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**'De Storm der Hartstogten Woedt': The works of Johannes Jelgerhuis Rienkszoon as a source of stagecraft for the historically informed performer**

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## Chapter 3, case study 1

### Staging Siméon: the manuscript *Toneel Studien* in practice

This chapter focuses on the lesser-known side of Jelgerhuis's techniques and acting style, and investigates how actors today can make use of his manuscripts as a supplement to his *Theoretische lessen* in historically informed performance. To this end, I describe the process of comparing and combining information from one of Jelgerhuis's studies in the *Toneel Studien* manuscript of 1811 with the *Theoretische lessen*, to create and stage a character based on Jelgerhuis's oeuvre.<sup>1</sup> The short basic exercise I devised based on Jelgerhuis's instructions for gesticulation and attitudes in tragedy, as described in Chapter 2, will serve as training material for two of the staged scenes. By mapping out a selection of Jelgerhuis's thought processes in creating and giving expression to a stage character, I cast light on aspects of his acting that I deem indispensable for a more nuanced comprehension of his characterization method and acting style. In so doing, I challenge the notion that Jelgerhuis's approach to acting focused predominantly on the 'external forms and techniques' presented in his treatise.<sup>2</sup> This supports my argument that Jelgerhuis limited his lessons to the theoretical topics assigned to him (by focusing mainly on external form), but that he did not consider this the integral work of an actor: he reveals the internal work of the actor, including character creation and the reasons behind the emotions of the character, in his *Toneel Studien*. The following paragraphs document the processes of engaging with both the *Toneel Studien* and the *Theoretische lessen* through analysis, comparison, and artistic practice. I thereby focus on one particular study from the *Toneel Studien*, by setting up a project to stage three scenes involving Jelgerhuis's role as Siméon in the five act tragedy *Omasis, of Jozef in Egypte* (a Dutch translation of Pierre-Marie-François Baour-Lormian's *Omasis, ou Joseph en Egypte*).<sup>3</sup> I selected the role of Siméon for the staging experiments in this case study for the following reasons: Jelgerhuis was passionate about this role, he provides detailed descriptions about it, and links practical information on acting to specific lines of the dramatic text.<sup>4</sup>

It is important to note that the manuscript's text records Jelgerhuis's acting like a camera zooming in on one detail of his performance at a time. His passionate style of writing, full of strong

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<sup>1</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, pp. 138–140.

<sup>2</sup> HIP stage director Sigrid T'Hooft's discusses these 'external forms and techniques' and the use of Jelgerhuis's *Theoretische lessen* in stage practice, in 'Sigrid T'Hooft in an interview with Laura Moeckli: Using Historical Treatises and Iconography in Opera Staging Today', in *Sänger als Schauspieler: Zur Opernpraxis des 19. Jahrhunderts in Text, Bild und Musik*, 5, ed. by Anette Schaffer, Edith Keller, Laura Moeckli, and others (Argus, 2014), 142–150 (p. 149).

<sup>3</sup> See Baour-Lormian, *Omasis*, transl. Westerman and Baour-Lormian, *Omasis*. The Dutch première took place on 28 April, 1810. See Abraham Louis Barbaz, *Mengelwerken van A. Barbaz; in nederduitsche en fransche vaerzen. Eerste deel* (Amsterdam: Willem van Vliet, 1810), p. 159.

<sup>4</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, pp. 115–180. I refer mainly to the *Toneel Studien* manuscript in Amsterdam. As the study of Siméon in particular contains very few differences (mainly in spelling) in comparison with the *Tonneel Stúdien* manuscript in Antwerp, I only mention the latter when a difference in content seems relevant to this chapter.

adjectives, captivates readers and sweeps them through a succession of details. But because of this focus on individual details, the reader does not experience the range of simultaneously occurring acting parameters that an actor requires to execute the scene described. The challenge for actors staging scenes from *Omasis, of Jozef in Egypte* in line with Jelgerhuis's writing, lies in attempting to create as complete a picture as possible of the actor's actions on stage.

### 3.1 TONEEL STUDIEN, THE FIFTH STUDY: SIMÉON IN CONTEXT

In Chapter 1, I have introduced the *Toneel Studien* manuscripts, in which Jelgerhuis documented his experience with various roles he has performed in the Amsterdam Schouwburg. His study of Siméon amply surpasses the other roles in terms of the scenes described in detail as well as the amount of pages: the role of Siméon counts sixty-five pages, whereas the others each cover between fifteen and thirty-five. Jelgerhuis singles out the role of Siméon for its unique quality and its goal 'de folteringen van een kwaad geweeten levendig voor te draagen de woorden daartoe zijn wel gekoozen en geeven den Acteur gepaste gelegenheid zig te kenmerken' (to display the tortures of a bad conscience in a lively manner, through well-chosen words, which give the actor the appropriate opportunity to distinguish himself).<sup>5</sup> Praising the '*de achtbaarheid van het onderwerp*' (the respectable subject) of the play, Jelgerhuis recounts his preparatory research into the background, costume, and character of this cherished role.<sup>6</sup> To help contextualize the many examples relating to the play and the role of Siméon in this case study, I provide here a summary of *Omasis, of Jozef in Egypte*:

#### 3.1.1 *Omasis, of Jozef in Egypte*, Synopsis (of the Dutch translation by Westerman)

**Fifteen years before** the day on which the play takes place: Siméon, envious of his father's preference for his brother Joseph, almost murdered the latter. But instead, Siméon and his brothers sold Joseph as a slave. Siméon then told their father Jacob that Joseph had been killed by a lion. Only the youngest son Benjamin did not know about this. **Fifteen years later**, Siméon is still filled with remorse, and his father Jacob has never stopped grieving for his supposedly dead son. Joseph, meanwhile, has been appointed second-in-command by the pharaoh (in the city of Memphis), since he (Joseph) had protected the city by explaining the pharaoh's dream, which he said predicted seven years of abundant harvest followed by seven years of famine. The city had prepared for the famine, unlike other places. Among the many who come to beg for help during the famine, Joseph (known as Omasis at court) recognizes his brothers but keeps his identity a secret. He learns from them that their father is still alive and keeps his two brothers Siméon and Benjamin at court, until the other brothers bring him Jacob. **Acts I and II:** Omasis is about to marry Almaïs, the sister of Ramnes, a prince at the same court. Siméon is secretly in love with Almaïs. Ramnes, having lost the pharaoh's favor after Omasis appeared at court, is envious of Omasis's excellent prospects and plans a coup. Ramnes tries to persuade Siméon to join the conspirators and kill Omasis, but Siméon resists. Siméon hides his love for Almaïs, as well as his remorse for (he thinks) murdering his brother Joseph. **Act III:** Almaïs tells Siméon that Omasis might lift Siméon's burdens. He confesses that his only wish is for his freedom. She is offended, and tells him she will never speak

<sup>5</sup> Underscored emphasis as in the original, see Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 116.

<sup>6</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 115.

to him again. **Act III, Scene 3:** Siméon's monologue. Siméon, grieving the loss of Almaïs's respect, and having thus lost everything, decides to join Ramnes's plot to kill Omasis. He blames Heaven for not leaving him in peace after fifteen years of remorse, saying he will act on Heaven's orders, if it will free him from remorse. **Act III, Scenes 4–7:** Ramnes again tries to persuade Siméon, who resists until Ramnes offers him Almaïs' hand in marriage (Ramnes had discovered Siméon's hidden passion for her). Omasis, wanting to find out if Siméon is remorseful about his past crime, asks Siméon about the cause of his sadness, but Siméon, suspicious, does not confide in Omasis. Their mutual frustrations trigger the anger of both. Omasis leaves, disappointed, and Siméon is now resolved to join Ramnes. Benjamin tells Siméon about the arrival of their father Jacob. Siméon is alarmed: he fears that Benjamin has found out what he is about to do, and does not dare to face their father. He leaves in dismay, telling Benjamin to keep away from him. **Act IV:** Jacob has arrived in Memphis and is reunited with all his children except Siméon (and his lost son Joseph). Omasis joins them, and, moved by his father's grief about Joseph, almost discloses his identity. Then Azaël enters, recounting that Ramnes and his conspirators are on their way, Siméon leading them. **Act V:** Nephtalia narrates how Ramnes was captured by the people during an uproar, and killed himself. Omasis has Siméon captured. Omasis comes to speak with Jacob and his other sons, and Siméon is brought in, in chains. Omasis must decide if Siméon should be punished or forgiven. Siméon declares that he should be killed for his crime, as he almost killed an innocent man (Omasis), but before he dies, he wants to confess to another crime: he almost killed his brother Joseph, and the other brothers (except Benjamin) also confess their guilt. Omasis then reveals that he is the lost son Joseph, and he and Jacob forgive Siméon and his brothers.<sup>7</sup>

### 3.1.2 Jelgerhuis's creation of Siméon

While Jelgerhuis refers to the Bible as a source to contextualize the play in terms of the time, the place, and Siméon's age, he turns to the visual arts, treatises on costume, and illustrations in his quest for historically accurate costumes and Siméon's hairstyle and beard. For instance, he consults engravings by Charles-Nicolas Cochin (1715–1790) in *Gewoonten der aloude volken* as a reference for Siméon's costume.<sup>8</sup> Several pages of this book can be found in Jelgerhuis's *Studiën van klederdragen* portfolio, containing a collection of drawings and prints intended as study material for actors and painters.<sup>9</sup> Jelgerhuis also examined etchings of biblical scenes by Jan Luyken as point of reference for Siméon's costume, mentioning in particular a plate depicting Joseph selling corn to his brothers.<sup>10</sup> He even allowed himself to 'follow him [Luyken] blindly', the more so as Cochin himself stated that he had copied his plates on Egyptian costume from Luyken.<sup>11</sup> Jelgerhuis added

<sup>7</sup> Compared to the biblical narrative, Baour-Lormian added the part regarding Almaïs to this five-act tragedy. For a Dutch synopsis and commentary on the play by theatre critics in 1817, see *De Tooneelkijker*, 3 (1818), pp. 34–40.

<sup>8</sup> For Cochin's engravings of Egyptian costume see, for instance, Dandré-Bardon, *Gewoonten der aloude volken*, transl. anonymous, vol. 3, plates 72, 74–75, pp. 33, 34.

<sup>9</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Studiën van klederdragen*. See also Chapter 1, section 1.6.7, 'Theoretische lessen, 1824–1830'.

<sup>10</sup> Johannes (Jan) Luyken, *Joseph verkoopt Koorn aan syn Broeders* (1708), Amsterdam Museum, object number A 52503, <http://hdl.handle.net/11259/collection.61417> (accessed 22 October 2021).

<sup>11</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, pp. 117–118.

two illustrations to his study of Siméon; one of his portrait in profile, clearly showing the style of Siméon's headdress and beard (Figures 1 and 2), and the other of his costume (Figures 4 and 5).<sup>12</sup>



Siméon's headdress and beard illustrated and engraved by Jelgerhuis.

Figure 1 (left), *Toneel Studien* (Amsterdam), detail; Figure 2 (centre), *Toneel Studien* (Antwerp), detail; Figure 3 (right), *Theoretische lessen*, plate 64, detail.

Almost twenty years later, Jelgerhuis included these two illustrations as engravings in the publication of his *Theoretische lessen* (Figures 3 and 6). It is interesting to see that Jelgerhuis elaborated upon but did not change the concept of Siméon's headdress and costume in the timespan between the writing of the manuscript (1811) and the publication of his treatise (1827–1829). The illustrations from the manuscripts in Amsterdam (Figures 1 and 4) and in Antwerp (Figures 2 and 5) are examples of Jelgerhuis's ability to make almost identical copies. The minor elaborations of these illustrations for the publication of his treatise therefore seem to have been deliberate choices.<sup>13</sup> His coloured illustrations in the manuscripts add information to that provided in the *Theoretische lessen*, in which Jelgerhuis makes no suggestion for the colours of Siméon's costume.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The red sleeves, the red trousers, and the blue tunic in Figure 4 and 5 are also visible in Jelgerhuis's costume design for Sofar in Ninus (see Chapter 1, section 1.3.5, 'Unpublished costume designs'), where he refers to the tunic and trousers as his own.

<sup>13</sup> The engraving in the *Theoretische lessen* shows a change in gesture and posture (the changes made add to the three-dimensionality of the figure and improve the posture: the left foot is placed more to the left side and the left hip and shoulder are dropped slightly, creating a C-shaped curve to the body. There is 'draai' (torsion/flexure) in the torso, the right hand is open to the side). The acorn-shaped pendants (*akers*) hanging from the red sash applied to the waist are omitted in the engraving and the cane is added.

<sup>14</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, pp. 208–209. For more on Jelgerhuis's studies on costume, see Chapter 1, section 1.3, 'Jelgerhuis - the costume designs'.





Costume designs for Siméon, illustrated and engraved by Jelgerhuis  
 Figure 4, (left) *Toneel Studien* (Amsterdam); Figure 5, (centre) *Tonneel Stúdien*, (Antwerp);  
 Figure 6, (right) *Theoretische lessen*, plate 64.



Figure 7, (left) Johannes (Jan) Luyken, *Joseph verkoopt Koorn aan syn Broeders*, (1708),  
 Amsterdam Museum, A 52503, detail; Figure 8, (centre) Engraving by Charles-Nicholas  
 Cochin in Dandré-Bardon, *Gewoonte der aloude volken*, transl. anonymous, vol. 3 plate 74, detail;  
 Figure 9, (right) Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, plate 63, detail.

The same treatise also contains costume illustrations for two other roles from the same play: Jacob and Joseph/Omasis).<sup>15</sup> Not only the costume, but also the entire picture of the latter is clearly copied directly from either Cochin or from Luyken's engraving of 1708 (see Figures 7 to 9).<sup>16</sup>

After describing his choices regarding Siméon's costume, Jelgerhuis discusses various aspects of Siméon's character. He writes about his creation of a sad, sombre Siméon oppressed with painful remorse who painstakingly tries to conceal his inner thoughts and feelings: a Siméon given to sudden passionate outbursts at the smallest offence and oversensitive to everything, including the beauty of Almaïs.<sup>17</sup> Jelgerhuis even decided not to add 'roodsel' (rouge) to Siméon's make-up, so that his pallor might mirror '*de inwendige foltering der Ziel*' (the inner torture of the soul).<sup>18</sup> His preparation of the character, then, is a complete creation, involving the outer aspects as well as the role's historical and emotional background, Jelgerhuis's feelings of the moment, and, as he himself repeatedly puts it, even his character's soul.

Once Jelgerhuis has outlined Siméon's background, costume, make-up, and character, he describes the staging. Starting with Siméon's first entrance on stage, Jelgerhuis writes about the character's state of mind, his gestures, and emotions. But more significantly, Jelgerhuis relays his own thoughts about the motivation behind Siméon's actions: the thoughts or words triggering the emotions that make him react, recoil, lash out, and lower or raise his voice. The intensity of Jelgerhuis's writing is heightened in the more dramatic scenes, which show instances of a profound identification with Siméon's character. The following passage gives an idea of Jelgerhuis's involvement with his subject (and the character); the most dramatic moments in his writing are marked by confusing phrases, almost breathless successions of his actions and thoughts, and a remarkable alternation between the personal pronouns '*ik, mij*' (I, me) and '*zijn*' (his).<sup>19</sup> '*Daar nu Almaïs [...] van haar aanstaande Huwlyk Spreekt met Omasis, word eenen minnenijldigen trek op zijn gelaat gebooren, de oogen dan eensklaps opslaande en Brandende van de Eene naar de andere Zijde wendende, deed ik ontwaaren wat in mij omging*'.<sup>20</sup> Jelgerhuis then continues:

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<sup>15</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 209. For the costume illustrations for Jacob and Joseph/Omasis, see plate 63; Siméon, plate 64.

<sup>16</sup> Luyken, *Joseph verkoopt Koorn*. See also Dandré-Bardon, *Gewoonten der aloude volken*, transl. anonymous, vol. 3, plate 74, pp. 33 and 34.

<sup>17</sup> *Zoo was voor mij in acht te neemen, dat bij Zijne Schunheid en treurige, Sombere, Pynlijke Wroeging, Zeekere opbruijnsingen van drift plaats moesten hebben, bij [122] bij de geringste belediging, voorts hoogst gevoelig voor alles, en dus ook voor de vrouwlijke Schoonheid van Almaïs*. (Thus, I had to take into account, that together with his [Siméon's] shyness and sad, somber, painful remorse, certain outbursts of temper had to take place, at [122] at the slightest offence, furthermore highly sensitive to everything, and therefore also to the female beauty of Almaïs). Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, pp. 121–122.

<sup>18</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 119.

<sup>19</sup> Jelgerhuis's manuscript is grammatically confusing in some places, making translation problematical, as certain passages or words can be interpreted in several ways. In order to stay as closely as possible to the original text, I have prioritized the meaning of Jelgerhuis's words or phrases over English grammar, even when this occasionally results in a slightly awkward translation.

<sup>20</sup> 'As Almaïs now speaks of her coming marriage with Omasis, an expression of jealousy is born in his face, the eyes then suddenly opening, burning, and turning from side to side, I showed what was happening inside of me.' Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 138.

*maar een Electricque Schok greep my aan door met de geheele Lighaams gestalte de felle Spijt uittedrukken op het hooren bevestigen dat zijn Vader en broeders in Waarheid koomen Zullen de handen dan tot Vuijsten brengende en de spieren spannende, de oogen Vinnig opwaarts heffende met een Eenigsints agter over geworpen hoofd, en de trek der Spijt op het gelaat maalende, drukte ik de Woedende Spijt uijt die Simeon alle de felle gemoeds drift opbruischend deed gevoelen, met eene Sterk onderscheidenden toon en Luijder Stemme Welke ontzetting baarde, vergat ik de teedere gevoelens tot almais en gedroeg mij als of ik al wilde verslinden Wat Zig op dat oogenblik by mij bevond.*<sup>21</sup>

but an electric shock went through me, by expressing the furious spite with my whole body, on hearing that his father and brothers truly would arrive [. M]y hands forming fists, and my muscles tensing, lifting my eyes furiously with my head slightly inclined backwards, and painting the image of spite on my face, I expressed the furious spitefulness that caused Siméon to feel the escalating fury of his passion. [Speaking] with a special tone [of voice] and a loud voice, which caused consternation, I forgot my tender feelings for Almaïs, and behaved as though I wanted to devour everything that was at that moment in my vicinity.

Passages such as these may also explain why the role of Siméon left Jelgerhuis emotionally drained after a performance. He writes, ‘*Veelen Mijner Rollen geeven dien Lighaams Vermoejing teevens Welke afmat, maar in deese Rol was mij altoos over eene Vermoejing der Ziel welke naa afloop der taak naar rust Snakte*’ (Many of my roles cause extreme physical fatigue, but in this role there was an enervation of the soul, gasping for rest after this task).<sup>22</sup> His exhaustion is not surprising when one takes his manner of acting into account: not only does Jelgerhuis move between various emotional states more than one hundred and twenty times in this role, but the high level of physical and emotional tension also indicates an extremely intense acting style.<sup>23</sup>

### 3.2 ANALYSIS OF JELGERHUIS’S ACTING STYLE

The paragraphs pertaining to this section of the dissertation are a continuation of the paragraphs which focused on Jelgerhuis’s acting in Chapter 1. The focus here sharpens on Jelgerhuis’s acting style in the role of Siméon, so as to examine the tools Jelgerhuis adopted to shape this specific role. Analysis of the other roles in the *Toneel Studien* would lead to variations in the outcomes here described. I have analysed Jelgerhuis’s study of Siméon according to six subjects. For the sake of brevity, legibility, and equity, I will use the term ‘actor’ to refer to persons of all genders.

1. Direct references to lines from the play text.
2. Jelgerhuis’s own interpretation of Siméon’s character and the thoughts and mental images behind his acting.
3. Emotions/passions (the term passion can be understood as a strong but specific emotional state, such as love, hate, joy or anger).
4. The voice: declamation, vocal colour, pitch, and volume.

<sup>21</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, pp. 138–140.

<sup>22</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 179.

<sup>23</sup> See Appendix A for a list of the passions described by Jelgerhuis in his study of Siméon.



5. Notes on the physical: eye movements, gestures, muscle tension, stance, and so on.
6. Indications concerning blocking: i.e., the actor's position and movements on stage.

### 3.2.1 Direct references to lines from the play text

In the process of studying Jelgerhuis's words in relationship with the play text, I worked in parallel with the following texts: a) the published text of the play *Omasis, of Jozef in Egypte* (hereafter *Omasis*); b) Jelgerhuis's study of Siméon in the *Toneel Studien* manuscript; c) Jelgerhuis's quotations from the *Omasis* play text in the manuscript; d) a working document (Appendix B) composed by myself that combines passages from these three sources (a, b, and c).<sup>24</sup>

The quotations that Jelgerhuis inserted in the manuscript made it clear which stage actions and emotions he performed in which scenes and lines, occasionally with exact words of the play text. These could be lines and words of Siméon's speech, as well as words spoken by the other characters. Jelgerhuis's thoughts on his interpretation clarify why certain actions and emotions came together in specific lines of text – not only when he speaks but also when he listens and reacts to the other characters in the play. He mostly underlines the quotations of the *Omasis* play text, as can be seen in Figure 10.<sup>25</sup>

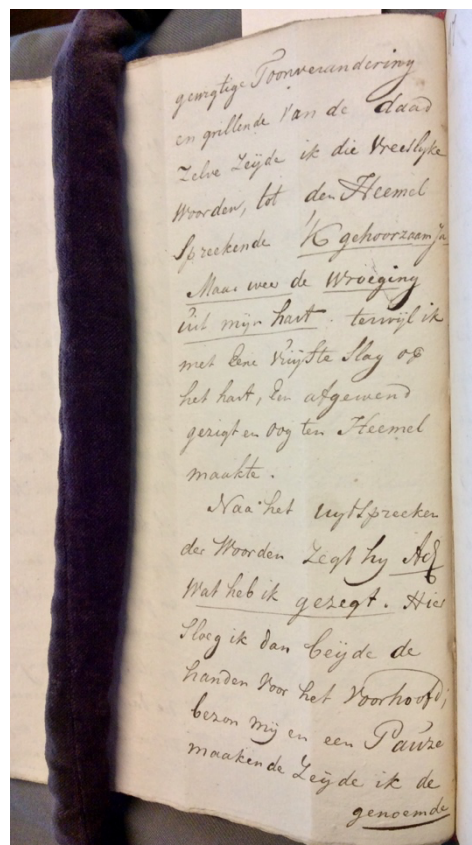


Figure 10, Example of Jelgerhuis's manuscript *Toneel Studien*, (Amsterdam), p. 146

<sup>24</sup> In order to work from a manageable text, I transcribed both the *Toneel Studien* manuscript in Amsterdam and the *Omasis* play text.

<sup>25</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 146.

In other sections, he describes a certain passage in his own words (often transformed or merged with Siméon's thoughts), making it more difficult to identify the exact lines of the play text that he refers to in his manuscript. In order to stay as close as possible to Jelgerhuis's descriptions in the manuscript during the staging process, I selected the fragments that directly concern passages in the play and inserted them between the corresponding lines in the play text, thus creating a single working document. The more Jelgerhuis goes into detail regarding a certain passage, the more this can be done with precision. Appendix B features a selection from this document, corresponding to the third act of the play, so as to give context for Scenes 3–5, discussed in this case study. Using the working document proved to be more efficient than moving back and forth between the published text of the play and the manuscript. Jelgerhuis also listed several passages (quotations) from the *Omasis* text that illustrate Siméon's character:<sup>26</sup>

*“die Simeon, dien we onzen blik zien schroomen  
 “die mijmerende en verdiept in zijne sombere droomen  
 “in de eenzaamheid verschuijlt op dat hy ons ontga..[...]*

*“ik Spreek met Simeon in Zijn verbrijzelt hart  
 “dring ik tot de oorzaak van zijn verkropte Smart  
 ===  
 “gij kunt dien Simeon, gij kunt Zijn Woeste Zeeden  
 ===*

*“Simeon is het hooft van Een dier woeste horden  
 “die nu Eens herders zyn zig dan in 't harnas gorden [...]  
 “Wel dra Zal ik zijn woede ontembaar bruijschen Zien  
 “vergeefs sch bestrijd hy t vuur, waardoor hij word verslonden,  
 “hij blaakt voor Almais ———*

*(“that Siméon, whom we see avoiding our glances  
 “who pondering and deeply sunk in his sad dreams  
 “hides in solitude so as to avoid us.. [...]*

*“I speak with Siméon[;] in his shattered heart  
 I reach the core of his suppressed pain  
 =====  
 “you know that Siméon, you are aware of his wild ways  
 =====  
 “Siméon is the leader of one of those savage hordes  
 “who are sometimes shepherds, and sometimes gird themselves for battle [...]  
 “soon I will see his anger boil uncontrollably  
 “in vain he tries to conquer the fire which devours him, he burns for Almais.)*

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<sup>26</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, pp. 120–121.

These are mostly lines spoken by other characters, but are indicative nevertheless as they depict Siméon's 'verbrijzelt hart' (shattered heart), his 'verkropte smart' (suppressed pain), his potentially uncontainable anger, and a fire which he tries to conquer in vain (his secret love for Almaïs), but 'waardoor hij wordt verslonden' (which devours him). Jelgerhuis emphasizes the importance of this secret, in addition to the secret of Siméon's conscience: '*dit was inzonderbeijd voor my een bedenkelijk voorstel, dewijl hij [Siméon] Niemand dit gehejm ooit ontdekt had, en zoo wel versmeeg als het feit, dat hem 't geweeten knaagf*' (for me, this in particular was a significant matter, as he [Siméon] never revealed this secret to anyone, and concealed this as well as the fact that his conscience gnaws at him).<sup>27</sup>

By analysing the text of the play in this manner, and in accord with an understanding of Siméon's past, Jelgerhuis created and assembled thoughts and mental images that later served him on stage. He wrote, addressing himself directly to the reader:

*Beoordeelt hoe veel verbeeldengs kragt 'er verEyst word om zulk Een mijmerende Zin verwarring wel aftebeelden [...] Wat kan daar toe lijden, dan alleen het geheele Character alle de Omstandigheeden voor af klaar te doorgronden en te vatten, al eer men Zehs tot het memoriseeren der Rol overgaat. — en dan levendige denkebeelden en geestkragt door naadenken optezamelen om het vermoogen van voorstelling te verkrijgen.*<sup>28</sup>

Judge how much imagination is necessary to represent well such a pensive and confused state of mind. How else can one achieve this, other than by grasping, and thoroughly understanding in advance [...] the entire character and situation before one even starts to memorize the role. — and then through reflection to gather lively mental images and strength of mind in order to acquire the ability to imagine.

This passage reveals Jelgerhuis's awareness of the preparatory processes behind his acting, as well as his desire to share this knowledge with readers/his potential audience. His ambition to note down the work of the actor, both behind the scenes and with the aim of publication, also shows Jelgerhuis's pride in his craft, in his creation and interpretation of this role.

### 3.2.2 Jelgerhuis's own interpretation of the character and the thoughts and mental images behind his acting

Jelgerhuis's approach to acting reveals different levels of engagement: his interpretation of Siméon, his thoughts on technical concerns (ensuring control over the voice, preparing a transition, and so on), and his construction of Siméon's inner thoughts. This preparatory process, based on the understanding of Siméon's character, enabled Jelgerhuis to draw on a mental storehouse of thoughts and images when he wanted to trigger a particular emotional reaction in the character.

<sup>27</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 122.

<sup>28</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 136. My choice to translate 'denkebeelden' as 'mental images' in this context stems from my personal acting experience and practice. Alternative translations could include 'thoughts' or 'ideas'. The word 'voorstelling' could mean 'imagination' as well as 'to represent'; for more on the choices and issues related to the translation of Jelgerhuis's works, see the Introduction to this dissertation.

Having created a Siméon whose main emotion is remorse, he worked with a character who repeatedly relives the past in his mind. In the following example, Jelgerhuis uses Siméon's vivid childhood memories, provoked by a dialogue between Omasis and Siméon, to generate feelings of remorse and anger in the latter:

*dit nadenken bragt hem levendig voor den geest, [...] het beginzel van de Oorzaak zijner wroeging, snel gelijk een bliksem straal schiet dat gevoel hem door de Zinnen. – en hoorende onderwijl Een voorstel van het geen hem tans door de Zinnen Zweeft, Zegt hij in volle woede, geheel in zig zelve gekeerd, met donderende wrevel en woede de tanden op Elkander slaande en trillende van razernij als in een vlaag van geheel zig Zelfen te vergeeten, en nu niets meer om zig heen bespeurende de Zeer opmerksaame Reegels<sup>29</sup>*

This thinking vividly brought to his mind's eye, [...] the source of the cause of his remorse. Swiftly, this feeling strikes like lightning through his senses, and at the same time hearing [Omasis] describe exactly what is on his [Siméon's] mind, he, in a full rage, completely withdrawn into himself, gnashing his teeth with thundering resentment and anger, and trembling with rage as if in a fit of complete self-abandonment, and not noticing anything around him anymore, speaks the very remarkable lines

Through the process of imagination, Jelgerhuis created Siméon's character and inner world to such an extent that he could move seamlessly between his own thoughts and memories and those of Siméon. The thoughts Jelgerhuis activated through his imagination feed into Siméon's character, guiding and provoking his emotions and actions. Jelgerhuis's preparatory work on building Siméon's character and 'gathering lively images' as described in the previous two citations shows parallels with the following fragment from Stanislavski's chapter on the imagination:

We must have, first of all, an unbroken series of supposed circumstances in the midst of which our exercise is played. Secondly we must have a solid line of inner visions bound up with those circumstances, so that they will be *illustrated for us. During every moment we are on the stage, during every moment of the development of the action of the play, we must be aware [...] of an inner chain of circumstances which we ourselves have imagined in order to illustrate our parts. [...]*<sup>30</sup>

Jelgerhuis's preparation created an 'inner chain of circumstances', of thoughts and 'lively images' or 'inner visions', which also continued during the lines of his fellow actors, so that he could react accordingly and build up the right tension for speaking his next lines.<sup>31</sup> In the third act, for instance,

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<sup>29</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, pp. 155–156.

<sup>30</sup> I find it astonishing how often Jelgerhuis's notes on acting and preparation brought to mind passages from Stanislavski's *An Actor Prepares*. Much has changed between the acting style of Jelgerhuis and that of Stanislavski and his contemporaries, yet there are essential elements that lie at the core of acting that seem not to register the passing of time. Italics in this citation are as in the original. See Constantin Stanislavski, *An Actor Prepares*, translated by Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood, introduction by John Gielgud, 33rd printing (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1979), p. 60.

<sup>31</sup> In the role of Avogaro (the second study in the *Toneel Studien*), Jelgerhuis even describes the mutual understanding between himself and another actor through their eye contact, although their characters have no lines in the play at that moment. See Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 60. For more

he constantly navigates between Siméon's feelings of anger and offence – sometimes triggered by the words of another character, sometimes by his own thoughts – and the dissimulation of these emotions by looking away, or by a sombre mien and a soft tone of voice. Jelgerhuis is also aware of how the development of events in the play directly affect the development of his role, increasing Siméon's range of emotions. Regarding the beginning of the fifth act, he writes: '*we vinden nieuwe Stof tot de bewondering over dit Character*' (we find new material leading to admiration of this character).<sup>32</sup> When Siméon appears on stage in chains, knowing that his conspiracy with Ramnes has been discovered, he experiences shame and disgrace. Jelgerhuis explains: '*dit had hij [Siméon] nog niet ondergaan. Dit gevoel is nieuw voor hem*' (he had not felt this way before. This feeling is new to him). Observations such as these reveal why Jelgerhuis made certain choices in his interpretation of this role. In understanding the thought processes behind Jelgerhuis's creation of the role of Siméon, and how he guided his imagination to achieve the passions he saw as fitting for the lines in the text, one can get an idea of the mental work and preparation he deems requisite for actors.

### 3.2.3 Emotions / passions

By separating the emotions Jelgerhuis mentions in his manuscript from the other parameters regarding acting mentioned above (concerning the voice, eye movements, gestures, muscle tension, stance, and indications concerning blocking), I observed additional supplements to the information in the *Theoretische lessen*. I noticed, for instance, that Jelgerhuis goes through a large number of passions in various sections of Siméon's role and that he predominantly describes combinations of emotions not listed in the *Theoretische lessen*. In the treatise, Jelgerhuis includes almost thirty passions – such as joy, anger, and fear – that he mostly explains and compares separately, giving transitions for some.<sup>33</sup> But his study of Siméon displays a broader range of passions, including those mixed with and coloured by other passions, such as '*Woedende Spijt*' (furious spitefulness); '*moedige trots*' (courageous pride); '*Wanhoopende Razernij*' (despairing rage); and the combination of '*Schrik en Schaamte en hartverscheurende Wroeging*' (fright, shame, and heart-wrenching remorse).<sup>34</sup> In the manuscript, combinations of passions such as these can rapidly follow each other within a few lines of text, suggesting Jelgerhuis's thorough command of the actor's craft. In fact, there are more than seventy-five different passions and combinations of

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on Jelgerhuis in the role of Avogaro, see Chapter 1, section 1.5.4, 'School for civilization and the preparation of a role'.

<sup>32</sup> *Nu tot de ontwikkeling van het 5 de Bedrijff koomende vinden wy nieuwe Stof tot de bewondering over dir Character [...] de Samensweering is ontdekt en Simeon in boeyens aldus verschijnt hij nu. Bedenkende dat nu eene vermeerdering van gevoel gebooren is, Schaamte en Schande, dit had hij nog niet ondergaan. Dit gevoel is nieuw voor hem.* (Now coming to the development of the 5th act, we find new material to admire in this character. The conspiracy has been discovered and Siméon now appears in chains. Realizing that an increase of feeling is born, shame and disgrace, this he had not experienced before. This feeling is new to him). Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, pp. 170–171.

<sup>33</sup> For examples of transitions between or combinations of different passions, see rest-wonder-surprise-fright: *Theoretische lessen*, plate 33, pp. 125–126; '*verrukking en overgang tot vreugde*' (rapture and the transition to joy), p. 140; de 'herneming van de schrik' (relief after fright), p. 146; for examples of passion combinations, see '*schrik [...] met verbaasdheid vermengd*' (fright [...] mixed with surprise), pp. 125–126, and '*verbaasdheid met vreugde gemengd*' (surprise mixed with joy), p. 140.

<sup>34</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, pp. 139, 172, 145, and 171.

passions in his description of Siméon's scenes.<sup>35</sup> Where such emotional states of mind are accompanied by Jelgerhuis's (or rather, Siméon's) thoughts, vocal colour, facial expression, gestures, postures, and movements, they reveal the layered and complex construction of Jelgerhuis's approach to acting and to perceiving his role. However, passion combinations such as those used by him are no novelty. Aaron Hill, for instance, writes in 'An Essay on the Art of Acting' that love is 'a Passion, the true name whereof might be *Legion*; for it includes all the other, in all their degrees and varieties'.<sup>36</sup> And although Jelgerhuis decided not to include Charles Le Brun's combined passions in his *Theoretische lessen*, the latter's *Methode pour apprendre a dessiner les passions* does offer illustrations for expressing '*Colere meslée de rage*' [sic] (anger mixed with rage) and '*Étonnement avec frayeur*' (astonishment with fright).<sup>37</sup> The value of observing these combined passions in Jelgerhuis's manuscript, then, lies in its application into practice, adding to the information in the *Theoretische lessen*, in which the passions are mostly didactically separated from the other layers of acting. In contrast, the *Theoretische lessen* contains illustrations and basics of posture and gestures that are lacking in the manuscript. As discussed in Chapter 2, Jelgerhuis's lessons on the passions provide examples of facial expression and postures for the passions he deemed appropriate for the stage. Jelgerhuis thus shares his knowledge of the basic passions, but there is no indication in the treatise of how to achieve variation in the passions, or how to convert the given information into a role. His descriptions in the Siméon study, despite being composed at an earlier date, can be seen as the key to the next level of the curriculum, as private lessons with a teacher of acting, and as a glimpse of what happens on stage as well as in the actor's studio.

### 3.2.4 The voice: declamation, vocal colour, volume, and pitch

In this respect, every aspect of Jelgerhuis's description of the voice in the Siméon manuscript directly enriches the *Theoretische lessen*. Jelgerhuis states in his treatise: '*ik handel van Gesticulatie en Mimiek, en mag dus van geen spreken gewagen; dit is anderen aanbevolen.*' (I deal with gesticulation and facial expression, and therefore cannot speak of speech; this is dealt with by others).<sup>38</sup> In the manuscript, however, he wrote freely about speech. He describes the vocal colour of Siméon's lines, emphasizing emotion, volume, articulation, contrast, and also describes passages requiring '*opklimming*' (climbing), and indications such as '*holle*' (hollow) and '*zuivere*' (pure) tones.<sup>39</sup> In several passages, he expresses Siméon's emotional state by adding sighs, whispers, stammering, or pauses in his text, sometimes combined with tears.<sup>40</sup> Naturally, the precise interpretation of such indications is subjective, but by using them as a guideline, the actor's vocal progression of the spoken lines changes significantly. The observation of the vocal indications and their application throughout the Siméon study unveils a style of delivery marked by contrast. Jelgerhuis achieved this by rapid alternations of contrasting passions, but also by a slow crescendo of emotion and

<sup>35</sup> Repeating passions are not included in this number. For a full list of the passions in Jelgerhuis's study of Siméon, see Appendix A.

<sup>36</sup> Hill, 'An Essay', p. 388.

<sup>37</sup> The French original as well as the Dutch translation feature the plates with double passions. See Le Brun, *Methode*, figures 34–35; and Le Brun, *Afbeelding der Hertstogten*, figures 34–35.

<sup>38</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 108.

<sup>39</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, pure tones: pp. 145; hollow: pp. 131, 168, 169.

<sup>40</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, sighs: pp. 123, 124, 128–130, 158, 170; whispering: pp. 148, 169; stammering: p. 141; pauses: pp. 126, 146, 162; tears: p. 141, 160, 161, 167, 176, 177.



volume and/or pitch throughout an entire passage, reaching an extreme against which yet another contrast could be placed. He even made use of vocal colour to emphasize the contrast between single words within the same sentence. For instance, in the following line ‘*Zoo keert de kalmte in ’t eijnde in mijn Verscheurd gemoed*’ (thus calm finally returns to my torn/lacerated heart):<sup>41</sup>

*deese Reegel gaf ik dan de Onderscheijding waar voor hij vatbaar is, naamlijk in den wenschenden en verlangenden toon te paaren, het gepaste geluid der stem Zagtheid op kalmte en daar tegen overstaande Ruuwen toon voor ’t woord verscheurd en vermeerderde alzo eene toonwisseling die my voorkwam Zoo te behooren.*<sup>42</sup>

I gave this line the differentiation of which it is capable, namely combining it with a wishing and longing tone. The appropriate soft tone on [the word] calm and in contrast the rough tone for the word torn thus increased a change of vocal colour which I deemed appropriate.

Descriptions of rapid changes such as these indicate Jelgerhuis’s attention to detail in creating a particular dramatic effect: short accents that tell the audience more about Siméon’s inner stirrings, although the overall emotion remains of a wishing, longing quality. Similarly, Jelgerhuis used vocal expression to hide or reveal Siméon’s true feelings. In Scene 5 of Act III, for instance, the words spoken by Omasis anger Siméon; instantly forgetting that someone else is with him, he raises his voice in dismay but quickly checks himself by disguising his anger behind a softer tone of voice: ‘*Zelfs met eenige lieflijke voorgewende Zoet vloeiendheid*’ (even with a lightly feigned dulcet, sweetly flowing quality).<sup>43</sup>

In his search for a differentiated performance, Jelgerhuis organized his vocal build-up to achieve the desired effect on the audience. Knowing which passages were the most moving, and which ones ‘*ontzetting baarde*’ (caused dismay), he ensured that such moments were well prepared.<sup>44</sup> He also made sure to be perfectly understood during important moments by placing himself centre stage when the situation allowed for it, and by articulating clearly.<sup>45</sup> Yet Jelgerhuis hides neither the difficulty he experienced in performing certain passages to perfection, nor the fact that he does not always succeed. He discusses one passage in the third act, so touching that he would almost be overwhelmed by his own emotions. Here, Jelgerhuis writes that he feared not being able to speak the simple words ‘*o ja*’ (oh yes) in the right tone of voice, and needed to muster all of his concentration to suppress his true feeling and postpone his tears until after he had uttered those words.<sup>46</sup> Keeping the voice under control seems to be the technical element which allows Jelgerhuis not to be overcome by his or the character’s emotions. Where Golding suggests that

<sup>41</sup> Underscored emphasis as in the original: Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, pp. 137.

<sup>42</sup> Underscored emphasis as in the original: Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, pp. 137–138.

<sup>43</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 155; for the entire passage, see pp. 152–155.

<sup>44</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 140.

<sup>45</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 143; standing center stage has both the visual and auditive advantage. For Meike Wagner’s description of experimentation with stage positions and their effect in the auditorium on the historical stage of Drottningholm, see Meike Wagner, ‘On a Praxeology of Theatre Historiography’, in *Performing the Eighteenth Century: Theatrical Discourses, Practices, and Artefacts*, ed. by Magnus Tessing Schneider & Meike Wagner (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2023), 21–45 (pp. 38–40).

<sup>46</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, pp. 159–161.

actors in the centuries previous to Jelgerhuis used ‘figures of rhetorical conventional behaviour’ and image-recall technique to modify and control the personification process, Jelgerhuis does this also by focusing on a reliable vocal production.<sup>47</sup>

### 3.2.5 Notes on the physical: eye movements, gestures, muscle tension, and so on

The previous quotations from the Siméon manuscript show that Jelgerhuis’s thoughts and emotions are also reflected in his descriptions regarding acting such as eye movements, muscle tension, gestures, and full body postures. Jelgerhuis mentions the intensity of the eyes (wide open, burning, fiery, vacant, direct) as well as their direction (eyes cast down, heavenwards, darting from side to side, looking away, and so on). And again, he also explains the expression of the eyes by indicating the emotion (boldly looking forward, casting the eyes down in sadness). Some stage actions seem to reflect an instinctive consequence of the emotion felt in that moment: covering the face with both hands in shame, anxiously wiping the forehead with the hand, recoiling in fear, and clenching the hands into fists during an angry passage. Other passages describe entire, full body sequences of movements, the physical action always being preceded by the emotion:

*mijne Reeden gestuijt ziende door Haar, deed ik Eene allerfelste ontroering, door het gebeele gestel ontwaaren, die mij [...] het vermoogen benam om Zonder Steun punt te blyven, Ja geheel ontzet greep ik de bystaande Zeetel om my te ondersteunen, de hand op 't hart leggende en met het booffd op de andere hand neederdaalende op den Rug des Zeetels, trilde ik met het gebeele Ligbaam.*<sup>48</sup>

‘seeing my words interrupted by her, I felt a most vehement emotion throughout my system, [...] which impeded my capacity to remain standing without support. Yes, in full dismay I grabbed the chair near, to support me, placing my hand on my heart and lowering my head onto my other hand on the back of the chair, my entire body trembled.’

These relatively instinctive movements on the one hand, and extremely dramatic sequences of movements on the other, are essential for a better understanding of Jelgerhuis’s acting style. The treatise might give the impression that this acting style features only an aesthetically elevated and balanced alternation of carefully planned contrasting poses or gestures, yet by highlighting these examples I want to demonstrate that the manuscript also shows outer representations of emotion that are still recognisable, and may even, although perhaps stylized in their form, still seem natural to an audience today. The following paragraph will provide similar examples regarding stage behaviour between two characters.

### 3.2.6 Indications concerning blocking: the actor’s position and movements on stage

The *Theoretische lessen* focusses mainly on an individual actor’s acting technique and less on interacting with other characters, apart from a section on groupings and the advice to avoid

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<sup>47</sup> Golding, *Classicistic acting*, p. 106.

<sup>48</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, pp. 140–141.

standing on stage exactly like one's counterpart.<sup>49</sup> Another essential aspect of acting on stage covered only briefly in the treatise is movement in the space, not as gestures or attitudes, but as a walking from point A to B. The lesson on entrances and exits does show the curved lines in which an actor should walk to make the stage seem bigger, and indicates that each entrance and exit should correspond to the emotional state of the character.<sup>50</sup> In chapter eleven, Jelgerhuis advocates using the entire stage, warning against the beginner's mistake of playing on only a small portion of it.<sup>51</sup> That said, the *Toneel Studien* manuscript provides more information on *when* Jelgerhuis might have moved on stage and on *how* to interact with other actors. Given the information provided in the treatise, it is not surprising that Jelgerhuis describes how Siméon crosses the stage in a half circle. Nor is it surprising that an actor would place himself centre stage at the beginning of an important monologue, as Jelgerhuis does in the third act of *Omasis*.<sup>52</sup> But the manuscript also casts light on more dynamic stage movements. Jelgerhuis recounts how, in Siméon's monologue in Act III, he left the initial mid-stage position: '*naar eene Zijde snellende, en ontzet met alle de Schrik op het bezef der misdaad als Eene geoopende affgrond, waande ik die te zien en deijnsde agterwaards*' (hastening to one side, and filled with horror at the realization of the crime as an abyss, I imagined seeing this, and recoiled).<sup>53</sup> The rapid succession of movements caused by intense emotion and imagination does not prevent the actor's speaking and moving simultaneously. This is also visible in Act III, Scene 7 with Siméon's young brother Benjamin: '*week ik eijzende van Benjamin af, agter uyt, en verliet woest het Toneel onder het uijtrocpen van de Woorden Zorg voor al dat gy mijn Schreeden vlied*' (I shuddering shrank back from Benjamin, moved backwards, and furiously left the stage while crying out: 'above all, make sure that you keep away from me').<sup>54</sup> A subsequent stage direction in the *Omasis* play text does indeed indicate Siméon's exit after that line: '*Hij vertrekt in verbijstering*' (he leaves in dismay).<sup>55</sup> By leaving slightly earlier, as he speaks his final line in the scene, Jelgerhuis adds momentum and drama to the moment, while he turns the presence of the second actor into a trigger for Siméon's emotional reaction, his recoiling, and his exit. As in most cases throughout the manuscript, this scene displays seemingly straightforward physical interaction between the actors. Even when performed with decorum, the actions themselves are still uncomplicated expressions of communication. Such examples include Siméon pushing Omasis away from him with both hands; Ramnes seizing Siméon's hand; Siméon placing his arm around Benjamin's neck; Siméon dragged forward in chains '*met die decentie welke de Sombere Ernst van dit Toneel vordert*'<sup>56</sup> (with that decorum which the somber seriousness of this scene requires) and thereafter being unchained on stage; and Benjamin assisting Siméon to reach the arms of his father, who receives him in his arms and lifts him up.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>49</sup> For Jelgerhuis on contrast between actors on-stage, see Chapter 1, section 1.2.2, '*Contrast*', or Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 90.

<sup>50</sup> See Chapter 2, section 2.3.2b, '*Attitudes en scene* with entrances and exits', and Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, second chapter, pp. 33–42.

<sup>51</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 106.

<sup>52</sup> Jelgerhuis mentions both stage movements in his description of Act III, Scene 3 of *Omasis*.

<sup>53</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 144.

<sup>54</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 170.

<sup>55</sup> Baour-Lormian, *Omasis*, transl. Westerman, Act III, Scene 7, p. 52.

<sup>56</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 171.

<sup>57</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, pp. 147, 158, 168, 171, and 178.

### 3.2.7 Remaining information

The cited passages in the previous paragraphs exemplify the six points of analysis I outlined above, and serve to illustrate those elements of Jelgerhuis's acting technique that represent additions to his instructions in the *Theoretische lessen*. I contend that addressing these aspects of acting can significantly augment the possibilities of movement and interpretation for actors working with the treatise, as they include freedom of timing, stage interactions between several actors, and various means of expression in movement and declamation. Because the examples above are only a selection, I have listed a more complete overview of staging details from the Siméon study in Appendix A. This list also features information from the manuscript that did not fit into the six categories above. The six categories covered almost the entire text of the Siméon study (see Figure 11). The remaining text (left uncoloured in Figure 11) amounted to Jelgerhuis's introductory description of his research on the context of the play, as well as the costume, headdress, and those contemplations aimed at the reader, most of which were mentioned in the previous paragraphs.

<p>omtrent den grijzen Jacob Wroeging veroorzaakte en wat die op het gestel van den mensch doet, Naamlijk te Wenschen om den dood, Welke Wensch geen gehoor</p>	<p>en wisseling van toon maakende in laage Holle klank, nam ik voor haar te ontwijken en in 't bezef der Ellende van mijn hart besloot ik in mijne Sombere treurigheid te Rug keerende, en in dien Stemtoon weeder needer daalende, het geringe overschot, mijner deugd te behouden. — Zoo folterende in 't hart, het geweeten Wroegt Zoo folterende, werkende denkbeel= =den, hoe veel word des niet gevraagd om dat wel te</p>	<p>133 ik nam dan de Reegels die hy hier zegt by zyn verscheijnen . — Ja ik verwin mij zelf ik wil de Liefde smart En haat ter Eener tyd ver= Smooen in mijn Hart in de agtergrond des Toneels naa een voorafgaande Pantomime op Almais doelende, — welke zig</p>
<p>130 vond, maar Eenen Beul in 't hart agter liet. - nu een oogenblik ademhaalende dagt ik aan de bijkoomende Hartstogt der Liefde welke Zijne Ellende vergroot, en hem nog Rampzaliger maakte, dan de flikkering van hoop, om haar te bezitten, die deese hartstogt in hem werkte, doet hem weeder aan het voorstel van Ramnes denken en voorneemen om daar in te deelen, Zuchtende in verrukking om Almais, de teedere en voorafgaande denkende toonen der Stem bragten mij nu gereed tot</p>	<p>132 kunnen voordragen. — ik bedagt dat de teederheid der Zenuwen van den Mensch door Smarten en voor al die door Wroegingen veroor= Saakt worden, Zoodanig gestel Zeer gevoelig maakt dat aan eenen inwendige Zielsknaaging ten prooij is en zijne kragten ondermijnd in het 3de Bedrijf verschijnd hij in diepe gedachten verzonken wandेलende in de Zaaen</p>	<p>134 tot hem wend en hem aanspreekt. — treurig en met needer geslaagen oogen naaderde ik den voorgrond . — verneemende dat Almais de hoop hem toevoegen wil zijn verdriet door Omazis verzagt te zien, — is zijn antwoord Zoo verward - als teevens opmerkzaam in een Soort van Verbystering zegt hy Liever door haar beklaagd te zijn, als weldaaden van hem te genieten, momenteel daar op herneemt hy zig en zegt. - Maar Neen ik moet voortaan de Godde=</p>
<p>131 die ontzetting welke hem daar weeder doet afzien. -</p>		

Figure 11, selected passages from Jelgerhuis's *Toneel Studien*, pp. 129–134, transcribed and marked as follows:

legend for the colour markings in Figure 11

- 1) yellow - direct references to lines from the play text
- 2) light blue - Jelgerhuis' interpretation, the thoughts and mental images behind his acting
- 3) pink - emotions/passion
- 4) purple - the voice: declamation, vocal colour, pitch, and volume
- 5) dark blue - notes on the physical: eye movements, gestures, muscle tension, stance, and so on
- 6) green - indications concerning blocking: i.e., the actor's position and movements on stage
- white - remaining text

The information in these uncategorized passages was an unexpected addition to the initial analysis, yet I consider it at least as important as the other six. Here, Jelgerhuis's insight into his personal thoughts on the physical and mental challenges of the craft is of an (almost) autobiographical nature. It sheds light on his emotional involvement and identification with the role, his compassion with the character of Siméon, his feelings regarding certain events in the play, and the way he thinks about certain words or sentences ('I said those terrible words'). He reflects on the way emotions and acting affect the soul, and on the psychological and emotional complexities of human nature.

By discussing my analysis of Jelgerhuis's study of Siméon, I have now added a fourth layer of information, which complements the terms and concepts introduced in Chapter 1, the short basic attitude series in Chapter 2, and the contextual discussion of Jelgerhuis's *Theoretische lessen* in Chapters 1 and 2. Together, these four layers provide both the practical and theoretical underpinnings for the first case study's research project.

### 3.3 METHODOLOGY AND COMPASS

This section serves to contextualize and clarify the reasons behind certain choices I made at the onset of this case study, which was aimed at staging selected scenes from *Omasis* with three actors, while using Jelgerhuis's *Toneel Studien* and other sources as guidelines.

#### 3.3.1 Training versus performance

This first case study keeps the experimentation, training, and staging process open to unexpected outcomes without aiming for a definitive and polished HIP production. The development of this project remained within the studio, receiving occasional feedback from attending colleagues, but the studied scenes were not presented in a theatre before a larger audience. My findings concerning this case study's creative phase are therefore to be considered within this working format — namely, as the experimental stages of preparation and research as if preceding performance. As a more thorough assessment of Jelgerhuis's performance, they are incomplete; Jelgerhuis's acting includes the presence of the audience, the costumes, the theatre space, lighting, and so on. However, the absence of these elements and of a performance-driven schedule allowed the actors and myself the time, firstly, to assimilate the information in Jelgerhuis's manuscript, and secondly, to embody, through training, an acting style based on Jelgerhuis works. Even though actual

costumes and sets could not be included in the project, I will present my preliminary research on sets and costumes for the play, as this background information served to inform the imagination of the actors and myself.

My functions in this project were several and involved research as well as practical work, including leading the project, carrying out analysis and returning to the sources previous to and in between the practical sessions, preparing the materials to work with, and training with the participating actors. In retrospect, these different functions can be divided in different categories, although tasks occasionally overlapped:

- **researcher:** carrying out background research of the historical sources relevant to the practical work previous to, during, or as a result of the sessions; providing information from the sources when questions arose, or to potentially improve the staging. Examples of this preparation are the acting analysis above, transcribing and translating the manuscript, locating Jelgerhuis's comments in the play text, photographing illustrations in the archive as inspiration for the characters, and so on. Later in the process, this involved drawing conclusions from my observations and adapting these into the written format of an article, a lecture, and finally, this chapter.<sup>58</sup>

- **project manager:** organizing sessions for experimentation with the individual actors and the workshop sessions, providing training materials partly described in Chapter 2 as well as working documents (including Appendices B, C, E and Figures 13a, 14b, and 14).

- **active participant:** although this was my project, the sessions with the other actors were very much a team effort. We could build upon a foundation of mutual respect and inspiration resulting from years of working together, and I joined the actors during some parts of the training.

- **observer and staging guide:** planning the entrances and exits for Act III, providing feedback, and inviting discussions between the actors, myself, and, when available, other observers. As mentioned in the Introduction and in Chapter 2, I consider observation of other actors/students/colleagues at work a valuable tool to develop my own practice. Observing other actors is an essential part of learning, yet today, the opportunities of seeing historically informed actors on-stage in the Netherlands are few. This project allowed me to guide the actors in their endeavours, suggest improvements based on the sources, learn by observing, and reflect on my own practical experiments in process.

The working environment during the staging sessions was similar to the format deployed at the meetings of the Dutch Historical Acting Collective (DHAC), in which the group members take turns to present selected texts, while the other members function as audience and provide

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<sup>58</sup> The lecture, titled “‘De storm der Hartstogten’: Passionate Expression in Body and Voice’ was part of the series ‘What’s New’, at the Early Music Festival Utrecht, The Netherlands, 27 August 2019. For the article, see Laila Cathleen Neuman, “Despairing Rage” and “Courageous Pride”. Exploring the Acting Style of Johannes Jelgerhuis Through Practice-Based Research’, in *Historical Acting Techniques and the 21st-Century Body*, ed. by Jed Wentz, special issue in *European Drama and Performance Studies*, 19 (2022–2), 113–151.



feedback, with the aim of learning from and with one another.<sup>59</sup> It was therefore unproblematic to program working sessions for Scene 5 during the DHAC winter workshop of 2020. The feedback other DHAC members offered – whether contradicting, confirming, or adding to my own observations – was a valuable addition to my own assessment/evaluations. Moreover, I consider the experience the actors gained from this project part of the dissemination of my work on Jelgerhuis. In order to keep my description of this case study as transparent as possible, I will provide footnotes to mark the different functions I took on at the various stages of the project.

### 3.3.2 From page to practice and back again

Here I return to the problematic sides, touched upon in the general introduction, of transforming written text into physical action and putting the results of artistic practice back into written words. Both the interpretation of the source and the description of artistic research are, although subjective, essential for an understanding of the physical and mental processes the actor engages in when preparing a role. Historically informed artistic practice is by default performed by a different person, usually in a different physical surrounding (the costumes, sets, and theatre) than in the original version, and in front of a contemporary audience. This means that in searching for ‘historically informed staging’, I must be able, at least on reflection, to distinguish the actual indications in the source from my own additions. As interpretation and imagination are a substantial part of this work, the actor needs to make their choices during preparation and performance. These may be conscious choices, as well as moments of (informed) intuition and inspiration during rehearsals or on stage, often generated by the (tacit) knowledge gleaned through experience. My aim in this project has therefore not been to recreate a historical event, to show ‘how it was done’, but rather to learn both from the sources and about them by doing, and to recognize tendencies in the acting style as Jelgerhuis describes it. In this way, the interpretation, the artistic choices, and the creation on-stage issue from a body and mind that have adapted this style as a second language. In order to stage the scenes in the style of the early nineteenth-century Dutch stage, the actors were to base their stances, gestures, and other elements inherent to acting on their knowledge of and experience with historical treatises on acting and painting, both before and during Jelgerhuis’s time. The actors and I were to optimize our interpretation of Jelgerhuis’s acting style by working with the material in his *Theoretische lessen* – such as the examples concerning facial expression, contrast in the body and gestures, *attitudes*, and *welstand*.<sup>60</sup> I argue that the process of creating such a foundation of vocabulary in a specific acting style, allows for and even requires the moments of intuition and imagination mentioned above.

The following questions, directly linked to the first research question of this thesis (‘How can a study of Johannes Jelgerhuis’s lesser-known works add to a more complete understanding of Jelgerhuis’s treatise *Theoretische lessen*, of his approach to acting and of his acting style, and how can this contribute in turn to historically informed performance practices’), were the basis of my

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<sup>59</sup> For reference to DHAC, see the Introduction.

<sup>60</sup> In this chapter, *welstand* is intended in its overarching sense (‘that which looks good’; a concept referring to beauty in form, harmonious proportions, and/or expression). For full definitions of the terms *welstand* and *attitudes* (full body stances, including gestures and facial expressions, which follow the rules of contrast and *welstand*), see Chapter 1, sections ‘contrast’, ‘attitude’, and ‘welstand’.

investigations: how could the process of staging three scenes from *Omasis* contribute to my conception of preparing and staging a role in agreement with Jelgerhuis's writings? And following Jelgerhuis's indications in his study of Siméon, how could I extend my understanding of the *Theoretische lessen* and consequently of the acting style in the Amsterdam Schouwburg in the early nineteenth century? The answers to these questions were sought through experimentation and comparison with other sources, generally in the following succession: question, research (whether through artistic practice or consulting and comparing sources), discussion, hypothesis, experimentation, reflection, answer, or new question. This project's approach to rehearsing, analysing, documenting, discussing, and experimenting is not a historical one, but an opportunity to engage with and obtain an understanding of Jelgerhuis's interpretation of Siméon. This was the role I had the most information about, and the interpretation of the other characters was adjusted in order to align with the information in Jelgerhuis's manuscript. I selected the scenes in which he was the most generous in his descriptions – Act III, Scenes 3, 4, and 5 – with the aim of incorporating as many details from the manuscript as possible. As these scenes only involved three roles, this selection also made the project more manageable in terms of participants, time, and – as 2020 and 2021 presented the complications caused by COVID-19 – logistics. The aim of this project was not to obtain a perfectly finished end product but to create a situation in which the actors and I might freely experiment with the information in the sources.<sup>61</sup>

### 3.3.3 The project's participants

In order to stage the selected scenes from the manuscript according to the ideals of decorum and stage behaviour of the early nineteenth century, I wanted to work with actors who would be willing to use historical acting techniques. Jed Wentz, João Louís Paixão, and Andreas Gilger, three colleagues from the DHAC who in previous years had studied and trained according to various principles in the *Theoretische lessen*, kindly agreed to collaborate. With their cooperation, the project could commence with a collective understanding of the *Theoretische lessen*. Moreover, they were familiar with other treatises (such as Gilbert Austin's *Chironomia* and Aaron Hill's 'An Essay on the Art of Acting') and had experience with acting techniques as described in these sources.<sup>62</sup> This facilitated communication and group work, as we could easily refer to a mutual frame of reference regarding decorum, techniques, and sources. Our focus during this staging process, however, was on sources directly concerning or mentioned by Jelgerhuis. The *Theoretische lessen* was the main manual of reference and our guide to staging the gestures and attitudes described in the manuscript, according to Jelgerhuis's ideals of stage practice. His other works (such as other roles in the *Toneel Studien* and his document of 1808) have been consulted in search of answers to the questions that arose during the preparation and staging process.

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<sup>61</sup> I leave aside comparison between Westerman's Dutch translation of *Omasis, of Jozef in Egypte* of 1810 and the French original, or the much earlier Dutch translation by Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679) *Jozef of Sofompaneas* of 1635 (after the Latin of Huig de Groot), as such comparisons are, at this stage, beyond the scope of this project.

<sup>62</sup> See Austin, *Chironomia*; and Hill, 'An Essay'.

### 3.3.4 Preparatory research

To compare Jelgerhuis's own experience with those of the theatre critics, I sought out reviews of performances by Jelgerhuis and his colleagues, as they appeared in Abraham Louis Barbaz's *Mengelwerken* of 1810, the *Tijdschrift van kunsten en wetenschappen* (1812), *Het kritisch lampje* (1823) and *De Tooneelkijker*.<sup>63</sup> Although the latter three sources date after Jelgerhuis's *Toneel Studien*, they contained valuable background information for this case study, as the comments also discuss aspects such as the play text, its translation, the costumes, the stage sets, and the various casts.<sup>64</sup> Comments on pronunciation, however, by Jelgerhuis and the theatre critics regarding pronunciation are limited to critique on personal defects (such as the inability to pronounce the 'r' properly, or dialect – Jelgerhuis, born the North of the Netherlands, had a slight Frisian accent). With the limited time at our disposal, I decided not to add historical Dutch pronunciation (with a Frisian accent for one of the actors) to the training of the actors. I focused only on those parameters of delivery which had a direct link to Jelgerhuis, such as those discussed in reviews and in Jelgerhuis's manuscript, including vocal volume, pitch, and colouring the voice through affect.<sup>65</sup> However, I consulted historical dictionaries to help us understand the Dutch vocabulary in which the play text and manuscript were written.<sup>66</sup>

### 3.3.5 Poetic metre

The parameter of vocal delivery here discussed concerns the question of how to deliver the poetic metre. *De Tooneelkijker* provides some information directly related to the performances of the play *Omais* where the *Theoretische lessen* offers none. The authors of *De Tooneelkijker* suspected a hasty translation of the play, resulting in disturbing irregularities of the prosody. They particularly criticized the inconsistency in the placement of the names of Almaïs and Siméon, causing different

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<sup>63</sup> Barbaz, *Mengelwerken* (1810), pp. 159–160; and the *Tijdschrift van kunsten en wetenschappen Mengelwerk, voor 1812. Met keizerlijke vergunning* [...] (Amsterdam: de Bruyn, Leeneman van der Kroe en IJntema, 1812), pp. 683–684. See also *De Tooneelkijker*, 4 vols (1816–1819); and *Het kritisch lampje, Lectuur voor alle standen* (Amsterdam: J. C. van Kesteren, 1823), ascribed author: Anton Cramer 1785–1833. For more information on this periodical, see Ruitenbeek, *Kijkcijfers*, p. 293.

<sup>64</sup> The cast of 1817: Jozef/Omais - Snoek, Siméon - Jelgerhuis, Ramnes - Rombach, Jacob - Westerman, and the actresses Almaïs - Grevelink, Siméon's young brother Benjamin was played by the actress Kamphuijsen (also spelled as Kamphuizen and Kamphuyzen). See *De Tooneelkijker*, 3, (1818), pp. 40–41. The record of the cast in 1812 is less complete but similar: Jozef/Omais - Andries Snoek, Siméon - Jelgerhuis, Ramnes - [?], Jacob - Westerman, [Almaïs?] - Grevelink, Benjamin - Kamphuizen. See *Tijdschrift van kunsten* (1812), pp. 683–684. Barbaz documents the cast of 1810: Jozef/Omais - Andries Snoek, Siméon - Jelgerhuis, further mentioning the actors Rombach, Westerman en actresses Grevelink en Kamphuyzen. (It is likely that the latter four performed the same roles as mentioned in the later review of 1817). See Barbaz, *Mengelwerken* (1810), p. 160. The review of 1823 mentions only Jelgerhuis as Siméon and Jelgerhuis's daughter as Benjamin. See *Het kritisch lampje* (1823), p. 50.

<sup>65</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, pp. 107–108. On Jelgerhuis's Frisian accent, see Albach, 'Johannes Jelgerhuis over zijn rollen', pp. 5, 9.

<sup>66</sup> See the historical Dutch dictionaries on the website of the Instituut voor de Nederlandse Taal (Institute for the Dutch language), <https://gtb.ivdnt.org/search/> (accessed 4 April 2025).

syllables to be stressed (Alma<sup>ä</sup>is in some passages and Alma<sup>z</sup>is elsewhere).<sup>67</sup> In fact, the inconsistencies not only occur in the stress of the names of Alma<sup>ä</sup>is and Siméon, but also in the stress of Omasis (as *Omasis* and *Omasis*) and other words. However, *De Tooneelkijker*'s observation that irregularities in the poetic metre are audible and disturbing was one reason for me to ask the actors for some accentuation of the meter instead of a naturalistic prose-like delivery, even if the faulty accentuation can be unsettling to modern ears too.

To make decisions regarding the metric delivery of the text, I also consulted Jelgerhuis's document of 1808, in which he discusses the state of Dutch theatre, past, present, and future.<sup>68</sup> In this document, Jelgerhuis denounces the old way of delivering verse in a '*dreunende galm*' (thumping, bellowing roar) and praises the actors Marten Corver (1727–1794) and Carel Passé (1741–1790) for acting and declaiming with good taste, avoiding the *ostinato*.<sup>69</sup> Alternatively, in an illustrated manuscript of 1817, Jelgerhuis criticizes the actor for his prosaic delivery of certain verses, stating that '*wanneer men zoodanig de verzen op 't toneel behandelt, dan behoeven 't geen vaerzen te zijn*' (if one treats verse on stage in such a fashion, verse is not needed).<sup>70</sup> This suggests that even if one searches for a more natural delivery than the (by then dated) *declamatory* style as practiced by Dutch actor Jan Punt (1711–1770) and his contemporaries, the verse should also not be spoken as if it were prose. Clearly, not even the combined sources on this subject could tell us exactly what Jelgerhuis's ideal delivery would have sounded like, but they did provide two extremes to avoid. My request to the actors was therefore not to speak as naturally as one would in prose, but to retain the rhythm of the verse while only subtly marking the caesura, where this 'felt right' in the context (subjective, grammar) – all the while avoiding that '*dreunende galm*' caused by excessive emphasis on the metre.

### 3.3.6 Limitations regarding costumes and theatre sets

At this stage of the project, I neither could provide the opportunity to work in a theatre nor to have actual costumes made, but I still wanted to get an idea of the costumes for the characters, and possible stage designs. Firstly, because I still hoped for a continuation of the project at the Valtice Castle Theater after the COVID-19 pandemic, and secondly because the knowledge of the character's costume and surroundings on stage are important for the imagination and can thereby influence the speed or manner of gesticulating and walking, even when one works in modern dress and in a different space.

**Costumes.** Jelgerhuis's costume illustrations for Jacob, Omasis, and Siméon provided an idea of the style of costume and headdress to envision for these characters (see Figure 12).

<sup>67</sup> *De Tooneelkijker*, 3 (1818) p. 40.

<sup>68</sup> Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag'.

<sup>69</sup> Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', p. 106–107. For more information on Corver, Passé and Punt, see Chapter 1, section 1.4.2, 'Developments in acting style'.

<sup>70</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Beschouwingen*.



Figure 12, engravings of costumes by Jelgerhuis in his *Theoretische lessen*; Jakob (left) and Joseph/Omasis (centre), plate 63, details; Siméon (right), plate 64, detail.

Jelgerhuis's costume and headdress (for Siméon) were even praised in a review after the Dutch première of *Omasis* in 1810, for being 'more than delightful' and for 'meeting the requirements'.<sup>71</sup> Information on costumes for the other roles was more difficult to trace down. I have found no information, for instance, on the costume for Ramnes. In 1812, however, theatre critics found fault with two other costumes. They deemed the costume of Almaïs's confidante's (Zamé) more fit for a '*marchande de modes*' than an inhabitant of Egypt, while they questioned what they termed Benjamin's '*hoofdsiersel*' (head decoration) for potentially being 'a little too feminine'.<sup>72</sup> It would be interesting to learn how Benjamin would have been dressed, as this role was documented as played by actress Kamphuyzen in the *reviews* of 1812 and 1818 and the actress '*meisjevrouw Jelgerhuis*' in 1823.<sup>73</sup> I am not aware of illustrations by Jelgerhuis depicting costumes for actresses playing a breeches role. Given that the review of 1812 questions whether Mrs Kamphuyzen's head

<sup>71</sup> The original description in Dutch is '*overheerlijk gemaskeerd en naar eisch gekostumeerd*'. See Barbaz, *Mengelwerken* (1810), p. 160.

<sup>72</sup> *Tijdschrift van kunsten* (1812), p. 683.

<sup>73</sup> With '*meisjevrouw Jelgerhuis*', the author of *Het kritisch lampje* of 1823 probably refers to Jelgerhuis's daughter Catherina Hessalina (1792–1843), who made her debut at the Amsterdam Schouwburg in 1808. See D'Ailly, 'Johannes Jelgerhuis Rienksz', pp. 225, 228–229, 244; and see Johannes M. Coffeng, *Lexicon van Nederlandse tonelisten* (Amsterdam: Polak & van Gennep, 1965), p. 98 (in the latter, her name is spelled Catharina Hessalina). The French *Omasis* play text of 1807 mentions the actress Mlle. Mars playing the role of Benjamin alongside the famous French actors Talma as Joseph/Omasis and Damas as Siméon. See Baour-Lormian, *Omasis*, transl. Westerman, p. 2.

decoration was not too feminine for Benjamin, I presume that the actresses playing this role did not wear a dress but a costume similar to that of Benjamin's brothers (therefore similar to the tunic of Siméon), as Jan Luyken's plate depicts all the brothers dressed in the same.

**Stage sets.** Because Jelgerhuis does not mention stage sets in his study of Siméon, I returned to the theatre critics in *De Tooneelkijker* to discover which kind of sets were used for *Omasis* at the Amsterdam Schouwburg. The theatre critic Barbaz as well as the authors of *De Tooneelkijker* comment on sets depicting a '*romeinsche hofzaal*' (Roman court hall) in the *Omasis* performances of 1810 and August 1817, respectively. Although the former found the old sets at the time of the Pharaoh '*binderlyk voor deskundigen*' (a nuisance to the expert) and the latter deemed the Roman court hall '*weinig passende voor den tijd*' (not very suitable for the time), I used their descriptions to search for similar sets designed for the Amsterdam Schouwburg in the early nineteenth century.<sup>74</sup> Whether the critics approved of them or not, these were the sets Jelgerhuis would have known and performed in as Siméon. The Allard Pierson collection in Amsterdam holds set designs for a court hall and a court gallery by the Dutch set painter François Joseph Pfeiffer Jr., who worked for the Amsterdam Schouwburg in Jelgerhuis's day.<sup>75</sup> Should the research project see a revival, the Van den Berghe collection holds a full stage set entitled *Zwarte zuilen* (black columns) which could show the visual effect of the performed scenes in front of such a stately background.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> See Barbaz, *Mengelwerken* (1810), p. 160; and *De Tooneelkijker*, 3 (Amsterdam: Delachaux, 1818), p. 41.

<sup>75</sup> François Joseph Pfeiffer jr., 'Decorontwerp voor hofgalerij', t003448.000, and 'Decorontwerp voor een hofzaal', t005787.000, Amsterdam, Allard Pierson, theatre collection. The Allard Pierson collection also holds images of sets depicting a court hall from before Jelgerhuis's time, including 'De Aloude Hofgallerij' by Gerard De Lairese, which had burned down with the previous Schouwburg in 1772, but of which many prints remain, such as Adolf van der Laan's 'Het coulissendecor "De Aloude Hofgallerij" met scène uit *Het huwelijk van Orondates en Statira*', (1738–1742), coloured engraving, Amsterdam, Allard Pierson, theatre collection, g002183000, and various designs by Pieter Barbiers, such as a court hall dated 1781–1785 for the miniature Slingelandt theatre. See Pieter Barbiers, 'Decor "de hofzaal" voor het Slingelandttoneel', Amsterdam, Allard Pierson, theatre collection, p00022.008.

<sup>76</sup> In today's world, where so few historical theatres and stage sets are available, it is rare to see all the elements required for a full theatre production come together at equal levels of expertise. I am aware that conclusions drawn from working on one specific aspect of the theatre (in this case, acting) are incomplete without the whole (the theatre, sets, costumes, a historical audience, and so on). Yet, each research project within their own specific field may contribute something in time to the others, if the dialogue remains open, documentation is transparent, and outcomes are shared. By focusing on Jelgerhuis's acting style and manuscript in a containable environment, within the circumstances of the available modest options, I aim to contribute to my part of the field, not only through the dissemination of the outcomes in written form (this dissertation and the articles published during the process) but also through the artistic outcomes and experience gained by my colleagues, my students, and myself. For more on the Van den Berghe collection, see Bruno Forment, *Droomlanders: Toveraars van het geschilderde toneeldecor* (Davidsfonds/Standaard Uitgeverij nv: Leuven/Antwerpen, 2021), pp. 85–94.



### 3.3.7 Reviews

As most of this chapter and consequently the staging project described in the paragraphs hereafter are based on Jelgerhuis's study of Siméon, I want to try and answer the following questions before I continue:

- To what extent did Jelgerhuis actually produce the effects and realize the depiction of Siméon's character as described in his manuscript?
- How can his (subjective) experience, the quality of his performance on stage, and the reception of his performance at the time, be verified?

The reviews of the performances of *Omasis* at the Amsterdam Schouwburg were my only source. Luckily, there were several throughout the years (1810, 1812, 1817, and 1823) and by different authors. The following selection provides extracts from these reviews (underlined emphases are my own):

Première: 28 April, 1810

*overheerlijk gemaskeerd en naar eisch gekostumeerd, hetwelk, gepaard met zyne uitmuntende karakterschildering, de sterkste begoogcheling en toejuigching heeft voortgebracht.*<sup>77</sup>

most delightfully disguised and dressed according to the requirements, which, together with his excellent character portrayal, has generated the strongest enchantment and acclaim.

September or October 1812

*De eer van deze vertooning, nogtans, komt, onzes oordeels, den Heere JELGERHUIS toe. Heerlijk, heerlijk heeft hij ons den Simeon vertoond: gelaat, houding, spraak, alles maalde ons den door gewetensangst gemartelden mensch af. Bij de algemeene toejuiching, hem dien avond ten deel gevallen, beden de onze te voegen, is voor ons eene zeer aangename verplichting, van welke wij ons volgaarne kwijten.*<sup>78</sup>

The honours of this performance, however, belong to Mr Jelgerhuis. Delightfully, delightfully he performed Simeon for us: facial expression, attitude, speech, in everything there was portrayed for us the man who is tortured by his conscience. To add ours [our acclaim], today, to the general acclaim which he received that evening, is our very pleasant duty which we gladly fulfill.

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<sup>77</sup> Barbaz, *Mengelwerken* (1810), p. 160.

<sup>78</sup> *Tijdschrift van kunsten* (1812), pp. 683–684.

23 August, 1817

*Jelgerhuis heeft in de rol van Siméon uitgeblonken: minnenij, hoogmoed, hoop, wroeging van het geweten waren in stem, houding en gebaren sprekend te lezen; en hoezeer wij in het vijfde bedrijf, bij de bekentenis van de op het hart brandende misdaad, meer bedaardheid en innige weemoedigheid verlangd hadden, boven zijn ontzettend geschreeuw, zettende zijne duidelijke uitspraak (iets, dat niet altijd bij hem het geval is,) zijn spel, dezen avond, niet weinig luister bij.<sup>79</sup>*

Jelgerhuis excelled in the role of Siméon: jealousy, haughtiness, hope, remorse were clearly to be observed in [his] voice, posture, and gestures; and however much we would have preferred more calmness and inner melancholy to his terrible shouting in the fifth act, at the confession of his heart-searing crime, his excellent diction (something which is not always the case with him) added lustre to his performance on this evening.

25 January, 1823

*Ijskoud was het Zaterdag den 25sten in den spaarzaam, ja, zeer spaarzaam bezetten schouwburg, alwaar men Omasis of Jozef in Egypte voorstelde. In pelzen en kraagjassen (karrieken) gewikkeld, zagen wij JACOB met zijne zonen op de planken bibberen. [...] JELGERHUIS, als SIMEON, heeft hitte genoeg aangebracht. Zijn hartstochtelijk spel, dat in dezen door velen geprezen werd, was niet minder belangrijk dan anders. Zijn verschrikkelijke blik, zijne gebaren waren voldoende voor hen, die begrijpen, dat zulks zoo wezen moest.<sup>80</sup>*

It was freezing cold, on Saturday the 25th, in the sparingly, yes, very sparingly attended theatre, where *Omasis of Jozef in Egypte* was performed. Wrapped in furs and overcoats, we saw Jacob and his sons shivering on the stage. [...] Jelgerhuis, as Simeon, provided heat enough. His passionate way of acting, praised by many, was as impressive as ever. The terrible look in his eyes and his gestures were enough for those who understand that this was the way it should be!

The criticism of Jelgerhuis's shouting in the fifth act (which will be discussed in more detail below), is the only negative comment on Jelgerhuis's rendition of Siméon I have come across. Apart from this particular, all other reviews are only positive. To answer the first question posed in this section ('to what extent did Jelgerhuis actually produce the effects and realize the depiction of Siméon's character as described in his manuscript?'), I highlight a few topics covered by the reviews that were also discussed in the analysis of Jelgerhuis's acting style (section 3.2): Jelgerhuis is depicted as a performer with a 'passionate acting style', which is visible in his eyes, his facial expressions, his gestures and postures. His costume and headdress are praised as part of a complete package, which includes Siméon's character and emotions. One can even recognize specific aspects of Siméon's character as well as several emotional states that Jelgerhuis aimed to deliver, such as haughtiness, hope, jealousy, and most importantly the *remorse* of a Siméon, *tormented by his conscience*. The reviews

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<sup>79</sup> *De Tooneelkijker*, 3 (1818), pp. 41, 43.

<sup>80</sup> *Het kritisch lampje* (1823), pp. 49, 50. (January is not specified in the review itself, but the review appeared between those of January 18 and February 1st, 1823).

therefore confirm that several aspects of Jelgerhuis's acting were not only part of his own experience as documented in the manuscript, but were also corroborated in the theatre critics's observation of Jelgerhuis's performance. The reviews of 1810 and 1812 state that their praise is shared by the audience, marking him (particularly in addition to the positive reviews of other roles outlined in Chapter 1, section 1.5.1, 'Jelgerhuis's acting described by others') as a well-received and popular actor.<sup>81</sup> Jelgerhuis's rendition of Siméon is even cited after his death as one of his best roles. According to his introduction to the *Toneel Studien*, Jelgerhuis did not reach for this level in all of his roles. As he considered several roles a hindrance to focusing on those he was more passionate about, the kind of in-depth research, observable, for instance, in the *Toneel Studien* was not worth his efforts, and seems even to have been impossible due to limited preparation time.<sup>82</sup> Indeed, reviews of Jelgerhuis's performances in other plays than *Omasis* mention his not being word-perfect.<sup>83</sup> The resulting contrast between under-rehearsed roles and brilliant ones, corresponds with the seeming uneven quality of the productions at the Amsterdam Schouwburg. Theatre critics alternate reviews of superior and poor productions, citing the latter for ineptness, on stage accidents, or unsatisfying performances by individual players.<sup>84</sup> The less successful events are ascribed to (inexperienced) actors and actresses who are not 'rolvast' (word-perfect), the quality of the repertoire, faulty characterization, visual incongruencies in the sets and costumes, and so forth.<sup>85</sup> Reviews of *Omasis* point out various flaws and/or irregularities, including non-matching costumes, sets that are not quite appropriate for the play, and a bland performance by one of the actresses who may have been unwell.<sup>86</sup> One therefore cannot deduce that the praise of Jelgerhuis in this role corresponds to the excellence of the entire production, yet the sum of the information gleaned from the reviews of Jelgerhuis's Siméon deepened my interest in Jelgerhuis's study of this role as a source for staging the planned scenes in *Omasis*. The intensity of Jelgerhuis's portrayal described both by himself and corroborated by the various reviews convinced me of the expressive potential of his acting style, elements of which may serve actors (and excite audiences) today. The reviews not only confirm that Jelgerhuis's Siméon study reflects a mastery of stagecraft, but they also contributed as a source of reference to the experimental trajectory with the three actors in this case study.

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<sup>81</sup> See also a biography of Jelgerhuis in 1847 in *De Nederlandsche Kunst-spiegel, XII afleveringen, Tweede Jaargang* ('s Gravenhage: Leopold Loebenberg, 1847), pp. 203–204.

<sup>82</sup> See Jelgerhuis's preface to *Toneel Studien*, p. 1.

<sup>83</sup> *De Tooneelkijker*, 1 (1816), pp. 56, 157, 165.

<sup>84</sup> For instance, Jelgerhuis's daughter 'enters the stage through a wall' and 'steps over the corpse of Claudius, immediately thereafter asking after him'. See *De Tooneelkijker*, 1 (1816), pp. 152–153. The acting of Cornelius Evers (ca. 1798–1849) was criticized for being so passionate that he accidentally knocked off Jelgerhuis's wig during the play. See *De Tooneelkijker*, 1 (1816), p. 158. Another wig accident and a child's tunic being lifted repeatedly, showing the child's bottom, were cause for laughter in the audience during the tragedy *Monzongo*. See *Het kritisch lampje* (1823), p. 132.

<sup>85</sup> On not being 'rolvast' (word-perfect) or mention of the prompter, see, for instance, *De Tooneelkijker*, 1 (1816), pp. 38, 45, 76, 81, 93, 101, 481; and *De Tooneelkijker*, 2 (1817), pp. 35, 36, 174.

<sup>86</sup> *De Tooneelkijker*, 3 (1818), p. 41.

### 3.3.8 The role of ‘staging guide’ explained

Rather than seeing myself as the director of the staging process, it was my aim to let Jelgerhuis’s manuscript be my compass, while I took on the function of staging guide. I intentionally avoid the title stage director here, firstly because this concept did not yet exist in Jelgerhuis’s time, and secondly, because I aimed at prioritizing Jelgerhuis’s instructions over my own. I suggested working on elements of the staging, such as entrances, exits, and so on, and assisted the actors to insert most of Jelgerhuis’s descriptions into their staging in the appropriate acting style. But there was one complication: I soon realized that I needed to be mindful of the distinction between voicing Jelgerhuis’s indications and interpreting them. I was more familiar with this material than the other actors through my previous research on Jelgerhuis and my experience as a performer and teacher of acting techniques based on the *Theoretische lessen*. This meant that I could provide suggestions accordingly, yet at the same time they had their own expertise which I valued, and their artistic intuition might also enrich my interpretation of Jelgerhuis’s directions. The actors were to adopt every movement and/or indication in Jelgerhuis’s descriptions to approach his style as much as possible, merging the previously mentioned layers of emotion, text, and thought into one coherent entity. But they had the double role of copying someone else’s way of acting, and to create their own version based on that material, similar to the practice of an acting student copying from a teacher. All the while, they were to search for *welstand* in their delivery at all times. From my own perspective, creative tension, arising the aim of following Jelgerhuis’ directions on the one hand, and seeing them applied not only through the interpretation of another actor, but to another actor centuries later, with a modern body and mind, is at the same time frustrating and fascinating. The frustration originates in the thought that even when following the sources closely, one will never know how Jelgerhuis performed Siméon, and the excitement is generated when witnessing how the characters take shape, and how convincing some moments are when performed by actors today. It is fascinating to see how moving certain passages can be, and how awe-inspiring others, and how some techniques described by Jelgerhuis just worked for these actors, while others do not.

## 3.4 THE STAGING PROCESS

### 3.4.1 Act III, Scene 5

The first project was to prepare and stage Act III, Scene 5 of *Omasis, of Jozef in Egypte* with Jed Wentz as Siméon and João Louís Paixão in the role of Omasis.<sup>87</sup> Because Wentz had the main part in the project, he and I started with eight preparatory sessions – between July 2019 and January 2020 – which included reading the Siméon manuscript and sections of the *Theoretische lessen*, experimenting with attitudes and Jelgerhuis’s instructions on using make-up to enhance facial expression. These sessions were followed by two preparatory sessions with Wentz and Paixão in February 2020, and almost daily sessions with both actors during the DHAC Winter Academy of 27 February to 2 March 2020, held at Leiden University. The sessions at DHAC consisted of staging experimentation with other DHAC members present. They observed the staging process

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<sup>87</sup> My main function in this section: project manager.

and joined in the discussions following the experiments. Their feedback was either directly taken on board to prepare the next session, or added as food for thought.

**Preparatory sessions with Wentz and Paixão.** In order to follow Jelgerhuis's directive to 'thoroughly understand the entire character before even starting to memorize the role', the actors and I read the play and the manuscript together and discussed the characters and their function in the play.<sup>88</sup> Wentz and Paixão then memorized their own parts as well as Jelgerhuis's descriptions from the manuscript corresponding to their specific lines, as can be seen in the working document I prepared: Appendix B, pp. 13–20. Another reading followed in which they incorporated the descriptions concerning affect and vocal colour in their declamation. Only then did we proceed to the actual staging.

**DHAC Winter Academy, Leiden University.** Throughout the staging process at the DHAC Winter Academy, the actors followed Jelgerhuis's basic advice on contrast as presented in the *Theoretische lessen*.<sup>89</sup> This entailed searching for contrast not only within the actors's own posture and gestures, but also between two actors on stage: mirroring one another or immediately adopting each other's attitude or gesture had to be avoided at all times.

The stage directions for Scene 5 in the printed *Omasis* text are mostly for Siméon, who has two asides, after one of which he is to speak loud again, and two indications regarding his state of mind: 'verward' (confused) and 'buiten zichzelf' (beside himself). Omasis has one aside at the very end of the scene. Comparison between the printed stage directions for Scene 5 in the *Omasis* text and Jelgerhuis's manuscript shows not only that the printed stage directions were carried out in this scene by the actors on stage, but in some cases also gives the context by describing what happens preceding, during, and after the particular stage direction, and how. Jelgerhuis describes, for instance, the tender state and the tears that accompany the moment at which Siméon is 'beside himself', and the following words spoken aside, when he is so. He then narrates how he turns to Omasis again, boldly looking him in the eye, to speak the following lines (marked as 'loud' in the play text) with 'een meer moedigen en Straffen toon' (a more courageous and severe tone of voice).<sup>90</sup> (Although Jelgerhuis does not mention the increase in volume as such, the combination of the bold body language, the passions, and the vocal tone Jelgerhuis describes here, point to a stronger volume). Later, Jelgerhuis writes about making a gesture that made it clear 'nu niets meer te willen hooren' (that he wanted to hear nothing else): this gesture gives a reason (not indicated in the play text) for Omasis to interrupt himself and change the topic. Jelgerhuis then turns away, which gives Omasis the space for his aside.<sup>91</sup>

It becomes clear from these examples that Jelgerhuis integrated the given stage directions in his interpretation of the scene, by adding his thoughts and additional movements so as to make the staging logical. To incorporate all of these various elements into the staging, the two actors had to

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<sup>88</sup> Edited citation. For the full citation, see section 3.2.1, p. 138, or Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 136.

<sup>89</sup> My main functions in this section: staging guide and observer.

<sup>90</sup> See Appendix B, p. 16 (Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, pp. 158–162; and Baour-Lormian, *Omasis*, transl. Westerman, p. 47).

<sup>91</sup> See Appendix B, p. 20; (Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 164; Baour-Lormian, *Omasis*, transl. Westerman, p. 49).

work in different ways: Wentz, as Siméon, had to insert a multitude of Jelgerhuis's descriptions into his acting, whereas Paixão had very few descriptions for Omasis, but interacted with Wentz by anticipating and acting in a way that made Siméon's actions and reactions more plausible. During these sessions, I provided feedback regarding the blocking, the balance of attitudes and gestures, entrances and exits, and continuously compared their scene with Jelgerhuis's written cues (Appendix B, pp. 13–20), raising attention towards elements that were missing or could be improved. It took adjusting for both actors to create the asides and the right emotional build-up and tension between the characters, but this process enabled Wentz to obtain the desired vocal colour, affects, gestures, eye movements, and accentuation of specific words.

### 3.4.2 Volume

As Scene 5 began to take shape, the dramatical construction of the text, guided by Jelgerhuis's remarks, propelled Wentz and Paixão into an ever-increasing intensity of passions.<sup>92</sup> The resulting volume of their dialogue reached a high level, recognized not only by myself and the actors, but also by the other members of DHAC. As the play text of Scene 5 indicates that only five lines be spoken loudly, and only by Siméon, the question emerged whether the general loudness did not exceed the limits of stage decorum in Jelgerhuis's time.<sup>93</sup> In search of an answer, I continued my research on volume touched upon in Chapter 1. Both Jelgerhuis's document of 1808 and *De Tooneelkijker* provided information on vocal volume on stage. As mentioned above, in *De Tooneelkijker*'s review of his performance as Siméon in 1817, the only criticism Jelgerhuis received concerned his excessive shouting.<sup>94</sup> *De Tooneelkijker*'s observation on shouting was no exception. As discussed in Chapter 1, Jelgerhuis had been criticized for the same tendency on several other occasions. This may seem unexpected, considering that Jelgerhuis himself had already written in 1808 that too much shouting took place among the tragedians of the Amsterdam Schouwburg.<sup>95</sup> Yet his writing reveals how one actor induced another to shout, particularly at the end of an important line, and how this habit persisted because it was applauded by the audience. Jelgerhuis provides the following explanation:

*Hij, die het waagt, daarvan af te kijken, verliest het openlijk handgeklap en vervalt dus, tegen beter weten in, tot navolging. Hoe moeilijk is het, deze dwaling te overwinnen! [...] Het natuurlijk verheven spel, dat de zinnen betoovert, ontbreekt nog geheel.*<sup>96</sup>

He, who dares to diverge from this, loses the applause and, against his better judgement, is reduced to conforming. How difficult it is, to master this error! [...] The naturally elevated way of acting, which enchants the senses, is as yet entirely missing.

<sup>92</sup> My main functions in this section: researcher and staging guide.

<sup>93</sup> Baour-Lormian, *Omasis*, transl. Westerman, Act III, Scene 5, p. 47.

<sup>94</sup> *De Tooneelkijker*, 3 (1818), p. 41.

<sup>95</sup> *De Tooneelkijker*, 2 (1817), pp. 19 and 433. See also Neuman, 'Three Jelgerhuis Manuscripts', pp. 127–128 or Chapter 1, section 1.4.3 on "Naturalness", "ease", and "gracefulness".

<sup>96</sup> Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', p. 111.



The importance of applause for the actor was already generated in the Amsterdam Schouwburg's auditioning practice at the very start of an actor's career: employment at the theatre depended on the amount of applause received at the actor's three debut performances. Tiffany Stern points out in *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan*, the importance of the applause in earlier English theatre practice, not only for the actors but also for the authors of newly written plays. Authors would be eager to have their new play performed at least three days in a row, as the third night resulted in a financial benefit for them.<sup>97</sup> For this reason, playwrights might even craft their plays with the moments that should win the applause in mind (also known as 'clap-trap'), and it was not uncommon that actors would raise their voices to ensure the applause. Stern gives the example of Marsilia, a character in the play *The Female Wits*, who, as the playwright had not included 'a genuine rousing moment in her text (known as a 'clap-trap'), [...] tries to force the actors to bring about applause by ranting'.<sup>98</sup>

Not all actors, however, seem to have molded their volume excessively to ensure the applause. As discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.4.3 on "Naturalness", "ease", and "gracefulness", Jelgerhuis compared the Dutch actors' stage behaviour with the acting of the famous François-Joseph Talma (1763–1826). This French actor impressed Jelgerhuis in his role as Nero, in which he seemed to remain 'in het vermogen zijner kracht' (within the bounds of his power) during the entire performance.<sup>99</sup> Jelgerhuis added:

*Angst en wroeging was het hoofddoel van zijn spel, en ofschoon hij bij al den eenvoud van zijn spel dikwerf deed ijzen, schreeuwde hij nooit. Zulks was om nimmer te vergeten! Zonder hier iemand te noemen, zeg ik alleen, dat men van niet één onzer Hollandsche Tooneelsten hetzelfde zeggen kan.*<sup>100</sup>

Fear and remorse were the main aim of his acting, and although he often caused cold chills by the simplicity of his acting, he never shouted. This was unforgettable! Without naming names, I only say that one cannot say the same of any one of our Dutch actors.

These examples suggest that Jelgerhuis was aware of the current imperfections, but also conscious of the difficulty in eliminating bad habits within the acting company, given that the audience's approval was crucial to the actor's career. Desirous of change, Jelgerhuis reflected upon solutions to improve both the audience's taste and the acting level. However, judging by his own *Toneel Studien* of 1811, *De Tooneelkijker's* reviews between 1816 and 1819, and even a review in *Melpomene en Thalia*, 1834, the issue of shouting on stage had not yet been resolved. These reviews still mention Jelgerhuis's excessive shouting, but also decry this tendency as a general flaw among the actors of the Amsterdam Schouwburg.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Tiffany Stern, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan* (Oxford: Clarendon press, 2000), p. 173.

<sup>98</sup> Tiffany Stern, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan*, p. 173.

<sup>99</sup> Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', p. 121. It is likely that Jelgerhuis here refers to one or several of Talma's performances in Amsterdam in 1797, 1803 and 1806 mentioned in Chapter 1. See section 1.4.2 on 'Developments in acting style', footnote 94.

<sup>100</sup> Jelgerhuis, 'Antwoord op de vraag', p. 121.

<sup>101</sup> See *De Tooneelkijker*, 1 (1816), p. 29; *De Tooneelkijker*, 2 (1817), p. 19; *Melpomene en Thalia, Tijdschrift voor beminnaren van den Schouwburg, eerste aflevering* [...] ('s Gravenhage: A. Kloots, 1834), p. 80.

Once I knew of the tendency among the Dutch actors to raise their volume to a level described as shouting, I faced that dilemma which so often tortures historically informed performers: were the actors to offer an interpretation of what I think actually happened in the performance (reality), or an interpretation of what the performer (in this case Jelgerhuis) may have desired had it been possible? As the passionate moments in Scene 5 naturally induced Wentz and Paixão to raise their voices, I decided not to ask them to limit their volume. The impact of their vocal crescendo created a contrast with moments of sensibility and asides, which I found effective. Vocal volume is one of the elements I hope to experiment with in an actual theatre, when the occasion arises, particularly with regard to Siméon's behaviour in Act V, which had given rise to *De Tooneelkijker's* criticism.

### 3.4.3 Preparation for Scenes 3 and 4

The second project involved staging Scenes 3 and 4 of Act III with Wentz as Siméon and Andreas Gilger as Ramnes.<sup>102</sup> This time I proposed sessions including training and experimentation in combination with the actual staging. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, all meetings were held online. The preparations took place in nine online sessions between 8 May and 30 September 2020. I then organized a more intense workshop format (eleven hours in three days: 22–24 October), which were followed by more than forty short meetings between 24 October 2020 and 25 February 2021. In alternation with the process of combining images with the text of Scenes 3 and 4, Wentz and Gilger agreed to preparatory readings and discussions of the text, similar to the work done earlier on Scene 5. Apart from understanding and creating the characters before staging the scene (in the months of preparation), I wanted us to think more profoundly about the notion of *welstand* and incorporate Jelgerhuis's advice to create lively images in the mind, as he describes it in both the manuscript and the *Theoretische lessen*. Following my own experimentations on creating attitude series from images as described in Chapter 2, I asked both Wentz and Gilger to select visual images as inspiration for their characters, attitudes, and gestures. These images were mainly paintings and illustrations mentioned or drawn by Jelgerhuis, most of which I provided, but also included other contemporary sources. Wentz and Gilger inserted these images into their text, creating a visual roadmap for their movements and attitudes, while reflecting on a possible route for the passions behind these movements. Appendix D is an example of the images of attitudes Gilger chose and inserted in the text for his interpretation of Ramnes in Scene 4.

### 3.4.4 Training

In the virtual workshop sessions (October 2020), I prepared elements of physical training in combination with readings, discussions, and videos made of Scenes 3 and 4 (the online format via Zoom facilitated the recording of these scenes). The training consisted of exercises – based on Jelgerhuis's lessons in the *Theoretische lessen* on gesticulation, full body attitudes, and facial expression (see Appendix E for a summary of the latter) similar to those described in Chapter 2, as well as work on embodiment of the images Wentz and Gilger had selected. As the exercises closely follow the instructions in the *Theoretische lessen*, they were intended not only as training, but also as a potential means to lead to intuitive moments on stage within the ideal aesthetic realm of

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<sup>102</sup> My functions in this section: project manager, (providing material), active participant, observer and stage guide.

*welstand*. In the exercises, I occasionally actively participated, joining Wentz and Gilger.<sup>103</sup> This was an opportunity for the three of us to learn not only by carrying out the exercise on our own person but also by observing each other. For instance, all three of us practised the short basic attitude series (T1–11) for tragedy based on Jelgerhuis’s guidelines on gesticulation, described in Chapter 2, section 2.2.4, ‘The basic tragedy series: T1–11’. Gilger and Wentz had already practiced the short basic series with me at the Historical Acting Summer Academy, held at Leiden University.<sup>104</sup> All three of us then took turns in performing the series, while adding variations by performing the sequence of attitudes in different characters and passions. By using the exercise titled ‘the regisseur’ (also described in Chapter 2) we also improvised other, shorter series: one of us would begin an attitude, and the two would take turns in calling out the next attitude to execute, oftentimes in combination with a passion. Doing so resulted in new series, such as: T5 in anger (T5 is the fifth attitude in the T[ragedy] series, which normally is connotated with the act of rejecting), T9 in pride, T11 in humility, T8 in disgust.<sup>105</sup> The various combinations improved our transitions between attitudes and led to variety in improvisations during the training.

To improve my own study and practice of attitudes that may have been used predominantly in masculine roles, I continued to take active part also in the more specific exercise training, which consisted in combining the short basic attitude series T1-11 series with passions and attitudes specifically intended for and inspired by the roles of Ramnes and Siméon. This part of the process was very much a creative team effort, including experimentation with passions and character traits of Siméon as described in the manuscript, and traits and passions that seemed fitting for the role of Ramnes. Wentz, for instance, executed the variation to the tragedy series T1-11, described as ‘all-in-one-passion’ in Chapter 2 with the sense of inner ‘*foltering*’ (torment), and later with ‘*teederheijd*’ (tenderness).<sup>106</sup> Wentz, Gilger and I each performed different versions of the series T1-11 described as ‘passions-in-pairs’ in Chapter 2, in which emotions alternated every two attitudes. For instance, two attitudes in ‘*donderende wrevel*’ (thundering resentment), the next two ‘*tot zĳg zelve keerende*’ (to contemplate), the subsequent two returning to ‘*donderende wrevel*’, and so forth.<sup>107</sup> Gilger used the T1-11 series as well as part of the attitude series he had created for Ramnes (Appendix D), alternating, for instance, pride, surprise, and scorn. After the workshop sessions, Wentz, Gilger, and I continued to develop the attitudes online, frequently at first, almost on alternate days (twenty-seven sessions in November-December 2020). Another eleven sessions followed in January-February 2021. These meetings had a substantial impact on my development as a teacher. In its repeatability, the Tragedy attitude series allowed for endless variation, and was adaptable not only to the characters of Ramnes and Siméon, but to any character and any combination of

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<sup>103</sup> My functions in this section: project manager and active participant.

<sup>104</sup> As mentioned in the Introduction, the Historical Acting Summer Academy was organized by Jed Wentz, and held at Leiden University (see page 11, footnote 28 of this dissertation). Jed Wentz, João Paixão, and I taught historically informed acting techniques, based on sources on acting including Aaron Hill’s ‘An Essay’; Charles Le Brun’s *Methodie*; Gilbert Austin’s *Chironomia* and Jelgerhuis’s *Theoretische lessen*. As these courses were intended for the development of the teachers as well as that of the students, the teachers attended each other’s group classes.

<sup>105</sup> See Chapter 2 for more information on training exercises based on Jelgerhuis’s attitudes.

<sup>106</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, for ‘*foltering*’, see pp. 131, 133; ‘*teederheijd*’, pp. 132, 176.

<sup>107</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, for ‘*donderende wrevel*’, see p. 156; ‘*tot mij zelve keerende*’, p. 128; ‘*tot zĳg zelve keerende*’, p. 135. See also Chapter 4, section 4.5.4, footnote 88.

passions (admittedly, some more difficult to render plausible than others). Gilger and I also took turns in practicing the Comedy series, for variety. Several of his original and playful ideas for characters in unusual situations pushed my imagination further in this genre, with which I had less experience.

### 3.4.5 Working online

The online format became problematical in the final stages of recording Scene 4 (October 24–26, 2020). Wentz and Gilger were working from their respective homes in differently shaped rooms, impeding their moving at the same distance from the camera. This resulted in video recordings with disproportionate images of Wentz and Gilger: one of the two looked significantly smaller, while on stage they would be standing near one another. Both actors were also restricted in their movements, as certain movements could cause a part of the body to be left out of the frame. In addition, the unstable internet connection occasionally hindered the dialogue, causing delays, and even momentarily blacking the video entirely. Not having better options at the time of the recording (larger rooms with a better internet connection), I decided to keep these recordings only to document our work in progress, rather than add them as an addendum to this chapter as planned.

### 3.4.6 *Theoretische lessen* and the manuscript complement each other

Early on in the project it became clear how the information in the manuscript and the *Theoretische lessen* complemented each other in providing answers in the search for an acting style based on Jelgerhuis's own sources. Take the delivery of anger as example: Jelgerhuis writes in the manuscript about Siméon's expressing 'anger' in a passage in Scene 5 with Omasis. In search of a historically informed rendition of 'anger', the actors and I turned to the chapter featuring anger in the *Theoretische lessen*.<sup>108</sup> Following the instructions in the acting manual, we studied and experimented with the expression of anger in the face, as well as with embodiment of the illustrations of full body attitudes. Having gained a basic idea of the style and two options for attitudes to express this emotion on stage, Wentz implemented this version of anger in the sentence spoken by Siméon, as notated in the manuscript. The manuscript provided additional details to colouring the voice, trembling of the body, and movement of the eyes, which made the basic form of anger more intense. However, following Jelgerhuis's instruction in the *Theoretische lessen*, even the most vehement passions - and therefore supposedly also the anger described in the manuscript - should be checked by *welstand*. The full expression of anger now created was therefore the result of experimentation and the two sources combined. The acting manual had provided the basic elements needed to attempt a physical interpretation of the manuscript, while the manuscript's information on detail and placement of the passion in the text expanded the basic information on portraying anger in the *Theoretische lessen*.

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<sup>108</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 156.

### 3.4.7 Staging examples: Act III, Scene 3

Siméon's monologue in the third act offered an opportunity to look into and experiment with the movements on stage during a monologue, as well as with specific gestures and a specific aspect of delivery: 'opklimming' (climbing).<sup>109</sup> Wentz (interpreting the role of Siméon) and I (here in the function of researcher, providing materials, stage guide, and observer) soon realized that this would be a virtuoso task. Jelgerhuis dedicated more than five pages to the seventeen lines of text, starting with the following introduction:

*deezē plaats uyt het werk verschaft mij de grootste zorge, ik houde haar voor de moeilijkste uijt de geheele Rol, Zij is de blinkend=Ste [sic] en dient Zoo te geschieden dat zij diep in het geheugen der aanschouwers blyfft. — deezē Clauze is door derzelver hartstogtelijken Stemming ver booven al het overige en doorgaande der Rol verheven [;] yder woord is yshyk*<sup>110</sup>

this place in the play gives me the most trouble, I consider it the most difficult in the whole role, it is the most brilliant and should be done in such a way that it remains deep in the minds of the audience. — This passage is, because of its passionate atmosphere, far superior to all the rest and the following parts of the role [;] every word is petrifying.

To make Jelgerhuis's descriptions easier to work with, I reduced the working document (Appendix B), to a document specific for Scene 3 and its transition into Scene 4 (see Figures 13a–13b), in which I listed (and numbered for later reference in this paragraph) only the direct physical acting cues and the essential sequences of thought and emotion. Figures 13a–13b show how many such sequences Wentz had to internalize before speaking certain lines (an English translation of these figures is attached as Appendix C).<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> My functions in this section: staging guide, researcher, observer.

<sup>110</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 142–143.

<sup>111</sup> Explanatory note for Figures 13a–13b: this document is a transcript of Act III, Scene 3 from Baour-Lormian, *Omasis*, transl. Westerman, pages 39–40 (in black) with inserted fragments from Jelgerhuis's study of Siméon in his manuscript *Toneel Studien* of 1811, pages 141–147 (in green italics). The latter is a shortened version of the descriptions in the manuscript, and has been paraphrased and set in the third person singular masculine (corresponding to Siméon), for clarity during the staging process. These are therefore not exact citations, but indications intended as a working document. For the more complete version of his text, including Jelgerhuis's spelling as copied from his manuscript, see Appendix B, Act III, Scene 3.

## DERDE TOONEEL

- (1) *Stamelend met afgebroken zachte toon: De ontzetting [...]. staken*  
(2) *langzaam bedarende in tranen uitbarstende, zich beklagend in haar haat vervallen te zijn en alles ontvallen te zien wat hem nog overig was.*

SIMÉON.

De ontzetting doet mijn bloed zijn loop in de aadren staken;  
Dit slechts ontbrak mij nog, haar haat mij waard te maken.

- (3) *tot herstel komend brengt hij zich haar huwelijk met Omasis te binnen*  
(4) *zijn woeste opbruising ontvlamt opnieuw.*

Ziedaar dan uw vaarwel. Rampzalig door uw schoon;  
Zou 'k dien gevloekten echt getuigen tot mijn' hoon!

- (5) *De moeilijkste en blinkendste plaats uit de hele rol, zo uit te voeren dat zij diep in het geheugen der aanschouwers blijft:*  
(6) *Gij Hemel.. - tot het Einde: hartstochtelijke stemming, ieder woord is ijselijk.*  
(7) *Zich in het midden des toneels plaatsend, sprekend met nadruk en helderheid.*  
(8) *Wel onderscheidende: een leed van 15 jaar berouw, zonder de Hemel te kunnen bevredigen doch om bescherming smekende, daar hij alle hoop mist.*

Gij, hemel, die me in toorn het licht hebt opgedragen;  
Die mijn geduld beproeft door zoo veel strenge slagen;  
Gij die behagen vindt, daar gij mij wreed kastijdt;  
Door vijftien jaar berouw nog niet bevredigt zijt;  
Bescherm mij in het eind, daar ik niet meer mag hopen.

- (9) *Onder: het Misdrieff Sleept<sup>1</sup> my voort snelde hij naar één zijde, ontzet, met alle schrik op het besef der misdaad als een geopende afgrond, wanend die te Zien en achterwaarts deinzend*

Het misdrijf jaagt mij voort. 'k Zie d' afgrond voor mij open!  
Ik wilde vlieden. . . Gij belette 't mij. . . Welaan!

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<sup>1</sup> Jelgerhuis writes 'sleept mij voort' (drags me onward), the *Omasis* text 'jaagt mij voort' (chases me onward).

- (10) *Een steeds klimmende toon der ontzetting en sterkte;*  
 (11) *voortgaand met het ijselijke voorstel om ‘Blinddelings [...] bloot te willen staan, en Zig aan zijne woede overtegeven.- en zijne gruwelen aan de Wil des Hemels Zelve te wijten’.*

’k Wil blindelings ten prooije aan uwe gramschap staan;

- (12) *de steeds klimmende ijselijkheden vorderen een toon der stemme daaraan geevenredigd,*  
 (13) *al zijn krachten parende bij de uitdrukking, het vermoogen der wanhopende razernij voor-stellend en daar in den overijlende resolutie om den moord aan Omazis te volbrengen.*

’k Zal slechts de schrikbre stem van mijne woede hooren:  
 De gruwlen die ik pleeg zijn uit uw’ wil geboren!  
 Gij eischt den dood van een’ tijran wiens trots mij tart?

- (14) *Tot dit uijterste gekoomen had hij de uiterste vermogens van stem verheffing [...] doen opklimmen.*  
 (15) *een gewigtige toonverandering:*  
 (16) *grillende van de daad zelf zegt hij, tot de Hemel sprekende K gehoorzaam ja,[...] hart*  
 (17) *met eene vuisteslag op het hart,*  
 (18) *Een afgewend gezigt en oog ten Hemel.*

’k Gehoorzaam, ja! . . Maar weêr de wroeging uit mijn hart.

- (19) *beijde de handen voor het voorhoofd slaan,*  
 (20) *zich bezinnen*  
 (21) *een Pauze makende zegt hij: Ach Wat heb ik gezegd, met de uitdrukking van het angstig herroepen van het geheugen*

Ach, wat heb ik gezegd!

- (22) *van zich zelf gruwende nu in geheel sombere gedachten stortende,*  
 (23) *terugkerend in de mijmering waarin Simeon zich het eerst vertoonde*  
 (24) *In mijmering voort wandelende met een halve ronde overgang over den voorgrond ontmoet hem Ramnes*  
 (25) *Op zijn zicht, zwoegt hij van deze ruwe bestorming en deinst een weinig terug*  
 (26) *Ramnes grijpt zijn hand*  
 (27) *Klam angst zweet stelt hij nu voor zich uit te breken met een handveeg over het voorhoofd*  
 (28) *Tevens enige rust zoekende in den aanvang van dit gesprek door stille stand en stem tonen die een angstig fluisteren gelijk zijn*  
 (29) *Zekere hartklopping vertonend die angst en gejaagdheid verraden en de zinnen op nieuw beroeren.*

Figure 13b

Figure 14 shows the document I prepared as visual aid for the blocking of this sequence, featuring Siméon's stage position and movements on the left, and the text on the right side.

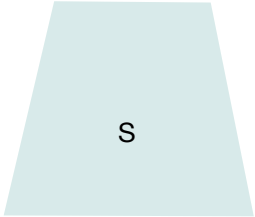
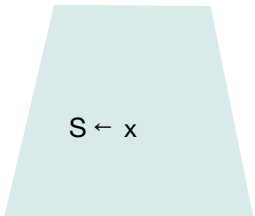
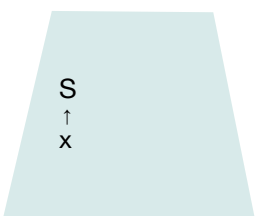
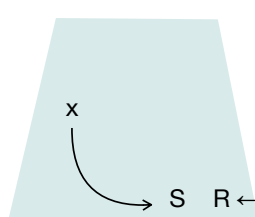
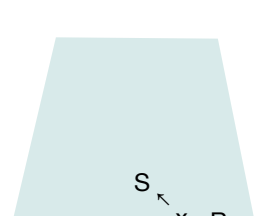
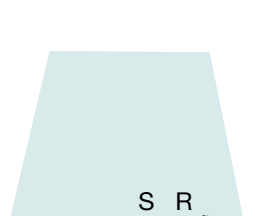
	<p>Zich het midden van het toneel plaatsend, sprekend met nadruk en helderheid</p> <p>(Placing himself centre stage, speaking with emphasis and clarity)</p>
	<p>Onder: <u>het Misdrijf Sleept my voort</u> naar één zijde snellende</p> <p>(Hastening to one side during: <u>Misdeeds drive me onward</u>)</p>
	<p>Met alle schrik op het besef der misdaad als een geopende afgrond, waant Siméon deze te zien en deinst achterwaarts</p> <p>(Filled with horror at the realization of the crime as an abyss, imagining seeing this, and recoiling)</p>
	<p>In sombere gedachten en in zijne gewone mijmering voort wandelende met een halve ronde overgang over den voorgrond ontmoet hij Ramnes [overgang tot het vierde toneel]</p> <p>(In a pensive state he walks in a semi-circle across the front of the stage, where he is met by Ramnes [transition to scene 4])</p>
	<p>Op het zien van Ramnes, deinst Siméon een weinig terug</p> <p>(On seeing Ramnes, Siméon retreats slightly)</p>
	<p>Ramnes grijpt de hand van Siméon: <u>Welnu, mag ik mij strelen</u></p> <p>(Ramnes seizes his hand: <u>Well now, may I flatter myself</u>)</p>

Figure 14, Staging sequence for the roles of Siméon (S) and Ramnes (R) in Act 3, Scene 3, and transitioning into Scene 4. The 'x' indicates their previous positions. The top of the trapezium is upstage, the bottom is downstage. The written indications are selected and paraphrased sentences from Jelgerhuis's *Toneel Studien*, pp. 143–147. The English translation follows the Dutch.



Siméon commences the monologue by positioning himself centre stage, then moving to the side and recoiling, and finally walking in a semi-circle across the front of the stage, where he is met by Ramnes.<sup>112</sup> Jelgerhuis's version of this monologue takes Siméon from soft stammering and tears to a build-up that moves through dismay and fear, anger, to despairing rage; from there, collapsing into fearful recognition of what he has said, and returning to an anxious, somber state in which he encounters Ramnes. Three times Jelgerhuis describes a build-up using the terms '*kelimmende*' or '*opklimming*' (building to a climax) to indicate an increase in events, and/or volume. To provide information about this term, I cite from two sources which Jelgerhuis may well have known in the time of writing his manuscript: Jacob Ploos van Amstel's *Aanleiding tot de uiterlijke welsprekendheid* (he refers to Ploos van Amstel's work later in his life as a suitable source for teaching acting students) and the periodical *Algemeene Konst- en letterbode*.<sup>113</sup> Ploos van Amstel refers to *opklimming* also as '*trapspreuk*', and the equivalents, already used by the ancient orators, '*climax*' (from the ancient Greek *κλίμαξ* [ladder]) and '*gradation*' (from the Latin '*gradus*' [step]).<sup>114</sup> The latter two terms provide a direct link to earlier sources, such as David van Hoogstraten's *Beginselen of kort begrip der rederykkunst* in the Netherlands — and to international sources, such as Austin's *Chironomia* and Jean Mauduit Larive's *Cours de déclamation*.<sup>115</sup> The term in its various forms ('climax', 'graduer') indicates a gradual increase (often associated with a ladder or steps, as the meaning of the words implies) of the dramatic content. The way this general idea of increase manifests (for instance, in poetry or in declamation), is explained in various ways in the sources. Some explanations include the repetition of a word, which every time is intensified in some way (for instance by volume, energy, gestures, pitch, and/or emotion).<sup>116</sup> Ploos van Amstel's definition combines climbing of the content with that of the vocal delivery (volume), and marks the difficulty of this aspect of delivery.<sup>117</sup>

*Eindelijk de Opklimming of Trapspreuk, welke van graad tot graad iets voegt bij de deugd of ondeugd van een daad, eischt in den beginne een stoute en volle stem; en moet vervolgens van sterker tot sterker oprijzen tot aan het laatste lid van deeze woordgestalte. Dit maakt, wanneer zij lang is, dat weinige in*

<sup>112</sup> For my analysis and description of this sequence, see section 3.2.6, 'Indications concerning blocking: the actor's position and movements on stage'.

<sup>113</sup> Ploos van Amstel, *Aanleiding*. For Jelgerhuis's reference to Ploos van Amstel, see Jelgerhuis, *Consepten*, No. 7, in Appendix G. See also *Algemeene Konst- en letterbode voor het jaar 1806, I. deel met platen* (Haarlem: A. Loosjes, Pz, [1806]).

<sup>114</sup> Climax is not intended in its modern meaning of highest point, but rather as defined in the OED: 'A rhetorical device consisting of a series of related ideas or statements arranged in order of increasing force, intensity, or effectiveness[...]' See *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. 'climax, n., sense 1.a', <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/8401543222>, (accessed 30 August 2023).

<sup>115</sup> See David van Hoogstraten (1658–1724), *Beginselen of kort begrip der rederykkunst, ten dienst der Tael- en Dichtlievendenden opgesteld door David van Hoogstraten* (Amsterdam: Gerard onder de Linden, 1725); Austin, *Chironomia*; and Jean Mauduit Larive, *Cours de déclamation prononcé a l'Athénée de Paris [...], tome second, première partie* (Paris: Delaunay, 1810).

<sup>116</sup> For climax manifested by 'encrease [sic.] of energy' in voice and gesture, see Gilbert Austin's instructions for executing Young's *Night thoughts*, in Austin, *Chironomia*, pp. 547–548. For examples of 'graduer' in semi-tones, word repetition, volume, and/or emotion, see Larive, *Cours de Déclamation*, pp. 87–88, 152–153, 240, 295, 340, 348.

<sup>117</sup> Ploos van Amstel, *Aanleiding*, pp. 112, 256, 265–266.

*staat zijn [266] om het onderscheid van toon te bespaaren, noodzakelijk om alle deelen van de Trapspreuk te ontwarren.*<sup>118</sup>

Finally, the Ascent or Climax, which adds, step by step, to the virtue or the vice of an act, initially requires a bold and full voice; subsequently it must rise, stronger and stronger, until the last syllable of this passage. This is why, when [the passage] is long, few are able [266] to retain the differentiation of tone which is necessary to distinguish between the various steps of the progression.

That this technique was not easy to master is clear from Jelgerhuis's records of his own acting experience and in another review of 1806, about the Dutch actor Schouten:<sup>119</sup>

*Zommylen echter gaat het hem als de meeste Hollandsche Schouwspelers, dat hy niet in staat is de stem naar eisch te doen klimmen, en in den beginne den toon te hoog neemt om dien, wanneer het 'er op aankomt, nog hooger te brengen.*<sup>120</sup>

Sometimes, however, he suffers from the same [phenomenon] as most Dutch actors, in that he is unable to make his voice rise to the required level, and he begins on too high a tone to raise it even higher when it becomes necessary.

This passage makes clear that the *opklimming* could also be expressed by climbing in vocal pitch. Wentz and I therefore agreed in his adding this aspect of the climbing technique to intensify the dramatic content and volume while working on this monologue. By adding this aspect to the previously chosen attitudes and Jelgerhuis's other descriptions (Figure 13b, cues 10–14), Wentz created an increase in intensity towards the final lines of Siméon's monologue. Here, I was interested in seeing and hearing in Wentz's rendition the two following moments of contrast in voice and movements as described by Jelgerhuis (visible in Figure 13b, cues 15–23). Having reached the extremity of volume and despairing rage, Jelgerhuis wrote about a change of tone to speak the next line as follows:

*grillende van de daad Zelve Zeijde ik die Vreeslyke Woorden, tot den Heemel spreekende K geboorzaam Ja, Maar weer de Wroeging uit mijn hart terwijl ik met Eene vuijste slag op het hart, Een afgewend gezigt en oog ten Heemel maakte.*<sup>121</sup>

while shuddering from the deed itself, I spoke those terrible words, speaking to heaven I obey, yes!.. but banish remorse from my heart, while I struck my heart with [my] fist, with averted face and one eye cast heavenwards.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Ploos van Amstel, *Aanleiding*, pp. 265–266.

<sup>119</sup> Jelgerhuis discusses keeping his emotions at bay, so that he could perform the '*opklimming*' this role required. See Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 194.

<sup>120</sup> *Algemeene Konst- en letterbode* (1806), p. 188.

<sup>121</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 146.

<sup>122</sup> As in Chapter 3, I have translated '*een oog ten hemel*' as 'one eye heavenwards' because Jelgerhuis uses this expression in the *Theoretische lessen* to indicate the tilting of the head to one side, during which one eye is higher than the other.

In addition to the vocal effect, Jelgerhuis's interpretation of this passage is manifested in physical action (striking his heart with a fist, and the angle of his face and his eyes), in thought and emotion (while shuddering from the deed itself), as well as Jelgerhuis's own opinion of Siméon's text '*Zeijde ik die Vreeslyke Woorden*' (I spoke those terrible words). After this passage, he mentions a gesture and a pause before speaking the next line, '*Ach Wat heb ik gezegt*' (Alas, what have I said):

*Hier Sloeg ik dan beijde de handen voor het voorhoofd; bezon mij en een Pauze maakende Zeijde ik de genoemde Woorden, onder de Uytdrukking van angstig herroepen van't geheugen, en van zig zelven gruwende nu in Een geheele Sombre gedagten Stortende, kwam ik tot die gewoone mijmering te rug, waarin ik mij het Eerst vertoonde.*<sup>123</sup>

Here I clapped both hands to my forehead, reflected, and pausing, I spoke those words, while expressing the fearful memory of the recollection, and disgusted with myself, now plunging into [...] entirely sombre thoughts, I returned to that habitual pensive state, in which I had appeared at first.

As an informed observer and staging guide, who had only read and studied Jelgerhuis's account of his performance, but not experienced it by witnessing an embodied performance, I found myself more moved than I had expected during Wentz's interpretation. The act of striking his heart with his fist at the pinnacle of the slowly built up vocal crescendo added to the desperation and rage Wentz expressed, and I was convinced by the contrast of this climax with the subsequent pause and breakdown as well as by Siméon's/Wentz's initial vulnerable stammering and tears. My conclusion regarding Wentz's embodiment of this scene is as follows: not only are the gestures in this monologue an addition to the vocabulary of gestures in the *Theoretische lessen*, but Jelgerhuis's description of words, gestures and vocal effects also casts light on the timing. Jelgerhuis's use of gestures while speaking the text is at least as valuable to the actor working with the manuscript as the gestures that occur in silence. Regarding the matter of timing, the 'how long' and 'how short' will remain inexact variables. But the fact that there was a pause at all, and that the pause was filled with a gesture and with Jelgerhuis's/Siméon's thoughts, is crucial to the interpretation of the entire role. The options of an expressive pause, and of movements in silence, give actors the freedom to construct their timing according to their interpretation, also between lines of text.

### 3.4.8 Staging examples: Act III, Scene 4

In the online workshop sessions of October 2020, I guided the staging experiment of Scene 4 (between Siméon and Ramnes) with Wentz and Gilger.<sup>124</sup> As can be seen on Figures 13b and 14, Siméon's previous monologue transitions into this scene. Siméon walks in a half circle downstage, to where I asked Gilger as Ramnes to enter from the left side of the stage (as seen from the actor's viewpoint). Again, I invited Wentz and Gilger to follow as much as possible Jelgerhuis's descriptions in the manuscript. Jelgerhuis depicts Siméon's interaction with Ramnes at the beginning of this scene: '*Op Zijn gezigt, swoegt hy [Siméon] van deeze ruwe bestorming en deijnst een weijnig*

<sup>123</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, pp. 146–147.

<sup>124</sup> My functions in this section: staging guide, providing feedback, working materials, and background information, observer.

*te rug, waar op deeze [Ramnes] hem aan de hand grijpt.* (On seeing [Ramnes], [Siméon] gasps, owing to this rough assault and retreats slightly, upon which [Ramnes] seizes his hand).<sup>125</sup> These stage directions are not in the published *Omasis* play text, but they were sufficient for Wentz and Gilger to work with. To prepare Ramnes's entrance at the beginning of Scene 4, Gilger selected Figure 15 from the examples I provided, an illustration from Jelgerhuis's study of Avogaro into the play text (for the illustrations inserted into the entire scene, see Appendix D).<sup>126</sup>



Figure 15, Jelgerhuis, illustration of himself as Avogaro, *Toneel Studien*

Once he had embodied his interpretation of this illustration, his entrance was energetic and suited the described sense of ‘assault’, mentioned above. Ramnes enters from stage left: his right hand is free to grab Siméon’s left hand while Siméon attempts to retreat. I asked Gilger to intensify this effect in order to trigger for Siméon’s anxiety in the first passages of his dialogue with Ramnes. Jelgerhuis continued using the pantomimic element of gestures and expression in Siméon’s part during this dialogue:

<sup>125</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 147.

<sup>126</sup> This illustration is present in both the *Toneel Studien* manuscript (in Amsterdam) and the *Tonneel Stúdien* manuscript (in Antwerp).

*Het klamme angst sweet stelde ik nu voor mij uijtzebreeken. eene handveege over het voorhoofd was de uijtdrukking daar van tevens eenige Rust Zoekende door Stille Stand en stem toonen die nu in den aanvang van dit gesprek Een angstig fluijsteren gelijk waaren [;] deeze voorstelling paarde ik met Zeekere hartklopping te vertoonen die angst en gejaagdheid verraaaden.*<sup>127</sup>

I now imagined breaking out in a cold sweat. Wiping my forehead with my hand was the expression thereof [;] at the same time searching for some calmness though a motionless stance and (soft) tones of voice, which at the beginning of this dialogue were like fearful whispering [;] I combined this representation by exhibiting some [possibly unmistakable] palpitations of the heart, which revealed fear and agitation.

This sequence of Simeon's actions proved to be more complicated to interpret than the previous ones. Firstly, because expressing palpitations and breaking out in a cold sweat, apart from the hand's movement on the brow, may be performed in many different ways, and secondly because it is not evident from this passage during which lines of the play text this manifestation of anxiety should take place. In search of a solution, Wentz tried out various moments at which to act out the gestures and whispering that Jelgerhuis refers to. Some versions felt slightly better than others to him, Gilger, and myself as I observed the scene, yet from our different viewpoints, we all found most versions convincing as long as they arose from Siméon's underlying anxiety and agitation. In both projects it became clear how, by changing each acting parameter, a scene could alter entirely, oftentimes resulting in more than one acceptable and unexpected outcome.

### 3.5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Throughout the entire staging period and its preparation, the search for new information and answers to my questions was undertaken through a combination of artistic experimentation and comparison between sources. The continuous rotation between experimentation, comparison, and reflection was a creative process in itself, a fertile ground for various outcomes. This formula allowed me to come one step closer to answering the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter:

- How could the process of staging three scenes from *Omasis* contribute to my conception of preparing and staging a role in agreement with Jelgerhuis's writings?
- Following Jelgerhuis's indications in his study of Siméon, how could I extend my understanding of the *Theoretische lessen* and consequently of the acting style in the Amsterdam Schouwburg in the early nineteenth century?

The process of exploring by doing, from the training to staging Scenes 3 to 5, exposed certain gaps in the information drawn from Jelgerhuis's manuscript and the *Theoretische lessen*. Yet in time, my understanding of both works increased and their application as complementary sources brought the results of the staging project into clearer focus: the manuscript served as a guide to creating

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<sup>127</sup> Jelgerhuis, *Toneel Studien*, p. 148.

the characters and how their actions connected to the play text, whereas the treatise provided the physical basics and more general but important concepts (such as *contrast* and *welstand*). Meanwhile, the additional sources including Jelgerhuis's study of other roles in the *Toneel Studien*, reviews by theatre critics, and Jelgerhuis's document of 1808, were useful aids in constructing other historically informed pieces of our puzzle. These additional sources answered questions we encountered concerning general elements of acting, decorum, and the interaction with the audience, which helped us understand Jelgerhuis's comments and encouraged us to experiment in areas that might otherwise have been left unexplored. The sources combined with the experience of the actors contributed to a rendition of the three scenes in an acting style which I deemed congruous with what I had read.

Each individual actor learned to inhabit physically their own interpretation of the ideals pertaining to the acting style in the Amsterdam Schouwburg in the early nineteenth century, gaining confidence and ease in delivery and movements within the realm of *welstand*. By practicing the outer form – inspired by historical sources – and especially by aligning this form with the characters' emotions and underlying motivations behind each movement, the imagination and the body merged into a unified expressive language. Because the form became embodied through practice, the mind can turn more fully to interpretation.

### 3.5.1 Building blocks

The following list is the result of this project (including its preparation) and summarizes (my interpretation of) the building blocks needed to create a character according to the acting style Jelgerhuis describes. The building blocks represent the constant and repeatable elements that allow for the unrepeatable outcomes intrinsic to the ephemerality of artistic creation (no rehearsal or performance can ever be repeated exactly). The order is not fixed, as it will vary for each performer and each character, and most of these steps are interrelated. Elements of this list may seem like an obvious part of a modern actor's routine, but research is necessary as one cannot merely assume that this routine was the same in the early nineteenth century on the Dutch stage, since many of the acting treatises of that time do not include all the aspects listed here.<sup>128</sup>

Tools derived from Jelgerhuis's study of Siméon to build up this character are as follows:

- Analyse the play text (including lines of the other characters) to find indications of the character, including key factors such as age, social status, and circumstance.
- Study historical facts or narratives (and/or additional sources such as the Bible) to understand the character's background and the context of the play.
- Use the information above to create the character's/actor's thoughts and emotions and to accumulate lively images in the imagination, which can be recalled on stage.
- Base the hair, headdress, and costume on historical sources and the visual arts, and adapt them, along with the make-up, to suit the age and the character of the part/role.
- Vary expression in the voice through the emotions and the dissimulation of emotions.

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<sup>128</sup> For a discussion of earlier examples of role analyses for actors by Aaron Hill and Felix Aristippe Bernier de Maligny, see Golding, *Classicistic acting*, pp. 105–106, 214.

- Organize the build-up of the role while consciously planning its effect on the audience. (The passages that will move the audience most are well-prepared and articulated with care.)
- Seek to balance between emotion and technique, in order to represent the emotion sufficiently to move the audience, while attempting to stay in control of one's voice.
- Use nuanced transitions as well as contrasts of affect and effect. Use artistic freedom in timing while speaking and between lines, even as the continuity of thought guides one's expression of character throughout the play.
- Consider including striking attitudes and gestures, pantomime, and physical exchanges between the actors (this can include taking someone's hand, pushing, and so on). For more details: see Appendix A.
- Respect the stage directions in the play text, attempting to integrate these as part of the interaction between the characters and their dramatic development.

Modern actors using these building blocks can increase their understanding of historically informed acting techniques and an acting style based on Jelgerhuis's writings by:

- Training based on information in the *Theoretische lessen* (such as basic attitudes, examples of *welstand*, gestures, and facial expression), enhanced with information from the *Toneel Studien* manuscript (additional gestures, mental images, and emotions).
- Incorporating additional examples and inspiration (for attitudes, gestures, and postures, etc.) from the visual arts.

This list was devised taking into consideration the following subjects, to be treated hereafter: imagination, dissimulation, and declamation.

### 3.5.2 Unity: the imagination, images, and the mental archive

The Siméon study reveals Jelgerhuis's use of imagination to create the thoughts and passions at the core of his character, which may be built up from elements such as the character's age and character traits, the historical context in which the character is set, and so on. Once the actor has established this core, all of the acting elements, including gestures, eye movements, vocal delivery, and vocal colour, can interact and become a unity: *they are connected, as they are generated by the same source*. This does not imply that practice or preparation have become superfluous; an actor can practise all these elements together or separately, as long as they come together to fit into the full picture on stage, which includes costume, fellow performers, and the stage set. Starting from the unity described here, the actor can work with extreme contrasts as well as nuanced transitions and *crescendi* in vocal colour, volume, and passion. Moreover, Jelgerhuis's study indicates a certain freedom regarding timing between lines for expressive pantomime, for movement on stage during a monologue, and for physical interaction with other actors. The continuity of thought (as described in the manuscript) links these elements together and results in acting and reacting not only during one's own lines but also during one's entrances and exits, or while another actor is speaking. I found that these guidelines resulted in a greater sense of artistic freedom for the actor as compared to working with the *Theoretische lessen* only, and that this can be important for the construction or creation of other roles.

### 3.5.3 Dissimulation, the audience, emotion versus technique

In Scenes 3-5, staged in this project, the three characters are feigning most of the time. Their real emotions can be revealed momentarily during an aside, a monologue, when hiding their intentions from the other characters by looking away, or when the characters agree (as when Ramnes and Siméon's ambitions become the same, albeit for different personal reasons). The actors must ensure that the audience can perceive the difference between the character's emotional disguise and glimpses of the character's emotional sincerity. In the case of Siméon, the actor has to balance out three levels: the character's true emotions, the emotions the character wishes to show, and the emotions the character wants to hide. In addition, they need to consider the emotions the character tries to hide but that become visible when they overwhelm their own better judgement. Meanwhile, the actor (behind the character's emotions) continuously monitors their own feelings, kept in check through technique as much as possible. Among all these layers of real emotion and make-believe, the moments that Jelgerhuis signals as most touching also stood out in our staging; they are those few moments in which the character opens up, shows their vulnerability, or is overcome by their feelings.

It seems clear from Jelgerhuis's own description that on stage, after all the preliminary work on thought and practice, he passionately dedicated his thoughts, emotions, and (in his experience) even soul, to his performance of Siméon. Yet he also openly draws the reader's attention to particular passages in which he struggled to keep his emotions in check. And even though strong emotions could be a hindrance to expressing himself on stage artfully (to speak the text as he had envisioned it), he engaged with the emotional situation on stage, even at the risk of being overwhelmed. This suggests a prioritization (whether this was a conscious choice or not) of the passionate engagement with his role over technical perfection, at least in the most dramatic passages.<sup>129</sup>

For modern actors engaging with the acting style as described by Jelgerhuis in the manuscript, this is an invitation to explore the fine line between one's own feelings and technique – another addition to the *Theoretische lessen*. Furthermore, the preparation and build-up of an actor's role include taking into account the passages that will move the audience most, and ensuring that such passages are well-prepared and articulated with care. This preparation not only involves gestures and attitudes but also skill in managing the various layers of emotional engagement between the actor and their character.

### 3.5.4 Declamation

Jelgerhuis's descriptions in the manuscript do not provide answers to all the questions concerning declamation on stage in the early nineteenth century: elements such as the pronunciation and the speed of delivery would require additional time to explore. But his search for contrast in the different passages, and the variety of descriptions regarding the voice, including sighs, pauses, stammering, and vocal quality coloured by emotion, reduce the gaps in the information on declamation in the *Theoretische lessen*. The staging process shaped my ideas on voice colour, volume, and pitch, and confirmed the emotional effect on the participating actors (and on the observers)

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<sup>129</sup> Possibly only valid in roles with which he felt particularly connected, and not in those roles he considered a waste of his time.



of the nuanced build-up, ‘*opklimming*’ and vocal contrasts (even between two words) described in the manuscript. The instinctive loud vocal delivery occurring in the dialogue between Paixão and Wentz in Scene 5 led us to address and investigate the delicate balance between a loud voice and shouting.

The research on these elements of delivery in the Amsterdam Schouwburg allows for future, more detailed comparison with international sources on declamation such as those by Jean Mauduit Larive, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and so on, for a more complete image of declamation practices in European theatres in the early nineteenth century.

### 3.5.5 Results of the training

Another unexpected result was the recognition of the importance of the training for Scenes 3 and 4, and the way that training developed during and after our work. As the actors and I alternated between working with the sources, stage work, and training, our understanding of the attitudes and mental images deepened, changing the training itself. Initially conceived as general preparation, the training became applicable to our specific needs during the staging process, and was transformed as our embodied knowledge of the sources and the practical work developed. Instead of a predefined preparation routine, it became flexible, ready to be fine-tuned as needed in order to shape and understand the characters of Siméon and Ramnes.

The training and staging allowed me, personally, to study (physically and mentally) those attitudes and other acting skills that Jelgerhuis links to male characters in the *Toneel Studien* manuscript and in the *Theoretische lessen*. As my stage experience had featured mainly female roles, this was less known terrain for me. This project gave me an opportunity to explore techniques and characteristics that can be used to create roles such as Omasis, Ramnes, and Siméon, which I might have otherwise left unexplored. I now use this knowledge regularly for staging and teaching purposes. Its value is not confined to creating male roles with (strong) character traits resembling those of the three roles above: elements of these physical and mental tools (including those listed in Appendix A) can be used as training material and adapted to fit both male and female characters. Moreover, to create a specific role in a play, opera, or melodrama, the elements can be combined with the building blocks listed above on pages 42–43.

A next step described in the *Theoretische lessen* is to adapt images and movements from daily life to extend their repertoire of movements and expressions. The advice given by Jelgerhuis to the aspiring acting student is to learn from excellent actors, statues and paintings, and then to turn to nature for further inspiration (such as an existing person’s gesture, posture, or facial expression).<sup>130</sup> The examples taken from observing other people are then to be adapted for the stage and perfected through the ideals of decorum, *contrast* and *welstand*, so that they are represented in their highest

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<sup>130</sup> ‘*Intusschen hoop ik reeds getoond te hebben, dat wij geen beeld, geen schilderij, geen print, en eindelijk geen mensch moeten beschouwen, zonder toepassing op onze kunst*’ (I hope to have demonstrated already, that we must observe no statue, no painting, no print, and ultimately no human being, without application to our art). See Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 72.

form, through art.<sup>131</sup> This could give the actor *carte blanche* to bridge any gap in the historical information on staging. Here, again, the *result* cannot be called historical, as the modern actor creates in present time, but the *method* is. I did not ask the actors to take this last step, because I deemed it important to see the gaps first, thus creating awareness of both the gaps and the moments filled in with nature-inspired movement and expression. Staying as close to the sources as the actors and I did in this project exposed these gaps, some of which may be reduced by future research projects.

The descriptions in the manuscript demonstrate how the stage directions as printed in the play text were respected in the scenes discussed in this case study, and how they were acted out. Yet Jelgerhuis reveals more stage action than prescribed in the play text. Although not surprising in itself (the prescribed directions are not many), this information allows for comparison between the stage action based on the analysis of Act III, Scenes 3–5, the stage action in other plays in the *Toneel Studien*, and onwards. The more that can be discovered about the difference between the published staging instructions and what actually happened on-stage, the more those interested in historically informed performance practice can cultivate a sense of when and how to take artistic license when staging a performance in the acting style as described by Jelgerhuis.

Even when informed by sources, acting remains a living process, in which the results cannot be pinned down as unchangeable facts. Wentz's experimentation with Siméon's expression of anxiety at the beginning of Scene 4 revealed several acceptable outcomes for the same scene. This reconfirmed the value of exploring by acting out the scenes physically, as active participation leads to different outcomes than when they are studied only through reflection or comparison of the sources. Although the actors worked with the same descriptions in the manuscript, knowing exactly which actions and reactions to aim for, the resulting staging and atmosphere differed slightly every time. Similarly, the dramatic tension and energy in Wentz and Gilger's rendition of Scenes 3 and 4 was very different when preceded by a reading of previous scenes. Ideal would be to eventually stage the whole play, so as to attain an understanding of the impact of earlier scenes on Scenes 3 to 5 of Act III. Having experienced the limitations of working and recording online, however, I would certainly not stage a bigger project in a virtual format. The more so because the elements I want to explore further – such as vocal volume, timing, and staging scenes that involve more than one actor – cannot be simulated online in the same way, without the physical presence or interaction between the actors and the acoustics of a larger (preferably historical) working space. Other steps could comprise including historical pronunciation and costumes based on Jelgerhuis's illustrations, to see how they affect the actors' gestures and delivery. In addition, Pfeiffer's illustrations of the court hall and court gallery could be used as a point of reference in choosing stage sets, should the project be revived in a theatre setting, as was intended for May 2020 in the restored Valtice castle theatre (due to COVID-19 this project was cancelled).

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<sup>131</sup> 'Alleen moet nu van onze zijde eene theatrale welstand niet uit het oog worden verlooren, welke den Tooneelspeler zoo zeer door de kunstregelen wordt bevolen, die op zijne kunst zoo geheel zonder uitzondering toepasselijk zijn, daar hij het levende beeld in het Tooneelschilderij uitmaakt' (Yet we must not lose sight of theatrical *welstand*, by which the rules of art govern the player, and must be applied without exception to his art, as the player is the live image in the painting that is the stage). See Jelgerhuis, *Theoretische lessen*, p. 150.

### 3.6 CONCLUSION

Jelgerhuis's study of Siméon reveals that he was a passionate craftsman who recorded not only his manner of creating and performing a role but also the difficulties he experienced in achieving his conception of an ideal performance. The reviews documenting his renditions of Siméon indicate that Jelgerhuis's performances were successful with the critics as well as the audience. His notes therefore cast light on the techniques, thoughts, preparations, and acting style of a successful performer in his time, and, relatedly, on the taste of the theatre audience in Amsterdam during the first decades of the nineteenth century.

Analysis of Jelgerhuis's study of Siméon has provided a conception of his rendition of this role, which allows for (future) comparison with his other roles in the *Toneel Studien* and, eventually, with successful roles performed by international actors such as Hyppolite Clairon, François-Joseph Talma, Sarah Siddons, August Wilhelm Iffland, and so on. Each step in this case study contributed to answer the question of how to build a character in Jelgerhuis's style, a style based on the principle of painterliness and *welstand*, in which nuanced passages alternate with strong contrasts in motion and emotion, and in which thoughts, imagination, and emotions are the core of every stage action, providing unity to the many aspects of an actor's delivery.

The following case study (Chapter 4) includes various performances of the melodrama *Proserpina*. Covering a timespan of more than two years, the second case study allowed me to observe the discussed techniques in the context of a present-day performance. As the performance factor adds a step to the research processes carried out in the first case study, the production and my research on *Proserpina* are in turn to be seen as a possible starting point for further investigations.