



Editorial

In this issue of *The Rijksmuseum Bulletin*, Maartje van Gelder and Fabio Pauletta discuss a painting by Pieter Isaacsz titled *Uprising of the Women of Rome on the Capitol*, from circa 1600. It depicts the mythical, obscure story of Papirius. Most contemporaneous representations of this event focus on the boy Papirius and members of the Senate. After having been present at a Senate's meeting, Papirius told his mother that the senators were considering bigamy – a lie the boy fabricated to keep the Senate's actual affairs secret. Most of these images served to instruct young men on the virtue of confidentiality and the contrast between men of restraint and overemotional women. In the Rijksmuseum painting, Isaacsz relegates the men to the margins and instead emphasizes the strength of the women who, shown centre stage, stand up for their rights. The theme is too rare for the painting to have been made for the art market. It was more likely commissioned by a wealthy Amsterdam merchant for the occasion of his marriage. The painting would have served the new couple as a conversation piece.

Maartje Brattinga researches a goblet with a stipple engraving of the author Elisabeth Wolff-Bekker (known as Betje Wolff, 1738-1804) and its very unusual inscription referring to her work, the engraver and the person who commissioned it. Glasses with portraits were mostly used in gatherings of patriots, when toasting their leaders. Wolff-Bekker, a patriot herself, was famous for her epistolary novels; in the glass's inscription, however, she is honoured for her active involvement in religious polemics. The glass was most likely made for Pieter Heijnsius, a well-to-do contractor and the father-in-law of Wolff-Bekker's publisher. Brattinga shows that, based on the early provenance, the glass can be linked to two of Wolff-Bekker's closest friends. In this way, a circle of acquaintances is reconstructed, demonstrating how portrait glasses of the eighteenth century were used in celebration of shared values.

Both of these articles pose a methodological research inquiry that is fundamental to art historical practice: how was an object conceived and what was its earliest function and use? Besides researching an object's genesis, another aspect of the art historian's *modus operandi* is labelling artworks and artists. This might be based on style, in which a work is classified into categories of similar works, or quality, in which an artist and his work are assessed in comparison to others. When examining art from past centuries, this labelling might seem useful and harmless. In modern times, however, Jos ten Berge argues that this practice can also prevent artists from receiving the recognition they deserve and can have a major impact on their life, art and career; he does so by analysing the reception of one artist in particular. Willem van Genk (1927-2005), creator of highly detailed drawings and collages, became the target of criticism, in which his mental problems all too often resulted in his disqualification as a professional artist. Labels such as mentally void, maladjusted, naive, amateurish, brutish, and outsider were consequently bestowed on him. At times, Van Genk's works show how these labels wounded him. In 2016, as part of its presentation of the twentieth century, for a period of one year, the Rijksmuseum exhibited his drawing *Moscow* (c. 1955). Even though still accompanied by a museum label mentioning his mental issues, Van Genk's work finally hung alongside works by other acknowledged artists.



Portraying Women in Revolt: How Pieter Isaacsz Represented the Myth of Papirius and the Uprising of the Women of Rome

• FABIO PAULETTA AND MAARTJE VAN GELDER* •

The history painting *Uprising of the Women of Rome on the Capitol* (fig. 1), painted on copper by the Dutch-Danish artist Pieter Isaacsz (1569-1625) between 1600 and 1603, deals with gender, power and politics.¹ Central to the mythical story depicted in the painting is Papirius, a Roman boy said to have tricked his mother into believing that the Roman Senate was deliberating the introduction of bigamy, which would allow Roman men to have two wives. Angered by this news, Papirius's mother called on other women to protest on the Capitol, Rome's political heart. The story itself is relatively obscure and was fairly rare in medieval and early modern art. In the few depictions that do exist, the uprising is shown in a traditional, predictable way, which contrasts the political actions of men with the foolishness of women, with Papirius's mother signifying the latter.² In these works, the boy Papirius invariably appears in the centre, typically positioned between his mother and the senators.

For the composition of his painting in the Rijksmuseum, however, Isaacsz took a radically different approach: he chose to show large numbers of women as they arrive on the (late sixteenth-century) Capitol, seeking redress from the governing senators. The women occupy the foreground and are moving towards the right;

< Fig. 1
PIETER ISAACSZ,
*Uprising of the
Women of Rome on
the Capitol*, c. 1600-03.
Oil on copper,
41.5 x 62 cm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. SK-A-1720.

leading them is Papirius's mother, dressed in yellow. By contrast, all the male figures are positioned to the side, with many of them watching from the staircase and balcony of the monumental Palazzo Senatorio, the seat of early modern Rome's important municipal courts of justice, visible in the background. Papirius himself can be seen far right, standing between the senators and his mother. Isaacsz's painting not only deviates from the limited visual tradition of the Papirius story described above, we also rarely see any depictions of a crowd of rebellious women in early modern art. In this article, we shall first investigate why Isaacsz chose this obscure story, and then examine why he placed the protesting women in the Rijksmuseum painting's foreground.

Remarkably, despite the theme's rarity Isaacsz painted it twice within a timespan of approximately thirteen years.³ An earlier version painted on panel, dated circa 1593, is preserved in the Museo di Roma (fig. 2);⁴ a drawing based on this panel is held in the collection of the National Galleries of Scotland (fig. 3).⁵ In composition and style, the Roman painting vastly differs from the Rijksmuseum painting. It is precisely these differences that will help us to better understand why Isaacsz chose to place the protesting Roman women in the foreground.



Fig. 2

PIETER ISAACSZ,
*Uprising of the
Women of Rome
on the Capitol*,
c. 1593.

Oil on panel,
65 x 115 cm.

Rome, Museo
di Roma,
inv. no. MR 188o.
Photo © Roma
capitale –
Sovrintendenza
capitolina –
Museo di Roma



Fig. 3

PIETER ISAACSZ,
*Uprising of the
Women of Rome
on the Capitol*,
c. 1593.

Pen drawing
washed brown ink,
28.6 x 49.8 cm.

Edinburgh,
National Galleries
of Scotland,
inv. no. RSA 1098.

The article will begin with an analysis of the Papirius literary tradition and the late medieval and early modern visual tradition arising from it. To understand why Isaacs chose this theme the first time, we must then consider his training as a painter in Italy and his years spent in Rome. One source of inspiration for his first version was undoubtedly the dissemination of the Papirius story in Dutch translations

and editions of classical literature. Yet, actual protests on the Capitol in the sixteenth century might have inspired the artist as well. The article will close with the contextualization and interpretation of the later painting in the Rijksmuseum. As we will endeavour to show, Isaacs's painting of the women of Rome rising up in protest against bigamy was very likely made for Jacob Poppe (1576-1624), one

of Amsterdam's wealthiest merchants, on the occasion of his marriage to Liefgem Goverts Wuytiers (1586-1622).

Papirius Praetextatus in Roman Literature

The mythical tale of Papirius was first told by the Roman scholar Aulus Gellius (before 130-after 180 AD), as part of his compendium *Noctes Atticae*.⁶ As the story goes, it was common in the Roman Republic for young sons to accompany their fathers into the Senate, where they could learn the business of politics. After the meeting, his father swore Papirius to secrecy. Upon the boy's return home, his mother asked what had been discussed. Papirius lied, telling her that the Senate had been discussing the introduction of bigamy. She immediately became worried: such a decision would have a negative effect on her own position and that of her children. She hastened to warn the other *matronae*, i.e. the married women of Rome's elite. On the following day, she led a crowd of angry women to the senate building on the Capitol, where they called on the senators to allow biandry (having two male partners), instead of bigamy. To prevent further escalation, Papirius confessed his fabrication to the senators, who were entirely unaware of the cause of the women's anger. Choosing not to punish the boy for his lie, the Senate instead lauded him for keeping state secrets. In reward, Papirius was henceforth permitted to attend all Senate meetings; other boys, by contrast, were denied this privilege, for fear they might succumb to their mothers' curiosity. It was then that Papirius was given the moniker 'Praetextatus': a reference to the young age at which he kept the Senate's business a secret (the *toga praetexta*, a toga with a purple border, was worn by freeborn boys until they came of age) and a wordplay on the term 'prae-texo' (to feign), referring to his politically expedient lie.

Gellius tells his story with a strong moralizing undertone: unlike Papirius, who remained true to his political obligation, his curious mother and the other women were vulnerable to deception, spurring them on to a rash, unfounded protest. The story thus presents politics as the exclusive domain of men – no place for gullible and easily agitated women.⁷ As recently suggested by the classicist Joanna Kulawiak-Cyrankowska, the story can also be interpreted as an anecdotal jest: the appearance of a mob of distraught Roman elite women advocating biandry will have struck readers of Gellius as an absurdity.⁸ An overly playful interpretation of this story, however, overlooks the fact that large-scale protests involving Roman women actually occurred on the Capitol.

For Roman women, excluded from any formal means of political participation, demonstrating was one of the few options to exert political pressure. In her discussion of women's protests in ancient Rome, historian Emily Hemelrijk suggests that the Papirius story was inspired by one demonstration in particular: in 195 BC, approximately 1,400 of the most affluent women of Rome collectively rose up in protest against the Lex Oppia, a sumptuary law that had been introduced during the Second Punic War, eighteen years earlier. The law prohibited displays of wealth and excluded women from possessing gold.⁹ In his *Ab urbe condita*, which narrates the history of Rome, Livy (c. 59 BC-17 AD) describes how male supporters and opponents of the Lex Oppia filled the Capitol. Hit hardest by the law, the wealthy *matronae* followed suit, staging a mass protest that lasted several days. The women of Rome blocked the streets leading to the Forum and the Capitol and called on the men to revoke the law. After directly presenting their case to the consuls, the law was finally repealed. In his history, Livy incorporated the

(probably fictitious) speech given by Cato the Elder (234-149 BC), who argued that the *Lex Oppia* be upheld.¹⁰ Cato's speech, in which he underscores women's lack of discipline and advocates for their submission to their husbands, may have inspired Gellius in writing the tale of Papirius and his mother. His telling of the story was subsequently adopted by the Roman philosopher Ambrosius Theodosius Macrobius (c. 370-430 AD) in his *Saturnalia*, an encyclopedic collection of essays on Roman culture, knowledge, myths and religion.¹¹

By 1541, a Dutch version of the Papirius story was circulating in the Netherlands, included in the first Dutch-language translation of Livy's *Ab urbe condita* in Antwerp.¹² As their source, the Dutch translators relied on an earlier, German translation of Livy's work, to which the German translators had added a passage to the account of Papirius as an army commander in the Second Samnite War (326-304 BC). Based on Macrobius' *Saturnalia*, they recounted the story of Papirius's white lie and the rashness of the ensuing women's riot to illustrate the commander's youthful wisdom, though leaving out the women's wish for biandry.¹³ Adopting this German insertion, the Dutch translation describes how Papirius's fabrication sparked 'a great grumbling and wrath among the women'.¹⁴ Livy's work became extremely popular in the sixteenth century, when the interest in

the classics among members of the Dutch elite increased dramatically. Many reprints were published, all invariably including the added Papirius myth.¹⁵ Another influence drawing Isaacsz's attention to the story was his brother, the historian Johannes Pontanus (1571-1639), who was working on a new Latin edition of Macrobius's *Saturnalia*, which he would publish in 1597.¹⁶

Viewed from a broader perspective, an educated member of the Dutch (male) elite living around 1600 could have known the story of Papirius and the protest of Rome's women via the Livy translations or the Pontanus edition. Isaacsz's friend Karel van Mander (1548-1606), for example, twice refers to Livy's translated version of the story in his *Schilderboeck*: once in his description of the Rijksmuseum painting, added to his biography of Hans von Aachen, Isaacsz's most important teacher, and a second time, albeit much more indirectly, in his biography of Lucas van Leyden, whose caution he compares to that of Papirius.¹⁷ Textual representations, from Gellius via Macrobius to the Livy translation, invariably emphasize Papirius's prudent actions, with the rebellious women of Rome in a supporting role. As we will show, the virtuous boy versus the naive *matronae*, a motif underscoring political loyalty to the (Roman) state, also prevails in the limited visual tradition of the story.

Fig. 4

POLICRATIC MASTER, *Papirius Praetextatus as Child in the Senate where Women Demonstrate*, c. 1384. Miniature, 60 x 75 mm. Besançon, Bibliothèque municipale, inv. no. ms. 677, fol. 19v.

Fig. 5

FAUVEL MASTER OR PAPELEU MASTER, *Papirius Praetextatus at the Senate*, fourteenth century. Miniature. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, Français, inv. no. 316, fol. 215v.

Fig. 6

MICHEL JOUVENEL MASTER, *Papirius Praetextatus and his Mother*, c. 1447-70. Miniature, 68 x 86 mm. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, inv. no. Latin 4915, fol. 101v.





Fig. 7
DOMENICO
BECCAFUMI, *The
Story of Papirius*,
c. 1520-21.
Oil on panel,
74 x 137.8 cm.
London, The
National Gallery,
inv. no. NG1430.

An Obscure Theme in the Visual Tradition

In our search for representations of the Papirius myth, the earliest we found were book illuminations from fourteenth- and fifteenth-century French historical chronicles. The first French book illumination of the story of Papirius, by the anonymous Policratic Master (active between 1366-1403), dates from circa 1384 (fig. 4). Two other late medieval book illuminations were painted, respectively, by the anonymous Fauvel Master (active between 1315-1340) or the Papeleu Master (1285-1335), and the Michel Jouvenel Master (active between 1447-1460) (figs. 5, 6). All three miniatures present the story of Papirius in the continuous narrative style: we see the moment the senators have gathered with the small, virtuous Papirius in their midst, while the *matronae* arrive to seek their redress. Unlike Isaacsz's later depictions, the women are few in number and appear somewhat hesitant. The protest is by no means large scale.

For the period up to 1700, three other paintings besides Isaacsz's works depict the theme in question.

The earliest, from around 1520-21, is a work by Domenico Beccafumi (1486-1551, fig. 7), an Italian painter predominately active in Siena, previously analysed by the art historian Carol Plazzotta.¹⁸ A second depiction of the Papirius story is a mural in the Nuremberg town hall (fig. 8), a work likely based on a sketch by Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528).¹⁹ The mural was destroyed during the American and British bombardment of the city during World War II. Papirius, on the right,



Fig. 8
ALBRECHT DÜRER,
*The Silence of the
Young Papirius*,
1521-22. Nuremberg,
Old Town Hall,
Great Hall, south
wall, first spandrel
from the east,
roundel. Destroyed
during WWII.
Photo: Marburg &
Zentralinstitut für
Kunstgeschichte
Photothek

Fig. 9

ANONYMOUS
SPANISH PAINTER,
*The Child Papirius
Saluting Harpocrates
as God of Silence,*
after 1607.
Oil on canvas,
82.5 x 66.8 cm.
London, Wellcome
Collection,
inv. no. 445591.



Fig. 10

OTTO VAENIUS,
Nihil silentio utilius,
1607.
Print, 181 x 148 mm.
In idem, *Q. Horatii
Flacci emblemata,*
Antwerp 1612,
third edition, p. 63.
Utrecht University
Library, shelf number
LBKUN RAR LMY VEEN,
04.



speaks to his mother in the middle, in the presence of other concerned women. The third work is an undated, anonymous Spanish painting of mediocre quality, in which we see Papirius greeting Harpocrates, a god of Egyptian origin (fig. 9). For the Egyptians, Harpocrates was the god of childhood; for the Romans, he was the god of silence, based on their interpretation of the god's raised finger held before his mouth. Papirius's association with the god therefore alludes to the boy's political discretion.

In all three paintings, the emphasis lies on the boy Papirius, and accordingly, his exemplary political actions. As his counterpart, the boy's mother is curious and ready to rebel. In her interpretation of Beccafumi's painting, Plazzotta states that Papirius's qualities, which suited model political behaviour in republican Rome, were translatable to the political culture of republican Siena in the early sixteenth century.²⁰ Similarly, the Nuremberg murals were also intended to promote virtuous behaviour among the political elite of this free imperial city within the Holy Roman Empire, as they gathered in the town hall's Great Hall. The same can be said of the Spanish painting, even if its maker and dating are unclear: its composition, in fact, is derived from the emblem *Nihil silentio utilius* (fig. 10), from the collection *Q. Horatii Flacci emblemata* (Antwerp 1607) by the humanist and painter Otto Vaenius (Otto van Veen, 1556-1629). Intended as an instructive tool for the political education of young men, Vaenius's collection was part of the broader tradition of the *specula principum*, or mirrors for princes. A later edition served to educate the young French king, Louis XIV (1638-1715).²¹ The emblem 'Nothing is more useful than silence' itself calls for self-control and silence, and thus political secrecy and confidentiality. In Vaenius's depiction, Harpocrates figures in the foreground, standing before the senate building;



Fig. 11
 ATTRIBUTED TO
 (THE STUDIO OF)
 BERNARD VAN
 ORLEY, wall tapestry
*The Twelve Ages of a
 Man: The First Three
 Ages, or Spring*, c. 1515.
 Wool, silk,
 444.5 × 716.3 cm.
 New York,
 The Metropolitan
 Museum of Art,
 inv. no. 53.221.1,
 gift of The Hearst
 Foundation, in
 memory of William
 Randolph Hearst,
 1953.

Papirius can be seen standing on the steps to one side; the senators look on from the windows. Apart from Isaacsz's paintings, this is the only representation of this theme to include a large group of women. They are demonstratively stationed behind Harpocrates, making it easy for a reader to contrast the uprising of the women with the symbolic representation of silence.

A comparable didactic function can also be discerned in two tapestries from the sixteenth century in which Papirius makes an appearance. In the Brussels cycle *The Twelve Ages of Man* (c. 1515), probably made after a design by the workshop of Bernard van Orley (1490-1542), Papirius is included in the tapestry representing the first three ages (birth to 18 years) or Spring. He kneels before a group of senators, with several women standing behind him (fig. 11, top centre). The scene conveys the evolving (male) intelligence from the age of six to twelve, and is accompanied by a Latin text briefly summarizing Papirius's story.²² The other cycle

is the *Los Honores* series (c. 1520-25), produced in the workshop of Pieter Coecke van Aelst (1502-1550) for the young Emperor Charles V (1500-1558). In keeping with the court culture of this period, the *Los Honores* tapestries depict several virtues to which a monarch should aspire.²³ In the tapestry dedicated to *Fides* (fig. 12), an adult Papirius wearing armour – solely identifiable by his woven name – stands in a crowd of figures, each personifying a sub-virtue of Wisdom: Cassandra, Job and Jacob and others. A final work to be mentioned is a drawing by Leonaert Bramer (1596-1674, fig. 13), made for an album of forty-nine (originally fifty) drawings to accompany the Dutch translation of Livy's *Ab urbe condita*. Bramer's drawing demonstrates just how fully the later Papirius addition had come to form an integral part of Dutch-language translations of Livy's work by the mid-seventeenth century. In his drawing, Bramer includes four women, who appear more desperate than rebellious



Fig. 12

STUDIO OF PIETER
KOECKE VAN AELST,
wall tapestry
Los Honores: Fides,
detail, c. 1520-25.
Wool, silk, gold
La Granja, Palacio
Real de la Granja
de San Ildefonso.

or angry. Unquestionably, by foregrounding Papirius, a clear political-educational message prevails in all the depictions discussed here, primarily intended for princes and ruling elites.²⁴ Yet in both of Isaacsz's paintings, this motif appears to play no role at all.

Roman Inspiration circa 1590

Born in 1569 to Dutch parents in the Danish city of Helsingør, Isaacsz had a varied career, working as a painter, art dealer, diplomat and spy.²⁵ His early sojourn in Italy was crucial for his decision to paint the Papirius story the first time. As a close friend privy to first-hand information, Van Mander wrote that Isaacsz briefly studied under the prestigious portrait painter Cornelis Ketel (1548-1616) in Amsterdam around 1583.²⁶ His next apprenticeship, circa 1585, was with Hans von Aachen, starting most likely in Venice. In 1587, Isaacsz accompanied Von Aachen on a trip to Frankfurt am Main and Munich.²⁷ Von Aachen – and therefore possibly Isaacsz as well – travelled to Cologne in 1588, returning to Venice in the

same year.²⁸ In all likelihood, Isaacsz parted ways with his master in the late fifteen-eighties or early fifteen-nineties, having fulfilled a standard apprenticeship of six years. He then moved to Rome.²⁹ There he would complete his first painting of the uprising of the women of Rome, based in part on the classical story but also on his own personal experiences in the historic city.

The panel in the Museo di Roma (fig. 2) and the drawing in the National Galleries of Scotland (fig. 3) both share the same overall composition, include traces of Von Aachen's influence and fit Isaacsz's early work.³⁰ The elderly bearded men (priests or senators) on the right, with their togas covering their heads, appear regularly in Isaacsz's earliest paintings.³¹ Van Mander states that Isaacsz depicted the bronze equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius and the Capitol after life.³² His rendering of the Capitol indeed confirms that Isaacsz knew it well, since throughout the sixteenth century this urban space underwent major development.³³ It is his representation of this crucial Roman space that motivated the Museo di Roma to acquire the panel. In the Roman painting, market stalls can be seen on the left, next to the old monastery of Santa Maria in Aracoeli. Although the market on the Capitol was moved from to the Piazza Navona in 1477, market women with food stalls were still selling their wares on the square in the sixteenth century.³⁴ Isaacsz also incorporated fictional elements in this work, such as the *tempietto* on the right.³⁵

As art historian Heiner Borggreffe also suggests, Isaacsz very likely conceived his composition for the Roman painting in consultation with his learned brother Pontanus, who visited him in Rome during his Grand Tour in 1593.³⁶ Conceivably, Pontanus may already have been working on his edition of the *Saturnalia*. Given his

education and interest in the classics, he is certain to have been familiar with the Dutch translation of Livy's work, including the added story of Papirius. Besides conversations with his brother on the history of the Roman Republic and visits to the Capitol, Isaacsz may very well have drawn inspiration from another aspect of Roman life during his time in the city – recurring mass protests on the Capitol.

Between August 1590 and January 1592, no fewer than four popes died: Sixtus v (27 August 1590), Urban VII (27 September 1590), Gregory XIV (16 October 1591) and Innocent IX (30 December 1591). On these four occasions, the city of Rome thus experienced an interregnum period or 'sede vacante', as the Diocese of Rome was without its bishop. During these 'sede vacante' periods, riots

would often occur and even large-scale protests, waged against the deceased pope. The most important location for such uprisings was, in fact, the Capitol, where the city council had its seat in the Palazzo dei Conservatori (in the Roman panel painting, visible on the right). Together with the Palazzo Senatorio, this building stood as symbol of the secular government. Yet the Capitol square also represented papal power, since it was home to monumental statues of the popes, the crowd's main target.³⁷ Regularly, during the 'sede vacante', large numbers of Romans would march to the square to express their anger against the newly deceased pope and his policies, smashing their sculpted images in protest. These groups comprised both men and women from the upper and lower echelons of the population. Following the death of Sixtus v in 1590, for example, a crowd of some two thousand people stormed the Capitol to protest this pope's exorbitant taxation.³⁸ While there is no way of knowing whether Isaacsz himself witnessed or participated in such a large-scale protest, as a resident of the city he was undoubtedly aware of these periods of unrest. In Isaacsz's depiction of the protesting women of Rome, representations of the Capitol as the historic meeting place of the Roman Senate, as the scene of the protest from the Papirius myth and as the location of mass demonstrations in the painter's own day therefore merge.

In the Roman panel and the accompanying pen drawing, probably intended as a *ricordo* of the painting, Isaacsz depicts the women's protest and the Papirius theme differently than in the later Amsterdam copper painting (fig. 1). To evoke a Capitol square filled with a multitude of figures, in his first version Isaacsz chose a distant point of view, with Papirius, his mother and the senators positioned in the centre. A consequence of this diverging perspective, combined with a difference in style and technique, is that the women

Fig. 13
LEONAERT BRAMER,
*The Story of the
Clever Young
Papirius*, 1655-60.
Black and gray ink,
black chalk
400 x 305 mm.
Munich, Vereinigung
der Freunde der
Staatlichen
Graphischen
Sammlung München
e. V., inv. no. F 116-26.
Based on the
Dutch-language
translation of Livy,
Ab urbe condita,
Amsterdam 1585.





Fig. 14
Detail from *Uprising
of the Women of Rome
on the Capitol* (fig. 2).

are less distinguishable from one another – here the emphasis lies on the uprising's scale and intensity.

The composition is chaotic, dynamic and violent, with physical confrontation between various actors forming a central and recurring element. Halberdiers, present in large numbers, are distributed throughout the composition. In the centre foreground, a soldier grabs a woman, just as another, half-naked woman falls to the ground next to him (fig. 14). Here the woman's partial nudity is the result of the male law enforcer's aggressive behaviour. Such depictions of male violence against women, displaying a clearly erotic undertone, recall depictions of a theme far more popular among Italian and (Italian-trained) northern European painters, the Rape of the Sabine Women (fig. 15), which also featured in Livy's *Ab urbe condita*.³⁹ After having been abducted by Roman men, the Sabine women ultimately choose to stay in Rome, married to their kidnappers. In many late medieval and early modern representations, the subject symbolized the importance and continuity of marriage.⁴⁰

The theme of the Sabine women is commonly painted showing wild, dynamic poses and abundant nudity, presented against a backdrop of

Roman (classical) architecture. When attacked, the Sabine women are the passive party. In his Roman panel painting, however, Isaacsz also includes incidents of female violence against men: right of the market stall, we see a woman armed with a cleaver engaged in a fight with a bearded man (fig. 16). In the foreground right – as a veritable counterpart to the defenceless half-naked woman in the foreground centre – one sees a woman from the back as she proceeds towards the centre of the action, wielding a roasting spit as her weapon (fig. 14). In fact, this is an element that returns in the Amsterdam painting; as it creates depth in both compositions, it should perhaps also be considered a *repoussoir*. In its depiction of the relatively obscure story of Papirius, the Roman panel diverges from the visual tradition described above, precisely because it places emphasis on the massive women's protest. At the same time, its style and composition echo contemporaneous representations of the well-known classical theme of the Rape of the Sabine Women.

The Amsterdam Painting circa 1600

On 20 November 1593, Isaacsz married Susanna Craeyborn Willemsdr van



Fig. 15
GIULIO LICINIO,
*The Rape of the
Sabine Women*,
detail, after 1566.
Oil on canvas,
transferred from
wood, 35.6 x 153 cm.
London, The
National Gallery,
inv. no. NG644.1.

Antwerpen (1569-1625) in Amsterdam, implying his return to the city in the second half of that year.⁴¹ At first, he worked mainly on painted portraits and militia pieces, following in the footsteps of his first teacher, Ketel.⁴² He also specialized in staffage, adding extraneous figures in architectural paintings by other artists.⁴³ From his two versions of the Papius story, we know that Isaacsz himself was also capable of architectural paintings filled with multiple figures. The second version (fig. 1) was possibly intended to profile himself as a classically trained painter in Amsterdam. Although some of the spatial-architectural elements found in the earlier Roman panel – specifically, the market stall and the fictitious *tempietto* – are absent from this later, zoomed-in version, Isaacsz again clearly displays his knowledge of Rome.

The large numbers of figures, depicted in detail in a variety of costumes, moreover gave Isaacsz an opportunity to demonstrate this other aspect of his talent, which he had already shown in previous works such as his *St John the Baptist* (late fifteen-nineties), and his figures in architectural paintings by Hans (1527-1609) and Paul Vredeman de Vries (1567-1617).⁴⁴ The attire worn by women in Isaacsz's painting comes

from all sorts of regions, such as the Netherlands, Italy, the Ottoman Empire and North Africa. He also gave a few women from the last two areas a darker skin colour. As previously shown by art historian Bianca du Mortier, Isaacsz based the clothing styles on costume books and prints.⁴⁵ Copper, a medium that lends itself well to highly detailed, glossy and richly coloured compositions, was the ideal underground for an artist desiring the precise representation of clothing and household objects, down to the smallest detail.⁴⁶

Fig. 16
Detail from *Uprising
of the Women of Rome
on the Capitol* (fig. 2).



In the Amsterdam painting, as stated above, Isaacsz chose to organize his composition by placing the rebellious women in the foreground of his painting, both literally and figuratively. The point in the story where Papirius's mother addresses the senators occurs on the right: virtually all the figures' heads turn in this direction. Relegated to a minor character, Papirius is portrayed here as a little boy standing alongside his mother's impressive entourage. Proudly posed, with her chin held high and her hands resting on her hips, she speaks to two astonished senators dressed in red robes. Other male figures have been pushed to the scene's margins: either watching from the stairs and balcony of the Palazzo Senatorio or the narrow alleys on either side of the building. Isaacsz's women come from various regions, as stated before, but also represent different ages and levels of social standing – from the very wealthy to the poor and physically disabled. Isaacsz depicts the women as a diverse group united in a common goal: to demand they be heard by the senators.

In the present work, however, one no longer observes the dynamic chaos or semi-nakedness present in Isaacsz's first version of the uprising. At first glance, one might think it was a peaceful procession in a Roman street scene. Yet classically trained contemporaries would certainly have recognized the painting as the depiction of a protest. In his *Schilder-boeck*, for example, Van Mander described the painting as: 'a very nice painting on copper, reflecting the history of the Roman women arriving at the Capitol and sparking an uprising'.⁴⁷ But even a less-informed audience would have had no trouble identifying the scene as a protest, with the potential to turn violent. Some of the women clearly seek escalation, e.g. the woman on the left seen from behind, holding the menacing roasting spit. To the right, a young woman in front of the bronze



equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius waves a broom; in the foreground right, an older woman raises a walking stick; a girl, walking next to an old woman in a dog cart, is carrying an iron spit holder (see p. 98). In the scene rear left, we see a woman with a huge spoon – commonly the symbol of a housewife – attacking fragments of the Colossus of Constantine – a statue from the fourth century AD that actually stood on the Capitol in the sixteenth century – as a man attempts to stop her.⁴⁸ On the left, three women protest by literally making a clamour using ordinary household objects: a woman in a blue dress shakes a large set of keys; her neighbour in yellow rattles some kind of object, likely an alms box; the third woman beats on a metal frying pan with a spoon, an act starkly contrasting with her diaphanous white gown and bare feet.⁴⁹

Fig. 17
JOHANN THEODOR
DE BRY AFTER
GILLIS VAN BREEN
AFTER KAREL
VAN MANDER,
*Battle of the
Trousers*, 1596.
Engraving,
109 x 86 mm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. RP-P-BI-5214.
From J.T. de Bry
and J.I. de Bry,
*Emblemata
saecularia:
Mira et iucunda
varietate seculi
huius mores ita
experimentia*,
Frankfurt am Main
1596.

Given their numbers, their attitude and weaponry, the women in this painting have clearly come to the Capitol to demand justice.

The combination of women and household objects used as weapons may bring to mind the popular satirical genre of prints and paintings depicting women as harpies. A common theme in late medieval and early modern European visual culture, such satirical imagery was also prevalent in the Netherlands.⁵⁰ One recurring motif was the 'battle for the trousers', represented in one of two ways: the struggle between a husband and wife for power within the marriage (fig. 17); or women fighting among themselves for the 'trousers', i.e. the love of a man (fig. 18).⁵¹ Women in these prints are often shown resorting to household objects as a weapon, like a distaff, a slipper, scissors or tongs. These images belong to the genre of *exempla contraria*, i.e. examples of inappropriate behaviour.⁵² In Isaacsz's painting, however, no evidence of this kind of violence or heavily exaggerated satire occurs.

How people viewed these protesting women in Isaacsz's painting would have greatly depended on their knowledge

of the classics, and of Livy's translation in particular. Only then could the Papirius story be recognized. Even if one possessed this knowledge, however, it would still be difficult to associate the image with the story, given the emphasis on the protesting women and the inconspicuous placement of the boy and senators. Interestingly enough, because of the moment it was painted by Isaacsz, the painting may also have evoked memories of the courageous women who performed heroic deeds during the Eighty Years' War – it was precisely in the final decades of the sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries that their deeds were being celebrated and commemorated in texts, and later also captured in images. Involved in all kinds of military actions during the war, these women resorted to both bona fide weapons and household objects.⁵³ One Haarlem woman, Kenau Simonsdr Hasselaer (1526-1588), reportedly strode to battle as fully armed as any man; in Utrecht, Trijn van Leemput (c. 1530-1607) led a group of women using farm implements as their weapons, a kettle as a drum and a blue apron tied to a mop

Fig. 18
FRANS HOGENBERG
AFTER MONO-
GRAMMIST PSF,
*Battle of the
Trousers*, 1540-90.
Etching and
engraving,
322 x 510 mm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. RP-P-1982-262,
purchased with
the support of the
F.G. Waller-Fonds.



handle as their battle standard (fig. 19). These tales, then, may have resonated with Isaacsz's depiction of the Roman women rising up in revolt.

An Amsterdam Patron

The end of the sixteenth century actually marked the beginning of an explosive increase in paintings centred on mythological and classical stories in the Netherlands. These were mainly smaller-scale works destined for an increasingly broader market of affluent burghers.⁵⁴ Isaacsz's painting of the uprising of the Roman women also falls in this category. With respect to subject and representation, however, the painting diverges from this overall development in two ways. Firstly, Isaacsz's painting centres on a rarely encountered theme, whereas the aforementioned production mostly involved the repetition of a restricted number of themes. By supplying

popular themes available in a smaller format, sales from existing stock were guaranteed, thereby eliminating the need for commissioned works.⁵⁵ A second difference is that Isaacsz has omitted all eroticizing elements, at a time when eroticism and moralizing messages were often part and parcel for classical and mythological subjects.⁵⁶ How, then, does one explain the differences between Isaacsz's later painting and the broader Dutch production of history paintings?

What probably influenced Isaacsz's choices is the involvement of a patron or intended buyer. Van Mander tells us that the Amsterdam painting was owned by Jacob Poppe, one of the richest men in Amsterdam at the onset of the seventeenth century. Having come to Holland as a poor migrant from Holstein, Poppe's father was a co-founder of the *Compagnie van de Verre*, the precursor of the *voc*, by which



Fig. 19
*Trijn van Leemput
 Departs with a
 Group of Women
 Armed with
 Hammers and
 Cleavers for the
 Castle Vredenburg,
 2 May 1577, 1637-39.*
 Etching, 63 x 70 mm.
 Amsterdam,
 Rijksmuseum, inv. no.
 RP-P-OB-79.672.
 From Johan
 van Beverwijck,
*Van de wtnementheyt
 des vrouwelicken
 geslachts*, Dordrecht
 1639.

Fig. 20

ABRAHAM RADEMAKER, *Corporalship of Captain Simon Willem Nooms and Lieutenant Jacob Poppe*, before 1753. Pen and brush in gray, 310 x 200 mm. Detail of the Beudeker Manuscript, *Oudheden van Amstelredamme*. Amsterdam, City Archives, Library, acc. no. 15030, inv. no. 289. Jacob Poppe is shown front row, with his back towards us; Pieter Isaacsz is the man in the background lifting a goblet.



means he made his fortune, among other enterprises.⁵⁷ The son, Jacob Poppe, was a wealthy entrepreneur with political ambitions: a member of the city council, an alderman, a councillor at the Admiralty of Amsterdam, and ultimately the city's burgomaster. Poppe lived in the canal house De Gulden Steur, built for his father on the city's prestigious Kloveniersburgwal. Upon Poppe's death in 1624, he left an unprecedented inheritance of almost one million guilders. During his lifetime, Poppe was one of a relatively small number of wealthy Amsterdam merchants who formed the main clientele for ambitious painters active in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, among them Isaacsz.

According to Van Mander, Poppe in fact owned no fewer than four paintings by Isaacsz. In addition to *Uprising of the Women*, there were three portraits, including one of Poppe himself.⁵⁸ Isaacsz also produced a militia piece of the *Corporalship of Captain Simon Willem Nooms and Lieutenant Jacob Poppe*, dated circa 1603-04, the same period in which he painted *Uprising of the Women*.⁵⁹ This militia piece, of which only a later sketch remains (fig. 20), also featured

Isaacsz himself.⁶⁰ Having previously lived on the Oude Turfmarkt, in July 1602 the artist moved to a large house with studio on the Sint Anthoniesbree-straat, near Poppe's house, De Gulden Steur.⁶¹ As members of the same corporalship within the militia, Poppe and Isaacsz assumed the task of preserving order and tranquillity in their part of the city. This entailed taking action when threatened, not only by outside enemies but also by internal unrest, including popular uprisings. Furthermore, participation in the militia clubs also ensured solidarity, a bond strengthened by communal meals and sharpshooting contests.⁶² From this, we may conclude that Poppe and Isaacsz were quite close.

In all probability, Isaacsz painted *Uprising of the Women* specifically for Poppe. The rarity of the Papius theme in painting and the unique emphasis on the women's uprising make it very unlikely that Isaacsz painted his piece for the open market. At the time of his death, the history piece was still in Poppe's possession, as evidenced by his estate inventory, compiled on 13 April 1627 at the request of his minor children's guardians. The inventory describes the painting as '1 large plate from the commotion

of the women in Rome f. 160:--:--'.⁶³ It was one of the most expensive paintings in the collection, further suggesting that Isaacsz would not have made it for the open market. Remarkably, more than twenty years after Van Mander described the scene, Poppe's relatives and the children's guardians still recognized and identified the painting as the 'revolt of the Roman women' – this, despite the theme's relative obscurity. In contrast, the inventory mentions neither the name of the painter nor that of (the visually rather inconspicuous) Papirius. The painting was purchased by Jan Tegnagel (1584-1635), a painter whose renderings of classical stories also deviated from the norm, for example, by excluding erotic aspects.⁶⁴

On 29 June 1603, Jacob Poppe married the then seventeen-year-old Liefgen Goverts Wuytiers, daughter of Dieuwer Jacobsdr Benningh (1552-1620) and Govert Dircksz Wuytiers (1548-1615), a wealthy textile merchant and regent.⁶⁵ That Poppe likely commissioned the painting for this occasion is corroborated by the fact that Isaacsz is certain to have finished the painting before the end of 1603, when Van Mander is known to have completed his written account. Isaacsz's distinctive representation of the Papirius story heralded the onset of Poppe's changed circumstances: no longer a bachelor, he was now a married man residing in De Gulden Steur. Poppe perhaps knew Papirius's story from his student days, having probably attended one of the two Latin schools in Amsterdam, intended for the sons of wealthy merchant and other prominent families.⁶⁶ Under the influence of humanism, the Latin school had come to be increasingly seen as an important part of a male child's overall cultural development, but also as an important stepping stone in preparation for higher education. During their final year of study, students had an opportunity to read the works

of Roman authors – e.g. Cicero, Livy, Virgil and Caesar – and the writings of the Dutch humanist and philosopher Erasmus. It was perhaps also at this time that students first heard about the story of Papirius. Also tenable, however, is that Poppe learned of the myth's meaning as explained to him by learned acquaintances in his circle, such as Pontanus or Van Mander. His spouse, Liefgen Wuytiers, would not have been able to learn about Roman myths in school – only sons were educated at the Latin school.⁶⁷ Yet even those lacking a classical training would immediately have noted the powerful and heroic women in the painting's foreground, without the slightest evocation of erotic nudity and the male figures all essentially relegated to the margins.

Displayed in Poppe and Wuytiers's canal house, Isaacsz's painting would undoubtedly have functioned as a 'conversation piece', an entertaining spectacle challenging the viewer to identify the multitude of figures and objects, placed in their Roman setting. Yet the work also served to further enhance the Poppe family's prestige.⁶⁸ Marriage was an essential element of the original story, as the women's uprising targeted the practice of bigamy. In representations chiefly intended for princes or members of the (male) administrative elite, the focus was much more on the boy's political virtues and the contrasting rash behaviour of the gullible, hot-tempered women. Those familiar with the Papirius story, among them Pontanus and Van Mander, would certainly have observed the reversal in Isaacsz's telling, where the emphasis lies, not on the virtue of the young senator's son, but on the boy's mother and her fellow female supporters, who, with a collective protest in defence of their marriages, occupy centre stage and gain the upper hand.

Conclusion

Inspired by his Roman period and his brother's knowledge of classical history and culture, Pieter Isaacsz made two paintings of the obscure Papirius story, one vastly different from the other in composition and style. This difference stems partly from the development he experienced as a painter, from his apprenticeship and his ensuing stay in Rome to his success as an established artist in Amsterdam. Another important and certainly influential factor is that the later painting involved a patron, Jacob Poppe, who possibly commissioned the Amsterdam painting in connection with his marriage to Wuytiers. What the two paintings share is that neither conform to the classical Papirius story and its restricted visual tradition, where in both the boy symbolizes the sound and sensible political actions of men and women are disqualified as political actors, often with a didactic function targeting a male elite. This didactic dimension is seemingly absent from Isaacsz's paintings, in which he introduces an entirely different approach to gender relations.

Isaacsz's panel painting in Rome belongs to a broader tradition of painted confrontations between men and women based on classical stories. In this work, women, some of whom are naked, are victimized by male enforcers of the law in highly physical confrontations. In Isaacsz's Amsterdam painting, by contrast, men have a diminished status as extras, while the women take centre stage. When looking at this work, only those possessing a detailed knowledge of the work of Gellius and Macrobius would have associated this uprising with the women's support for biandry and their denouncement of bigamy – for *cognoscenti*, an enticing detail perhaps. Unfortunately, we have no idea whether Wuytiers might have had a say in the artwork's purchase or its making, let alone what her thoughts

were regarding the painting. As the woman of the house, the temporary transfer of power from men to women depicted in the painting, and accordingly, the reversal of the gender order – where women act collectively to achieve a common goal – may have appealed to her.⁶⁹ Perhaps the reality of urban uprisings, certainly present in the mind of militia members such as Poppe and Isaacsz, also played a role in the making of the Rijksmuseum painting: we know that, like women in ancient and early modern Rome, women in the Netherlands frequently took to the streets. They protested against exorbitant taxes, restrictions on property boundaries, and food shortages.⁷⁰ In the Amsterdam *Uprising of the Women*, a highly diverse group of women protests in a streamlined, almost peaceful manner, where order prevails over chaos, self-control over violence; the women are clothed, not naked, often in extravagant attire. As opposed to female vulnerability, prevalent in depictions of the Rape of the Sabines, or female agitation, prevalent in the textual representations of the Papirius story, this painting highlights female strength. Accordingly, Isaacsz's painting in the Rijksmuseum – a possible wedding gift – is a far cry from the original message of the classical Papirius story.

ABSTRACT

The present article analyses the painting *The Uprising of the Women of Rome on the Capitol* by the Dutch-Danish painter Pieter Isaacsz (1569-1625). This work depicts the mythical story of the Roman boy Papirius, who, after attending a meeting of the Roman Senate, lied to his inquisitive mother to safeguard political secrets, falsely telling her that the senators were deliberating the introduction of systematic bigamy. Enraged, his mother then marched to the Capitol, leading a crowd of elite married women in protest. In the (limited) visual tradition of this classical story, it is always the boy – and therefore, the sound and sensible political actions of men – who takes centre stage, set against the foolish and rebellious behaviour of the women. Isaacsz painted this obscure story twice, approximately ten years apart. The paintings differ in composition and style, but especially in the second painting, the women – not Papirius – have assumed the leading role. In *Uprising of the Women*, we see the women entering the Capitol in protest: they are in the foreground, with all men relegated to the margins. Based on an analysis of the literary tradition and representation of the Papirius myth, the painter's sources of inspiration and a comparison of the two paintings, we investigate why Isaacsz chose to place the protesting women in the foreground of his later, Amsterdam painting, thus turning the spotlight on female agency.

NOTES

- * We wish to thank Judith Noorman, Arno Witte, the members of the Onderzoeksgroep Early Modern Mobilities (University of Amsterdam) and peer reviewers for their comments and suggestions. We are also very grateful to Tico Seifert (National Galleries of Scotland), Federico De Martino (Museo di Roma), Giulia De Vivo (Rijksmuseum) and Sabine Wölfel (Graphische Sammlung München) for their assistance. Research for this article was made possible by an nwo Aspasia subsidy.
- 1 The painting was acquired by the Rijksmuseum at Frederik Muller & Co in 1898, from the collection of Gijsbert de Clerq; see Barthold Willem F. van Riemsdijk, *Catalogus der Schilderijen, Miniaturen, Pastels, Omlijste Teekeningen, enz. in het Rijks-Museum te Amsterdam*, Amsterdam 1903, p. 140.
 - 2 Carol Plazzotta, 'Beccafumi's "Story of Papirius" in the National Gallery', *The Burlington Magazine* 143 (2001), no. 1182, pp. 562-66.
 - 3 See the catalogue raisonné in Badeloch Noldus and Juliette Roding (eds.), *Pieter Isaacsz (1568-1625): Court Painter, Art Dealer and Spy*, exh. cat. (Museum of National History at Frederiksberg Castle) 2007, pp. 115, 264, 268, 284-85, cat. nos. 3, 9, 37.
 - 4 Up until 2022, the Museo di Roma attributed this work, without concrete substantiation, to Frans Francken II, see Carlo Pietrangeli, *Il Museo di Roma: documenti e iconografia*, Rome 1971, p. 41. This institution now follows the attribution in the catalogue raisonné. Nothing more is known about this painting's provenance, other than the fact that it was acquired by the *Governatorato di Roma* in 1926.
 - 5 This drawing belonged to the art collector David Laing, who died in 1878, leaving his collection to the Royal Scottish Academy. As communicated by Tico Seifert, curator at the National Galleries of Scotland, based on a letter from curator Mungo Campbell to Eric Domela Nieuwenhuis, 6 January 1994. Isaacsz made other *ricordi*, drawings after earlier made paintings, see Ilja Veldman, 'Pieter Isaacsz and Art on Paper: Drawings and Prints after his Designs', in Noldus and Roding (eds.) 2007 (note 3), pp. 59-73. A drawing after the Rijksmuseum painting, held in the collection of Cornelis Hoogendijk until 1911, appears to have been lost, see Henri Ekhard Greve, *De bronnen van Carel van Mander voor 'Het leven der doornachtighe Nederlandsche en Hoogduytsche schilders'*, The Hague 1903, p. 260; Ulrich Thieme and Felix Becker (eds.), *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler des xx. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 19, Leipzig 1926, p. 231. In 1906, Hoogendijk was placed in a psychiatric institution, at which time his collection was given to the Rijksmuseum on loan. Upon Hoogendijk's death in 1911, part of the collection was donated to the museum. Another part was sold in May 1912 at Frederik Muller & Co; see Jan Frederik Heijbroek and Ester L. Wouthuysen, *Portret van een kunsthandel: De firma Van Wisselingh en zijn compagnons 1838-heden*, Zwolle 1999, pp. 269-70;

- Herbert Henkels, 'Cézanne en Van Gogh in het Rijksmuseum voor Moderne Kunst in Amsterdam: De collectie van Cornelis Hoogendijk (1866-1911)', *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 41 (1993), no. 3/4, pp. 155-287.
- 6 Consulted in translation; see Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights Book 1. xxiii* (translation by J.C. Rolfe), Cambridge 1927 (*Loeb Classical Library*, vol. 195), pp. 104-08.
 - 7 D.W.T. Vessey, 'Aulus Gellius and the Cult of the Past', in Wolfgang Haase (ed.), *Band 34/2. Teilband Sprache und Literatur (Einzelne Autoren seit der hadrianischen Zeit und Allgemeines zur Literatur des 2. und 3. Jahrhunderts [Forts.])*, Berlin 1993, p. 1876.
 - 8 Joanna Kulawiak-Cyrankowska, 'Roman Women Clamoring for Biandry? (Gell., NA 1, 23)', in Maria José Bravo Bosch (ed.), *Feminización y Justicia*, Valencia 2020, pp. 213-17.
 - 9 Emily Hemelrijk, 'Women's Demonstrations in Republican Rome', in Josine Blok and Peter Mason (eds.), *Sexual Asymmetry: Studies in Ancient Society*, Amsterdam 1987, pp. 217-40.
 - 10 *Ibid.*, pp. 217-19.
 - 11 *Ibid.*, pp. 236-37.
 - 12 Titus Liuius, *dat is, de Roemsche historie oft gesten (...) nu eerstmael in onser Nederlantscher spraken ghedruckt*, translated by Joannes Grapheus and Joannes Gymnicus, Antwerp 1541, fol. 88r-88v. This translation contains the first four books of *Ab urbe condita*.
 - 13 John-Mark Philo, 'Livy in the Renaissance', in Marco Sgarbi (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Renaissance Philosophy*, Cham 2022, pp. 1959-60; Susanne Wagini, *Die Geschichte Roms: Leonaert Bramers Illustrationen zu Livius' 'Ab urbe condita'*, Berlin 2013, pp. 18-20.
 - 14 '[d]aer van stont een groote murmuratie op, ende gramschap onder de vrouwen'. Titus Liuius 1541 (note 12), fol. 88v.
 - 15 See for example *De Roomsche historie of gesten*, Leiden 1585, fol. 47v; *De Roomsche historie of gesten*, Leiden 1597, pp. XLIII-XLIX.
 - 16 Macrobius, *Opera*, corrected and translated by Johannes Isacius Pontanus, Leiden 1597. Regarding Pontanus's edition and the many errors it contained, see Stéphanie Lecompte, *La chaîne d'or des poètes: présence de Macrobie dans l'Europe humaniste*, Geneva 2009, chapter 3. It was not until 1644 that Gellius's *Noctes Atticae* appeared in a Dutch edition.
 - 17 Karel van Mander, *Het Schilder-boeck*, Haarlem 1604, fol. 21v; Rik Vos, 'The Life of Lucas van Leyden by Karel van Mander', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 29 (1978), no. 1, pp. 459-507, esp. p. 478; Karel van Mander, *The Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters*, translated and edited by Hessel Miedema, vol. 3, Doornspijk 1994, p. 3.
 - 18 Plazzotta 2001 (note 2).
 - 19 *Ibid.* For Dürer's contribution to the Nuremberg town hall, see Shira Brisman, 'Christoph Jamnitzer's Speechless Defense of the Goldsmith's Strengths', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 83 (2020), no. 3, pp. 385-405. A drawing in the Louvre (inv. no. RF 5624, Recto), before erroneously attributed to Dürer, shows the same scene.
 - 20 Plazzotta 2001 (note 2).
 - 21 Inemie Gerards-Nelissen, 'Otto van Veen's Emblemata Horatiana', *Simiolus* 5 (1971), no. 1/2, pp. 20-63; Karl A.E. Enenkel, *The Invention of the Emblem Book and the Transmission of Knowledge, ca. 1510-1610*, Leiden 2019, pp. 365-43.
 - 22 Edith Appleton Standen, 'The Twelve Ages of Man', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 12, no. 8 (1954), pp. 241-48.
 - 23 Guy Delmarcel, *Het Vlaamse wandtapijt van de 15de tot de 18de eeuw*, Tiel 1999, p. 150; Guy Delmarcel, *Los Honores: Vlaamse wandtapijten voor Keizer Karel v*, Antwerp 2000.
 - 24 Plazzotta 2001 (note 2), pp. 562-66.
 - 25 Noldus and Roding (eds.) 2007 (note 3), pp. 9-11; Juliette Roding and Marja Stompé, Pieter Isaacsz (1569-1625): *Een Nederlandse schilder, kunsthandelaar en diplomaat aan het Deense hof*, Hilversum 1997, p. 11; Eliška Fučíková, 'Towards a Reconstruction of Pieter Isaacsz's Early Career', in Görel Cavalli-Björkman (ed.), *Netherlandish Mannerism: Papers Given at a Symposium in Nationalmuseum Stockholm, September 21-22, 1984*, Stockholm 1985, pp. 165-75, esp. pp. 166-68. For an early study, see N. de Roever, 'Drie Amsterdamsche schilders (Pieter Isaacsz, Abraham Vinck, Cornelis van der Voort)', *Oud Holland* 3 (1885), pp. 171-208. Also Abraham Bredius, *Künstler-Inventare: Urkunden zur Geschichte der holländischen Kunst des xviten, xviiiten und xviiiiten Jahrhunderts*, vol. 5, The Hague 1918, pp. 1473-79 and vol. 7, The Hague 1921, pp. 128-36; Thieme and Becker 1926 (note 5), pp. 231-32; *Saur allgemeines Künstlerlexikon: die bildenden Künstler aller Zeiten und Völker*, vol. 76, Berlin 2013.
 - 26 Van Mander 1604 (note 17), fol. 289-291; Van Mander (Miedema 1994, note 17), fol. 290v-291v, pp. 259-63. See To Schulting,

- 'Pieter Isaacsz, Pupil of the "Artistic, Sensible Mr. Cornelis Ketel"', in Noldus and Roding (eds.) 2007 (note 3), pp. 31-42, esp. pp. 34-35, and Heiner Borggreffe, 'Pieter Isaacsz in the Company of Hans von Aachen', in *ibid.*, pp. 43-57; Roding and Stompé 1997 (note 25), pp. 9-11.
- 27 Fučíková 1985 (note 25), pp. 166-68; Borggreffe 2007 (note 26), p. 46; Roding and Stompé 1997 (note 25), p. 11.
- 28 Roding and Stompé 1997 (note 25), pp. 9-11; Eric Domela Nieuwenhuis, 'A Matter of Style: Characterizing Pieter Isaacsz as a Painter', in Noldus and Roding (eds.) 2007 (note 3), pp. 115-30, esp. p. 116; Borggreffe 2007 (note 26), p. 47.
- 29 In the year 1593, according to *Saur* 2013 (note 25).
- 30 Borggreffe 2007 (note 26), p. 47; Noldus and Roding (eds.) 2007 (note 3), pp. 284-85, no. 37.
- 31 Borggreffe 2007 (note 26), pp. 47-49; Fučíková 1985 (note 25), p. 169, fig. 9.
- 32 'nae t'leven'. Van Mander 1604 (note 17), fol. 291r.
- 33 See Borggreffe 2007 (note 26). In the artwork's description on the inventory card, the Museo di Roma provides more details concerning both the authentic and fantastical elements van Isaacsz's Capitol.
- 34 Emmanuel Pierre Rodocanachi, *The Roman Capitol in Ancient and Modern Times: The Citadel - the Temples - the Senatorial Palace - the Palace of the Conservators - the Museum*, London 1906, pp. 72-73.
- 35 Borggreffe 2007 (note 26), p. 47.
- 36 *Ibid.* For Pontanus, see also Eco O.G. Haitsma Mulier, Anton van der Lem and Paul Knevel (eds.), *Repertorium van geschiedschrijvers in Nederland 1500-1800*, Leiden 2009, no. 387, pp. 333-36.
- 37 For protests during the 'sede vacante', see Laurie Nussdorfer, 'The Vacant See: Ritual and Protest in Early Modern Rome', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 18 (1987), no. 2, pp. 173-89; John M. Hunt, *The Vacant See in Early Modern Rome: A Social History of the Papal Interregnum*, Leiden 2016, pp. 124-25.
- 38 Hunt 2016 (note 37), pp. 178-79, 189-90.
- 39 Another early example is Andrea Andreani, *The Rape of the Sabines*, 1585, woodcut in three sections, 93.6 x 74.6/75.6 cm, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. nos. 22.733-73, 74 and 75. In his treatise on art (1584), Giovanni Lomazzo suggested emphasizing nudity, torn clothing and 'lively' depicted bodies when painting the Sabine women.
- 40 This was a popular subject on fifteenth-century *cassoni* (marriage chests) in Italy, which art historians interpret as a warning given to a bride, that she obey her husband. See Silvia Tomasi Velli, 'L'iconografia del "Ratto delle Sabine": Un'indagine storica', *Prospettiva* 63 (1991), pp. 17-39; Yael Even, 'On the Art and Life of Collective Sexual Violence in Renaissance Italy', *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 23 (2004), no. 4, pp. 7-14.
- 41 Roding and Stompé 1997 (note 25), p. 15; De Roever 1885 (note 25), pp. 174-76.
- 42 Roding and Stompé 1997 (note 25), pp. 11-18; Domela Nieuwenhuis 2007 (note 28), pp. 117-18.
- 43 Veldman 2007 (note 5), pp. 63-64.
- 44 Borggreffe 2007 (note 26), pp. 51-53; Domela Nieuwenhuis 2007 (note 28), pp. 121-24.
- 45 Bianca M. du Mortier, "'...Hier sietmen Vrouwen van alderley Natiën...'" *Kostuumboeken bron voor de schilderkunst?*, *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 39 (1991), no. 4, pp. 401-13. Isaacsz's sojourn in Venice also likely played a role: Isaacsz's earlier *Allegory on Vanity* (1600; Basel, Kunstmuseum, inv. no. 370; Noldus and Roding (eds.) 2007 (note 3), no. 8) paraphrases Titian's *Venus and the Lute Player* (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, inv. no. 129), with in the background a scene containing a group of men dressed in Venetian and Ottoman attire, possibly inspired by the prints of the engraver Giacomo Franco (1550-1620).
- 46 Isabel Horovitz, 'The Materials and Techniques of European Paintings on Copper Supports', in Michael K. Komanecky (ed.), *Copper as Canvas: Two Centuries of Masterpiece Paintings on Copper, 1575-1775*, New York 1999, pp. 63-92.
- 47 'een seer aerdigh stuck op coper, wesende d'Historie, daer de Roomsche Vrouwen op t'Capitolium comen, en ooploof maken'. Van Mander 1604 (note 17), fol. 291r.
- 48 In the sixteenth century, fragments of this statue, including the head and foot, indeed stood on the Capitol, near the Palazzo dei Conservatori, shown on the right side of the painting. These fragments today form part of the collection of the Capitoline Museums.
- 49 Our thanks to archaeologist Roos van Oosten (Leiden University) for assisting with the identification of the various objects.
- 50 Lène Dresen-Coenders, 'De strijd om de broek: De verhouding man/vrouw in het begin van de moderne tijd (1450-1630)', *De Revisor* 4 (1977), pp. 29-37; Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, 'La lutte pour la culotte, un topos iconographique des rapports conjugaux (xve-xixe siècles)', *Clio*:

- Femmes, Genre, Histoire* 34 (2011), pp. 203-18; Martha Moffitt Peacock, *Heroines, Harpies, and Housewives: Imaging Women of Consequence in the Dutch Golden Age*, Leiden 2020.
- 51 The caption accompanying epigram reads: 'Tis groot cruys int huis/ al waer vreucht in den hoeck sneefft/ Daert' Wyff vol gekyff een Been dus in die Broeck he(e)ffft' (The house bears a heavy cross/with joy dying in the corner/when the quarrelsome wife already has one leg in the trousers). For this theme, see Eddy de Jongh and Ger Luijten, *Spiegel van alledag: Nederlandse genreprenten 1550-1700*, Amsterdam 1997, pp. 137-39; Dresen-Coenders 1977 (note 50).
- 52 Moffitt Peacock 2020 (note 50), pp. 245-66.
- 53 Moffitt Peacock 2020 (note 50), pp. 45-104; Marten Jan Bok, 'Heldhaftige vrouwen', *Kunstschrift* 91 (1991), no. 2, pp. 7-8.
- 54 Eric Jan Sluijter, 'Depictions of Mythological Themes', in Albert Blankert (ed.), *Gods, Saints and Heroes: Dutch Painting in the Age of Rembrandt*, exh. cat. Washington (The National Gallery of Art)/Detroit (The Detroit Institute of Arts)/Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) 1980, pp. 55-65, and idem, *De 'heydensche fabulen' in de Noordnederlandse schilderkunst, circa 1590-1670: Een proeve van beschrijving en interpretatie van verhalende onderwerpen uit de klassieke mythologie*, Leiden (diss. Leiden University) 1986.
- 55 Eric Jan Sluijter, 'Prestige and Emulation, Eroticism and Morality: Mythology and the Nude in Dutch Art of the 16th and 17th Century', in Peter Schoon and Sander Paarlberg (eds.), *Greek Gods and Heroes in the Age of Rubens and Rembrandt*, exh. cat. Athens (National Gallery/Alexandros Soutzos Museum)/Dordrecht (Dordrechts Museum) 2000, pp. 35-63, esp. pp. 43-45. Angela Jager, *The Mass Market for History Paintings in Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam: Production, Distribution and Consumption*, Amsterdam 2020.
- 56 Eric Jan Sluijter, *Seductress of Sight: Studies in Dutch Art of the Golden Age*, Zwolle 2000, p. 69.
- 57 Johannes Gerard van Dillen, *Het oudste aandeelhoudersregister van de Kamer Amsterdam der Oost-Indische Compagnie*, The Hague 1958 (*Werken uitgegeven door de vereniging Het Nederlandsch Economisch-Historisch Archief*, vol. 14), pp. 6-7, 108. Jan Poppe first lived on the Warmoesstraat, in 1568; in 1601, he resided in De Gulden Steur on the Zeedijk. He later had a house built on the Kloveniersburgwal (then called the 'Ververijen'). The 'Poppenhuis' (doll house), which stands today in the same location, was built by Poppe's grandson in 1642.
- 58 Van Mander 1604 (note 17), fol. 290v-291r. The individuals portrayed in the other three portraits are unknown; none of these three portraits are known to have survived.
- 59 Roding and Stompé 1997 (note 25), p. 17.
- 60 This probably concerns district XI. Circa 1600, Amsterdam was divided into eleven militia districts; see Marc Hameleers, *Gedetailleerde kaarten van Amsterdam: Productie en gebruik van grootschalige, topografische kaarten*, Bussum/Amsterdam 2015, pp. 30-32. Roding and Stompé 1997 (note 25), p. 17, name district II, but this was in another part of the city. For the stylistic analysis of this and other militia pieces by Isaacsz, see Roding and Stompé 1997 (note 25), pp. 16-17; Norbert E. Middelkoop, 'Pieter Isaacsz's Militia Piece *Company of Captain Jacob Gerritsz Hoynghe and Lieutenant Appelman*', in Noldus and Roding (eds.) 2007 (note 3), pp. 93-99.
- 61 For the homes of Pieter Isaacsz, see S.A.C. (Bas) Dudok van Heel, 'The Birth of an Artists' Quarter: Pieter Isaacsz Amsterdam Years', in Noldus and Roding (eds.) 2007 (note 3), pp. 75-92, esp. pp. 81-82. After Isaacsz moved to Denmark, the house was rented to the painter Jan Tegnagel.
- 62 Paul Knevel, *Burgers in het geweer: De schutterijen van Holland, 1550-1700*, Hilversum 1994.
- 63 'I copere plaet van de commotie van den vrouwen tot Romen f. 160:--:--'. For this inventory, see <https://research.frick.org/montias/details/292> (Montias Database of 17th-Century Dutch Art Inventories, inventory no. 292 (Stadsarchief Amsterdam), lot no. 24).
- 64 For example, Pomona is entirely clothed in Jan Tegnagel's *Vertumnus and Pomona* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-4699); see Sluijter 2000 (note 55), pp. 78-80.
- 65 Roding and Stompé 1997 (note 25), p. 20.
- 66 Marieke van Doorninck and Erika Kuijpers, *De geschoolde stad: Onderwijs in Amsterdam in de Gouden Eeuw*, Amsterdam 1993, pp. 63-65.
- 67 *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- 68 Bok 1991 (note 53), p. 8.
- 69 Plazzotta 2001 (note 2), p. 566.
- 70 Rudolf M. Dekker, 'Women in Revolt: Popular Protest and Its Social Basis in Holland in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *Theory and Society* 16 (1987), no. 3, pp. 337-62.