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‘Far more to wonder, than to fathom completely’: one hundred poems devoted to the town hall

Bussels, S.P.M.; Eck, C.A. van; Plezier, L.M.; Oostveldt, B. van

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The Amsterdam Town Hall in Words and Images



The Amsterdam Town Hall in Words and Images

Constructing Wonders

Edited by
Stijn Bussels, Caroline van Eck and
Bram Van Oostveldt

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Contents

List of Illustrations	vi
List of Contributors	x
Acknowledgements	xii
1 Introduction <i>Stijn Bussels, Caroline van Eck and Bram Van Oostveldt</i>	1
2 The Palace of the Republic: Idea and Construction <i>Pieter Vlaardingerbroek</i>	29
3 The Amsterdam Town Hall: The Triumphant Statement of a Successor State <i>Caroline van Eck</i>	61
4 'Far More to Wonder, than to Fathom Completely': One Hundred Poems Devoted to the Town Hall <i>Stijn Bussels, Caroline van Eck and Laura Plezier</i>	83
5 The Portrait of a Building <i>Stijn Bussels</i>	117
6 The Exercise of Power: The Caryatids of the Town Hall's Tribunal <i>Frederik Knegtel</i>	143
7 Jacob's Trowels : The Construction of the Amsterdam Town Hall and Its Ceremonial Objects (1648–present) <i>Minou Schraven</i>	173
8 Under Discussion: Eighteenth-Century Reactions to the Town Hall <i>Freek Schmidt</i>	195
Index	231

Illustrations

1.1	The Citizens' Hall seen from the west.	3
1.2	The Tribunal.	3
1.3	Jurriaan Pool, silver medal commemorating the inauguration ceremony of the Amsterdam Town Hall, 29 July 1655.	8
1.4	Jürgen Ovens (?), <i>Entry of the Amsterdam Burgomasters</i> , c. 1662.	10
1.5	Gerrit Adriaensz. Berckheyde, <i>The Town Hall on Dam Square</i> , 1665–80.	12
1.6	Casper van Wittel (alias Vanvitelli), <i>View of St. Peter's Square</i> , c. 1700,.	13
1.7	Hendrick Mommers, <i>View of the Louvre from the Pont-Neuf</i> , c. 1665.	13
1.8	Hendrick Mommers, <i>Market Scene before the Dam</i> , c. 1665.	14
1.9	Philips Galle after Maarten van Heemskerck, <i>The Temple of Diana at Ephesus</i> , 1572.	15
2.1	Salomon Jacobsz Savery, Amsterdam's town hall of Amsterdam as it appeared during the visit of Maria de' Medici in 1638.	30
2.2	The development of the building lot of the Amsterdam town hall, 1639–47.	31
2.3	Pieter Nolpe, unexecuted design for the Amsterdam town hall by SGL.	32
2.4	Jacob van Campen and Pieter Post, the interior of the Oranjezaal in Huis ten Bosch, The Hague.	34
2.5	Abraham Lutma, <i>Portrait of Jacob van Campen</i> .	35
2.6	Gerrit Adriaensz Berkcheyde, <i>The Amsterdam Town Hall</i> , 1672.	37
2.7	(a) and (b) Cornelis Danckerts, Ground plan of the Town Hall's ground and first floor.	39
2.8	View of Solomon's Temple and Palace, as published in Juan Bautista Villalpando, <i>In Ezechielem Explanationes et Apparatus Urbis ac Templi Hierosolymitani</i> .	42
2.9	Solomon's Palace.	43
2.10	Section of the north wing of the Amsterdam Town Hall, c. 1652.	44
2.11	Europe, as published in Cesare Ripa, <i>Iconologia of uijtbeeldingen des verstands</i> .	45
2.12	Edinburgh, Palace of Holyroodhouse.	51

3.1	Detail of chimney overmantle relief in Burgomasters' room, showing the triumph of Fabius Maximus Cunctator attributed to Artus Quellinus.	66
3.2	Passage from the Citizens' Hall leading to what are now the royal apartment and Salon of the English quarter.	67
3.3	Perugino, <i>Christ Giving the Keys to St Peter</i> , 1481.	69
3.4	Andrea Mantegna, <i>Triumphs of Caesar</i> .	70
3.5	Peter Paul Rubens and Erasmus Quellinus, <i>Free Copy after Mantegna's Triumphs of Caesar Canvas II and IX</i> .	71
3.6	Title page of <i>Verscheidene Nieuwe Festonnen geinventeert door Iacob van Campen</i> .	72
4.1	Frontispiece of Joost van den Vondel, <i>Inwydinge van 't Stadhuis t' Amsterdam</i> .	88
4.2	Artus Quellinus and workshop, Medusa head in the Tribunal of the Town Hall, 1651–2.	101
4.3	Lieven Willemsz. Coppenol, calligraphic.	103
4.4	The Citizens' Hall of the Amsterdam Town Hall.	105
5.1	Jan van de Velde after Pieter Jansz. Saenredam, 'View on the Grand Square with Town Hall of Haarlem'.	119
5.2	Johannes or Lucas van Doetechum after Hans Vredeman de Vries, 'View on a city with palaces and canal from a bird's eye perspective'.	119
5.3	Gerrit Adriaensz. Berckheyde, <i>The Town Hall on Dam Square</i> , 1668.	120
5.4	Elias Noski, stone engraved with Huygens' poem, 1660.	125
5.5	Jacob van der Ulft, <i>Market on Dam Square</i> , 1653.	126
5.6	Hendrick Mommers, <i>Market Scene before the Dam</i> , c. 1665.	127
5.7	Jan Beerstraaten, <i>Ruins of the old Town Hall</i> , c. 1660.	128
5.8	Pieter Saenredam, <i>The Old Town Hall of Amsterdam</i> , 1657.	130
5.9	Willem van Nieulandt (II), <i>The Arch of Septimus Severus</i> , 1609.	133
5.10	Abraham de Verwer, <i>The Louvre Grande Galerie, view of Paris from the Barbier bridge</i> , c. 1640.	134
5.11	Abraham de Verwer, <i>Galerie du Louvre and the Porte Neuf</i> , c. 1640.	134
5.12	Abraham de Verwer, <i>The Louvre Grande Galerie, view of Paris from the Barbier bridge (upstream)</i> , c. 1640.	135
6.1	The Citizens' Hall seen from the West.	144
6.2	Marcantonio Raimondi, <i>Facade with caryatids</i> , 1502–34.	149
6.3	A caryatid from the Forum of Augustus, first-century CE copies of fifth-century BCE originals.	150

6.4	Cesare Cesariano, <i>Di Lucio Vitruvio Pollione de architectura libri dece</i> (Como: Gottardo de Ponte, 1521)	151
6.5	Hans Vredeman de Vries, plate 15 of 16.	152
6.6	Jean Goujon, two of the four caryatids in the Salle des Caryatides, 1546–50.	153
6.7	Theodoor van Thulden after Peter Paul Rubens, <i>The Temple of Janus</i> .	154
6.8	Artus Quellinus, <i>The Judgement of Junius Brutus</i> , c. 1655.	157
6.9	Artus Quellinus, Interior of the Tribunal with a portion of the eastern wall visible on the right, c. 1655.	163
7.1	Johannes Lutma, silver trowel with inscriptions used at the foundation ceremony of the Amsterdam Town Hall, 28 October 1648.	174
7.2	After Johannes Lutma, silver medal issued at the foundation ceremonies of the Amsterdam Town Hall, 28 October 1648.	175
7.3	Rummer of green glass with inscriptions commemorating the foundation of the tower of the New Church, 26 June 1647.	177
7.4	Chamois apron used at the foundation ceremonies of the Amsterdam Town Hall, 28 October 1648.	179
7.5	Illustration showing the obverse and reverse of Lutma's silver trowel (7.1).	180
7.6	Gerrit Lambrets, drawing of a silver spoon given to the citizens standing on guard during the inauguration ceremony of the Amsterdam Town Hall, c 1810.	183
7.7	Jurriaan Pool, silver medal commemorating the inauguration ceremony of the Amsterdam Town Hall, 29 July 1655.	183
8.1	Daniel Marot, civil guard on Dam Square, presenting themselves to the Burgomasters of the city, on the occasion of the Amsterdam fair, 1686.	196
8.2	Martin Bernigeroth, portrait of Leonhard Christoph Sturm, 1707.	198
8.3	Dancker Danckerts (?) after Jacob Vennekool, ground plan of the main floor of Amsterdam Town Hall, 1661.	199
8.4	Leonhard Christoph Sturm, ground plan of the main floor of Amsterdam Town Hall, with Sturm's proposal for new external staircases.	200
8.5	Jacob Houbraken, <i>Portrait of Jan Wagenaar</i> , 1766.	201
8.6	Simon Fokke, <i>View of Amsterdam Town Hall with the New Church and the Weigh House on Dam Square</i> , c. 1770.	202

- 8.7 C. Bogerts after Hendrik Keun, *Interior of the central hall of Amsterdam Town Hall*, c. 1770–8. 203
- 8.8 Simon Fokke, *Dam Square with the Town Hall, New Church and Weigh House*, 1762. 204
- 8.9 Reinier Vinkeles, *Amsterdam Town Hall and Weigh House*, c. 1764–7. 205
- 8.10 Reinier Vinkeles, *Ball in Amsterdam Town Hall in 1768, on the occasion of the entry of Prince Willem V and Princes Wilhelmina*, 1771. 206
- 8.11 Reinier Vinkeles. *Portrait of Petrus Camper*, 1776. 208
- 8.12 Anonymous, *Tribunal in the Amsterdam Town Hall*. 209

Contributors

Stijn Bussels is Professor of Art History before 1800 at the Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society, Leiden University. Until 2018, he was the Principal Investigator of the ERC Starting Grant project ‘Elevated Minds. The Sublime in the Public Arts in Seventeenth-Century Paris and Amsterdam’. Together with Gijs Verstegen and Walter Melion, he is the editor of *Magnificence in the Seventeenth Century: Performing Splendor in Catholic and Protestant Contexts* in the *Intersections* series published by Brill (2020).

Caroline van Eck is Professor of Art History at Cambridge University and Fellow of King’s College. In 2016, she was Slade Professor in Oxford. Her main research interests are art and architectural history and theory of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century; classical reception; and the anthropology of art. She recently published *The Style Empire and its Pedigree: Piranesi, Pompeii and Alexandria, Architectural Histories* 6/1 (2018) and *Restoring Antiquity in a Globalizing World: Piranesi’s Late Work and the Genesis of the Empire Style* (2019).

Frederik Knegtel is an Expert on Applied Arts at Venduehuis der Notarissen, The Hague. Until 2019, he was a PhD student at the Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society. There, he wrote his thesis *Constructing the Sublime: The Discourse on Architecture and Louis XIV’s Sublimity in Seventeenth-Century Paris*. His most recent essay, ‘Transcending the Natural World: A Developing Sublime’ in André Félibien’s *Tapisseries du Roy*, is published in *Emblems and the Natural World*, ed. Karl Enenkel and Paul Smith (2017).

Bram Van Oostveldt is Professor of Theatre History at the Department of Art, Music and Theatre Sciences at Ghent University. His research interests focus on early modern and modern theatre and theatricality in France and the Low Countries. He has published on the early history of the sublime in the age of Louis XIV. His most recent book is *Tranen om het alledaagse: Diderot and the verlangen naar natuurlijkheid in het Brusselse theaterleven in de achttiende eeuw* (2013). Together with Caroline van Eck and Stijn Bussels, he is the editor of *Antoine Wiertz Revisited* (2020).

Laura Plezier is a PhD student at the Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society. She is preparing a thesis on the seventeenth-century laudatory poems on the Amsterdam Town Hall and has co-authored an essay on the laudatory poems of Constantijn Huygens with Stijn Bussels and Marc Van Vaeck in *Spiegel der Letteren* (2017).

Minou Schraven is a Lecturer at the Amsterdam University College. She studies festivals and processions in early modern Italy, especially Rome. Together with Maarten Delbeke, she has edited *Foundation, Dedication, and Consecration in Early Modern Europe* (2012). Her most recent book is *Festive Funerals in Early Modern Italy: The Art and Culture of Conspicuous Commemoration* (2014).

Freek Schmidt is Professor of architectural history at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. His most recent book, *Passion and Control: Dutch Architectural Culture of the Eighteenth Century*, was published in 2016. His research on the design, use and appreciation of the built environment in the early modern and modern age, makes use of insights of the history of art, culture and architecture, urban planning and heritage studies.

Pieter Vlaardingerbroek is Architectural Historian for the city of Amsterdam and Lecturer at Utrecht University. He studies architecture in the seventeenth century and has published widely on the Amsterdam Town Hall, the Portuguese Synagogue and the Canals. Amsterdam canal houses, their inhabitants and architects are his special interest. In 2011 he published *Het paleis van de Republiek. Geschiedenis van het stadhuis van Amsterdam*.

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Stijn Bussels
Caroline van Eck
Bram Van Oostveldt

‘Far More to Wonder, than to Fathom Completely’: One Hundred Poems Devoted to the Town Hall

Stijn Bussels, Caroline van Eck and Laura Plezier

In seventeenth-century Europe, the laudatory poem was one of the most prominent literary genres.¹ Countless poems were written in praise of a person or object that played a major role in constructing social identities. Every memorable event in the political life of a nation or city and in the individual lives of the elite needed poets writing appropriate praise. Ascending the throne or taking important public offices, as well as the birth, wedding and funeral of preeminent persons were as a rule accompanied with verses that celebrated the virtues of these men and women. They were often intimately connected with art and architecture. Innumerable panegyrics were written to celebrate portraits and sing the praises of the sitter and the artist. In poems praising royal palaces or the houses and mansions of the rich, the qualities of the architecture were merged with the virtues of the owner or inhabitant.

This essay will relate the popularity of laudatory poems to the Amsterdam Town Hall. Panegyrics of paintings and buildings enjoyed a Golden Age in the young Dutch Republic.² Nevertheless, the poems are heavily neglected by Dutch literary historians, who dismiss them as cheap verses full of clichés purely written for money’s sake. Art and architectural historians studying the seventeenth-century Republic disregard them because the poems lack a straightforward analysis of artworks or buildings; there would be too much poetic licence. The neglect is undeserved. This essay will clarify how the corpus of poems praising the Town Hall offer a unique insight into social and political perceptions of a major building. No other important public building of the seventeenth century in Europe, perhaps with the exception of Versailles, generated such a rich and varied poetical response.³

The poems document the perception of the Town Hall, by contemporaries who often directly witnessed its construction. They rehearse traditional themes in such poems, such as harmonious proportions and the use of rich materials. But they also speak of extreme reactions to the building and its art works. Creating amazement in the viewer or visitor was the ultimate objective. Third, poets often focus on the relation between the building and its founders. They suggest political contexts, connect artworks and the building itself with the politics of the Burgomasters and the city at large, and present the Town Hall as visible evidence of the excellence of those in charge. The poems frequently present the structure or its works of art as clear evidence of the prosperous future emulating previous Golden Ages, mostly taken from the Greco-Roman, Biblical or their own national history. Often, the logic of a *translatio imperii* is followed in which similar objects from a prosperous past are presented as evidence of an unbroken pedigree connecting the present to that past and paradoxically of a bright future as well.⁴ Some poems went even further, creating an entirely artificial pedigree for the Town Hall, and by implication Amsterdam, as the rightful successor to the Jewish Kingdom of Solomon or the Roman Republic.

Starting from the political context shared by the Town Hall, its artworks and the poems, enables us to revisit this literary genre and more particularly the exceptional number of poems written to celebrate the Town Hall. Our research has brought to light more than 100 poems on the building, written from the early 1640s, when the first plans for the building were made, until the end of the century, with a surge around the laying of the first stone in 1648 and the inauguration of the building in 1655.⁵ Even in seventeenth-century Europe, this was unique. Moreover, they display considerable diversity in length, genre, style and intended audience. The very first poem is a couplet by Mattheus Gansneb Tengnagel (1613–52) written in 1641. In 1655, Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679) wrote an ode of 1,378 lines on the inauguration of the Town Hall and Everard Meyster (1617–79) merged allegory and pastoral play, staging Vitruvius, Michelangelo and other famous architects. The corpus is also highly intertextual. Meyster explicitly mentions previous poets in his own poem as the ones who truly comprehend the amazing building. When the personage of Michelangelo is not able to fully comprehend the Tribunal by himself, he calls three Dutch poets for help. The literary topos of speaking with the dead is reversed, since a dead architect calls for living writers.⁶ It must have had a surprising, if not humorous, effect to hear the following verses come out of Michelangelo's mouth:

Ha van de Vondel, komt gy Asseling, gy Bos,
 Gy schrand're geesten komt, maeck uwe tongen los,
 En helpt ons met u Geest die geestigheên beschrijven,
 Daer wy, en elck voorstil, en stom staen moeten blijven.⁷

*Oh, come [Joost] van den Vondel, you [Thomas] Asselijn, you [Jan] Vos,
 You shrewd spirits come, loosen your tongues,
 And help us with your Intellect to describe these ingenuities,
 Since we can only stand in front of it totally dumbfounded.*

The close connections between the many panegyrics of the Town Hall – both implicit and explicit – also reveal a solid political embedding. Most of the poems present a similar discourse on the Burgomasters, presenting the grand building as a *pars pro toto* for their rule. Poets praise the Town Hall for its overwhelming impact on the visitors and see this as clear evidence that Amsterdam is the rightful heir to the Roman Republic governed by excellent Senators, or to the Jewish Kingdom of Solomon. Direct praise of an individual Burgomaster was not entirely out of the question, but could easily be considered inappropriate, or could lead to rivalry. Conspicuous spending, for instance in the deployment of rich materials such as Carrara marble, required a delicate balancing act in the Republic, as associations with royal public display had to be avoided. Poets also had to deal with the fact that Burgomasters were only appointed for one year. All these circumstances favoured a displacement of praise away from the persons of the Burgomasters towards their Town Hall.

Old traditions

Whereas the laudatory poems on the Town Hall are exceptional in number and in their close interaction with each other, they can be connected with rhetorical traditions going back to Antiquity.⁸ The description of the palace of Alcinous (Homer's *Odyssey*, 7.81f) or the Sun Palace (Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 2.1f) shaped the genre of architectural description. In the Middle Ages, buildings were described in chivalric romance, such as Von Scharfenberg's *Jüngere Titurel*, which contains a description of the Temple of the Grail. This tradition feeds into later descriptions of buildings such as Chaucer's House of Fame, Marot's Temple of Cupid and Tasso's Palace of Armida. All these texts are about buildings that did not really exist. Nevertheless, they influenced the panegyrics of the Town Hall, by their expression of the amazement the buildings caused, and by contrasting

this to everyday life. Humans are overwhelmed, stupefied and made ecstatic by the exceptional splendour brought before their eyes. These descriptions of wondrous architecture often have moral aspects, and thematize our relation to what is extremely high above us, which Ovid calls *sublimis*. The Roman poet discusses human reactions to the sublime Sun Palace by contrasting the morally negative *hubris* with the positive virtue *humilis*. Phaeton's ecstasy, caused by the Sun Palace, makes him haughty, which ultimately leads to his death.⁹

Another important rhetorical tradition is that of the *laus urbium*, the praise of a city.¹⁰ Ever since Herodotus's description of Babylon in *The Persian Wars* (1.178.2), cities have been praised for their excellence. Following the revival of the genre by the Byzantine scholar Manuel Chrysoloras in his *Comparison of Old and New Rome* (a comparison of Rome and Constantinople), Italian and German humanists expanded the genre to include cities to the North of the Alps. Hans Sachs praised German cities, and Lodovico Guicciardini applied his rhetorical skill to cities in the Low Countries.¹¹ These *laudes urbium* do not give a neutral account of what can be seen in a city, but rather evoke its marvellous character and relate this to the great merit of the city's leaders and the dynamism of its citizens. There are many examples of leaders paying poets to write a *laus urbium*. This makes it difficult to see where wonder as an actual experience elicited by visiting a city stops, and where wonder as a propagandistic device to enforce the position of a founder begins, just as is the case with the laudatory poems on the Town Hall.

The rhetorical exercise of the description, or *ekphrasis* of an actual building, was another major tradition that shaped Amsterdam panegyric. These include classical authors' descriptions of the Seven Wonders of the World.¹² Originally meant to point ancient travellers to actual destinations and what would be the highlights of their journeys around the world, by the early modern period the Wonders of the World had been lost or destroyed. But the recollection of them still served as a fixed and authoritative reference for extreme possibilities in the display of power in periods of political, economic, and cultural greatness.¹³ The idea of the successor state – which Caroline van Eck has discussed in the previous essay – is important here, as relating new buildings to the ancient wonders implied that the present would be a new period of flowering. Next to the Greco-Roman tradition there are also biblical descriptions of buildings, the most influential being the description of the Temple of Solomon, which in the medieval and early modern periods shaped the design of many churches. Solomon's Palace was an important model for the Town Hall as well, as Pieter Vlaardingebroek has argued in his essay for this book.¹⁴

These three related rhetorical traditions – descriptions of fictitious architecture, the *laus urbium* and descriptions of real buildings – not only influenced the poems on the Town Hall, but were also extremely popular across all of seventeenth-century Europe. This can be seen in John Milton's fantastic Pandemonium, Thomas Greill's praise of Munich, Pedro Calderón de la Barca's glorification of the Retiro Palace and Madame de Sévigné's tribute to Versailles.¹⁵ The country house poem is also part of this tradition. Influenced by Pliny the Younger's description of his villa, it blossomed in England in the work of Ben Jonson and Andrew Marvell and in France with Jean de La Fontaine and, as already mentioned, in the Republic in the work of Constantijn Huygens (1596–1687).¹⁶ Finally the medieval tradition of the *descriptio templi* – the description of Christian churches with its strong theological overtones and tendency to present the building as a material manifestation of the divine – which goes back to Eusebius' description of the inauguration of an early-Christian church, and was continued by Paulus Silentarius, and Suger of Saint Denis, enriched the rhetorical genres outlined here with theological elements. It continued to develop fully as a literary tradition in the seventeenth century, particularly in Germany and Britain.¹⁷

Praise put to political purpose

Due to a lack of interest in laudatory poems on architecture, a thorough understanding of their use in the seventeenth-century Republic, as well as in the rest of Europe, is lacking as yet. On the basis of our study of the poems devoted to the Town Hall, however, we can present some initial insights. Those written by the most celebrated poets were eventually published in collections and collected works, even during the seventeenth century. To begin with, however, most of the poems celebrating the new building were usually disseminated individually, as they were printed on loose sheets, and the more substantial ones on leaves bundled in simple quires without a cover. They were not unlike pamphlets, sold cheaply and easily distributed. Since most of the poems are closely related to the founders and present the Town Hall time and again as a thing of pure wonder, they disseminated the intended effect widely, especially at the ceremonial events of the laying of the first stone and the inauguration which brought together a mass of people.

For the inauguration ceremony, the Burgomasters paid Vondel (among other poets) for his *Consecration (Inwydingen)* (Figure 4.1).¹⁸ Here, the poet gives us an indication of what must have taken place during the ceremony, although this



Figure 4.1 Frontispiece of Joost van den Vondel, *Inwydinge van 't Stadhuis t' Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Fontein, 1655), photo by author.

of course is seen through the lens of praise. Vondel describes how thousands of men and women are standing at the gates eager to enter the city and to participate in the ceremony of the Burgomasters and the Magistrates entering the building in parade. To describe the role of the bystanders, Vondel uses the word 'inzingen' which is a contraction of 'zingen' (to sing) and 'inzingen' ('to consecrate').¹⁹ This harmonious union in song echoes the Burgomasters' desire for a perfect *communitas*. The *Wilhelmus*, commemorating William the Silent, the founding father of the Dutch Republic (which centuries later became the national anthem) and other popular songs dating from the Dutch Revolt were sung together. Besides, as many panegyrics celebrating the ceremony were written in Dutch in simple rhyme and rhythm, we can assume that the short poems could have served as songs for this special occasion as well.²⁰

Anthology

In what follows, we give the first English translations of some of the most significant laudatory poems on the Town Hall. We follow a chronological order. Starting with the very first poem published in 1641, and then continuing with odes devoted to the laying of the first stone in 1648, we pay special attention to the poems written in 1655, the crucial year for the Town Hall when it was officially put to use. In that year, many remarkable verses were devoted to the building, often with an explicit reference to the festive occasion and the founders. Poets constantly emphasize the connection between the founders and the building in the years after the inauguration. We end our anthology in the 1660s, when the largest sums to finance the huge building project had already been spent. Poets could now explicitly connect a specific Burgomaster or another prominent figure from the Amsterdam elite individually to the Town Hall, often in poems written for births, weddings and funerals. Whereas the huge cost was still an issue in the 1650s, a decade later this was felt less urgently and therefore individual connections with the building could far more easily be made without making the person of praise too vulnerable for critique.

The first poem

Mattheus Gansneb Tegnagel, notorious for his invectives and scabrous verses, wrote his *Amsterdam Linden Leaves* (*Aemsterdamsche Lindebladen*) in 1641 in an attempt to strengthen his reputation as a poet.²¹ This volume of laudatory poems on his beloved birthplace contains a couplet which offers the very first praise of the future Town Hall. It was probably written shortly after the city council had decided to build it (see Pieter Vlaardingebroek's essay in this book). Thus, the work that would shortly lead to innumerable verses, had very humble origins. Moreover, it is uncertain how the poem was received, what the Burgomasters thought of it, let alone if they commissioned it, and whether it improved the poet's bad reputation. Nevertheless, Tegnagel's two verses already address some important elements of praise which would often return in subsequent poems. Whereas it was still unclear what the building would look like, the poet already builds in his two verses a solid basis to defend its construction by presenting it as a consolidation of the city's prosperity and the resulting flowering of the arts. His clever play on the double meaning of the Dutch '*toekomend*', which can mean both 'future' and 'arriving', conveys the sense that, even though the appearance of the Town Hall was still unknown, it was

close to being realized. By mentioning a temple to administer justice, he invokes the Temple of Jerusalem and reminds his readers that the Amsterdam citizens are the new Chosen People, a frequent argument in later laudatory poems. Tengnagel's reference to divine jurisdiction corresponds to the importance the Burgomasters gave to the Tribunal from the first plans for the building.²²

Op het toekomstende Raedhuis

De rijckdom en de konst, die meester, deese knecht,
Zijn uyt op Tempelbouw voor 't Goddelijcke recht.²³

On the future Town Hall

*Riches and art, one master, the other servant,
Aim at edifying a Temple for Divine jurisdiction.*

Ceremonial odes

Although Joost van den Vondel wrote his most famous poem on the Town Hall for the occasion of its inauguration in 1655, the poet dedicated an elaborate poem to the laying of the first stone in 1648 as well. In the latter, he dramatizes the ceremony by using the format of a tragic chorus with its strophe, anti-strophe and epistrophe. Through this experiment in dramatization, the poet tried to emulate Greco-Roman literary models, just as he was doing in his tragedies of the same period.²⁴ Appropriating the ancient literary model was one way of placing Amsterdam's recent success in the classical tradition. But his emulation went beyond such formal aspects by introducing the cities of Athens, Rome and Amsterdam as if they were living persons. Athens is personified as an architectural connoisseur and Rome as a successful conqueror, but Amsterdam is the person combining these two qualities. Thanks to her colonial expansion, the city conquered much larger territories than Rome had ever done. Moreover, the city also started to construct the Town Hall. Although the building was not yet visible, Vondel already describes it as such an impressive building that it even amazes Athens. The description of the four young sons or nephews of the Burgomasters who ceremonially laid the first stone connects the past, present and future, as it predicts dynastic longevity for the city's political elite. This insistence on the building as an embodiment of the connections between past, present and future is another frequent theme in the poems.

Zang.

Athene en Rome dragen by
Een zonderlinge lievery

Van kunsten, elck in zijn gewest.
 De Bouwkunst voegt Athene best,
 En andre wetenschappen meer;
 Het strijdbre Rome voeght een speer
 En schilt, gelijk een krijgsheldin,
 Op datze 't aerdrijck overwinn',
 En met den Burgemeestersrock,
 Dan alles wat zij overtrok
 Met vliegende Arenden, haer Goôn,
 Berechte, en onder haar geboôn
 Doe zwichten d'overheerde liên,
 Die 't aertsgebiet naer d'oogen zien.
 Dus zijnze beide in lof zoo rijk,
 Elckandre in zegen ongelijck,
 Het zy bij nootlot, of geval;
 Want een bezit het zelden al.²⁵

Tegenzang.

Maer AMSTERDAM, zoo zwaer met gout
 Gekroont, en uit Godts schoot bedouwt
 Met zegen, voert haer oorloghsvlagh
 Tot in den ondergaenden dagh,
 Van 't blozende Oosten, en beklimt,
 Van daer de steile Noortbeergrimt,
 De Zuidas met haer stoute kiel.
 Zymint den Vrydom als haer ziel,
 En na dien dierbevochten schat
 Zoo kroontze't merktvelt van de stadt,
 Den Visschersdam, met een gebouw
 Waer voor d'Athener strijken zou,
 En stom staen met zijn open mondt ;
 Hoewel hy zich den bouw verstont ;
 Hij zou gerief en majesteit
 En tijtverdurende eeuwigheit
 Verknocht zien in een Hoofdgesticht,
 De glori van mijn bouwgedicht.

Toeang.

Geen droevig voerspook kan men ramen
 Uit uwen grontbouw; PANKRAS, GRAEF,
 En VALCONIER, en SCHAEF, uw Namen,

In witten marmer, net en braef
 Gehouwen, houden hunnen luister,
 En flonckren in den zwarten nacht,
 Als klare starren, die by duister
 Ontfangen grooter glans, en kracht.
 Bezwalcktze, in 't bloejen van uw jaren,
 Met geen gebreken: volght uw bloet,
 Die 't Burgemeesters-ampt bewaren,
 En houdt dien burgerlijcken voet,
 Als rechte Neven, rechte Zoonen;
 Zoo zal de Deught uw jaaren kroonen.

Strophe

*Athens and Rome contribute
 An extraordinary love
 For the arts, each in its own domain.
 Athens applies Architecture best,
 As well as many other sciences;
 Soldierly Rome adds a spear
 And a shield, like a war heroine,
 To make Amsterdam conquer the world,
 And judge, wearing the burgomasters' tabard
 All [regions] that she commands
 With flying Eagles, her Gods,
 And subjugate under her laws
 Those she dominates
 Who want to comprehend her wishes.
 Thus they are both to be praised fully,
 Incomparable to each other in victory,
 Through fate, or coincidence;
 As one can only seldom possess it all.*

Antistrophe.

*But AMSTERDAM, so heavily crowned
 With Gold, and covered with dew from God's bosom,
 Leads her battle flag to victory
 Until the setting day ,
 Of the blushing East, and climbs,
 From there to the steep Arctic Circle,
 [Sails till] the South Pole Circle with her brave keel.
 She loves Freedom as her soul,
 And after this hard-fought treasure*

*She crowns the market of the city,
The Fishers' Dam [Dam Square], with a building
To which the citizen of Athens would yield,
And stand dumbfounded with open mouth;
Although he did comprehend architecture;
He would have seen comfort and majesty
And eternity that endures eternity
Knit together in a Principal Edifice,
The glory of my building poem.*

Epistrophe

*No sad phantom will emerge
From these foundations; PANKRAS, GRAEFF,
And VALCONIER, and SCHAEPE, your Names,
Carved clearly and assiduously in white marble,
Will keep their splendour
And will radiate in the dark night,
As bright stars, that by darkness
Receive even more radiance, and power.
Do not sully them, in the flowering of your years,
With any failing: follow your blood,
That preserves the Burgomasters' Office,
And keep this civil way of life
As straight Cousins, straight Sons;
Thus Virtue will crown your years.*

The most famous poem

To celebrate the inauguration of the Town Hall in 1655, Vondel wrote what would become the most famous laudatory poem devoted to the building, a poem of no less than 1,378 lines, paid for by the Burgomasters.²⁶ Many other poets tried to emulate this. Vondel's main aim was to defend the huge building costs by presenting Amsterdam as the centre of the world and therefore evidently in need of a magnificent building. The poet follows a proto-capitalist logic in which the costs are legitimised as an investment in the future.

- 1 Gelijck nu d'ackerman de zeissen slaet in d'airen,
 En heenstreeft, door een zee van gout en goude baren,
 Zoo weckt ons Amsterdam, door overvloed van stof,
 Om in den vruchtbren oeghst van zijnen rycken lof
- 5 Te weiden met de penne, en vrolijck in te wyen
 De hoogtijdt van 't Stadthuis en burgerheerschappyen,

- Met een de jaermerckt, die, met haeren open schoot,
 Alle omgelege steên en bontgenooten noodt
 Op 't heerelijck bancket van allerhande gading,
 10 Die 't nimmer zat gezicht genoeg en verzading
 Beloofd, door zoo veel schat, gerief, verscheidenheên,
 Als kunst en hantwerck hier nu stapelen op een.
 Dat zoo veel duizenden, als sterck ter poorte indringen,
 Zich spoeden naer den Dam, om 't wyfeest in te zingen,
 15 In 't midden van ons vloên, den Amstel en het Y,
 Met al de burgerjeught van d' oude en nieuwe Zy,
 Op 't heldere geklanck der zilvere trompetten,
 Het dondren van kortouwe, en maetklanck van musketten,
 Het vliegen van de vaene, en luid triomfgeschal;
 20 Terwijl elck element van blyschap juichen zal,
 De hemel huppelen, en alle starretranssen
 In 't ronde, als hant aen hant, rontom ons Raethuis danssen,
 De Bruit, daer 't al om danst, en die, zo fier en ryck,
 Op haeren schoonsten dagh en 't kussen, zit te pryck.
 25 De Leeuw des hemels schynt de hoofstadt van de landen
 Wiens schilt gehanthaeft wort van leeuwen, onder 't branden
 Te zeeغن, met een lucht, uit zyne keel gestort,
 Te maetigen zyn vier, om frisch en onverdort,
 De graftlaen en het loof der boomen te bewaeren.
 30 De straelen van zyne maene en glinsterende hairen
 En oogen steecken niet zoo vinnigh op ons hooft;
 Als had hy dezen dagh en zyn triomf beloofd
 Een koele lentezon: want dit gestarnt, by vlaegen,
 Den geest verstickende, door 't gloên der heetste dagen
 35 En weecken, koestert nu den zanglust, en de Min,
 En Oegstmaent gaet met lust, gelijck de Maymaent, in.
 Ghy Heeren, die de Stadt, gelyck vier hooftpylaeren,
 Met raet en wysheit stut, in 't rypste van uw jaeren,
 Grootachbre Vryheer GRAEF, en Ridder MAERSEVEEN,
 40 Oprechte telgh van POL, en SPIEGEL, die 't Gemeen
 Ten burgerspiegel streckt, gewaerdicht ons gezangen
 Te hooren, daer 't muzyck uw' intre zal ontfangen
 Met blyschap op den stoel, en 't eerlyck wapenkruis;
 Uw burgermeesterschap het ingewyt Stehuis
 45 Vercieren, meer dan kunst, besteet aen witte marmers;
 En d'oude burgery haer hoofden en beschermers

Begroeten, uit den drang, van overal vergaêrt.
De burgervaders zyn met recht alle eere waert.²⁷

- 1 *Just like a farmer cuts the ears with his scythe,
And glides through a sea of gold and golden waves,
Similarly, Amsterdam exhorts us by its abundance of subject matter
To pasture with our pen in the fertile harvest of its rich praise*
- 5 *And to inaugurate full of joy the great moment
Of the Town Hall and the rule of burghers,
At the moment of the annual market which, with open arms,
Invites all surrounding cities and allies
For a delicious banquet to everyone's taste*
- 10 *And which promises joy and satisfaction to faces that never tire,
Thanks to so many treasures, commodities, varieties,
As art and artisanry have accumulated here.
So many thousands, eagerly entering the gates,
Hurry towards Dam Square, to start the inauguration ceremony with their
 song,*
- 15 *With, in the middle of our throng, the rivers Amstel and Y
Bringing all youth of the old and the new part of town,
On the clear sounds of silver trumpets,
The thunder of artillery, and the rhythmical sound of muskets,
The flying of flags, and loud triumphal horn blowing;*
- 20 *While every element will rejoice in happiness,
Heaven will skip, and all stars of the galaxies
Dance in the round, hand in hand, around the Town Hall,
The Bride, the centre of the dancing universe, and who, so proud and rich,
sits triumphant in her most beautiful day and seat.*
- 25 *The Lion of heaven [the sun] shines over the capital of countries,
Whose shield is supported by lions, and blesses
While burning with a breeze coming from his throat.
He tempers his fire in order to preserve
Fresh and unwithered the canals and the foliage.*
- 30 *The rays of his manes and glittering hair
And of his eyes do not viciously pierce our head;
As if he had promised for this triumphal day
A fresh sun of spring: as this constellation, at moments,
Suffocating our mind with the glow of the hottest days*
- 35 *And weeks, now fosters the lust for songs and love
In the Harvest Month, just as he does in the Month of May.*

- You Lords, who support the City like four central pillars
 With advice and wisdom, in the most mature of your years,
 Most venerable nobleman GRAEF, and Knight MAERSEVEEN
 40 Honest scion of POL, and SPIEGEL, who offers
 To the common people a burgher-mirror, deign to hear
 Our songs, since the music will grace your joyful entry
 on the seat and the honest cross [of Amsterdam's coat of arms];
 Your Burgomastership adorns the inaugurated Town Hall
 45 Even more than the art lavished on white marble;
 And the throng of old citizenry, gathered from everywhere,
 Who wants to greet its leaders and protectors.
 The fathers of burghers deserve all honour.*

Jacob van Campen and Daniel Stalpaert surpassed Orpheus and Amphion, as the former did not use magic to move forests for the foundations and stones for the building of the Town Hall. However, Vondel was unable to pass by the struggle between van Campen and Stalpaert which ultimately led to van Campen leaving the building project, and being absent at the inauguration. The conflict was probably caused by a difference of opinion about the construction of the vaults of the galleries and the large rooms adjacent to the Citizens' Hall, in which the Burgomasters followed Stalpaert's view.²⁸

- (...) heeft Orfeus eertijts bossen
 555 Verplant met zijne lier, Amfion met zijn snaer
 De steenen oit verzaemt, om Thebe wonderbaer
 Te stichten tot een stadt; 't is t'Amsterdam gebleecken
 In waerheit, onverbloemt, en zonder dichters streekcen.
 Het Noortsche mastbosch neemt het Raethuis op den rugh.
 560 De rots van Benthem danst, de Wezerstroom wordt vlugh.
 De Wester marmerklip den maetzang volght van Kampen
 En Stalpaert, die bezweet noch arbeit vliên, noch rampen,
 Noch opspraeck, nu en dan gesprongen van hun scheen,
 Te vrede datze zich verbouwen voor 't Gemeen.

- Where Orpheus once transplanted
 555 Forests with his lyre, and with his strings Amphion
 brought together stones, to found Thebes
 Miraculously as a city; this became manifest in Amsterdam
 In truth, without any poets' tricks.
 The Northern forest of poles takes the Town Hall on its back.
 560 The rock of Bentheim dances, the stream of the river Weser quickens.*

*The Western marble cliff follows the harmony of Campen
And Stalpaert, who in sweat do not avoid hard work, nor disasters,
Nor discredit, which sometimes snaps at their ankles,
But happy that they can serve the Common cause.*

The builders of the Town Hall not only surpassed the mythological heroes, but the architects Vitruvius and Apollodorus of Damascus as well. The latter was famous for constructing Trajan's Column.

Vitruvius trede aen,
En zelf Apollodoor, bouwmeester van Trajaen,
Wiens naelt noch heden praelt te Rome, voor onze oogen;
650 Zy vinden dit gebouw door al zyn leên voltogen,
Van boven tot beneën. geene outheit dit verdooft.
Het heeft zyn middenlijf, zijne armen, voeten, hooft,
En schouders, elck om 't netst. het heeft zyn ingewanden,
Elck lidt, elck ingewant zyn ampt, gebruick, en standen.
655 Hier leeft en zweeft de ziel van ons Wethoudery,
Gelyck een Godtheit, in, en ziet het zeilryck Y
Met 's weerelts oeghsten en Oostindiën geladen.

*Enter Vitruvius,
And even Apollodorus, the architect of Trajan,
Whose needle [column] this very day adorns Rome before our eyes;
650 They find this building perfect in all its members,
From up till down. No antiquity can mute this.
It has its torso, its arms, feet, head,
And shoulders, all at their best. It has its intestines,
Every member, every bowel its task, use and hierarchy.
655 Here lives the soul of our City Council,
Like a Deity, and sees the river Y full of sailing ships
Loaded with the world's harvests and East-Indian cargo.*

Vondel starts his praise of the decorations of the Town Hall by pointing at the use of the Composite and the Corinthian order, presented here as the bringers of Greek culture to Amsterdam.

Men ziet, van buiten en van binnen, drie kolommen,
Gekoren uit de vyf aeloude, konstigh brommen,
In bey de stadiën, voor 't opgetogen oogh.
De laagste uit twee gemengt, en d'ongemengde om hoogh.
685 D'Ionische, en Korintsche, als in een huwlijck, onder,
Gesmolten onderen, wort, tot een weereltsch wonder,

Gedraegen van den voet, en draeght Korinthen weër
 Uit Griecken t' Amsterdam om hoogh, tot Aemstels eer.

*One sees, outside and inside, three columns,
 Chosen from the five ancient, artfully on display,
 On both floors, for the elated eye.
 The lowest is mixed for two, the unmixed the highest.*

- 685 *Below, the Ionic and Corinthian, as in a marriage
 Fused together, are elevated by a pedestal
 Into one of the world's wonders, and carry in their turn Corinth
 From Greece to Amsterdam to the honour of the Amstel.*

By the end of the poem, it has become evident that every architect or artist in Europe will have to study the building and its artworks closely to become truly accomplished. The chain of *emulatio* is extended in time backwards from Greece and Rome to the Chaldeans, and now culminates in Amsterdam.

- Wie nu bouwmeester, of een schildergeest wil worden,
 Of Fidias in kunst en beeldehouwery,
 1180 Die zal, uit gansch Euroop, zich spoeden naer het Y,
 En onzen trotzen Dam, met penne, en verwe, en koole,
 Om in dit nieuw Stadthuis, als in de hooghste schoole
 Van Pallas, uit het brein van Jupiter geteelt,
 Te tekenen al wat de leerlust hem beveelt
 1185 t' Ontworpen op papier, en perckement, en doecken.
 Zoo ging de Griek van outs de kunst te Memfis zoecken,
 De Roomsche jeught t'Athene, en elck by dien Romain.
 Nu toont u Amsterdam, beknopt by een, in 't klein,
 Wat Memfis wat Athene en Rome t' zamenhaelden;
 1190 Toen deze, als eigenaers, met al hun leengoet praelden,
 En zwoeren, elck om 't zwartst, met onbeschaemden mont,
 Dat dit geen leenkunst was, maer ieders eigen vont,
 Inzonderheit de Griek, al kan hy niet ontschreeuwen
 Dat d'eerste kunstbron vloeide uit d'ader der Chaldeeuwen.

- Who now wants to become an architect or painter,
 Or Phidias in art and sculpture,
 1180 Will have to hasten from all over Europe to the river Y,
 And to our proud Dam, with pencil, paint, or charcoal,
 To draw in the new Town Hall, since it was created in the highest school
 Of Pallas, born from the head of Jupiter,
 All what the passion for learning orders him*

- 1185 *To design on paper, parchment and canvas.*
Thus, the Greek of yore went to search the art in Memphis,
The Roman youth in Athens, and everyone with this Roman.
Now Amsterdam shows you, closely knit together, in a small space,
What Memphis, what Athens and Rome have brought together;
- 1190 *When these, as owners, showed off all their borrowings,*
And swore, in contest with each other, that they were their own invention,
Especially the Greek, but even though he cried loudest, he could not deny
That the first source of art sprang from the veins of the Chaldeans.

Vos emulates Vondel

With a laudatory poem of 1,000 lines written for the inauguration, playwright and glazier Jan Vos (1612–67) clearly wanted to charm the Burgomasters who had given him the commission for the windows of the Town Hall.²⁹ By doing so, he also competed with Vondel. At the time Vos felt confident, as his play *Aran and Titus*, premiered in 1641, was enjoying an unprecedented success on the Amsterdam stage, and was kept in repertoire for decades. Much of the play's acclaim was due primarily to its extensive staging of bloodshed, often inspired by Seneca's tragedies.³⁰ In the preface of a later play, Vos would admit that he emulated Vondel through the straightforward rendering of cruelties.³¹ His poem on the Town Hall is also distinguished by a dwelling on the horrific aspects of the construction and its boundless engineering ambition.

Men valt met macht aan 't werk. de schup gaat naar de gront.
 Men ziet ter hoolen in, als in de hel zijn mondt.
 Men graaft de graaven wech, op 't kerkhof vet van lijken.
 De dooden moeten voor de levendige wijken.³²

The work is attacked with all might. The spade enters the soil.
There they see holes, as in the mouth of hell.
They dig away the graves, on the graveyard saturated with corpses.
The dead have to give way to the living.

Noorweegen heeft voor 't Y haar bosschen afgehouden:
 Men slaatze, door getal van handen, met metaal
 En yzre blokken, door de grondt, naar Plutoos zaal.
 Het hof van d'afgrondt dreunt door d'overzwaare slaagen.
 De Vorst van 't helsche ryk, omheint van zieleplaagen,
 Verschrikte voor 't geschal dat hem het hart doorboort.

*For the river Y, Norway has cut off its forests:
 They drive them, through number of hands, with metal
 And iron blocks, through the soil, down to Pluto's hall.
 The overheavy blows make the court of the abyss resound.
 The Prince of the hellish empire, surrounded by infestations of souls,
 Is terrified by the shattering noise that penetrates his heart.*

Men ryt de boezem van het aardtryk gants in twee,
 Om 't ingewant van steen, door beitels scharp van snee,
 En mookers hardt van staal, voor eeuwich uit te scheuren.
 De Berggoôn, die 't geweldt in 't hardt gebergt bespeuren,
 Verbergen zich van angst in d'allerdiepste kolk.
 D'alteelend' Aarde riep: wat naadert ons voor volk?
 Wie durft myn steene troon met wapentuig belaagen?
 Gy zult, o dartelen! uw stout bestaan beklaagen.
 (...) neen, riep de Stadt der steeden:
 Nu dat ik aan het Y, het lusthof van de vrede,
 Een heiligh Raadthuis bouw, kom ik by u om stof.
 De vruchtbaar' Aarde zweegh, en opende haar hof,
 Op dat'er Amsterdam de steenen uit zou kappen.

*They tear open the bosom of the earth, right in two,
 To pull out for ever the intestines of stone,
 With sharp chisels and sledges of strong steel,
 The mountain gods, who feel the violence in the strong mount,
 Hide in fear in the deepest gully.
 The all-breeding Earth cried: What kind of people is approaching us?
 Who dares to put siege to my throne of stone with weaponry?
 Oh fools, you shall pity your bold existence.
 (...) no, shouted the City of cities:
 Now that I am building along the river Y, a place for peace,
 A holy Town Hall, I come to you for materials.
 The pregnant Earth was silenced, and opened her court,
 So that Amsterdam could cut the stones there.*

Support for van Campen

In honour of his neighbour, Jacob van Campen, the eccentric country gentleman Everard Meyster wrote his *Heavenly Pastoral Play* (*Hemelsch Land-Spel*).³³ It is arguably the strangest laudatory poem of all 100, combining praise of the rural

setting around Amersfoort, a town close to Utrecht, in which both men had their estates, with praise for the Amsterdam Town Hall.³⁴ Also, the panegyric has the format of a pastoral allegorical play in which Jupiter orders Vitruvius, Apelles, Scamozzi, Raphael, Michelangelo, Holbein and Van Heemskerck to come to Meyster's mansion. The famous artists and architects explain to the Olympians assembled the wonders of the new building. This is not easy, as they have to acknowledge often that the wondrous construction leads 'far more to wonder, than to fathom completely'.³⁵ The play ends in total confusion with Michelangelo, the master of the *terribilità*, describing the heads of Medusa and the Fury Erynnis of the Tribunal (Figure 4.2).



Figure 4.2 Artus Quellinus and workshop, Medusa head in the Tribunal of the Town Hall, 1651–2, marble. Courtesy Stichting Koninklijk Paleis Amsterdam. © The Royal Palace of Amsterdam, photograph: E&P Hesmerg.

MICHELANGELO – Was 's rechters oogh, was 't Swaerd, en kroon in marmor
steen

Opt aerdigst' uytgewrogt: verselschap met twee hoofden
Vol slangh-hair opgepronkt, dien ons 't gesicht beroofden
Van voorts daer all's te zien; zoo warens' uytgeworcht,
Zoo zagens' op ons aen, of self het helsch gedroght
Erynnis, en Medus', ons levend' hadden willen
Verscheuren en vertreen; wy staen schier noch en trillen,
Als wy'r gedenken aen, my dunkt, sy volgen noch.³⁶

JUPITER – Maer stil, sijns' ons hier niet dicht by? Ey luystert toch,
My dunkt, uyt 't donderen, dat sy de reusen stuuwen
Ten leegen Hemel in, en teegen ons op-ruuwen
Al 't Goddeloost' gespuys, of yetwes diergelijck
Van berg' en wapen-klanck (vermetel aengedreeven)
Wil op ons Hemel aen; 't sa laetw'ons derwaerts geeven;
Licht houd' haer Pallas staen tot wy'r gekomen zijn;
Waer hulp in tijds by quam, daer weeck vaeck het fenijn.

*MICHELANGELO – The judge's eye, his sword and crown were wrought
In a most artful way in marble: Accompanied by two heads
with dazzling display full of snake-hair, which blinds our eyes
to everything that would be visible there; They were wrought
In such a way that they stared at us as if even the hellish creatures
Erynnis and Medusa wanted to tear us apart alive,
and to trample on us; we are still trembling,
When we remember them, I think they still follow us.*

*JUPITER – But quiet, are they [Medusa and Erynnis] not nearby us? Oh listen,
Me thinks, listening to the thunder, that they push the giants
Towards the empty skies, and goad against us
All the godless brood of the subterranean realm.
Or similar clangour of mountains and arms (driven boldly)
Wants to storm our Heaven; let us go there;
Possibly Pallas can keep them away until we arrive;
Where help came in time, there venom often retreated.*

Pure wonder

In 1657 Constantijn Huygens, the secretary of the Princes of Orange, wrote his *Congratulations to the Noble Lords Rulers of Amsterdam, in its new Town Hall* (Geluck aen de ee. heeren regeerders van amsterdam in haer nieuwe stadthuys) to

have it recited at an official dinner in honour of the powerful Amsterdam merchant Johan Huydecoper van Maarsseveen (1599–1661).³⁷ This may have been in support of Huydecoper's ambitions to become Burgomaster for the fifth time. Directly after the event, the poem was printed on loose leaves and widely distributed. Very shortly after the merchant was successful in his re-election bid, the poem was reproduced in calligraphy, commissioned by the Burgomasters. Framed in ebony, the calligraphed version of Huygens' poem adorned their room (Figure 4.3). Today, we can still see the poem displayed prominently in that room. Not the paper version, however, but one engraved in black stone made in the early 1660s. According to Huygens, Amsterdam is so strong that the new building will easily be replaced by a subsequent one that will be even better, just as the van Campen's Town Hall surpasses its medieval predecessor.

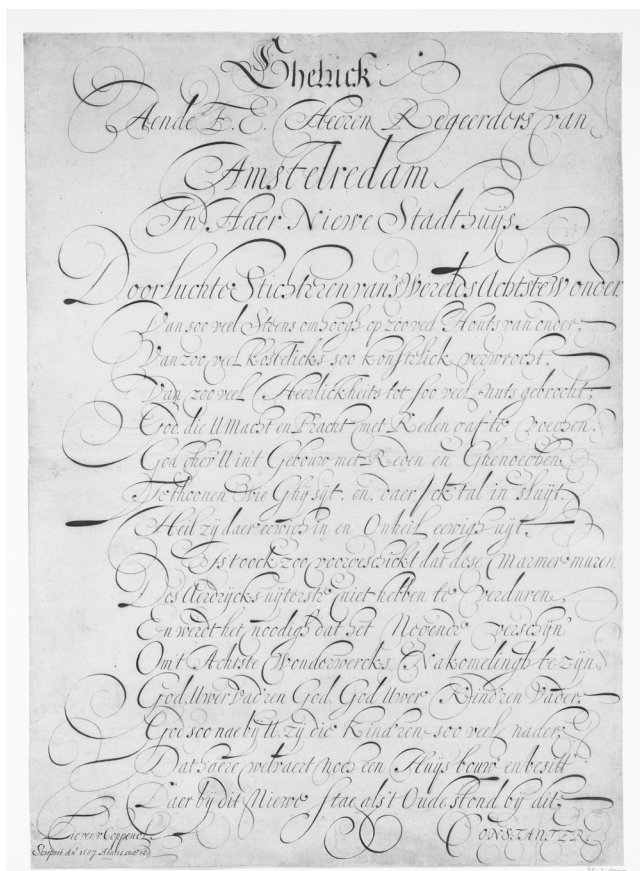


Figure 4.3 Lieven Willemsz. Coppenol, calligraphic writing with Constantijn Huygens' *Congratulations to the Noble Lords Rulers of Amsterdam, in its new Town Hall*, 1657, pen, 706 × 504 mm. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Public Domain.

Geluck aen de ee. heeren regeerders van amsterdam in haer nieuwe stadthuys

Doorluchte Stichter en van 's Werelds Achtste wonder,
 Van soo veel Steens om hoogh op soo veel Houts van onder,
 Van soo veel kostelicks soo konstelick verwrocht,
 Van soo veel heerlickheits tot soo veel nuts gebrocht;
 God, die U Macht en Pracht met Reden gaf te voeghen,
 God gev' u in 't Gebouw met Reden en Genoeghen
 Te thoonen wie ghij zijt, en, daerick 't al in sluijt,
 Heil zij daer eewigh in en Onheil eewigh uijt.
 Is 't oock soo voorgeschickt, dat deze Marmer-muren
 Des Aerdrijcks uysterste niet hebben te verduren,
 En, werdt het noodigh dat het Negende verschijn'
 Om 't Achtste Wonderwercks nakomelingh te zijn,
 God, uwer Vad'ren God, God uwer Kind'ren Vader,
 God soo naeby U, zij die Kind'ren soo veel nader,
 Dat haere Welvaert noch een Huijs bouw' en besitt'
 Daer bij dit Nieuwe stae als 't Oude stond bij dit.³⁸

Congratulations to the Noble Lords Rulers of Amsterdam, in its new Town Hall

*Illustrious Founders of the World's Eighth Wonder,
 Miraculously made out of so much stone above, so much Wood below,
 Of as many riches so artfully created,
 Of as many delights brought so much to use;
 God, who ordered you to combine Power and Splendour with Reason,
 God may give you that you can show in the Building
 Who you are with Reason and Pleasure, and, as I include the universe,
 May Salvation dwell there eternally, and Evil be eternally absent.
 It has also been pre-ordained that these Marble walls
 Will not have to endure the final moments of the Earth,
 And, would it be necessary that the Ninth appears,
 To be the descendant of the Eight Wonder Work,
 God, your Father's God, God, the Father of your Children,
 God so close to you, even if those Children are so much closer,
 May her Prosperity build and own a House
 To which the New will stand as the Old to this.*

Truly sublime

Huygens devotes a poem to the floor of the Citizens' Hall as well, which was at the time the largest interior secular space open to the public in Europe. On its



Figure 4.4 The Citizens' Hall of the Amsterdam Town Hall, courtesy Stichting Koninklijk Paleis Amsterdam. © The Royal Palace of Amsterdam, photograph: Wim Ruigrok.

floor visitors could admire two maps of the world and one of the heavens, after a design by the celebrated cartographer Willem Blaeu (Figure 4.4). With every map having a diameter of 624 centimetres (246 inches), they are the largest ever made and illustrated Amsterdam's position as the centre of cartography.

Op de aerdtcloot inden vloer van 't stadhuijs tot Amstelredam

Die op dit vloeren lett,
 En op dit heerlijk welven,
 moet seggen by syn selven,
 Voorseker dese Wet
 Bestaet in all' haer leden
 Uijt hoogh vernufte lien;

Sij leeren ons met reden
 De werelt te vertreden
 En opwaert aen te sien.³⁹

Op den hemelcloodt aldaer

Leert onder het gewemel
 Van 'tweelighe Stadthuys
 Gedencken aen den Hemel,
 En treedt vrij in 'tgedruijs,
 Als vander aerdt geresen
 Op Sterr en Son en Maen;
 Hier werdt u in bewesen
 Hoe dat het eens naer desen
 Den saligen sal gaen.

On the globe in the floor of the Town Hall of Amsterdam

*Who pays attention to these floors,
 And to the delightful curve,
 Has to say to himself,
 For sure this Law
 Consists in all its members
 Of highly ingenious men;
 They teach us with reason
 To walk across the world
 And to gaze upwards.*

On the heavenly vault in the same place

*Learn in the jostle
 Of the crowded Town Hall
 To bear in mind Heaven
 And enter freely into the bustle,
 As if you rise from earth
 Towards the Stars and Sun and Moon;
 Here it is proven to you
 How it once after this [life]
 Will turn out for the blessed.*

A magnificent capitol

In his poem *Triumphant Amsterdam* (*Het triomfeerende Amsteldam*), Jan Zoet (1609–74), a proud citizen of Amsterdam, as well as a fierce defender of the Oranges, focusses on the stately reception of Prince William, the future

King-Stadholder William III, in 1666 in the Town Hall.⁴⁰ The poet celebrates the event as a reconciliation of the city with the Oranges. Their relation was seriously troubled, certainly after the so-called 'Attack on Amsterdam', a failed attempt by William's father, William II, in July 1650, to occupy the city and break the power of the Burgomasters.⁴¹ At the start of the poem, Zoet puts the building in an international perspective of the most important governmental sites in European history.

Myn praalrijk Kapitoel verstrekte, in het byzonder,
 Aan 't allerkeurigste oog, meer dan een achtste Wonder;
 Want, waar 't gezigt zig keerd, daar staat het harte ontsteld.
 Wat, binnen Roome, eertyds, in 't pronktal wierd geteld.
 Dat moest, voor dit Gebouw, terstond de vlagge strijken.
 Het Keizerlikke Hof moet, voor de waarde wijken
 Van Amsteldams Stadhuis. De Louvre van Parijs
 Geeft, aan mijn meesterstuk, zeer gaaren d'opper prijs,
 Veel min kan Withal daar in 't allerminst by haalen:
 Maar 't geen mijn Keizerin, in volle praal, doet praalen,
 Niet in Albastersteen, in Kooper, Zilver, Goud,
 In Zinnebeelden, of in Schildery, daar 't Zout
 Des Staats op word verbeeld, op veelerhande wijzen,
 In 't allerminst bestaat. Men ziet mijn Hoofdzon rijzen,
 Door d'Agtbaarheeden van mijn Burgemeesterschap:
 Mijn *Valkenier*, mijn *Tulp*, die, met zijn geurig zap,
 De dooden haast verwekt, en wederom doet leeven.
 Mijn *Vlooswijk*, en mijn *Graaf*, op 't roer des Staats bedreeven.⁴²

*My magnificent Capitol gave, in particular
 To the most discerning eye, more than an eighth Wonder of the World;
 Because, wherever the eye looks, the heart is moved.
 Buildings in Rome previously flaunted
 Must before this Building immediately lower their flags.
 The Imperial Court must bow to the value
 Of the Town Hall of Amsterdam. The Louvre in Paris
 Gladly accords to my masterpiece the highest prize,
 Even less has Whitehall to compare:
 But what makes my Empress triumph in full splendour, does not exist
 In Alabaster stone, in Copper, Silver, Gold,
 In Emblems, nor in a Painting, where the Worth
 Of the State is depicted, in diverse ways,
 My primary Sun can be seen ascending,*

*Through the respectability of the office of the Burgomasters:
My Valkenier, my Tulp, who with his fragrant elixir,
Almost rouses the dead, and brings them back to life.
My Vlooswijk, and my Graaf, skilled in steering the State.*

A funeral

From the 1660s onwards, we see that poets increasingly describe the Town Hall as the particular achievement of one Burgomaster, often in verses written for the occasion of a birth or marriage of one of his descendants or his own funeral. For the funeral of the powerful Burgomaster Johan Huydecoper van Maarsseveen (1599–1661), for example, the family commissioned the respected classicist poet Lucas Rotgans (1653–1710) to write an elegy that would connect his rich political career with the Town Hall that he advocated so fervently.

't Was Maarsseveen, die voor een reeks van jaaren
In d'Amsterdam, uit Pallas heiligdom
En Themis school, ten dienst der burgerschaaren,
Langs vaders spoor op 't hooge Raadhuis klom.⁴³

Daar is zijn zorg vernuft en deugt gebleeken.
Daar vond zijn geest, zo werkzaam, ruime stof.
Indien ik zweeg, de beelden zouden spreken.
De vierschaar gaat nog zwanger van zijn lof.

*It was Maarsseveen, who after a series of years
In Amsterdam, from Pallas' shrine
And Themis' school, at the service of the burghers,
Climbed the high Town Hall following his father's trail.*

*There his care, intelligence and virtue became apparent.
There his spirit, so active, found much work.
If I would keep quiet, the sculptures would speak.
The tribunal is still pregnant with his praise.*

Notes

- 1 For a general study, see J.A. Burrow, *The Poetry of Praise* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Additionally, there are many specialized studies, often from a political point of view, e.g. Terence Allott, 'Serious Games: Panegyrics of Louis XIV,

1686', *Seventeenth-Century French Studies* 14, no. 1 (1992): 65–8; Joanne Altieri, *The Theatre of Praise: The Panegyric Tradition in Seventeenth-Century English Drama* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1986); Mark Bannister, 'Heroic Hierarchies: Classical Models for Panegyrics in Seventeenth-Century France', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 8 (2001): 38–59; Stefano Colombo, 'The rhetoric of celebration in seventeenth-century Venetian funerary monuments' (PhD diss., University of Warwick, 2016), esp. Chapter 2; Jean-Jacques Gabas, 'La Fontaine et la louange de Louis XIV', *Seventeenth-Century French Studies* 6, no. 1 (1984): 111–19; James Garrison, *Dryden and the Tradition of Panegyric* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); Stéphane Macé, 'Grandeur standing the test of death: Massillon's eulogy for Louis XIV', *XVIIe siècle* 269 (2015): 623–32; John McManamon, *Funeral Oratory and the Cultural Ideals of Italian Humanism* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989); Victoria Moul, 'England's Stilicho: Claudian's Political Poetry in Early Modern England', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* (May 2019), online: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs12138-019-00529-z> (Consulted 2 March 2019); David Norbrook, 'Panegyric of the Monarch and its Social Context under Elizabeth I and James I' (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 1978); Milan Pelc, 'Panegyric Emblem Books. Jesuits and the Habsburg Emperors: Some Examples Related to 17th-Century Croatia', *Primljen* 43 (2019): 59–74; Claude Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (eds), *The Muses Common-Weale. Poetry and Politics in the Seventeenth Century* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1988).

- 2 See primarily Gregor Weber, *Der Lobtopos des 'lebenden' Bildes* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1991) starting from a long laudatory poem on painting by Jan Vos from 1654; Eddy Verbaan, *De woonplaats van de faam* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2011) concentrates on the *laudes urbium* in the seventeenth-century Republic (cf. infra).
- 3 E. Delerot, *Ce que les poètes ont dit de Versailles* (Versailles: Bernard, 1870).
- 4 See Karl Enenkel and Konrad Ottenheym (eds), *The Quest for an Appropriate Past in Literature, Art and Architecture* (Leiden: Brill, 2018) and Karl Enenkel and Konrad Ottenheym (eds), *Ambitious Antiquities, Famous Forebears. Constructions of a Glorious Past in the Early Modern Netherlands and in Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).
- 5 This research is primarily done in the PhD project of Laura Plezier as part of the ERC starting grant 'Elevated Minds: The Sublime in the Public Arts in Seventeenth-Century Paris and Amsterdam'. She has studied poems entirely devoted to the Town Hall, as well as praising the building in a poem concentrating on another subject. Most of the poems that we can date come from the inauguration and the decade after this ceremony. Cf. Stijn Bussels, 'Meer te verwonderen, als immer te doorgronden. Het Amsterdamse stadhuis, een overweldigende burgerspiegel', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 126, no. 2 (2013): 234–48 and Marijke Spies, 'Minerva's commentaar: Gedichten rond het Amsterdamse stadhuis', *De zeventiende eeuw*, 9, no. 1 (1993): 15–33.

- 6 Jürgen Pieters, *Speaking with the Dead: Explorations in Literature and History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005).
- 7 Everard Meyster, *Hemelsch Land-Spel of Goden Kout, Der Amersfoortsche Landdouwen. Bevattende den buytensten Opstal van't Nieuwe Stad-Huys* (Amsterdam: s.n., 1655), 75.
- 8 Paul Friedländer, *Kunstbeschreibungen justinianischer Zeit* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1969); Gisbert Kranz, *Das Architekturgedicht* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1988); Carole Newlands, 'Architectural Ecphrasis in Roman Poetry', in *Generic Interfaces in Latin Literature: Encounters, Interactions and Transformations*, ed. Theodore D. Papangelis, Stephen J. Harrison and Stavros Frangoulidis (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 55–78; Frans Slits, *Het Latijnse stededicht. Oorsprong en ontwikkeling tot in de zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: Thesis Publishers, 1990); Christine Smith, *Architecture in the Culture of Early Humanism: Ethics, Aesthetics and Eloquence 1400–1470* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Ruth Webb, 'The Aesthetics of Sacred Space: Narrative, Metaphor and Motion in *Ekphraseis* of Church Buildings', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 53 (1999): 59–74.
- 9 For Ovid's use of the concepts *sublimis*, *hubris*, and *humilis* and their reception in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, see Stijn Bussels, 'Theories of the Sublime in the Dutch Golden Age. Franciscus Junius, Joost van den Vondel and Petrus Wittewrongel', *History of European Ideas* 42, no. 7 (2016): 882–92.
- 10 Laurent Pernot, *La rhétorique de l'éloge dans le monde gréco-romain* (Paris: Institut d'Etudes Augustiniennes, 1993), I, 178–214.
- 11 For more examples, see Kranz, *Das Architekturgedicht*.
- 12 Peter A. Clayton and Martin J. Price (eds), *The Seven Wonders of the World* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988).
- 13 John and Elizabeth Romer (eds), *The Seven Wonders of the World: A History of the Modern Imagination* (New York: Henry Holt & Co, 1995).
- 14 William James Hamblin and David Rolph Seely, *Solomon's Temple: Myth and History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2007) and Anne-Françoise Morel, *Glorious Temples or Babylonian Whores. The Culture of Church Building in Stuart England Through the Lens of Consecration Sermons* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), esp. 66–72.
- 15 For more examples, see Kranz, *Das Architekturgedicht*.
- 16 G.R. Hibbart, 'The Country House Poem of the Seventeenth Century', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 19, no. 1/2 (1956): 159–74. Recent bibliography in Anne M. Myers, *Literature and Architecture in Early Modern England* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), Ch. 2; Eleanor Titcomb, 'Introduction', in Jean de la Fontaine, *Le songe de vaux* (Geneva: Droz, 1967): 1–47; Willemien de Vries, *The Country Estate Immortalized: Constantijn Huygens' Hofwijck* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1990).
- 17 Ulrich Schlegelmilch, *Descriptio templi: Architektur und Fest in der lateinischen Dichtung des konfessionellen Zeitalters* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2003).

- 18 Geeraardt Brandt, *Het leven van Joost van den Vondel* ('s-Gravenhage: Frijhoff, 1932), 68. Cf. Marijke Spies, 'Minerva's commentaar': 15.
- 19 Joost van den Vondel, *Inwydinge van 't Stadthuis t' Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Fontein, 1655), v. 14. See the lemma 'inzingen' in: <http://gtb.inl.nl/iWDB/search?actie=article&wdb=WNT&id=M028425&lemma=inzingen&domein=0&conc=true> (consulted March 2, 2020).
- 20 Jan Zoet explicitly mentions the singing of the popular song *Wilhelmus* in his 'Het triomfeerende Amsteldam', in Jan Zoet, *d' Uitsteekenste digtkunstige werken* (Amsterdam: Philip Verbeek, 1714), 125 (v. 46).
- 21 G.J. van Bork and P.J. Verkruijsse (eds), *De Nederlandse en Vlaamse auteurs van middeleeuwen tot heden met inbegrip van de Friese auteurs* (Weesp: De Haan, 1985), 562.
- 22 Pieter Vlaardingerbroek, *Het paleis van de Republiek. Geschiedenis van het stadhuis van Amsterdam* (Zwolle: WBOOKS, 2011), 14 and 29.
- 23 Mattheus Gansneb Tengnagel, 'Op het toekomstende Raedhuis', in Mattheus Gansneb Tengnagel, *Aemsterdamsche Lindebladen* (Amsterdam: Nicolaes van Ravesteyn, 1641), 21.
- 24 E.g. Stijn Bussels, 'Vondel's *Brothers* and the Power of Imagination', *Comparative Drama* 49, no. 1 (2015): 49–68.
- 25 Joost van den Vondel, 'Bouwzang', in *Olyf-kranen der Vreede*, ed. Reyer Anslo (Amsterdam: Houthaak, 1649), 393–4.
- 26 For a Dutch edition, as well as a thorough explanation of Vondel's extensive poem, see Joost van den Vondel, *Vondels Inwydinge van 't Stadthuis van Amsterdam*, ed. and ann. by Saskia Albrecht et al. (Muiderberg: Coutinho, 1982).
- 27 Joost van den Vondel, *Inwydinge van 't Stadthuis t' Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Fontein, 1655), vv. 1–48.
- 28 Koen Ottenheym, 'Architectuur', in *Jacob van Campen. Het klassieke ideaal in de Gouden Eeuw*, ed. Jacobine Huiskens, Koen Ottenheym and Gary Schwartz (Amsterdam: Architectura & Natura Pers, 1995), 198.
- 29 Nina Geerdink, 'Een glazenmaker op de Parnas. Twee carrières van Jan Vos (1610–1667)', *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 27, no. 2 (2012): 180–93.
- 30 The most elaborate introduction to the drama is still W.J.C. Buitendijk, 'Inleiding', in Jan Vos, *Toneelwerken*, ed. W. J. C. Buitendijk (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1975), 47–97. For the latest bibliography on the play, see Nina Geerdink, 'Het vraagstuk van een wraakstuk. Jan Vos' "Aran en Titus"', in *Schokkende boeken!*, ed. Rick Honings, Lotte Jensen and Olga van Marion (Hilversum: Verloren, 2014), 39–46.
- 31 Marijke Meijer Drees, 'Toneelopvattingen in beweging. Rivaliteit tussen Vos en Vondel in 1641', *De Nieuwe Taalgids* 79 (1986): 453–60.
- 32 Jan Vos, 'Inwyding van het Stadthuis t' Amsterdam', in Jan Vos, *Alle de gedichten* (Amsterdam: Lescaille, 1662), 337–9.

- 33 For a comprehensive discussion of the poem, see Stijn Bussels, 'Medusa's Terror in the Amsterdam Town Hall, Or How to Look at Sculptures in the Dutch Golden Age', in *Idols to Museum Pieces. The Nature of Sculpture, its Historiography and Exhibition History, 1640–1880*, ed. Caroline van Eck (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 85–102.
- 34 Dianne Hamer and Wim Meulenkamp, *De dolle jonker: Leven en werk van Everard Meyster (c. 1617–1679)* (Amsterdam: Bekking, 1987).
- 35 'Meer te verwonderen, als immer te doorgronden'. Meyster, *Hemelsch Land-Spel*, 22.
- 36 Meyster, *Hemelsch Land-Spel*, 78.
- 37 Stijn Bussels, Laura Plezier and Marc Van Vaeck, 'Amsterdam sierlijk verbonden met God. Het lofdicht op het Amsterdamse stadhuis van Constantijn Huygens', *Spiegel der Letteren* 59, no. 2/3 (2017): 261–90.
- 38 Constantijn Huygens, 'Geluck aen de EE. Heeren Regeerders van Amsterdam, in haer nieuwe Stadthuys', in Constantijn Huygens, *Gedichten*, ed. by J.A. Worp (Groningen: Wolters, 1899), VI, 108.
- 39 Constantijn Huygens, 'Op de aerdtcloot' and 'Op den Hemelcloot', in Huygens, *Gedichten*, VI, 82–3.
- 40 Rudolf Cordes, *Jan Zoet, Amsterdammer (1609–1674). Leven en werk van een kleurrijk schrijver* (Hilversum: Verloren: 2008).
- 41 Maarten Prak and Diane Webb, *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century: The Golden Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 193.
- 42 Jan Zoet, 'Het triomfeerende Amsteldam', in Jan Zoet, *d' Uitsteekende digtkunstige werken* (Amsterdam: Philip Verbeek, 1714), 124–6.
- 43 Lucas Rotgans, *Elegy on Joan Huydecoper van Maarsseveen*, unpublished, Utrecht Archives, Entry 67, Archive of the Family Huydecoper, n. 80.

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