The Self-Promotion of a Libertine Bad Boy:
Hadriaan Beverland’s *Portrait with a Prostitute* in the Rijksmuseum

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The Rijksmuseum has the art historian François Gérard Waller (1867-1934) to thank for more than fifty thousand prints and drawings; some donated during his lifetime, some bequeathed by him and, since 1938, many purchased with money from the fund that bears his name. The museum also holds a number of paintings from his collection, including a panel portrait in *brunaillé* of the Dutch classics scholar and infamous erotomaniac Hadriaan Beverland (1650-1716; fig. 1), notorious for his banishment from the Dutch Republic because of his scandalous writings. The identification of the sitter is indisputable. Beverland’s name is on the portrait and on prints reproducing the painting. This remarkable panel shows the eccentric libertine with a glass of wine and a pipe, sitting at a table with a prostitute – a confrontational likeness. Why did this young humanist broadcast this provocative image of himself? And the panel in the Rijksmuseum is not the only unusual portrait Beverland commissioned. In London – where he settled after he was banished – Beverland ordered a portrait print in which he is seen drawing the naked back of a sensual statue of Venus (fig. 13). While most people in the seventeenth century put forward their best side in their portraits, Beverland presented himself surrounded by attributes of a rather ambiguous nature. Why did he deliberately push the moral boundaries in these portraits? And did he do this in all his portraits? In this article we analyse the *Portrait of Hadriaan Beverland with a Prostitute*, investigate what lay behind Beverland’s extraordinary manner of self-promotion, and argue that the portrait was the starting point of a calculated campaign of portraits with which Beverland endeavoured to control his reputation.

**Beverland and his Banishment**

Hadriaan (also known as Adrian, Adriaan, Adriaen or Hadrianus) Beverland was born in Middelburg in 1650. After finishing Latin school at the age of eighteen, he left Zeeland to study at the universities of Franeker, Leiden, Utrecht and Oxford. He read philosophy and literature and in 1677 gained a doctorate in law. His reputation as an extraordinarily intelligent and ambitious student, with an incredible command of Latin and extensive knowledge of classical literature, brought him into contact with the most eminent scholars of his day, among them Nicolaas Heinsius (1621-1681), Jacobus Gronovius (1645-1716) and Isaac Vossius (1618-1689). This group, which Beverland called the *Initiati*, constantly shared ideas and commented on one another’s manuscripts.

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**Fig. 1**

ARY DE VOIS,
*Portrait of Hadriaan Beverland with a Prostitute*, 1676.
Oil on panel, 35 x 27.5 cm.
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-3237.
F.G. Waller Bequest, Amsterdam.
At a very early stage, Beverland's research focused on a single subject: sexuality. The subject was still taboo in the 'tolerant' Dutch Republic, even in humanist scholarly circles. As a true libertine, Beverland placed 'naturalness' and genuineness above restriction and hypocrisy. In his studies he aimed to criticize his fellow humanist scholars' repressive attitude to sexuality, and the negative view of sexuality in contemporary Christian society. He was convinced that sexual desire predominated in all people and in all eras, using a traditional philosophical approach to adduce the proof of his theory. With a rigorously critical eye, Beverland searched for obscene quotations (censored by his predecessors) and for more veiled passages with layers of suggestive erotic meaning. He garnered these quotes from the classics and from more modern publications, historical and Christian writings. He wanted to present his finds in a three-volume corpus magnus, to be titled De Prostibulis Veterum (On the Prostitution of the Classics). He most probably began compiling the material for this book in the spring of 1678, but it was never published.

Beverland had decided to publish his planned chapter on lust and original sin separately. Three editions of his De Peccato Originali (On Original Sin) were published in 1678 and 1679. In this work he argued that the Bible story of Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden should be read as an allegory, not taken literally. The first humans did not eat fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they had sexual intercourse for the first time. Beverland contended that sexual desire was the original sin with which God had burdened mankind for all eternity. This book did not achieve the response he had hoped for. The combination of Beverland's perverse libertine image, his impious subject of study, his criticism of the work of generations of theologians and scholars, and his critical reading of the Bible were too provocative in the eyes of both religious and secular authorities in the Republic. Even the Initiati no longer wished to be associated with him and his arguments.

On 26 October 1679 Beverland was arrested in Leiden, where he had enrolled again as a student after obtaining his doctorate. He was locked up in the students' prison at the university, awaiting the verdict. When it came, the sentence pronounced by the Academic Tribunal of Leiden University on 25 November was harsh. He was expelled from the university and fined. His book was banned, he was compelled to surrender his notes for his as yet incomplete De Prostibulis Veterum and had to swear never to publish a scandalous treatise again. But the most severe punishment of all was that Beverland was banished from the provinces of Holland, Zeeland and West Friesland. His reputation was in tatters. He was now a convicted immoral heretic, who had to watch his step even in the provinces from which he had not been banished. After his imprisonment he sought refuge in Utrecht for a short time, but in March 1680 he emigrated to England.

In England, Beverland again managed to mix in eminent intellectual circles. He was received by celebrated collectors like Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753) and Sir William Courten (1642-1702) and worked as book agent for the famous humanist Isaac Vossius (1618-1689). He was also in touch with Constantijn Huygens Jr (1628-1697), secretary to King William III. Beverland's name appears several times in Huygens's diary, in which he kept a record of his daily meetings with courtiers and other London notables. Beverland dealt in valuable books and curiosities for the virtuoso collectors in London, and also possessed a considerable collection of his own. His private holdings included a great many books, paintings, coins,
the restoration of Rembrandt’s Syndics

The Scene Unravelled

The portrait (fig. 1) shows the Middelburg-born classicist in a carefully staged setting. Several elements stand out, beginning with Beverland himself. The confident student dominates the left-hand side of the panel. With absolute self-assurance he relaxes in a chair, his challenging gaze directed unflinchingly at the viewer. Dressed in the very latest fashion, he wears a modish allonge wig in Louis XIV style, with large curls falling over the shoulders. The gleaming garment he wears is a ‘Japanese robe’ or ‘banyan’. This casual housecoat (silk in this case, but also made in cotton and linen) – modelled on the original Japanese kimono – had been informal wear for men and students in the Republic and beyond since the first decades of the

shells, drawings and prints,12 but at times when his finances were at a low ebb he was obliged to part with large sections of his collections in order to make ends meet. The last decades of his life were marked by a mental decline. Beverland became paranoid. He no longer trusted anyone and wrote at length of his fear of murderous plots.13 He published several of his paranoid flights of fancy before his death in 1716.14

Attribution and Date of the Portrait

Although the Portrait of Hadriaan Beverland with a Prostitute (fig. 1) was attributed in the past to the famous portraitist Caspar Netscher (1639-1684), the work can be attributed with certainty to the Leiden artist Ary de Vois (c. 1632/35-1680).15 An attribution on stylistic grounds is supported by inscriptions on prints that reproduce the painting. An engraving by the printmaker Johannes Willemsz Munnickhuysen (c. 1654/55-1701/21; fig. 2) makes it possible to date De Vois’s painting. The inscription on the print records that Beverland was twenty-six when he sat for De Vois. That would mean that the painting was made in 1676, when Ary de Vois was active again in Leiden. Between 1670 and 1673 he lived for a while in Warmond, where according to the artists’ biographer Arnold Houbraken he filled his days fishing, not painting. In 1673 he returned to Leiden and started painting again.16 At some point the twenty-six-year-old Beverland, who was still a popular figure at Leiden University in 1676, must have decided to have his likeness recorded by De Vois, whose oeuvre largely consisted of portraits and genre scenes with peasant types smoking and drinking.17

Fig. 2

JOHANNES WILLEMSZ MUNNICKHUYSEN,
Portrait of Hadriaan Beverland, c. 1676-80.
Engraving, 258 x 159 mm. Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-P-1885-A-9449.
seventeenth century. A century later, this oriental garment was still extremely popular among a specific group of students in Leiden, as we see from a ban imposed on the wearing of banyans to church during the centennial celebrations of the University of Leiden in 1725.

From 1675 onwards Beverland could certainly afford an expensive outfit like this, for he came into the estate of his deceased parents when he turned twenty-five. With the considerable sum of more than 2,100 pounds he lived an opulent student life. In later notes for pamphlets in which Beverland looks back on his early years, we read that he already attached great importance to fine clothes before 1675, to the immense frustration of his guardians. Beverland proudly writes that he was always better dressed than his friends and fellow students. To achieve this he had put his guardians to great expense. They had to come up with two hundred pounds to pay the eighteen-year-old Beverland’s debts to tailors and other tradesmen.

On the table there is a glass of wine on a silver tray. In the seventeenth century, as they still are today, drinking and studying were inextricably linked. Drinking wine and beer was regarded as an essential part of a student’s education. In the time-honoured tradition of the ancient Greek symposia, students and professors regularly came together to converse, debate and drink. This ritual for expanding the mind was encouraged by an exemption from tax on alcohol for students and professors. But there were also voices preaching moderation in publications examining the harmful consequences of excessive alcohol consumption.

No extravagant reports of Beverland’s drinking habits have survived from his student days, but considering that he lived among students and professors (whom he sometimes referred to in his letters as his ‘drinking companions’) we may safely assume that he enjoyed the odd glass now and again. It is only in correspondence dating from after the month he spent in a cell that we read more often about his consumption of alcohol and drunkenness; some letters actually seem to have been written in a state of inebriation.

Beverland balances a long pipe between his fingers. There are countless images of smoking attributes and figures smoking in Golden Age still lifes and genre works. Generally speaking, we more often see short pipes in the hands of coarse types, whereas long, slender pipes are used by smokers from better backgrounds. The only type of portrait in which we not infrequently encounter a pipe is the artist’s portrait, with likenesses of often anonymous painters or self-portraits, and we have
to interpret the action of smoking as a ‘stimulus to the creative powers brought about by the use of tobacco’. The rebellious libertine Beverland liked nothing better than being provocative and so he chose to be recorded for posterity holding a long, thin-stemmed pipe.

Pipes and wine glasses often feature in late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century genre scenes featuring students. In The Gambler (fig. 3, formerly also known as The Foolhardy Student or The Jolly Drinker) by Jan van Mieris (1660-1690), a young man in expensive clothes holds up a long pipe. Before him stands a glass of wine and he gestures towards the pack of cards and the dice on the table as he looks cheerfully at the viewer. Although there are no academic attributes in view, Allard de la Court, son of the man who commissioned this panel, Pieter de la Court, described it thus: ‘1 foolhardy student with 1 trictrac board and pipe &c … painted for my father, cost f 50.’ We also find a tipsy student with a glass of wine and a pipe in Ary de Vois’s oeuvre. This extravagantly clad Dissolute Student (fig. 4) – who bears a striking resemblance to our young erotomaniac – sits in front of a bookcase and drapery that are very reminiscent of those in the background to the Portrait of Hadriaan Beverland with a Prostitute in the Rijksmuseum. In genre scenes like these, tobacco and wine symbolize fugitive pleasures, since the effect of these stimulants is always short-lived. But if we assume on the basis of these attributes that De Vois’s portrait of Beverland is simply a picture of a student, we do the painting an injustice.

The most curious element in the picture is the woman at Beverland’s side. She is unmistakably a lady of easy virtue. Her shift is unlaced, exposing her breasts. With her right hand she...
playfully beckons Beverland to come closer, as if she is inviting him to disappear with her behind the curtain draped in the background. She is a true temptress, like the women in windows in seventeenth-century genre prints and paintings. There is a nice visual parallel, for instance, with Woman at a Window by Thomas van der Wilt (1659-1733; fig. 5). It is evident that the woman beside Beverland belongs to a more expensive class of prostitute than a whore who made her money on the streets. We do not find prostitutes in any other early modern portrait. Her presence was a very radical choice. Like the pipe and the glass, she is an attribute that reveals something about Beverland. Her profession is an obvious allusion to the title of Beverland’s erotic corpus, on which she rests her hand. Like a muse, she sits at the table by Beverland and inspires him in his erotic studies.

By presenting himself in a portrait as a smoking and drinking student with a prostitute by his side, Beverland was not only making fun of prevailing conventions in portraiture, he was also running counter to generally accepted notions of honour and scandal that were very important in the day-to-day life of the Republic. As the lawyer Simon van Leeuwen (1627-1682) put it: ‘Nothing in life is more valuable than honour and the good opinion that others have of us.’ Honour and a good name were crucial to someone’s social standing and tied up with personal social, economic and religious well-being. When someone’s honour was impugned by word or deed (for instance in a public quarrel or through the spreading of slanderous gossip), a case could be brought to obtain a formal apology and restore honour (an amende honorable). In towns and cities, district officers could pronounce a semi-official verdict to settle such affairs of honour. By having his portrait painted with a dissolute lightskirt, Beverland shattered the prevailing codes of honour. His urge to provoke was evidently stronger than his desire to protect his reputation.

And yet there are details in the Portrait of Hadriaan Beverland with a Prostitute that lend our classicist something of a respectable air. When the portrait was painted, Beverland had not yet been prosecuted for his immoral writings. Still in high spirits, he was working on his major thesis on sexuality, which lies open on the table in the portrait. Beverland’s name and the title de Prostibulis Veterum are conspicuous on the edge of the book. Rather prematurely, his erotic thesaurus is presented here as a finished book, but because of his criminal prosecution it was never actually published. His De Prostibulis Veterum is not the only book in the portrait, however. In the background is a well-filled bookcase, half concealed behind a curtain. Beverland’s library, with a great many editions of classical authors and a
Blaeu Atlas, was his pride and joy. In the portrait the books represent Beverland’s interest in the classics and humanist literature. Their presence puts the picture firmly into the tradition of the scholar’s portrait. The *Portrait of Anthonie van Leeuwenhoek* by Jan Verkolje I (1650-1693) is a typical example (fig. 6). The portrait shows the Delft physicist (famous among other things for his microscopy research into spermatozoids) sitting at a writing table with a compass and a globe. On the table, prominently displayed, is the deed of his admission as a member of the Royal Society in London. Attaining such an important professional milestone was the ideal occasion for a new portrait. In Beverland’s portrait, however, the situation is quite different. Although he proudly parades his passion for his research into sexuality and his knowledge of world literature, at the time this portrait was painted he had not yet achieved very much and had not published anything. The subject of his studies and the calculated depiction of them were moreover extraordinarily provocative.

Ary de Vois’s *Portrait of Hadriaan Beverland with a Prostitute* finds an interesting middle way between a portrait of an irresponsible student and that of an accomplished scholar. It is an intriguing ego document by the ambitious young Beverland. In the light of his prosecution three years later, the portrait is at the same time an ironic example of the pride that comes before a fall.

**Preliminary Study for a Frontispiece**

The portrait of Beverland is De Vois’s only known work painted as a *brunaille*—executed entirely in shades of brown with white highlights. Overall, there are very few portraits executed in monochrome like this one. In most cases, it is obvious that those
that are have a dual function – as works of art in their own right on the one hand, and as preliminary studies for portrait prints on the other. Among the best known are the ‘thirty seven pictures in grisaille done by Vandike after the life, of the most eminent men of his time, from which the plates were graven’. These were preliminary studies for portrait etchings in Anthony van Dyck’s large series known as the Iconography. Another well-known example is the self-portrait of Samuel van Hoogstraten (1627-1678; fig. 7) in Huis Van Gijn in Dordrecht. This modest panel was the model for the frontispiece in the second edition of Van Hoogstraten’s *Inleyding tot de Hooghe Schoole der Schilderkonst* (Introduction to the High School of the Art of Painting) published in 1678 (fig. 8). The technique and the small dimensions of the panel De Vois used would seem to imply that the *Portrait of Hadriaan Beverland with a Prostitute* was likewise originally intended as a preliminary study for a print.

The idea that Beverland really did intend to publish his portrait as a print and use it as the frontispiece to his planned erotological corpus *De Prostibulis Veterum* is confirmed by François Halma’s account in his
Tooneel der Vereenigde Nederlanden of 1725. After he was banished, Beverland briefly sought refuge in Utrecht. Halma describes how the students in Utrecht had adored the exile and welcomed him as a hero. They gathered in a circle around him in the city’s taverns, where — fuelled by the inevitable drink — Beverland regaled them with lewd passages from his banned De Prostibulis Veterum. Halma writes that Beverland ‘had kept the title drawing of this work, being a Temple of Venus, or interior of a Brothel, full of lewd gestures, in which he himself sat in the foreground with a whore on his lap; which drawing he frequently showed to his confidants with titillating pleasure’.

Although Halma’s description of the scene reflects the distortion of oral tradition over the years, it is virtually certain that this is a description of De Vois’s painted panel. Shortly before he went to Utrecht, Beverland was severely punished for his obscene writings and the sullying of ‘Christian youth’ they had caused. And yet he delighted in showing his lewd portrait to the young men of Utrecht with the express intention of titillating them. It must have been precisely this effect that Beverland also had in mind for the opening of his De Prostibulis Veterum. The job
of a frontispiece, after all, is to pique readers’ curiosity about the content of the book. His contemporaries’ scholarly publications usually opened with a historical scene, an allegory or a portrait of the author. Beverland’s choice of a portrait print with appropriate attributes is consequently conventional, but the addition of the prostitute makes it highly provocative. Although we also encounter ladies of easy virtue on the frontispieces of late seventeenth-century pornographic novels, Beverland’s portrait is an order of magnitude more provocative. A good example is the print on the title page of ‘t Amsterdamsch Hoerdom of 1681 (fig. 9). Here prostitution is depicted as the devil’s work. It shows two men, chained by a devil, who crawl through the dust at a prostitute’s feet. A second devil stands arm in arm with the light-skirt and together they stand on the necks of the two grovelling men. Although there is a prostitute in this scene, it conveys a very strong moral. There is no moralizing element whatsoever in Beverland’s portrait. Beverland manifestly wanted to push the boundaries and break taboos not just with the content of his erotological corpus but with his frontispiece, too. Regrettably it never reached that stage, so we can only speculate about the influence Beverland’s De ProstibulisVeterum and his remarkable author’s portrait might have had.

Self-Promotion with Portraits
After this first portrait, Beverland commissioned at least four more. Carefully selected attributes give each one a character of its own, and each presents a different side of Beverland – a side he wanted to show off at that moment.

A Serious Scholar
His unconventional area of study notwithstanding, Beverland had real academic ambitions. The portrait engraving by Johannes Willemisz Munnickhuysen referred to above (fig. 2) shows a serious Beverland, entirely in line with other seventeenth-century portrait prints of authors and scholars. The print simply reproduces Beverland’s bust from De Vois’s painting. All the suggestive attributes have been omitted. What we do still see is his voluminous periwig and a detail of his banyan. Viewers unfamiliar with Beverland’s past or De Vois’s original portrait would not have suspected that the serious man in this portrait had a reputation as an ‘arch exponent of the very vilest depravities’. It is striking that Beverland’s face is exactly the same size in the engraving and the painting. The copy is literally one-to-one. This means that Munnickhuysen had access to the panel by De Vois, suggesting that Beverland most probably commissioned the engraving himself. There is no information, however, about precisely where and when the print was made. In 1672 Munnickhuysen went to London with his teacher Abraham Blooteling (1634-1690). The contract Munnickhuysen’s mother had drawn up for this apprenticeship ran for three years. During this
period Blooteling would teach her son the tricks of the trade and provide board and lodging, and see to the passage home. A document dated 1701 is the earliest evidence of Munnickhuysen’s return to Amsterdam. We do not know exactly when he came back. If he returned early, he must have engraved Beverland’s portrait before the latter left for England, but if Munnickhuysen remained in London after his contract came to an end, he could have made Beverland’s portrait there. Beverland’s personal circumstances before his arrest were obviously rather different from the position he subsequently found himself in in England. Since we do not know exactly where and when the print was made, we can only guess at what its specific function might have been.

The fairly standard oval frame with laurel leaves and berries appears elsewhere in Munnickhuysen’s oeuvre. Other prestigious authors’ portraits he made, like the ones of Jan de Wys (fl. 1680) and Petrus Suerendonck (c. 1622/33-1696), are contained in similar decorative borders and are part of a series. However, Beverland is not an obvious figure to feature in a series of notables. It would certainly not have been normal practice to add a portrait to a series on one’s own initiative. Tellingly, though, none of the other portrait prints Munnickhuysen made are exactly the same size as his likeness of the banished erotomaniac. In other words, Beverland’s picture was probably not part of a series. A function as a stand-alone portrait of an author is more credible. Portrait prints of writers were a popular product in the seventeenth century. Given their standard size, the prints could easily be added to a book, either by the publisher or by the reader himself. In terms of its dimensions, Beverland’s portrait fits in a quarto binding, but there is no known volume of Beverland’s work to which the portrait has been added.

**A Bad Boy in London**

Some ten years after Ary de Vois painted his portrait of Beverland, the London printmaker and publisher Isaac Beckett (c. 1653-1688) made a mezzotint after the controversial painting (fig. 10). Beverland probably commissioned it himself and still had the painting in his possession. The mezzotint reproduces the whole of the painting in mirror image; the only difference is that the title *de Prostibulis Veterum* has vanished from the edge of the book. Strangely, Beverland’s name does not appear on any of the four known states of Beckett’s print, although the title *Peccatum Originale* is printed in the bottom margin of the third state. Beverland deliberately thrust his libertine bad boy image under the world’s nose again. But why? Might he have had a reissue of his *Peccatum Originale* in mind? It seems more likely to have been a shrewd attempt to raise his profile. The absence of his name could imply that Beverland himself had commissioned a small run of the portrait print so that he could distribute it – as a sort of visiting card – among his connections. Had the making of the print been initiated by Beckett with a view to a wide distribution, Beverland’s name would certainly have graced the lower margin. In the estate inventories of collectors among Beverland’s contemporaries, Samuel Pepys (1633-1703), Alexander Browne (d. 1706) and William Courten (1642-1702) among them, portrait prints of Beverland were clearly listed with his name. The owners of these prints (particularly given the addition of the title *Peccatum Originale*) would have had absolutely no doubt about the identity of the sitter.

A fascinating twist is that in the much later fourth state of this print – issued by the London publisher and print dealer Samuel Lyne (fl. 1741-48), who got hold of the plate after Beckett – the inscription has been filled in. The title
Peccatum Originale remains. But it is followed by the words John Earl of Rochester aged 33 years and This was She./ That first Pluck’d Fruit from the Forbidden Tree./ Satyr on Women. Lyne reused Beverland’s likeness as a portrait of another eccentric celebrity, the English bad boy John Wilmot, 2nd Earl of Rochester (1647-1680). This notorious poet and satirist at the court of King Charles II (1630-1685), was known for his erotic poetry. Portraits of the earl most often show him in a voluminous periwig wearing a gleaming satin robe and a lace jabot. His most famous portrait (fig. 11) presents him standing, with a manuscript and a
small laurel wreath in his hands. He
dangles the wreath over the head of a
monkey, which offers him a crumpled
page it has just torn out of a book. In
seventeenth-century painting, monkeys
usually symbolized sensuality and
lewdness, and this one alludes to both
the erotic poems and the dissolute
lifestyle of this famous libertine court-
ier. The portrait of Beverland with a
prostitute could easily be recycled as a
portrait of this curly-wigged English
rake. Deliberately altering the identity
of the subject of a portrait was not
that uncommon, and it was generally
prompted by the profit motive. It is
reasonable to think that in England the
demand for a portrait of this English
pornographer would be greater than
for a portrait of the relatively obscure
Beverland. Selling a portrait of the
earl would generate more profit for
Lyne than a portrait of Beverland.
A mezzotint by printmaker Pieter
Schenck I (1660-1711; fig. 12), which
closely follows the composition of the
Portrait of Hadriaan Beverland with
a Prostitute, is also interesting. With
the exception of Schenck’s own name
and the words Cum Privilegio, the
bottom margin of the print is empty.
Schenck appears to have based his
work on Beckett’s mezzotint rather
than the painting. In both prints the
Drapery in the background has been enlivened with a floral pattern and the women, in particular, bear a strong resemblance, but Schenck has also very specifically altered a number of details in the composition. He has, for instance, rendered Beverland’s features unrecognizable. His roguish look and snub nose have been transformed, with deeper wrinkles, different eyes and a large nose. Schenck’s print is not a portrait of Beverland, it is a generic image of an anonymous bon viveur. The pipe has been replaced with a tastevin, a small, shallow silver saucer that was used to judge the clarity and colour of wine. In his other hand, which was previously empty, the man holds a pipette – another device used in wine tasting.54

A Connoisseur of Antiquities
His portraits with a prostitute by De Vois and Beckett are not the only startling pieces Beverland commissioned.
Around 1687 he got Isaac Beckett to make his likeness in mezzotint for the second time (fig. 13), this time after a lost preliminary study by Simon du Bois (c. 1632-1706). The print shows Beverland surrounded by Egyptian obelisks, pyramids and sphinxes. Among the ancient ruins stands a single statue of Greek origin: a sensual image of the goddess Venus. Beverland himself perches on a fragment of an ancient temple and looks amiably over his shoulder at the viewer. The attitude of his body and the tablet in his hands suggest that he is drawing the goddess of love. An artist amidst ancient ruins and monuments was a popular motif in printmaking (fig. 14). The fact that Beverland very deliberately positioned himself behind the statue and is studying the goddess’s nude posterior gives this portrait a provocative twist not found in other images of artists working among ruins. It underlines Beverland’s image as a provocateur, libertine and erotomaniac.

The singular composition follows that of the frontispiece of Lorenzo Pignoria’s Mensa Isiaca of 1669, engraved by Abraham Blooteling (1634-1690; fig. 15). In his book Pignoria (1571-1631) presents his interpretation of the Mensa Isiaca (also called the Bembine Tablet), a Roman altar table with decorations in Egyptian style. He suggested that the images on the tablet represent an Egyptian sacrificial rite. This was certainly the sort of thing that fascinated Beverland. In his own research he often focused on sexual sacrificial rituals in Antiquity. In two manuscripts written by Beverland, we find evidence that he owned a copy of Pignoria’s
As well as handwritten notes the manuscripts also contain prints that have been cut out and unusual print collages. Among the many cut-outs – chiefly nude gods and nymphs – we find two silhouetted details that Beverland cut out of the frontispiece of the *Mensa Isiaca*: Lorenzo Pignoria drawing and an Egyptian sculpture group. It can hardly be a coincidence that it was these exact details that Beverland got Beckett to modify in his portrait print.

The inscription beneath the image describes Beverland as ‘a critic and judge of medals, insects, shells, pictures and rare books’. Beverland wanted this portrait to stress his extensive knowledge of Antiquity. He worked as an intermediary for several London collectors, helping them to acquire rare books, prints and antiquities. He most probably

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Fig. 15
ABRAHAM BLOOTELING, Frontispiece to Lorenzo Pignoria’s *Mensa Isiaca*, Amsterdam 1669. Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam, Special Collections, no. OTM 073 93 (I).
distributed this portrait print as a sort of business card in London collectors' circles – in which collecting portraits was extremely popular – in the hope of attracting new clients. The scholarly virtuosi among them would have recognized and appreciated the link between Beverland's portrait and Pignoria's frontispiece.

**A Reformed Scholar**

Isaac Vossius, Beverland's principal mainstay in London, died in 1689. His stepfather, Bernard de Gomme, with whom he had a very close bond, had died a few years earlier. Beverland felt himself alone in a foreign country. Homesick, he thought more and more often about his heyday as a student in the Republic and realized 'that if he ever wanted to return to his fatherland, he had to publicly and convincingly revoke his early endeavours'. But his self-created and consolidated bad boy reputation was a serious obstacle. If he was ever to have a chance of a pardon, he had to cultivate a more virtuous, honourable image, and he started to take the first steps on his road to reform. In 1689 Beverland consequently embarked on a new treatise, titled *De Fornicatione Cavenda Admonitio* (**Warning About Fornication Which Should Be Avoided**), in which he apologized for his earlier immoral works.

'I condemn the boldness of my careless youth. I abhor the obscenity of my style and the even more obscene contents. I thank God that he removed from my eyes the veil which sadly blinded me and that he prevented me from seeking ever absurd material in support of my stubbornness.' He even went as far as to request 'all who may have obtained a manuscript in my hand, in secret, by force, or by means of petitions, to return such writings to me in order that I myself may burn them'. This work can hardly have contributed to his obtaining a pardon. King-Stadholder William III granted Beverland his pardon in 1693 and *De Fornicatione Cavenda* was not actually published until 1697. What actually made the difference was Beverland’s involvement in the sale of the late Vossius’s famous library. Beverland acted as intermediary in a battle for this collection between the Bodleian Library in Oxford and Leiden University Library and managed to wangle himself a pardon on the strength of it. He was free to return to the Republic, but he never did.

In 1689, the year of his dramatic volte face, Beverland had a new portrait painted (fig. 16). This time he went to Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646-1723), the leading portrait painter in England at that time. Kneller painted Beverland as a humble man, without his luxuriant wig, a book in his hand. With a modest but friendly smile, he looks at the viewer. The portrait stands in stark contrast to all the earlier portraits. It shows Beverland as the reformed scholar he wanted the outside world to see; no longer presenting himself as the dissolute bad boy, surrounded by scantily clad women or nude statues. Whether or not his reformation was feigned, it had the desired effect. In the eighteenth century his portrait entered the collection of the Bodleian Library in Oxford, where it still hangs, surrounded by portraits of other famous authors and scholars.

**In Conclusion**

The *Portrait of Hadriaan Beverland with a Prostitute* in the Rijksmuseum can rightly be regarded as one of the most remarkable portraits made in the seventeenth century. A sitter, smoking, with a prostitute at his side is a provocative image, but in Beverland’s case a particularly telling one. Many viewers would have relished this audacious scene in an age of repression of sexuality in word and image. On the one hand we can link the portrait to the end of Beverland’s academic career and his banishment. On the other, it was the starting point for a string of commis-
sioned portraits for self-promotion orchestrated by Beverland himself. Each of his successive portraits was made with a specific goal in mind – to boost Beverland’s image. Like a true PR man, he used his portraits (particularly his portrait prints) as tools for controlling his image. Each one shines the spotlight on a different aspect of his personality. Whether the image they presented was genuine, or sometimes disingenuous, is not always obvious. What does become clear is that when Beverland commissioned his portraits there was always something he wanted to achieve. The deliberately provocative portraits were designed to attract attention to him and his publications, and bring him contacts and clients. He had his respectable portraits made in order to restore his reputation. The large number of portraits of himself that Beverland commissioned is virtually unequalled in the Golden Age and attests to an extraordinarily self-assured expression of identity.

Fig. 16

Godfrey Kneller,
Portrait of Hadriaan Beverland, c. 1689.
Oil on canvas,
76 x 63.5 cm.
Oxford, Bodleian Library, no.
O.U.BODL.LP199.
Photo: copyright
Oxford University Images
The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam owns one of the most curious portraits ever made in the seventeenth century – the likeness of the Dutch classical scholar and notorious erotomaniac Hadriaan Beverland (1650-1716), who was banished from the Dutch Republic in 1679 because of his scandalous publications. In the portrait – a brunaillé – the libertine rake sits at a table with a prostitute; a provocative scene. Why did this young humanist promote such a confrontational image of himself? In this article the author analyses the portrait and explores Beverland’s motives for his remarkable manner of self-promotion, going on to argue that it was the starting point for a calculated campaign of portraits. Over the years Beverland commissioned at least four more portraits of himself, including one in which he is shown drawing the naked back of a statue of Venus. Each of his portraits was conceived with a view to giving his changeable reputation a push in the right direction. They attest to a remarkable and extraordinarily self-assured expression of identity seldom encountered in seventeenth-century portraiture.

The information presented here will also be part of my doctoral thesis, scheduled for publication in 2019. I am very grateful to Huigen Leeflang (curator of prints at the Rijksmuseum) and Volker Manuth (professor in art history at Radboud University) for their advice and support.


2 For the portrait see Rijksmuseum Amsterdam Inventory 1935.


4 In the Dutch Republic, renowned for its tolerance in scholarship and philosophy in the Golden Age, not everything was tolerated where sexuality was concerned. Since 1669, for instance, it had been expressly forbidden to publish ‘obscene books seeking to corrupt young people and giving rise to all kinds of licentious debauchery’ (‘obscoene boeckjens, streckende tot bedervinge van de jeught, ende aenleydinge gevende tot alle licentieuse ongebondenheyt’), see Inger Leemans, ‘De Viceroy van de hel, Radicaal libertinisme’, in Henk van Nierop et al. (eds.), Romeyn de Hooghe. De verbeelding van de late Gouden Eeuw, Zwolle 2008, pp. 32-47, esp. p. 32.


7 The manuscript of the first volume of Beverland’s De Prostibulis Veterum: Leiden University Library, BPL 1994.

8 The first edition appeared in 1678, anonymously, under the title Peccatum Originale. In 1679 Beverland brought out
two revised editions with his name on them and the titles De Peccato Originali and Poma Amoris; Hollewand 2016 (note 3), p. 36. The fact that Beverland published his first version anonymously suggests that he was very well aware of the provocative nature of his writings. Pornographic literature was often published anonymously for the same reason. See Donald Haks, ‘Pornografie in de zeventiende eeuw: libertijnse achtergrond en voorland der burgerij’, De Boekenwereld 1 (1984/85), pp. 9-17, esp. p. 9.

9 Beverland was not the first to study the story of the Fall and detect erotic undertones in it. Hollewand provides an overview of a great many of his early Christian, medieval and early modern predecessors, see Hollewand 2016 (note 3), pp. 72-86. For more on Beverland’s banishment, see Hollewand 2016 (note 3).


12 As his paranoia worsened, Beverland did not even trust his partner any more. For many years Beverland lived with Rebecca Tibbith, Isaac Vossius’s kitchen maid. They had a daughter, Anna. See Hollewand 2016 (note 3), pp. 295-96.


14 After Beverland’s death the painting may have remained in the possession of his partner or daughter. The panel surfaced again on 9 March 1779, when the German painter Johann Anton de Peters (1725-1795) sold it in Paris as a work by Caspar Netscher (sale, Johann Anton de Peters, Paris (Remy & Basan), 9 March 1779, no. 57 (l. 2970). After a period when its whereabouts are unknown, in the nineteenth century the portrait was in Chateau d’Argeronne in La Haye-Malherbe, France, until the French countess Renée de Montmort (1881-1960), who lived in the chateau, sold the painting at an auction in Amsterdam in 1726 (sale, Renée de Montmort et al., Amsterdam (A. Mak), 15 June 1926, no. 51). François Gerard Waller acquired the painting at this sale and gave it to the Rijksmuseum in 1935. Waller was the first to reattribute the portrait to Ary de Vois on the basis of prints made after it.


19 ‘This was all spent and lost in Holland in 4 Years: Except that I brought over 500 Pound in Money and in Books 300 Pounds.’ Hadriaan Beverland, Although My Innocency Is Shelter’d a Bulwark of Vertues..., London 1709, p. 6. The exact sum Beverland inherited from his parents is not clear. In the two editions of Although My Innocency... he mentions different amounts. In the 1709 edition he writes that it was 2,160 pounds, and in the 1712 edition he refers to a sum of 2,225 pounds.

20 ‘When I was a Lad in the Trivial School and a Spark upon the Academie I went always in richer clothes than any of my companions.’ Beverland’s notes for the Seignior Perin Del Vago correspondence, Bodleian...
the restoration of Rembrandt’s Syndics


31  ‘I had contracted 200 P. of Debts and my Guardians where forced to petion the magistrat to sel a Band of 200 P. to pay the Booksellers, Millenars and Taylers, who had flattered me in their Debet.’ Beverland’s notes for the Seignior Perin Del Vago correspondence, Bodleian Library, Oxford, ms Rawl. c. 344-1, fol. 16v.

29  Ibid., pp. 124.

28  Ibid., p. 86-87.


26  Benjamin B. Roberts, Sex and Drugs Before Rock ‘n’ Roll: Youth Culture and Masculinity During Holland’s Golden Age, Amsterdam 2012, chapter 3.


23  ‘1 roekeloze student met 1 verkeerbort en mij onder de garb van ons heeft.’ Simon van Leeuwen, Het Rapenburg, 6 vols., Leiden 1664, p. 427.

22  ‘I had contracted 200 P. of Debts and my Guardians where forced to petition the magistrat to sell a Band of 200 P. to pay the Booksellers, Millenars and Taylers, who had flattered me in their Debet.’ Beverland’s notes for the Seignior Perin Del Vago correspondence, Bodleian Library, Oxford, ms Rawl. c. 344-1, fol. 16v.

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18  Ibid., pp. 86-87.

17  Ibid., p. 124.

16  ‘I had contracted 200 P. of Debts and my Guardians where forced to petition the magistrat to sell a Band of 200 P. to pay the Booksellers, Millenars and Taylers, who had flattered me in their Debet.’ Beverland’s notes for the Seignior Perin Del Vago correspondence, Bodleian Library, Oxford, ms Rawl. c. 344-1, fol. 16v.

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10  ‘I had contracted 200 P. of Debts and my Guardians where forced to petition the magistrat to sell a Band of 200 P. to pay the Booksellers, Millenars and Taylers, who had flattered me in their Debet.’ Beverland’s notes for the Seignior Perin Del Vago correspondence, Bodleian Library, Oxford, ms Rawl. c. 344-1, fol. 16v.

9  ‘I had contracted 200 P. of Debts and my Guardians where forced to petition the magistrat to sell a Band of 200 P. to pay the Booksellers, Millenars and Taylers, who had flattered me in their Debet.’ Beverland’s notes for the Seignior Perin Del Vago correspondence, Bodleian Library, Oxford, ms Rawl. c. 344-1, fol. 16v.

8  ‘I had contracted 200 P. of Debts and my Guardians where forced to petition the magistrat to sell a Band of 200 P. to pay the Booksellers, Millenars and Taylers, who had flattered me in their Debet.’ Beverland’s notes for the Seignior Perin Del Vago correspondence, Bodleian Library, Oxford, ms Rawl. c. 344-1, fol. 16v.

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appear on the surviving inventories of Beverland’s paintings collection, which he compiled with a view to selling it. We know of four different handwritten lists (c. 1705-14), see British Library, London, Sloane ms 1985, fols. 1r-5v. There are also two surviving versions of a printed sale catalogue: sale, Hadriaan Beverland, London, 5 May 1714. It is possible that he never wanted to sell De Vois’s portrait of him.

John Charrington, A Catalogue of the Engraved Portraits in the Library of Samuel Pepys, F.R.S., now belonging to Magdalen College, Cambridge 1936, p. 16; sale, Alexander Browne, London, 17 April 1706 (1. 1964); inventory of the collections of medals, engravings, etc. of William Courten, c. 1692, British Library, London, Sloane ms 3961, vol. 1. See also note 32 for portrait prints of Beverland to which his name has been added in the bottom margin in pen and ink.

For more on the deliberate reuse of portrait prints see George Somes Layard, Catalogue Raisonné of Engraved British Portraits from Altered Plates, London 1927.

‘Cum privilegio’ refers to the privilege for fifteen years that Schenck was granted on 19 November 1686. ‘Geef enz. hoe dat hy Supplt alrede heeft gemaakt verschijende kunstige prenten, soo in de swarte als andere kunst, waervan hier eenige zijn annex, ende genegen wesende om dese sijne kunst nog verder int werk te stellen en te exerceren int maecken van historien, lantschappen, geselschappen en anders meer, als oock veelerhande Conterfeysels van koningen, vorsten, princken en geleerde mannen deser eeuw, bedught enz….. versoekt Octroy voor 15 jaeren, voor al sijn werk.’ See Obreen 1877-90 (note 46), vol. 7, pp. 152-53.

Emile Peynaud et al. (eds.), The Taste of Wine: The Art Science of Wine Appreciation, New York and elsewhere 1996, pp. 130-33. These attributes are also used in Ferdinand Bol’s The Governors of the Wine Merchants’ Guild in Amsterdam of c. 1659 (Alte Pinakothek, Munich, inv. no. 9656). With thanks to Alexander Dencher.

It is not clear whether the intermediate portrait by Du Bois was a painting or a drawing. In the inscription on Beckett’s print that follows Du Bois’s portrait we read delin. This could refer to a drawn preliminary study. Confusingly, in Beverland’s inventory of his paintings he lists a work by Du Bois: ‘My Pictur don by Sim. du Bois.’ (British Library, London, Sloane ms 1985,
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63 Beverland finished the first, unpublished, version of this treatise, titled Exhortatio ad pudicitiam et castitatem in 1693; Leiden University Library, RP. 205. The work was published in four slightly different versions in 1697 and 1698. Versions 1 and 2 were published in 1697, both titled De Fornicatione Cavenda Admonitio. Sive adhortatio ad Pudicitiam et Castitatem. Versions 3 and 4 saw the light in 1698 as De Fornicatione Cavenda Admonitio. Sive adhortatio ad Pudicitiam et Castitatem, Edito Nova et ab Auctore Correcta. For more on Beverland’s De Fornicatione Cavenda, see Hollewand 2016 (note 3), p. 289; Rudolf De Smet, ‘Hadrian Beverland’s De Fornicatione Cavenda: an adhortatio ad pudicitiam or an ad impudicitiam?’, in Ingrid De Smet, Philip Ford, et al. (eds.), Érotisme et obscénité dans la littérature néo-latine, Cambridge 1995 (Cahiers d’Humanisme et Renaissance, vol. 51), pp. 113-39.


66 Two other later and more serious portraits of Beverland have survived. A mezzotint by William Sherwin after a design by Isaac Paling, dated c. 1680-1709, shows Beverland in an oval wreath. In the bottom margin the inscription reads: ‘Mons.r Beverland, j.u.q.d. / Jugez du reste’. The title j.u.q.d. (juris utriusque doctor) refers to his doctorate in both types of law (Roman civil law and canon law). The pronunciation ‘jugez du reste’ (you can imagine the rest) may well be a subtle hint at Beverland’s bad-boy reputation. For an impression see Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. RP-P-1910-2003. The present author has rejected the second portrait, a painted portrait of c. 1692 in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford (inv. no. WA1908.225), as a portrait of Beverland. The sitter’s face bears no resemblance to Beverland’s face in his other portraits. For the attribution at the Ashmolean Museum, see Colin Harrison (et al.), The Ashmolean Museum Complete Illustrated Catalogue of Paintings, coll. cat. Oxford 2004, p. 64.

67 The earliest known record of the portrait is found on an inventory of paintings handwritten by Beverland, see British Library, London, Sloane ms 1983, fol. 3r: ‘18. My Pictur don by Sr. God. Kneller.’ The earliest mention of the portrait in Oxford occurs in John Pointer, Oxoniensis Academia, London 1749, p. 196, no. 6. In other words, the work was already in the Bodleian Library in Oxford by 1749. We do not know exactly when the painting entered the collection. It is possible that Beverland donated the portrait to the Bodleian Library himself.