non tollendis Christi et Sanctorum Imaginibus*, Ingolstadt 1522. For the pre-Tridentine Catholic response and polemic, see Polman 1932, especially p. 410-41; Scavizzi 1981, p. 43-234; and Freedberg 1973, p. 50-56. For examples of the poems in which Anna Bijns satirized or attacked what she regarded as reformed double standards in the matter of images (they retained Lascivious and other unsuitable images in their homes, see *Referenzen van Anne Bijns*, ed. A. Bogaers and W.L. van Helten, Rotterdam 1875, p. 106, 118 and 124).

<sup>55</sup> The text of this portion of the Heidelberg Confession is that of Dathenus' translation. It is also the one that appeared in Richard Schilder's *Formulierenboek* (Middelburg, 1611), which in turn lay at the basis of the Dort Synod's discussions in



1619. For the full text, the textual history and the variants, see Bakhuizen van den Brink 1976, p. 201-08 (for more on the various translations see p. 35-36). It is worth noting – as one considers the problem of variant readings – the differences between the text of the answer to Question 98 as given here, and that of the two Emden translations of 1563 and 1565, which runs as follows: 'Neent: want wij en zullen niet wijser zijn dan Godt, de welcke sijne Christenheyt niet door stomme afgoden, maer door de levendige predicacie sijns woordts wil onderwesen ofte gheleert hebben'. 'Predicacie' for 'verkondinghe' and 'stomme beelden' for 'stomme afgoden' are changes worth pondering.
- <sup>51</sup> These matters are all carefully and brilliantly set out in Jedin 1935, p. 143-89 and 404-29.
- <sup>52</sup> 'Imagines porro Christi, deiparae Virginis et aliorum sanctorum in templis praesertim habendes et retinendas... quoniam honus, qui eis exhibetur, refertur ad prototypa, quae illae repraesentant... Illud vero diligenter doceant episcopi, per historias mysteriorum nostrae redemptionis, picturis vel aliis similitudinibus expressas, erudiri et confirmari populum in articulis fidei commemorandis et assidue recolendis', *Decretum De invocatione, veneratione, et reliquiis sanctorum et sacris imaginibus (Sessio XXV)*, readily available in *Decretum* ed. 1973.
- <sup>53</sup> 'In has autem sanctas et salutare observationes si qui abusus irrepererint: eos prorsus aboleri sancta synodus vehementer cupit, ita ut nullae falsi dogmatis imagines et rudibus periculosi erroris occasionem praebeentes statuatur... Omnis porro superstitio in sanctorum invocatione, reliquiarum veneratione et imaginum sacro usu tollatur, omnis turpis questus eliminetur, omnis denique lascivia vitetur ita ut procacitate venustate imagines non pingantur nec orientur; et sanctorum celebratione ac reliquiarum visitatione homines a commensatione atque ebrietatis non abutantur, quasi festi dies in honorem sanctorum per luxum ac lasciviam agantur', *ibidem*, p. 775-76.
- <sup>54</sup> *ibidem*, p. 776. For the influence in the Netherlands of this part of the decree, both theologically and artistically, see Freedberg 1973, p. 165-70, as well as Freedberg 1976.
- <sup>55</sup> It is still worth consulting the remarkable compendium of documents in the estimable work by Te Water 1779-96. The most useful up-to-date summary in English of these events is provided by Parker 1979, p. 68-71 (with good bibliographical references on p. 286-88) while a recent popular account in Dutch (with interesting illustrations) is provided by H. de Schepper in Van Deursen/De Schepper 1984, p. 54-63.
- <sup>56</sup> For a comprehensive summary of the role of the preachers in the beginning of the revolt, with a good bibliography of primary and secondary sources (though see the following note), see Mack Crew 1978, and Decavele 1968-69, p. 1-42, as well as the works cited in the following note.
- <sup>57</sup> The classic article on the *hagepreken* (astonishingly absent from Mack Crew's bibliography) is Fruin 1903. But the accounts are so numerous (even the exactly contemporary ones) that it would be futile to list them here. Amongst the most interesting for the North Netherlands are Van Campen 1949 and Smit 1924.
- <sup>58</sup> Backhouse 1971, p. 78.
- <sup>59</sup> *ibidem*, p. 91-111 for this and the further progress of the group.
- <sup>60</sup> The literature on iconoclasm in Antwerp is substantial, often good and sometimes very provocative. Amongst the works worth consulting and perusing, see Van Roosbroek 1930, with a full bibliography of contemporary accounts, of which perhaps the most revealing is the one by Godevaert van Haecht edited by Van Roosbroek himself, *De Kroniek van Godevaert van Haecht over de troebelen van 1565 tot 1574 te Antwerpen en elders*, ed. R. van Roosbroek, Antwerp 1929. Also useful (for other places as well) is the 'Corte verhalinge vande Beeltstormerije, geschiet binnen dese Nederlanden als Brabant, Vlaenderen, Hollant ende Zeelant, ende int lant van Luydick', in F.G.V. 1743, p. 82-85.
- <sup>61</sup> For a summary of the extent to which iconoclasm was planned – and whether it was locally planned or done so on a wider and possibly national scale, as once was thought in certain quarters – see Scheerder 1952, p. 67-74; Scheerder 1974, p. 98-101; see also Dierickx 1966, p. 1040-48. Almost every one of the articles cited in the notes in this section contain evidence of organization; but some – for example notes 116 and 121 also cite those instances where iconoclasm seems to have taken a more spontaneous turn.
- <sup>62</sup> For an excellent summary of these events, see Scheerder 1974, p. 48-51.
- <sup>63</sup> See Fig. 3 for a map of the progress and pattern (if one can call it that) of iconoclasm. For a good chronology, see Scheerder 1974, p. 117-20. Appropriate bibliographic references for the appearance of iconoclasm in each of these and the following towns in this and the next paragraph will be given in the detailed discussion on p. 74-76 above and notes below.
- <sup>64</sup> Woltjer 1962, p. 150-52, and Woltjer 1969, p. 170-75.
- <sup>65</sup> See p. 77 above and n. 137 below.
- <sup>66</sup> For some of the social and economic issues and factors, see the now well-known left wing work Kuttner 1949 as well as Van der Wee 1971.
- <sup>67</sup> In addition to the works cited in the preceding note, see, for example, the contemporary observations by Van Vaerenwijck ed. 1905, p. 87; F. de Potter, ed., *Dagboek van Cornelis en Philips van Campene*, Ghent (1870), p. 10-11 (both with reference to Ghent); and van Haecht's *Kroniek* (cf. n. 65) p. 14, 17 (for Antwerp).
- <sup>68</sup> For Middelburg and its surroundings, see Van Vloten 1873.
- <sup>69</sup> Beenakker 1971, p. 71.
- <sup>70</sup> See the chronicle in Ackersdijck 1857.
- <sup>71</sup> Van Nierop 1978, p. 30.
- <sup>72</sup> Breen 1896, p. 24.
- <sup>73</sup> Breen 1896, p. 25-26.
- <sup>74</sup> Breen, 1896, p. 26.
- <sup>75</sup> '...want door het vriendelijck spreken van de schutterij sijn alle vertrocken, ende kerck worde geslooten', Breen 1896, p. 27.
- <sup>76</sup> Breen 1896, p. 31-32.
- <sup>77</sup> Breen 1896, p. 38. On the course of the second iconoclasm in Antwerp, see van Nierop 1978, p. 36-38.
- <sup>78</sup> Breen 1896, p. 38-39.
- <sup>79</sup> See p. 180-81 of the *Proces-Verbael ghehouden na het inne-nemen van het clooster van de Minnebroeders* in Soutendam 1877, p. 179-221. On the course of iconoclasm in Delft, see also Smit 1924.
- <sup>80</sup> Scheerder 1974, p. 75; cf. Van Bleyswijck 1667, p. 250.
- <sup>81</sup> Van Bleyswijck 1667, p. 168.
- <sup>82</sup> Kleijntjens/van Campen 1932, p. 67, where the provocative sermon of 'Gerrit van Kuilenburg' is also mentioned. On other preachers active in and around Utrecht, see p. 66-68.
- <sup>83</sup> For the 'Raads dagelijckx boeck' on the events of 24-25 August, 1566 in Utrecht, see Kleijntjens/van Campen 1932, p. 71-243.
- <sup>84</sup> Kleijntjens/van Campen 1932, p. 171.
- <sup>85</sup> Kleijntjens/van Campen 1932, p. 172.
- <sup>86</sup> The course of their activities is made abundantly plain in the extraordinary testimony published in Kleijntjens/van Campen 1932, p. 71-244. St. James's really only appears in the hearing of Jan van Amerongen on p. 207-10, and in Alva's instructions to repair the churches, here reproduced on p. 244-45.
- <sup>87</sup> Cited in Scheerder 1974, p. 79. For the actions of the rhetoricians, see Loosjes 1909, p. 623; Knappert 1908, p. 207-08; and p. 141 in Kolff 1966.
- <sup>88</sup> See Kist/Moll 1862, p. 429 for the relevant document of 26 August 1566. On 28 August the Council insisted on the storage and safekeeping of objects (*ibidem* p. 431) Indeed, just over a year later, on 16 December 1567, in a letter to the Court of Holland the Council was to claim that thanks to its care and foresight the most important works of art were saved (*ibidem*, p. 433-36). Cf. Hermesdorf [e.a.] 1978, p. 401 n. 60, as well as n. 131 below.
- <sup>89</sup> Scheerder 1974, p. 79. The best account of the troubles in Leiden is Kolff 1966.
- <sup>90</sup> Breen 1896, p. 32-33; cf. also Scheerder 1974, p. 76-77.
- <sup>91</sup> For a brilliant discussion of the whole problem of the range of beliefs in a town like this, see Troost/Woltjer 1972, especially p. 318-26, as well as the interesting material on p. 340-42 about lapsed or lapsing priests in the neighbourhood.
- <sup>92</sup> Troost/Woltjer 1972, p. 328.
- <sup>93</sup> *ibidem*.
- <sup>94</sup> Duke/Kolff 1969, p. 326 (with appropriate archival reference in n. 77).
- <sup>95</sup> See P. Marnix van St. Aldegonde, *Vraye narration et apologie des choses passees... en l'an MDLXVI*, in Van Marnix ed. 1871, p. 109. With this one may compare the very similar sentiments expressed by the altogether notorious preacher Herman Modet, also about the Antwerp iconoclasm, in his *Apologie ofte verantwoordinghe...* (Maastricht, 1567), reprinted in Brutel de la Riviere 1879, p. 65.
- <sup>96</sup> See Wils 1938, p. 417, and supplement with Troost/Woltjer 1972, p. 335.
- <sup>97</sup> Troost/Woltjer 1972, p. 334.
- <sup>98</sup> His actions are documented with great care in De Jong 1957.
- <sup>99</sup> De Jong 1957, p. 102.
- <sup>100</sup> As cited in Scheerder 1974, p. 86 (p. 85-87 provide an excellent summary of the events of the week following 7 September in Culemborg).
- <sup>101</sup> Scheerder 1974, p. 87.
- <sup>102</sup> Kleijntjens 1948, p. 173. For another instance of the participation of a lapsed priest in the iconoclasm around Groningen, see Kleijntjens 1948, p. 174 (Loppersum). But everywhere the priests were changing sides, and sometimes there were former priests among the preachers who led the image-breaking in so many places.
- <sup>103</sup> Kleijntjens 1948 p. 174. It is perhaps worth recalling here that in 1568 twenty two Antwerp schoolteachers lost their jobs as they were alleged to have taught Protestant catechisms and psalms and encouraged their pupils to defy the authorities (Briels 1972, p. 92).
- <sup>104</sup> Kleijntjens 1935, p. 6; cf. also the documents published on the following pages



- of Kleijntjens' article, as for example, on p. 20, 27 etc. etc.
- <sup>110</sup> Kleijntjens 1935, p. 6-7, 43.
- <sup>111</sup> Kleijntjens 1935, p. 44-46 for the role of a number of members of the shoemakers' guild.
- <sup>112</sup> Kleijntjens 1935, p. 51.
- <sup>113</sup> The events in these places are neatly summarized in Scheerder 1974, p. 87-89.
- <sup>114</sup> See Rogier 1945, I, p. 537-39, for what he calls, on p. 538 'de schandelijkste episode van de Noordnederlandse protestantisering, een van de brutaalste vormen van minderheidsrecht en gewetensknegting'.
- <sup>115</sup> Quoted in Scheerder 1974, p. 92. For more on the *voederjaar* in Maastricht, see Bax 1941, II, p. 101-208 ('Maastricht omstreeks het wonderjaar').
- <sup>116</sup> As quoted in Salomons 1985 p. 179. The rest of this article (p. 179-90) provides an excellent short analysis of the rise and subsidence of the particularly fierce outburst of iconoclasm in this small weaving town in Netherlands-Limburg.
- <sup>117</sup> See Duke 1968.
- <sup>118</sup> For the events in Haarlem and the role of Coornhert, see especially Kleijntjens/Becker p. 1-134 (reproducing the documents of the official investigation and proceedings against him in 1567), with an excellent summary of his actions and attitudes on p. XI-XIV.
- <sup>119</sup> In addition to the documents cited in Kleijntjens/Becker, see the pages on the relation between Coornhert's and the iconoclastic position in Saunders 1978-79, p. 80-83.
- <sup>120</sup> The characteristically copious testimony taken before them is reprinted in Van Hoeck, p. 215-433.
- <sup>121</sup> Van Hoeck, p. 206-07, with plenty of further evidence on the following pages, as, for example, on p. 250.
- <sup>122</sup> Van Hoeck, p. 286.
- <sup>123</sup> See, for example, Kleijntjens/Van Campen 1932 p. 244, which also reproduces the further instructions from the Utrecht *Schout*, upon receipt of Alva's *missyve*, to the churchwardens of all the local churches.
- <sup>124</sup> De Jong 1957, p. 144.
- <sup>125</sup> See, for example, the extraordinary case of the painting of the Ten Commandments in gold letters on a black ground on the surface of a now lost *Crucifixion* by Hugo van der Goes in St. James's in Bruges, described by Van Mander, fo. 204v. Van Oudenhoven 1649, p. 25, reports the replacement of a painting by Bosch on the High Altar of St. Johns in 's Hertogenbosch with the text of the Decalogue in large gold letters; and so on and so forth. It is perhaps worth recalling here how frequent were the recommendations that figured imagery be replaced by text, as in the case of the recommendation by Versteghe (see p. 71 above) that if one had to have something on the walls, one should either have stories from scripture, or edifying sayings in large letters ('off alleen schone spruiken mit grote letteren an die moeren laten schryven unde gar wit sonder figuren laten blijven' BRN IV, p. 289) – which was much better.
- <sup>126</sup> Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, no. 2815; each panel 101: 54/35.5 cm. Friedlar der, X, no. 55.
- <sup>127</sup> On the history and restoration of *The seven works of mercy* polyptych, see the excellent account in De Bruyn Kops 1975.
- <sup>128</sup> As appears from the photographs of the painting in its stripped state, which were made by William Suhr in 1959, immediately before he undertook restoration and repairs. These photographs show severe X-shaped cuts to the eyes and mouths. I am grateful to Jan Piet Filedt Kok for drawing my attention to this aspect of the painting's history and to the Toledo (Ohio) Museum of Art for letting me have copies of the relevant material.
- <sup>129</sup> Further discussion of this issue in Freedberg 1986, p. 27-33 and n. 95-99.
- <sup>130</sup> For further discussion of these aspects of iconoclasm, see Freedberg 1986.
- <sup>131</sup> For the fate and fortune of Lucas's triptych during this period, see Rammelma-Elsevier 1875, p. 75-76; Dulberg 1899A, I, p. 33-34; and, above all, Hermesdorf [e.a.] 1978, p. 325-30, p. 401, n. 58-60 (with an important consideration of the validity of a group of documents about its movement in 1566-77), and p. 411 Docs. I and 2 (instructions and payments in 1577).
- <sup>132</sup> For the history of the restorations and the final removal of the paint covering God the Father (already detected but not completely 'freed' in or around 1806), see the comprehensive documentation in Hermesdorf [e.a.] 1978, p. 328-35 and 415-17 (restorers' report).
- <sup>133</sup> Cited in n. 124 above.
- <sup>134</sup> For further examples, see Hermesdorf [e.a.], 1978, p. 402, n. 67, as well as Freedberg 1982, with illustrations and discussion.
- <sup>135</sup> The main relevant source is, of course, *Het Leven der Doorluchtighe Nederlandsche en Hoogduytsche Schilders* published as fo. 196-305 of Van Mander, but printed in Alkmaar by Jacob de Meester for Paschier van Wes[t]busch of Haarlem.
- <sup>136</sup> For a sound recent overview of his life (with the appropriate references to earlier sources), see Van Mander ed. 1973, H, p. 297-306. For the *Martyrdom of St. Catherine* of 1582 (but commissioned by the Courtrai linen-weavers in 1581) still in St. Martin's in Courtrai, see Valentiner 1931, p. 6-9, and no. 7, reproduced on pl. 1.
- <sup>137</sup> As in Van Mander, fo. 210v, 213v, 224v, 244v, 254r and 254v – to take only a very few of the many possible examples (which include several of the instances cited in the following notes).
- <sup>138</sup> Van Mander, fo. 244r.
- <sup>139</sup> *Ibidem*.
- <sup>140</sup> Van Mander, fo. 244v.
- <sup>141</sup> *Ibidem*.
- <sup>142</sup> Van Mander, fo. 247r – and this apart from 'al d'uytnemende constighe stucken die de rasende beeldstorminge schandelijk heeft vernielt, so datter nu ter tijt niet veel van hier te Lande gevonden en wort'.
- <sup>143</sup> '...eene die overbleven was is doorgesaeht en zijn nu twee schoon stucken tot den Commandeur in de sael van 'nieuw ghebouw', Van Mander, fo. 206r.
- <sup>144</sup> 'doch door den krijgh oft beeld-stormen vernielt', Van Mander, fo. 206r.
- <sup>145</sup> Van Mander, fo. 229v, 'want zijn huys doe afghebrendt is met dat van hem daer in overghebleven was'.
- <sup>146</sup> Van Mander, fo. 207v.
- <sup>147</sup> Van Mander, fo. 239v.
- <sup>148</sup> Van Mander, fo. 254v.
- <sup>149</sup> Van Mander, fo. 224v.
- <sup>150</sup> Van Mander, fo. 236r.
- <sup>151</sup> Gouda, Museum St. Catherinagasthuis; Van Mander, fo. 254r.
- <sup>152</sup> Van Mander, fo. 254v.
- <sup>153</sup> Van Mander, fo. 254r-254v.
- <sup>154</sup> Van Mander, fo. 210v.
- <sup>155</sup> '...wert principalvck beclaecht een seer schoene ryckelycke tafel van de hoogen outaer eertyts geschildert by Jasmyn Mabuyze, daer hy vyffthien jaren over besich geweest hadde: dewelcke gereputeert was to syne de schoenste schilderye van geheel Europa....'. *Register Perpetueel der stad Rumerswaal*, Middelburg, Stadsarchief, No. 84, fo. 173; published in *Messenger des sciences historiques*, 29 (1855), p. 416 and more recently in cat. exhib. Rotterdam-Brugge, 1965, p. 381.
- <sup>156</sup> In the manuscript now in the library of the University of Ghent (MS.G. 2469), available as *Van de beroerliche tijden in de Nederlanden en voornamelijk in Ghendt 1566-68*, in Van Vaernewijck ed. 1872-81; and as *Van Vaernewijck ed. 1905*. Perhaps the most spectacular of his accounts of the saving of a work of art is that concerning the Ghent altarpiece, but he also alludes, for example, to the painting by Gossaert mentioned in the previous note (albeit in rather vague terms) and refers to the devastation in Northern places like Leiden.
- <sup>157</sup> Including an *Adoration of the magi* and a *Siege and attack of Bethulia* by Bosch; and a *Creation of the World with a David and Abigail* and a *Solomon and his mother Bathsheba* (surprisingly on the High Altar) also by Bosch; and a *Crucifixion* (on the altar of Saints Peter and Paul) by Jan van Scorel; Van Oudenhoven 1649, p. 25.
- <sup>158</sup> Van Oudenhoven 1649, p. 25.
- <sup>159</sup> As recorded, for example, in Phillips 1973, with visual evidence of just this phenomenon in fig. 24a, 24b, 28, 29a and 29b.
- <sup>160</sup> Van Bleyswijck 1667, p. 167 and 250.
- <sup>161</sup> Van Bleyswijck 1667, p. 249.
- <sup>162</sup> Van Bleyswijck 1667, p. 247-48.
- <sup>163</sup> The reference is to the geographer George Braun; Van Bleyswijck 1667, p. 249.
- <sup>164</sup> Van Bleyswijck 1667, p. 250.
- <sup>165</sup> Van Bleyswijck 1667, p. 168.
- <sup>166</sup> For the commission and fortuna of this project, see Oosterbaan 1973, p. 32-36.
- <sup>167</sup> Oosterbaan 1973, p. 36-42 gives an excellent anthology of contemporary and early descriptions of the magnificent marble and alabaster altar.
- <sup>168</sup> For Duncanus's book cf. n. 44 above.
- <sup>169</sup> For more on the contents of this book (and on its immediate context) see Freedberg 1973, p. 69-88, as well as Oosterbaan 1973, p. 157-59 (Oosterbaan also has an excellent brief account of Duncanus's career on p. 150-63).
- <sup>170</sup> F. Schenck, *De vetustissimo sacrarum imaginum usu in Ecclesia Christi catholica*, Antwerp (1567); briefly discussed in Polman 1932, p. 412-18. It is perhaps worth noting here that Schenck's was the last burial to be held in the Cathedral at Utrecht; and that on that occasion members of the Reformed community crowd into the building in order to sing their version of the psalms.
- <sup>171</sup> The extraordinary floods of works in defence of religious imagery – in a comparatively short space of time – is discussed at some length in Freedberg 1973, p. 68-96 and 136-65; very briefly in Freedberg 1976, especially p. 28-29 and notes; and usefully but summarily in Polman 1932, p. 409-18.
- <sup>172</sup> In Miedema 1978 and Miedema 1980B.
- <sup>173</sup> Miedema 1978, p. 63.
- <sup>174</sup> Miedema 1978, p. 67 (p. 67-69 for the texts).
- <sup>175</sup> Miedema 1978, p. 69. The New Testament subjects may show a significant concentration; they are (on the west side) *Christ entering Jerusalem*, *Christ driving the moneychangers from the Temple*, *Christ teaching in the Temple*; (on the east side, in better chronological order) the *Annunciation*, *Nativity*, *Circumcision*, and *Resurrection*.
- <sup>176</sup> Cf. Miedema 1978, p. 67-72, and fig. 9-24.
- <sup>177</sup> Miedema 1978, p. 71. For speculation



- about the possible contemporary significance of the Daniel subject, see p. 71 above and 79 below, and in the reference in n. 39 above and n. 196 below.
- <sup>178</sup> Miedema 1978, p. 87.
- <sup>179</sup> Miedema 1978, p. 71.
- <sup>180</sup> For speculation about the possible contemporary significance of this subject, see p. 71 and 79, and in the references in n. 39 above and n. 196 below. On the representation of this unusual subject, see also Schneider 1954.
- <sup>181</sup> See p. 79 above and n. 196 below.
- <sup>182</sup> Indeed, a work such as the glass panel designed by Crabeth (cf. cat. 243) was conceived of as part of a series devoted to the *Defensores Ecclesia*.
- <sup>183</sup> Discussed at length by Miedema 1980B, p. 239-83.
- <sup>184</sup> Miedema 1980B, p. 273.
- <sup>185</sup> See Miedema 1980B, p. 261-72 for the precise details of each subject and each inscription, with, on p. 269 and 273-74 an attempt to make sense of the 'programme' as a whole.
- <sup>186</sup> Miedema 1980B, p. 281.
- <sup>187</sup> Miedema 1980B, p. 278.
- <sup>188</sup> The notion of corruption is strongly present in Van Mander as well, who notes of the behaviour of the Israelites 'In dit bancketteren sietmen seer lewendich uytghebeeldt des volcx dertel wessen en den oncuytschen lust ten ooghen uyt hem openbarende', Van Mander, fo. 213v.
- <sup>189</sup> Ibidem.
- <sup>190</sup> Friedlander X, no. 94; but see also Bruyn 1960, p. 80-81. The panel is one of three devoted to the Life of St. Sebastian.
- <sup>191</sup> This most unusual scene comes from the life of St. Sebastian in the *Legenda Aurea*.
- <sup>192</sup> The Hague, Mauritshuis, No. 433; Friedlander XI, no. 64. The arms on the reverse of the wings are those of Willem Simonsz. (1498-1557), who amongst several other offices was eight times burgomaster of Zierikzee, and of his wife Adriana van Duyveland (1506-1545).
- <sup>193</sup> As noted in cat. 's-Gravenhage 1968, p. 36 (where a few other examples of this subject are also given), the composition and iconography derive from prints by Lucas of 1514 and 1517-18 (Hollstein X, p. 82 and 204).
- <sup>194</sup> Since the erection of the Brazen Serpent had for so long stood as a typological antecedent for the Crucifixion; the Israelites were thereby saved from the plague in the wilderness just as Christ on the cross saved mankind from its sins. On the other hand, one could always point to the fact that it was later pulled down by Hezekiah. For a marvellous encapsulation of the relevance of the Brazen Serpent to the debate about images, see Marnix van Sint Aldegonde's fierce response to a Lutheran interlocutor about the matter in the *Antwoord P. Marnixii. Heere van St. Aldegonde, op d'assertie eenes Martinists dat het afwerpen der beelden niemande dan der hoogher overhetti gheoorlooft en zijn* (in Van Marnix ed. 1871, p. 1-34), p. 12. The survival of these arguments in the North Netherlands (as well as many of the others about images) is wonderfully testified to by Didericus Camphuysen's *Stichtelyke Rijmen*, in which he translated Johannes Geesteranus's late sixteenth century *Idolelenchus as Tegen 't Geestigdom der Schilderkunst, Strafrijmen* (for the reference to the Brazen Serpent see D.R. Camphuysen, *Stichtelyke Rijmen*, Amsterdam 1647, p. 190-91).
- <sup>195</sup> Hollstein VIII, p. 247, no. 534-43; p. 242, no. 230-33; p. 246, no. 414-17; and p. 243, no. 240-47. For the many surviving drawings for the prints in these series, see Saunders 1978-79, p. 63, n. 16-18.
- <sup>196</sup> Hollstein VIII, p. 247, no. 534-43, no. 5.
- <sup>197</sup> Hollstein VIII, p. 247, no. 534-43, no. 6. The possibility of topical allusions in these series by Heemskerck was raised by me in Freedberg 1973, p. 193-94 and Freedberg 1976, p. 35-37, and then taken up and expanded by Saunders 1978-79, p. 59-83, who rightly emphasized the relationship with discussions about the role of authority in the removal of images. But see also Bangs 1977, p. 8-11, for a further discussion of this particular print, as well as a remarkable stained glass panel after it (Ibidem, plate 1).
- <sup>198</sup> Hollstein VIII, p. 242, no. 230-33.
- <sup>199</sup> Hollstein VIII, p. 246, no. 414-17, no. 4.
- <sup>200</sup> See especially *Josiah destroying the Temples of Ashtaroah and Chemosh*, Hollstein VIII, p. 240-47, no. 5; but compare the equally violent scenes of *The Destruction of the house of Baal* (no. 3), *The removal of the horses of the sun* (no. 4), *The Destruction of the altars at Bethel* (no. 6), and *The Priests of the High Places slaughtered on their altars* (no. 7).
- <sup>201</sup> On this aspect of the series, see the excellent outline in Bangs 1977.
- <sup>202</sup> According to Van Mander, fo. 247r. The newest monograph on Heemskerck, Grosshans 1980 has a summary of his life and of some of the issues raised here on p. 18-26; but still does not supplant Veldman 1977A.
- <sup>203</sup> Hollstein VIII, p. 242, no. 202-23; cf. Freedberg 1976, p. 35.
- <sup>204</sup> See note 118 above and Saunders 1978-79, p. 80-82.
- <sup>205</sup> This possibility – together with the relevant material from and about Coornhert – is excellently discussed by Saunders 1978-79, p. 67-83.
- <sup>206</sup> Veldman 1977A.
- <sup>207</sup> London, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, Hodnett 1971, p. 26, pl. 2; noted by Freedberg 1973, p. 187-91 in the context of iconoclasm; and in cat. exhib. Amsterdam 1984, p. 41, no. B12 (as *Allegorie op de Verwording van de katholieke kerk*).
- <sup>208</sup> Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet F.M. 479A. Discussed in cat. exhib. Hamburg, 1983-84, p. 144-45, no. 18; Van Deursen/De Schepper 1984, p. 63; cat. exhib. Amsterdam 1984, p. 41-42, no. B13 (as *De calvinistische propaganda verdedigt de beeldenstorm*).
- <sup>209</sup> For a variety of attempts to come to grips with these problems, see especially Emmens 1973 and Moxey 1977A, Kreidl 1972 is devoted to the religious paintings, but does not raise the kinds of issues broached here.
- <sup>210</sup> A possibility also adumbrated by Freedberg 1982, p. 142.
- <sup>211</sup> See p. 77 above and n. 141 above.
- <sup>212</sup> Rotterdam, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, no. 1007; Friedlander XIII, no. 297.
- <sup>213</sup> Daniel 3: 5-25.
- <sup>214</sup> This possibility was again noted by Freedberg 1973, p. 191-93, and Moxey 1977A, p. 243-49 (substantially reproduced in Moxey 1976, p. 70-74). For Heemskerck's prints of the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, see Hollstein VIII, p. 243, no. 264-67. The first of these bears remarkable similarities to Aertsen's painting.
- <sup>215</sup> See Wescher 1929, p. 155-57, reproduced on p. 155. The painting is still preserved in the Frans Hals-Museum, Haarlem, no. 234.