

# Taste making southerners and northern innovators

## *Artistic dialogue between painters of kitchen scenes in the Republic and the Southern Netherlands, c. 1590–1630*

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### Abstract

In the early seventeenth century many artists from the Northern Netherlands produced kitchen scenes, of which the quality, quantity and diversity amaze us even to the present day. These paintings were developed in competition with their famous predecessors from both antiquity and the sixteenth century, and partly inspired by their contemporaries from the Southern Netherlands. It is demonstrated that the process of development of new types of images after 1600 received a powerful impetus from the influx of immigrants from the Southern Netherlands, which included many painters of food as well as a considerable part of a new audience. Not only was the Southern Netherlandish custom of surrounding oneself with paintings of different price categories, including kitchen scenes and other images of food, imitated by the local population, this also generated a demand for paintings of higher quality, that is, technically more skilful, more life-like and more interesting and attractive in terms of their inventiveness.

*Keywords:* Artistic exchange, artistic competition, kitchen piece, laid table, painted food, still life

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#### *Introduction*

When the Amsterdam artist Adriaen van Nieulandt (c. 1587–1658) painted the kitchen piece in 1616 that now hangs in Brunswick (Braunschweig), he must have had the ambition to surpass and renew the most spectacular examples that had been produced in this genre up to then (fig. 1). Not only is this painting extraordinary because of the enormous dimensions – it is almost two and a half meters wide – but this versatile and ambitious artist also employs an abundance of motifs, that were more than likely seen by the spectator – probably a prosperous patron and his guests – as highly amazing. Entirely new in still life painting of the Northern Netherlands is the depiction on this large scale of exclusive animal species such as the peacock, the swan, the head of a wild boar, the deer, finches, snipes, partridges and turkey. These motifs create a strong impression that this sumptuous interior is part of a palace, as do the expensive silver and gilt showpieces (including the famous chalice by the Utrecht silversmith Adam van Vianen from 1614).<sup>1</sup> In addition, this is the earliest known Northern Netherlandish kitchen piece with a profane history in the background. The chosen theme – the history of Mark Anthony and Cleopatra, which Pliny mentioned in his *Naturalis Historiae* – is, as far as we know, unique.<sup>2</sup> It concerns a scene in which Cleopatra challenges the suspicious

\* This contribution is to a large extent based on the research done for my dissertation: Z. Kwak, “‘Proeft de kost en kauwtse met uw’ oogen’”. Beeldtraditie, betekenis en functie van het Noord-Nederlandse keukentafereel (ca. 1590–1650), unpublished dissertation University of Amsterdam 2014.

1 The renowned chalice was created in 1614 under the patronage of the Amsterdam guild of silversmiths in memory of Adam’s brother Paulus van Vianen, the ‘Kammergoldsmied’ or Chamber Goldsmith of Emperor Rudolf II, who died in Prague in 1613. Shortly after the creation of the masterpiece, which was probably exhibited in the central hall of the guild where it could be viewed by a relatively broad public, the chalice was depicted in paintings, of which the most were produced by Amsterdam artists. See R.J. Baarsen in: R.J. Baarsen et al. (eds.), *Dawn of the Golden Age. Northern Netherlandish art 1580–1620*, (exh.cat. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, 1993–1994), Zwolle 1993–1994, p. 452–453, and the literature mentioned therein.

2 Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historiae*, XXI, 9. The subject of this scene was only convincingly identified in 1981 by R. Klessmann, ‘Ad Tragoediam non ad vitam’, in: *Ars Auro Prior. Studia Joanni Bialostocki sexagenario*

Anthony to put a poisoned cup to his lips, only to prevent him at the very last moment and force a prisoner to drink from the cup, upon which he collapsed and died on the spot. The temptingly displayed profusion of victuals in the foreground of Van Nieulandt's painting undoubtedly refers to the voluptuousness and extravagance of Anthony and Cleopatra and illustrates the incomparable pomp and ceremony of their court.

When Adriaen van Nieulandt completed the kitchen piece in Braunschweig in 1616 he was still under thirty years of age. However, by this time he had already built up a variegated oeuvre which brought him, as we will see, the greatest reputation imaginable among his contemporaries. In 1589, he moved with his Calvinist family from his birthplace Antwerp to Amsterdam where he was initially trained by Pieter Isaacsz., and from 1607 by Frans Badens II.<sup>3</sup> He was primarily active as a painter of history pieces in which landscape also plays an important role. In addition, a few flower pieces, vanitas still lifes, portraits and an architectural piece are known by him.<sup>4</sup> Until the present day the painting in Brunswick is the only known kitchen piece by Van Nieulandt. This is notable, because the scene belongs to the most ambitious compositions ever produced in this genre and the artist thus asserted his position as a celebrated painter of still life.

As I will demonstrate, Van Nieulandt's monumental composition is also truly remarkable, because with this kitchen piece he placed himself consciously within a famous tradition of illustrious predecessors from the Northern Netherlands, and at the same time reacted to the newest developments taking place in Antwerp. His example makes



Fig. 1 Adriaen van Nieulandt, Kitchen piece with the history of Cleopatra and Mark Antony, canvas, 194×247 cm, signed and dated bottom right: Adriaen Van Nieulandt Fecit In Amsterledam Anno 1616, Brunswick, Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum.

*Dicata*, Warsaw 1981, p. 367–372, esp. 370–371; also to be compared A. Balis in: C. Nitze–Ertz, U. Kleinmann, S. Brakensiek (eds.), *Das flämische Stilleben 1550–1680*, (exh. cat. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum; Essen, Villa Hügel, 2002), Lingen 2002, p. 204–205, no. 66, illustration. The following interpretations of the background scene must be rejected: the Murder of Amnon during the feast of Absalom (Samuel II, 13:28–29) (see *Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum Braunschweig. Verzeichnis der Gemälde*, Braunschweig 1969, p. 103, and *Die Sprache der Bilder. Realität und Bedeutung in der niederländischen Malerei des 17. Jahrhunderts*, (exh. cat. Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Brunswick), Brunswick 1978, p. 123, n. 5), the parable of the rich man and the poor man Lazarus (I. Bergström, *Dutch still life painting in the 17th century*, London, New York 1956, p. 247), the healing of a possessed boy (Mark 9:14–29) (N. Schneider, *Still life. Still life painting in the early modern period*, Cologne 1994, p. 41, 205, n. 50).

<sup>3</sup> For biographical details, see the article by E.J. Sluijter in this volume, with further literary references.

<sup>4</sup> See for his flowerpieces and vanitas still lifes F.G. Meijer, 'Not Ambrosius Brueghel (1617–1675), but Adriaen van Nieulandt (1587–1658). A mutilated image of Vanity', in: *Oud Holland* 109.3 (1995), p. 158–164.

it abundantly clear that the exchange and transfer of artistic knowledge between north and south must have been intensive, and that this interaction could lead to very fruitful results. Taking Van Nieulandt's impressive composition as a point of departure, I will examine if, and if so, how other painters of kitchen pieces and related subjects concerning food in the Republic reacted to examples from the Southern Netherlands and to what extent and in which manner this cultural transfer led to innovations in the genre. Which motifs were taken from Southern artists and to which degree and manner were these incorporated into the Northern tradition? Which similarities and differences exist between the kitchen pieces in the Southern Netherlands and the Republic? To what extent are these differences explained by a different context? Finally, the data provided to us by seventeenth century auctions and inventories are analyzed, in order to explore the dynamics of the process that forms the basis of the stylistic and iconographic development of the kitchen piece (and related compositions depicting food). This also allows us to better understand through which channels the cultural interaction took place and how South-Netherlandish immigrants played a role in this.

### *A North Netherlandish and a South Netherlandish tradition*

To begin with, Van Nieulandt shows that his invention is indebted to the kitchen pieces of earlier generations of North-Netherlandish artists, such as in particular Pieter Pietersz. (c. 1540-1603), Cornelis van Haarlem (1562-1638) and Pieter Cornelisz. van Rijck (1568-after 17 February 1635) and that he competes with these examples. The kitchen pieces by these artists had revived the tradition established by Pieter Aertsen (1508/9-1575); around the middle of the sixteenth century the latter had painted the earliest known kitchen scenes during his stay in Antwerp, before returning in the course of the 1550s to his birthplace, Amsterdam.<sup>5</sup>

When Aertsen introduced the monumental paintings in which he depicted food items and kitchen utensils, along with prominently depicted kitchen maids and boorish types, these must have made an overpowering impression on the audiences of the day. They attested to an extraordinary inventiveness, virtuosity and wit. A new art form emerged, by which the painter nevertheless had made a connection with existing traditions, such as the carnival iconography, the peasant satire in graphic work, brothel scenes, the carousing Prodigal Son and the iconography of gluttony. But it was particularly the unconventional manner of depiction that was experienced as highly surprising and witty: low subjects were presented for the first time on a monumental scale and the usual distance between the spectator and the objects and figures was

<sup>5</sup> Aertsen certainly lived in Amsterdam in 1557 and died there in 1575. See N. de Roever, 'Pieter Aertsz, gezegd Lange Pier, vermaard schilder', *Oud Holland* 7 (1889), p. 7-8; K. van Mander, *The lives of the illustrious Netherlandish and German painters*, ed. H. Miedema, 6 vols., Doornspijk 1994-1999, vol. 4, p. 57, n. 57; F.D.O. Obreen, *Archief voor Nederlandsche Kunstgeschiedenis [...]*, Rotterdam 1877-1890, facs. ed. Soest 1976, vol. 4, p. 34.

abandoned.<sup>6</sup> Aertsen already received transnational fame during his lifetime, a fact that is testified to by the honourable mention in 1567 by Ludovico Guicciardini in his *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi*.<sup>7</sup>

In Antwerp Aertsen's nephew and pupil Joachim Beuckelaer (c. 1530–c. 1574) successfully created an entirely new form of expression just after 1560, which would be instrumental in the development of the theme in the Southern Netherlands. Beuckelaer brought innovation to the genre by including in most of his paintings an even greater variety and profusion of food than Aertsen; Beuckelaer's compositions are more balanced and his use of colour is more richly nuanced; moreover, the still lifes are more powerfully developed by blending the shades of separate still life elements more harmoniously together.

The beginning of two strongly related, but nevertheless essentially different traditions – in the North and in the South – seems to be marked by Aertsen's move to Amsterdam and Beuckelaer's dominant activity in Antwerp. From city descriptions of Antwerp and Amsterdam it appears that people were most certainly convinced already at the beginning of the seventeenth century of their own distinct traditions, and that this was proclaimed with pride. In *Antwerpia* from 1610 by Carolus Scribanus (1561–1629), it is not Aertsen but Beuckelaer who is celebrated as one of the illustrious painters that brought fame to Antwerp. In a fragment about a kitchen piece by Beuckelaer, Scribanus praises the deceptively realistic depiction of the foods painted in it and he compares his work to that of the Roman artist Possis.<sup>8</sup> In this manner Scribanus demonstrates that Beuckelaer is part of an honourable tradition reaching back to antiquity and that Beuckelaer is in a position to compete with his renowned predecessor.

While Scribanus honours Beuckelaer in particular for his contribution to the fame of the Antwerp painters' tradition, Aertsen is extensively praised in the seventeenth-century city descriptions of Amsterdam.<sup>9</sup> In his description of that city of 1614, Pontanus lauds Aertsen as the founder of Amsterdam art when he cites him first in his overview of the most important artists the city had produced. In a reference to Hadrianus Junius' *Batavia* from 1588, Pontanus repeats his accolade to the kitchen pieces of Aertsen and compares Aertsen with the legendary Greek painter Piraeicus.<sup>10</sup> Also in

6 Kwak, *Proeft de kost*, especially chapter I and II; for a historiography of the sixteenth century kitchen piece (in particular by Aertsen), see Appendix 1.

7 L. Guicciardini, *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi* [...], Antwerp 1567, p. 144.

8 'Varro narrat cognitum a se Posim nomine, ab eoque; factas Romae uvas & pisces, ita ut non esset aspectu discernere a veris. Quid diceret si culinam vidisset Ioachimi Buecklaer, in qua poma & hortorum reliqua; in qua altilia, carnes, pisces, ita rem mentiuntur, ut non vnquam fallant ancillam coquariam?' See J.S. Held, 'Carolus Scribanus's observations on art in Antwerp', in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 59 (1996), p. 174–204, esp. 200. Held correctly points out that Scribanus does not mention that Possis was not a painter, but sculpted in clay; p. 190 and 200, n. 98.

9 The captions by the portraits that Hondius published in 1610 in print form also mention Beuckelaer emphatically as Antwerper and Aertsen as Amsterdammer. See H. Hondius, *Pictorum Aliquot Celeberrimae praecipuae Germaniae inferioris effigies*, The Hague 1610, vol. 2, pl. 29–30.

10 J.I. Pontanus, *Historische beschrijvinge der seer wijt beroemde coopstadt Amsterdam*, trans. P. Montanus, Amsterdam 1614, p. 286: '... Langhe Pier: den welcken onse Junius derf met dien Pyreico van Plinius verghelijcken/ende by na voorstellen: soo seer schijnt alomme in zijne werken een seker

the city descriptions of Dapper from 1663 and from Van Domselaer from 1665, Aertsen is highly praised, among other things for his skilfully painted kitchen pieces, and he is placed firmly at the beginning of a glorious Amsterdam artistic tradition.<sup>11</sup>

From around 1590 onwards, in particular painters with the highest artistic aspirations were the ones who continued the tradition of the kitchen piece in the Northern Netherlands. It concerned the most successful history painters of the time, artists who are considered part of the generation of the late Dutch mannerists, such as Abraham Bloemaert (1566–1651), Joachim Wtewael (1566–1638), Cornelis van Haarlem and Pieter Cornelisz. van Rijck. For them the kitchen formed pre-eminently a theme that – due to the major diversity of materials and figures – offered the opportunity to show off their virtuosity and understanding of the depiction of surface textures. They did this by vigorously engaging in a competition with illustrious predecessors – from both the Southern and Northern Netherlands, but also with Italian painters of kitchen pieces – which contemporary connoisseurs would certainly have found entertaining. This new generation intensified and improved the illusionism and other means in order to involve the spectator in the scene.<sup>12</sup> A powerful stimulus for these artists to compete with their predecessors was the fact that the kitchen pieces by Pieter Aertsen and Joachim Beuckelaer in the late sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century had become extremely costly and highly coveted collectors' items.<sup>13</sup>

bevallicheydt/wtghedrukt seer fraey in Boerinnkens/aenden Cabeljauwen ende andere Visschen/ ende alle reetschap van de keucken: soodanighe als behalven de seer groote ghenuchte/ook met een oneydelicke verscheydentheyte de oogen nauwelicx en versadighen.'

**11** O. Dapper, *Historische Beschryving der Stadt Amsterdam*, Amsterdam 1663, p. 542: 'Deze wist wonder kunstigh na't leven Boerinetjes, met Kabeljauwen en andere visschen, en allerlei gereetschap dat tot de keuken van noden is, uit te beelden.' See T. van Domselaer, *Beschryvinghe van Amsterdam [...]*, Amsterdam 1665, p. 100. See also E.A. Honig, *Painting and the market in early modern Antwerp*, New Haven, London 1998, p. 102.

**12** Kwak, *Proeft de kost* (n. 6), chapter IV.2–IV.3.

**13** Hadrianus Junius already emphasized in 1588 that Aertsen's kitchen pieces not only brought him the greatest fame, but also that his paintings were sold for higher prices than the carefully painted large format works of many other masters; H. Junius, *Batavia [...]*, Leiden 1588, p. 239–240. Van Mander mentioned in 1604 that the appreciation for the paintings of Beuckelaer after his death rose considerably: his paintings are then so 'seer ghewenscht en begheert' that they sometimes made twelve times their purchase price; Van Mander, *The lives* (n. 5), vol. 1, fol. 238r 34–41. That the kitchen pieces by Aertsen and Beuckelaer were indeed highly coveted and extremely expensive is evident on examining the house contents and auction catalogues of the painting collections mentioned by Van Mander and correspondence of contemporaries. One example of a major collector and art lover repeatedly mentioned by Van Mander is Melchior Wyntgis. In 1618 an inventory was drawn up of the artworks that were part of his possessions in the Volderstraat (now Lombardstraat) in Brussels. Among the most valuable paintings in his possession were a kitchen piece by Pieter Aertsen 'met een staende figure nhaer't leven' (cost 250 g., valet 300 g.) and a kitchen piece by Joachim Beuckelaer 'oock met een staende vrouwen figure nhaer't leven', that was equally valued at 300 guilders; H. Hymans, 'Melchior Wyntgis', in: *Dietsche Warande, Tijdschrift voor kunst en zedegeschiedenis*, 2 (1889), p. 152–158, 268–277, esp. 270. Also during the seventeenth century comparable exorbitant amounts were mentioned, proven by the estimated value of f 250 for a kitchen piece by Joachim Beuckelaer in the collection of Lucretia Coymans in 1643; J.M. Montias, *Art and auction in 17th century Amsterdam*, Amsterdam 2002, p. 286,

The artists of the new generation undoubtedly knew many works by Aertsen and Beuckelaer especially through the extremely wealthy collectors of their paintings (such as Sion Luz, Melchior Wyntgis and Jacob Rauwert), who belonged to a network of art lovers and who also would have formed the most important audience for these younger artists.<sup>14</sup> Joachim Wtewael, for example, had probably studied a kitchen scene by Beuckelaer owned by one of these collectors such as the *Kitchen maid with Christ in the house of Martha and Mary* from 1574 (fig. 2).<sup>15</sup> It is clear that Wtewael pointedly competes with this composition when he paints the same subject, probably around 1620–1625, and by doing so convincingly improves upon Beuckelaer's example (fig. 3).<sup>16</sup> This case not only shows that the model for Beuckelaer was present in the north, but also that Wtewael demonstrates his great appreciation of his predecessor and that the painter apparently assumed that his audience would recognise the model that he emulates. That a northerner so emphatically enters into a dialogue with the work of a southerner in his work is striking, but not exceptional.

The new generation of artists came into contact with major examples from the sixteenth century via other channels as well. We know that young painters frequently had the opportunity during their training to study the kitchen pieces of their predecessors. For example, Van Mander writes that during Abraham Bloemaert's apprenticeship the latter's father had his son paint a copy of a kitchen piece by Aertsen as part of his training.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, knowledge regarding the tradition and skills in the painting of kitchen pieces was passed down from master to pupil in the workshop.<sup>18</sup>

n. 452. The highest amounts were paid for kitchen pieces by Pieter Aertsen at the public auction in The Hague on 17 April 1662 of the incredibly rich collection of paintings, prints and drawings in the bequest of Johan Chrisosthomos de Backer, 'in leven Choordeecken van Eijndhoven'. It concerned two paintings each of a kitchen maid, sold together for f 280.– and a 'grootte Keucken' for as much as f 520.– The two paintings of 'Keucke-meijssens' (nos. 8 and 9) were bought together for f 280.– by 'Rentmr. v.d. Hooch'. The 'grootte Keucken' (no. 10) was bought for f 520.– by 'd'Heer v.d. Werve'. A 'Mary and Martha' (no. 12) by Aertsen, perhaps a kitchen piece, fetched 'only' f 83.– and was bought by 'Dr. Dedel te Delft'; Obreen, *Archief* (n. 5), vol. 5, p. 295.

**14** Kwak, *Proeft de kost*, p. 19–20, 178–180, 188, 211, 397. The Amsterdam merchant and art collector Jan Nicquet belonged to this network: in an inventory from 1612 of the possessions of his widow Margaretha Bosmans a kitchen piece by Joachim Wtewael is mentioned for the extremely high value of 200 guilders; A. Bredius, *Künstler-Inventare*, republished in cooperation with O. Hirschmann, 8 vols., The Hague, 1915–1922, vol. 2, p. 395, no. 17.

**15** Panel, 112×81 cm, not signed, dated 1574, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. no. GG 6049.

**16** Canvas, 103.2×72.3 cm, signed at the bottom of the roasting spit: *Jo* (as monogramme) *wte wael fecit.*, Utrecht, Centraal Museum. Lindeman, who dated the kitchen scene by Wtewael to around 1605, indicated in 1929 the great similarity with Beuckelaer's painting; C.M.A.A. Lindeman, *Joachim Anthonisz. Wtewael*, Utrecht 1929, p. 85–86, 109. While I don't rule out an earlier date, I hereby set the date at between 1620 and 1625, as in Lowenthal. See A.W. Lowenthal, *Joachim Wtewael and Dutch Mannerism*, Groningen 1986, p. 148, no. A-84; see also A.W. Lowenthal in J.A. Spicer and L.F. Orr (eds.), *Masters of light. Dutch painters in Utrecht during the Golden Age*, (exh.cat. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; The Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore; National Gallery, London 1997–1998), San Francisco, Baltimore, London 1997–1998, p. 224.

**17** Van Mander, *The lives*, vol. 1, fol. 297r 41–45.

**18** For an example of the transfer of knowledge from master to student: Cornelis van Haarlem, as pupil of Pieter Pietersz. and in turn as master of Gerrit Pietersz., Cornelis Jacobsz. Delff and Cornelis Engelsz., who practiced the genre intensively and competed with each other; Kwak, *Proeft de kost*, p. 201–202, 397.



Fig. 2 Joachim Beuckelaer, *Kitchen maid with Christ in the house of Martha and Mary*, panel, 112×81 cm, dated 1574, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.



Fig. 3 Joachim Wtewael, *Kitchen maid with Christ in the house of Martha and Mary*, canvas, 103.2×72.3 cm, signed at the bottom of the roasting spit: Jo (as monogramme) wte wael fecit., c. 1620–1625, Utrecht, Centraal Museum.

### *Competing with North Netherlandish predecessors*

That Van Nieulandt must have been familiar with the kitchen and market scenes by Pieter Pietersz. appears to be the case from a comparison with his *Market scene with the Journey to Emmaus and a self-portrait as a cook* from 1571 (fig. 4).<sup>19</sup> As the eldest son of Pieter Aertsen, paintings with market and kitchen scenes had a very personal meaning for Pieter Pietersz. Pieter received his training in the studio of his father, first in Antwerp, and probably shortly after 1555 in Amsterdam.<sup>20</sup> It is noteworthy that the motif of the kitchen maid

<sup>19</sup> Panel, 118×155 cm, monogrammed and dated 1571, present location unknown (German art dealer, Diemen, 1929). See Z. Kwak, “‘Taste the fare and chew it with your eyes’. A painting by Pieter Pietersz and the amusing deceit in 16th- and 17th-century Dutch and Flemish kitchen scenes”, in T. van Houdt et al. (eds.), *On the edge of truth and honesty. Principles and strategies of fraud and deceit in the early modern period, intersections. Yearbook for Early Modern Studies*, 2 (2002), p. 223–251.

<sup>20</sup> Pietersz. probably left Amsterdam shortly after 1569 to establish himself as an independent painter in Haarlem, where he probably worked until 1583. In or just before 1585 he settled in Amsterdam, where he died in 1603. See P. van den Brink, ‘De Gortenteller van Pieter Pietersz.. Een teruggevonden schilderij’, in: J.L. de Jong en E.A. Koster (eds.), *Onverwacht bijeengebracht. Opstellen voor Ed Taverne en Lyckle de Vries ter gelegenheid van hun 25-jarig jubileum in dienst van de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen*, Groningen 1996, p. 13–24, esp. 13–14.



Fig. 4 Pieter Pietersz., Market scene with the Journey to Emmaus and a self-portrait as a cook, panel, 118×155 cm, monogrammed and dated 1571, present location unknown (German art dealer, Diemen, 1929).

plucking a bird in the left foreground of Van Nieulandt's kitchen piece strongly resembles the woman that Pieter Pietersz. depicted on the left and in a similar kneeling position, bending forward. Like Pieter Pietersz, Van Nieulandt shows the woman in a more or less 'antique' style of clothing, one that differs from the costumes worn by kitchen maids when they are depicted in a more contemporary setting. Furthermore, the facial type of the girl seems to resemble examples from Pieter Pietersz, who would paint kitchen maids in a similar manner with thin eyebrows, a long, narrow nose and a high forehead that ends in a narrow chin, such as in the *Kitchen maid with the Supper at Emmaus* in Stockholm.<sup>21</sup>

We encounter this type also in Cornelis van Haarlem's *Kitchen scene with a merry company* from 1596 which equally shows a bird-plucking kitchen maid and in which we also see for the first time a similar large number of valuable metal objects, akin to depictions by Van Nieulandt, including a silver or gilded *tazza* (fig. 5).<sup>22</sup> Cornelis van Haarlem had in turn, between 1572 and 1573, been a pupil of Pieter Pietersz., during

<sup>21</sup> Panel, 110×80 cm, marked, Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, inv. no. NM 5693.

<sup>22</sup> Canvas, 137×198 cm, monogrammed and dated 1596, auction Vienna, Dorotheum, 10-2-2002, no. 146. Previously: Linz, private collection (1962-1989).



Fig. 5 Cornelis van Haarlem, *Kitchen scene with a merry company*, canvas, 137×198 cm, monogrammed and dated 1596, auction Vienna, Dorotheum (2002).

the latter's stay in Haarlem.<sup>23</sup> It is very likely that already at that time Cornelis acquired experience in painting figures in combination with food. Cornelis's painting shows an even more subtle depiction of gradations in light and dark than the kitchen pieces of his master. The still life and the figures are blended together harmoniously in a more natural way, and there is a more convincing suggestion of space: the illusionism through which the spectator becomes involved with the scene depicted, is both intensified and improved. Therefore, Van Mander's claim that Cornelis 'soon surpassed his master masterfully; and, as if the Fates wished it so, he received, while still young, the name Cornelis Schilder [Painter]', is entirely applicable.<sup>24</sup>

The ambitious construction of Van Nieulandt's painting is also particularly close to Pieter Cornelisz. van Rijck's magnificent *Kitchen piece with the parable of the Great Supper* in Brunswick from 1604 (fig. 6). That kitchen piece must, both because of the extraordinary scale as well as the overwhelming richness of motifs it contains, be viewed as the most spectacular composition that up to that time had been produced in that genre. The kitchen piece executed on canvas measures 189 by 288 cm and is therefore, as far

<sup>23</sup> Van Mander notes that Cornelis lived from the age of ten to twelve in the house on the Spaarne owned by Pieter Pietersz. 'welcken te deser oorsaek was t'verwekkende voorbeeldt en den eersten Meester van Cornelis Cornelisz.' Van Mander, *The lives* (n. 5), vol. 1, fol. 292r 26-31.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, fol. 292r36-42.



Fig. 6 Pieter Cornelisz. van Rijck, Kitchen piece with the parable of the Great Supper, canvas, 189×288 cm, signed and dated bottom right: *Petrus van Rijck/In. [venit] et fecit 1604*, Brunswick, Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum.

as is known, larger and more ambitious in composition than any other earlier still life. In the year that the scene was painted – 1604 – the thirty-six year old Van Rijck, who lived in Haarlem at that time, could look back on a rich experience that he had gained during a long term stay in Italy. Van Rijck emphatically showed off his familiarity with kitchen pieces by Italian painters such as Jacopo Bassano and Vincenzo Campi, while at the same time demonstrating his affinity with the Aertsen tradition.<sup>25</sup>

Apart from the fact that Van Nieulandt displays a similar richness of motifs, he built up his composition like Van Rijck along a powerful diagonal (in Van Rijck this concerns two diagonals). It is formed by the table placed in an oblique angle with the picture plane, and leads the eye from the right foreground to the scene in the left background; thus, a powerful depth is achieved. While Van Nieulandt depicts food items in a totally different way than Van Rijck – among other things because he uses a brighter palette and stronger light-dark contrasts – there are recognizable similarities in the manner in which some details are painted, such as the crabs and lobsters on the ground (shown lying on their backs), or the dead songbirds that hang limply over the edge of the table.

Van Nieulandt signs his name and the date elaborately and decoratively on the right, under the dead peacock: *Adriaen Van Nieulant Fecit In Amsterledam Anno 1616*. Van Nieulandt announced with pride that he is the creator of the composition. By adding the

<sup>25</sup> Kwak, *Proeft de kost* (n. 6), p. 224-233, 236-237.

unusual information that the kitchen piece was created in Amsterdam he seemed to consciously emphasise that his work belonged to the illustrious Amsterdam painters' tradition of Pieter Aertsen and Pieter Pietersz. In 1618, only two years after Van Nieulandt painted the kitchen scene, he was immortalised in Theodoor Rodenburgs honorary poem to Amsterdam, 'De Paragonne van de wereldt', as one of the most important painters produced by the city – together with among others Pieter Aertsen and his master Frans Badens II, who also must have painted kitchens.<sup>26</sup> In 1620, Van Nieulandt was again mentioned in an enumeration of famous artists in Balthasar Gerbiers 'Eer ende claght-dicht ter eeren van Henricus Goltius'.<sup>27</sup> This time he received a place of honour in the company of, among others, Abraham Bloemaert, Cornelis van Haarlem, Jan Pynas, Frans Badens II, Pieter Lastman, David Vinckboons and Cornelis van der Voort.

### *Competition with Frans Snyders*

At the same time Van Nieulandt, with his exuberant, apparently nonchalant composition, demonstrates that he is well aware of the most recent developments in Antwerp since he refers emphatically to the highly innovative paintings of still lifes and pantries Frans Snyders had introduced there shortly after his return from Italy around 1609. Snyders' dynamic still lifes pointedly depict the spoils of the hunt, such as roe deer, wild boar, swans and pheasants, bitterns, herons, hares and all kinds of small game, while hunting dogs often appear in the foreground.

Generally speaking, Snyders' pantries entered into competition with the kitchen interiors of Beuckelaer in particular, who typified these already as temporary storage rooms such as the *Kitchen piece with Christ in the house of Martha and Mary* from 1566 in the Rijksmuseum (fig. 7). But Snyders enriched his compositions with motifs which he borrowed from print series of the elements, the senses, the seasons and the months.<sup>28</sup> The close relationship with the iconography of the seasons appears among other things from the presence of monkeys and squirrels that steal some of the food and the depiction of game in his paintings. Furthermore, Snyders seems to have borrowed the new motif of the page which occupies such a prominent place in his compositions, from idealized mealtime scenes, such as the open air scenes of the Mechelen painter

<sup>26</sup> N. de Roever, 'Drie Amsterdamsche schilders (Pieter Isaaksz, Abraham Vinck, Cornelis van der Voort)', in: *Oud Holland* 3 (1885), p. 171–208, esp. 172. 'Eine kuchel mit einer frau vom Franz Baaden. (Orig.)' is mentioned in the inventory from 1621 of the emperor's Prague collection; H. Zimmermann, 'Das Inventar der prager Schatz- und Kunstkammer vom 6. Dezember 1621', in: *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen der Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* 25 (1905), p. 13–75, esp. 41, no. 956.

<sup>27</sup> Gerbiers' poem appeared in The Hague. See O. Hirschmann, 'Balthasar Gerbiers Eer ende claght-dicht ter eeren van Henricus Goltius', in: *Oud Holland* 38 (1920), p. 104–125.

<sup>28</sup> As in the series of the *Seasons* by Crispijn de Passe after Maarten de Vos and Joris Hoefnagel from c. 1600; F.W.H. Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish etchings, engravings, and woodcuts c. 1450–1700*, Amsterdam 1949, xv, nos. 560–563; XLIV, nos. 1420–1423; XLVI, p. 210–211, ill.



Fig. 7 Joachim Beuckelaer, *Kitchen piece with Christ in the house of Martha and Mary*, panel, 171 × 250 cm, monogrammed and dated 1566, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

Lodewijck Toeput.<sup>29</sup> From Snyder's *Van Nieulandt* not only borrowed the entirely new repertoire of motifs, whereby in particular the spoils of the hunt are shown, but also the dynamic manner of presentation, that gave the composition an unprecedented grandeur and drama. Adriaen van Nieulandt maintained good contacts with his birthplace, where his brother, the painter and dramatist Guiliam II van Nieulandt, lived and worked since 1606 (see the article in this volume by Eric Jan Sluiter).

Apart from the dynamic manner of presentation we find various motifs that were depicted by Van Nieulandt, such as the head of a wild boar, the swan, the peacock, the turkey and the deer, earlier in Snyder's painting showing *The recognition of Philopoemen*, that the latter produced in partnership with Rubens around 1609–1610 (fig. 8). That Rubens was the inventor of both the subject and the composition appears from the rough oil sketch from his hand which is preserved at the Louvre.<sup>30</sup> The scene by Snyder and Rubens marks a new departure in the history of the still life: the composition is among other things exceptional because of the enormous size of the painting (with its 201 by 311 cm it even surpasses the dimensions of Van Rijck's kitchen piece from

<sup>29</sup> See the examples illustrated in L. Menegazzi, 'Giunte a Ludovico Pozzoserrato', in: *Arte Veneta* 15 (1961), p. 119–126, esp. 121–122, plate 144–145.

<sup>30</sup> For the oil sketch, see J. Held, *The oil sketches of Peter Paul Rubens. A critical catalogue*, vol. 1, Princeton 1980, p. 374–375, no. 278.



Fig. 8 Frans Snyders and Rubens, *The recognition of Philopoemen*, canvas, 201×311 cm, c. 1609–1610, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado.



Fig. 9 Frans Snyders, *Pantry*, canvas, 125.7×198.1 cm, c. 1612, London, Wallace collection.

1604), and because of the subject, borrowed from Plutarch (c. 46–120 A.D.), which was never previously depicted. As far as is known, it concerns the earliest example in which a kitchen-like still life is combined with a profane history.<sup>31</sup> This might have given Van Nieulandt, or possibly his client, the idea to also depict an unusual subject from classical history in a kitchen scene instead of a biblical scene.

Van Nieulandt must have studied other innovative compositions by Snyders as well. Elements in Van Nieulandts painting, such as the pheasant, the asparagus, artichokes, grapes and the bowl of strawberries also appear among other things in a *Pantry* by Snyders from around 1610–1620, now in Rotterdam, and in the piece in London, in which yet again a deer, a peacock and a head of a wild boar are depicted (fig. 9).<sup>32</sup> Despite strong similarities in the motif repertoire and the dramatic, artificial manner of presentation Van Nieulandt's composition has an entirely individual character. He applied an essentially different compositional scheme from Snyders, who organised his still life mostly parallel to the picture plane and within this suggested a stronger diagonal movement by connecting the forms to each other. By contrast, Van Nieulandts composition is built along powerful lines of perspective, providing greater depth, while the still life is distributed over different planes.

In short, the Northern and Southern Netherlandish traditions in this work by Van Nieulandt form a refined amalgam by which a surprisingly innovative scene has come into being. As we will see below, in that sense it is not an exception. On the basis of three other cases, it can be demonstrated how painters of kitchen pieces in the Republic adapted and made use of Southern Netherlandish examples, and to which important innovations this has led.

<sup>31</sup> See for the painting by Rubens and Snyders S. Koslow, *Frans Snyders. Stilleven- en dierenschilder (1579–1657)*, Antwerp 1995, p. 74–80; J. Raeymaekers, 'De herkenning van Philopoemen. Rubens en Justus Lipsius', in: *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 15.2 (1999), p. 197–203; A.T. Woollett et al. (eds.), *Rubens & Brueghel. Een artistieke vriendschap*, (exh.cat. Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum; The Hague, Maurits-huis, 2006–2007), Zwolle 2006, p. 25–26.

<sup>32</sup> Panel, 82.5×129 cm, The Hague, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, inv. no. 1686 (on loan in Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans–Van Beuningen) and canvas, 125.7×198.1 cm, London, Wallace collection, inv. no. P 72.

*The reaction from the specialist Cornelis Jacobsz. Delff: a varied offering*

A reaction to the impressive example from Van Nieulandt came from the Delft artist Cornelis Jacobsz. Delff (1571–1643). In contrast to the versatile Haarlem and Utrecht late mannerists, Delff developed very early on into a true specialist of kitchen pieces. This pupil of Cornelis van Haarlem turned out monumental compositions around 1600 that originated in competition with his master (fig. 10).<sup>33</sup> That Delff also reacted to works by Joachim Beuckelaer, and that he himself apparently had the chance to observe these examples well, can be deduced from the presence of the dead turkey, on the extreme left in the painting. It concerns a motif that Beuckelaer depicted in an innovative way shortly after 1560 in his kitchen pieces, in which he presents the bird on one side of the composition so that the motif functions as *repoussoir*. Delff painted this in a very similar manner (seen from almost the same angle and in comparable shadow) to the turkey in, for example, Beuckelaer's *Kitchen still life with Christ at Emmaus* in the Mauritshuis.<sup>34</sup>

However, around 1615–1620, Delff successfully introduced a whole new type of image: kitchen still lifes without figures. This type includes the monumental large format painting *Kitchen still life with a swan and a turkey* (fig. 11).<sup>35</sup> By depicting a huge dead swan and a turkey this scene strongly evokes an image of fabulous luxury. This combination of motifs was probably borrowed from Van Nieulandt's kitchen piece from 1616. That Delff must have studied Van Nieulandt's kitchen piece closely, appears even more clearly from another still life by his hand in which a dead swan constitutes the central theme: Delff shows this swan in a similar pose as Van Nieulandt and the bird appears here also in combination



Fig. 10 Cornelis Jacobsz. Delff, *Kitchen piece*, canvas, 131.8×219.1 cm, signed lower left of centre: C.J Delff Fc, auction Amsterdam, Sotheby's (2006).

<sup>33</sup> Canvas, 131.8×219.1 cm, signed lower left of center: C.J Delff Fc, auction Sotheby's, Amsterdam, 14–11–2006, no. 35, ill. Among others it appears from the depiction of the old fool in the foreground, that Delff returns to the work of his teacher: the manner in which the man grabs the girl, with one arm around her waist and one hand on her shoulder, imitates, in mirror effect, the manner in which Cornelis van Haarlem depicts the lecherous man in his *Kitchen piece with a fish still life, an amorous couple and a merry company* from around 1596, canvas, 125×175 cm, location unknown; illustrated in P.J.J. van Thiel, *Cornelis Cornelisz. van Haarlem 1562–1638. A monograph and catalogue raisonné*, Doornspijk 1999, p. 126, cat. no. 241, p. 386, Pl. 126.

<sup>34</sup> Panel, 110×169 cm, The Hague, Mauritshuis (loan from P.& N. de Boer Foundation since 1960), inv. no. 965. See A. Chong and W. Kloek (eds.), *Het Nederlandse stilleven 1550–1720*, (exh.cat. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam and Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland 1999–2000), Zwolle 1999, p. 107–109, no. 2.

<sup>35</sup> Panel, 123.5×189.5 cm, monogrammed: cjd [joined] Delff, private collection Munich, as Gillis Gillisz. de Bergh.



Fig. 11 Cornelis Jacobsz. Delff, Kitchen still life with a swan and a turkey, panel, 123.5 × 189.5 cm, monogrammed: cjd [joined] Delff, private collection Munich.

with a comparable precious metal wine cooler (fig. 12).<sup>36</sup> From the presence of motifs such as the basket of grapes (seen in the left foreground), and the large copper basin, it can be assumed that Delff also employed elements from the work of Snyder. Shortly before these were painted by Snyder in a similar manner, as in the *Still life with game, vegetables and fruit* from 1612, his earliest known dated autonomous still life (fig. 13).<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, there are in the execution of this type of image considerable differences between Delff and Snyder: while the latter displays a larger selection of game, Delff particularly concentrates on kitchen paraphernalia and also paints fish, raw (offal) meat and sausages; Delff's colour palette is also much more restrained. These monumental scenes were undoubtedly destined for a very wealthy and affluent audience, but Delff also painted types of images that were probably put on the market at a lower price.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Panel, 103.5 × 138.5 cm, lower left monogrammed, auction London (Phillips), 14–2–1989, no. 67, ill.

<sup>37</sup> Panel, 95.5 × 125.6 cm, signed and dated: *F. Snyder 16[1]2*, New York, Jack Kilgore & Co., Inc.

<sup>38</sup> Delff painted both for rich patricians as well as for a class of wealthy citizens. The latter can be ascertained from inventories of estates of citizens' houses. From a list of the twenty most frequently named painters in Delft inventories in the period 1610–1679 it appears that C.J. Delff in 1620–1629 was mentioned seven times, in 1630–1639 four times, in 1640–1649 fifteen times, in 1650–1659 ten times, in 1660–1669 four times and in 1670–1679 one time. See J.M. Montias, *Artists and artisans in Delft. A socio-economic study of the seventeenth century*, Princeton 1982, p. 257, table 8.5. When Van Bleywijck praises Delff in his city account of Delft from 1667, because he is 'een veerdig en goet Schilder [...] van stilleggent-goet, en voornamelijk seer uitnemende in Koper te schilderen', he remarks that this can still



Fig. 12 Cornelis Jacobsz. Delff, *Kitchen still life with a swan*, panel, 103.5×138.5 cm, lower left monogrammed, auction London, Phillips (1989).

Delff's *Kitchen still life* in Strasbourg from about 1615–1620 probably belongs to the last category; it is one of his earliest known representations in this genre without figures (fig. 14).<sup>39</sup> Delff had developed this type directly from his *Kitchen scene with a boozier*, which also dates from about 1615–1620: in that piece we already encounter elements like the copper and bronze or tin kettles and bowls, the artichokes and the practically similarly displayed quinces and fish (a pike and bass).<sup>40</sup> Instead of the goose and the rib meat, a couple of fat ducks, finches and grapes are shown. All this Delff places against a uniformly-dark background which shows a faint glimmer on the right side of an invisible light source located outside the image. In the dimly lit kitchen everything is made

be seen 'aen sijn dingen in veel voorname oude Burgers-huysen [...]'; D. van Bleyswijk, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, Delft 1667, vol. 2, p. 845–846. Delff's audience of wealthy patricians included for example Joost van Adrichem, the mayor of Delft in whose inventory of 1653 a kitchen piece by Delff is listed; Bredius, *Kunstler-Inventare* (n. 14), vol. 4, p. 1440. Delff's most noteworthy customer was Prince Frederick Hendrick: in 1637 Delff received the very large amount of 250 guilders for a fruit still life that was intended as an 'over-door' for his palace in Rijswijk, Huis ter Nieuburg; H. Wichmann, 'Mitteilungen über Delfter Künstler des XVII. Jahrhunderts', in: *Oud Holland* 42 (1925), p. 60–71, esp. 65.

<sup>39</sup> Panel, 79×127 cm, signed above right: C. Delff, Strasbourg, Musée des Beaux-Arts, inv. no. 1703.

<sup>40</sup> Panel, 99×149 cm, signed: C. Delff, auction Amsterdam, Sotheby's, 12-5-1992, no. 123.



Fig. 13 Frans Snyders, Still life with game, vegetables and fruit, panel, 95.5 × 125.6 cm, signed and dated: F. Snyders 16[1]2, New York, Jack Kilgore & Co., Inc.

ready to prepare a meal. More explicitly than before, the artist implies the presence of the viewer by displaying on the foreground a glass of frothy beer, a bite-sized herring, cut into wedges with onions, and a plate of butter lumps: it is as if the viewer has just eaten the butter and took a bite of the herring. Furthermore, the still life is shown in close-up and the vanishing point is much lower compared to the large-scale compositions which

Delff painted around 1600, constituting a stronger suggestion of closeness. At the same time Delff manages to involve the viewer more intensively in the scene by focusing on the still life, also presenting a more convincing coherence of the different motifs.

The evolution of this type of kitchen still life reveals itself gradually and seems at first sight rather the result of a logical, inner development, than of external factors. However, the transition to this type of kitchen still life without figures cannot



Fig. 14 Cornelis Jacobsz. Delff, Kitchen still life, panel, 79 × 127 cm, signed above right: C. Delff, Strasbourg, Musée des Beaux-Arts.

be considered independently from developments in the Southern Netherlands, where a similar transformation took place shortly before. An incentive for Delft might have been the – as far as we know – earliest dated compositions of this type from 1611 by Clara Peeters, who is supposedly from Antwerp. One of her still lifes of that same year features a range of freshwater fish, including carp, pike and roach, but also cooked sea crabs and shrimp (fig. 15). Peeters painted another still life in the same year in which – just as Delft some years later – she depicts dead finches, a mallard drake and other wildfowl.<sup>41</sup> In a similar manner to Delft, Peeters paints fresh, mostly raw food in close-up, which in her case is arranged side by side on a table placed parallel to the bottom edge of the picture and also presents them against a dark, uniform background.



Fig. 15 Clara Peeters, Still life with fish and crabs, panel, 50×71.6 cm, signed and dated 1611, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado.

These images give the impression that most of the raw products have just been obtained and are ready to be cooked. While the fish still life by Peeters only shows a copper colander with a slotted spoon, Delft more emphatically refers to the cooking process by displaying all the pots, pans and other kitchen utensils. In a similar way to Peeters, Delft executed the kitchen still life in Strasbourg in a limited colour range of reds, browns, greens and ochre, in which he achieved in a most refined manner a balanced harmony in colour and tone. How Delft became acquainted with Peeters's compositions we do not know, but it is certain that in 1613 a still life by Peeters from 1608 was mentioned in an anonymous inventory in Amsterdam.<sup>42</sup>

Snyders, on the other hand, produced kitchen still lifes without figures probably earlier, such as the one with game, meat, poultry and a lobster and the painting with fish, an otter, a lobster and vegetables (fig. 16).<sup>43</sup> Like Delft and Peeters, Snyders also shows these items in close-up and brings them together into a more compact whole. In these com-

<sup>41</sup> Panel, 50×71.6 cm, signed and dat., lower left.: *CLARA.P. A° 1611*, Madrid, Museo del Prado, inv. no. 1621 and panel, 56×71 cm, dat. 1611, Madrid, Museo del Prado. It is assumed that Clara Peeters was from Antwerp and spent most of her life there, though her name is missing in the registers of the Antwerp St. Luke's guild. It is also assumed that she worked in 1612 in Amsterdam and in 1617 in The Hague, but this is also not documented. See Chong and Kloek, *Het Nederlandse stilleven* (n. 34), p. 296; M. Brunner-Bulst, *Pieter Claesz. Der Hauptmeister des Haarlemer Stillebens im 17. Jahrhundert*, Lingen 2004, p. 154, 198, n. 322.

<sup>42</sup> 'Een schilderij van suyckerbanquet' of 'een vrou Claer Pieters in 1608 geschildert van Antwerpen'. See Montias Database, 169.0004, on 13-4-1613.

<sup>43</sup> Resp.: panel, 58.4×106.7 cm, auction London, Christie's, 9-7-1976, no. 174; panel, 97×126 cm, Delft, Stedelijk Museum Het Prinsenhof (loan from Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, inv. no. NK 1980).



Fig. 16 Frans Snyders, Still life with fish, an otter, a lobster and vegetables, panel, 97×126 cm, Delft, Stedelijke Museum Het Prinsenhof (loan from Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed).

positions from about 1610, Snyders shows a number of very similar motifs in his kitchen piece in the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne, which dates from approximately the same year.<sup>44</sup> However, that particular piece was fashioned by Snyders after a Northern Netherlandish example: the highly influential print with a kitchen piece probably of 1603 by the Haarlemmer Matham Jacob (1571–1631).<sup>45</sup>

At the same time an important motivation for Delft to develop this new type of painting was no doubt that such works could be produced much faster and cheaper than his large-scale compositions, which allowed him to meet the increased demand for this kind of painting, and to better serve a wider audience. As mentioned above, Delft varies the production of images with a more modest design, which nevertheless suggests a lavishly stocked kitchen, to monumental pictures displaying luxury and opulence. This variety of kitchen still lifes in his oeuvre is probably to some extent a reflection of the differentiated audience for whom he worked. Apparently, the more luxurious types of images Delft introduced were successful and clearly there was a demand for this type of paintings, as can be concluded from the fact that other Northern Netherlandish artists elaborated on his examples. In fact, Delft provoked competition with his kitchen still lifes from painters such as Dirck van Cats, Jacob Gerritsz. Cuyp, Dirck Govertsz. and Harmen Steenwijck. By the late 1620s, new types mainly evolved from the autonomous kitchen still life, such as the hunting and fish still lifes.<sup>46</sup>

44 Canvas, 88,5×120 cm, Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, inv. no. WRM 2137.

45 *Kitchen interior with the Supper at Emmaus*, engraving, 200×330 mm, signed in the margin lower right: *Jacobus Maetham fecit*; lower centre: *IESVS in fractione panis agnoscitur*; lower left: *Cum privil. Sa. Cae. M.* (Hollstein XI, no. 320). This was part of a series of prints after or in the style of compositions by Pieter Aertsen. This print is, however, an invention of Matham. Concerning the series, see Kwak, *Proeft de kost* (n. 6), p. 216–217, and for the relation to Snyders p. 321.

46 *Ibidem*, p. 297–301.

Fig. 17 Floris Claesz. van Dijck, Laid table, panel, 73.7×113 cm, monogrammed and dated upper right: *FVD fecit/A° 1610*, Paris, Galerie de Jonckheere (shown at TEFAF, Maastricht, 2005).



### *The development of laid tables by Floris van Dijck and Nicolaes Gillis*

Time and again, painters of food seek new resources to surprise the public with ever more convincing and seductive illusions. The Haarlem born Floris Claesz. van Dijck (1574 or 1575–1651) and the Antwerp-born Nicolaes Gillis around 1610, elicited a radical innovation by introducing laid tables without figures (fig. 17).<sup>47</sup> Compositionally and regarding the content their paintings primarily connect with a type that was probably painted in collaboration by both Lucas van Valckenborch and Georg Flegel at the end of the 80s or 90s of the sixteenth century in Frankfurt (fig. 18).<sup>48</sup> These scenes glorify the gathering of a grand, patrician company at a meal with precious tableware and luxurious treats. It is very likely that the *Festive banquet with music* represents a wedding banquet.<sup>49</sup> The composition of the victuals on the table reveals striking similarities with the laid tables of Gillis and Van Dijck: we notice the same combination of cheeses, butter, rolls, fruit, candy, wine and extremely costly *tazza* and decorative goblets. The laid tables of Gillis and Van Dijck must therefore also have been painted with the intention of evoking images of a festive event like a wedding banquet.

An essential difference regarding the Valckenborch–Flegel compositions is of course that Van Dijck and Gillis created autonomous still lifes without figures. Gillis and Van Dijck must have been aware that they reduced the distance from the viewer to the meal, and that the illusionistic effect is increased when the figures are completely eliminated from the painting: thus it is possible to display the objects and food in *close-up* and

<sup>47</sup> Panel, 73.7×113 cm, monogrammed and dated upper right: *FVD fecit/A° 1610*, Paris, Galerie de Jonckheere (shown at TEFAF, Maastricht, 3–2005).

<sup>48</sup> Panel, 120×190 cm, private collection, Austria. For this painting, see A.-D. Ketelsen-Volkhardt, *Georg Flegel 1566–1638*, Munich, Berlin 2003, p. 42 e.v., 59, 106, 109, 131, 163–164, no. III, pl. 47.

<sup>49</sup> A. Wied in K. Wettengl (ed.), *Georg Flegel (1566–1638) Stilleben*, (exh.cat. Frankfurt am Main, Historischen Museum, 1993–94), Frankfurt 1993, second edition 1999, p. 38.



Fig. 18 Lucas van Valckenborch and Georg Flegel, *Festive banquet with music*, panel, 120×190 cm, c. 1590, private collection, Austria.

in a more life-like manner, giving the viewer a more active role by creating a strong suggestion that the painted meal is prepared for him.

An important step in this direction had already been made around 1590–1600 by an unknown artist, probably a South Netherlandish painter, which marks a transition from the Valckenborch–Flegel compositions to the still lifes of Gillis and Van Dijck (fig. 19).<sup>50</sup> Just as with Gillis and Van Dijck there are no figures depicted in the foreground; only in the right background a girl is busy with the preparation of a main course. All food, except for the parsnip and the waffle, recurs in the same combination in the work of Gillis and Van Dijck.

It is noteworthy that Joachim von Sandrart stated that Flegel's still lifes were highly desired by art connoisseurs, and especially by Netherlandish residents in Frankfurt; for that reason he could not possibly meet the high demand, despite his fast working method.<sup>51</sup> The type of image developed in Frankfurt must have been introduced to the Northern Netherlands by the international (trading) network of southern Netherlandish immigrants who had settled in the larger cities such as Amsterdam, Haarlem and Leiden. The presence of this new buying public and the fact that among them many artists had a Southern Netherlandish origin, must have been a driving force in the development of new types of images.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Panel, 81.6×136.7 cm, auction Christie's, Paris, 16–10–2013, no. 69, col.pl., ascribed to Huybrecht Beuckelaer. Formerly: auction Christie's, Amsterdam, 7–5–1997, no. 63, col.pl., as anonymous.

<sup>51</sup> J. von Sandrart, *Teutsche Academie der edlen Bau-, Bild- und Malerey Künste*, Nürnberg 1675, ed. A.R. Peltzer, Munich 1925, p. 164.

<sup>52</sup> Particularly from around 1615 there is also a major increase in the number of artists from the Southern Netherlands, who settled in Haarlem. This chiefly concerns second generation refugees. For the emigration of painters to Haarlem see M.E.W. Goosens, 'Schilders en de markt. Haarlem 1605–1635', dissertation Leiden University 2001, p. 44–51.

Not only was the custom in the Southern Netherlands to surround oneself with paintings of different price categories, including kitchen pieces and other representations of food imitated by the indigenous population of the Northern Netherlands, and did the demand for this kind of painting among a wide audience increase significantly; it also must have generated the need for paintings of a higher quality, which were technically more skilful, more life-like and more interesting and attractive in terms of their inventiveness.<sup>53</sup> Shortly after Van Dijck and Gillis had introduced the still life genre of laid tables in Haarlem, their innovations incited competition among a large number of painters, including Floris van Schooten, Roelof Koets, Pieter Claesz. and Willem Claesz. Heda.<sup>54</sup>



Fig. 19 South Netherlandish artist, Laid table with kitchen scene, panel, 81.6×136.7 cm, c. 1590–1600, auction Christie's, Paris (2013).

### *The development of the Peasant Kitchen Piece*

Southern Netherlandish examples also played a seminal role in the development of the peasant kitchen piece, a new type of image that enjoyed immense popularity in the thirties and forties of the seventeenth century. In Rotterdam a lot of these paintings were produced by specialists such as Hendrick Martensz. Sorgh and Pieter de Bloot (fig. 20).<sup>55</sup>

The viewer can enjoy the sight of peasants abandoning themselves to drinking and debauchery in their environment, often a barn. Typical of many of these paintings, apart from their small size, is the fact that they usually show a divide in the picture plane, which is split between a genre scene and a prominent still life. In Dordrecht, Jan Olis developed his own variation on the theme, which he produced since the forties of the seventeenth century (fig. 21).<sup>56</sup> Often, an immense amount of food is piled up in the foreground, of which a luxurious meal can be prepared, and is intended explicitly for the viewer. Another feature of these paintings is that they are often executed in a very limited colour range of greys, browns and greens. Therefore it was probably possible to

<sup>53</sup> See E.J. Sluijter, 'Over Brabantse voddens, economische concurrentie, artistieke wedijver en de groei van de markt voor schilderijen in de eerste decennia van de 17de eeuw', in: R. Falkenburg, J. de Jong and B. Ramakers (eds.), *Kunst voor de markt, Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 50 (1999), p. 115–143, and the literature mentioned.

<sup>54</sup> Kwak, *Proeft de kost* (n. 6), p. 283–292.

<sup>55</sup> Panel, 60×82 cm, signed and dated lower right: *P. de Bloot/1640*, auction Charpentier, Paris, 25–5–1949, no. 5, ill.

<sup>56</sup> Panel, 68.5×81.5 cm, signed and dated: *Jo[joined] lis fecit 1645*, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; on loan to Dordrechts Museum, Dordrecht, inv. no. A 296.



Fig. 20 Pieter de Bloot, Peasant kitchen, panel, 60 × 82 cm, signed and dated lower right: P. de Bloot/1640, auction Charpentier, Paris (1949).

produce them at a low price. The origin of this type of image is to be found in Antwerp. Certainly as early as 1565, Maerten van Cleve developed there, in competition with Aertsen and Beuckelaer, an innovative type of kitchen piece (fig. 22).<sup>57</sup> It distinguished itself from previous kitchen scenes of Aertsen and Beuckelaer because it has a much smaller size and is executed with looser brushwork, allowing it to be produced faster. Moreover, the space – a large kitchen of an inn – is populated by a much larger number of people, and certainly not just peasants. Various comical motifs in the scene draw a smile from the viewer, such as the amusing bagpipe-playing peasant couple entering on the right, or the muscular and clownish cook, depicted in the midst of his victuals and forcefully sticking a bird on the spit, while looking over his shoulder at a small girl who holds the spit for him. Such a painting could have functioned as a model for the maker of a small format painting of a *Peasant kitchen* with the signature *Savery*, one of the earliest known examples of this type of image from the seventeenth century (fig. 23).<sup>58</sup> It must have been produced just after 1600 in the Northern Netherlands by a member of the Savery family, who had emigrated to Amsterdam. Savery's composition shows a transitional phase in the development of the sixteenth-century kitchen piece by Maerten van Cleve in the direction of the many peasant kitchen pieces of the 1630s and 1640s. Compositions such as Savery's were probably among the many cheap kitchen pieces that appeared in large numbers certainly from 1600 onwards, via Southern Netherlandish immigrants, on the Amsterdam art market. This generated a strong demand for this type of painting among a broader public and encouraged local artists to develop types of images and production methods, by way of which they could cope with the new competition.

57 Panel, 50 × 66 cm, signed and dated on the back of the panel: *Merten van Klef 1565*, Verona, Museo di Castelvecchio, inv. no. 1786/1B1058.

58 Panel, 31.7 × 46.3 cm, signed lower right: *Savery fe*, art-dealer De Jonckheere, Paris, Geneva 2013.

Fig. 21 Jan Olis, Kitchen piece, panel, 68.5×81.5 cm, signed and dated: *jo[joined] lis fecit 1645*, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (on loan to Dordrechts Museum).



### *The impact of the South Netherlandish immigrants on the North Netherlandish art market: prices, owners and production of kitchen pieces*

To understand the dynamics of the process that forms the basis of the stylistic and iconographic development of the kitchen piece (and related images with food), a careful analysis of the data that seventeenth century auctions and inventories of estates provide is necessary. From my research into the financial value of kitchen pieces and their owners, carried out on the basis of inventories in a number of larger cities in the Northern Netherlands, it appears that certainly from around 1620 onwards, there was an increasingly wider public that collected images of painted food: kitchen pieces and paintings with food items were found among widely diverse professional sectors of society.<sup>59</sup> The majority of the owners belonged to a well-to-do class of primarily merchants, and many kitchen pieces could be found in the possession of practitioners of ‘free professions’, as well as painters and art dealers, but also with simple craftsmen and shopkeepers. It is striking that precisely practitioners of professions such as inn keepers and pastry chefs had a particular preference for kitchen pieces and still lifes depicting food: we can assume professional considerations would have played a role here.

Furthermore, it has been established that the valuations of kitchen pieces could vary greatly. At the end of the sixteenth and throughout the seventeenth century, exorbitant prices have often been recorded for kitchen scenes by illustrious artists such as Aertsen and Beuckelaer. The high appreciation of kitchen pieces by Aertsen, who is first on the list of most frequently mentioned painters in Amsterdam inventories, supports the

<sup>59</sup> Kwak, *Proeft de kost*, chapter VI.1., and for the owners of kitchen pieces, esp. p. 379–382.



Fig. 22 Maarten van Cleve, Kitchen piece, panel, 50×66 cm, signed and dated on the back of the panel: Merten van Klef 1565, Verona, Museo di Castelvecchio.

hypothesis that seventeenth century painters, encouraged by the public for whom they worked, were stimulated to compete with their sixteenth century predecessors.<sup>60</sup>

But it is equally striking that certainly from around 1600 onwards, the Amsterdam art market (and probably this also occurred in other Dutch cities) was flooded with cheap kitchen scenes by Southern Netherlandish artists, which made it possible for people to purchase such pictures in very diverse price categories. In at least 35 of the 189 auctions organized between 1600 and 1617 under the auspices of the Amsterdam orphanage chamber, documented in the Montias Database, kitchen pieces were sold, very often for prices between four and ten guilders.<sup>61</sup> These cheap paintings were executed on panel and frequently on a small format, as appears from descriptions such as a 'koockentgen' or a 'koockenbortje'. The makers were never named, but probably most of them were painted by artists from the Southern Netherlands, both by immigrants and painters active in the South. As suggested above, it is indeed possible that it concerns works such as the *Peasant kitchen* (fig. 23) signed by a member of the Savery family. Less time-consuming and labour intensive production methods probably made it possible to sell these at a low price, and that applies just as much to all other categories of auctioned paintings. The original owners of the auctioned kitchen pieces were probably for the most part Southern Netherlandish immigrants as well, mostly wealthy merchants and sometimes artists, originating from Antwerp, who were accustomed to surrounding themselves with paintings of various price categories.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Ibidem, chapter IV.I. and VI.I., esp. p. 382–385.

<sup>61</sup> In chronological order: Montias Database (<http://research.frick.org/montias/home.php>), inv. nos. 857 (on 29-8-1600), 785, 786, 787, 797, 800, 1106, 733, 756, 758, 723, 899, 1009, 702, 727, 704, 705, 1127, 707 (on 16-3-1610), 694, 695, 696, 605, 684, 710, 687, 714, 690, 691, 677, 678, 680, 681, 683, 889 (on 10-8-1617).

<sup>62</sup> Such as the Antwerp born merchant Hans van Gheel by whom a kitchen piece was purchased on 15-2-1601 (no. 785.001) for 5.– by the *uitdraagster* (second hand dealer) Mary Andries; the Antwerp

One of these was the Antwerp born merchant and insurer Jacques Rombouts I from whose collection three kitchen pieces were auctioned on 24 March 1609, all by anonymous makers, for very wide-ranging prices: f 18.–, f 58:5.– and f 280.–. The last sum is the highest for a painting from this rather extensive collection.<sup>63</sup> Among the buyers at these auctions were many South Netherlandish immigrants.<sup>64</sup> The first-mentioned kitchen piece from the Rombouts-collection was bought for example by the Antwerp born silk painter Sebald de Witte, while the two expensive pieces were bought by Hans Rombouts, also born in Antwerp and brother of Jacques Rombouts, who was also a merchant.<sup>65</sup>



Fig. 23 Circle of Jacob Savery 1, Peasant kitchen, panel, 31.7×46.3 cm, signed Savery fe, after 1600, Paris, Geneva, De Jonckheere (2013).

born painter Gillis van Coninxloo (1544-1606), from whose collection two kitchen pieces were auctioned, on 1-3-1607 (733.0127 and 733.0245) for respectively f 20.– and f 32:10.– (this last piece was bought by Frans Pietersz. de Grebber from Haarlem); the Antwerp born retailer Jan Colijn (1548-1603), from whose collection a kitchen piece (758.0001) was auctioned, dated 4-5-1607, for f 4:1.– (bought by Michiel Colijn, retailer and bookseller); the Antwerp-born painter and art dealer Hans van de Velde (c. 1552-1609) from whose collection two kitchen pieces (702.0012 and 702.0013) were auctioned (on 23-2-1609) for respectively f 1.– and f 1,55.–; the bleacher Joost Pietersz, probably born in Antwerp from whose collection on 14-4-1614 a kitchen piece (714.0009) was sold for f 26.– to Dolle Willem, probably a secondhand dealer; the jeweller and merchant Hans Tysz. (Tijsz.) [the Elder], born in 1556 in Antwerp from whose collection on 22-4-1614 two kitchen pieces were sold (690.0033 and 690.0034) for resp. f 10.– (to a secondhand dealer) and f 20.–; the merchant Balthazar van de Veecke born around 1573 in Antwerp from whose collection a kitchen piece was auctioned on 2-11-1616 (677.0032) for f 25.–; the Ghent born Charles Gillisz. Cooren (or Coorne) (1566-1617) from whose collection a kitchen piece was sold on 6-6-1617 (683.0035) for f 20.– to the Antwerp born painter and art dealer Jacob van Nieulandt (who was the brother of Adriaen van Nieulandt), and a kitchen piece (683.0041) for f 18.– to the similarly Antwerp-born merchant and silk weaver Jaques Senepaert. Charles Cooren had probably purchased one of these kitchen pieces in 1614 at the auction of the Cornelis van der Voorts collection. In this collection 'Charles Corne by Honckelboer in den Cornbloem' was named as the purchaser of no. 687.0014 for f 37.–. If the identification with one of the items named is correct, the kitchen piece dropped sharply in value (see also the commentary in the Montias Database).

**63** Montias Database, respectively 727.0020, 727.0010 and 727.0035.

**64** Examples of buyers with a Southern Netherlandish background: the Antwerp-born merchant and dyer Ambrosius Laurensz at whose request an auction was organised on 22-7-1608 (899.0010, for f 11:15.–), the Antwerp-born 'coeckebacker' Samuel van Balen (residing in Alkmaar), who bought a kitchen piece (695.0069) for f 14.– at the auction on 14-3-1611, from the collection of the art lover Barcman Claesz Dob (Dobbens) mentioned by Van Mander.

**65** He was also a son-in-law of the Amsterdam merchant and art collector Jan Nicquet; it can thus be asked if the painting for which f 280.– was paid, is the kitchen piece by Joachim Wtwael with a valuation of 200 guilders, that was in the collection of Nicquet in 1612. See Bredius, *Künstler-Inventare* (n. 14), vol. 2, p. 395, no. 17.

Another interesting example is the Antwerp painter, merchant and art dealer Louijs de Rocourt, who had settled in Amsterdam in 1616. In his collection, of which the inventory was drawn up on 22 May 1627, we encounter no less than 25 paintings of food, including various examples by South Netherlandish artists. Apart from many fruit still lifes and laid tables (including a 'banquet' by Osias Beert), he also possessed seven kitchen pieces; the most remarkable being 'a large kitchen by Breugel' (by whom we do not know any autograph kitchen piece), a 'large kitchen' by the unidentified 'Scheel Hansken naer Breugel', another copied kitchen piece after Brueghel and two large kitchens after 'Schele Hansken'.<sup>66</sup> A large portion of this collection was auctioned a month later; seven kitchen pieces (the same as in the inventory?), all of them without a name attached to it, yielded between f 17:10.– and f 66.–. The highest prices, f 61.– and f 66.–, are not small, but seem nevertheless to be somewhat low for a real Brueghel.<sup>67</sup>

This new competition must have been an enormous stimulus for the local painters to adapt their production methods. Many, especially Cornelis Jacobsz. Delff, did this by specializing more intensively and providing within their specialism a more differentiated supply of both quite quick and cheaply produced pieces of a smaller format, as well as more laborious and more expensive compositions with monumental dimensions. Others, such as Abraham Bloemaert, Joachim Wtewael, Pieter Cornelisz. Van Rijck and Adriaen van Nieulandt, with their large scale and obviously expensive compositions, aimed at a very affluent and elite audience. In order to prevent the market for painted food from becoming saturated, many painters generated a new demand by surprising the audience with innovative types of images such as the kitchen still life, the laid table, the peasant kitchen piece, the hunting still life and fish still life. That many painters were particularly successful in their strategy appears from the rich variation of types of images and their diverse styles, formats, iconography and dimensions, that we encounter in inventories, often even in one home. This diversity is undoubtedly not only the result of the competition between artists, but must also have been generated by a rivalry between the owners, who enthusiastically tried to outdo each other in the richness of their painting collections. They also displayed their kitchen pieces, kitchen still lifes and other images with food to give expression to their hospitality and to show how well filled their pantries were. Significant is the way in which even the moralist Petrus Wittewrongel expressed in 1661 that flaunting splendor in the home is permitted to a certain extent:

<sup>66</sup> Montias Database, inv. no. 6240, on 22-5-1627; the kitchen pieces: 6240.0025 ('keuken van ketelwerck'), 6240.0030 ('een kleine vette keuken'), 6240.0042 (Brueghel), 6240.0045 ('Scheel Hansken naer Breugel'), 6240.0046 (kitchen piece 'nae Breugel'), 6240.0047 ('2 groote keukens nae Schele Hansken'). Almost all paintings from this collection of 150 art objects were, curiously enough (temporarily stored?) in the hall.

<sup>67</sup> Montias Database, inv. no. 624, on 22-6-1627, 624.0019, 624.0048, 624.0055, 624.0059, 624.0062, 624.0073, 624.0081. The number of auctioned artefacts was 140; the auctioned collection did not entirely correspond with that in the inventory of the estate of De Rocourt.

Not only are we allowed to furnish our houses with the most necessary household items, with everything needed [...] in the kitchen and in the special rooms. It is also permitted to display for the eyes our need for comfort and abundance.<sup>68</sup>

## Conclusion

This contribution demonstrates that the artistic exchange between the traditions of the kitchen piece in the North and the South was very intensive and strongly stimulated innovation. The two closely related, yet essentially different traditions appear to have had a continuous interaction. On the basis of examples by Adriaen van Nieulandt, Joachim Wtewael, Cornelis Jacobsz. Delff, Floris van Dijck and Pieter de Bloot it has been argued that these traditions did not remain separated, but often merged. These painters reacted to examples of South Netherlandish painters by borrowing motifs or modes of picturing and appropriated these to transform and renew their own pictorial tradition. This artistic transfer from the South to the North confirms the fact that artists and their artworks were very mobile. In the case of the Amsterdammer Van Nieulandt, it is most likely that he became familiar with the new developments in his birthplace Antwerp thanks to the close family ties he maintained. Many other artists, such as Wtewael and Delff, did not need to travel far and could admire kitchen pieces by Beuckelaer and probably also still lifes by Peeters and Snyder in collections in the Northern Netherlands. Everything points to the fact that the high quality, quantity and variety of production of kitchen pieces and related images of food in the early decades of the seventeenth century in the Northern Netherlands received a powerful impetus from the stream of South Netherlandish immigrants, among whom were painters of food as well as a considerable part of a new audience; they played a decisive role after 1600 in the process of development of new types of images and were responsible for the strong increase in demand for these kinds of paintings. They were taste makers in multiple ways.

68 'Niet alleen en moghen wij oock/met alleen noodighen huys-raet onse wooningen stoffeeren: ende van alles/wat soo in de keucken, ende de bysondere kameran, tot nootsaeckelick gebruyck [...] vereyscht wert. Het is oock geoorloft, daer in ons gemack, ende het gerief tot overvloet te *be-oogen* [my italics].' P. Wittewrongel, *Oeconomia christiana ofie Christelicke huys-houdinghe*, 2 vols., Amsterdam 1661, vol. 2, p. 145-147.