

Master Thesis | December 2013

a Peasant Quest

A search for identification, characterization, and contextualization of late seventeenth-century Dutch Peasant Genre Painting (1670-1700)



Teun (A.P.M.) Bonenkamp | 3036731
Research Master | *Art History of the Low Countries in its European Context*

Utrecht University | The Netherlands
Supervisor | prof. dr. P.A. Hecht

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Introduction

A substantial part of seventeenth-century Dutch genre painting is dedicated to images of peasants. It is generally assumed that the tradition of what is called ‘peasant’ painting for convenience sake – but what may concern images of lower-class society in general too – died a slow death in the Dutch Republic after about 1670. A closer look at the dates of the genre’s leading artists from the northern Netherlands confirms a decline: Adriaen Brouwer (1605/06-1638); the Van Ostade brothers (Adriaen (1610-1685) and Isaack (1621-1649)); the Saftleven brothers (Cornelis (1607-1681) and Herman (1609-1685)); Jan Miense Molenaer (1609/10-1668); Cornelis Bega (1631/32-1664); and Jan Steen (1626-1679). All of these painters had been active around the mid-decades of the seventeenth century. Some, such as Brouwer and Molenaer, already painted low-life genre images in the early 1630s and did not live to see the century’s final decades. Others, such as Adriaen van Ostade and Herman Saftleven, were still alive around 1675 but no longer developed themselves or no longer produced genre pictures at all (in the case of Saftleven).¹ Hence, the most important Dutch low-life genre painters were either dead or their works were of insignificant importance in the period 1670 to 1700.

The Dutch biographer Arnold Houbraken (1660-1719) was one of the first to question the ‘quality’ of Dutch low-life genre painting (among other genres) after the death of aforementioned masters: “*Wie in ‘t malen van Boere en Soldateleven naa de Dood van Brouwer, Ostade, Bega en Teniers? (...) Die hun gelyk is of hen overtreft?*”.² Although Houbraken’s quote should be understood within the context of a discussion about the decline of Dutch painting in general – as followed up in subsequent decades by Johan van Gool (1685-1763) and Gerard Hoet (1648-1733)³ – his observation of a decay in peasant genre painting is still present in current art history.

Two major and quite recent art historical overviews of Dutch painting in its Golden Age both underscore a decline of peasant imagery during the late seventeenth century. First of all, Seymour Slive’s *Dutch Painting 1600-1800* is divided into two parts. The first treats the period 1600 to 1675 and includes a separate paragraph on ‘peasant and low-life scenes’.⁴ The second part focusses on the remaining decades until 1800 but lacks any specific reference to images of

¹ Pieter Biesboer, *De Gouden Eeuw begint in Haarlem*, exh. cat. Haarlem (Frans Hals Museum) 2008, p. 155.

² Arnold Houbraken, *De Groote Schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, 3 vols. (1718-1721), Amsterdam 1967, 2 vol., p. 132.

³ See: Johan van Gool, *De Nieuwe Schouburg der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, The Hague 1750-1751; Idem, *Antwoordt op den zoo genaemden brief aan een vriend*, The Hague 1752-1753; Gerard Hoet, *Brief aan een’ Vrient*, The Hague 1751; Idem, *Aanmerkingen op het eerste en tweede deel des ‘Nieuwen schouburghs’*, The Hague 1753. In the third chapter of this thesis, I will shortly touch upon the implication of this discussion on the question of decay in Dutch peasant genre painting.

⁴ Seymour Slive, *Dutch Painting 1600-1800*, New Haven 1995, pp. 133-137.

peasants. It seems as if the subject had ceased to exist or, at least, as if it was no longer as important as in the days of Brouwer and Van Ostade. Secondly, in *The Golden Age: Dutch Painters of the Seventeenth Century*, Bob Haak, when it comes down to low-life genre painting, almost exclusively writes about the abovementioned painters and their contemporaries. He concludes that peasant genre painting had little or no continuation after Cornelis Dusart (1660-1704) – epigone of Adriaen van Ostade – had died in 1704.⁵ Dusart indeed appeared to be the only late seventeenth-century low-life genre painter to whom is frequently referred to in art historical literature.⁶ In general we may conclude that peasant genre painting hardly played a role in the northern Netherlands after about 1670.

Remarkably enough, there is a relatively large number of low-life genre pictures to be found that date from the period 1670 to 1700. This surprising high number of peasant pictures, combined with a considerable variety of artists that painted them, seems not to be in accordance with the tendency I described above. Simply stating that these works' quality is inferior to those from previous decades and that they (therefore) hardly appear in important collections, leaves far too many questions unanswered. What do these pictures look like? Which artists still painted images of peasants? Is it even justified to speak of 'decay'? And if so, how come that this large amount of pictures exists nonetheless? How should we relate these less-known and hardly studied works to those by renowned artists from previous generations, such as Adriaen van Ostade and Jan Steen, among others? This thesis will focus on questions such as these, in order to identify, characterize, and contextualize late seventeenth-century low-life genre painting. My main question, therefore, will be how we should interpret the relatively large amount of Dutch low-life genre pictures that date from the period 1670 to 1700 if peasant imagery was no longer in vogue by that time?

Defining the subject

Before explaining how I am about to tackle the main question, I will first specify a pair of parameters from the main question: first, how do I define 'peasant genre', and second, how strict will I use the years 1670 to 1700? Let me start with the first.

Not every depiction of a farmer or country man necessarily is a peasant scene. Autonomous peasant scenes hardly existed in the Middle Ages. If the peasant appeared at all, he figured in illuminated manuscripts, in religious- or mythological scenes, or in iconographical programs,

⁵ Bob Haak, *Hollandse Schilders in de Gouden Eeuw*, Amsterdam 1984, pp. 388-391, 499.

⁶ Biesboer, *De Gouden Eeuw begint in Haarlem*, p. 145.

being a representative of the simple, hardworking lower-class.⁷ By the end of the Middle Ages, literary traditions stimulated a different kind of peasant image, that of a brute, ill-mannered and lazy type.⁸ Increasingly, the peasant was negatively represented and he incorporated a moral framework that mirrored the values of the urban and noble class.⁹ It is from this context that sixteenth-century Flemish (and later, seventeenth-century Dutch) autonomous peasant imagery developed.

The term 'peasant' is very much determined by this 'negative' notion. In medieval Dutch literature, the term *dorpernie* ('from the villager') stood for evilness or meanness.¹⁰ In the narrative poem *Beatrijs*, the word 'peasant' is used as a term of abuse. Even in medieval Italian, *il villano* ('the villager') was a brute and indecent yokel.¹¹ It is no coincidence that the current English word 'villain' has a similar connotation. The Dutch word *boer* has a problematic sense of ambiguity, both referring to an agriculturist (and as such it is an 'objective' term) as well as to the uneducated, ignorant, and poor country dweller (being a 'subjective' term).¹² The English language has different words to distinct the agrarian (the farmer) from the boor (the peasant). Hence, the term peasant mainly refers to the uncivilized and boorish country dweller and – likewise – peasant genre painting mainly represents the uncivilized and boorish side of society. It is important to note that the genre not necessarily shows low-life society, culture and moral as it actually was but rather how seventeenth-century citizens (or the non-peasant class) perceived it. I will further address this aspect in the third chapter of this thesis.

Secondly, I have chosen to focus on the period 1670 to 1700, a period during which peasant genre painting hardly seems to have played a significant role. A choice for such specific years bears the risk of arbitrariness and I need to stress that I will not use this timeslot too literal. Adriaen van Ostade, for instance, only died in 1685 and some of his pictures are dated post 1670. There are good reasons, however, to consider him as a low-life genre painter of the mid-century. He was trained in the late 1620s and 30s, a majority of his oeuvre originated in the mid-century, he was active in the years that the genre flourished, and his style hardly changed after 1670. Hence, although some of his pictures can be related to the period 1670 to 1700, the style and

⁷ Margaret A. Sullivan, *Bruegel's Peasants. Art and Audience in the Northern Renaissance*, Cambridge 1994, p. 145; M. Kavalier, 'Pieter Bruegel's *Fall of Icarus* and the Noble Peasant', *Jaarboek Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen* (1986), pp. 83-98.

⁸ Paul Vandenbroeck, 'Verbeeck's Peasant Weddings: A Study of Iconography and Social Function', *Simiolus* 14 (1984), pp. 79-124; H.J. Raupp, *Bauernsatiren: Entstehung und Entwicklung des bäuerlichen Genres in der deutschen und niederländischen Kunst ca. 1470-1570*, Niederzier 1986.

⁹ Paul Vandenbroeck, *Beeld van de andere, vertoog over het zelf. Over wilden en narren, boeren en bedelaars*, exh. cat. Antwerpen (Royal Museum of Fine Arts) 1987, pp. 96-106.

¹⁰ Paul Vandenbroeck, *Beeld van de andere, vertoog over het zelf*, p. 64.

¹¹ Hessel Miedema, 'Realism and comic mode: the peasant', *Simiolus* 9 (1977), pp. 205-219, there p. 209.

¹² See the Dutch dictionary 'Van Dale'. See also: Peter van der Coelen (et al.), *Everyday Life in Holland's Golden Age. The Complete Etchings of Adriaen van Ostade*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Museum Het Rembrandthuis) 1998, p. 20.

tradition in which they originated cannot. These pictures, therefore, will not be treated as late seventeenth-century peasant genre paintings. At the same time, low-life genre painter Richard Brakenburgh (1650-1702) was born in Haarlem in a time when peasant genre painting was particularly popular. However, by the time he started to work as an independent painter, the final decades of the century had already started and his first pictures date from the late 1660s. His oeuvre will therefore be treated as late seventeenth-century genre painting.

Hence, the year 1670 should not so much be thought of as an absolute gap. It rather indicates a difference between two 'generations'. The first includes artists whose artistic life was shaped and lived mainly before 1670 whereas the second generation covers painters whose artistic identity mainly relates to the century's final decades. Likewise, the painters from the 'second generation' obviously did not drop their brush in 1700. However, at the turn of the century they had already settled and the early eighteenth century did not add significant changes to their oeuvres.

Finally, for the purpose of this research, I have decided only to include Dutch artists who had been active in the Northern Netherlands. The situation in Flanders will therefore hardly be brought into question. Moreover, Dutch artists who worked abroad, such as Egbert van Heemskerck (1634-1704) who left Haarlem in the early 1680s and moved to London¹³, will be excluded from this research.

Structure

In the first two chapters I will focus on the first and second 'generation' low-life genre painters respectively. Chapter one is an introduction to Dutch peasant genre painting and covers the period from the early seventeenth century to about 1670. I will shortly survey the roots of peasant genre painting in the Dutch Republic and describe how it developed throughout the decades, using the most prolific painters, their works and their lives, as a guidance. The focus point of this chapter will be Haarlem, for it turns out that the city played a key role in the rise and development of Dutch peasant imagery. The chapter will not only answer the question what peasant genre painting looked like at about 1670, but it will also offer me proper context and background against which I may position late seventeenth-century low-life images.

Since peasant imagery from the centuries' final decades is only sporadically documented, I will present a schematic overview of the genre's late seventeenth-century appearance in this thesis' second chapter. I will examine artists who painted low-life genre images during the period 1670 to 1700 and I will characterize their works. I will also describe how the peasant is represented in these images and I will identify the most important themes. My aim is not to

¹³ For more information on Van Heemskerck, see: Neeltje Köhler, *Painting in Haarlem 1500-1850. The Collection of the Frans Hals Museum*, Ghent 2006, pp. 195-196.

present a full and complete overview of late seventeenth-century peasant genre painting but a representative one though.

In the third and fourth chapter I will approach peasant genre painting contextually, trying to understand how we should position these late seventeenth-century representations of peasant life. The third chapter focusses on questions related to the intended public of these images. As there are quite a few low-life genre paintings that date from the period 1670 to 1700, we may assume that late seventeenth-century people still must have been interested in representations of peasants. But is that a proper observation? And if so, who were these people and why did they buy peasant images? In the fourth chapter I will address the question how these images fit seventeenth-century ideas about peasantry and low-life society. It will not only help me to understand late seventeenth-century peasant genre painting but it may also contribute to the question whether the genre declined indeed after 1670.

Finally, in the conclusion I will take all chapters together and formulate a hopefully satisfying answer to the ambiguous fact that, on the one hand, Dutch peasant genre painting hardly seems to have played a role in the late seventeenth century but, on the other, that a large amount of peasant images from this period is to be found.

Since late seventeenth-century peasant genre painting is only minimally studied, there were hardly proper (digital) images available. I have tried to illustrate the works discussed in this thesis as best as possible but unfortunately I did not always manage to acquire a decent image. Sometimes I did not even succeed in getting an image at all, some images lack sufficient quality, and others come with a watermark for copyrights' reason. I hope, however, that the images I have included (see pp. 63-82) will illustrate my research nonetheless.

This thesis forms the conclusion of the research master 'Art History of the Low Countries in its European Context' at Utrecht University. I would like to thank the program's teachers for two inspiring and extremely interesting years. In particular, I would like to thank my supervisor Peter Hecht, not only for supervising this and other papers. During these two years, he has always been very helpful to get me further, up to today.

Chapter 1 | Peasant genre painting 1600-1670

In order to understand the nature and character of late seventeenth-century peasant genre painting it is inevitable to consider its appearance in the first decades of the Dutch Golden Age first of all. If one wants to assess whether the genre's assumed decline from the 1670s onwards is a proper observation, one needs to know what paintings of peasants looked like in the preceding years. In this first chapter I will therefore focus on the early- and mid-seventeenth century, the zenith of Dutch peasant genre painting.

Much has already been written about seventeenth-century Dutch artists who are generally known for their depictions of low-life genre- and peasant scenes and it would not make much sense to recapitulate these hundreds of books that already fill the shelves of the libraries' art historical section.¹⁴ Instead, I will only touch upon a couple of aspects that are important for my research. My focus point will be the city of Haarlem, for almost all artists of any importance who occupied themselves with painting peasants, sooner or later threw in with this city north-west to Amsterdam, one of the wealthiest at the time.

Although it is not without reason that Slive opens his paragraph on 'peasant and low-life scenes' by saying that a "discussion of Dutch paintings of peasants should begin with Adriaen Brouwer" (1605/06-1638)¹⁵, the artist's interest in rigorously depicting low-class people did not raise out of thin air. Already by the end of the sixteenth century, the popularity of the peasant genre in the Southern Netherlands started to stimulate northern artists' interest in the subject. First and foremost, images of feasting peasants (such as the village fair or peasant wedding) – a tradition dominated by its founding father Pieter Bruegel the Elder (c.1525-1569) – were imitated by many artists. David Vinckboons (1576-c.1632), a Flemish painter born in Antwerp, moved to the Northern Netherlands in 1585 and painted several village scenes, such as his *Village Wedding* in Munich (see fig. 1).¹⁶ He is one out of many examples through which the 'Bruegelian tradition' may have entered the Dutch Republic.¹⁷ Bruegel's works were also known through copies or

¹⁴ For an overview of seventeenth-century low-life genre painting, see for instance: Slive, *Dutch Painting 1600-1800*, pp. 133-137; Haak, *Hollandse schilders in de Gouden Eeuw*, pp. 237-239, 388-391; Peter C. Sutton and Christopher Brown (ed.), *Masters of Seventeenth-Century Dutch Genre Painting*, exh. cat. Philadelphia (Museum of Art), Berlin (Staatliche Museen, Gemäldegalerie) and London (Royal Academy of Arts) 1984, pp. XXXIV-XXXVI, LVII-LXI; Biesboer, *De Gouden Eeuw begint in Haarlem*, pp. 122-155.

¹⁵ Slive, *Dutch Painting 1600-1800*, p. 133.

¹⁶ David Vinckboons, *Village Wedding*, undated, 42,7 x 60,1 cm, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich (inv. no. 4927).

¹⁷ See also: Sutton and Brown (ed.), *Masters of Seventeenth-Century Dutch Genre Painting*, p. XXIX.

prints by artists such as Pieter van der Heyden (c.1525-1569), of which is known that they were widespread in the northern part of the Netherlands.¹⁸

Merry companies spending their time with parties or banquets outdoor, were also the subject of paintings by artists such as Esaias van de Velde (1587-1630) whose works, however, did not include peasants or village people but richly dressed, young well-to-do people instead. In his footsteps we find Willem Buytewech (1591/92-1624) and Dirck Hals (1591-1656), the younger brother of the famous Frans Hals (1582/83-1666).¹⁹ What their paintings have in common is that they show the idle, temporary pleasures of the Dutch burghers – or upper-class to be sure – in their free time.²⁰

The artists mentioned here were in Haarlem at a certain point and within this climate it is Adriaen Brouwer as one of the first in the city to have painted a couple of peasant images.²¹

Adriaen Brouwer (1605/06-1638)

Adriaen Brouwer was born in Flanders and died in Antwerp in 1638.²² For only a relatively short period he dwelled in the Northern Netherlands – presumably between 1625 and 1631.²³ In Antwerp, however, Brouwer was frequently referred to as a Haarlem Painter.²⁴ Thus, although his stay in the north could have lasted no longer than six years, there are good reasons to assume that the artist must have had a productive and substantial period in the Dutch city.

It is not easy to value his Haarlem period properly, not only because we lack consistent bibliographical information but even more for a lack of dated works by his hand. It is generally assumed, however, that his stay in the north was of significant importance. On the one hand his own style underwent some sweeping changes during his Haarlem years, on the other hand Brouwer's representations and motives of peasant life were imitated by several artists, especially in Haarlem.²⁵ I will leave the first point out, for it mainly relates to Brouwer's personal changes in style (such as tonality and composition) and is therefore less relevant for this

¹⁸ Mariët Westermann, *The Amusements of Jan Steen. Comic Painting in the Seventeenth Century*, Zwolle 1997, p. 208.

¹⁹ Pieter Biesboer, 'Die Entwicklung der Genremalerei in Haarlem 1610-1685', in: Peter van den Brink and Bernd Wolfgang Lindemann, *Cornelis Bega. Eleganz und raue Sitten*, exh. cat. Aachen (Suermondt-Ludwig Museum) 2012, pp. 61-62.

²⁰ Sutton and Brown (ed.), *Masters of Seventeenth-Century Ditch Genre Painting*, p. XXIX.

²¹ Biesboer, 'Die Entwicklung der Genremalerei', in: Brink and Lindemann, *Cornelis Bega*, p. 62.

²² For more information about Brouwer, see: Konrad Renger, *Adriaen Brouwer und das niederländische Baurenggenre 1600-1660*, exh. cat. Munich (Alte Pinakothek) 1986; Margret Klinge, *Adriaen Brouwer. David Teniers the Younger. A Loan exhibition of Paintings*, exh. cat. New York and Maastricht (Noortman & Brod) 1982; Haak, *Hollandse schilders in de Gouden Eeuw*, pp. 237-238.

²³ In 1626 Brouwer signed a notarial act in Amsterdam; in 1626 and 1627 he is mentioned as a 'Beminnaer' (friend) of the Haarlem Rhetoricians; somewhere between 18 September 1631 and 18 September 1632 he is registered in the Guild of St. Luke in Antwerp. See: Renger, *Adriaen Brouwer und das niederländische Bauerngenre*, pp. 9-11.

²⁴ Klinge, *Brouwer and Teniers*, p. 11.

²⁵ Haak, *Hollandse schilders in de Gouden Eeuw*, pp. 237-238; Klinge, *Brouwer and Teniers*, p. 11.

research. The second point, however, needs further clarification for it does not only touch upon the fact *that* Brouwer painted images of peasants but more importantly upon *how* Brouwer represented the peasant in his works.

Brouwer's peasants are no sweeties. On the contrary, his figures rather seem to be dangerous street folk coming to blows at the least little thing. In his *Scuffling Card Players in a Tavern*²⁶ we see how a simple card game results in a brute brawl whereby peasants harass each other not only with crockery but with knives and swords too (fig. 2). The painting is exemplary for the artist's oeuvre. As no other artist he vividly showed how the peasant's pleasures of drinking, smoking and gaming – often set in a tavern interior – led to brawls and fights.²⁷

Another tavern scene shows a similar story, as can also be concluded from its title *Brawl between five Peasants* (fig. 3).²⁸ Again, the fight is brute and the scene's character is dangerous. However, not only the fight itself but – more importantly – the type of figures that act in it make these stories perilous. The peasants' heads are robust, if not ugly, and with their unbridled and ill-mannered behaviour it leaves no doubt that these figures belonged to the dregs of society. Thus, both the subject as well as the peasant-figures obviously gave these paintings a dangerous appearance.

A majority of Brouwer's oeuvre can be seen in this light. In many of his works the artist shows us frankly that the occupations of these dangerous people – be it drinking, smoking, playing, or even sleeping – lead inevitably to acts of violence.²⁹ The fight itself does not necessarily need to be represented. In his *In the Tavern*³⁰, for instance, we see an ostensibly merry group of five figures of which one raises his glass (see fig. 4). The simple fact, however, that the man seen on his back hides a knife leaves nothing to the imagination: this gathering of gaming and drinking will ultimately end in a brute fight.

Other subjects by Brouwer also breathe a sense of brutality and danger. His famous *The Bitter Potion*³¹ (see fig. 5) in Frankfurt fits the tradition of depicting the five senses – the taste in this case. Above all, however, we see a rough and dangerous man and we automatically conclude that this is a second-class criminal, a figure who would easily fit the present-day definition of a hooligan.

²⁶ Adriaen Brouwer, *Raufende Kartenspieler in einer Schenke*, undated, 33,4 x 49,8 cm, Alte Pinakothek, Munich (inv. no. 562).

²⁷ Van der Coelen (et al.), *Everyday Life in Holland's Golden Age*, p. 18; Klinge, *Brouwer and Teniers*, p. 9; Biesboer, 'Die Entwicklung der Genremalerei', in: Brink and Lindemann, *Cornelis Bega*, p. 63.

²⁸ Adriaen Brouwer, *Keilerei zwischen fünf Bauern*, undated, 22,7 x 30,7 cm, Alte Pinakothek, Munich (inv. no. 2050).

²⁹ See also: Renger, *Adriaen Brouwer und das niederländische Bauerngenre*, pp. 30-44.

³⁰ Adriaen Brouwer, *Eine Trinkstube*, undated, 35,5 x 27,2 cm, Alte Pinakothek, Munich (inv. no. 2063).

³¹ Adriaen Brouwer, *Der Bittere Trank*, undated, 47,5 x 35,5 cm, Städel Museum, Frankfurt (inv. no. 1076).

In the case of Brouwer's figures, one may wonder whether we can still speak of peasants. He was less interested in depicting the peasant in its historical setting but he rather seemed to focus on the peasant as a type, as an actor figuring in the artist's story.³² While the figures in peasant scenes by Bruegel and his followers could (theoretically) have been representation of the peasant-class who have a bit of fun next to their working life, we may question whether Brouwer's 'peasants' ever worked at all. Presumably not, they are louts instead, criminals who were part of the same social class as the peasants at most.

Adriaen van Ostade (1610-1685)

Adriaen and Isaac van Ostade³³ are considered to be the most important followers of Brouwer's wild tavern scenes with drinking and fighting peasants.³⁴ Although the exact nature of the relation is unclear, the similarities between the works of the Van Ostade-brothers (both born in Haarlem) and Brouwer are too obvious to be ignored.

According to Houbraken, Brouwer and Adriaen van Ostade were pupils of Frans Hals at the same time but his statement has never been substantiated.³⁵ Brouwer may have left Haarlem already by the time Van Ostade started to become active as an independent painter.³⁶ However, Van Ostade was in his late teens (15-21 years old) when Brouwer was active in Haarlem, an age in particular when a young painter is open to influences from the world around him. Moreover, in his early work, Van Ostade shows a clear knowledge of Brouwer's boisterous and dangerous peasants. In his *Interior with Drinking Figures and Crying Children*³⁷ (fig. 6) for instance, a work from the early 1630s, Van Ostade treats the peasant subject and -figures in a similar way as Brouwer did in his *Scuffling Card Players in a Tavern* (see fig. 2).

Although Van Ostade must have been familiar with (and initially seems to be inspired by) Brouwer's work, during the course of his career he gradually moved away from the wild and violent peasant. From the middle of the century onwards, Van Ostade's works lack Brouwer's riotous country life and the artist seemed to focus on the simple peasant at rest instead. The

³² Renger, *Adriaen Brouwer und das niederländische Bauerngenre*, p. 30.

³³ For information about the Ostade-brothers, see: Bernhard Schnackenburg, *Adriaen van Ostade, Isack van Ostade: Zeichnungen und Aquarelle. Gesamtdarstellungen mit Werkkataogen. 2 vols.*, Hamburg 1981.

³⁴ Haak, *Hollandse schilders in de Gouden Eeuw*, p. 238; Slive, *Dutch Painting 1600-1800*, p. 135; Van der Coelen (et al.), *Everyday Life in Holland's Golden Age*, p. 21.

³⁵ "Adr. Brouwer en hy [Adriaen van Ostade] waren op een tyd Leerlingen van Frans Hals, en Izaak van Ostade een Leerling van zyn broeder." (from: Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh*, vol. 1, p. 347).

³⁶ Bernhard Schnackenburg, 'Die Anfänge des Bauerninterieurs bei Adriaen van Ostade', *Oud Holland* 85 (1970), pp. 158-169, especially p. 160.

³⁷ Adriaen van Ostade, *Interior with Drinking Figures and Crying Children*, 1634, 31,1 x 42,9 cm, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (inv. no. BF.1979.4).

figures in his later paintings are well-mannered peasants who no longer misbehaved in the inn but peacefully dwelled in or around the house.³⁸

This development can well be illustrated by comparing the aforementioned work in Houston with his *Peasant Interior*³⁹ in the Rijksmuseum, painted almost thirty years later (see fig. 7). We see a couple of peasants peacefully spending their time in an interior. There is no act of violence visible, nor any indication or hint that one will occur shortly. And where Van Ostade's figures are rough and ungainly in the early 1630s, they seem to have turned into modest and refined peasants in his Amsterdam picture.

Brouwer's impact on Van Ostade's early work is obvious. Some tendencies outside Haarlem, however, may also have had impact on Van Ostade's handling of the peasant theme but to these developments has been paid less attention. The early seventeenth century saw a rise of peasant genre painting also in the cities of Rotterdam and Middelburg, with artists such as Pieter de Bloot (1601/02-1658), Herman Saftleven (1609-1685), and Frans Rijckhals (1609-1647). Their low-life images often show a barn- or kitchen interior with kitchenware and chattels arranged on the foreground and with several figures in the back, such as a *Tavern Interior*⁴⁰ (fig. 8) by Pieter de Bloot or Herman Saftleven's *Interior of a Peasant Hut*⁴¹ (fig. 9) in St. Petersburg, both painted in the (early) 1630s. It could well be that such peasant interiors with pictorially arranged furniture and utensils stimulated Adriaen van Ostade to depart from Brouwer's violent and unruly tavern scenes and to focus on more quiet interior scenes.⁴²

We have seen before that one may question whether Brouwer's brute and unmannered peasants were peasants at all. With Van Ostade's more civilized and quiet peasants one should likewise question the life-likeness of his figures. The peasants in his later pictures appear to do very little and any reference to work is missing. Apparently he was only interested in some facets of country life.⁴³ Besides, more than that his figures needed to be truth to life, they should immediately have been recognizable as peasants. Many of his figures, therefore, are of the same type and they certainly must have been the result from both sketches from life as well as from his own creativity.⁴⁴

³⁸ Slive, *Dutch Painting 1600-1800*, p. 136; Van der Coelen (et al.), *Everyday Life in Holland's Golden Age*, p. 21; Haak, *Hollandse schilders in de Gouden Eeuw*, pp. 238-239.

³⁹ Adriaen van Ostade, *Boerengezelschap binnenshuis*, 1661, signed, 37 x 47 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (inv. no. SK-C-200).

⁴⁰ Pieter de Bloot, *Tavern Interior*, dated 1630s, 48 x 66 cm, private collection.

⁴¹ Herman Saftleven, *Interior of a Peasant Hut*, signed 'Hermanus Saft Leven f. 1634', 42 x 60 cm, Hermitage, St. Petersburg (inv. no. 796).

⁴² See also: Renger, *Adriaen Brouwer und das niederländische Bauerngenre*, pp. 63-65.

⁴³ Van der Coelen (et al.), *Everyday Life in Holland's Golden Age*, pp. 16-17.

⁴⁴ Haak, *Hollandse schilders in de Gouden Eeuw*, p. 389; Van der Coelen (et al.), *Everyday Life in Holland's Golden Age*, pp. 19-20.

Isaac van Ostade (1621-1649) was not only Adriaen's eleven years younger brother but he is also considered to have been one of his most gifted pupils.⁴⁵ He started to paint in the manner of his brother and teacher, as to be seen, for instance, in *Peasant Interior with playing Children*⁴⁶ (fig. 10), but in the course of the 1640s he abandoned Adriaen's cottage interiors in favour of peaceful exterior scenes such as landscapes or country life scenes outdoor. These pictures breathe a more pastoral feeling and seem to be idyllic and rustic representations of country life.⁴⁷ Because of his early death in 1649 he did not get the chance to artistically free himself from Adriaen but it is not unlikely that he would have been able to step out of his brother's shadow if he was given the time to further developed his own style.

In Van Ostade's footsteps

Isaac van Ostade may have been Adriaen's most gifted pupil but Cornelis Bega (1631/32-1664) surely will have been one of his most closest followers.⁴⁸ During Bega's relatively short career – his first known picture is dated 1658 – he was quite productive and he painted numerous peasant households, rustic inns and musical subjects in the manner of his teacher, as to be seen in, for example, his *Tavern Interior*⁴⁹ (fig. 11). Where Van Ostade's figures usually are from the same type, Bega's peasants became more divers and pronounced by the end of his life and his style too became more refined. In *Two Men Singing*⁵⁰ (fig. 12) we see not only how Bega elaborated the two figures but even how he has tried to visualize the music notes on the little paper and the lyrics underneath. This and other later works illustrate a departure from Van Ostade's manner and almost seem to approximate the refined style of the Leiden school.⁵¹

Another Haarlem painter who produced low-life genre images was Jan Miense Molenaer (c.1610-1668), a contemporary of Adriaen van Ostade. We do not know for sure whether Molenaer was a pupil of Frans Hals but his early pictures suggest a training in the master's studio.⁵² Although Molenaer got in contact with Brouwer (of whom he even completed an

⁴⁵ See, for instance: Sutton and Brown (ed.), *Masters of Seventeenth-Century Ditch Genre Painting*, p. XXXVI.

⁴⁶ Isaac van Ostade, *Peasant Interior with playing Children*, dated 1641, 44,8 x 64,5 cm.

⁴⁷ Biesboer, *De Gouden Eeuw begint in Haarlem*, pp. 142-143.

⁴⁸ For an overview of Bega's oeuvre, see the catalogue of the recent Bega exhibition: Peter van den Brink and Bernd Wolfgang Lindemann, *Cornelis Bega. Eleganz und raue Sitten*, exh. cat. Aachen (Suermondt-Ludwig Museum) 2012.

⁴⁹ Cornelis Bega, *Tavern Interior*, undated, 51 x 74 cm, private collection.

⁵⁰ Cornelis Bega, *Two Men Singing*, signed 'c bega A° 1662', 35,9 x 31,9 cm, National Gallery of Ireland (inv. no. NGI.28).

⁵¹ Slive, *Dutch Painting 1600-1800*, p. 137; Renger, *Adriaen Brouwer und das niederländische Bauerngenre*, p. 67; Sutton and Brown (ed.), *Masters of Seventeenth-Century Ditch Genre Painting*, p. XXXVI.

⁵² Dennis P. Weller (ed.), *Jan Miense Molenaer. Painter of the Dutch Golden Age*, exh. cat. Raleigh (North Carolina Museum of Art), Columbus (Indianapolis Museum of Art) and Manchester (The Currier Museum of Art) 2002-2003, p. 4. See this exhibition catalogue for more information on Jan Miense Molenaer.

unfinished picture), his works do not suggest a particular influence.⁵³ In 1636, Molenaer married the painter Judith Leyster and they moved to Amsterdam in the same year. From the late 1630s onwards, Molenaer increasingly painted merry peasant companies and it seems as if the artist had found a niche in the Amsterdam art market.⁵⁴ Many of his depictions of peasant interiors bear reference to Adriaen van Ostade, such as his *Figures Smoking and Playing Music in an Inn*⁵⁵ (fig. 13).

In the late 1640s, Molenaer moved back to Haarlem where he spent the rest of his life. The paintings that date from this period can best be described as both rooted in the “Haarlem tradition of peasant scenes founded by Brouwer and Ostade” as well as resembling in many ways “the work of Molenaer’s younger contemporary Jan Steen”.⁵⁶ Exemplary for this phase – and, according to Dennis Weller, for the entire career of the painter – is his *Peasants Carousing*⁵⁷ (fig. 14), an ambitious, large picture that indeed seems to combine the worlds of Van Ostade and Steen.

Jan Steen (1626-1679) is mentioned as yet another pupil of Adriaen van Ostade but this has never been fully substantiated.⁵⁸ However, although he was born in Leiden, Steen almost spent ten years of his life in Haarlem, between 1661 and 1669, and it now appears that this was a productive period during which he painted works of great quality.⁵⁹ This is underscored by the fact that many Haarlem painters followed his tradition and I will come across a couple of them further on in this research.

It is not easy to shortly survey Jan Steen’s oeuvre of for he was a divers artist. He painted both religious images and low-life genre pictures and basically everything in between. As far as his depictions of the lower-class are concerned, Steen focused on comic representations of merry peasant companies who feast and drink, not seldom within the context of a particular event such as a wedding, a birth, or the feast of Saint Nicholas.

⁵³ Renger, *Adriaen Brouwer und das niederländische Bauerngenre*, pp. 69-70.

⁵⁴ Weller (ed.), *Jan Miense Molenaer*, pp. 162, 165.

⁵⁵ Jan Miense Molenaer, *Figures Smoking and Playing Music in an Inn*, signed ‘J molenaer’ and dated c.1640s, 38,2 x 49,5 cm, Worcester Art Museum (inv. no. 1999.384).

⁵⁶ Weller (ed.), *Jan Miense Molenaer*, p. 174.

⁵⁷ Jan Miense Molenaer, *Peasants Carousing*, signed ‘Jan Molenaer 1662’, 109 x 126 cm, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (inv. no. 07.500).

⁵⁸ For information on Jan Steen, see: Karel Braun, *Alle tot nu toe bekende werken van Jan Steen*, Rotterdam 1980; H. Perry Chapman, Wouter Th. Kloek and Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., *Jan Steen. Schilder en Verteller*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) and Washington (National Gallery of Art), Zwolle 1996; Wouter Kloek, *Jan Steen (1626-1679). Rijksmuseumdossiers*, Zwolle 2005; Mariët Westermann, *The Amusements of Jan Steen. Comic Painting in the Seventeenth Century*, Zwolle 1997.

⁵⁹ Haak, *Hollandse schilders in de Gouden Eeuw*, pp. 390-391.

The style of Steen's presumed master is visible in some of his works, such as in his *Peasant Wedding*⁶⁰ in Amsterdam (fig. 15). The subject of this scenes, however, leads back to the tradition of Bruegel the Elder. As one of the first since the subject of the peasant wedding had entered the Northern Republic at the turn of the sixteenth century (with artists such as Vinckeboons), Steen gave the subject a new impulse. He painted quite a few village- or peasant weddings and it gave him the opportunity to humorously depict the world of peasants and village people.⁶¹

Some other paintings by his hand show the peasant as we have seen him more frequently in the seventeenth-century, such as in *Peasants merry-making outside an Inn*⁶² in London (fig. 16), and Steen painted a couple of pictures with a similar subject. What all his representations of peasants have in common is their humoristic character. The wit appears to have been the determining factor and is the key to interpret Steen's low-life genre paintings.⁶³

Without doubt, Bega, Molenaer and Steen are – next to Adriaen van Ostade – the most important artists who painted images of peasants at the middle of the seventeenth century. The three can all be related to Van Ostade, be it either in terms of style and subject-matter or because of a teacher-pupil connection; in the case of Bega it is even both. Remarkably enough, it is hardly possible to link them to Brouwer, unless one takes into account that Van Ostade was influenced by him in his early career.

There were others at the time, however, to have painted low-life genre images, amongst which is Pieter Jansz. Quast (1606-1647), a contemporary of Brouwer who was born and died in Amsterdam but lived in The Hague between 1634 and 1641. Some of his peasants resemble Brouwer's figures, such as the smoking man sitting in the foreground in *Three Smoking, Drinking and Music-Making Peasants*⁶⁴ (fig. 17). Quast's figures lean towards caricature and especially in his drawings they can become quite dangerous.⁶⁵ In his paintings, however, we hardly see any violent peasants.

⁶⁰ Jan Steen, *Peasant Wedding*, signed 'JSteen. 1672', 38,5 x 50 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (inv. no. SK-A-388).

⁶¹ I have written a paper about the meaning and interpretation of village wedding's by Jan Steen under the title *Amusing Amours in Witty Weddings. About the Meaning and Interpretation of the Village Wedding by Jan Steen* (2013).

⁶² Jan Steen, *Peasants merry-making outside an Inn*, dated late 1640s, 24,3 x 20,3 cm, National Gallery, London (inv. no. NG2557).

⁶³ Mariët Westermann, 'How was Jan Steen Funny? Strategies and Functions of Comic Painting in the Seventeenth Century', in: Jan Bremmer and Herman Roodenburgh (ed.), *A Cultural History of Humour. From Antiquity to the Present Day*, Cambridge 2005, pp. 134-178.

⁶⁴ Pieter Jansz. Quast, *Three Smoking, Drinking and Music-Making Peasants*, signed 'PQ / 1643', 35 x 28,8 cm, Sotheby's (London), 9 July 2002, lot 359.

⁶⁵ It has been suggested that Quast's caricatures are borrowed from theatre, see: B.A. Stanton-Hirst, 'Pieter Quast and the Theatre', *Oud Holland* 96 (1982), pp. 213-237.

Others, such as Claes Hals (1628-1668), Klaes Molenaer (1630-1676) – not related to Jan Miense Molenaer though – and Jan Victors (1619-1676) seem to focus on peasant scenes as we have seen them previously with Adriaen van Ostade's. Their pictures rather bear reference to Van Ostade's rustic works than to the unruly peasant scenes by Brouwer.

Finally, Cornelis Dusart (1660-1704) is the final artist that usually figures in an art historical overview of Dutch peasant genre painting, being the genre's final convulsion.⁶⁶ Since Dusart's artistic life covers the period 1670-1700 I will treat him in the second chapter of this thesis.

Conclusion

In order to understand the *status quo* of peasant genre painting in the mid-decades of the seventeenth century, it is inevitable to start with Adriaen Brouwer who – indeed – can be considered as one of the main actors in the rise of peasant imagery in the Northern Netherlands, particularly in Haarlem. His contact with Adriaen van Ostade in the late 1620s – regardless its exact nature – must have had impact on Van Ostade for his earlier works are strongly rooted in the Brouwer tradition.

At the same time, Brouwer's importance for the development of Dutch peasant genre painting is complicated. As Van Ostade gradually moved away from Brouwer's unmannered and violent peasants, the latter's stamp on Dutch peasant imagery became less visible. On the one hand, most of the painters that were active around the middle of the century bear reference to Van Ostade, more than to Brouwer. On the other hand, Van Ostade can hardly be regarded separately from Brouwer. Hence, one should be aware of an indirect presence of Brouwer in peasant painting around 1650.⁶⁷

In Flanders, the situation was different. In works by artists such as David Teniers the Younger (1610-1690) and Joos van Craesbeeck (1605/06-c.1660), the spirit of Brouwer is much more present.⁶⁸ Van Craesbeeck's *The Smoker*⁶⁹ (fig. 18) in the Louvre resembles Brouwer's figures with distinct emotions and affects. In many of his other paintings too we see violent fights and brute peasants.⁷⁰ With van Ostade's shift to a more rustic image of the peasant, it seems as if there was no place anymore for Brouwer's brute peasants in Dutch peasant genre

⁶⁶ See also the introduction to this thesis, p. 4.

⁶⁷ The many reproductions in prints after works by Brouwer may have contributed to this, see: Horst Scholtz, *Brouwer Invenit. Druckgraphische Reproduktionen des 17.-19. Jahrhunderts nach Gemälden und Zeichnungen Adriaen Brouwers*, Marburg 1985, there especially pp. 41-54.

⁶⁸ For the relation between Brouwer and Teniers, see: Margret Klinge, *Adriaen Brouwer and David Teniers the Younger. A loan exhibition of paintings*, exh. cat. New York and Maastricht (Noortman & Brod) 1982. See also: Renger, *Adriaen Brouwer und das niederländische Bauerngenre*, p. 70.

⁶⁹ Joos van Craesbeeck, *The Smoker (possibly a Portrait of the Artist)*, undated, 41 x 32 cm, Louvre, Paris (inv. no. MI906).

⁷⁰ For more information on Van Craesbeeck, see: Karolien de Clippel, *Joos van Craesbeeck (1605/06 – ca.1660). Een Brabants genreschilder (Pictura Nova XI)*, Turnhout 2006.

painting around the middle of the seventeenth century. Brouwer's peasants were trimmed of their dangerous character and in the hands of Molenaer, Van Ostade, and Steen they had turned into merrily feasting figures who did not always behave properly but never became really dangerous or criminal.

Chapter 2 | Peasant genre painting 1670-1700

Since I have briefly surveyed the character of Dutch peasant genre painting during its zenith in the first chapter, it is now time to turn to the period of its presumed decay. As I have stated in the introduction of this research, there is a surprising amount of paintings from the period 1670 to 1700 to be found with representations of peasant life and most of these images are much less documented as their early- and mid-seventeenth-century counterparts, if at all. So, before I am able to say anything about the relation of these late seventeenth-century images of peasants to peasant genre painting of the preceding decades, I first need to characterise the whole lot of paintings that date from the period 1670 to 1700.⁷¹ In this second chapter I will therefore focus on the following questions: which artists still painted images of peasants in the years 1670 to 1700? What do their paintings look like? What exactly are their peasants doing? And what kind of themes do we find in these paintings?

Probably the most objective way to organize and survey three decades of paintings would be to take a chronological approach. In this case, however, I would get bogged down in summing up artists and paintings without having a framework or reference. Therefore I have decided first to present three artists from this period who in particular busied themselves with representing peasants and village life: Cornelis Dusart (1660-1704), Richard Brakenburgh (1650-1702), and Jan Molenaer II (1654-c.1700). Their oeuvres mainly consist of low-life genre images. Secondly, I have categorized all paintings into seven groups and I will systematically go through these categories, being: normal peasant life, specific events from peasant life, the obvious 'immoral' peasant, tavern scenes, interior scenes, gaming peasants, and exterior scenes. I will elucidate these categories further on. Let me first start with the three most important artists of the period.

Cornelis Dusart (Haarlem 1660 – Haarlem 1704)

Cornelis Dusart⁷² is probably the best known artist from the last quarter of the seventeenth century who dedicated his artistic life to painting peasants – or, at least, he is most frequently mentioned in art historical literature. Haak, who quite rightly labels Dusart as epigone of Adriaen van Ostade, believes that the peasant genre died with him in 1704.⁷³

⁷¹ See attachment 1 (pp. 57-62) for a schematic overview of peasant paintings that date from the period 1670 to 1700.

⁷² For general literature on Dusart, see: Ulrich Thieme and Felix Becker (ed.), *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, Leipzig 1907-1950, vol. 10, pp. 224-225; Mirjam Neumeister, *Holländische Gemälde im Städel Museum 1550-1800. Band 3: Künstler geboren nach 1630*, Frankfurt am Main 2005-2010, p. 61.

⁷³ Haak, *Hollandse schilders in de Gouden Eeuw*, p. 499.

Dusart was born in Haarlem, where he remained active for the greatest part of his life, although he appears to have been in Amsterdam for a while. Dusart was apprenticed to Adriaen van Ostade and he must have entered the master's studio during the last years of Van Ostade's life.⁷⁴ After Van Ostade's death in 1685, Dusart not only finished some of his works but he even produced copies after his master's paintings, which he sometimes even provided with Van Ostade's signature.⁷⁵ From Dusart's inventory we may conclude that he possessed quite a lot of drawings and etchings by the Van Ostade brothers. He also must have been a diligent collector and art dealer. In 1680 he joined the St. Luke Guild in Haarlem where he became 'hoofdmans' in 1692. The artist died in 1704.

Cornelis Dusart almost exclusively painted low-life country scenes and in his graphics too he applied himself principally to images of peasants. His interiors – and his compositions at all – are very much in the manner of Adriaen van Ostade's later works but his figures, his colouring and the liveliness of his scenes sometimes recall paintings by Jan Steen, who was in Haarlem for a certain period during Dusart's younger years. While Van Ostade seems to have characterized the peasant in his late work, Dusart's more satirical scenes lean towards caricature.⁷⁶

As a vast majority of his paintings are dated, it appears that Dusart started his artistic career in the early 1680s. In one of his earlier works, *A Peasant Family outside a Cottage*⁷⁷ from 1683 (fig. 19), we see close affinity with Van Ostade's later paintings. Light falls upon three figures in front of a peasant dwelling, a fourth hangs out of the half-opened doorway. In the background we see some dancing and music-making peasants. The subject of this painting, a peasant family entertaining their selves with drinking, dancing, and resting (or, at least, doing nothing) in front of their home, perfectly fits Van Ostade's later images of rustic peasant life. Both in subject and style the painting is in line with, for instance, Van Ostade's *Violinist*⁷⁸ (1673) in the Mauritshuis (see fig. 20).

The subject in a broader sense – a couple of peasants spending their time eating, drinking, making music, smoking, or otherwise, outside their homes or an inn – is the starting point for many other scenes by Dusart's hand. But, although the subject seems to be borrowed from Van Ostade, Dusart treats it more effusively. His *Village Feast*⁷⁹ (fig. 21) from 1684, now in the Frans

⁷⁴ Slive, *Dutch Painting 1600-1800*, p. 137.

⁷⁵ Biesboer, 'Die Entwicklung der Genremalerei', in: Brink and Lindemann, *Cornelis Bega*, p. 70; Haak, *Hollandse schilders in de Gouden Eeuw*, p. 390.

⁷⁶ Slive, *Dutch Painting 1600-1800*, p. 137.

⁷⁷ Cornelis Dusart, *A Peasant Family outside a Cottage*, signed 'Cor. Dusart' and dated 1683, 59,6 x 50 cm, Christie's (Amsterdam), 13 April 2010, lot 27.

⁷⁸ Adriaen van Ostade, *The Violinist*, 1673, 45 x 42 cm, Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis, The Hague (inv. no. 129).

⁷⁹ Cornelis Dusart, *Village Feast*, signed and dated 1684, 80 x 70,5 cm, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem (inv. no. os 55-39).

Hals Museum, for instance, shows feasting peasants in front of an inn. The enthusiastic man sitting in the centre of the scene and smiling with great frivolity at the dancer and the fiddler, resembles figures in paintings by Jan Steen.

What goes for this exterior scene, goes for some of his interior scenes too. In his *Drinking Bout*⁸⁰ (undated) in Haarlem we see four drunken figures, observed (or criticized) by a maiden and a child (see fig. 22). It is obvious that Dusart has turned the peasants into caricatured figures. With that, it seems as if he wanted to stand out from his master's late period but the result is not very convincing. Many of Dusart's peasants seem caricatured copies after Van Ostade's figures and, as such, they lack a specific character. Some of his works, therefore, have resulted in hollow copies after Van Ostade's paintings.

Although the lion's share of Dusart's paintings show groups of peasants who wait for the time to pass by with feasting, sitting, drinking, sleeping, smoking – in- or outside a tavern –, he was also interested in other aspects from village life, such as the *Village Market* (fig. 23).⁸¹ In these paintings the comparison with Van Ostade is most striking and they prove that Dusart never managed to artistically free himself from his teacher.

Richard Brakenburgh (Haarlem 1650-Haarlem 1702)

Another artist who applied himself in particular to low-life genre painting during the late seventeenth century is Richard Brakenburgh⁸², yet another pupil of Adriaen van Ostade although he appears to have been trained by Hendrick Mommers (c.1623-1693) too. Different from Dusart, the Haarlem painter Brakenburgh did not spend his entire lifetime in his city of birth. From at least 1670, but possibly already before, he lived and worked in Leeuwarden. The question when he left the Friesian city to return to his city of birth remains unanswered yet but in 1687 he is mentioned as a member of the Haarlem St. Luke guild. A reasonable part of his quite extended oeuvre (he must have been productive) is dated.⁸³

Although the artist was trained by Van Ostade, his style is closer to Steen's and with reason he is frequently referred to as a follower or imitator of the latter. The fact that Steen stayed in Haarlem when Brakenburgh was in his teens supports the idea that he was inspired by him. Brakenburgh's compositions sometimes seem somewhat disturbed and his peasants are more

⁸⁰ Cornelis Dusart, *Drinking Bout*, undated, 48 x 56 cm, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem (inv. no. os 1-74).

⁸¹ Cornelis Dusart, *Vismarkt*, signed 'Cor. Dusart' and dated 1683, 68,5 x 90,5 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (inv. no. SK-A-98).

⁸² For general literature on Brakenburgh, see: Thieme and Becker (ed.), *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler*, vol. 4, p. 514; Piet Bakker, *Gezicht op Leeuwarden. Schilders in Friesland en de markt voor schilderijen in de Gouden Eeuw*, PhD Amsterdam 2008, pp. 183-184; Köhler, *Painting in Haarlem 1500-1850*, pp. 115-116.

⁸³ See also: Bakker, *Gezicht op Leeuwarden*, p. 168.

exuberant than those of his teacher Van Ostade. He seems to have been quite successful and to have earned a good wage before he died in 1702.

As with Dusart, a majority of Brakenburgh's low-life images are dedicated to peasants in a tavern, such as his *Peasant company dancing to the Music of a hurdy-gurdy player in a Tavern*⁸⁴ (fig. 24) from 1688. It obviously shows the artist's familiarity with Steen's work, both in composition and colouring as well as in the characterization of the figures. Another tavern scene, *Merry Company in a Tavern*⁸⁵ (fig. 25) from 1689, shows Brakenburgh's seeming predilection for depicting a large group of people very close together, centrally positioned – in this case around a table – and with much mutual interaction. Many of his tavern scenes share similar characteristics and rather breathe a sense of mirth than of thoughtlessness.

Brakenburgh's preference for showing merry and joyful companies is also visible in a couple of paintings that show specific events from (peasant) life, such as *The Baptismal Party*⁸⁶, *The Whitsuntide Bride*⁸⁷, and *A Wedding Feast in a Tavern*⁸⁸. The collection of the Frans Hals Museum includes two works that perfectly fit this set of paintings: the *Feast of St. Nicholas* (c.1690, see fig. 26) and *The Twelfth Night Feast* (1691, see fig. 27)⁸⁹. The spirit of Steen wanders around in these paintings, not only because they have been executed in his manner. Depicting 'specific events' from peasant- or village life was one of Steen's specialities in particular.

With some of his more quiet scenes Brakenburgh comes closer to his teacher Adriaen van Ostade. The relation of his *Interior with a Peasant Family and three Figures at a Fireplace*⁹⁰ (c.1690, see fig. 28) to works of his master is abundantly plain – the painting has even been attributed to Adriaen van Ostade and Dusart subsequently. More according to his own style is a *Peasant Company having Dinner in an Interior*⁹¹ (fig. 29). A third example is his *Family at Supper*⁹² (c.1685) in Haarlem (fig. 30), a – for him – serene composition with four figures from

⁸⁴ Richard Brakenburgh, *Peasant company dancing to the Music of a hurdy-gurdy player in a tavern*, signed 'R. Brackenburgh' and dated 1688, 40,7 x 49,6 cm, Christie's (Amsterdam), 13 April 2010, lot 94 (probably unsold).

⁸⁵ Richard Brakenburgh, *Merry Company in a Tavern*, signed 'R. Brakenburgh Fecit' and dated 1689, 110 x 155, Sotheby's (London), 10 July 2002, lot 36.

⁸⁶ Richard Brakenburgh, *The Baptismal Party*, signed 'R. Brakenburgh', 40,5 x 48,5 cm, Dobiaschofsky (Bern), 14 November 2008, lot 319.

⁸⁷ Richard Brakenburgh, *The Whitsuntide Bride*, unsigned and –dated, 50 x 51,5 cm, Christie's (Vienna), 29 October 1996, lot 48.

⁸⁸ Richard Brakenburgh, *A Wedding Feast in a Tavern*, signed, 100 x 127,5 cm, Christie's (London), 9 July 2004, lot 65.

⁸⁹ Richard Brakenburgh, *The Feast of St. Nicholas*, c. 1690, 75 x 86,5 cm, Frans Hals Museum (inv. no. os 2011-22); Richard Brakenburgh, *The Twelfth Night Feast*, 1691, 52 x 62,5 cm, Frans Hals Museum (inv. no. os 75-308).

⁹⁰ Richard Brakenburgh [?], *Interior with a Peasant Family and three Figures at a Fireplace*, c.1690 [fake signature 'AV. Ostade 1667'], 34 x 40 cm, Dorotheum (Wenen), 13 April 2011, lot 550 (probably unsold).

⁹¹ Richard Brakenburgh, *Peasant Company having Dinner in an Interior*, 76 x 88 cm, Dorotheum (Vienna), 24 April 2007, lot 152.

⁹² Richard Brakenburgh, *Family at Supper*, c. 1685, 31,5 x 24,5 cm, Frans Hals Museum (inv. no. I-613).

close-by and three others in the background (of which one stands behind an easel). These three paintings differ so much from each other, however, that we may question whether an attribution to Brakenburgh is tenable in all three cases. (In my view, an attribution to him is best arguable for the Vienna painting.)

Furthermore, Brakenburgh's oeuvre includes a couple of exterior scenes showing feasting or gaming peasants. Exemplary for this is his *Drinking and feasting Peasants in front of an Inn*⁹³ where the artist gives us a glimpse of a village scene including numerous peasants having fun with drinking and laughter. What goes for this paintings, goes for most of his oeuvre: humour and gaiety are the dominating factors, Brakenburgh hardly ever becomes rude or banal.

Jan Molenaer II (Haarlem 1654 – Haarlem c.1700)

Among the three most important artists of late seventeenth-century peasant genre painting, Jan Molenaer II definitely is the most problematic. His factual life is covered in mysteries and he is only minimally mentioned in art historical literature. He is recorded as a master of the Haarlem St. Luke guild in 1684.⁹⁴ Both his identity and his work have frequently been confused with Jan Miense Molenaer (1610-1668) and a certain Jan Jacobsz. Molenaer (date of birth unknown – he died in 1685) but his relation to both artists is unknown.⁹⁵ The style of Molenaer II does not resemble Jan Miense, not even where it concerns images of peasants; those of the latter are much more refined. Some of the works now attributed to Molenaer II have previously been assigned to Egbert van Heemskerck (1634/35-1704), whose style indeed seems more related to Molenaer II.

A majority of his oeuvre consists of images showing peasants, or rather – to turn it the other way around – a reconstruction of his oeuvre focuses on depictions of peasant life. Hardly any painting bears a date and although quite some images are signed 'Jan Molenaer', the signature does not necessarily exclude an attribution to another member of the Molenaer dynasty. It appears that Jan Miense Molenaer, for instance, sometimes signed his work without the middle name 'Miense'.⁹⁶ Therefore, it is problematic to compile the artist's oeuvre. For the purpose of this research, I will not sift through discussions of attribution or dating but suffice it to say that I am aware of those problems concerning Jan Molenaer's constructed oeuvre. I will handle the chosen examples with care and suspicion.

⁹³ Richard Brakenburgh, *Drinking and feasting Peasants in front of an Inn*, signed (remnants) 'R. Brack.', 39.8 x 49,3 cm, Christie's (London), 14 April 1999, lot 288.

⁹⁴ Hessel Miedema, *De archiefbescheiden van het St. Lukasgilde te Haarlem*, Alphen aan de Rijn 1980, vol. 2, p. 707.

⁹⁵ Jan Molenaer II is not mentioned as any of Jan Miense Molenaer's relatives, see: Weller (ed.), *Jan Miense Molenaer*, pp. 3, 21-22.

⁹⁶ Weller (ed.), *Jan Miense Molenaer*, p. 5.

A substantial part of the images now attributed to Jan Molenaer II is dedicated to representations of peasants in the tavern, as we have also seen with Dusart and Brakenburgh. Exemplary for his dark-coloured inn scenes is an undated *Tavernscene*⁹⁷ (it is signed 'Jan.molenaer') where is a dancing couple to be seen (see fig. 31). The lady's white dressing contrasts with the scene's dark setting and, therefore, she is the immediate eye-catcher.

In two other scenes, Molenaer II shows us that innocently dancing was not the only occupation of the peasants in their taverns. In *Amourous Couple in an Inn*⁹⁸ (two paintings, probably pendants to each other, (see figs. 32-33) we see a chap making advances to a peasant woman. Again, these scenes are executed in dark tones and the paintings are most likely by the same hand as the tavern scene previously mentioned.

Molenaer's tavern scenes, however, are not exclusively painted in brown and grey tones. Where he used a lighter colour pallet, his images come closer to both Dusart's tavern scenes and – maybe even more – to those of Van Heemskerck, as we see in *Drinking Peasants in an Inn*⁹⁹ (fig. 34) with four men around a table. One lights his pipe, a second – seen from the back – is about to take a drink and looks towards the viewer, a third laughs enthusiastically. Although the figures are not convincingly elaborated, they do evoke a sense of sympathy. The same is true for a couple of other tavern images by the artist's hand with figures around a table.¹⁰⁰ Molenaer's peasants seem not to be unruly or rude, as we can also conclude from his *Peasant Family saying prayer before Meal* (fig. 35).¹⁰¹

Not all of his peasants, however, are necessarily peace-loving. In *Fighting Women in an Inn*¹⁰² (c.1690) we see how a pair of women are at each other's throats, encouraged by some bystanders (see fig. 36). This is one out of very few examples that show us the boisterous peasant, however, and even here Molenaer II seem not to have caricatured the peasants.

⁹⁷ Jan Molenaer II, *Tavernscene*, signed 'Jan.molenaer' and undated, 34,7 x 47 cm, Bolland & Marotz (Bremen), 12 November 2011, lot 676 (as by Jan Miense Molenaer).

⁹⁸ Jan Molenaer II, *Amourous Couple in an Inn*, signed 'Jan Molenaer' and undated, 31 x 22 cm, Nagel Auktionen (Stuttgart), 29 March 2006, lot 468 (as by 'follower of Jan Miense Molenaer'); the pendant was auctioned under the same lot.

⁹⁹ Jan Molenaer II, *Drinking Peasants in an Inn*, signed 'Molenaer' and undated, 33,5 x 25,5 cm, Nagel Auktionen (Stuttgart), 29 March 2006, lot 480.

¹⁰⁰ See for instance: Jan Molenaer II, *Smoking and drinking Peasants in an Inn*, signed 'Jan. molenaer' and undated, 25 x 21 cm, Sotheby's (London), 31 October 2002, lot 54; Jan Molenaer II, *Interior of an Inn with card-playing Peasants*, signed 'JMolenaer' and undated, 31,3 x 25,5 cm, Bonhams Knightsbridge (London), 7 July 1999, lot 67.

¹⁰¹ Jan Molenaer II, *Peasant Family saying prayer before Meal*, signed 'Jan.molenaer' and undated, 27,9 x 27,2 cm, Sotheby's (Amsterdam), 5 November 2002, lot 205.

¹⁰² Jan Molenaer II, *Fighting Women in an Inn*, unsigned and dated c.1690, 33,6 x 26,8 cm, Christie's (Amsterdam), 4 September 2001, lot 440.

A categorization of peasant subjects

Although Dusart, Brakenburgh and Molenaer II can be regarded as the most dominant artists, they were certainly not the only ones to have painted images of peasants during the final decades of the seventeenth century. In order to give an overview of the peasant genre between 1670 and 1700, I will not treat all artists separately. Instead, I will focus on the most important themes that occur in these paintings and – with that – I will come across the relevant painters.

For a systematic survey of the corpus of peasant images, I have come up with a categorization into seven groups: normal peasant life, specific events from peasant life, the obvious ‘immoral’ peasant, tavern scenes, interior scenes, gaming peasants, and exterior scenes. Questions such as *what* is represented or *what* are the peasants doing, were the determining factors for this categorization. However, more than being a qualification in terms of content, this approach is first and foremost conducted as a means to systematically survey hundreds of images. Secondly, it will provide me with useful information about the popularity of certain subjects.

a) Normal peasant life

This first category is both very general as well as quite specific. It concerns those images where the artist seems to give us a glimpse of ‘normal’ or domestic peasant life; in that sense they are quite general. Their appearance, however, is quite specific. By far the greater part of peasant imagery focuses on certain branches of peasant life. Hence, the generality of the subject makes these paintings quite typical. We have seen images belonging to his category before with Molenaer’s *Peasant Family saying prayer before Meal* (see fig. 35) and Brakenburgh’s *Family at Supper* (see fig. 30).

Willem van Mieris (1662-1747), son of the more famous Frans van Mieris (1635-1681), mainly focussed on middle- and high-class genre scenes but has painted a couple of peasant images too. In his *Peasant Family in a Cottage Interior*¹⁰³ (1718) we see a woman sitting at a spinning wheel, a man standing next to her and a baby in between (see fig. 37). He is feeding the little child some porridge but the baby has fallen asleep as it seems. Van Mieris’ refined manner and subtle handling of the theme gives the scene a serene appearance – it has even been proposed that the painting illustrates the Holy Family. A similar scene is to be seen in *A Young Mother tending to her two Children in a domestic Interior*¹⁰⁴ (1728), where a seated woman in the centre of the composition tries to feed a child some porridge (see fig. 38). On her right hand an

¹⁰³ Willem van Mieris, *Peasant Family in a Cottage Interior*, signed and dated ‘W Van Mieris. Fec. Anno 1718’, 50,8 x 41,2 cm, Koller (Zürich), 18 September 2009, lot 3040.

¹⁰⁴ Willem van Mieris, *A Young Mother tending to her two Children in a domestic Interior*, signed and dated ‘W.van Mieris Fe Anno 1728’, 44,5 x 38,5 cm, Sotheby’s (London), 7-8 December 2011, lot 239.

older child leans on a table. Looking at the woman's physiognomy and the colouring of her dress, she seems to be after the same model as the lady in the former painting. Even her pose is rather similar – be it mirrored – with one foot on a stove. Van Mieris has represented a noble type of peasant, people like you and me who – although they may have belonged to a different (lower) social class – share the same morals.

It is hardly possible to find another peasant scene that is as serene as Van Mieris' two paintings. We know of a simple peasant interior by Hubert van Ravesteyn (1638-1691) where the artist has depicted a man sitting in the centre of the scene, looking at his wife in the left background who is busy with three kids. On the right hand side we see a glance of a stall interior.¹⁰⁵ The latter seems to be the artist's speciality. Van Ravesteyn was a Dordrecht painter who painted quite a few images of the peasant (at work) in the stall, such as his *Stalinterior*¹⁰⁶ (fig. 39) in the collection of the Dordrechts Museum. Whether these stall interiors give us a realistic view of any reality is something I will leave out for now. These images, however, are rare for the seventeenth century did not saw many paintings where we the peasant was represented either at work or in his working space.

I previously mentioned some paintings by Dusart, Brakenburgh, and Molenaer II which also fit this category.

b) Specific events from peasant life

Where paintings in the first category lacked reference to a specific moment in peasant life, this group includes images with a clear indication that we see a specific event in the life of the country man. I previously mentioned a couple of paintings by Richard Brakenburgh with subjects such as the baptismal party, the Whitsuntide bride, the wedding feast, the feast of St. Nicholas and the Twelfth Night feast. Also attributed to Brakenburgh is a scene showing a funeral¹⁰⁷, a theme that hardly occurs at all.

By far the most popular event that belongs to this category is the peasant- or village wedding, a subject that – since its invention by Pieter Bruegel the Elder – has been numerously copied or reworked. Brakenburgh at least painted two peasant weddings and their mutual comparison is so striking that they must have been copies after one another.¹⁰⁸ Another peasant

¹⁰⁵ Hubert van Ravesteyn, *Interior of a Dutch Peasant Cottage*, signed 'RN', 55 x 78 cm, Küppers & Bödiger (Bonn), 3 March 1955, lot 7.

¹⁰⁶ Hubert van Ravesteyn, *Stalinterior*, signed 'H. Ravesteyn', 62,8 x 90,7 cm, Dordrechts Museum (inv. no. DM/907/90). See: Angela Tamvaki, *The Golden Age of Dutch Painting from the collection of the Dordrechts Museum*, exh. cat. Athens (Museio Alexandru Sutz) 2002, p. 39.

¹⁰⁷ Richard Brakenburgh, *The Peasant Funeral*, undated, 31 x 24 cm, present whereabouts unknown (last seen with art dealer H. Baumann (Düsseldorf) in 1936).

¹⁰⁸ The two versions being: Richard Brakenburgh, *The Wedding Feast*, undated, 70,5 x 90,5 cm, Bonhams (London), 9-10 July 2002, lot 322; and Richard Brakenburgh, *Wedding Feast in a Tavern*, signed, 70,9 x 90,9 cm, Christie's (London), 9 July 2004, lot 65.

wedding that we know of is by the hand of the Amsterdam painter Hendrick Bogaert (1626/27-c.1685).¹⁰⁹ The wedding couple in Bogaert's painting seems to pose in the centre of the scene (see fig. 40).

However, it is hard to find more examples of peasant weddings or paintings which show any other specific events from peasant life. Besides, it needs to be emphasized that nearly all the examples mentioned here are by Brakenburgh's hand. We may, therefore, cautiously conclude that the subject – including the peasant wedding – hardly played a significant role in the period of 1670 to 1700.

c) The obvious 'immoral' peasant

The immoral peasant is represented by the artist in such a way that the seventeenth-century viewer must have concluded that the peasant employed bad behaviour. Brouwer's images of fighting and knife pulling peasants are very likely to be read as such, but a village- or tavern scene that includes cheerful dancing, feasting and drinking without outrageous behaviour makes an immoral reading less obvious. To this category, therefore, only belong images of the first kind, such as Molenaer's *Fighting Women in an Inn* (see fig. 36) mentioned above.

Another example shows a brute fight in a tavern interior.¹¹⁰ In the centre of the painting we see a kneeling man who is to be harassed by at least three others. Two of his assailants are about to smash the poor victim with a broom and a stool while a woman in the right background hardly dares to look. The painting is currently attributed to Van Ravesteyn but the subject is somewhat atypical for him.

*Sleeping and drunken women in a Kitchen*¹¹¹ (fig. 41), painted after Richard Brakenburgh, illustrates a messy kitchen where no less than nine women have fallen asleep, be it sitting, lying, hanging on furniture, or even standing. The work has previously been attributed to Jan Steen but is now thought to be by an anonymous follower of Brakenburgh.

Some other examples that would fit this category are attributed to Molenaer II, such as a small grisaille illustrating how three men harass a woman¹¹², the latter obviously does not appreciate the men's attention. There is yet a great number of paintings that, although they do not actually show immoral acts, could be subjected to a moralistic reading nonetheless. I will treat them in due course.

¹⁰⁹ Hendrick Bogaert, *Peasant Wedding*, signed 'HBogert fecit Anno 167(1)', 109 x 174 cm, Westfries Museum, Hoorn (inv. no. 00528). The painting has been stolen in the night from 9 to 10 January 2005. Hence, present whereabouts unknown.

¹¹⁰ Hubert van Ravesteyn, *A brute Peasant fight in a Tavern*, unsigned and undated, 32 x 39 cm, present whereabouts unknown (last seen at Fievez (Brussels), 16 June 1931, lot 119).

¹¹¹ After Richard Brakenburgh, *Sleeping and drunken women in a Kitchen*, undated, 65 x 77,5 cm, Sotheby's (Amsterdam), 12 November 1996, lot 29 (as by R. Brakenburgh).

¹¹² Jan Molenaer II, *Peasants harassing a Woman in an Inn*, dated 'JMolenaer', 19,2 x 15,2, Dorotheum (Vienna), 17 October 2007, lot 223.

d) Tavern scenes

A rough half of all the peasant images which date from the period discussed here, shows a scene from the tavern. Different from what we have seen with the first three groups, the location is the determining factor for the paintings belonging to this fourth category. However, the location (the tavern) is equivalent to a certain type of behaviour and therefore represents a social activity or social activities. The inn was a place to dance, to laugh, to feast, to drink, to smoke, to make advances, or to make music. I believe these activities are of the same kind and the tavern has been used as the ultimate excuse to stage them.

I previously mentioned some tavern scenes by Dusart, Brakenburgh and Molenaer II. Another artist who frequently painted scenes from the inn is Hendrik de Valk¹¹³ (1674-1709), who was born and died in Leeuwarden. However, he also must have stayed in Haarlem for a certain period for he is mentioned as a member of the city's St. Luke Guild in 1693.¹¹⁴ Many of his paintings seem to be rooted in the Steen-tradition, such as his *Tavern Interior with a merry Company drinking and smoking*¹¹⁵ (fig. 42) where a dozen of figures spends their time in an inn: a fiddler makes some music, others are in conversation, a man makes advances to a woman, and the waitress opens the window. A second example by his hand shows a larger scene, including dancing and feasting peasants.¹¹⁶ And although the signature of Jan Steen is fake, the painting breaths his spirit nonetheless. De Valk's tavern scenes show merry and joyful peasants, sometimes with a touch of mischievousness but never rude or dangerous.

Among the very few paintings that we know of by the hand of Nicolas van Haeften¹¹⁷ (1663-1715) we find at least three tavern scenes. In a picture dated 1696¹¹⁸ Van Haeften seems to have emphasized the amorous aspect of the tavern but the peasants are kind-hearted. His handling of the subject, therewith, resembles Brakenburgh's tavern scenes.¹¹⁹ In another picture, the central role is to be played by a monkey that lightens a pipe on a table (see fig. 43).¹²⁰ It is most likely, however, that the artist already was in Paris by the time he painted this remarkable subject.

¹¹³ For a short biography, see: Bakker, *Gezicht op Leeuwarden*, pp. 237-238.

¹¹⁴ Thieme and Becker (ed.), *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler*, vol. 34, p. 48.

¹¹⁵ Hendrik de Valk, *Tavern Interior with a merry Company drinking and smoking*, undated, 40,7 x 48,6 cm, Sotheby's (London), 6 July 2004, lot 538.

¹¹⁶ Hendrik de Valk, *A Peasant Feast in an Inn*, dated 1693, 58 x 77 cm, F. Muller (Amsterdam), 13 March 1951, lot 12.

¹¹⁷ Nicolas (Walraven) van Haeften was born in Gorcum but moved to Paris in the 1690s, see: Neumeister, *Holländische Gemälde im Städel*, p. 131; Fieke Tissink and H.F. de Wit, *Gorcumse Schilders in de Gouden Eeuw*, Gorinchem 1987, p. 89.

¹¹⁸ Nicolas van Haeften, *Peasants in a Tavern*, signed '..haften' and dated 1696, 53,8 x 65 cm, Sotheby's (London), 20 April 1994, lot 26.

¹¹⁹ See also: Thieme and Becker (ed.), *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler*, vol. 15, p. 450.

¹²⁰ Nicolas van Haeften, *Gesellschaft mit pfeifenrauchendem Affe in einer Schenke*, undated, 46 x 37 cm, Kunstmuseum Basel (inv. no. 274).

More in the manner of Dusart is Caspar Leeuwenburgh's (1668-after 1699) *Smoking and Drinking Peasants in an Inn*¹²¹. A standing figure in the centre raises his glass to the sound of a fiddler in the background. The poses of the peasants, and their heads in particular, lean towards caricature and resemble some of the peasants in Dusart's work. In tavern scenes by Hendrick Carré¹²² (1656-1721) we see a similar resemblance with Dusart's caricatured figures, such as in a dated work from 1693¹²³. There are only a few peasant images by Carré known to us and a couple of them have been ascribed to Dusart in the past.

A majority of all the tavern scenes, however, are by the hands of Dusart, Brakenburgh, and Molenaer II. Most of Dusart's and Brakenburgh's depictions of the inn consist of larger ensemble scenes with relatively large spaces, stuffed with numerous figures of which some sit down, others stand, some make a dance, there is a musician, there is sufficient drinking and smoking, the floor is scattered with all kind of objects, and a child – and preferably a dog too – runs among the crowd. Exemplary for these kind of tavern scenes is Dusart's *Peasant Inn*¹²⁴ (c.1680-1690) in the Mauritshuis (fig. 44) and Brakenburgh's *Tavern scene with Peasants dancing*¹²⁵ (1690) in Vienna (fig. 45). Molenaer's tavern pictures usually are smaller – or more intimate so to say – with less figures, often sitting around a table or a barrel. In his scenes the artist alludes to amours more than once, as we see, for instance, in his *Merry Company in a Peasant Inn*¹²⁶ (fig. 46). However, be it smaller or larger in scale, almost all these tavern scenes turn on the same: the peasants have fun, sometimes they drink, smoke or leer too much, but in the end they never turn out to be coarse or dangerous.

d2) Interior scenes

To this subcategory belong a couple of interior scenes that either do not take place in the tavern, or the acts do not match the social framework of the tavern, despite the fact that the scene has been staged in it. An example of the latter is *A Tavern Interior with a Lady eating a Bowl of Soup*¹²⁷ (signed and dated 16(7/9)5) by Brakenburgh (fig. 47). Although the scene is laid in a tavern, the subject is different from what we have seen in paintings belonging to the former

¹²¹ Caspar Leeuwenburgh, *Smoking and Drinking Peasants in an Inn*, signed 'K.Leeuwenburgh', present whereabouts unknown (last seen at: Art Dealer J. Gans (The Hague), 1936).

¹²² For a short biography of Carré, see: Bakker, *Gezicht op Leeuwarden*, p. 189.

¹²³ Hendrick Carré, *Peasants in an Inn*, signed 'H Carre f 169(3)', 22,8 x 27,6 cm, Sotheby's (London), 11 July 1973, lot 43.

¹²⁴ Cornelis Dusart, *Boerenherberg*, signed 'Corn. Dusart', 40,5 x 49,5 cm, Mauritshuis, The Hague (inv. no. 440).

¹²⁵ Richard Brakenburgh, *Tavern scene with peasants dancing*, signed 'R. Brakenburgh' and dated 1690, 67 x 83,5 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, Vienna (inv. no. GG_629).

¹²⁶ Jan Molenaer II, *Merry Company in a Peasant Inn*, signed 'Jan Molenaar', 33 x 29,2 cm, Christie's (London), 13 July 2001, lot 109.

¹²⁷ Richard Brakenburgh, *A Tavern Interior with a Lady eating a Bowl of Soup, other Figures by a Window beyond*, signed 'R. Brak / 16[7/9]5', 31 x 40,5 cm, Sotheby's (London), 18 April 2002, lot 45.

category. Brakenburgh's painting shows a centrally seated, almost Vermeer-like woman, about to take a bit of soup, as if she is a kitchen maid having a little break. The figures in the background do not play a significant role. It is a peaceful little scene.

Jan Molenaer II painted a quiet kitchen interior with five figures by a fireplace.¹²⁸ One of them looks over his shoulder directly towards the viewer. Van Haeften too painted a pair of kitchen interiors, the first showing a seated woman baking pancakes, accompanied by two standing ladies in the background of which one is eating.¹²⁹ In a second painting, the artist depicted a kitchen maid that prepares vegetables while the innkeeper kneels next to her.¹³⁰ From the look on his face it is not hard to guess what he is up to.

All of the scenes in this category show quiet peasants, mostly within the context of a kitchen interior.

e) Gaming peasants

The paintings in this category illustrate that peasants in their 'free time' busied themselves with more than just drinking and smoking. The country men that play a role in these scenes play a game, often inside a tavern or another interior, sometimes outdoors. On the one hand, the activity of gaming can be put under the same heading as all other social activities that took place in the tavern (and thus could have been treated as such in the fourth category). On the other hand, however, there is a significant number of images with an obvious focus on gaming and as far as interpretation is concerned, such images can be read different from 'regular' tavern scenes, although I am not inclined to focus on the matter of interpretation here. At least, it has a practical advantage to treat gaming peasants separate from their 'feasting' fellows.

Among the most occurring games we find card-games, dice-games, and 'triktrak' (backgammon). The *Dice Players*¹³¹ by Brakenburgh shows a group of three figures playing a game (fig. 48). Two young ladies seat at a table, an elderly man stands on the left hand side and has just gambled. In the background, four figures observe the main actors. For now, I will leave the question unanswered how we should interpret a scene like this, where an old men plays a game with two young ladies.

¹²⁸ Jan Molenaer II, *Kitchen Interior with merry Company*, signed 'Jan Molenaer', 27 x 25,7 cm, Sotheby's (New York), 3 October 1996, lot 154.

¹²⁹ Nicolas van Haeften, *Kitchen Interior with a pancake baking Lady*, unsigned, 32 x 24 cm, Piasa (Paris), 27 March 2000, lot 22.

¹³⁰ Nicolas van Haeften, *Interior with an Innkeeper and a kitchen maid cleaning vegetables*, signed 'N. van Haeften 1706', 41 x 32 cm, Nivaagaards Malerisamling, Nivå; see: Claus M. Smidt, *100 malerier på Nivaagaards Malerisamling*, Nivaa 1983, pp. 21, 31.

¹³¹ Richard Brakenburgh, *The Dice Players*, signed 'R.Brakenburgh', 37,6 x 29,7 cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art (inv. no. 528).

Molenaer II painted quite a few tavern interiors with card-playing peasants, whereby a small group of people, both man and woman, are involved in a card game.¹³² Usually there is minimal one participant who turns his face away from the game to smile or laugh at the viewer, as there is always a bystander observing the game with such a specific look on his or her face that we can only conclude he or she is commentating the players. The same is true for Brakenburgh's *Game of Cards at an Inn*¹³³ (fig. 49) where a centrally seated woman and her challenging pose in particular give enough reason for further interpretation. The 'triktrak'-game is the subject of a painting that is attributed to Job Adriaensz. Berkheyde (1630-1693) showing a couple of man playing backgammon in the open air beneath a pergola (see fig. 50).¹³⁴

f) Exterior scenes

The final category includes images of peasants in the open air. After depictions of tavern interiors, this category is the largest one and the paintings that it includes link thematically on to images of tavern scenes. These exterior scenes mainly show drinking, smoking or feasting peasants, not in the tavern, however, but in front of it, sometimes also on a farmyard, in a village setting or otherwise.

Many paintings by Dusart fit this category. His *Village Fair*¹³⁵ is an elaboration of the old theme of the peasant kermis (fig. 51). In front of an inn – the flag hangs out – we see dancing and feasting peasants. Another scene by his hand, *A Merry-Making*¹³⁶ (fig. 52) now in Dublin, is smaller in scale and shows how a cheerful man in the centre takes off his hat and asks a sitting lady for a dance. Yet other paintings show peasant families in front of their houses, such as Dusart's *Peasant Family outside a Cottage* (see fig. 19). Many of these scenes include street musicians such as fiddlers or hurdy-gurdy players.

Among the many larger-scaled village scenes with numerous figures and several actions we find a *Village Fair*¹³⁷ by Pieter van Mase (c.1650-after 1703) and a couple of village scenes by Brakenburgh, such as his *Peasants drinking and carousing outside a Tavern*¹³⁸. Both images

¹³² Exemplary for this is: Jan Molenaer II, *Interior with Boors seated at a Table playing Cards*, signed 'JMolenaer', 31,7 x 25 cm, Bohams Knightsbridge (London), 7 July 1999, lot 67.

¹³³ Richard Brakenburgh, *A Game of Cards at an Inn*, undated, 50 x 34 cm, National Gallery of Denmark, Copenhagen (inv. no. KMSsp650).

¹³⁴ Job Adriaensz. Berkheyde, *Peasants playing Backgammon beneath the Arbour of a Tavern*, unsigned, 34,4 x 28,9 cm, Christie's (London), 29 October 1999, lot 32.

¹³⁵ Cornelis Dusart, *Village Fair*, unsigned, 86,5 x 135,6 cm, Dutch private collection.

¹³⁶ Cornelis Dusart, *A Merry-Making*, signed 'C. Dusart 1692', 33,5 x 38,5 cm, National Gallery of Ireland (inv. no. NGL.324).

¹³⁷ Pieter van Mase, *Village Fair*, signed 'PVMaes/ A 1679', 64 x 91 cm, Sotheby's (Amsterdam), 14 November 1990, lot 120.

¹³⁸ Richard Brakenburgh, *Peasants drinking and carousing outside a Tavern*, signed 'R.Brack...', 39,8 x 49,3 cm, Christie's (London), 13 December 1996, lot 271.

illustrate once more how a large number of peasants do what they always seem to do: they are having fun.

A painting now attributed to Hendrick Carré zooms in on a group of peasants around a table while the left background shows us a village kermis.¹³⁹ The seated figures in the foreground smoke and talk to each other. The main role is played by a man who has turned towards the viewer and is about to refill his jar at the wine barrel in the left foreground. Hendrik de Valk painted a scene with a quack doctor¹⁴⁰, a subject that only occasionally occurs.

Thematically, almost all exterior scenes share the same characteristics as their interior counterparts. In general, the large-scaled village scene shows the feasting and dancing peasant, whether or not within the setting of a village kermis, while the smaller-scaled exterior scene focuses on the smoking and chatting peasant, be it either in front of a tavern or at their own doorstep.

Conclusion

There are many paintings from the period 1670 to 1700 that are dedicated to peasant- and village life. Realizing that there certainly are images that I have not come across during this research, I can only conclude that peasant genre painting still existed during the late seventeenth century. Its main protagonist – without doubt – is Cornelis Dusart, as is also confirmed by his frequent appearance in art historical literature. At the same time, Richard Brakenburgh and Jan Molenaer II appears to have painted quite a number of low-life images too. Together with Dusart they can be considered as the most prominent artists from the late seventeenth century who in particular spent their artistic life to represent the world of peasants and village people.

Dusart and Brakenburgh were both pupils of Adriaen van Ostade and Dusart's connection to his teacher is inevitable. Brakenburgh's images, however, are closer to Steen's. Where Molenaer II received his artistic training is unknown for we hardly know anything at all about the artist's life and career. Some of his paintings recall the style of Van Heemskerck and his figures sometimes seem to be inspired by Steen.

It is undocumented whether the three knew each other. We do know, however, that they were all born and died in Haarlem. Brakenburgh, however, spent almost two decades of his life in Leeuwarden. The lack of any reliable information about Molenaer II makes it impossible to assume that he will have spent his entire lifetime in Haarlem. But although we do not have sufficient information to ascertain when the three lived in the city, we do know that they became

¹³⁹ Hendrick Carré, *A Village Feast*, dated 1691, 42 x 35,5 cm, presents whereabouts unknown.

¹⁴⁰ Hendrik de Valk, *A Quack Doctor and Peasants in a Village*, signed 'H. v. Valke 1692', 31,7 x 42,5 cm, Christie's (London), 12 December 1980, lot 107.

a member of the Haarlem St. Luke Guild in the 1680s: Dusart in 1680 (in 1692 he became 'hoofdmans'), Molenaer II in 1684 and Brakenburgh after he returned to the city in 1687. Hence, it is not inconceivable that the three artists – who belonged to the same generation – will have known each other and each other's work.

The lion's share of Dutch low-life genre images from the late seventeenth century shows the peasant in its public sphere, be it either in a tavern or outdoor in the village. If one believes these images to be truthful and representative depictions of contemporary daily peasant life, he or she would conclude that the late seventeenth-century country man dedicated a majority of his time to feasting, drinking, smoking, dancing, gaming, laughing or other activities that can be attached to the 'social framework' of the tavern. Three of the aforementioned categories include images of this kind: tavern scenes, gaming peasants and exterior scenes. Together, the pictures from these categories form more than three quarters of the total amount. Moreover, most of the paintings that illustrate specific events from peasant life – the second category, that is – show merry companies too (for a special event is being celebrated with drinking and dancing after all).

There are only two categories that clearly stand out from the bulk of images that illustrate the peasants' pleasures of life. On the one hand we find a couple of images that show the obvious immoral peasant (the third category). Although the peasants' activities in these pictures may be situated within the same social sphere as, for instance, tavern scenes, their pronounced negative undertone give these images a different appeal. On the other hand there are a couple of pictures showing the peasant in a domestic context (the first category). These paintings seem to give us a glance of 'normal' peasant life. However, the number of pictures belonging to these two categories form only a vast minority within the total amount of late seventeenth-century low-life genre images.

A comparison of peasant genre painting from the years 1670 to 1700 (as described in this chapter) to the genre's character of the preceding decades (surveyed in the first chapter), results in two main observations. First of all, the genre seems to stand still. It appears that no new subjects had been introduced, nor had there been an artist who treated traditional themes in an original way. The subjects I have categorized into seven groups all bear reference to previous subjects. Brakenburgh's peasants do not act different from Steen's, and Dusart's figures drink similarly to Van Ostade's. The peasants in the hands of Molenaer II, De Valk, or Carré, among others, still feast, drink, laugh, smoke, dance and play. The tavern remained the main stage for the peasants and their pleasures and the domestic area was still reserved for more quiet scenes. The low-life genre artists of the century's final decades lack the inventiveness of earlier masters such as Brouwer, Van Ostade and Steen, who each treated the peasant theme in their own

manner. Secondly, it is not only theme and subject treatment that lacks originality. The style of most late seventeenth-century low-life genre painters recall (mainly) Van Ostade and Steen. In general, the colouring of the scenes, the use of light, composition, or the brushwork never become really surprising or exciting.

All in all, assessing and characterizing images of peasants from the period 1670 to 1700 leads to the conclusion that they only seem to have existed in the slipstream – or by the grace – of the genre's most important protagonists from decades before. In that sense, the idea that the genre heavily decayed during the late seventeenth century – as pointed out by Haak, Slive, and Biesboer among others – can only be true. However, how come that we still have quite an amount of peasant pictures from this 'period of decay'? For whom were these paintings made? And what developments underlie this decay? These questions will be addressed in the rest of this thesis, starting in the next chapter with the issue of the intended public.

Chapter 3 | The public of late seventeenth-century peasant genre painting

The bulk of images with peasants and village people from the period 1670 to 1700 – as surveyed in the second chapter – suggest that there still must have been a market for low-life genre painting in the late seventeenth century. Substantiating this assumption, however, is yet another question. In order to get an idea of the popularity of such images in the last decades of the century, I will focus on questions related to the art market: who were the buyers of these peasant paintings? What position will they have had on the art market? And what functions might these images of peasants have had?

It is far from easy to find out who bought peasant genre painting in the late seventeenth-century. First of all, only very few late seventeenth-century peasant images that are known today come with a proper provenance and even for these pictures it is hardly possible to trace its history back to its first seventeenth-century owner. Secondly, we do know of quite a few inventories from wealthy Dutch collectors but from these lists it is difficult to ascertain to what kind of images with peasants or low-life people is been referred to, if they appear at all. For instance, in the inventory of the Dutch merchant-banker Herman Becker (c.1617-1678) – who's collection with over a 230 pictures has been regarded as one of the most important collections of Dutch art at his time – we find many descriptions of artworks with a clear attribution or description.¹⁴¹ 'A Priest reading a book by Jan Lievens the Elder' or 'A sleeping shepherdess and shepherds by Ter Brugge' are two out of many records that give quite a good indication to what kind of painting is been referred to. As far as images of low-life genre are concerned, however, there are less than fifteen records that might hint to peasant imagery. Moreover, these descriptions, such as 'Some farmers' or 'Some card players', are vague and extremely difficult to further investigate. Only three records provide us with a name: Brouwer appears two times, the third picture is been described as a 'Wedding in the style of Bruegel'. Thus, descriptions of low-life genre pictures do hardly appear in Becker's inventory and if they do, they cannot consistently be attached to a specific painting or painter and the situation of Becker's inventory is no exception.

It should also be stressed that paintings mentioned in seventeenth-century inventories that we know of, together only form a little part of the total amount of pictures that must have circulated at the time. The situation regarding contemporary auction catalogues is not much different. How is it possible then to address the question of popularity? How can we know what kind of people

¹⁴¹ For information on Herman Becker and his collection, see: Hugo J. Postma, 'De Amsterdamse verzamelaar Herman Becker (ca. 1617-1678). Nieuwe gegevens over een geldschieter van Rembrandt', *Oud Holland* 102 (1988), pp. 1-21.

were interested in peasant imagery by the end of the seventeenth century? Let me turn the approach upside down. By excluding several options – trying to find out what kind of people were not interested in images of peasants – I hope to get at a certain point of understanding.

The concept of ‘otherness’

There is hardly any reason to believe that the peasant himself – or, in a broader sense, the lower social class – was interested in images of country life in the first place, nor that they had enough financial sources at their disposal to acquire paintings in the second. We do know of some inventories of seventeenth-century country men from which we may conclude that a few of them did possess paintings.¹⁴² In most cases, however, it is unknown what the subjects of these artworks were. Moreover, given the correlation of the scarceness of these kind of inventories (and the low number of paintings that appear in it) to the bulk of late seventeenth-century peasant images, we cannot speak of a general tendency. Generally we may conclude that the seventeenth-century buyer of low-life genre images was not the lower-class man himself.

As a result, there must have existed a discrepancy between the public of these kind of paintings and the world that they represent. The seventeenth-century viewer, thus, must have looked at these pictures with a feeling of ‘otherness’. To some, this notion of ‘being different’ is considered to be an important ‘assumption’ or ‘condition’ for reading peasant imagery. Paul Vandebroek, for instance, used this concept of otherness as the main key to unlock several ideas regarding the interpretation of peasant scenes.¹⁴³

The assumption that the intended public of these low-life genre pictures had no part in the social world that these images illustrate, indeed proves itself very useful for an understanding of these artworks. On a theoretical level, the relation between peasant imagery and its viewer can take three different forms. The historian Paul Freedman distinguishes ‘unfavourable alterity’, ‘similarity’, and ‘favourable dissimilarity’¹⁴⁴ and Bart Ramakers writes about ‘moralism, realism, and idealism’.¹⁴⁵ In short, the interpretation of peasant images can have a negative, neutral, or positive character. Most of the peasant scenes from the sixteenth century – the Bruegel-dynasty and its followers, that is – fall under the first category and are generally interpreted as ‘negative’. The exact use of this negative concept (or, in the words of Freedman and Ramakers, the concept of ‘unfavourable alterity’ or ‘moralism’) follows two different lines, represented by two groups of

¹⁴² Jan de Vries, *The Dutch Rural Economy in the Golden Age, 1500-1700*, New Haven and London 1974, p. 219.

¹⁴³ Paul Vandebroek, *Beeld van de andere, vertoog over het zelf. Over wilden en narren, boeren en bedelaars*, exh. cat. Antwerpen (Royal Museum of Fine Arts) 1987.

¹⁴⁴ Paul Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant*, Stanford 1999, p. 302.

¹⁴⁵ Bart Ramakers, ‘Kinderen van Saturnus. Afstand en nabijheid van boeren in de beeldende kunst en het toneel van de zestiende eeuw’, *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek 2002*, 53 (Zwolle 2002), pp. 11-51, there p. 13.

art historians. The first and larger group tends to read such images as a form of satire that evoke moral and admonishing messages. To this group belong Hessel Miedema, Keith P.F. Moxey, Vandenbroeck, Hans-Joachim Raupp, and Margaret A. Sullivan, among others.¹⁴⁶ The second group follows a more mild or softer line and is represented by Svetlana Alpers and Bart Ramakers.¹⁴⁷ They take the comic character of peasant scenes as a starting point to illustrate that these images were first and foremost meant as a form of entertainment and pastime.

Both directions, however, do fall under the 'negative' concept. The mild-comic line too – be it milder than the satirical – dissociates oneself from the peasant. Laughing because of the aspect of 'otherness' does imply an inferior attitude towards the country man. Moreover, they both represent urban constructions. Images of peasants were made by and for the citizen. With humorously ridiculing or satirizing the lower class, such paintings will have entertained a non-peasant public. Hence, the 'concept of otherness' as a means to interpret peasant images, underscores the assumption that paintings with peasants were in little demand among the peasants themselves.

Art theory

Likewise, there are good reasons to assume that these late seventeenth-century low-life genre paintings were not very popular among high-class citizens either. From two important art theoretical writings of the time, Gérard de Lairese's *Groot Schilderboek* (1712) and Houbraken's *Groote Schouburgh* (1718-1721)¹⁴⁸, we may conclude that paintings of peasants were not in high esteem among wealthy art-lovers from the late seventeenth century.

First of all, in the course of the seventeenth century, styles and techniques became increasingly associated with a painting's subject. For works with well-mannered and civic figures or lofty and grand subjects it was appropriate to use a refined and precise style, while the messy and muddy style of low-life genre painting could only represent the rude and uncivil side

¹⁴⁶ For publications in which these art historians ventilate their ideas, see (in the same order as above): H. Miedema, 'Realism and comic mode: the peasant', *Simiolus* 9 (1977), pp. 205-219; K.P.F. Moxey, 'Sebald Beham's church anniversary holidays: festive peasants as instruments of repressive humor', *Simiolus* 12 (1981), pp. 107-130; P. Vandenbroeck, 'Verbeeck's Peasant Weddings: A Study of Iconography and Social Function', *Simiolus* 14 (1984), pp. 79-124; H.J. Raupp, *Bauernsatiren: Entstehung und Entwicklung des bäuerlichen Genres in der deutschen und niederländischen Kunst ca. 1470-1570*, Niederzier 1986; M.A. Sullivan, *Bruegel's Peasants. Art and Audience in the Northern Renaissance*, Cambridge 1994.

¹⁴⁷ For their view, see: S. Alpers, 'Bruegel's festive peasants', *Simiolus* 6 (1972-1973), pp. 163-176; Idem, 'Realism as a comic mode: low-life painting seen through Bredero's eyes', *Simiolus* 10 (1975-1976), pp. 115-144; Idem, 'Taking Pictures Seriously: A Reply to Hessel Miedema', *Simiolus* 10 (1978-1979), pp. 46-50; B. Ramakers, 'Kinderen van Saturnus', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, 53 (2002), pp. 11-51.

¹⁴⁸ Gérard de Lairese, *Groot Schilderboek*, Amsterdam 1712; Arnold Houbraken, *De Groote Schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, 3 vols., (1718-1721), Amsterdam 1967.

of society.¹⁴⁹ In his *Groot Schilderboek*, De Lairese strongly discourages the reader to pursue the latter. Depictions of peasants or other lower-class people (such as beggars and whoremongers) no longer fitted the ideals of late seventeenth-century classical art theory.¹⁵⁰ De Lairese makes his appeal not only to the artist and his 'taste' but to the art-buyer too. Low-life genre paintings should no longer decorate people's walls for it would derogate the beauty of their rooms: who would receive honourable guests in a beautiful room while its walls show fighting peasants or urinating children?¹⁵¹ He even criticizes artists such as Adriaen van Ostade, Brouwer, or Molenaer for the 'ugliness' of their figures and for ignoring of the rules of art.¹⁵² Although De Lairese's book may not have had one-to-one influence on artists or art-lovers, his art theoretical treatise represents ideas that gradually must have been accepted within upper-class circles nonetheless. Even if one takes the gap between De Lairese's 'theory' and late seventeenth-century 'reality' into account, there is no need for imagination to conclude that low-life genre images of peasants had become out of fashion.

The same conclusion can be drawn from a closer look at Houbraken's *Groote Schouburgh*. This thesis includes several artists that painted peasant scenes during the period 1670-1700 (see chapter 2, pp. 18-33), but only three of them are mentioned by Houbraken. It must be said that an exclusion from Houbraken does not necessarily mean the world; both Johannes Vermeer and Meindert Hobbema do not appear in de *Groote Schouburgh* either. The lack of so many late seventeenth-century low-life genre painters, however, is significant. Houbraken does mention low-life genre artists from previous generations, such as Brouwer, the Ostade-brothers, the Saftleven-brothers, Bega, and Steen but he totally ignores Dusart and Molenaer II, as well as many others. He may either not have known about these painters or he purposely chose not to include them. Both options imply that these artists did not play a significant role during Houbraken's life (1660-1719), a period which covers the years discussed here. Among the three artists he does mention, are Hendrick Carré (of whom he only seems to know a handful of facts¹⁵³) and Hubert van Ravesteyn (who he quite rightly labels to have painted mainly '*schaapstalletjes*'¹⁵⁴). Houbraken spends a considerable amount of words to the life of the third, Job Adriaensz. Berkheyde, and that of his brother Gerard.¹⁵⁵ Berkheyde, however, was not primarily a low-life genre painter. He mainly painted cityscapes and church interiors.

¹⁴⁹ Wayne Franits, 'Domesticity, Privacy, Civility, and the Transformation of Adriaen van Ostade's Art', in: Patricia Phagan (ed.), *Images of Women in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art. Domesticity and the Representation of the Peasant*, Georgia 1996, pp. 3-25, there pp. 16-18.

¹⁵⁰ See also: Haak, *Hollandse schilders in de Gouden Eeuw*, p. 499.

¹⁵¹ De Lairese, *Groot Schilderboek, Derde Boek*, p. 171.

¹⁵² Idem, p. 174.

¹⁵³ Houbraken, *De Groote Schouburgh*, vol. 3, pp. 382-383.

¹⁵⁴ Idem, p. 215.

¹⁵⁵ Idem, pp. 189-198.

Brakenburgh does figure in Houbraken but only as a painter “who had lived in Friesland for a while” and who “was merely drunken by the end of his life”.¹⁵⁶

Hence, the character and focus of both De Lairese’s and Houbraken’s publications, give reason to assume that low-life images of peasants were banished from the field of late seventeenth-century painting that really mattered. Its style and subject matter could no longer be brought into agreement with contemporary art theory as formulated by De Lairese and its artists hardly occur in Houbraken’s bundle of biographies. Within this context it may not be surprising that low-life genre scenes are hard to find in inventories of wealthy Dutch collectors from the second half of the century (such as Becker’s) or in seventeenth-century auction catalogues. Peasant pieces that do occur in such auction lists or inventories, almost without exception concern works by already established masters from previous generations such as Bruegel, Brouwer, Van Ostade and Steen.¹⁵⁷ All in all, there is little reason to believe that low-life paintings by Dusart or Molenaer II were greatly appreciated by wealthy collectors and art-lovers from the late-seventeenth century.

The art market

However, the simple fact that De Lairese in the year 1712 felt the urge to firmly reject low-life genre painting, suggests that there still must have been artists who produced peasant scenes, as can also be concluded from the bulk of peasant images surveyed in the previous chapter. Most of these images will have circulated at an anonymous art market. Some may have been sold directly to customers who visited an artist’s studio, others indirectly through the intervention of art dealers, exhibitions or sales organised by the St. Luke guilds. It is known that some artists put their paintings into a lottery, also in Haarlem. In some cases, there was even the possibility of using paintings to pay off debts.¹⁵⁸

The art market in general, however, faced some substantial problems in the period 1670 to 1700 and it leaves no doubt that this must have affected the production of low-life genre pictures too. First of all, during the course of the 1660s the market had reached its limit. Paintings had (and still have) a relatively long duration of life and the ever-growing number of pictures had to be sold to a less growing audience. Secondly, the First Anglo-Dutch War (1652-1654) caused a great

¹⁵⁶ Idem, p. 383.

¹⁵⁷ Paintings by, for instance, Brouwer were auctioned for incredible high prices, such as a “*stukje van Adriaen Brouwer, genaemt hair om hair*” that was sold for f900,-. See: Gerard Hoet, *Catalogus of Naamlyst van Schilderyen, met derzelver pryzen*, The Hague 1752, p. 13. This publication includes quite a few records with low-life genre painters from the pre-1750 generation. However, I have not found an unquestionable reference to any artist that is mentioned in the second chapter of this thesis or that figures in the attachment (pp. 57-62).

¹⁵⁸ Michael North, *Art and Commerce in the Dutch Golden Age*, New Haven and London 1997, pp. 87-93. Also: Bakker, *Gezicht op Leeuwarden*, pp. 105-121.

number of bankruptcies and therefore stimulated the supply of second-hand paintings. Moreover, the art market suffered from economic stagnation, especially downmarket (where a vast majority of the low-life genre paintings will have circulated). After the 'Rampjaar' (or disaster year, 1672) the art market – except for the upper segment – never managed to completely recover from all the trouble.¹⁵⁹

Hence, from the early 1670s onwards, the situation for artists of low-life genre images was difficult: the art market was in dire straits and the public that normally would pay good prices for artworks was no longer interested in depictions of peasants or low-life people, although works by artists such as Brouwer and Van Ostade remained in vogue and kept generating considerable prices. In order to survive this difficult and competitive climate, painters could either try to keep their prices as low as possible by lowering their production costs ('process innovation') or they had to ensure that their product was unique and of great quality ('product innovation').¹⁶⁰ The importance of the latter is evidenced by Brouwer, whose work (including unruly and boisterous peasants) and style (loose and muddy) was not at all in agreement with De Laire's ideas and ideals about art. For his capacity of depicting human emotions, however, he was very much praised and his works were still very much sought after during the late seventeenth century. It is therefore not surprising that we come across his name, and that of Van Ostade among other talented artists, in late seventeenth-century inventories and auction catalogues.

Richard Brakenburgh was a late seventeenth-century low-life genre painter that did manage to build up a significant reputation – at least as far as his years in Leeuwarden are concerned. There are good reasons to assume that Brakenburgh's works circulated mainly in the upper segment of the Leeuwarden art market and his paintings occur in many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century collections from wealthy Frisian or Groningen families, collections that had their roots in the seventeenth century.¹⁶¹

Others who did not manage to acquire such a reputation – and that probably goes for most of the artists that figure in this research – may have turned to what has previously been

¹⁵⁹ Marten Jan Bok, *Vraag en aanbod op de Nederlandse Kunstmarkt, 1580-1700*, PhD Utrecht 1994, pp. 121-127; Piet Bakker, 'Crisis? Welke crisis? Kanttekeningen bij het economisch verval van de schilderkunst in Leiden na 1660', *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 27 (2011), pp. 232-269, there p. 233.

I want to stress that the troubles and subsequent collapse of the Dutch art market did not necessarily result in a decline of Dutch art's quality in general, as was so strongly stated by Houbraken (see: Houbraken, *De Grootte Schouburgh*, vol. 2, pp. 132-136). See, for instance: Ekkehard Mai (ed.), *De Kroon op het Werk. Hollandse Schilderkunst 1670-1750*, exh. cat. Cologne (Wallraf-Richartz Museum), Dordrecht (Dordrechts Museum) and Kassel (Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister) 2006-2007; Lyckle de Vries, *Diamante Gedenkzuilen en Leerzaeme Voorbeelden: een bespreking van Johan van Gools Nieuwe Schouburg*, Groningen 1990, pp. 87-101.

¹⁶⁰ J.M. Montias, 'Cost and Value in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art', *Art History* 10 (1987), pp. 455-466, there pp. 456-458; Idem, 'The influence of economic factors on style', *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 6 (1990), pp. 49-57, there pp. 51-52.

¹⁶¹ Bakker, *Gezicht op Leeuwarden*, pp. 152, 184.

described as ‘process innovation’: changing the process in order to lower their product’s price and therewith improve their position at the art market. One way of reducing artistic process’ costs is to copy other works. It is much easier to simply re-use elements, figures, compositions, or entire scenes than to develop new ones. More important, copying other artists’ work could both be to the advantage of the painter as well as to the buyer. On the one hand, the artist adapted his production to what was being asked for at the art market, imitating those artists who were still popular. On the other hand, the buyer who could not afford to buy himself a real Van Ostade, was helped with a less expensive imitation. It explains why a majority of the works mentioned in the second chapter of this thesis bear reference to both van Ostade and Steen. Van Ostade lived and worked in Haarlem his entire life and Steen’s works that originated in the city are now thought to belong to the best share of his oeuvre.¹⁶² Their pictures always remained popular – also during the last three decades of the seventeenth century – and were much sought after. Other Haarlem low-life genre painters will have tried to profit from their reputation by imitating their style and subjects, hoping to make a good sell out of their own works. Besides, it is generally assumed that the public was most fond of painters from their own city.¹⁶³

Conclusion

In this chapter I addressed the question what the public of late seventeenth-century peasant painting may have looked like. As potential buyers of the art works discussed in this thesis’ second chapter, we can exclude both the lower- and upper side of society with great certainty. On the one hand, the peasants themselves could not afford to buy paintings or may not have been interested at all. Some country men possessed paintings but only on a small scale and there is no reason to believe that this concerned low-life genre pictures. Moreover, I have shown that the interpretation of peasant scenes do not leave much space for another option. Among art historians there is general agreement that the public of peasant imagery had no part in the social world that it represented, although there is a difference of opinions on the implication of this.

On the other hand, changes in taste and the rise of classical art theory evoked a negative attitude towards depictions of low-life subjects among the upper-class. Wealthy collectors and art-lovers were no longer interested in images of peasants, unless they were by the hand of excellent and already established masters such as Brouwer, Van Ostade, or Steen.

Hence, the character of late seventeenth-century peasant imagery suggests that its public mainly consisted of (Haarlem) citizens who were not wealthy enough to buy the ‘good stuff’ but did want to have something nice on their walls. Many – if not all – of the pictures discussed in

¹⁶² Biesboer, *De Gouden Eeuw begint in Haarlem*, p. 30.

¹⁶³ J.M. Montias, *Artists and Artisans in Delft. A Socio-Economic Study of the Seventeenth Century*, Princeton 1982, pp. 270-271. Also: Bakker, *Gezicht op Leeuwarden*, p. 142.

chapter two bear reference to what was previously done in Haarlem. I believe, we should not underestimate the importance of the Haarlem tradition of peasant genre painting. It had originated and flourished in this city and there was no other place in the Dutch Republic where images of peasants had been as popular as in Haarlem, given the fact that basically all seventeenth-century low-life genre painters of any importance can somehow be related to Haarlem. The genre was rooted in the city and it may therefore not be surprising that it was not given up so quickly by both its artists and citizens. After 1670, the genre was no longer appreciated by the elite but the 'average' citizen may not have turned his back towards the genre immediately. In the lower segment of the late seventeenth-century Haarlem art market, images of peasants still circulated, not only because they offered an affordable alternative to expensive works by great masters. The Haarlem burgher may possibly still find enjoyment in looking at images of peasants.

Now we know what peasant genre painting looked like in the years 1670 to 1700 (chapter 2), how this relates to the period of the genre's rise and flourishing (chapter 1), and what kind of people might have been interested in images of peasants during the late seventeenth century (chapter 3), it is time to put things into a broader context. In order to fully understand the position of late seventeenth-century peasant genre painting I will dedicate the fourth chapter of this thesis to the peasant image of the seventeenth century. I hope it will provide me with useful information on how low-life images of peasants were perceived, how ideas about peasantry developed during the century, and how the bulk of images from chapter two should be understood and explained. What did buyers of late seventeenth-century peasant images think of the peasant?

Chapter 4 | Seventeenth-century perception of the peasantry

How can we come to an understanding of how seventeenth-century citizens looked at country men of their own time? It is not easy to formulate a coherent answer to the question how seventeenth-century potential buyers and viewers of low-life genre scenes perceived peasantry in general. The first problem is a lack of contemporary sources that formulate a clear and autonomous vision on the peasant or on the representation of the peasant in art (for that are two different issues)¹⁶⁴. Therefore, such an image should be constructed on the basis of other factors. That brings us to the second problem: what aspects do we need to take into consideration and may art *itself* not be one of these aspects? Art can both be a product, a result, as well as a vital and leading actor of its epoch. Hence, one would risk to get bogged down in circular reasoning: in order to elucidate the image *of* the peasant in art it may be useful to survey seventeenth-century ideas *about* peasants in general. However, one of the aspects that may give us useful information about these ideas is art itself. Other factors that may play a role in creating an image of seventeenth-century peasantry concern social, economic, and – in a broader sense – cultural (such as literary, artistic, theatrical) phenomena.

I believe, it is essential to take these aspects together. Wilhelm von Bode, who adhered the common view at his time that Dutch seventeenth-century painting was directly connected to reality, saw in the changing tone of peasant imagery a socio-economic development from the poor peasant to a more wealthy country dweller.¹⁶⁵ Although it is true that the financial and social situation of the Dutch farmer improved during the century¹⁶⁶, artists kept focusing on the peasant in his spare time and they even seemed to eschew entrepreneurial aspects or economic innovations.¹⁶⁷ Hence, one would need more information to consolidate Bode's statement.

Therefore, in this chapter I will focus on the seventeenth-century peasant-image from different points of view. My aim initially was to isolate the period 1670 to 1700 but this approach appeared to be too specific. Instead, I will survey the peasant image of the seventeenth century. I will include economic aspects (urbanization), literature (poetry, lyrics, and theatre) and social

¹⁶⁴ See also: Svetlana Alpers, 'Realism as a comic mode: low-life genre painting seen through Bredero's eyes', *Simiolus* 10 (1975-1976), pp. 115-144.

¹⁶⁵ Wilhelm von Bode, *Die Meister der holländischen und flämischen Malerschulen*, Leipzig 1956, pp. 170-171.

¹⁶⁶ For the development of the peasants' economic situation, see: De Vries, *The Dutch Rural Economy in the Golden Age*, especially pp. 214-235; Franits, 'Domesticity, Privacy, Civility', in: Phagan (ed.), *Images of Women in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art*, pp. 4-5; Bernhard Schnackenburg, *Adriaen van Ostade, Isack van Ostade: Zeichnungen und Aquarelle. Gesamtdarstellungen mit Werkkatalogen. Vol 1*, Hamburg 1981, p. 58.

¹⁶⁷ Anna C. Knaap, 'From Lowlife to Rustic Idyll: The Peasant Genre in 17th-Century Dutch Drawings and Prints', *Harvard University Art Museums Bulletin* 4 (1996), pp. 30-59, there p. 32.

phenomena (concepts of domesticity and middle-class mentality). From this broader context I will try to position late seventeenth-century low-life images.

Before I will start, it is important to note that seventeenth-century Dutch peasant genre is indissolubly connected to its sixteenth-century Flemish predecessor. In the introduction and the first chapter I have already elucidated the nature of this connection. Its implication is twofold. First of all, seventeenth-century peasant imagery should not be investigated as an isolated phenomenon. It is part of a long-standing tradition and Dutch images of peasants are connected to their earlier Flemish counterparts¹⁶⁸; in a certain way, they may either result or differ from them. Secondly, some pictorial elements in Dutch peasant genre painting may have become abstracted elements in their selves, initially bearing specific meanings but gradually becoming part of a more general peasant iconography.

Country versus City

There is a sense of ambiguity in the relation between the country and the city, or the countryman (the peasant) and the citizen. First of all, the peasant as a negative determination only originated simultaneously to its counterpart: the citizen. With the rise of cities and citizens, the concept of the anti-citizen (the peasant or country man that is) arose: a constructed figure being incapable of meeting the urban public's standards.¹⁶⁹ Hence, the peasant incorporated everything a citizen was not. Secondly, there is an art historical tendency that images of peasants particularly occurred at places and moments in time where urban culture flourished. Such happened in Nuremberg and Antwerp during the first- and second half of the sixteenth century respectively as well as in the Dutch cities of Haarlem and Amsterdam during the seventeenth century.¹⁷⁰

Both aspects of the relation between the country and the city should be taken into consideration. Brouwer's peasants, the starting point of Dutch peasant genre painting, obviously render the 'anti-citizen', the uncivilized criminal who differed negatively (both in behaviour and appearance) from the town dweller. It hardly needs further explanation that his depictions of low-life people should be observed within a caricatured and comic context. At the same time, Brouwer may have played on prevailing senses of fear or antipathy to the unknown. The real

¹⁶⁸ It is not without reason that Van der Coelen states that '...the choice of subject, what Van Ostade shows us of everyday life, is largely determined by the iconographical tradition'. See: Van der Coelen (et al.), *Everyday Life in Holland's Golden Age*, p. 17.

¹⁶⁹ See: Vandenbroeck, *Beeld van de andere, vertoog over het zelf*, pp. 63-108.

¹⁷⁰ Van der Coelen (et al.), *Everyday Life in Holland's Golden Age*, p. 15.

citizen hardly came into contact with low-life people and their fear for the peasants' behaviour may therefore even had been bigger.¹⁷¹

On the other hand, the increasing urbanization in Holland during its Golden Age initiated a counter reaction: country and country life gradually aroused interest of urban people. Increasingly, the rich elite desired to escape from crowded city life to retreat in the quiet country. The surroundings of the city of Haarlem were particularly known for its attractiveness. The most wealthiest people could afford to acquire country estates or houses. Others went only for day trips and organized excursions. People enjoyed the dunes and woods surrounding the city by walking or by coach and horses. Such activities could also include visits to village fairs and inns.¹⁷²

Van der Coelen states that it hardly leaves any doubt that the rise and flourishing of peasant genre painting in Haarlem was somehow related to the urban fascination for country life. To him, the precise nature of this link, however, is unclear.¹⁷³

Apparently, the relation of the Haarlem burghers to country life as they would have known it from the city's surroundings, was twofold: on the one hand, they still must have had the 'old' and 'negative' idea about people from outside the city. On the other hand, however, the country was a 'positive' place where citizens settled down to temporarily free themselves from urban bustle. Besides, it is tempting to take the socio-cultural gap between the farmer and citizen for an absolute one but that is not necessarily fair. The country man could live close by, sometimes even within the city, and the city heavily depended on the country for subsistence. Moreover, low-life people belonged to the same society and shared the same religious-ethical framework as the city dwellers did.¹⁷⁴

All in all, the interplay of on the one side 'the city' and on the other 'the country' is diverse and multiform. At first sight, they may be opposites to one another – and in some matters they are – but on other levels they are interrelated. Eventually, it is their difference that makes them related. Does contrast not exist by the grace of the interrelation of differences?

Literature

A comparison of themes in literature and art should be conducted carefully. Haak rightly points out that the choice of subject by artists such as Brouwer and Adriaen Van Ostade may quite

¹⁷¹ See also: Lisa Rosenthal, 'Fairtime Folly and the Taming of Transgression: Adriaen van Ostade's Prints of Peasant Festivity', in: Phagan (ed.), *Images of Women in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art*, pp. 27-39, there pp. 32-33.

¹⁷² See also: Van der Coelen (et al.), *Everyday Life in Holland's Golden Age*, p. 15; Knaap, 'From Lowlife to Rustic Idyll', p. 31.

¹⁷³ Van der Coelen (et al.), *Everyday Life in Holland's Golden Age*, p. 16.

¹⁷⁴ Ramakers, 'Kinderen van Saturnus', p. 13.

certainly have been influenced by tendencies in literature. In Bredero's work, for instance, the fighting and feasting peasant is presented as both attractive and frightening.¹⁷⁵ It does not mean, however, that literary tendencies automatically can be transferred to fine arts, nor that the development of both disciplines happened along similar lines.

Moreover, the position of the peasant in seventeenth-century literature is not unequivocal, neither is the peasant image that results from it. It has been suggested that the rediscovering of Horace's *Beatus Ille* – a pastoral ode to life in the countryside – stimulated a more positive image of the peasant.¹⁷⁶ The popularity of Horace indeed implies a certain appreciation of country life but to translate this one-to-one to peasant imagery is yet another thing.¹⁷⁷

Horace's relatively brief poem opens with "*Happy the men free of business cares, who, like the men of olden days, ploughs the family fields with his own oxen*".¹⁷⁸ Obviously, the quotation is about the diligent farmer, the country man who ploughs his land or shears his sheep. If one would translate this directly to art one would expect an equal presence of images with working farmers tiling the land. Such images, however, can hardly be found in seventeenth-century peasant imagery¹⁷⁹, which is not surprising given the fact that they were absent in peasant imagery from the sixteenth century too. In the Middle Ages, however, the hard-working farmer frequently appeared in illuminated manuscripts, in calendars of the months and seasons, or in religious-iconographical programs. Vandenbroeck believes this fact to be a logical outcome of the function of peasant images as 'negative self-definition'. Medieval nobility adhered a non-working ethos. Labour was associated to roughness and ill-breeding, to the peasant, thus. In the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic – which owed its wealth and greatness to a trading and working elite after all – labour had become an essential element. Peasantry, therewith, automatically turned into a lazy and work-shy social class.¹⁸⁰

I will put the rediscovering of Horace's *Beatus Ille*, along with a couple of other tendencies in seventeenth-century literature, in a broader context. The peasant image that will result from this is not homogeneous.

¹⁷⁵ Haak, *Hollandse schilders in de Gouden Eeuw*, p. 238.

¹⁷⁶ Bernhard Schnackenburg is one among others who connects the changes in Adriaen van Ostade's oeuvre to Horace's *Beatus Ille*, see: Schnackenburg, *Adriaen van Ostade. Isack van Ostade. Vol. 1*, p. 41.

¹⁷⁷ The popularity of the *Beatus Ille* can well be illustrated by the great amount of Dutch writers who translated or reworked Horace's poem, such as: Coornhert (c.1575), Abraham van der Myl (1593), Samuel Coster (1615), Johan van Heemskerck (1626), Vondel (1654), Jacob Westerbaen (1657), Henrick Bruno (1659) and J. van Someren (1660).

¹⁷⁸ The translation is taken from: Elizabeth Jones, 'Horace. Beatus Ille', *Arion* 13 (2005), pp. 117-120.

¹⁷⁹ Van der Coelen (et al.), *Everyday Life in Holland's Golden Age*, p. 18; Vandenbroeck, *Beeld van de andere, vertoog over het zelf*, p. 106.

¹⁸⁰ Vandenbroeck, *Beeld van de andere, vertoog over het zelf*, pp. 96-106.

Desire for nature

The *Beatus Ille* by Horace was not the only classical text in which a tribute was paid to country life. The same is true for *De Georgica* by the Roman writer Virgil (written around c. 30 BC), which enjoyed great popularity in the seventeenth century: “*O most happy farmers, if you only knew how happy you are*”.¹⁸¹ Joost van den Vondel (1587-1679) is one among other Dutch seventeenth-century writers who was greatly inspired by his Roman predecessors and used his artistic skills to praise the country man:

*“Die, in een liefelijke streek,
Bij ’t ruischen van een zilver-beek,
Zijn landhuis sticht en boersche woning,
Wat is dat een gezegend koning!”*¹⁸²

Another, Jan Luyken (1649-1712), seems to have based his formulation almost literally on Horace:

*“Gelukkig mensch, wien ’t is gegeven,
Bij ’t vreedzame en onnoozele vee,
Dat nooit noch kwaad, noch onrecht dee,
In ’t veld zijn dagen af te leven;”*¹⁸³

In his poem *Hof- en Landleven* (or ‘Courtly- and Country life’) the famous Dutch writer Jacob Cats (1577-1660) compares life in the country side to courtly life. In the last strophe he concludes:

*“Nu, tot besluit, o bloemtje van der heiden!
Vergeet het Hof, daar is nooit rust.
Komt nevens mij uw teere schaapjes weiden,
Hier is vermaak en enkel hertenlust.
Wat baat den mensch òf eer òf machtig goud?
Hij leeft naar wensch, die uwe velden bouwt,
O wel gelukkig woud!”*¹⁸⁴

In one of Constantijn Huygens’ (1596-1687) ‘zedeprinten’ (or moral sketches) from 1623, the Dutch poet too praises the farmer: “*Hij is een edelman, zoo wel als de aller eerste/ Die in geen stad*

¹⁸¹ Translated from Dutch: “*O overgelukkige boeren, als jullie maar wisten hoe gelukkig jullie zijn*” (Zang II). See: Piet Schrijvers, *Vergilius. Georgica / Landleven*, Groningen 2004.

¹⁸² Joost van den Vondel, *Rei van Eubaeers* (uit: J. van den Vondel, *Palamedes oft vermoorde onnooselheyd*, Amsterdam 1625).

¹⁸³ Jan Luyken, *Buitenleven* (uit: Joan Luyken, *Duytse Lier*, Amsterdam 1671).

¹⁸⁴ Jacob Cats, *Hof- en Landleven* (uit: J. Cats, *Koninglyke herderin Aspasia*, Amsterdam 1655).

en woonde, en, of hij 't al beheerschte"¹⁸⁵. Other titles, such as *Een nieuw liedeken tot lof van den gemeinen Huisman* or *Den Lof van den Boer, die alles moet bezorgen, van den avond tot den morgen*, both by anonymous Dutch writers from the seventeenth-century, also imply that a more positive light was shed on the country man.¹⁸⁶

This ode to the farmer or peasant, however, should not be taken too literal. It should rather be interpreted as an ode to nature as the main source of life. The fertile soils of mother earth fill the mouths of all the people that live on it. Within this light, Virgil's *De Georgica* should rather be understood as a glorification of agriculture, forestry and viticulture, stockbreeding, and apiculture consecutively than being a praise of the people who dwell in the country.

The impact of these seventeenth-century poems and texts about nature and farmers is twofold. Firstly, the one who tils the land – and that is the country man after all – should be praised, for he reaps the fruits of nature. In that sense, labour and working do play a significant role and the farmer or country man should be considered positively. Secondly, it is not necessarily labour that fulfils a central part. When it turns around life in the country or nature in itself, those texts present an image of a more classical, pastoral life situated in idyllic, non-Dutch landscapes (with mountains, caves, and vines, among other things). In that sense they feel more like a praise of pastoral- rather than farmer- or peasant life.

Hence, this literary 'desire for nature' perfectly fits the tendency I previously described from a socio-economic point of view: the urbanization caused an increasing sympathy for the country and its nature. However, it does not necessarily implies that the peasant as a social human being was appreciated, nor that the urban elite attached positive qualities to the country dweller. The re-appreciation of Horace's and Virgil's pastoral poems supports this provisional conclusion.

Fighting Peasants

The fact that the urban 'desire for nature', as previously described from both an economic and literary point of view, did not necessarily caused an increasing appreciation of the country dweller, also appears from a couple of literary sources that focus on the peasant as a human being (instead of the peasant as an inhabitant of the country). Illustrative among others is Gerbrand Adriaensz. Bredero's (1585-1618) *Boerengezelschap*, a poem that tells how a couple of male and female dressed-up peasants attend a feast. The party ends in a fight and one of the revellers even comes to die. In the last strophe Bredero addressed himself to the reader:

*"Gij heeren, gij burgers, vroom en welgemoed,
Mijdt der boeren feesten, zij zijn zelden zoo zoet,*

¹⁸⁵ Constantijn Huygens (ed. J.A. Worp), *Gedichten. Deel 1: 1607-1623*, Groningen 1892.

¹⁸⁶ For both poems, see: P.J. Meertens, *De Lof van den Boer*, Amsterdam 1942, pp. 43-47.

Of 't kost iemand zijn bloed."¹⁸⁷

Throughout the whole seventeenth century, we find similar poems in the manner of Bredero, proclaiming messages that peasant activities sooner or later always end in brawls and fights. A rough hundred years after Bredero, Lucas Rotgans (1654-1710) stroke a similar tone in *Boerinnengevecht*:

*"Het bloed druip uit de neus, en sijpelt langs de jakken,
Het kermiskleed wordt vuil, en glimt van roode vlakken.
De kroplap van de borst, de gouden bel van 't oor.
Toen riep er een: laat los, maar hij kreeg geen gehoor.
Dus wierp hij elk op 't lijf een volle kruik met water.
Toen rees er onder 't volk een ijselijk geschater."*¹⁸⁸

Apart from such poems, there were many seventeenth-century stories that vividly described how gathering of peasants always got out of control. Gerrit van Spaan (1651-1711) tells us about two 'Bentschopper boeren' who enter a tavern to have a pint. The innkeeper stipulates that the two peasants will keep it quiet, upon which the two answer: *"Daar hebben wij den duvel van, want wij meinen 't huis van dezen avond wel helder op te schikken. Vertrekt dan aanstonds uit me huis (sprak Kooiman [the innkeeper]) of ik zal je bruien dat je geen menschen zult gelijken. Op deze dreigementen rukten de boeren hunnen messen uit, en begonnen naar den waard te snijden dat 't rookte."*¹⁸⁹

It hardly needs any explanation that the peasant image that emerges from these poems and stories differs fundamentally from the idyllic-pastoral image. Obviously, poems and stories with fighting peasants focus on the social and cultural aspects of the country, while the pastoral odes centre around the nature and labour of the country side.

The peasant-type in Dutch theatre-plays

The peasant image that emerges from seventeenth-century Dutch plays and theatre is quite uniform: the peasant is always presented as a stupid, silly oaf who is easily put upon by others; someone to be laughed at rather than to feel sorry with.¹⁹⁰ Bredero's *Klucht van de Koe* (1619) is an illustrative example. The play humorously tells how the main character, Dirck Thyssen, is hoodwinked by a sneak thief who makes him sell his own cow and subsequently takes the

¹⁸⁷ Gerbrand Adriaensz. Bredero, *Boerengezelschap* (uit: G.A. Bredero, *Groot Lied-boeck*, Amsterdam 1622).

¹⁸⁸ Lucas Rotgans, *Boerinnengevecht* (uit: Lucas Rotgans, *Boerenkermis (Poezy van verscheide mengelstoffen)*, Leeuwarden 1715).

¹⁸⁹ Gerrit van Spaan, *Een boerenvechtpartij* (uit: Gerrit van Spaan, *Lusthof der boeren, bestaande in minneryen, vegt- en snywerk*, Rotterdam 1700).

¹⁹⁰ P.J. Meertens, *De Lof van den Boer*, pp. 177-178.

money that was involved with the deal. On an endless list of variants in Bredero's manner, we find, among others, Van Breen's *Klucht van 't Kalf* (1656) and a play by J. Klaerbout (1662) with the same title. The whole seventeenth century saw a production of plays in which the peasant's shoulder was burdened with the role of doormat.¹⁹¹

Three themes were particularly popular in the many peasant plays and farces from the seventeenth century: the marriage between an elderly man and a young woman, the confrontation of a peasant with a quack doctor, and stories with a particular focus on the erotic.¹⁹² The use of same motives and elements over and over again must have contributed to the role of the peasant as a bungler. Beforehand, the public already knew that the peasant would be a dolt in the end. That alone must have led to comic reactions even before the farce had started or ended at all.

All in all, the peasant image as it comes to the fore from seventeenth-century literature has several faces. In theatre (plays and farces) the peasant mainly is a booby who – sooner or later – always turned out to be the big loser at which the public could laugh. The country dweller as we find him in poems and stories has two opposite components – pastoral versus peasant-like, the country side's nature versus its culture, the shepherd's pipe versus the bagpipe – whereby only the second element of each opposition can be related to the peasant. The figures in pastoral odes in the manner of Horace and Virgil hardly concern the peasant at all, while those yokels in poems and stories about fighting peasants certainly do. The peasant in seventeenth-century poetry, therefore, mainly is a yokel.

It is good to realise that these literary sources were produced by and for an urban-class, just as we have seen with peasant painting. These texts do not necessarily bear reference to an actual reality but rather to a truth that existed in the minds and culture of citizens.

Domesticity and seventeenth-century civility

Socially, there were certain changes in the seventeenth-century that will have had impact on the perception of the peasantry. As the century progressed, the awareness for concepts of domesticity gradually increased. The causes for this tendency are not easy to find.¹⁹³ May the growing prosperity and wealth of the Dutch Republic have stimulated a new kind of civility in

¹⁹¹ For other examples of such plays, see: A. van Steyn, *Lammert Mees of klucht van de melck-boer* (1661); J.Z. Baron, *Klucht van Kees Louwen, ofte den gheschooren boer* (1667); E. Luyden, *List sonder voordeel* (c.1670); Willem Ogier, *Belachelyck misverstant ofte boere geck* (1680); J. Lemmers, *De boere koopman* (1682); Willem den Elger, *Wagt me voor dat laantje* (1698). From the years of publication we may conclude that such plays remained popular during the last decades of the seventeenth century.

¹⁹² P.J. Meertens, *De Lof van den Boer*, pp. 177-178, 183-184.

¹⁹³ Franits, 'Domesticity, Privacy, Civility', in: Phagan (ed.), *Images of Women in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art*, pp. 11-13.

which domestic life became more important? Did the conclusion of the Eighty Years' War (1568-1648) and the Peace of Münster created a quiet and peaceful atmosphere in which domestic life could flourish?

We do not know for sure, but it leaves no doubt that there was a clear attention and interest for domestic and private life by the middle of the seventeenth century. First of all, domestic subjects only rarely appeared in fine arts from the first half of the century, and if they did it was mainly in prints and drawings. It is only after the Peace of Münster (1648) when artists started to paint serene depictions of domestic life on a larger scale.¹⁹⁴ Secondly, there was a literary tradition with a focus on private life, initially (in the early sixteenth century) mainly among protestant reformers and humanists. Towards the end of the sixteenth-, and during the course of the seventeenth century in particular, it became a widespread phenomenon.¹⁹⁵ One of the best known seventeenth-century sources about domestic life is Jacob Cats' *Houwelyck* from 1625 in which the author describes marriage, family life, and the accompanying duties and customs.¹⁹⁶

Where people previously were mainly focused on the public sphere and its social network, their attention gradually shifted towards the private domain.¹⁹⁷ The increasing notion of private civility must also have had consequences for how citizens looked at peasantry or how they perceived images of peasants at least. Depictions of low-life society before 1650 almost exclusively showed the peasant in his public sphere, such as the tavern or the village fair. It has been suggested that Ostade's move towards a more quiet and idyllic representation of the peasant at home must be understood against this background.¹⁹⁸ I agree that this must have played a role.

Conclusion

In the introduction to this chapter I mentioned the risk of circular reasoning when using art as a way to create a seventeenth-century peasant image that may have influenced peasant imagery of that time. I therefore focused on other aspects and we have seen that economic, literary, and social factors indeed shine a light on the (changing) position of the peasant in seventeenth-century society.

The peasant image that emerges from late seventeenth-century peasant painting, only minimally fits the peasant image that comes to the forth in this chapter. The many representations of the

¹⁹⁴ Peter C. Sutton, *Pieter de Hooch*, Oxford 1980, p. 45.

¹⁹⁵ Wayne E. Franits, *Paragons of Virtue: Women and Domesticity in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art*, Cambridge and New York 1993, p. 66. Also: Franits, 'Domesticity, Privacy, Civility', in: Phagan (ed.), *Images of Women in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art*, p. 13.

¹⁹⁶ Jacob Cats, *Houwelyck. Dat is de gansche gelegentheyt des echten staets*, Middelburg 1625.

¹⁹⁷ Vandenbroeck, *Beeld van de andere, vertoog over het zelf*, p. 90.

¹⁹⁸ See, for instance: Wayne Franits, 'Domesticity, Privacy, Civility', in: Phagan (ed.), *Images of Women in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art*, pp. 3-25.

feasting and drinking peasant that figure in chapter two of this thesis, are in line with how low-life society was represented in late seventeenth-century theatre plays, farces, in some poems and texts. It should be stressed however that the literary peasant image is more violent and brute than its late seventeenth-century pictorial counterpart. The popularity of subjects such as the tavern and the village kermis may have been the result from the citizens' interest for life in the country side and their daytrips to the village's inns and fairs.

Other changes and developments that occurred in the peasant image of the mid-century seem not to be in accordance with the appearance of peasant genre painting after 1670: urban desire for the rustic country side, the rise of pastoral literature, and the focus on private and domestic life. These developments may rather have had negative impact on the popularity of paintings that show the feasting and exuberant peasant. Hence, most changes in the seventeenth-century peasant image – be it from an economic, social, or cultural point of view – underscore and explain the waning position of peasant imagery in the final decades of the Dutch seventeenth century.

Conclusion

It is generally assumed that images of peasants were no longer popular in the Northern Netherlands after about 1670. Artists who had stimulated the genre's rise and flourishing, were either dead or no longer of significant importance during the final decades of the seventeenth century. The genre's most prolific protagonists, such as Adriaen Brouwer, Adriaen van Ostade, Jan Miense Molenaer, and Jan Steen, belong to a generation of low-life genre painters that were active mainly before 1670. When most of them had died, the Haarlem tradition of peasant genre painting hardly found continuation. In art historical literature, Cornelis Dusart appears to be the only low-life genre painter who was active in the Dutch Republic between 1670 and 1700 and to whom is frequently referred to. We may conclude that these decades lacked a specific interest for images of peasants or low-life society. However, how should we interpret the relatively large amount of Dutch low-life genre pictures that date from this period if peasant imagery was no longer in vogue?

First of all, a systematic survey of peasant scenes that were produced in the Northern Netherlands between 1670 and 1700, gives some interesting results at first sight. It appears that there must have been quite a few artists who still produced low-life genre images by that time, their pictures show a variety of subjects and themes, and the total amount of paintings I have come across is remarkably large.

Three artists in particular spent their artistic life to depicting peasant scenes: Cornelis Dusart, Richard Brakenburgh, and Jan Molenaer II. We do not know for sure whether the three artists knew each other. As they were all in Haarlem at a certain point, it is likely, however, that they knew each other's work at least. Both Dusart and Brakenburgh were pupils of Adriaen van Ostade. Dusart's peasant paintings are very much in the manner of his master's. In some of his scenes and figures, however, he leans towards caricature but he never becomes really brute or satirical. Dusart, therefore, remained a somewhat awkward but true clone of his teacher. Brakenburgh, however, seems to have been less dictated by Van Ostade and rather will have drawn his inspiration from Steen, both in style as well as in subject matter. His work includes exuberant ensemble pieces and merry companies and the tone he strikes often retains Steen's joviality. A reconstruction of the life and work of the third, Jan Molenaer II, is problematic for we hardly know anything about the artist. We do not know whom he was trained by but paintings that have been attributed to him resemble works by Egbert van Heemskerck, and – to a lesser extent – Dusart and Steen. Molenaer's pictures sometimes feel like satirical sketches of peasant life.

Apart from those three painters, there were others to have painted peasant scenes as well. A systematic classification on the basis of subject matter results in a broad range of peasants'

activities that were transposed to the canvas. They can be categorized into seven groups, being: normal peasant life, specific events from peasant life, the obvious 'immoral' peasant, tavern scenes, interior scenes, gaming peasants, and exterior scenes. This variety of themes, combined with the total amount of peasant images dated post 1670 (including the oeuvres of Dusart, Brakenburgh, and Molenaer II), suggests that the tradition of pictorially representing the world of peasants was far from dead by the end of the seventeenth century.

At the same time, if one takes a closer look at *how* the peasant is represented in the abovementioned categories, a less varied picture comes to the forth. An absolute vast majority of these peasant scenes show us the feasting, drinking, laughing, smoking, dancing, or gaming peasant. Sometimes with a more caricatured look (with Dusart, for instance) but often with a merry and exuberant touch (in the case of Brakenburgh and Molenaer II, among others). The setting may differ from a tavern (as is the case with almost half the pictures) to a scenery outdoor, or from a public village kermis to a domestic celebration of a birth. Whatever the exact setting or activity of these paintings is, their idiom is not new at all. Such representations of peasants were already busied decades before by artists from previous generations. There is actually no single late seventeenth-century low-life genre painter who knows to add a significant new element to the already long-standing tradition of peasant genre painting. In style too, these late seventeenth-century peasant pictures heavily bear on low-life genre artists from the early- and mid-century, such as Van Ostade and Steen. Hence, peasant genre painting may not have been dead in terms of quantity, qualitatively there is little reason to believe that a flourishing future was in the offing.

As the genre's late seventeenth-century appearance was so much defined by its development in previous decades when it was at its zenith, it is interesting to know, first of all, why it almost stood still after about 1670 and, secondly, who was interested in paintings belonging to a genre that I just declared for death? In order to answer the first question – why the genre lacked significant development after 1670 – it is necessary to position late seventeenth-century peasant imagery in a broader context. It turns out to be very useful to link contemporary changing ideas about the peasantry in general to the development I sketched above.

Firstly, from an economic point of view, the seventeenth century saw a rise of the Dutch cities' importance. The increasing urbanization caused a greater and different interest in the country side. It is known that Amsterdam and Haarlem citizens frequently escaped their busy urban lives to find rest in their cities' quiet surroundings. This caused an interesting but ambiguous relation between 'the citizen' versus 'the peasant': on the one hand there was the former, negative image of the peasant as an 'anti-citizen' (including all the implications this had), on the other hand

there was this 'new' and positive interest for the country side. Moreover, the socio-cultural gap between the country and the city should not necessarily be thought of as an absolute one.

Secondly, there is a similar dualism to be found in seventeenth-century literature. The increasing popularity of pastoral odes by classical authors such as Horace and Virgil, stimulated a tradition of poems and other vernacular texts in which nature and its dweller was extensively praised. At the same time, literature in which the peasant was associated with immoral and objectionable behaviour – a gathering of peasants will always end with a fight – remained in vogue. The first, pastoral tendency expresses a general desire for nature (and, as such, links on to the issue of urbanization). Here, the peasant figures as a hardworking man tiling the land and reaping the fruits of nature. He is rather portrayed as a passenger of nature, while the second literary tendency pitchforks him into a leading actor of the country side. In the many seventeenth-century theatre plays and farces the we know of, the peasant always is a softy who is easily footled and sooner or later turns out to be the big loser.

In the third place, the middle of the century saw a change in the social position of the private sphere. While the educated elite and middle-class citizen were previously focused mainly on the public social network, they increasingly drew their attention to the domestic and private domain. This tendency also must have had impact on how images of peasants were perceived. A majority of peasant imagery showed him in the public sphere, such as the tavern or the village kermis. It is only with Van Ostade that depictions of the peasant at home started to become of interest. However, the number of late seventeenth-century low-life genre images that give us a snapshot of domestic peasant life, is significantly lower than those paintings that focus on the public sphere of low-life society.

Fourthly, developments in art theory also imply a changing attitude towards peasant imagery. From publication by prominent art theorists, such as De Lairese and Houbraken, we may conclude that low-life genre images were not highly esteemed during the final decades of the century. De Lairese rejects the 'ugly' style of low-life genre painters such as Brouwer and Van Ostade and Houbraken only minimally included late seventeenth-century painters of peasant scenes.

All in all, a majority of peasant genre painting between 1670 to 1700 shows – in short – the peasant that feasts, drinks, laughs, or otherwise waits for the time to pass by. The peasant image that emerges from these paintings, fits the peasant image of late seventeenth-century farces, theatre plays, and poems. The fact, however, that the genre's development almost stood still after about 1670, suggests that – especially because seventeenth-century (genre) painting heavily depended on the art market – less and less artists applied themselves to low-life genre painting during the last thirty years of the century and the subject's popularity highly declined. A contextual approach confirms this: the subject did not match the urban desire for the rustic

country side, it conflicted with the rising popularity of the pastoral ode, it no longer fitted the increasing importance of the private and domestic sphere, and it was no longer in agreement with late seventeenth-century (classical) art theory.

In order to answer the second question – who was interested in paintings belonging to a genre that I declared for death – there are good reasons to assume that the upper-class of late seventeenth-century Dutch society was no longer interested in images of peasants, neither were talented painters who sold their works within these circles. Although we may question who were the first to have turned away from depictions of peasants – the artist, the art-lover, or both by means of an interrelated process – it is a fact that the upper segment of the late seventeenth-century art market and -climate hardly offered any space for peasant genre painting. Moreover, it is highly unlikely that the peasants themselves were interested in low-life genre images. Most of them could not afford to buy paintings (and probably may not have been interested at all). Besides, the ‘concept of otherness’ as a general accepted key to interpret images of peasants, implies that the public of peasant imagery was not the peasant himself. Who, then, would have been interested in peasant images between 1670 and 1700 if it were not the upper-class citizens nor the lower-class peasants?

The answer lies somewhere in between. From a painters’ eyes of view, the art market found itself in a peculiar position around 1670 and thereafter. Economic stagnation and an increasing circulation of second-hands paintings created a difficult climate at the art market. To the upper segment came no harm in the end, but the situation downmarket remained problematic. As images of peasants were no longer desired in the top, low-life genre painters faced significant problems at the anonymous art market. By imitating former, already established masters (such as Van Ostade and Steen) they will have hoped to sell their peasant pictures nonetheless. It explains why there is a great amount of late seventeenth-century peasant paintings to be found in the manner of Van Ostade and Steen.

From another point of view, that of the art-buyer, there still will have been interest in such peasant imagery ‘in the manner of’, especially in Haarlem. Peasant genre painting had its roots in Haarlem and there was no other place in the Dutch Republic where so many images of low-life society had been produced. As the elite gradually turned their faces away from depictions of peasants, the Haarlem middle-class may have been less eager to leave the city’s tradition behind so quickly. Besides, they probably could not afford to buy themselves ‘real’ and ‘good’ masters anyway and were happy to acquire a decent imitation all the more. It explains why nearly all the low-life genre artists that figure in this thesis’ second chapter, were born and died in Haarlem, or lived there for a substantial period. A substantial part of the Haarlem art climate kept holding to its tradition of peasant painting, also after 1670. Late seventeenth-century low-life genre

painting will not have served the city's elite and upper-class – therefore it lacked prolific masters, sufficient quality and significant development – but it will have found a ready sale among those less fortunate, middle-class Haarlem citizens who could not afford the top, who wanted to decorate their walls though, and who – somehow – still attached value to the city's tradition of peasant genre painting.

Concluding, with respect to the number of low-life genre images dating from 1670 to 1700 and the many different artists that spent their artistic life to depict the world of peasants, it is unfair to ignore the genre's late seventeenth-century appearance. Most of the pictures that figure in this thesis are strongly rooted in the Haarlem tradition and were dictated by artists that had been active in previous decades, such as Adriaen van Ostade en Jan Steen. On the one hand, the existence of these 'mediocre' late seventeenth-century low-life genre paintings underscores the genre's decay during the final episode of the century – at least in terms of quality and compared to peasant paintings from previous generations. On the other hand, it illustrates (firstly) that the Haarlem tradition of representing low-life society remained popular until the early eighteenth century and (secondly) how the style and manner of renowned artists such as Van Ostade and Steen were carried over into next generations.

Finally, developments in the history of art are – for good reasons – often measured by the successes of great masters, wealthy clients, and important writers, among other significant aspects of (artistic) society. Developments and processes that take place in the 'lower' and less accessible parts of art history, however, may also embody interesting ideas on past societies. This research hopes to contribute to a further understanding of late seventeenth-century Dutch art and society, a period that has always been subjected to questions about artistic developments in relation to the (economic) decline of the Dutch Republic.

Attachment 1 | The Corpus

The figure below includes all paintings I have come across during my research on late seventeenth-century peasant genre painting. I need to stress that the scheme is far from complete. However, given the amount of examples, I am inclined to believe that the corpus is quite representative for peasant imagery between 1670 to 1700, at least in terms of subject matter and artists. I have only included those works from which I was able to acquire a decent copy, preferably full-colour but (unfortunately) I often had to be content with a reproduction in black/white.

¹**Cat. = Category:** The pictures are categorically ordered: a = normal peasant life; b = specific events from peasant life; c = the ‘obvious’ immoral peasant; d = tavern scenes; d2 = interior scenes; e = gaming peasants; f = exterior scenes.

²**RKD:** As many of these pictures are rather unknown and hardly studied, it is difficult to get proper images. The numbers in this column refer to the RKD-art work numbers and can be used in the institute’s online images database to directly find the correct record. If the RKD-art work number misses, the picture in question cannot be found in the online database. In that case, I only have a hard-copy on paper, taken from the archives in The Hague.

³**Fig. = Figure:** These numbers correspond to the images I have included in this thesis (see pp. 63-82).

⁴**Footnt. = Footnote:** If this columns shows a footnote-number, detailed information about the work in question can be found in the corresponding footnote in this thesis’ main text.

Cat. ¹	Artist	Date	Title	Dating	RKD ²	Fig. ³	Footnt. ⁴
a	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>Interior scene</i>				
a	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>Peasant Family saying prayer before Meal</i>	1669-1684	108645	35	101
a	Ravesteyn, Hubert van	1638-1691	<i>Shepherd with livestock in a barn interior</i>	1653-1691	30684		
a	Ravesteyn, Hubert van	1638-1691	<i>Stallinterior</i>	1653-1691		39	106
a	Ravesteyn, Hubert van	1638-1691	<i>Interior scene</i>	1653-1691			105
a	Ravesteyn, Hubert van	1638-1691	<i>Stallinterior with farmers and cattle</i>	1653-1691	44468		
a	Mieris, Willem van	1662-1747	<i>Peasant Family in a Cottage Interior (The Holy Family?)</i>	1718	59973	37	103
a	Mieris, Willem van	1662-1747	<i>A Young Mother tending to her two Children in a domestic Interior</i>	1728	62850	38	104
a	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>Interior with a Peasant Family and three Figures at a Fireplace</i>	c.1690	3337	28	90
a	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>Peasant Company having Dinner in an Interior</i>	1670-1702	203716	29	91
a	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>Family at Supper</i>	c.1685		30	92
a	Valck, Hendrick de	1674-1709	<i>A Peasant Kitchen Interior</i>	c.1700	8046		

Cat. ¹	Artist	Date	Title	Dating	RKD ²	Fig. ³	Footnt. ⁴
a	Mieris, Willem van	1662-1747	<i>Interior with a Mother nourishing her Child</i>				
a	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>Fish Market</i>	1683	25630	23	81
a	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>Fish-seller in front of a Peasant Dwelling</i>	c.1690	70219		
a	Maton, Bartholomeus (mogelijk)	c.1645- na1684	<i>A Woman in a Courtyard cleaning the Fish</i>	1658-1704	25432		
a	Naiveu, Matthijs	1647-1726	<i>A Woman selling Cherries</i>	1669			
b	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>The Peasant Funeral</i>				107
b	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>The Whitsuntide Bride</i>	1690s	15461		87
b	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>The Feast of St. Nicolas</i>	1685	55597		
b	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>The Twelfth Night</i>				
b	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>The Whitsuntide Bride</i>				
b	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>A Wedding Feast in a Tavern</i>	1665-1702	113596		88
b	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>An Interior with Figures around a newborn Twin</i>	1665-1702	9955		
b	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>The Baptismal Party</i>				86?
b	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>The Wedding Feast</i>				108
b	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>The Feast of St. Nicholas</i>	c.1690		26	89
b	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>The Twelfth Night Feast</i>	1691		27	89
b	Bogaert, Hendrick	c.1626- 1675/95	<i>Peasant Wedding</i>	1671	54682	40	109
c	Brakenburgh, Richard (naar)	1650-1702	<i>Sleeping and drunken Women in a Kitchen</i>	1690-1750	11205	41	111
c	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>A Peasant Company with fighting Dogs</i>	1669-1684	108485		
c	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>Peasants harassing a Woman in an Inn</i>	1675-1699	6474		112
c	Ravesteyn, Hubert van	1638-1691	<i>A brute peasant Fight in a Tavern</i>				110
c	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>Fighting Women in an Inn</i>	c.1690	104126	36	102
d	Valck, Hendrik de (mogelijk)	1674-1709	<i>A Company in a Tavern</i>	1693-1709	47273		
d	Valck, Hendrik de	1674-1709	<i>A Brothel scene with a Card Game and a Fiddler</i>	1680-1710	6163		
d	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>A Peasant Company in an Inn</i>				
d	Valck, Hendrik de	1674-1709	<i>Feasting Peasants in a Tavern</i>				

Cat. ¹	Artist	Date	Title	Dating	RKD ²	Fig. ³	Footnt. ⁴
d	Valck, Hendrik de	1674-1709	<i>Feasting Peasants in a Tavern</i>	1693			
d	Valck, Hendrik de	1674-1709	<i>Amorous Couple in a Tavern</i>	c.1700	47465		
d	Valck, Hendrik de	1674-1709	<i>A Tavern Scene</i>	1680-1700	55957		
d	Valck, Hendrik de	1674-1709	<i>Tavern Interior with a merry Company drinking and smoking</i>	c.1700	121322	42	115
d	Valck, Hendrik de	1674-1709	<i>Interior with a merry Peasant Company</i>	c.1700	198219		
d	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>Lazy Peasants in an Inn</i>				
d	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>A Tavern Scene with feasting Peasants</i>				
d	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>Tavern scene with peasants dancing</i>		106092	46	126
d	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>Amorous Couple in a Tavern</i>				
d	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>Revelling Peasants</i>				
d	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>Smoking and drinking Peasants in a Tavern</i>	1669-1684	115458		
d	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>Amorous Couple in an Inn</i>	1669-1685	190494	32	98
d	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>Amorous Couple in an Inn</i>	1669-1685	190493	33	98
d	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>Tavernscene</i>	1669-1705	20893	31	97
d	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>A Tavern Interior with dancing and amorous Figures</i>	1675-1699	64413		
d	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>A dancing Peasant Company in a Tavern</i>	c.1690	64750		
d	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>Monks having a Party in a Tavern</i>	1679-1705	105714		
d	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>Drinking Peasants in an Inn</i>	1669-1685	208896	34	99
d	Leeuwenburgh, Casper	1668-c.1700	<i>Smoking and Drinking Peasants in an Inn</i>	c.1700	106926		121
d	Haeften, Nicolaes van	1663-1715	<i>A Tavern Interior with three Figures, of which one reads</i>	1678-1715	55841		
d	Haeften, Nicolaes van	1663-1715	<i>Peasants in a Tavern</i>	1696			118
d	Haeften, Nicolaes van	1663-1715	<i>Peasant Company with a smoking Monkey on a Table</i>			43	120
d	Carré, Hendrick	1656-1721	<i>Peasants in an Inn</i>	1693			123
d	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>Merry Company in a Tavern Interior</i>				
d	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>An Interior with a Merry Company</i>	1665-1702	25613		
d	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>Interior with a smoking and drinking Peasant Company</i>	1669	25611		

Cat. ¹	Artist	Date	Title	Dating	RKD ²	Fig. ³	Footnt. ⁴
d	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>Merry Company in a Tavern Interior</i>	1696			
d	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>An exubarant Peasant Company in an Inn</i>	1696			
d	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>Tavern scene with peasants dancing</i>	1690		45	125
d	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>A Company with musicians in a Tavern</i>	1675-1699	4551		
d	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>An Interior with a feasting Company: drinking, smoking and fiddling</i>	1685	6090		
d	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>A Tavern scene with an amorous Couple</i>	c.1696	8264		
d	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>Feasting Company in an Interior</i>	1691	25610		
d	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>Peasant Company dancing to the Music of a hurdy-gurdy player in a Tavern</i>	1688	104668	24	84
d	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>Merry Company in a Tavern</i>	1689	107541	25	85
d	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>Tavern Interior with a Merry Company</i>	1665-1702	120523		
d	Bogaert, Hendrick	c.1626-1675/95	<i>A Tavern Interior with drinking peasants, string-players and a dacing man</i>	1650-1699	61870		
d	Berckheyde, Job Adriaensz.	1630-1693	<i>Tavern Interior with smoking and drinking Peasants</i>	c.1670	30929		
d	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>A Tavern Interior with a Figure baking Waffles</i>	1693	3210		
d	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>A Merry Company in a Tavern Interior</i>	1675-1704	25179		
d	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>Peasant Inn</i>	1675-1704	25629	44	124
d	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>A Peasant Company in a Tavern</i>	1675-1704	38315		
d	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>Reading and drinking Peasant in an Inn</i>	1683	65808		
d	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>Drinking Bout</i>	1690-1703	69099	22	80
d	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>Tavern scene with a Mother and her Child</i>		109302		
d	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>A Tavern Interior with peasants making music, smoking, drinking and playing card games</i>	1675-1704	237084		
d2	Haeften, Nicolaes van	1663-1715	<i>Kitchen Interior with a pancake baking Lady</i>	1668-1715	64675		129
d2	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>Kitchen Interior with merry Company</i>	1670-1690	11294		128
d2	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>A Peasant Family relaxing in an Interior</i>	1680s	107096		
d2	Haeften, Nicolaes van	1663-1715	<i>Interior with an Innkeeper and a kitchen maid cleaning vegetables</i>	1706	117386		130

Cat. ¹	Artist	Date	Title	Dating	RKD ²	Fig. ³	Footnt. ⁴
d2	Haeften, Nicolaes van	1663-1715	<i>Interieur met piskijker</i>	1697	185716		
d2	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>A Tavern Interior with a Lady eating a Bowl of Soup, other Figures by a Window beyond</i>	1695	115453	47	127
d2	Valck, Hendrik de	1674-1709	<i>An Attic Interior with a Man, Woman, and Child</i>	1693-1717	108624		
e	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>Interior with Boors seated at a Table playing Cards</i>	1669-1700	56276		132
e	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>Gaming Peasants</i>				
e	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>A Tavern Interior with card-playing Peasants</i>				
e	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>A Tavern Interior with card-playing Peasants</i>				
e	Molenaer II, Jan	1654-c.1700	<i>The 'Pantoffelspel'</i>	c.1675	5694		
e	Haeften, Nicolaes van	1663-1715	<i>Peasants playing a Card Game in an Inn</i>				
e	Haeften, Nicolaes van	1663-1715	<i>Card-players in a Tavern</i>	1687-1715	55813		
e	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>The Dice Players</i>			48	131
e	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>The Card-play Feast</i>	1673			
e	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>A Game of Cards at an Inn</i>			49	133
e	Berckheyde, Job Adriaensz.	1630-1693	<i>Interior with smoking and chatting men playing Backgammon</i>	1675-1693	35429		
e	Berckheyde, Job Adriaensz.	1630-1693	<i>Peasants playing Backgammon beneath the Arbour of a Tavern</i>		62009	50	134
e	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>A Peasant Company playing a game of Skittles in front of a Tavern</i>	1682	216034		
f	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>A flutist, Children, and a smoking and drinking Peasant in front of a Peasant Dwelling</i>	1680s	3284		
f	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>A little Boy playing the Fiddler surrounded by listeners in front of an Inn</i>	c.1690	7581		
f	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>A Peasant Feast in a Village</i>		25318		
f	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>Village Feast</i>	1684	25627	21	79
f	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>Peasants and a Musician in front of an Inn</i>	1693	26188		
f	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>A Merry-Making</i>	1692		52	136
f	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>Landscape with a Donkey in front of a House</i>	1681	38312		
f	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>Drinking and smoking Peasants at a Farmyard</i>	1684	41827		

Cat.¹	Artist	Date	Title	Dating	RKD²	Fig.³	Footnt.⁴
f	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>Smoking and drinking Peasant in front of a Village Tavern</i>	c.1680	66122		
f	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>Village Fair</i>			51	135
f	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>A hurdy-gurdy Player at a Tavern's Yard</i>	1681	69069		
f	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>Street Musicians in a Village Street with Peasants</i>		185776		
f	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>A hurdy-gurdy Player and a Peasant Company eating and drinking outside a Tavern</i>	1685	198356		
f	Dusart, Cornelis	1660-1704	<i>A Peasant Family outside a Cottage</i>	1683	213041	19	77
f	Valck, Hendrik de (naar)	1674-1709	<i>Revelling Figures in front of an Inn</i>				
f	Valck, Hendrik de	1674-1709	<i>A Quack Doctor and Peasants in a Village</i>	1692			140
f	Mase, Pieter van	c.1650- c.1710	<i>Village Fair</i>	1679			137
f	Carré, Hendrick	1656-1721	<i>Music-making Peasants in front of a Tavern</i>				
f	Carré, Hendrick	1656-1721	<i>A Village Feast</i>				139
f	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>Villagers outside an Inn</i>				
f	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>Peasants drinking and feasting in front of an Inn</i>	1665-1702	27631		93
f	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>Gayful activities in front of a Tavern</i>				
f	Brakenburgh, Richard	1650-1702	<i>The 'showbox'</i>	1675-1699	56990		
f	Droochsloot, Cornelis	1640-na 1673/93?	<i>A Village Street with Figures</i>	1669	4215		
f	Droochsloot, Cornelis	1640-na 1673/93?	<i>A Village Scene with a merry Company in front of a Tavern</i>	1670	11043		
f	Droochsloot, Cornelis	1640-na 1673/93?	<i>A Village Scene with a merry Peasant Company around a Table</i>		65086		

Attachment 2 | Images

Figure 1
David Vinckboons,
Village Wedding, undated,
42,7 x 60,1 cm, Bayerische
Staatsgemäldesammlungen,
Munich (inv. no. 4927)



Figure 2
Adriaen Brouwer,
*Raufende Kartenspieler in
einer Schenke*, undated,
33,4 x 49,8 cm, Alte
Pinakothek, Munich
(inv. no. 562)



Figure 3
Adriaen Brouwer,
*Keilerei zwischen fünf
Bauern*, undated,
22,7 x 30,7 cm,
Alte Pinakothek, Munich
(inv. no. 2050)



Figure 4
Adriaen Brouwer,
Eine Trinkstube,
undated, 35,5 x 27,2 cm,
Alte Pinakothek,
Munich (inv. no. 2063)



Figure 5
Adriaen Brouwer,
Der Bittere Trank, undated,
47,5 x 35,5 cm,
Städel Museum, Frankfurt
(inv. no. 1076)



Figure 6
Adriaen van Ostade,
*Interior with Drinking
Figures and
Crying Children*, 1634,
31,1 x 42,9 cm,
The Museum of Fine Arts,
Houston (inv. no. BF.1979.4)



Figure 7
Adriaen van Ostade,
*Boerengezelschap
binnenshuis*, 1661,
37 x 47 cm, Rijksmuseum,
Amsterdam
(inv. no. SK-C-200)



Figure 8
Pieter de Bloot,
Tavern Interior, dated 1630s,
48 x 66 cm, private
collection



Figure 9
Herman Saftleven,
Interior of a Peasant Hut,
signed 'Hermanus Saft
Leven f. 1634',
42 x 60 cm, Hermitage, St.
Petersburg (inv. no. 796)



Figure 10
Isaac van Ostade,
*Peasant Interior with
playing Children*, dated
1641, 44,8 x 64,5 cm



Figure 11
Cornelis Bega,
Tavern Interior, undated,
51 x 74 cm, private
collection



Figure 12
Cornelis Bega,
Two Men Singing,
signed 'c bega A^o
1662', 35,9 x 31,9
cm, National Gallery
of Ireland (inv. no.
NGI.28)



Figure 13
Jan Miense Molenaer,
*Figures Smoking and
Playing Music in an
Inn*,
signed 'J molenaer'
and dated c.1640s,
38,2 x 49,5 cm,
Worcester Art
Museum (inv. no.
1999.384)



Figure 14
Jan Miense Molenaer,
Peasants Carousing,
signed 'Jan Molenaer 1662',
109 x 126 cm, Museum of Fine
Arts, Boston (inv. no. 07.500)



Figure 15
Jan Steen,
Peasant Wedding,
signed 'JSteen. 1672',
38,5 x 50 cm,
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
(inv. no. SK-A-388)



Figure 16
Jan Steen,
*Peasants merry-making
outside an Inn*,
dated late 1640s,
24,3 x 20,3 cm,
National Gallery,
London (inv. no. NG2557)





Figure 17
 Pieter Jansz. Quast,
Three Smoking, Drinking and Music-Making Peasants, signed 'PQ / 1643', 35 x 28,8 cm,
 Sotheby's (London), 9 July 2002, lot 359



Figure 18
 Joos van Craesbeeck,
The Smoker (possibly a Portrait of the Artist),
 41 x 32 cm, Louvre, Paris (inv. no. M1906)



Figure 19
 Cornelis Dusart,
A Peasant Family outside a Cottage,
 signed 'Cor. Dusart' and dated 1683,
 59,6 x 50 cm, Christie's (Amsterdam), 13
 April 2010, lot 27

Figure 20
Adriaen van Ostade,
The Violinist, 1673,
45 x 42 cm,
Royal Picture Gallery
Mauritshuis, The Hague
(inv. no. 129)



Figure 21
Cornelis Dusart,
Village Feast,
signed and dated 1684,
80 x 70,5 cm,
Frans Hals Museum,
Haarlem (inv. no. os 55-39)



Figure 22
 Cornelis Dusart,
Drinking Bout, undated,
 48 x 56 cm,
 Frans Hals Museum,
 Haarlem (inv. no. os 1-74)



Figure 23
 Cornelis Dusart,
Vismarkt, signed 'Cor. Dusart'
 and dated 1683,
 68,5 x 90,5 cm,
 Rijksmuseum,
 Amsterdam
 (inv. no. SK-A-98)



Figure 24
 Richard Brakenburgh,
*Peasant company dancing to the
 Music of a hurdy-gurdy player in
 a tavern*, signed 'R.
 Brackenburgh' and dated 1688,
 40,7 x 49,6 cm,
 Christie's (Amsterdam),
 13 April 2010, lot 94

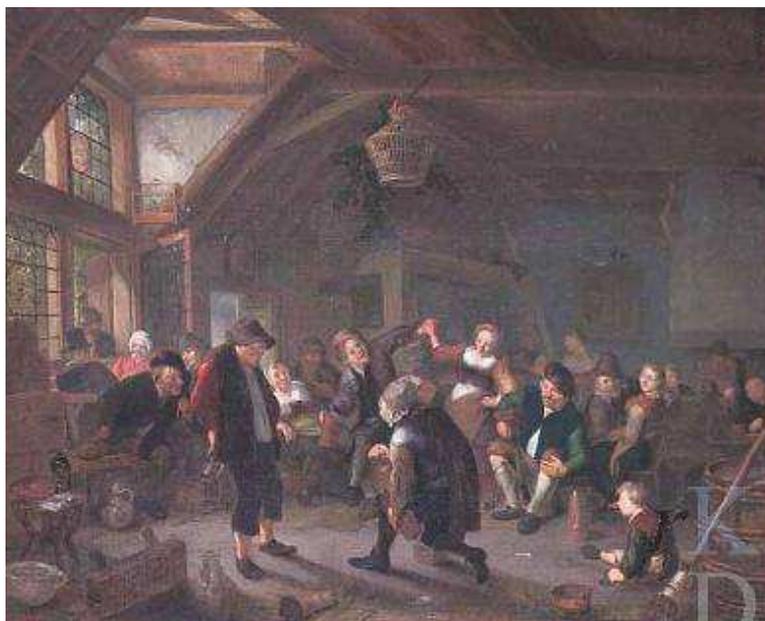


Figure 25
Richard Brakenburgh,
Merry Company in a Tavern,
signed 'R. Brakenburgh Fecit' and
dated 1689, 110 x 155,
Sotheby's (London),
10 July 2002, lot 36.



Figure 26
Richard Brakenburgh,
The Feast of St. Nicholas, c. 1690,
75 x 86,5 cm, Frans Hals Museum
(inv. no. os 2011-22)



Figure 27
Richard Brakenburgh,
The Twelfth Night Feast, 1691,
52 x 62,5 cm, Frans Hals Museum
(inv. no. os 75-308)



Figure 28
Richard Brakenburgh [?],
*Interior with a Peasant Family and three
Figures at a Fireplace*, c.1690
[fake signature 'AV. Ostade 1667'],
34 x 40 cm, Dorotheum (Wenen),
13 April 2011, lot 550



Figure 29
Richard Brakenburgh,
*Peasant Company having Dinner in an
Interior*, 76 x 88 cm,
Dorotheum (Vienna),
24 April 2007, lot 152



Figure 30
Richard Brakenburgh,
Family at Supper, c. 1685,
31,5 x 24,5 cm, Frans Hals Museum
(inv. no. I-613)



Figure 31
Jan Molenaer II,
Tavernscene, signed
'Jan.molenaer' and undated,
34,7 x 47 cm,
Bolland & Marotz (Bremen),
12 November 2011, lot 676



Figure 32-33
Jan Molenaer II, *Amourous Couple in an Inn*,
signed 'Jan Molenaer' and undated, 31 x 22 cm (each panel),
Nagel Auktionen (Stuttgart), 29 March 2006, lot 468



Figure 34
Jan Molenaer II,
Drinking Peasants in an Inn,
signed 'Molenaer' and undated,
33,5 x 25,5 cm,
Nagel Auktionen (Stuttgart),
29 March 2006, lot 480



Figure 35
Jan Molenaer II,
Peasant Family saying prayer before Meal,
signed 'Jan.molenaer' and undated,
27,9 x 27,2 cm, Sotheby's (Amsterdam),
5 November 2002, lot 205

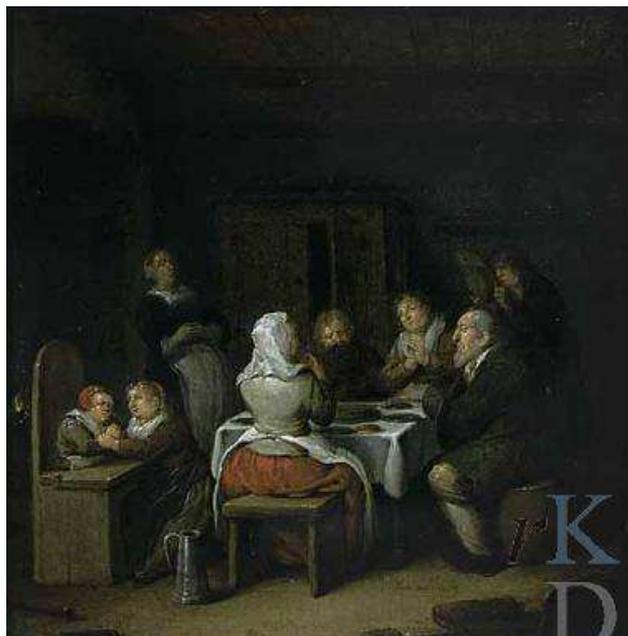


Figure 36
Jan Molenaer II,
Fighting Women in an Inn,
unsigned and dated c.1690,
33,6 x 26,8 cm,
Christie's (Amsterdam),
4 September 2001, lot 440

Figure 37
Willem van Mieris,
*Peasant Family in a
Cottage Interior*,
signed and dated 'W Van
Mieris. Fec. Anno 1718',
50,8 x 41,2 cm, Koller
(Zürich), 18 September
2009, lot 3040



Figure 38
Willem van Mieris,
*A Young Mother tending to
her two Children in a
domestic Interior*, signed and
dated 'W. van Mieris Fe Anno
1728', 44,5 x 38,5 cm,
Sotheby's (London),
7-8 December 2011, lot 239



Figure 39
 Hubert van Ravesteyn,
Stallinterior, signed 'H.
 Ravesteyn', 62,8 x 90,7
 cm, Dordrechts Museum
 (inv. no. DM/907/90)



Figure 40
 Hendrick Bogaert,
Peasant Wedding, signed
 'HBogert fecit Anno
 167(1)', 109 x 174 cm,
 Westfries Museum,
 Hoorn (inv. no. 00528)



Figure 41
 After Richard
 Brakenburgh,
*Sleeping and drunken
 women in a Kitchen*,
 65 x 77,5 cm,
 Sotheby's (Amsterdam),
 12 November 1996,
 lot 29



Figure 42
Hendrik de Valk,
*Tavern Interior with a
merry Company
drinking and smoking,*
40,7 x 48,6 cm,
Sotheby's (London),
6 July 2004, lot 538



Figure 43
Nicolas van Haeften,
*Gesellschaft mit
pfeifenrauchendem
Affe in einer Schenke,*
46 x 37 cm,
Kunstmuseum Basel
(inv. no. 274)



Figure 44
 Cornelis Dusart,
Boerenherberg,
 signed 'Corn. Dusart',
 40,5 x 49,5 cm, Mauritshuis,
 The Hague (inv. no. 440)



Figure 45
 Richard Brakenburgh,
*Tavern scene with
 peasants dancing*,
 signed 'R. Brakenburgh' and
 dated 1690, 67 x 83,5 cm,
 Kunsthistorisches Museum,
 Gemäldegalerie, Vienna
 (inv. no. GG_629)



Figure 46
 Jan Molenaer II,
Merry Company in a Peasant Inn,
 signed 'Jan Molenaer', 33 x 29,2 cm,
 Christie's (London),
 13 July 2001, lot 109

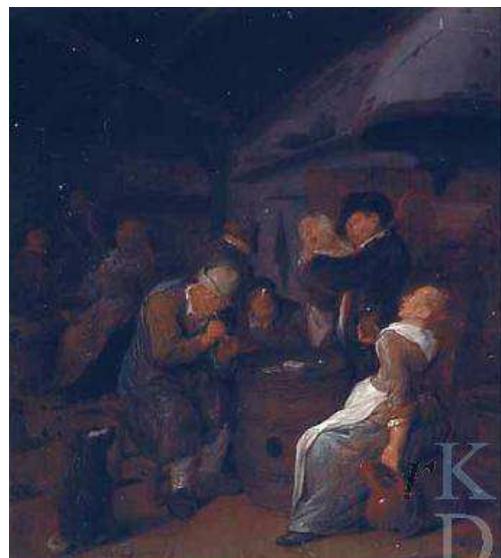


Figure 47
 Richard Brakenburgh,
*A Tavern Interior with a Lady eating a
 Bowl of Soup, other Figures by a
 Window beyond*, signed 'R. Brak /
 16[7/9]5', 31 x 40,5 cm,
 Sotheby's (London),
 18 April 2002, lot 45



Figure 48
 Richard Brakenburgh,
The Dice Players, signed
 'R.Brakenburgh', 37,6 x 29,7 cm,
 Philadelphia Museum of Art
 (inv. no. 528)



Figure 49
 Richard Brakenburgh, *A Game of Cards
 at an Inn*, 50 x 34 cm, National Gallery
 of Denmark, Copenhagen (inv. no.
 KMSp650)





Figure 50
Job Adriaensz.
Berckheyde,
*Peasants playing
Backgammon
beneath the Arbour
of a Tavern*,
unsigned,
34,4 x 28,9 cm,
Christie's (London),
29 October 1999,
lot 32



Figure 51
Cornelis Dusart,
Village Fair,
unsigned,
86,5 x 135,6 cm,
Dutch private
collection

Figure 52
Cornelis Dusart,
A Merry-Making,
signed 'C. Dusart 1692',
33,5 x 38,5 cm,
National Gallery of Ireland
(inv. no. NGI.324)



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