

The sons of Jacob: the twelve patriarchs in sixteenth-century Netherlandish prints and popular literature*

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The word “patriarch” is used in the Bible for various Old Testament figures. In Hebrews 7:4, for instance, it is applied to Abraham, and in Acts 2:29 to David. Broadly speaking, all the pre-Noachian ancestors of Christ and of the entire human race are titled “patriarchs”, as in Hans Sebald Beham’s woodcut series of 1530: *The ten elder patriarchs of Christ from the Old Testament*, namely Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech and Noah, with their wives and children.¹

Specifically, though, the term is applied to the twelve sons of Jacob, of whom only Juda, of course, was the true ancestor of Christ. As we read in Acts 7:8–9: “And so he [Abraham] begot Isaac, ... and Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob the twelve patriarchs (Vulgate: “duodecim patriarchas”).

Several of Jacob’s sons feature prominently in the Bible, and thus in the visual arts. The detailed story of Joseph, for instance (Genesis 37 and 39–47), was particularly popular, but there was also some interest in Juda (Genesis 38), who entered Christ’s family tree somewhat unintentionally by begetting a child on Tamar, and even in Simeon and Levi (Genesis 34), who destroyed the city of Sichem to avenge the rape of Dina

The twelve sons appear as a group in Genesis 49:1–28.

Jacob is on his deathbed, and he summons his children (the male ones, anyway), with the words: “Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you the things that shall befall you in the last days.” Christians have interpreted the subsequent prophecy as foretelling the coming of Christ, particularly verse 10: “The sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till he come that is to be sent, and he shall be the expectation of nations.”

This deathbed scene, which is also called the blessing or testament of Jacob, is rare in art. Early sixteenth-century Dutch and German Bibles are profusely illustrated, and yet even they only depict it once or twice: in the Vorsterman Bible published in Antwerp in 1528 (fig. 1), and in the Luther Bible of Wolfgang Kopfl (Strasbourg 1530).² The woodcut in the Vorsterman Bible, which is attributed to Jan Swart, shows Jacob seated in a chair while his sons kneel at his feet listening to the prophecy, the content of which is not alluded to in any way. The second blessing in the background is that of Jacob’s grandsons Ephraim and Manasses (Genesis 48:14).

The series of *Twelve patriarchs* etched by Dirck Volckertsz. Coornhert in 1550 after designs by Maarten van Heemskerck is therefore something of an anomaly.³ The surviving preliminary drawings for the series bear the

* We are grateful to Jan Piet Filedt Kok for his helpful comments on this article, which was translated from the Dutch by Michael Hoyle. All illustrations are from the Rijksmuseum Printroom, Amsterdam, unless otherwise stated

¹ F W H Hollstein, *German engravings, etchings and woodcuts 1400–1700*, in progress, Amsterdam 1954–, vol 3, pp 174–75 (*Die zehen alten Ertzvetter Christi des alten Testaments*)

² For the attribution to Jan Swart see N Beets, *De houtsneden in Vorsterman’s Bybel van 1528 afbeeldingen der prenten van Jan Swart, Lucas van Leyden e a*, Amsterdam 1915. In the Kopfl Bible Jacob is also shown seated with his sons around him. It was not until Brandmüller’s Luther Bible (Basel 1699) that a new illustration of the scene appeared, see P Schmidt, *Die Illustration der Lutherbibel 1522–1700*,

Basel 1962, p 488. See note 30 below for *Jacob’s blessing* by Carel van Mander

³ T Kerrich, *A catalogue of the prints which have been engraved after Martin van Heemskerck*, Cambridge 1829, pp 15–17, and F W H Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish etchings, engravings and woodcuts, ca 1450–1700*, in progress, Amsterdam 1949–, vol 8, p 238, nrs 56–57. The prints of Dan and Joseph are included in exhib cat *Zwischen Renaissance und Barock – das Zeitalter von Bruegel und Bellange*, Vienna (Albertina) 1967, p 93, nrs 105–06. The twelve patriarchs are occasionally depicted in the broader context of biblical genealogy, but without their attributes, see Hartmann Schedel, *Weltchronik* (ed princ Nuremberg 1493), Dortmund 1979 (facsimile edition, *Die bibliophilen Taschenbücher*), fols 25v–26r

date 1549.⁴ The prints (figs. 2-13) show the sons of Jacob as classicized nude figures with various attributes, invariably including an animal and a classical sculpture on a pedestal. Each print has an explanatory inscription consisting of a Latin distich (with a certain number of scribal errors attributable to the engraver) and two lines of Dutch verse.

Thematically this series follows on from Heemskerck's prior illustrations of the chapters preceding Genesis 49. In 1549 Coornhert issued a series of etched histories of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,⁵ and in that same year, when he was working on the drawings for the *Twelve patriarchs*, Heemskerck also made designs for the story of Juda and Tamar.⁶ The *Twelve patriarchs* can therefore be regarded as the next stage in the illustration of Genesis from the time of Abraham.

The *Twelve patriarchs* differs from the other series in having Latin and Dutch inscriptions (see Appendix 1). Two considerations would have been at work here. First of all, the theme was an unfamiliar one in art, and secondly some of the biblical passages are quite difficult to construe, so the explanation would have helped to make the prints more accessible.

Every now and then the choice of words in the Dutch couplets bears a very strong resemblance to the language of the Dutch Liesveldt Bible in the editions published in Antwerp between 1526 and 1542. In addition, the spelling of the patriarchs' names, which varies considerably from one edition to the next, is identical to that in the Liesveldt Bible.⁷ The two lines of Latin owe little or nothing to the Vulgate, but are a metrical paraphrase of the biblical text, and may well have been written with the Dutch couplets as the starting point. In any event, the print inscriptions are closer to Genesis 49 than some of the motifs depicted in the prints. Even for Heemskerck, with his humanist leanings and debt to Italian art, the inclusion of statues of classical gods in scenes of biblical figures would still have been a fairly unusual innovation.

Although motifs of this kind appear to have little in common with the biblical text, it turns out that they can be explained with the aid of a small book entitled *The testaments of the twelve patriarchs*, which enjoyed an extraordinary vogue during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, being published in Dutch, English, Welsh, French, German, Danish and Bohemian.⁸

The *Testaments* is a work of popular literature with a

im. in begijfte Joseph b'fondcr. Dat. r'win. Capittel.



Dier na als dic albus ghesleden was/
wert Joseph gebootschap dat zij ha

1 Jan Swart, *Jacob's blessing*, woodcut from the Vorsterman Bible, Antwerp 1528 (photo Universiteitsbibliotheek, Amsterdam)

4 The dated preliminary drawings for *Juda* and *Aser* are in the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris (inv. nos 1686 and 1701)

5 Kerich, op cit (note 3), pp 10-12, Hollstein, op cit (note 3), vol 8, pp 237-38, nos 16-19, 24-31 and 33-45

6 Kerich, op cit (note 3), pp 13-14, Hollstein, op cit (note 3), vol 8, p 238, nos 46-51 and 52-55.

7 For another of Heemskerck's borrowings from the text of the Liesveldt Bible see Ilja M Veldman, *Maarten van Heemskerck and Dutch Humanism in the sixteenth century*, Amsterdam & Maarssen 1977, p 39

8 For the history and textual analysis of this book see M de Jonge, *The Testaments of the twelve patriarchs: a study of their text, composition and origin*, Assen 1953 (diss) and idem (ed.), *Studies on the Testaments of the twelve patriarchs*, Leiden 1975. A modern English version is M de Jonge, "The Testaments of the twelve patriarchs," in H F D Sparks, *The Apocryphal Old Testament*, Oxford 1984, pp 505-600. The English quotations given in the present article are from the edition printed by Robert Sanders, Glasgow 1684

history going back to the early days of the Christian era. The earliest extant version is a second-century Greek work with traces of even earlier Christian redactions. Parts of it may have been based on Jewish documents written in Hebrew or Aramaic. The Greek version is divided into twelve chapters, each relating the deathbed speeches of Jacob's twelve sons to their children and grandchildren. Each patriarch tells the story of his life and predicts, partly as *vaticinia ex eventu*, what will come to pass among his own family down to the time of the divine savior. He calls on his progeny to live virtuously, and illustrates his sermon by extolling his own virtues and disavowing his vices. Thus each of Jacob's sons is given his own "testament," together with a subtitle referring to a particular virtue or vice. The Greek *Testaments* were translated into many languages in the middle ages, including Armenian, Slavic, Serbian and modern Greek. In the thirteenth century Robert Grosseteste produced a Latin translation which spread throughout Europe, appearing in printed editions from ca. 1520. This Latin text formed the basis for the sixteenth-century vernacular translations.

The first Dutch version was published in 1538, and the subsequent popularity of the book was probably due to the appeal of the prophecies and the sound admonitions to live a God-fearing life. Twenty-five Dutch editions appeared in the course of the sixteenth century, and at least three have survived from the period 1538-1544.⁹

Several of these editions have woodcut illustrations, initially restricted to a frontispiece. The title page of *Die testamenten der XII patriarchen Jacobs kinderen*, which was published in 1544 by the Kampen printer Pieter

Warnerszoon, shows a patriarch on his deathbed surrounded by his children and grandchildren (fig. 14).¹⁰

The first extant edition to have illustrations to each chapter is *De testamenten der twalf patriarchen Jacobs kinderen*, which was published at Ghent in 1552 by "Joos Lambrecht lettersteker" (letter-cutter).¹¹ Each of Jacob's sons is depicted in a separate woodcut, together with attributes and accessories (fig. 15-26). Despite the fact that Lambrecht was granted a privilege in 1551 to prevent others from pirating his book, virtually identical copies of these woodcuts, but with different ornamental borders, appeared in editions of 1552 (?) and 1554 issued by Joos Destree in Ypres.¹²

These woodcuts, taken in conjunction with the text of the *Testaments*, not only provide a satisfactory explanation for the unusual program adopted by Heemskerck, including quite minor details, but demonstrate that he drew equally on the Bible and the *Testaments*.

There is, however, one problem. The extant edition of Lambrecht's *Testamenten* was only published in 1552, three years after Heemskerck made his preliminary designs. However, the woodcut of Nephthali (fig. 24) bears the date 1541, from which one might conclude that the woodcut was executed in that year, and could have been used by Heemskerck as a source. The trouble is that the date is in the ornamental border, and closer examination of the borders reveals that they are not part of the woodcuts with the patriarchs, but consist of four separate blocks which were printed around the figure. That being said, though, the proportions of the borders appear to conform closely to the woodcuts, and since they are not found in other works by Joos Lambrecht it could well be that they were in fact made for the

9 An incomplete and occasionally inaccurate bibliography in R. Sinker, *A descriptive catalogue of the editions of the printed text of the versions of the "Testamenta XII patriarcharum"*, Cambridge & London 1910, with the Dutch and Flemish editions on pp. 20-25. The *Testaments* was equally popular in England (but only from 1576), with 47 editions. Sinker lists nine French editions between 1540 and 1743, and ten German between 1539 and 1857.

10 The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, shelf-mark 1704 E 1. "Die testamenten der XII patriarchen Jacobs kinderen, hoc een yeghelick voer sijnen eynde sijn kinderen gheleert totter vreesen Godts ende Godtsalighen leven vermaent heeft. Oock hoc een yeghelick bysonder doer den propheetischen ghyest van Christo den waeren Messia (claerder dan dat licht) getuyghet. Daer inne veel schoone leer ende troestelicker toesegginge van Christo begrepen sint seer troestelick ende tot eenen waren Godtsalighen leven gants dienstelick" (The testaments of

the twelve patriarchs, the children of Jacob, how each before his end did teach his children to fear God and advised them to lead a godly life. Further how, through the prophetic spirit, each testifies (clearer yet than the light) to Christ, the true Messiah. Containing much fine teaching and comforting promises of Christ, most comforting and serving greatly towards a truly godly life"), Sinker, op. cit. (note 9), p. 21, nr. 5. G. H. A. Klans, "Peter Warnisen drukker en uitgever te Kampen," *Het Boek* 1936-37, pp. 147-85, identifies the woodcut in her bibliography (p. 170, nr. 2) not as a patriarch giving his blessing, but as *Jacob's blessing*, which is unlikely given the presence of children and grandchildren and the actual text of the *Testaments*.

11 Ghent, University Library, shelf-mark Gent 199. Sinker, op. cit. (note 9), p. 21, nr. 7.

12 Sinker, op. cit. (note 9), pp. 22-23, nrs. 8, 11. The 1552 (?) edition is in the University Library in Cambridge, the 1554 edition in the Catharijneconvent Museum in Utrecht.

patriarchs after all, and were used in an earlier edition of the *Testamenten* published in the 1540s, when Lambrecht was very active as a printer. The wear of the woodblocks, which is particularly noticeable in figs. 16, 19 and 20, could also indicate prior use. Very few of the books published by Lambrecht have survived; in fact only one copy of most of the sixteenth-century editions of the *Testamenten* is known.

The rarity of Lambrecht's publications may be due to the fact that, like so many printers of the period, he regularly fell foul of the ecclesiastical authorities. In 1539, for instance, he published *Spelen van sinne* and *Refereinen int vroede* (the work of the De Fonteijne chamber of rhetoric in Ghent), only to have them banned the following year for their criticism of the pope and the church. His publication of Cornelis van der Heyden's *Corte instructyende ondermyn hoe een ieghelic mensche met God ende zynen evennaesten schuldigh es ende behoud te leven* (1545) got him in trouble with the theological faculty of Louvain university, and he was forced to ask official forgiveness of the Court of Flanders and pay a fine.¹³ In 1570 the *Testamenten* itself was placed on the index.¹⁴

A second point concerns the authorship of the woodcuts in the *Testamenten*. The border around Levi (fig. 18) contains the monogram "IL", which was Joos Lambrecht's own signature. However, this proves nothing more than that he was responsible for the borders. From 1537 he was official engraver of marks and seals in Ghent, so he would undoubtedly have had experience in cutting wood. Although it is still an open question whether he designed the depictions of the patriarchs, or the 34 illustrations in his *Een zuverlic boueskin van der ketyvighyt der menschlicker naturen* (1543), which appear to be from the same hand, we have decided in the interests of simplicity to refer to Lambrecht as the designer, rather than to some anonymous artist.

¹³ For Joos Lambrecht see A. Voison, *Josse Lambert, imprimeur, graveur, poète et grammairien Gantois du XVII^e siècle*, Ghent 1842, and F. van der Haegen, in *Biographie Nationale de Belgique*, vol. 6, Brussels 1890-91, cols. 203-09. G. K. Nagler and A. Andresen, *Die Monogrammisten*, vol. 3, Munich 1863, p. 1038, list under nr. 2719 further woodcuts signed "I L." in Wenzel Hagek's *Kronyka Czeská*, Prague 1541.

¹⁴ *Index Librorum prohibitorum*, Antwerp 1570, p. 93. See also C. Sepp, *Verboden lectuur*, Leiden 1889, p. 253.

¹⁵ The Hebrew text of Genesis speaks of the coming of "Shiloh," a word that has never been satisfactorily explained, although Christians

THE TWELVE PATRIARCHS OF MAARTEN VAN HEEMSKERCK AND THE WOODCUTS OF JOOS LAMBRECHT
Juda (figs. 2 and 15)

Heemskerck's series is numbered, but unlike Genesis and *De testamenten van de twaalf patriarchen* he does not open with Ruben, Jacob's eldest son, but with Juda, the fourth, who fathered twins by Tamar and thus became the head of a long line leading to David, the royal house of Israel, and thus to Christ himself. As it happens, Juda is listed first in Revelation 7:5, 1 Chronicles 2:3, 4:1-2 and 5:1-2, and Numbers 2:3, 7:12 and 10:14, which describe the families of the twelve tribes of Israel.

The crown which Juda wears in both illustrations, of which there is no mention in Genesis 49, is an allusion to his royal descendants. Genesis 49:10, however, does speak of Juda's scepter: "The scepter shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till he come that is to be sent, and he shall be the expectation of nations."¹⁵ The lion on which he is leaning comes from Genesis 49:9—"Juda is a lion's whelp: to the prey my son thou art gone up: resting thou hast couched as a lion, and as a lioness, who shall rouse him?"

The statue of Jupiter, with his customary attributes of eagle and thunderbolt, has nothing to do with the Bible, nor is it in Lambrecht's woodcut. Since virtually all the other woodcuts by Lambrecht have either a mythological or an allegorical figure, it seems that Heemskerck decided to extend the system by including a similar motif in all his prints. Jupiter, the supreme god (and sometimes depicted with a crown), was the most suitable candidate for Juda, not only because he was the most powerful of the gods, but also because his adulterous behavior would have called up associations with the subtitle of the chapter on Juda in the *Testaments*: "Concerning...covetousness and fornication." According to the book, though, Juda seems to have had a deathbed repentance of his amorous encounter with Tamar, who had

formerly interpreted it as a reference to Christ. They regarded the passage as a prediction of the historical fact that Israel only retained its autonomy until the coming of Christ. The Vulgate speaks merely of "qui mittendus est," he that is to be sent. The Liesveldt Bible translates Shiloh with "dyc vrome" (the noble one), with the exegesis: "dic vrome is Christus" (the noble one is Christ). Shiloh is left untranslated in the Vorsterman Bible, with the marginal note: "die gezonden zal worden" ("who shall be sent"). In the present article the Vulgate is quoted from the English translation by Richard Challoner.



2 Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert after Maarten van Heemskerck, *Juda*, nr. 1 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1550), etching



3 Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert after Maarten van Heemskerck, *Ruben*, nr. 2 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1550), etching

16 Vulgate: "Effusus es sicut aqua, non crescas: quia ascendisti cubile patris tui." This passage is less literally rendered in other Bible translations. The Revised Version, for instance, gives "unstable as water," and the New English Bible "turbulent as a flood." The jug with water spilling from it is also an attribute of Proditio (Betrayal), who walks beside the triumphal car of Opulentia (Riches) in Heemskerck's series, *Cycle of the vicissitudes of human affairs*. The fact that she is carrying a vessel containing fire and is wearing a mask indicates that betrayal or treachery can be seen in relation to love; see Veldman, op. cit. (note 7), p. 134, fig. 86.

disguised herself as a prostitute, and blames his moment of weakness on alcohol.

The building under construction in the background of Heemskerck's print has an obvious significance, for the person of Judah is a preparation for the coming of Christ.

Ruben (figs. 3 and 16)

In the *Testaments* Ruben personifies unchastity. In Genesis 49:3-4 Jacob strips him of his first birthright, for he had defiled his father's bed. This is a reference to the events described in Genesis 35:22, when Ruben lay with Bala, his father's concubine. This is depicted in the background of Lambrecht's woodcut, and on the water basin in Heemskerck's print. In both scenes Ruben is pointing at Cupid, who led him on. The Venus in Heemskerck's print is pouring water from a jug and the latter motif is also found in Lambrecht. Water spilling from a jug is a depiction of Genesis 49:4: "Thou art poured out as water, grow thou not, because thou wentest up to thy father's bed."¹⁶

Heemskerck makes further reference to Ruben's moral lapse by including a boar—since time immemorial the most common symbol of impurity and lust. Lambrecht incorrectly gives the boar to Levi (fig. 18). For Ruben he has chosen the bear, which can stand for Luxuria, but more commonly for Ira.¹⁷ Heemskerck accordingly reserved the bear for Levi, his fourth print (fig. 5), which is certainly the more suitable context.

Simeon and Levi (figs. 4 and 17, 5 and 18)

In Genesis Jacob castigates Simeon and Levi in the same breath, giving them a joint character assessment and

¹⁷ The boar as a symbol of Luxuria in Ioannes Pierius Valerianus, *Hieroglyphica sive de sacris Aegyptiorum, abarumque gentium literis commentarii*, Venice 1556, ch. 9: "Sus Luxuriosae delitiae." Luxuria is accompanied by a pig in a series of Venetian engravings of the *Seven deadly sins* (1470-80); see A. M. Hind, *Early Italian engraving*, vol. 4, New York & London 1948, pl. 397. In a series of woodcuts by Cornelis Anthonisz. entitled *Misuse of fortune* (1546), Gluttony has a boar and Unchastity a bear; see F. J. Dubiez, *Cornelis Anthoniszoon van Amsterdam: zijn leven en merken ca. 1507-1553*, Amsterdam 1969, fig. 15, nr. 4. In 1549-50 Heinrich Aldegrever produced a series of engravings based on these woodcuts in which the woman with the boar is called Luxuria, and the woman with the bear Lascivia; see Hollstein, op. cit. (note 1), vol. 1, p. 57, nrs. 109-10. The bear is found with Ira in a series of *Seven deadly sins* by Aldegrever (1552), Hollstein, op. cit. (note 1), vol. 1, p. 61, nr. 126, and in a series of *Seven deadly sins* by Georg Pencz of ca. 1541, see D. Landau, *Georg Pencz*, Milan 1978, pp. 132-34, nr. 102.

prognosis. Although Heemskerck also refers to them as a pair in the inscription to each print, he understandably depicts them individually, although this necessarily meant separating their character traits. It was here that the woodcuts in the *Testamenten* came in particularly useful.

In Genesis Jacob roundly condemns the rage and fury of the two brothers, and Heemskerck follows suit in his inscriptions. In the *Testaments*, however, Simeon stands for “Envy,” *Invidia*, for it was jealousy that led him to plot the murder of his younger brother Joseph, which is described at length in Simeon’s testament. Lambrecht depicts Simeon in a helmet with an upraised sword (fig. 17). His companions, who are in the style of the *Invidia* in a series of *Seven deadly sins* by Georg Pencz (ca. 1541),¹⁸ are a woman biting into a heart—the allegorical personification of Envy—and a jackal of sorts. Heemskerck adopted the woman for his classical statue, but replaced the jackal with a cat.¹⁹ The skull on the block of stone on which Simeon is sitting is one of *Invidia*’s attributes in the *Misuse of prosperity* (1546), a series of woodcuts by Cornelisz Anthonisz, and in a related print series by Heinrich Aldegrever (1549–50).²⁰

The peacock at Envy’s feet was a common symbol of pride, and Heemskerck may have taken it from the subtitle of Levi’s testament, which runs: “De sacerdotio et superbia” (On priesthood and pride). In his print of Levi (fig. 5) he adopted the flaming sword from Lambrecht (fig. 18), as well as the headgear with the half moon, but otherwise preferred to follow Genesis by making Levi the representative of Rage, with the bear as his most appropriate attribute. The scene in the background is an illustration of Genesis 49:6: “For in their anger they killed men, wantonly they hamstrung oxen.”

The fact that Heemskerck has turned Lambrecht’s diadem of priesthood into a miter shows that he was acquainted with the *Testamenten*, which describes how Levi was shown the seven heavens (at top left in Lambrecht’s woodcut), and was then told: “Up! Put on the stole of priesthood, the crown of righteousness,...the mitre of holiness and the ephod of prophecy...Be thou henceforth the Lord’s priest” (*Testament of Levi* 8:2).

The sculpture of a nude woman driving a spear into a man’s back appears at first sight to be a visualization of Levi’s rage and bloodlust when he razed the city of Sichem. The pedestal, however, is decorated with orgiastic scenes. Moreover, in Lambrecht’s woodcut



4 Duick Volketsz Coornhert after Maarten van Heemskerck, *Simeon*, nr 3 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1550), etching



5 Duick Volketsz Coornhert after Maarten van Heemskerck, *Levi*, nr 4 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1550), etching

¹⁸ Landau, op cit (note 17), nr 101

¹⁹ It is possible that the animal in Lambrecht’s woodcut is meant to be a wolf, the symbol of Mats and warfare. Since Heemskerck had to give the wolf to Benjamin on the basis of the Bible text he was forced to seek an alternative here, because nowhere does he use the same animal twice.

²⁰ Dubicz, op cit (note 17), fig 15, nr 5, and Hollstein, op cit (note 1), vol 1, p. 57, nr 111



Son in sul water der rivier met twee ghesichten. *Amber onder segende, sal by uft een vissen.*

6 Dirk Volkertsz. Coornhert after Maarten van Heemskerck, *Zabulon*, nr. 5 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1550), etching



Man sijn paerde met twee ghesichten. *Hijde domine, eren tributa dicit.*
Hijde sijn den in den tributa te lange gesproken.

7 Dirk Volkertsz. Coornhert after Maarten van Heemskerck, *Issachar*, nr 6 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1550), etching

Levi is accompanied by Venus and Cupid, the instigators of sensual lust. So once again it turns out that Heemskerck has drawn on the *Testaments* for his implicit warning that the power of women will be fatal to Levi's posterity, for in the chapter in which he describes the falling away of his children the patriarch prophesies: "Ye shall steal away the choicest things, and eat them disdainfully with harlots teaching commandments of covetousness. Ye shall defile married women, and inforce maidens in Jerusalem, you shall match your selves with whores and harlots, you take the daughter of the heathen unto wife, purifying them with unrighteous purifying and your mingling shall be like Sodom and Gomorah" (14:5-6).

Zabulon (figs. 6 and 19)

All that Genesis 49:13 has to say of Zabulon is that he "shall dwell on the sea-shore, and in the road of ships, reaching as far as Sidon." The Latin and Dutch verses on Heemskerck's print identify him as a seaman with wares to sell, but in both Heemskerck and Lambrecht he is actually depicted as a fisherman. Heemskerck shows him making a net, while Lambrecht follows the *Testaments*, where Zabulon, as a fisherman, stands for "compassion and mercy," and is seen giving a fish and a cloak to a poor man. In both prints, however, it is Neptune rising from the waves with his trident who provides the strongest association with water.

Issachar (figs. 7 and 20)

Heemskerck's depiction of Issachar as a countryman with an ass is very similar to Lambrecht's version, yet both turn out to be based primarily on Genesis 49:14-15. "Issachar shall be a strong ass lying down between the borders. He saw rest that it was good: and the land that it was excellent: and he bowed his shoulder to carry, and became a servant under tribute." Heemskerck has included the border posts ("termini" in the Vulgate), and he renders the carrying and the tribute in the form of a yoke and the figure of Atlas as the classical prototype of someone who "bowed his shoulder to carry" (Genesis 49:15).

Lambrecht stays closer to Issachar's testament: "When I came into man's state, I watched with an upright heart, and became bayliff of husbandry unto my fathers, and brought them the fruits of their lands in their due seasons" (3:1). Lambrecht personified "the

fruits of their lands” with Ceres and her cornucopia, which Heemskerck reserved for Aser (fig. 10).

Dan (figs. 8 and 21)

The depiction of Dan in both prints is based chiefly on Genesis, although in the *Testaments* he stands for anger and lying. In Genesis 49:16–17 we read: “Dan shall judge his people like another tribe in Israel. Let Dan be a snake in the way, a serpent in the path, that biteth the horse’s heels that his rider may fall backward.”

Heemskerck gave this patriarch the gnarled judge’s rod, and chose the shepherd lad Paris and his golden apple as the classical prototype. Admittedly this was not entirely consistent, but he really had little choice. The actual Judgment of Paris is shown on the pedestal. The snake biting the horse’s heels is repeated in the foreground as a suitable animal symbol.

In Heemskerck’s inscription Dan is described as “treacherous.” His classical parallel, Paris, allowed bribery to sway his judgment, which bodes ill for Dan’s impartiality as a judge, as does the subtitle of his testament: “The testament of Dan concerning anger and lying.” It seems, then, that the Janus head lying on the ground in Heemskerck’s print is not so much an allusion to Dan’s abolition of idolatry, as has been suggested, but has the more negative connotation of Prudentia discarded.²¹

Gad (figs. 9 and 22)

Jacob is brief on the subject of Gad: “Gad, being girded, shall fight before him: and he himself shall be girded backward” (Genesis 49:19). Lambrecht presents him as a warrior, with helmet, sword and cuirass, and with soldiers battling with lance and spear in the background. His classical equivalent is Mars. Heemskerck has followed Lambrecht closely. The animals in the two scenes, however, repay further examination. Lambrecht’s Gad is holding up four animals by their hind legs, which is a faithful rendition of the testament. “I kept the flocks by night, and when there came any lion, leopard, wolf, bear or other wilde beast upon our cattel, I pursued it, and overtaking it, I seized its foot with my hand and hurled it about a stone’s throw and so killed it” (1:3). The inevitable conclusion is that Heemskerck was also following the text of the testament, for he has chosen the leopard. He had already given the lion to Juda (fig. 2), the wolf had to go to Benjamin on the basis of Genesis 49:27 (fig.

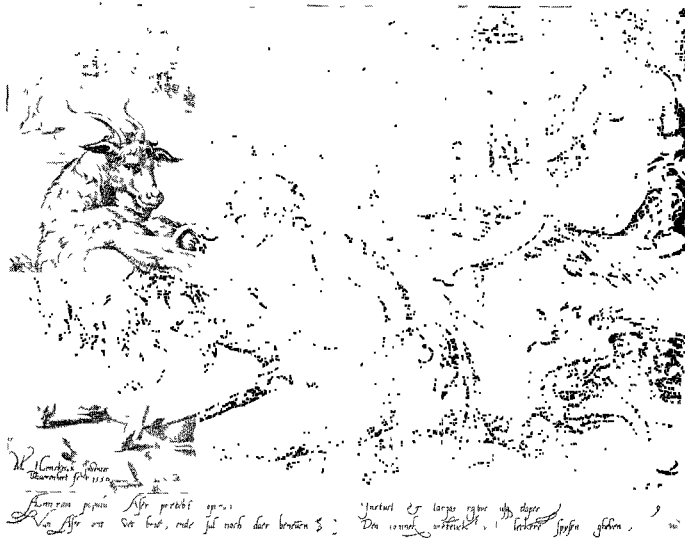


8 Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert after Maarten van Heemskerck, *Dan*, nr. 7 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1550), etching

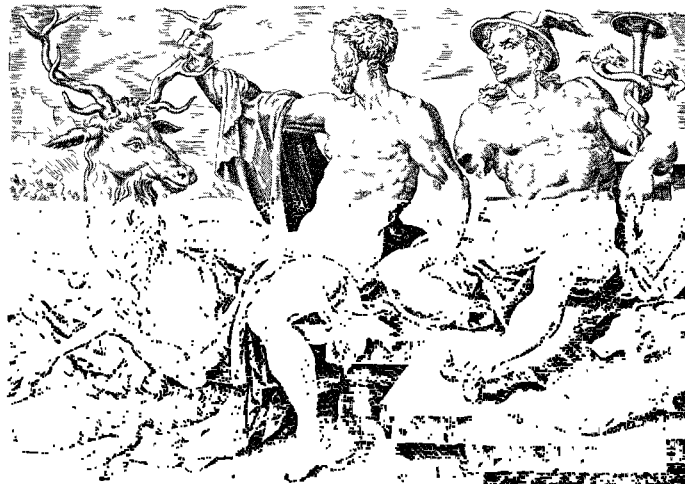


9 Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert after Maarten van Heemskerck, *Gad*, nr. 8 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1550), etching

²¹ The Janus head as a symbol of both retrospective and foresighted wisdom is found in the first emblem of Guillaume de La Perrière’s *Le theatre des bons engins*, Paris (Denys Janot) 1539, in Andrea Alciati, *Emblemata*, Lyons (Matthias Bonhomme) 1550, p. 24, and elsewhere. See also E. Panofsky, *Hercules am Scheidewege*, Leipzig & Berlin 1930 (*Studien der Bibliothek Warburg* 18), p. 1f. For the Janus head as a symbol of the abolition of idolatry see exhib. cat. *Zwischen Renaissance und Barock*, cit. (note 3), p. 93.



10 Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert after Maarten van Heemskerck, *Aser*, nr. 9 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1550), etching



11 Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert after Maarten van Heemskerck, *Nephthali*, nr. 10 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1550), etching

22 See W. Harms, *Homo viator in brevis: Studien zur Bildlichkeit des Weges*, Munich 1970; Panofsky, op. cit. (note 21); and N. van der Blom, "Over de Y in Delft," *Florilegium*, Leiden 1982, pp. 133-40.

13), and the bear underlined Levi's rage (fig. 5). The leopard was all that was left. The role of the *Testamenten* in Heemskerck's choice is made all the more plausible by the fact that the leopard or panther is a very rare symbol in western art, and is not even used in the context of Mars and warfare, where the more usual animal is a wolf.

Aser (figs. 10 and 23)

Jacob is equally succinct on the subject of Aser: "Aser, his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield dainties to kings" (Genesis 49:20). Lambrecht depicts the royal meal in the right background of his woodcut, but Heemskerck had little to go on for his version of the patriarch. In the *Testaments* Aser is the symbol of "two faces, of vice and virtue," in other words the two paths that man can follow: good and evil. This is indicated in Lambrecht's woodcut by the ypsilon, the angel and the devil.²² The two faces on the ypsilon stand for the one path that leads to joy, and the other that leads to misery. Heemskerck remained more faithful to Genesis by showing Aser milking a goat, with figures ploughing and sowing in the background. Ceres, whom Lambrecht had used for Issachar, fitted happily into this rustic setting. However, Heemskerck's choice of a goat (why not a cow?) may well have been derived from Aser's testament, where one particular type of "double-faced" man is compared to goats and stags ("capreoli et cervi"). "This man is also double faced but yet is all his doings good: and he is like a ro or stag which in a common wilde herd seem to be unclean, and yet are altogether clean, because he walked in the zeal of the Lord" (4:4-5). Since a stag was prescribed for the print of Nephthali, Heemskerck had only the association of a goat for Aser.

Nephthali (figs. 11 and 24)

Both Heemskerck and Lambrecht follow Genesis 49:21 by showing Nephthali with a stag: "Nephthali, a hart let loose, and giving words of beauty." Lambrecht presents those "words of beauty" in the guise of Mercury, the god of eloquence, and Heemskerck adopted the same device. Oddly enough, though, this particular sculpture is in a rather battered condition, like many of the statues which Heemskerck had seen during his stay in Rome. In neither of the prints is there anything of Nephthali's "goodness," which is his virtue in the *Testaments*.

The Dutch verse on Heemskerck's print (in translation: "Nephthali is likened to a swift hart, and with his

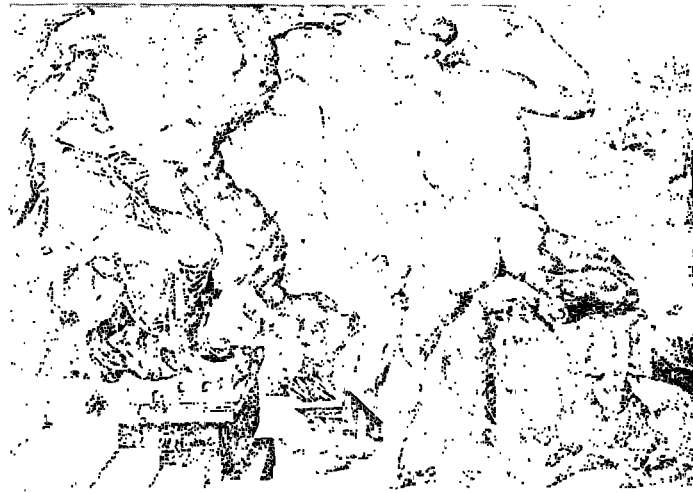
mouth he shall speak sweet words”) is clearly based on the Dutch Liesveldt Bible: “Naphtali is een snelle hert, ende geeft scone reden”(Nephthali is a swift hart, and gives sweet words). The Dutch texts of Heemskerck and Liesveldt thus agree in a marked deviation from the Vulgate passage given above, which has “cervus emissus,” “a hart let loose.”

Joseph (figs. 12 and 25)

Jacob waxes long and approvingly on Joseph, his favorite son. Lambrecht has chosen to give a literal interpretation to the figurative passage in Genesis 49:23: “But they that held darts provoked him, and quarreled with him, and envied him. His bow rested upon the strong,” for he shows Joseph with a large bow and quiver. Heemskerck also gives him these attributes, but he goes further by including a lamb which is not mentioned in Genesis 49. The lamb is a not uncommon symbol of *Patentia*, but it can also be interpreted as the lamb whose coming (a reference to Christ) is foretold in Joseph’s testament, where he relates one of his dreams. “I saw how that of Juda was a virgin born,... and of her came forth an immaculate lamb,...and all beasts made against him and the lamb overcame them and trode them under his feet, and in him joyed the angels, the men and all the earth....Therefore,” Joseph adjures his sons, “honor Juda and Levi. For of them, to you shall spring the lamb of God, which by his grace shall preserve all Gentiles and Israel. The kingdom of him is a kingdom eternal, which shall never pass” (19:3-7).

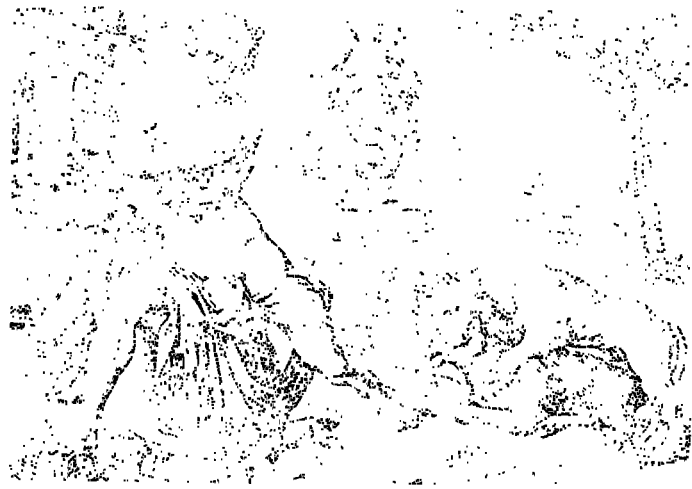
Instead of Lambrecht’s three allegorical figures—*Tolerantia* (Endurance), *Castitas* (Chastity) and *Longanimitas* (Patience), which according to the *Testament of Joseph* (subtitle and 2:7) are Joseph’s chief virtues in bearing the jealousy of his brothers and the importunities of Potiphar’s wife—Heemskerck chose the statue of Athena Parthenos, the goddess of chastity, who presents Joseph with the figure of *Victoria*. In her hand *Victoria* holds a laurel wreath, which Joseph is seen wearing in Lambrecht’s woodcut. This helmeted Athena with her aegis and the sign of victory symbolizes Joseph’s steadfastness in the face of every temptation.

Finally, the tree in the background calls up associations with Genesis 49:22: “Joseph is a fruitful tree,” the starry sky with his dream in Genesis 37:9, and the shepherds in the background with the translation in the Liesveldt Bible: “Wt hem zijn ghecomen herders” (From



De herden die Joseph den Sweetheert van Joseph tege. Sin vater die dat in de vreesse de mede tege

12 Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert after Maarten van Heemskerck, *Joseph*, nr. 11 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1550), etching



Beniamin een ghebrueder van Joseph den Sweetheert. Ende vater die dat in de vreesse de mede tege

13 Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert after Maarten van Heemskerck, *Benjamin*, nr. 12 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1550), etching



14 Title woodcut from *Die testamenten der xii patriarchen Jacobs kinderen*, Pieter Warnerszoon, Kampen 1544 (photo: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague)

15 Joos Lambrecht, (?) *Juda*, nr. 1 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1552), woodcut



16 Joos Lambrecht, (?) *Ruben*, nr. 2 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1552), woodcut



17 Joos Lambrecht, (?) *Simeon*, nr. 3 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1552), woodcut



him have shepherds come) or with his brothers' feeding of the flock in Sighem (Genesis 37:13).

Benjamin (figs. 13 and 26)

"Benjamin a ravenous wolf, in the morning shall eat the prey, and in the evening shall divide the spoil" (Genesis 49:27). Heemskerck has accordingly given the youngest of Jacob's sons a wolf devouring a sheep. Lambrecht's woodcut offered little help. In the *Testaments* Benjamin does not stand for a rapacious individual at all, but for "a clean mind." This is symbolized in the woodcut by the figure of Caritas, love of one's fellow man, with three children and "a flame of fire" on her head, which Ripa later explained as the ceaseless action of love.

Heemskerck, however, evidently fastened onto the biblical description of Benjamin's predatory nature, to which there appears to be a second allusion in the classical sculpture, whose combination of a triple female-torso and a winged snake's tail, suggests some fabulous beast of antiquity. The most appropriate interpretation of the monster would be the harpy, or the fury or Erinys, which steals food from others. For as Apollodorus records in his *Library* (1.9:21), harpies were "winged female creatures, and when a table was laid for Phineus, they flew down from the sky and snatched up most of the



18 Joos Lambrecht, (?) *Levi*, nr. 4 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1552), woodcut



19 Joos Lambrecht, (?) *Zabulon*, nr. 5 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1552), woodcut



20 Joos Lambrecht, (?) *Issachar*, nr. 6 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1552), woodcut

victuals."²³ It is true that harpies are described in Virgil (*Aeneid* 3:225f) as female birds with "taloned feet," but in a woodcut in Alciati's *Emblemata* of 1531 a harpy is shown as a winged woman with plump animal feet and a snake's tail.²⁴

The comparison of Lambrecht's woodcuts with Heemskerck's prints leads to the following conclusion. The former were based on the contents of the *Testamenten*. The emphasis in that book on the virtuous or sinful lives of the patriarchs or their descendants provided the illustrator with a varied arsenal of allegorical beasts and figures. His use of so many classical gods (Cupid, Venus and Amor, Ceres, Neptune, Mars and Mercury) to illustrate the character of the patriarchs reflected that fusion of Christian and classical concepts which was such a feature of the world view of sixteenth-century rhetoricians.

To our mind, Heemskerck's prints represent a more advanced stage in the visualization of the theme. This is indicated not only by the fact that he drew most of his allegorical allusions and symbolism from the *Testamen-*

ten and its woodcuts, but above all by his systematization of the motifs in the woodcuts, so that each patriarch acquired an animal and a classical sculpture. His adoption of Lambrecht's mythological pantheon, and his addition of Jupiter, Atlas, Athena Parthenos and Paris, comes as no surprise, for he was well-versed in depicting moral lessons through the medium of classical stories.²⁵

Although the moralism of the *Testamenten* is only implicit in Heemskerck's prints, we can nevertheless say that it was the very popularity of the book that prompted him to depict the patriarchs in such detail. The fact that he knew the book, and actually read it, lends added relevance to the sixteenth-century foreword.

To paraphrase, the foreword announces that the book contains "Christian warnings, teaching, and most lively admonitions, not only for the children of Jacob, but also for all faithful and true children of God who, by means of a good life, testify to their spiritual perfection, fixity of heart and purity of faith. For Holy Scripture has revealed that those who are descended from Isaac and Jacob have struggled piously and valiantly against fleshly desire."

²³ Apollodorus, *The Library*, trans. by James George Frazer, vol. 1, London & Cambridge (Mass.) 1967, p. 105.

²⁴ Andrea Alciati, *Emblematum liber*, Augsburg (Heinrich Steyner) 1531.

²⁵ See Veldman, op. cit. (note 7), esp. chs. 2 and 5.



21 Joos Lambrecht, (?) *Dan*, nr. 7 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1552), woodcut



22 Joos Lambrecht, (?) *Gad*, nr. 8 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1552), woodcut



23 Joos Lambrecht, (?) *Aser*, nr. 9 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1552), woodcut

This last statement is not entirely in accord with Genesis 49, where at least half of Jacob's sons receive decidedly unfavorable character assessments, with promises of worse to come. Fortunately, though, these patriarchs of the tribes of Israel have, again according to the foreword, "confessed their crime, done penance, and sinned no more." That also explains the following exhortation: "Following the example of the twelve patriarchs we too must examine our conscience and openly confess our crimes in the presence of others. To this end it is necessary not only to read these testaments of our fathers closely, but also to discuss them and know them by heart, that we may put all ungodliness from us and cleanse ourselves of sin." This is completely in line with the didactic and moralistic nature of much sixteenth-century popular literature, of many prints and paintings of the period, and certainly of Heemskerck's own work.

Copies after Lambrecht's woodcuts began to appear in English versions of the *Testaments* from 1576.²⁶ The woodcuts in the *Testaments of the twelve patriarchs* printed by Robert Sanders at Glasgow in 1684 were given

²⁶ Sinker, op. cit. (note 9), pp. 6-15.

²⁷ This is the preliminary drawing for the *Simeon* in the *Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts* in Paris (inv. nr. 1890 M).

²⁸ H. Mielke, "Antwerpener Graphik in der 2. Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 38 (1975), pp. 29-83, esp. p.

English quatrains which summed up the moral. Only the scene associated with Aser, the choice between good and evil, seems to have been considered too abstruse. It was replaced by a new woodcut, unmistakably seventeenth-century in design, in which two figures accompanied by the inevitable ass point to the sun in the sky and to the mouth of hell in a chasm below as symbols of "vertue" and "vice." The moral, though, remained unchanged: "Two waies, saith Aser, are prepar'd for men: the one for joy, the last for death, The first is best, but this breeds sore annoy."

THE LATE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY PATRIARCHS OF CRISPIJN VAN DER BROECK AND CAREL VAN MANDER Heemskerck's print series is not unique in Netherlandish art, for Crispijn van der Broeck, who worked in Antwerp, also made designs for the *Twelve patriarchs*. One of his surviving drawings is dated 1570.²⁷ The prints were engraved by Jan Sadeler, and were included as "Duodecim patriarchae" in the *Thesaurus veteris et novi testamenti* of Gerard de Jode (Antwerp 1585).²⁸ In this illustrated Bible they were placed between the sto-

79, nr. 9. The twelve engravings are printed on six sheets. See Hollstein, op. cit. (note 3), vol. 8, nrs. 3-14 (listed under the non-existent engraver "J. Haeyler," which is a misreading of Jan Sadeler's signature). See also Hollstein, op. cit. (note 3), vol. 21, nrs. 66-77.



24 Joos Lambrecht, (?) *Nephthali*, nr. 10 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1552), woodcut



25 Joos Lambrecht, (?) *Joseph*, nr. 11 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1552), woodcut



26 Joos Lambrecht, (?) *Benjamin*, nr. 12 of a series of *Twelve patriarchs* (1552), woodcut



27 Jan Sadeler after Crispijn van der Broeck, *Ruben*, from a series of *Twelve patriarchs*, engraving



28 Jan Sadeler after Crispijn van der Broeck, *Issachar*, from a series of *Twelve patriarchs*, engraving



29 Jan Sadeler after Crispijn van der Broeck, *Dan*, from a series of *Twelve patriarchs*, engraving

ries of Dina and Joseph in accordance with the biblical chronology.

Van der Broeck follows Genesis in starting the series with Ruben rather than Juda. The four lines of Latin verse on each print (see Appendix II) are totally dependent on the Bible. However, given the remarkable popularity of the *Testamenten* in Antwerp, particularly in the second half of the century (Sinker lists nine Dutch editions published in Antwerp between 1558 and 1582, three of them in or after 1570, the year when the book was placed on the Index),²⁹ it is perfectly possible that the prints of van der Broeck and Sadeler also served as an illustrative parallel to the *Testamenten*. Apart from anything else, the preliminary drawings were made fifteen years before the publication of the *Thesaurus*. Although

²⁹ Sinker, *op. cit.* (note 9), pp. 22-25; Weduwe Jacob van Liesveldt 1558; Plantin 1561; Weduwe Liesveldt 1562; Plantin 1564; van Keersbergen 1564; Willem Sylvius 1569 and 1570; Joh. Trognescius 1580; N. Soolmans 1582. There is also an edition printed by Plantin in 1566



30 Jan Sadeler after Crispijn van der Broeck, *Joseph*, from a series of *Twelve patriarchs*, engraving

van der Broeck's patriarchs are situated realistically in landscape settings, and although the draftsman has abandoned the program of an animal and a mythological or allegorical figure for each one, there do seem to be parallels with the woodcuts of Joos Lambrecht, or with the copies published by Joos Destree in Ypres.

Ruben (fig. 27) is comparable to the type created by Lambrecht (fig. 16), being an older man with a long beard and a head covering. There is no mention of the "effusus es sicut aqua" in the inscription, yet he is carrying the familiar jug at such an angle that the water is spilling out. The Bible does not compare Ruben to any animal, but here he has an ox and a goat. The first probably symbolizes his strength (in the Vulgate: "tu fortitudo mea"), which has been modified in the inscription

which is not mentioned in Sinker, see G. B. C. van der Feen, "Noord-nederlandse bockerijen in de 16e eeuw," *Het Boek* 7 (1918), pp. 318-34, esp. p. 328, nr. 136.

to “excellens imperio,” foremost in power. The goat apparently stands for the lustful nature that led him to defile his father’s bed.

Issachar (fig. 28), with his laden ass, spade and broad-brimmed sunhat, also resembles Lambrecht’s version (fig. 20). The composition of the print with Dan (fig. 29) is again close to Lambrecht (fig. 21), particularly as regards the odd judge’s wand, which Heemskerck depicted more correctly as a branch stripped of its twigs.

In most other cases the Bible itself proved to be a sufficiently fertile source of imagery, but van der Broeck’s choice of the large bow and quiver from Jacob’s long blessing of Joseph (fig. 30) clearly owed much to Lambrecht (fig. 25). Strangely enough, the Latin inscription states that it was Joseph himself who was so swift in loosing arrows, whereas Genesis 49:23 states that “they that held darts provoked him.”

More than seventy years after its first appearance this series of engravings was again included in an illustrated Bible, the *Theatrum biblicum* of 1643 of Claes Jansz. Visscher, and as in the case of de Jode’s *Thesaurus* two patriarchs were depicted on each plate.

In one of the undated editions of the *Theatrum biblicum* entitled *Bilder-Bibel* the prints are preceded by an explanation of the theme. After a brief summary of the traits of the patriarchs derived from the Bible the author makes the interesting observation that Jacob’s prophecy was not restricted to the tribes of Israel, “but still holds today for people with certain characteristics originating in the twelve tribes, which accordingly must be reckoned to those tribes.” The unchaste, for example, fall under Ruben, the wrathful under Simeon and Levi, spiritual victors and the strong under Juda, the humble under Zebulon, the industrious under Issachar, the sly under Dan, the bellicose under Gad, benefactors under Aser, the eloquent under Nephthali, the fruitful who

“grow in virtue” under Joseph, and “ravengers” under Benjamin.

Although the specific, moralistic content of the *Testaments of the twelve patriarchs* has here receded into the background, the twelve tribes do retain a certain immediacy of ethical meaning.

The series of prints by Jacques de Gheyn after Carel van Mander are one step further removed from Lambrecht’s woodcuts.³⁰ Van Mander, who settled in Haarlem in 1583, certainly knew the series by Heemskerck, who had died in the town nine years previously, for the Latin verses on van Mander’s prints are literal borrowings from Heemskerck, with the exception of the slightly confusing inscriptions for Simeon and Levi. In Heemskerck the joint character of the brothers is divided over two prints; in van Mander each is given his own inscription.³¹

The jug spilling water beside Ruben (fig. 31) has now become a standard attribute, while the bedroom scene in the background is reminiscent of Lambrecht (fig. 16). Van Mander’s Simeon (fig. 32) echoes Heemskerck’s version (fig. 4), but Dan’s clothing (fig. 33) is again closer to Lambrecht (fig. 21). Van Mander seems to have taken Dan’s rod in the versions by Lambrecht and van der Broeck as a roll of paper, but he has followed Heemskerck in giving him a true judge’s wand as well. The bow and quiver remain the distinctive attributes of Joseph (fig. 34), but he is also depicted as the “fruitful tree by a spring” described in Genesis.

Van Mander’s prints, too, were later included in a print Bible, the *Emblemata sacra* of Jan Philips Schabaelje (1654). As in Claes Jansz. Visscher’s *Bilder-Bibel*, the description of the patriarchs’ spiritual qualities are given a contemporary slant which is intended to edify the reader and viewer, but which differs in emphasis from the *Testaments*.

³⁰ E. Valentiner, *Karel van Mander als Maler*, Strasbourg 1930, pp. 100-01, nrs. 14-25. First edition published by Joh. Pitten, second by J. Razet, and a third by Claes Jansz. Visscher. See also Hollstein, op. cit. (note 3), vol. 7, p. 180, nrs. 366-77.

Van Mander, incidentally, also designed a *Jacob’s blessing* which was engraved by Zacharias Dolendo (Valentiner, p. 100, nr. 13) and shows the twelve sons clustered around their father’s bed. This print must be regarded as quite separate from van Mander’s *Twelve patriarchs*. Going by the inscription in the cartouche it was the pendant to a *Descent of the Holy Ghost*. The Old Testament blessing was described as a “*benedictio corporalis*,” or physical blessing, while the Pentecost descent was the “*benedictio spiritualis*,” or spiritual blessing.

³¹ The text to *Levi* (nr. 2 in the series) reads

Tu cum fratre sequente procul fugias, apage-sis
Quid mihi, quid tecum sanguinolente Levi?

(You, go far away, followed by your brother, begone I beg you. What have I to do with you, Levi, shedder of blood?)

The text to *Simeon* (fig. 32) reads

Te quoque, te Simeon durae cervicis amantem,
In ditone mea vivere non patiar

(You too, Simeon, you who love boldness, I shall not permit you to dwell in my domain, in the land where my writ runs.)

On van Mander’s print of *Nephthali* the erroneous “*nitur cervus*” has been replaced by “*celer cervus*,” like a swift hart.



*Cingere non potens nativum maxime RUBEN
Ausus enim es thalamos contemnerare meas*

31 Jacob de Gheyn after Carel van Mander, *Ruben*, from a series of *Twelve patriarchs*, engraving



In illione mea vivere non patiar , 3

32 Jacob de Gheyn after Carel van Mander, *Simeon*, from a series of *Twelve patriarchs*, engraving

Ruben (fig. 31) is given the epithet “a son of authority.” After explaining how he had come to lose his birthright the author sets out the moral. “So we too lose the first birthright when we take to ourselves that which belongs to God the Father alone and follow the flesh more than the spirit.” Levi, as the symbol of “dedication,” teaches us that “according to Moses the priesthood can only be exercised by those who renounce themselves, their father, mother, brothers and sisters, thus destroying the lusts and greeds of the flesh.” Simeon (fig. 32), as “hearkening,” points the moral that God does not love the desire for revenge and “fleshly thoughts.” Juda (“a praise”) signifies that the kingdom of God also dwells within us when we praise God by dedicating our lives wholly to him. Zebulon, as “dwelling”, stands for a humble heart living by a peaceful harbor which shares in the light of Christ. Issachar (“a wage”) teaches us that if we are subservient to God we shall be rewarded under Christ’s yoke with peace in our

souls. Dan (fig. 33) dispenses justice, and from him we learn that we shall be condemned if we yield to sin. Gad symbolizes “a rabble,” and tells us that the only way to combat jealousy is with spiritual, not physical weapons. Aser, who is described as “fortunate,” signifies physical and spiritual nourishment. “If we receive God’s seed in fat earth we shall bring forth fruits in abundance, otherwise must we wither and perish.” Nephthali (“my struggle”) bears the lesson: “Let the beautiful words of the Lord wrestle in our soul, that we may vanquish all that is against us.” Joseph (fig. 34) is the symbol of “growth,” and tells us that, if we are “fruitful in God” we shall grow in virtue, storing up granaries full of corn which shall stand us in good stead in times of hardship. There is a dual significance to the likening of Benjamin, “the son of the right hand,” to a ravaging wolf. He is both the wolf Saul, who pursued David, and the apostle Paul, who first persecuted Christians but was then converted, and “divided the spoil.”



*Juravit autem populus Dei iniquosus & omnis
Exiget in solo spesq; animosq; Deo.*

33 Jacob de Gheyn after Carel van Mander, *Dan*, from a series of *Twelve patriarchs*, engraving



*Pater Josephus pater quoy: timore tui
Abfuerit: Superis deniq; charus erit.*

34 Jacob de Gheyn after Carel van Mander, *Joseph*, from a series of *Twelve patriarchs*, engraving

Apart from reprints of the series by Crispijn van der Broeck and Carel van Mander, there seems to have been no further demand for depictions of the twelve patriarchs in the seventeenth century. The popularity of the *Testamenten* also declined, with only four Dutch editions (Amsterdam 1615, 1623, 1648 and 1679) in contrast to the 25 of the sixteenth century.³² The insistent

and rather simplistic moralizing clearly lost its attraction. Jacob's last words as recorded in Genesis 49 failed to provide later artists with a solid enough foundation for a visual treatment.

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³² Sinker does not mention the 1615 edition, which was printed at Amsterdam by Jan Evertsz. Cloppenburgh (Amsterdam, University Library, shelf-mark 329 G 23).

Appendix

I Inscriptions on the *Twelve patriarchs* by Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert after Maarten van Heemskerck (1550)

1 *Juda*

Non prius amittes sceptrum fortissime Juda,
 Quam fuerit mundo publica nata salus
 (You shall not lose the scepter, most brave Juda, until universal salvation is born into the world)
 Den scepter en sal van Juda niet werden ghenomen,
 Tot die tijdt toe dat die beloofde Silo sal comen
 (The scepter shall not be wrested from Juda till the promised Shiloh come)

2 *Ruben*

Crescere non poteris natorum maxime Ruben
 Ausus enim es thalamos contemnerare meos
 (You shall not advance, Ruben, my eldest son, for you dared defile my bed)
 Ghij Ruben en hebt gheen voordeel meer in mijn testament,
 Want door u opstighen hebt ghij mijn legher gheschent
 (You Ruben no longer take precedence in my testament, for by your going up have you defiled my bed)

3 *Simeon*

Levis et o Simeon immania pectora fratres
 Quid mihi vobiscum sanguinolenta cohors?
 (O Levi and Simeon, fearsome brotherhood! What have I to do with you, you bloodshedding band?)
 Van Simeon ende Levi met haeren versaemden raedt,
 Onthoude hem mijn siele, vervlout sy haer gramschap quaedt
 (Withold my soul from Simeon and Levi, they with their gathered band, damned be their evil rage)

4 *Levi*

Non ego vos patiar nostra requiescere terram [terra]
 Disjiciam tota sed regione vagos
 (I shall not permit you two to remain in our domain, but shall scatter you as wanderers across the land)
 Dees twee ghebroeders wil ick verstroyen in Ysrahel,
 Want haer swaeden sijn wapenen des toorns vol moetwils fel
 (I shall scatter these two brothers in Israel, for their swords are weapons of rage, full of fierce desire)

5 *Zabulon*

Sidonios portus et litora curva Sebulon
 Mercibus implebit velificamque Tirus)
 (Zabulon shall fill the harbors and curving shores of Sidon with his wares, and likewise the sail-studded Tirus)
 Sebulon sal aender see wonen, ende hem gheneeren
 Aenden oever scepende, sal hij tot zidon keeren
 (Zabulon shall dwell by the sea, and shall live by plying to the shore, and he shall turn to Sidon)

6 *Issachar*

More asini patiens oneris patiensque laborum
 Isaschar domino certa tributa dabit
 (As an ass carrying buidens and troubles, so shall Issachar pay his lord due tribute)
 Isaschar sach dat goet was in rusten te leeven,
 Hij heeft hem in dienstbaerheijt tot draghen ghegheeven
 (Issachar saw that it was good to live at rest, he has given himself to carry in servitude)

7 *Dan*

Jura dabit populus [populus] Dan insidiosus, et omneis
 Eriget in solo spes animosque Deo
 (The treacherous Dan shall judge the peoples, and shall direct all his hopes and thoughts to God alone)
 Dan sal rechter in sijn volck sijn, soo wel als een gheslacte,
 In Israhel, heer u salcheijt ick alleen op wachte
 (Dan shall be judge among his people and a tribe in Israel , Lord I await but your salvation)

8 *Gad*

Acria magnanimus committes [committet] paelia Gades
 Et galea crineis anget, et ense latus
 (Gad the magnanimous shall enter into fierce battles, he shall adorn his hair with a helmet and his side with a sword)
 Len gherust hejrr sal Gad te overvallen beghinnen,
 Ende sal oock ten laetsten sijn vianden verwinnen
 (Gad shall begin by attacking a well-accoutred army, and in the end he shall prevail over his enemies)

9 *Aser*

Annonam populus [populis] Aser praebebit optimam
 Instiuet et largas igribus [regibus] usque dapes
 (Aser shall furnish the peoples with grain in abundance, and
 kings with rich meals)
 Van Aser comt vet broot, ende sal noch daer beneven
 Den conncck ionstelck veel leckere spijzen gheven
 (Out of Aser comes fat bread, and graciously he shall give
 the king much dainty food)

10 *Nephtali*

Ut nitet [nitet] in puo prolutus flumine cervus
 Tam nitidas voces Naphtalis ore dabit
 (As a gleaming stag wettened in a pure stream, so shall
 Nephtali speak gleaming words)
 Naphtali wert bij een snelle herte gheleken
 Met sinen monde sal hij schoone reden spreken)
 (Nephtali is likened to a swift hart, and with his mouth he
 shall speak sweet words)

11 *Joseph*

Pulcher Josephus, foelix quoque, si modo livor
 Abfuerit, superis denique charus erit
 (The comely Joseph, who would also have been happy had
 only envy been absent, will be beloved of the gods in the
 end)
 Wt haet vielen die schutters den vruchtbaen soon Joseph
 teghen
 Sijn boghe bleef vast ende hij verciicht die meeste zeghen
 en
 (The archers fell upon the fruitful son Joseph from hate, but
 his bow stood firm and he shall gain the most victories)

12 *Benjamin*

Ut lupus in sylvis, quem siccis famibus angit
 Diu a fames, talis Benjaminus erit
 (Like a wolf in the forests tormented by a fierce hunger
 through dire lack of food, so shall Benjamin be)
 Benjamin een schoende wolf, sal morgens den roof
 eethen,
 Ende tsavens den but wt deijlen die hij heeft verbethen
 (Benjamin, a ravening wolf, shall devour the prey in the
 morning, and in the evening he shall divide the booty)

II *Inscriptions on the Twelve patriarchs by Jan Sadeler after Crispijn van der Broeck (1570)*1 *Ruben*

Primus Iacobi natoium nomine Ruben
 Doni [Donis, or Domi?] excellens imperioque prior
 Sed quia foedavi stratum genitoris ab illis
 Exclusus, perij seu [ceu] levis unda brevi
 (I am the first of Jacob's sons, Ruben by name I excel by
 my gifts, and am the foremost in power But because I have
 defiled my father's bed I have been shut out of them, and in
 a brief span I am spent like an insubstantial wave)

2 *Simeon*

Ense meo cecidere viii dum vindico stuprum
 Germanae, fracto federe quod pepigi
 Hinc pater iratus Simeoni dira precatus
 Nostraque posteritas heu maledicta fuit
 (Men fell by my sword when I avenged the outrage done to
 my sister, thus breaking my covenant Angered, my father
 uttered a terrible curse over Simeon, and alas from that day
 forth our posterity was damned)

3 *Levi*

Sichemitarum regem cum fratre necavi,
 Disiectique ut bis moenia celsa ferox
 Propterea Levi poenas fert, nil propriumque
 Possidet, in certo nec manet ipse loco
 (With my brother I slew the king of the Sichemites, and
 wildly I cast down the city's high walls For this Levi bears
 punishment He has nothing of his own, nor a settled
 abode)

4 *Juda*

Felix ante alios fratres ego dicoi Iuda,
 Non mihi verba pater invidiosa dedit
 Sed me victorem dixit, forteque [fortemque] Leonem
 Hostes qui superet viibus ecce suos
 (I, Juda, am called more fortunate than my brethren My
 father has uttered no angry words to me, but has called me
 victor and brave lion, for the lion's strength gives him victory
 over his foes)

5 *Zabulon*

Accola littoreas Zabulon factus ad undas
 Et navium vita est in Statione mea
 Otia dum vito studysque navalibus insum,
 Omnia consurgunt prosperiora mihi
 (I, Zabulon, went to live on the sea-shore, and my life I pass
 at the berth place of ships I allow myself no respite and
 devote myself to shipping, so I advance daily)

6 *Issachar*

Isachar onusto cur sim simulatus asello,
 Inque manu signet quid hgo scire capis [cupis]?
 Fimbis exiguis, contentus ferre labores,
 Me iuvat et collo non recusare iugum
 (Do you wish to know why I, Issachar, resemble a sturdy
 ass, and hold a mattock? I am content to bear burdens on my
 patch of land, and do not deny my shoulders the yoke)

7 *Dan*

Dan factus populi iudex est ut tribus omnis
 Caetera collatus in semita Colubio
 Cerasti, morsu preudenti posteriora,
 Fortis equi, ascensor quo cadet ipse retro
 (Dan has become the judge of the people, and also of each
 tribe He is other wise as a horned viper on the path that bites
 the heels of a game horse so that the rider falls backward)

8 *Gad*

Gad animo magnus belli virtute probatus
 Victoris laudes abstulit ense suo
 Ex me prognatus vates praeclarus Elias
 Quem currus vivum igneus eripuit
 (Gad, great in spirit, tried in valor, has with his sword borne
 off the victor's praise From me sprang Elijah, the prophet
 of great renown, who was carried off alive by a fiery char-
 riot)

9 *Aser*

Pingue [pingue] solum tibi dona tulit cerealia multa,
 Nec Asaro desunt munera bacche tuae [tua]
 Regibus hinc prodes multis vinoque paneque
 Temperat ambrosias cum tura [alitura] dapes
 (The fat earth has brought you many gifts of corn Nor does
 Aser lack your bounty, Bacchus Thus you serve many kings
 with wine and bread, when the fruits of the earth help to
 temper the exquisite meals)

10 *Nephthali*

Neptalin ex multis sei vatus saepe periclis,
 Corniger infestus sei vus ut a canibus
 Nosti a tribus tentaue [tentata] fuit saepissime bello,
 Sed bonitate dei mox liberata fuit
 (Nephthali has often been saved from many dangers, like an
 antlered stag, imperiled, evaded the hounds Many times
 was our tribe tested in war, but was soon freed by God's
 goodness)

11 *Joseph*

Filius accrescens, aspectu pulcher Ioseph
 Faemineo e turri convitio petitus
 Invideam mihi contraxit mea vita pudica
 Quodque manus levibus, sit mihi prompta telis
 (A growing son, fair of countenance, is Joseph From the
 towers women abuse him My chaste life has earned me
 hatred, as has my hand, so swift with light darts)

12 *Benjamin*

Sum natu minimus Benjaminus ex Cananea
 Mater in enixu est morte perempta meo
 Me scriptura Lupum natum consumere praedam
 In matutino tempore vera vocat
 (I, Benjamin, am the youngest, born of a Canaanite woman
 who died giving me birth The scriptures justly call me a
 wolf born to devour its prey in the morning)