



# ‘Works of patience and love’

## The Engravings by Johan Wilhelm Kaiser (1813-1900) after Rembrandt’s *Syndics* and *Night Watch* and Bartholomeus van der Helst’s *Civic Guard Banquet*

• ROBERT VERHOOGT •

A few years ago, the Rijksmuseum acquired an interesting collection of documents about Johan Wilhelm Kaiser, an eminent engraver and a former director of the Rijksmuseum. They had been donated by his great-great-grandson.<sup>1</sup> The nineteenth-century engraver Kaiser was famous for his engravings after, notably, *The Syndics of the Drapers’ Guild* and the *Night Watch* by Rembrandt, and Bartholomeus van der Helst’s *Banquet of the Amsterdam Civic Guard in Celebration of the Peace of Münster*, but he also made a name for himself with book illustrations, banknotes and the first Dutch postage stamp.

The Kaiser documents include letters from the artist Ary Scheffer and the statesman Johan Rudolf Thorbecke. More interesting yet are the surviving contracts that Kaiser signed with the Amsterdam art dealer and publisher Buffa, one of the most influential firms in the Dutch art trade in the nineteenth century. Although we are learning more and more about the practical business of reproducing art in the nineteenth century, which I previously described in *Art in Reproduction*, contemporary contracts like this are rare nowadays.<sup>2</sup> The Rijksprentenkabinet holds several of Kaiser’s prints, and these contracts give us a unique insight into the stages that preceded their production: the plan to produce

*Detail of fig. 13*

an engraving, the parameters within which this had to be done and the engraver’s remuneration. They shed new light on Kaiser’s work and on the reproduction of old master paintings in the nineteenth century.

### Engraver

In 1830 Johan Kaiser made his debut at the Exhibition of Works by Living Artists in The Hague with an ‘engraving after a standing Academy statue’, and scored a hit. King William I wrote to Kaiser personally to tell him how much he liked the print. And his appreciation was not confined to words – there was an award of a hundred guilders.<sup>3</sup> With this successful start, Kaiser could look forward to a rosy future, but even before his career got under way, it seemed as though it was about to come to an end. In 1830, the year of the Belgian Revolution, the tense situation between the Northern and Southern Netherlands came to a head and political relations reached breaking point.<sup>4</sup> The situation worsened dramatically on 5 February 1831, when Jan Carel Josephus van Speyk died a martyr’s death aboard his gunboat on the River Scheldt. His action instantly made Van Speyk a Dutch national hero in the struggle against the Belgians. Perhaps inspired by Van Speyk, on 10 May 1831 Johan Kaiser volunteered, joining the infantry as a gunner, second class.

He signed up for six years and was promoted to gunner, first class, on 21 November 1832. We know little about his wartime career other than that he was stationed in Den Helder from 1831 until the end of 1833, and fought against the Belgian uprising.

‘As far as his military duties allowed, he continued to practise art during this period’, wrote the artists’ biographer Johannes Immerzeel.<sup>5</sup> In 1834, while he was still serving, his training in printmaking was furthered when he went to study under the famous engraver André Benoit Barreau Taurel (1794-1859). This Frenchman, a good friend of the French painter Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), had himself been an apprentice in the workshop of the celebrated engraver Charles-Clément Bervic (1756-1822) and had been invited to the Netherlands in 1828 specifically to revive the flagging art of printmaking there. Associated with the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Amsterdam, Taurel soon became one of the most influential teachers in Netherlandish printmaking. His most successful students were his son, Charles Edouard Taurel (1824-1892), Dirk-Jurriaan Sluyter (1811-1886), Henricus Wilhelmus Couwenberg (1814-1845) and Johan Wilhelm Kaiser.

In the year Kaiser went to Taurel, he submitted two works to the Exhibition of Works by Living Artists in Amsterdam. The first was a print of Ferdinand Bol’s painting of Admiral de Ruyter. This portrait of the renowned Admiral was frequently copied, and the hostilities around 1830 gave the seventeenth-century war hero a highly topical significance. Kaiser also sent in an engraving of a portrait of Cardinal Richelieu.<sup>6</sup> In 1837 Kaiser was discharged from the army, so his passport tells us. It also gives us a description of the young Kaiser: he was just under five foot ten tall, had an oval face, light brown eyes and blond hair.<sup>7</sup> Henceforth the gunner, first class, was an engraver (fig. 1).

On 20 February 1844 Johan Kaiser signed a contract with the art gallery and print publishers Frans Buffa & Zonen of Amsterdam to engrave the painting of *Admiral de Ruyter’s Heroic Death* by Nicolaas Pieneman (1809-1860; figs. 2 and 3). It shows Michiel de Ruyter after he has been hit in the leg by a cannonball. The shocked sailors wrap the naval hero in sheets and carry him from the deck to his cabin. The scene is set during the Battle of Agosta on 22 April 1676, a naval engagement between the united fleets of Spain and the United Provinces commanded by De Ruyter and the French fleet under Admiral Abraham Duquesne. The outcome of the encounter was inconclusive. Pieneman painted the work in 1834 and showed it at the Exhibition of Works by Living Artists in Amsterdam the same year. King William I paid 1,280 guilders for the painting in 1840 and gave it to Sophie van Württemberg (1818-1877), the wife of the later King William III.<sup>8</sup>

The art gallery and print publishers Buffa & Zonen was established by Frans Buffa in 1806 and grew into one of the most influential businesses in its field.<sup>9</sup> The firm published countless engravings, etchings and lithographs of works by modern artists and old masters – portraits, history paintings and landscapes. Buffa was part of an international network of print dealers and publishers that included companies like Goupil, Agnew and Colnaghi. As early as 1816 the English painter David Wilkie wrote, after a visit to Amsterdam, ‘Mynheer Buffa, an Italian printseller long established in that city, was the most respectable person in that line in the whole country.’<sup>10</sup> By Wilkie’s account, Buffa even spoke of the illustrious engraver and publisher John Boydell (1719-1804) as a good friend. Buffa’s commitment to the art of engraving was recognized in the magazine *Kunstkronijk* in 1847: ‘We have observed with pleasure that Messrs F Buffa & Zonen still continue



Fig. 1  
JOHAN WILHELM  
KAISER, *Self-Portrait*,  
c. 1830-50.  
Pencil and brush  
and grey ink,  
216 x 173 mm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijkmuseum,  
inv. no. RP-T-1999-11;  
gift of A.C. Roose,  
Curaçao.

with their best and so often entirely altruistic endeavours to revive the art of engraving in Holland.<sup>11</sup> The writer and critic Everhardus Johannes Potgieter also praised Buffa's efforts, which went against the tide of many cheap foreign prints: 'Buffa's on the other hand, Buffa's publish real art, satisfying the most exacting of connoisseurs ...'<sup>12</sup> The publishing houses of Josi, Maaskamp and Immerzeel – later taken over by H.J. van Wisselingh – also issued many reproductions.<sup>13</sup>

Kaiser probably saw *Admiral de Ruyter's Heroic Death* in 1834 at the Exhibition of Works by Living Artists in Amsterdam. Pieneman's painting received glowing reviews on that occasion and was applauded again the following year. Potgieter called it the most important history painting at the Exhibition of Works by Living Artists in The Hague in 1835.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, the idea that Kaiser actually made his reproduction after the painting itself is open to question. In practice, reproductive prints were usually made



Fig. 2  
JOHAN WILHELM  
KAISER, *Admiral  
de Ruyter's Heroic  
Death*, 1845.  
Engraving,  
360 x 447 mm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum, inv. no.  
RP-P-OB-67.767.

from reduced-size copies, sketches or watercolours – and later photographs – of the work in question.<sup>15</sup> It is, moreover, by no means certain that Kaiser could even have gained access to the painting, which had been in the royal family's possession since 1840. It is therefore quite likely that in making the reproduction of the painting he used Pieneman's own watercolour – an exact copy of the work. The print is similar in size to the watercolour, which saved the printmaker the laborious task of reducing the size of the image.<sup>16</sup>

Kaiser was paid two thousand guilders for engraving Pieneman's painting of *Admiral de Ruyter's Heroic Death*. Regrettably, we do not know how much Buffa's made on the print.<sup>17</sup>

The engraver received considerably more for his reproduction than the 1,280 guilders Pieneman got from King William I for his painted original. For this sum, the engraver undertook to 'maintain the plate in good condition until four hundred impressions have been printed from it, without claiming any recompense whatsoever for said work, this work being included in the payment of two thousand guilders, unless any accident, aside from wear to the plate, should occur ...'.<sup>18</sup>

As well as the fee, the contract set out agreements about the proofs that were made during the production process. Kaiser could keep some proofs for himself, on condition that he did not sell them. He was allowed



Fig. 3  
NICOLAAS PIEMAN,  
*Admiral de Ruyter's  
Heroic Death* (1676),  
c. 1834-44.  
Oil on canvas,  
92.5 x 108.5 cm,  
Stichting Historische  
Verzamelingen van  
het Huis Oranje-  
Nassau.

at most to give a few of them away, but not until they had been marked with the publisher's stamp so as not to distort the market. Proofs, which by their nature were rare, were highly sought-after by collectors and it was of great importance to the publisher to make clear agreements about them before so much as a scratch had been made on the plate. Or as the influential Belgian art publisher Ernest Gambart once remarked:

The unfinished Proofs publishers are in the habit to canvass with, are generally only shown to the Trade with all due intimation of their unfinished state [and this is] rather a favourable circumstance than

otherwise since it leaves to the imagination to fancy the wonders that are coming... When a plate is finished the illusion ceases, there is the fact, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the interest abates.<sup>19</sup>

Should the engraver die before the plate was completed, 'arbiters' would be appointed to assess the value of the unfinished plate. The publisher would reimburse the heirs in that amount, and would then become the owner of the plate. Were the publisher to die, the contract with the engraver would be taken over by his heirs.<sup>20</sup>

According to his contract with Buffa, Kaiser undertook 'to work this plate in the best style of engraving as is



Fig. 4  
HENRICUS WILHELMUS  
COUWENBERG,  
*Portrait of a Syndic*,  
29 August 1834.  
Engraving  
(fourth state),  
220 x 160 mm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum,  
inv. no. RP-P-1912-451;  
gift of P.L. Dubourcq.

practicable'.<sup>21</sup> The choice of engraving technique was by no means self-evident given the quantities of etchings, mezzotints and lithographs produced in the 1840s. However the engraving had been experiencing a comeback ever since the 1820s, when English and French engravers started to make much greater use of steel plates. As a result, editions could be increased

tenfold from a few hundred to a few thousand impressions without significant loss of quality.<sup>22</sup> In the early 1830s, Jan Baptist Tetar van Elven (1805-1889) became one of the first engravers in the Netherlands to work on steel plates. Kaiser also engraved primarily in steel.

Kaiser must have been pleased with his print of *Admiral de Ruyter's*

*Heroic Death*, for on 29 October 1845 he submitted a proof to the annual competition of the Fourth Class of the Royal Institute of Arts and Sciences. On 12 November he received a letter from the secretary informing him that the department had decided 'as a consequence of a provisional report that said proof is entirely worthy of consideration for participation in the competition'.<sup>23</sup> The result of this competition, which had been announced in 1844, was a long time coming. Meanwhile Kaiser submitted his print to the Exhibition of Works by Living Artists in Amsterdam in 1846. There were provisions governing exhibitions like this in his contract with Buffa. It was stipulated, for instance, that if more than twelve impressions of the print were sold at the exhibition, the engraver would receive ten percent of the proceeds. If the prints were bought by the artists' society *Arti & Amicitiae*, the engraver was actually entitled to twenty percent of the income.<sup>24</sup> In the event, Kaiser was awarded the Royal Institute's gold medal for his work.<sup>25</sup>

Kaiser's engraving of *Admiral de Ruyter's Heroic Death* by Nicolaas Pieneman in 1844 was his first major commission and it laid the foundations for his career as a self-employed engraver specializing in the reproduction of works of art.

#### **Engraving after *The Syndics* by Rembrandt (1847)**

Like Kaiser, the young engraver Henricus Wilhelmus Couwenberg (1814-1845) had a promising future, cut short by his sudden death on 16 December 1845. In Couwenberg's estate there were some unfinished engravings, including a large plate of Rembrandt's *Syndics of the Drapers' Guild*.<sup>26</sup> It was decided that these plates should be finished by other engravers. The plate of *A Girl with a Basket of Fruit at a Window* by Gerard Dou was given to Johannes de Mare to

complete, and the French engraver Alphonse François was chosen to finish the engraving of Ary Scheffer's *Mignon and her Father*.<sup>27</sup> The completion of Couwenberg's plate of *The Syndics* was entrusted to Johan Kaiser, who, like Couwenberg, had studied with Taurel.

Couwenberg had begun by making etched studies of a detail of *The Syndics*, as we can see from some early proofs of the figure on the extreme left of the picture – Willem van Doeyenburg, dyer, pillar of the Dutch Reformed Church and president of the Board of Syndics in Amsterdam.<sup>28</sup> These are graphic preliminary studies, printed between 26 and 29 August 1834, in which Couwenberg experimented with his technique (fig. 4). On the impression made on 27 August, for instance, we read 'bitten with 20 percent in 1½ hours'.<sup>29</sup> Probably encouraged by the result of this detail, he decided to engrave the whole of *The Syndics* in this way. On 1 December 1834 he began preparations by making a drawing of the overall composition of Rembrandt's painting.<sup>30</sup> This drawing is covered with grid lines to make it easier to reduce the dimensions of the sizable painting to those of a manageable engraving.<sup>31</sup> Couwenberg also drew the outlines of the figures and sketched in the syndics' faces.

Once the composition had been transferred to the plate, the work of engraving it could begin, as John Ruskin poetically explained. 'Engraving, then, is, in brief terms, the Art of Scratch. It is essentially the cutting into a solid substance for the sake of making your ideas as permanent as possible, graven with an iron pen in the Rock for ever.'<sup>32</sup> The main lines of the engraving were usually etched, a method customary as early as the eighteenth century that Couwenberg and Kaiser both used. The print was then worked up as a line engraving supplemented with etching and





drypoint.<sup>33</sup> Couwenberg's print shows the composition of the figures around the table in sketchy outline. As was customary among engravers, Couwenberg worked out the print from the whole to the details. The figures were brought out of the background, and details like faces and hands were filled in later (fig. 5).<sup>34</sup>

Couwenberg's print of *The Syndics* was soon receiving plaudits. On the basis of a proof (and another of Dou's *Girl at a Window*, on which Couwenberg was also working), the famous French art dealers and publishers Goupil & Cie immediately offered him a contract for another engraving, this time of Ary Scheffer's painting *Mignon and Her Father*.<sup>35</sup> In the earliest state of Couwenberg's print of *The Syndics* the faces are still very lightly indicated, while the clothes, the table and the background are largely finished. In the next three states the engraver carefully gave the

faces more contrast and volume. The plate was probably in the fourth state at the time of Couwenberg's sudden death. The painter Pierre Louis Dubourcq found the plate in the late engraver's studio and noted on an impression: 'The plate is as it was found after the death of H.W. Couwenberg. March 1846 P.L. Dubourcq' (fig. 6).<sup>36</sup>

Fig. 5  
HENRICUS WILHELMUS  
COUWENBERG,  
*The Syndics*, 1844-45.  
Engraving  
(first state),  
465 x 572 mm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum,  
inv. no. RP-P-1912-469;  
gift of P.L. Dubourcq.

Fig. 6  
HENRICUS WILHELMUS  
COUWENBERG,  
*The Syndics*,  
March 1846.  
Engraving  
(fourth state),  
465 x 572 mm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum,  
inv. no. RP-P-1911-2976;  
gift of M. Onnes  
van Nijenrode.

Fig. 7  
HENRICUS WILHELMUS  
COUWENBERG / JOHAN  
WILHELM KAISER,  
*The Syndics*,  
c. 1846-May 1847.  
Engraving,  
465 x 572 mm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum, inv. no.  
RP-P-08-67.601.



Kaiser agreed with Buffa's that he would 'finish the engraving after Rembrandt, known as *The Syndics*, begun by the late H.W. Couwenberg, in the best style of engraving for the sum of fifteen hundred guilders'.<sup>37</sup> His earnings were five hundred guilders less than for the previous print after Pieneman, but it was still a serious amount of money. The job had to be done by May 1847 at the latest. In broad outline, this contract follows the same pattern as the previous one for the reproduction of Pieneman's *Admiral de Ruyter's Heroic Death*.<sup>38</sup> Here again, the engraver was obliged to maintain the plate in order to guarantee four hundred impressions. The contract also contained two new provisions that testify to the close eye the publisher kept on the reproduction process. To start with, the engraver undertook 'to give the publisher impressions of the progress of the plate as often as possible, and in any event every other Monday'.<sup>39</sup> There was also a compensation clause in the event of a breach of the agreement. 'Every month that J.W.K. [Johan Wilhelm Kaiser] delivers the properly finished plate later than 30 June 1800 and forty-seven; J.W.K. will pay Fr.B.Z. [Frans Buffa & Zonen] recompense of fifty guilders a month.'<sup>40</sup>

The plate was at an advanced stage when it came to Kaiser, but the trickiest details, such as the faces and the syndics' opulent garments, still had to be done. Although Kaiser and Buffa agreed to share proofs on a regular basis, none are known. In the final result, Kaiser has delicately modelled the faces of the syndics in Couwenberg's engraving and added the light falling on the collars to superb effect. The composition, figures and staffage have been meticulously translated into the print medium, and the deep red tones of the table carpet subtly rendered in black, white and grey (fig. 7). Kaiser even painstakingly reproduced the Old Master's signature.

As the author Conrad Busken Huet wrote in his book *Het land van Rembrandt*, Rembrandt's *Syndics* and the island of Java were the most important things produced by seventeenth-century Dutch culture.<sup>41</sup> Van Gogh later waxed lyrical about Rembrandt's painting of the regents: '*The Syndics* is perfect – the finest Rembrandt'.<sup>42</sup> Kaiser's engraving after *The Syndics* is part of a long tradition of reproductions of Rembrandt's work. The English publisher John Boydell published several prints in the eighteenth century, and in 1796 there were almost two hundred and fifty reproductive prints after Rembrandt's works in circulation.<sup>43</sup> In the course of the nineteenth century the growing appreciation of Rembrandt was expressed in books and reproductions. John Smith's 1836 overview of Rembrandt's oeuvre was followed by thorough studies by Kolloff (1854), Blanc (1859) and Vosmaer (1868).<sup>44</sup>

*The Syndics* has frequently been reproduced, by among others the English engraver Richard Houston, who made a mezzotint after it in 1774.<sup>45</sup> The Couwenberg/Kaiser steel engraving of 1847 was followed by various etchings by William Unger, Léopold Flameng and Carel Dake after Rembrandt's masterpiece. The reproductive etchings are looser and more sketchy than the painstakingly meticulous hatching of Couwenberg and Kaiser's engraving. It was thanks in part to his print after *The Syndics* that in 1850 Kaiser was admitted as a member of the Fourth Class of the Royal Institute.<sup>46</sup>

#### **Engraving after Van der Helst's *Civic Guard Banquet* (1853)**

In 1833 Cornelis Apostool, then director of the Rijksmuseum, conceived a plan to produce *The Banquet of the Amsterdam Civic Guard* by Bartholomeus van der Helst as a print.<sup>47</sup> This huge militia group portrait was the most famous work



Fig. 8  
HENRICUS WILHELMUS  
COUWENBERG,  
*The Civic Guard  
Banquet*, 1834.  
Brush and black  
and grey ink,  
465 x 871 mm.  
Haarlem,  
Teylers Museum,  
inv. no. BB 035.

in the Rijksmuseum at that time, even casting the *Night Watch* into the shade. Van der Helst painted this picture of the civic guard banquet in the headquarters of the crossbowmen's guard to celebrate the Peace of Münster on 18 June 1648 almost immediately after the event.

Apostool commissioned the master engraver A.B.B. Taurel to produce the engraving. Taurel, in turn, got his apprentice H.W. Couwenberg to make a detailed drawing of the painting. Leaving drawings of this kind to pupils was common practice in the workshops of renowned engravers at that time. Reducing the original to the format of a print was always a complicating factor, and in the case of Van der Helst's huge painting (232 x 547 cm) it was a particularly difficult job. Using a grid, Couwenberg made a highly detailed drawing measuring 465 x 871 mm on which to base the reproductive engraving. For reasons that remain unclear, however, it seems that Taurel never embarked on the engraving and never used Couwenberg's drawing,

which found its way into the art collection of the Amsterdam sugar merchant J. Moyet in 1843. When his collection of paintings and drawings by old masters and contemporary artists was sold at auction in April 1859, Teylers Museum in Haarlem bought the drawing after *The Civic Guard Banquet* for 1,630 guilders (fig. 8).<sup>48</sup>

It was presumably when he was asked to complete *The Syndics* after the young artist's death in 1845 that Kaiser came up with the idea of using Couwenberg's drawing to engrave Van der Helst's famous militia portrait, too. He made a number of proofs, the earliest – as far as we now know – dates from 18 November 1848 (fig. 9). This was followed by proofs on 5 April 1850, 12 July 1850 and 6 December 1850. It was not unusual for the process of engraving prints like these to take several years.<sup>49</sup> In the meantime Kaiser had invested a great deal of work in the print, but had not yet earned a penny. This changed when Buffa's expressed their willingness to buy the engraved plate.



Fig. 9

JOHAN WILHELM  
KAISER, *The Civic  
Guard Banquet*,  
18 November 1848.

Engraving,  
530 x 865 mm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum, inv. no.  
RP-P-08-81.629.

Fig. 10

Detail of BARTHOLOMEUS  
VAN DER HELST, *Banquet  
of the Amsterdam Civic  
Guard in Celebration  
of the Peace of Münster*,  
18 June 1648.

Oil on canvas,  
232 x 547 cm.  
Amsterdam, Rijks-  
museum, inv. no. SK-C-2;  
on loan from the  
City of Amsterdam.

On 26 January 1853, Kaiser and Buffa agreed that *The Civic Guard Banquet* should be engraved for the sum of fifteen thousand guilders.<sup>50</sup> This is an impressive figure that very few nineteenth-century artists could command.<sup>51</sup> Kaiser earned far more than other engravers in the Netherlands and could even compete with celebrated foreign engravers like Luigi Calamatta and Samuel Cousins. At least as interesting, though, is the fact that Buffa's of Amsterdam could afford to pay this much.<sup>52</sup> The parties agreed that Kaiser would sell the plate to Buffa's and deliver it by 15 June 1854 at the latest. Payment was to be made in instalments: seven thousand guilders after a month (on 28 February 1853), and four hundred guilders every three months from 31 May onwards. This sum would be topped up to four thousand guilders on delivery. The last four thousand guilders would be paid a year after delivery. The plate was essentially only finished when four hundred impressions had been made.

Kaiser translated Van der Helst's masterpiece into an engraving with magnificent details, such as the





Fig. 11

JOHAN WILHELM  
KAISER, *The Civic  
Guard Banquet*,  
14 April 1854.  
Engraving,  
530 x 865 mm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum,  
inv. no. RP-P-OB-81.631.

glittering cuirass worn by Captain Cornelis Jansz Witsen and the plumes in the hat of the figure on the extreme right (figs. 10 and 11). It is clear from some alterations in the composition that Kaiser based his print on Couwenberg's drawing and not directly on the Van der Helst painting itself. In the print – unlike the painting but exactly as in the drawing – the composition has been extended at the top slightly so that the whole of the window and the standard can be seen. Kaiser also added a row of tiles to the floor in the foreground. Van der Helst's painting has never been any taller than it is now or it would not have fitted into its original setting of the Old Hall in the Crossbowmen's headquarters, and it was its present dimensions when it was acquired by the Rijksmuseum in 1808.<sup>53</sup> Couwenberg may have got the idea from Jacob Cats's 1779 print after the painting, in which the room is also higher. The composition of Kaiser's print goes even further and has been extended top and bottom, giving the civic guard company more space than in the painting, so that it appears even more impressive.

From January 1853 to mid-June 1854 at the latest, Kaiser worked almost uninterruptedly on *The Civic Guard Banquet*, as agreed with Buffa's.<sup>54</sup> The engraver had, though, stipulated that he should be allowed to finish two other projects on which he was already engaged during this period. He had undertaken to make a plate for the prize for the lottery of the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts – an engraving after Nicolaas Pieneman's 1838 painting *Prince William of Orange Wounded by Jaureguy*.<sup>55</sup> Kaiser was also working on a commission to engrave a banknote for the Ministry of Finance.<sup>56</sup> Aside from these, Kaiser was prohibited from taking on any other work while he was engraving *The Civic Guard Banquet*. Should he nonetheless take on another commission, he was liable to pay Buffa's compensation to the tune of two thousand guilders – the amount he earned for the banknote. If the finished plate did not match up to the proof that had been supplied so far, the engraver had to pay the same sum to the publishers. If necessary, the ruling of specially-appointed arbiters would be final.<sup>57</sup>

The proofs were officially the property of the publishers, and Kaiser was not allowed to give away a single impression without their permission. He was at most allowed to keep one impression of each state for himself, but only after the publishers had put their stamp on it. The proofs were essential in assessing the progress of the project in artistic terms, but they were also important in monitoring the financial aspects and paying the artist. Kaiser consequently received his money in instalments, linked to the progress established on the basis of the proofs.<sup>58</sup>

In the summer of 1854 Kaiser's engraving after *The Civic Guard Banquet* was nearing completion and Buffa's was displaying a proof for potential buyers to examine and a subscription list. Among those who put their names down was Ary Scheffer, who happened to be on a brief visit to his native country at the time. When Buffa told Kaiser this, the engraver was honoured by the interest of the celebrated Dutch artist, now based in Paris. On 7 July 1854 he wrote to Scheffer:

Dear Sir,

Since receiving from Messrs F. Buffa & Zoon the glad tidings that you have seen my engraving after the Civic Guard Banquet in their shop and honoured the subscription list with your signature, I have been very desirous of hearing your opinion of it and of benefiting from your advice and comments in completing this work.

I am therefore taking the liberty of requesting an interview with you, to which end I shall call on you on Monday next (the 10th inst.) in the Badhuis in Scheveningen. I respectfully ask you to drop me a word if you are unable to accede to the request, and with expressions of the greatest esteem I have the honour to be,

Dear Sir, Your servant,

J.W. Kaiser,

Prinsengracht by Noorderstraat.<sup>59</sup>

This letter from Kaiser to Scheffer was first published thirty years ago, in 1982, by Van Thiel.<sup>60</sup> We find Scheffer's reply, written two days later on 9 July 1854, in the documents given to the Rijksprentenkabinet:

Sir,

On returning this morning from a trip to Antwerp I found your letter requesting a meeting for tomorrow, Monday, in Scheveningen. I do not know whether a reply will reach you in time, but in any case you will find me here tomorrow and after tomorrow on Tuesday, at the Hotel des Bains, if you would do me the honour of dining with me on one of those days at half past five I would be happy to introduce my family to an artist whose talent I appreciate and admire.

Your engraving, Sir, is very fine, it fittingly reproduces one of the masterpieces of Dutch art. I shall be proud to display it in Paris as the work of a compatriot.

Be assured, Sir, of my very best wishes,

Ary Scheffer

Scheveningen, Sunday

Bartholomeus Van der Helst took two years to make the painting; in the end Kaiser spent more than six years engraving his reproduction of it.<sup>61</sup> To promote Kaiser's engraving, Buffa published a booklet by the Romantic poet Willem Hofdijk (1816-1888) containing a description of Van der Helst's painting, an explanation of the historical subject and information about Kaiser's engraving. The publisher explained what he wanted to achieve in the foreword:

Art-lovers in other countries often reproach our nation, and rightly so, for leaving the broadcasting of the fame of our school of art to foreigners. The undertaking of an engraving after this masterpiece

that was too little known abroad is an important step in escaping this censure; the six years of concentrated work and the significant sacrifices that this work entailed were fully justified by the goal.<sup>62</sup>

After a lively account of the Eighty Years' War and the Peace of Münster, Hofdijk continued with a lengthy paeon to Van der Helst's *Civic Guard Banquet*, of which, he said, 'no adequate illustration, but on the contrary a very bad one' existed.<sup>63</sup> Hofdijk had heard from the lips of the engraver A.B.B. Taurel – who had taught both Couwenberg and Kaiser – that 'Kaiser's work of art is worthy of Van der Helst's'.<sup>64</sup>

The print could be purchased in various versions at a range of prices:

artist's proof	f 200
proof on Chinese paper	f 150
proof on white paper	f 120
standard impression	
on Chinese paper	f 75
standard impression	
on white paper	f 60

There is little difference between the prices of these prints and the amounts fetched by paintings and watercolours done by lesser contemporary artists.<sup>65</sup> Kaiser's print after Pieneman's painting of *Admiral de Ruyter's Heroic Death* could be bought for twenty-eight guilders (proof) and fourteen guilders (standard impression).

Under the terms of the contract, four hundred impressions had to be printed; how many were actually sold and how much was made on them we do not know. In any event this was not just a matter for the publisher. The engraver also had an interest in seeing the print sell in large numbers. Kaiser, for instance, in addition to the fifteen thousand guilders and a number of impressions, received a percentage of the sale of every print.<sup>66</sup> If he found a buyer himself, he earned fifteen percent commission on the selling price. This

sum was not paid in money, however, but in prints from the publisher's stockroom. This was more than a good turn on the part of the publisher. It was laid down in the contract that 'the travelling and accommodation expenses incurred by J.W. Kaiser to acquire subscribers outside Amsterdam will be reimbursed to J.W. Kaiser by Frans Buffa & Zonen'.<sup>67</sup> In that regard, Kaiser was more than an engraver, he was also a salesman for Buffa's. An engraver like Kaiser was part of a network of artists and printmakers who would appreciate his engraving after *The Civic Guard Banquet*. The print was likewise on display – and for sale – at the Exhibition of Works by Living Artists in Amsterdam in 1856 and in The Hague the following year.

The critic Tobias van Westrheene Wz praised *The Civic Guard Banquet*: 'No conventional accuracy, no lifeless rigour, but a correct and characteristic expression of the whole and of the proportions of the details'.<sup>68</sup> In the *Kunstkronijk* the critic A.J. de Bull was likewise lyrical about Couwenberg's drawing and Kaiser's engraving of it:

With his engraving Kaiser has created a monument to himself and to our national art, which will bear witness to the greatness of both for posterity, but the foundation stone of that monument was laid by your hand, immortalized!, when it completed the drawing that was the basis of Kaiser's labour.<sup>69</sup>

The members of the Fourth Class of the Royal Institute saw a proof of the print in 1850. Taurel delivered a glowing account of his pupil's 'enormous undertaking', noted down and quoted by De Bull:

Twenty-five heads, thirty or thirty-five hands, eight or ten full-length figures; countless quantities of arms, garments in every type of fabric, goblets, tableware, and who knows





what else. And all this, without exception, has to be executed down to the smallest particulars as in a portrait, as in a still life, because otherwise Van der Helst would not be depicted. We declare loud and clear, this enterprise, which would have caused the boldest engraver to turn pale, contains within it as much work as a great many plates together, for nothing can be sacrificed here, no rest can be enjoyed here, and everything has to be done without the aspect and the harmony nevertheless suffering in consequence.<sup>70</sup>

If such an undertaking was to succeed, it must, agreed De Bull, fulfil the criteria set out by Théophile Gautier:

A good engraving is more than a copy; it is an interpretation; it is a work of patience, of love. The engraver must love, admire, understand his original; he must have absorbed its spirit in himself, and be permeated with it to his innermost being; for it is not enough to render the lines of the composition, the outlines of the forms meticulously, to put light and shade in their proper place, to employ one's talent to make the half-tones melt away; no, more is demanded of the engraver!<sup>71</sup>

Kaiser's engraving after Van der Helst's *Civic Guard Banquet* made his name as an engraver. He received royal recognition when he was appointed

Fig. 12  
JOHAN WILHELM  
KAISER, *Night Watch*,  
1862.  
Engraving  
(first state),  
582 x 677 mm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum, inv. no.  
RP-P-1903-A-24195;  
gift of J.W. Kaiser,  
Bloemendaal.



Knight in the Order of the Dutch Lion in 1855. A few years later, by Royal Decree of 7 July 1859, he was made director and principal of the engraving school at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Amsterdam.<sup>72</sup> He succeeded the master engraver (and his teacher) A.B.B. Taurel, who died that year at the age of sixty-five.

**Engraving after Rembrandt's *Night Watch* (1865)**

Rembrandt's *Night Watch* hung opposite Bartholomeus van der Helst's *Civic Guard Banquet* in the Trippenhuys. The *Night Watch* did not start to vie with *The Civic Guard Banquet* for the accolade of greatest masterpiece in this gallery until after the dramatic

reappraisal of Rembrandt in the middle of the nineteenth century. The earliest known proof of Kaiser's engraving after the *Night Watch* dates from 6 December 1862 (fig. 12). The light parts of the composition, such as the girl in the background and Willem van Ruytenburch in the foreground, have as yet been left open. In the state dated 10 February 1863 these light passages have been worked out in more detail and are more modelled. After that, as we see from the state of 8 March 1863, Kaiser appears to have turned his attention to the darker parts of the composition, such as the dark sleeve of the figure on the extreme left, Sergeant Reijer Engelen. In the state of 11 February 1864, Frans Banning

Fig. 13  
JOHAN WILHELM  
KAISER, *Night Watch*,  
9 March 1864.  
Engraving,  
582 x 677 mm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum, inv. no.  
RP-P-OB-67.766.



Fig. 14  
 JOHAN WILHELM  
 KAISER, *Night Watch*,  
 1866.  
 Engraving,  
 582 x 677 mm.  
 Amsterdam,  
 Rijksmuseum, inv. no.  
 RP-P-1892-A-17658;  
 Jonkheer P.A. van den  
 Velden Bequest,  
 The Hague.

Cocq's ruff is more defined. A month later, on 9 March 1864, Kaiser pulled another impression of the plate.<sup>73</sup> This one seems to have been made primarily to show the current state of affairs with a view to the contract he signed a week later, on 15 March 1864, to sell his 'plate now in hand after the painting by Rembrandt, known under the name of the "Night Watch" ... and undertakes to complete said plate in the best engraving style'.<sup>74</sup> Interestingly the other party to the contract is A. Caramelli (on behalf of the art gallery and publishers Buffa) together with J. de Vos, C.P. van Eeghen and P.L. Dubourcq. Jacob de Vos Jacobsz (1803-1878) and Christiaan Pieter van Eeghen (1816-1889) were eminent

private art collectors who actively promoted the fine arts, and Pierre Louis Dubourcq was at that time the director of the Rijksmuseum and the *de facto* keeper of the *Night Watch*.<sup>75</sup>

The steel plate had to be finished by 1 October 1865 at the latest, and the engraver would be paid twelve thousand guilders in instalments. He had to guarantee eight hundred impressions. It is interesting that the contract provided the opportunity to duplicate the printing plate by galvanoplasty. This modern method made it possible to reproduce the plate itself by means of electrolysis. Galvanoplasty, introduced by Moritz H. von Jacobi in 1837, was one of the new possibilities for increasing the size



Fig. 15  
 LAMBERTUS ANTONIUS  
 CLAESSENS, *Night  
 Watch*, 1797.  
 Engraving,  
 540 x 635 mm.  
 Amsterdam,  
 Rijksmuseum, inv.  
 no. RP-P-1913-667;  
 gift of A. Allebé,  
 Amsterdam.

of print runs that were developed in the first half of the nineteenth century, along with the use of steel plates, the faster printing presses devised by Charles Stanhope, 3rd Earl Stanhope (1753-1816), and the new 'continuous' paper invented by Louis-Nicolas Robert (1761-1828). The art journal *L'Artiste* ranked the invention of galvanoplasty on a par with that of photography.<sup>76</sup>

According to the contract, the engraver would be paid a hundred and fifty guilders for the galvanic duplication of the *Night Watch* plate, but at his own risk.<sup>77</sup> We do not know whether Kaiser actually took advantage of this option. He had to supply a proof every three months and the plate was to be

finished by 1 October 1865 at the latest; both the schedule and the quality were to be closely monitored.<sup>78</sup> In the event of doubt on this project, three arbiters would be appointed to assess the quality of the plate.

The state dated 9 March 1864 (fig. 13), just before the contract was signed, shows that the plate was already far advanced. There is a proof dated 28 May 1864, which Kaiser undoubtedly made with an eye to the need to send a proof to the publishers on 1 June as agreed. Under the terms of the contract he must have made more proofs than we now know of.<sup>79</sup> There is an interesting undated state with the engraver's last corrections in white watercolour. We know of a number of such retouched



Fig. 16  
ADOLPHE MOUILLERON,  
*Night Watch*, 1854.  
Lithograph,  
398 x 483 mm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum, inv. no.  
RP-P-1896-A-19326.

prints by Kaiser; this was fairly standard practice in in reproductive engraving and one with a long tradition. The engraving after the *Night Watch* was duly finished in 1865 (fig. 14).<sup>80</sup>

Kaiser's print after the *Night Watch* is one in a series of prints after this famous militia portrait. An engraving by Lambertus Antonius Claessens, made from a watercolour of the *Night Watch* by Jacob Cats (fig. 15), was published in 1797. In 1854 Adolphe Mouilleron (1820-1881) made a large lithograph after the *Night Watch* – a commission by the French state for the Paris Exhibition of 1855 (fig. 16).<sup>81</sup> Kaiser's engraving is sharper, with greater contrast than Claessens's work. Mouilleron's soft, chalky-looking rendition is yet another

interpretation of Rembrandt's civic guard portrait. Kaiser's engraving of 1865 was followed by several reproductive etchings of the painting. In 1875, for instance, the etcher Léopold Flameng (1831-1911) was in the Rijksmuseum to make a print of the *Night Watch*, as Lawrence Alma-Tadema wrote to his friend Carel Vosmaer:

You know that Flameng has copied the hundred guilder print for the French Government and is now in Amsterdam to make the *Night Watch* as a pendant? The print turned out magnificently, and if the *Night Watch* is as successful I promise you it will be even finer.<sup>82</sup>



Fig. 17  
LÉOPOLD FLAMENG,  
*Night Watch*, 1875.  
Etching, 324 x 391 mm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum, inv. no.  
RP-P-1892-A-17637;  
Jonkheer P.A. van den  
Velden Bequest,  
The Hague.

Flameng's etching of 1875 can be counted among the highlights of his reproductive works (fig. 17).<sup>83</sup> The decision to make an etching of the painting was prompted by the great popularity the technique had enjoyed since the eighteen-sixties. Modern French artists like Daubigny, Manet, Millet and Braquemond experimented with this technique as 'peintre-graveurs', and it increasingly came to be seen as the right approach for the reproduction of Old Master paintings. Instead of the stiff, rigid linear texture of the engraving, the flexible and sketchy etching technique could produce almost 'impressionistic' effects that made it possible to interpret Rembrandt's chiaroscuro. Compared with Kaiser's

sharp engraving, Flameng's 1875 etching looks more like a swift, sketchy reproduction of Rembrandt's work. Following Flameng's print, other artists, among them Charles Albert Waltner (1846-1925) in 1887, also published etchings after the *Night Watch*.

Alongside Kaiser's engraving of the *Night Watch*, Mouilleron's lithograph and the etchings of the same painting by Flameng and Waltner, photographic reproductions of the *Night Watch* started to appear. In 1875 the renowned firm of Braun of Dornach made carbon prints of the Rijksmuseum's masterpieces. These early pictures were not a great success – in fact some of them failed altogether because of the poor lighting. Another attempt was made in

1886; this time the photographers were allowed to have the paintings moved over to the window to catch more light.<sup>84</sup> Braun's photographic carbon prints give yet another impression of Rembrandt's great painting. The critic Jan Veth felt that such photographs actually made the etchings, lithographs and engravings of works of art redundant, but he was still susceptible to the particular charm of prints by artists like Kaiser, as he wrote in *De Nieuwe Gids* in 1887:

In our day and age, when one can obtain such perfect reproductions of paintings as the Braun photographs, a diligent etching, but as such spiritless, so cold, lacking colour, has, in our opinion, no reason to exist. If that which is contained in a master's work is not rendered by someone who can testify to have felt that beauty more deeply than ourselves, the etcher would do better to stay at home. My yellowed impression of Mouilleron's lithograph after 'the Night Watch' had fallen off the wall and slipped down behind a piece of furniture. Awaiting Waltner's etching, I simply left my old-fashioned reproduction lying there. And yet I fetched it out again, had it decently framed and restored it to its proper place. There is so much more understanding in it! Even Kaiser's cold engraving, so austere and hard, beats Waltner's etching in many respects.<sup>85</sup>

Kaiser's engraving was just one interpretation of the *Night Watch* in a whole array of works in graphic and photographic techniques. Some people liked the more expressive reproductive etchings by Unger, Flameng and Waltner, others preferred 'the picture, the whole picture and nothing but the picture' and opted for the Braun photographs.<sup>86</sup> For those who appreciated the singular quality

of an engraving (and the years of work that went into it), there was Kaiser's print, with graphic traditions stretching back to Rembrandt's day.

### The Six Collection in Prints

Starting in 1864, and publishing it in instalments, Kaiser edited an illustrated edition of prints in the Rijksmuseum's Print Room: *Curiosités du musée d'Amsterdam. Facsimile d'estampes de maîtres inconnus du xve siècle*.<sup>87</sup> The engravings were not by him, however; they were made by his students at the Royal Academy, among them J.A. Boland (1838-1922).<sup>88</sup> Kaiser elected to reproduce the collection of fifteenth-century prints in newly engraved copies and not in photographs. In his view, a new engraving more closely approached the original print than a photograph, as he explained in his introduction to this publication: '...photography cannot reproduce as exactly as when one uses the same means as served to compose the originals.'<sup>89</sup> He sent an instalment of the publication to the government for their information and received a warm letter back from the Minister of the Interior, Johan Rudolph Thorbecke, which is among the documents given to the Rijksmuseum:

I received with pleasure the copy sent to me of the first instalment of the *Curiosités du Cabinet d'estampes d'Amsterdam*, which was already regarded with great satisfaction in Amsterdam. I wish you luck with such a successful enterprise, which was at the same time an exercise for a school and an example of what we may expect of it. A second instalment can count on the same support from the Government as the first.<sup>90</sup>

Thorbecke, the politician, did not regard art as a matter for the government, but its reproduction apparently was, given his support for this project,

which he took care to stress was on behalf of the government. When Kaiser sent the next part to Thorbecke, the statesman was again full of praise:

Warmest thanks, Dear Sir, for the continuation of your splendid work, which represents your school in such a worthy manner, and at the same time enriches the history of art. It is a gift to the foreigner as well as to us. It will give me a great deal of pleasure, and on repeated examination it will always renew our appreciation of the master of our engraving.

I have the honour to remain, Sir,  
Yours faithfully,  
Thorbecke.<sup>91</sup>

A few years later Kaiser conceived a plan to publish another great collection in the form of prints. This time it was the Six family's collection he had in his sights. This collection contains works by Vermeer, Dou and Ruysdael, but the highlight must be Rembrandt's famous portrait of Jan Six. The Six Collection was renowned, but in the nineteenth century access to it was limited.<sup>92</sup> Few works in the collection had been reproduced, since the Six family seldom admitted engravers or photographers, as we know from the account of the etcher Philip Zilcken.<sup>93</sup> Kaiser was one of the few printmakers who was given access to reproduce masterpieces in the collection, among them Rembrandt's portrait of Jan Six, possibly thanks to his contacts through the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten. Kaiser, who had been appointed Chevalier de l'Ordre Impérial de la Légion d'Honneur in August 1869, was promoted to professor at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam in 1870.<sup>94</sup>

Kaiser and Adolf Blomhert, a bookseller and publisher in Nijmegen agreed that Kaiser 'will etch a book of plates entitled The Art Collection of the

Messrs Six, published in eight parts, each of six plates and four to eight pages of text ...'<sup>95</sup> The edition was to be produced at the engraver's expense but in close collaboration with Blomhert, as laid down in the contract that the two parties signed in September 1874.<sup>96</sup> The objective was to sell at least seventy-five copies of the first instalment within six weeks. If this did not happen, the engraver was free to stop work. Should the target be reached, then he would 'proceed with all vigour' so that the whole project would be completed within four years.<sup>97</sup>

Kaiser selected fifty works by Dutch Old Masters from the Six family's collection.<sup>98</sup> The series began with two portraits by Rembrandt of Mrs Six and her son, the burgomaster Jan Six. They were followed by *The Milkmaid* by Johannes Vermeer, Gerard ter Borch's *Music Lesson* and *The Dutch Housewife* by Gerard Dou, plus works by Adriaen van Ostade, Pieter de

Fig. 18  
JOHAN WILHELM  
KAISER, *The Milkmaid*,  
Engraving in  
J.W. Kaiser,  
*De Hollandsche  
School uit de  
kunstverzameling  
der Heeren Six.  
Album van 50  
der voornaamste  
schilderijen uit dat  
kabinet, Nijmegen  
1874, plate 3.*





Hoogh, Bartholomeus van der Helst and Jacob Ruisdael (fig. 18). These are very diverse pictures that demanded the utmost of Kaiser's ability, as he wrote about the two Rembrandt portraits: 'Just as if Rembrandt wanted to leave to the Six family examples of the utmost powers of his multi-faceted talent, he painted the portrait of Johan in contrast to that of his mother, in the boldest and broadest style, as he alone could do, such as to reduce to despair anyone who attempted to follow him.'<sup>99</sup>

The texture of a painting was particularly complex for engravers. There was a lively debate among nineteenth-century reproductive printmakers on the question as to how far an engraver should go in rendering the original. Would the depiction of the composition suffice, or was it necessary to reproduce the original texture, too? Was the engraver bound to depict not only the original composition but the original medium as well? Or should he remain faithful to his own graphic medium?<sup>100</sup> Internationally, opinions among printmakers differed, splitting along the lines of the 'moderates' and the 'orthodox'. The English engraver W.J. Linton (1812-1897) held to the view that the printmaker was free to interpret the technique of the original.<sup>101</sup> The eminent engraver Luigi Calamatta (1802-1869), on the other hand, stressed that he might never make an original finer than it actually was.<sup>102</sup> Kaiser must have been acutely aware of this dilemma. The portrait of Jan Six derived its quality from Rembrandt's broad, virtuoso brushstroke, as the engraver said: 'The face that appears to address you, although broadly and boldly painted, is extensively finished; but the clothes and hands were put in as if playfully, yet with an accuracy of colour and tone that does not leave any greater elaboration to be wished for. ... it is as if one sees the work emanate from the master's hand and he grants us a glimpse of the rich treasure



chamber of his imagination.'<sup>103</sup> Kaiser did his best to express the handling of the brush by reproducing the brushstrokes with his etching needle (fig. 19).<sup>104</sup>

After four instalments, Blomhert told Kaiser that he wanted to stop the series. Kaiser, however, was adamantly opposed to discontinuing his publication of the Six Collection. The printmaker and publisher engaged in lengthy negotiations in an attempt to reach a compromise. When this failed, Kaiser actually took the case to the district court in Amsterdam. After Blomhert died in 1874, the engraver and the publisher's widow, Pauline Johanna Blomhert-Koopman, decided to put an end to the relationship. It was agreed that Kaiser would be paid two thousand guilders in recompense for the losses he had sustained as a result of the premature termination of the series. In return, Kaiser would transfer all the remaining copies and the rights

Fig. 19  
JOHAN WILHELM  
KAISER, *Jan Six*,  
Engraving in  
J.W. Kaiser,  
*De Hollandsche  
School uit de  
kunstverzameling  
der Heeren Six*.  
*Album van 50  
der voornaamste  
schilderijen uit dat  
kabinet, Nijmegen  
1874, plate 2.*

to the work to Mrs Blomherth, and she would pay Kaiser all the costs in the case.<sup>105</sup> The prestigious publication of etchings after works in the Six Collection thus came to a halt halfway and ended up in the lawyers' hands.<sup>106</sup>

Johan Wilhelm Kaiser was a successful engraver who went on to become a professor at the Akademie voor Beeldende Kunsten and director of the Rijksmuseum. As an engraver he worked in a centuries-old tradition and witnessed the advent of the steel engraving, lithography and photography. He owed his fame above all to his prints after *The Civic Guard Banquet*, *The Syndics* and the *Night Watch*.<sup>107</sup> He died on 29 November 1900, one of the last representatives of this time-honoured discipline of

engraving. At the time of his death, Buffa's was still selling his prints in all sorts of versions and at all sorts of prices.<sup>108</sup> After his death, his heirs were obliged, according to custom, to return his decoration as a Knight in the Order of the Dutch Lion to the Court. The last letter in the little pile of Kaiser documents is from the Chancellor of Netherlandish Orders. It is an acknowledgement of receipt of the decoration of Knight in the Order of the Dutch Lion of the late Johan Wilhelm Kaiser.<sup>109</sup>

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## NOTES

- 1 With thanks to J.J. Groeneveld and R.-J. te Rijdt. The documents are in the Rijksprentenkabinet.
- 2 D. Dekkers, “‘Zeer verkoopbaar’”. Zakelijke afspraken tussen de Hollandse schilder en zijn kunsthandelaar (1860-1915)’, in J.L. de Jong and E.A. Koster, *Onverwacht bijeengebracht. Opstellen voor Ed Taverne en Lyckle de Vries ter gelegenheid van hun 25-jarige jubileum in dienst van de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen*, Groningen 1996, pp. 33-39; R.M. Verhoogt, *Art in Reproduction. Nineteenth-Century Prints after Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Jozef Israels and Ary Scheffer*, Amsterdam 2007, pp. 179-88.
- 3 See letter dated 30 November 1830 from the Ministry of the Interior, Education, Arts and Sciences in The Hague to J.W. Kaiser, in the Rijksmuseum.
- 4 E.H. Kossman, *De Lage Landen 1780-1980. Twee eeuwen Nederland en België. Volume 1 – 1780-1914*, Amsterdam 2001, pp. 133-54.
- 5 ‘Zoo veel zijn dienspligten het toelieten, heeft hij zich gedurende dien tijd in zijn kunstvak blijven oefenen’; J. Immerzeel, *De levens en werken der Hollandsche en Vlaamsche kunstschilders, beeldhouwers, graveurs en bouwmeesters van het begin der vijftiende eeuw tot heden*, Amsterdam 1842, pp. 94-95.
- 6 After 1834 he did not submit any prints to the Exhibition of Living Artists for more than a decade. We know from a few small engravings he made as book illustrations that he was still working as an engraver. For instance, he made prints for several works put out by the Amsterdam publisher G.J.A. Beijerinck, who published *De Gids* from 1837 onwards.
- 7 See the passport issued to J.W. Kaiser in 1837, after his discharge from military service, in the Rijksmuseum.
- 8 S.H. Levie et al., *Het vaderlandsch gevoel. Vergeten negentiende-eeuwse schilderijen over onze geschiedenis*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) 1978, p. 177.
- 9 J.F. Heijbroek, ‘Van eenvoudige prentenkoopman tot gerenommeerde kunsthandelaar: Frans Buffa & Zonen in Amsterdam (ca. 1785-1951)’, *De Boekenwereld* 23 (2006-07) no. 2, pp. 50-64.
- 10 Letter dated 8 October 1816 from David Wilkie to the engraver Abraham Raimbach, in A. Cunningham, *The Life*

- of Sir David Wilkie with his Journals, Tours and Critical Remarks on Works of Art and a Selection from his Correspondence, London 1843, pp. 447-48.
- 11 'Met genoegen hebben wij gezien, dat de HH F Buffa en zonen steeds voortgaan met hunne beste en zoo menigwerf geheel belangeloze pogingen aan te wenden, ter opwakkering van de Graveerkunst in Holland.' Anonymous, 'Kunstberichten', *Kunstkronijk* 8 (1847), p. 14.
- 12 'Buffa's daarentegen, Buffa's geven echte kunst uit, de keurigsten der kenners bevredigend ...' E.J. Potgieter, 'Amsterdam te 1860', *De Gids* 24 (1860), p. 247. In this article he discusses the first and second issues of *Amsterdam in 1860*, with text by W.J. Hofdijk and plates by J. Hilverdink, published in 1860 by F.C. Bührmann.
- 13 J.F. Heijbroek and E.L. Wouthuysen, *Portret van een kunsthandel. De firma Van Wisselingh en zijn compagnons 1838-heden*, Zwolle 1999, pp. 13-16.
- 14 L. van Tilborgh and G. Jansen, *Op zoek naar de Gouden Eeuw. Nederlandse schilderkunst 1800-1850*, exh. cat. Haarlem (Frans Hals Museum) 1986, p. 148.
- 15 H.W. Couwenberg once engraved the painting *Mignon and her Father* by Ary Scheffer, for which the painter undertook to supply him with a drawing of the work as an alternative to the original, which by then belonged to Queen Victoria. When Couwenberg actually saw the drawing, however, he was unhappy with the quality and decided after all to ask the queen's permission to study the painting itself for his engraving. Permission was forthcoming and so he was able to see the work itself and make extensive corrections to a proof of his print. For more on this affair see J.J. Heij, 'De voelende hand van de kunstenaar. Over een 19de-eeuwse reproductiegravure', *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 50 (2002) no. 2, pp. 295-307. See also Verhoogt, op. cit. (note 2).
- 16 R. de Leeuw et al., *Meesters van de Romantiek. Nederlandse kunstenaars 1800-1850*, exh. cat. Rotterdam (Kunsthall) 2005, no. 239, fig. on p. 198.
- 17 According to art. 4 of the contract, the engraver was to receive a hundred guilders a month for six months, commencing on 1 March 1844. The plate was to be completely finished at the end of the six months. The engraver would be paid four hundred guilders three months after delivering the plate, another four hundred three months later, and three months after that (nine months after delivery) a further three hundred and fifty guilders. Finally, under the terms of art. 11, the engraver would get a stack of impressions to the value of two hundred and fifty guilders. See the contract dated 20 February 1844 between J.W. Kaiser and F. Buffa relating to *Admiral de Ruyter's Heroic Death*, in the Rijksmuseum.
- 18 '...de plaat in goede staat te onderhouden tot dat er een getal van vierhonderd exemplaren op gedrukt is, zonder iets hoegenaamd voor die werkzaamheden te mogen vorderen zijnde die werkzaamheid in de betaling der tweeduizend guldens begrepen tenzij er eenig ongeluk, buiten het slijten der plaat, moogt komen ...' See art. 5 of the contract between J.W. Kaiser and F. Buffa (note 17).
- 19 A. Dyson, *Pictures to Print. The Nineteenth-Century Engraving Trade*, London 1984, p. 66.
- 20 See arts. 9 and 10 of the contract between J.W. Kaiser and F. Buffa (note 17). In the light of this provision, it is remarkable that nothing is stipulated in the event of bankruptcy.
- 21 'deze plaat in de beste stijl van gravure te bewerken als hem doenlijk is'; see art. 2 of the contract between J.W. Kaiser and F. Buffa (note 17).
- 22 A.J. Vervoorn, *Nederlandse prentkunst 1840-1940*, Lochem 1983, p. 46.
- 23 'als gevolg van een voorlopig onderzoeksrapport [heeft] beslist, dat gezegde proef alleszins waardig is ter mededinging in aanmerking te komen'; see the letter dated 12 November 1845 from the secretary of the Fourth Class of the Royal Institute to J.W. Kaiser, in the Rijksmuseum.
- 24 See art. 11 of the contract between J.W. Kaiser and F. Buffa (note 17).
- 25 See the gold medal certificate with seal J.W. Kaiser received from the Fourth Class of the Royal Institute for his engraving *Admiral de Ruyter's Heroic Death* after the painting by N. Pieneman, in the Rijksmuseum.
- 26 P.J.J. van Thiel, 'Het Rijksmuseum in het Trippenhuys, 1814-1885 (1v): Kopiïsten en fotografen', *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 30 (1982), p. 72.
- 27 The Rijksmuseum has a remarkable collection of twenty-five states of Couwenberg's engraving after Gerard Dou's work that was passed on to Johannes de Mare. Closer examination reveals that Johannes de Mare did not finish this print either; the last two states are by Kaiser.

- 28 B. Haak, *Rembrandt. Zijn leven, zijn werk, zijn tijd*, Amsterdam 1990, p. 310.
- 29 See a state of Couwenberg's print of a head of one of the figures in *The Syndics* in the Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-P-1912-453.
- 30 In his manual for printmakers Perrot wrote: 'The preliminary studies of the engraver are the same as those that serve the draughtsman, the painter and the sculptor. It is essential to draw them with great accuracy, with taste and fluency; there are very few celebrated engravers who were not excellent draughtsmen.' ('Les premières études du graveur sont les mêmes que celles qui conviennent au dessinateur, au peintre et au sculpteur. Il doit dessiner avec une grande justesse, avec goût et facilité; il est très-peu de graveurs célèbres qui n'aient été d'excellents dessinateurs.') See A.-M. Perrot, *Manuels-Roret. Nouveau Manuel Complet Du Graveur ou Traité de l'art de la Gravure et tout genre*, Paris 1984, p. 15. For a detailed description of the processes in a printmaker's studio see Dyson, op. cit. (note 19), pp. 31-55, 113-44.
- 31 There were various ways of doing this. Fielding describes a method whereby the dampened drawing was impressed on a wax-coated plate, see T.H. Fielding, *The Art of Engraving*, London 1841. See also Perrot, op. cit. (note 30), pp. 62-67; J. Roller, *Praktische handleiding bij het etsen op koper. Een onmisbare vraagbaak voor allen, die zich op het etsen willen toeleggen, s.l.e.a.*, pp. 45-48; C. Wax, *Mezzotint. History and Technique*, New York 1990, p. 67.
- 32 J. Ruskin, *Ariadne Florentina*, London 1907, p. 31.
- 33 In the course of the nineteenth century, new techniques were constantly being invented to make it possible to get the grooves into the plate more quickly than by hand engraving alone. See Dyson, op. cit. (note 19), p. 130; Verhoogt, op. cit. (note 2), pp. 63-131.
- 34 One example is James Henry Watt's print from *The Highland Drivers: Scene in the Grampians* by Edwin Landseer, see S. Lambert, *The Image Multiplied. Five Centuries of Printed Reproductions of Paintings and Drawings*, London 1987, pp. 52-53. Anthony van Dyck often worked the other way round, starting with the detailed faces, an approach that was probably less widely used in the nineteenth century.
- 35 Heij, op. cit. (note 15), p. 297.
- 36 'Staat der plaat zoo als dezelve na het overlijden van H.W. Couwenberg bevonden is. Maart 1846 P.L. Dubourcq'. See the fourth state of H.W. Couwenberg's engraving of *The Syndics* in the Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-P-1911-2976.
- 37 'de gravure naar Rembrandt, *De Staalmeesters* genaamd, door wijlen H.W. Couwenberg begonnen in de beste stijl van gravure [zal] afwerken voor een somme van vijftienhonderd gulden'. See art. 1 of the contract between J.W. Kaiser and F. Buffa relating to *The Syndics* in the Rijksmuseum. It is not clear when this contract was actually signed. In view of the timetable for payments, it was probably September 1846.
- 38 Again J.W. Kaiser was paid in instalments of a hundred guilders a month, rising to five hundred guilders three months after delivery of the finished plate. He also received four proofs 'before the lettering' and four impressions 'with the lettering' from the publisher, and was allowed to keep one impression of every state for himself. See arts. 4, 6 and 7 of the contract between J.W. Kaiser and F. Buffa (note 37).
- 39 'zoo dikwijls mogelijk aan de uitgever drukken geven van de vordering der plaat, en wel minstens elke tweede maandag'. See art. 9 of the contract between J.W. Kaiser and F. Buffa (note 37).
- 40 'Elke maand dat J.W.K. [Johan Wilhelm Kaiser] deze plaat goed afgewerkt, zal leveren, later als 30 juny 1800 zevenenveertig; zal J.W.K. aan Fr.B.Z. [Frans Buffa & Zonen] schadeloosstelling moeten betalen vijftig gulden per maand.' See art. 10 of the contract between J.W. Kaiser and F. Buffa (note 37).
- 41 C. Busken Huet, *Het land van Rembrandt. Studiën over de Noordnederlandsche beschaving in de zeventiende eeuw*, vol. 2, Haarlem 1882-84, p. 559. See also J. Boomgaard, *De verloren zoon. Rembrandt en de Nederlandse kunst-geschiedschrijving*, Amsterdam 1995, p. 142.
- 42 Letter dated 10 October 1885 from Vincent van Gogh to Theo van Gogh, in L. Jansen et al., *Vincent van Gogh – The Letters. The Complete Illustrated and Annotated Edition*, vol. 3, Amsterdam 2009, pp. 290-91.
- 43 D. Alexander, 'Rembrandt and the Reproductive Print in Eighteenth-Century England', in C. White et al. (ed.), *Rembrandt in Eighteenth-Century England*, London 1983, p. 53.
- 44 C. Brown et al., *Rembrandt. De meester en zijn werkplaats. Schilderijen*, exh. cat.

- Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) 1991, pp. 114-15.
- 45 Alexander, op. cit. (note 43), p. 61. There is also a print by J. de Frey of 1799.
- 46 See letter dated 30 April 1850 from the secretary of the Fourth Class of the Royal Institute in Amsterdam to J.W. Kaiser, in the Rijksmuseum.
- 47 Van Thiel, op. cit. (note 26), p. 70.
- 48 Ibid., p. 82.
- 49 Verhoogt, op. cit. (note 2), p. 274.
- 50 See the contract dated 26 December 1853 between J.W. Kaiser and F. Buffa concerning *The Civic Guard Banquet* by Bartholomeus van der Helst, in the Rijksmuseum.
- 51 August Allebé, for instance, was paid forty guilders for an ordinary lithograph for *De Kunstkritiek*, a hundred guilders for a presentation print after Jozef Israëls's *Adagio con espressione* and a thousand guilders for his large-format lithograph after *The Pilgrim Fathers* by J.G. Schwartz. See C.H. de Stuers, *Het lithografisch werk van August Allebé. Beschrijvende catalogus met inleiding*, Utrecht 1929, p. 60.
- 52 Dyson pointed out that the incomes of engravers rose dramatically during the course of the nineteenth century as a result of the growing status of printmakers and the explosive growth of the print trade – a development from which the best printmakers profited most; see Dyson, op. cit. (note 19), p. 62. It is probably no coincidence that the terms of the Italian engraver Paolo Mercuri's first contract of 1832 are very different from those of the second in 1835, by which time he had had successes at the Salon. The most significant difference is that in the first case the engraver was paid a fixed sum for the work involved, whereas in the second he entered into an agreement with the publisher on a much more equal footing and was involved in the publication of the print.
- 53 With thanks to Jonathan Bikker, research curator in the Fine Arts Department at the Rijksmuseum.
- 54 See art. 8 of the contract between J.W. Kaiser and F. Buffa (note 50): 'J.W. Kaiser undertakes to work on the plate continuously without working on anything else, with the exception of the plate for the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts and that for the Ministry of Finance.' (J.W. Kaiser verbindt zich onafgebroken aan de plaat door te werken zonder iets anders onder handen te nemen, uitgezonderd de plaat voor de Vereeniging ter Bevordering van Beeldende Kunsten en die voor het ministerie van Financiën.)
- 55 J.J. Heij (et al.), *Eene vereeniging van ernstige kunstenaars. 150 jaar Maatschappij Arti et Amicitiae*, Amsterdam 1989, p. 154.
- 56 Strictly speaking, Kaiser had not actually concluded the contract with the Finance Ministry when he signed the contract for the engraving after *The Civic Guard Banquet*. The engraver already had some experience in making designs for the government. In the summer of 1851 he had designed and engraved the first Dutch postage stamp. Inspired by the British Penny Black, the first postage stamp in the world, which had been issued in 1840, Kaiser engraved the portrait of King William III in profile. He took as his example a portrait of the sovereign by Nicolaas Pieneman. The first Dutch postage stamp, engraved by Kaiser, was issued on 1 January 1852. It was printed in different colours in an edition of 300,000. More than a year after engraving this stamp, Kaiser signed up to engrave the bank note, see the letter dated 17 February 1853 from the Council of State Agent of the Ministry of Finance to J.W. Kaiser, in the Rijksmuseum. For Kaiser's work on the first Dutch postage stamp see J.J. Havelaar, *Postage Paid. The Story of the First Dutch Postage Stamp 1852-2002*, Zutphen 2002, pp. 104-07; P. Hefting, "'Spiritus et materia unum'. De postzegel als tijdsbeeld', N. Bartelings et al. (ed.), *Beelden in veelvoud. De vermenigvuldiging van het beeld in prentkunst en fotografie*, Leiden 2002 (Leids Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek, vol. 12), pp. 427-52.
- 57 See art. 9 of the contract between J.W. Kaiser and F. Buffa (note 50).
- 58 This was standard practice in nineteenth-century print production. It was also the norm abroad, as emerges from the contract that Ingres signed with the engraver Luigi Calamatta on 3 December 1825 for the reproduction of his painting *The Vow of Louis XIII*, and the 1832 contract between Goupil & Cie and the engraver Paolo Mercuri for the reproduction of *Saint Amélie Queen of Hungary | Making an Offering to the Virgin* painted by Paul Delaroche, see A. Bergeon, 'Le temps ciselé, correspondances autour d' une oeuvre gravée: éditeurs, artistes, critiques (1829-1859)', in H. Lafont-Couturier, *État des lieux-1*, Bordeaux 1994, pp. 43-44. The agreement between the publishers Hodgson & Graves and the engraver

- Samuel Cousins for the reproduction of *The Abercorn Children* was similar to these contracts. The engraver was to deliver an engraving within ten months and could select the printer, provided he supervised the printing process himself. He had to guarantee an edition of a thousand impressions. He was paid a total of three hundred pounds (a hundred on delivery of the first proof, a hundred during the first three months of printing and a hundred when the last proofs were delivered). He also received an additional five guineas for every hundred impressions (after the first two to eight hundred prints), see Dyson, op. cit. (note 19), pp. 60-61.
- 59 'WelEdel Gestr. Heer, De goede tijding mij door de Heeren F. Buffa en Zoon medegedeeld, dat UedGestr. mijne gravure naar de Schuttersmaaltijd bij hen hebt gezien en de inteekeelijst met UEDS. handteekening hebt vereerd, heeft bij mij zeer de wensch verlevendigt UEDS. oordeel daarover te mogen vernemen en UEDS raadgeving en aanmerkingen te mogen benuttigen bij het afmaken van dit werk. Daarom neem ik de vrijheid UEDGestr. ten vriendelijkste een onderhoud te verzoeken, waartoe ik mij Maandag aanstaande (en 10 dezer) ten Uwent zal vervoegen aan het Badhuis te Scheveningen. UEDGestr. bescheidenlijk verzoekend mij met een enkel woord te willen beantwoorden, zoo UED. in dit verzoek niet kunt bewilligen, en met de betuiging der meeste hoogachting heb ik de eer te zijn. WelEdelGestr. Heer, UEDDien. Dienaar, W. Kaiser, Prinsengracht bij de Noorderstraat.' Letter dated 7 July 1854 from J.W. Kaiser to Ary Scheffer, in J.J. Heij, 'De correspondentie van Ary Scheffer met enkele Nederlandse kunstenaars', in M. Adang et al., *Met eigen ogen. Opstellen aangeboden door leerlingen en medewerkers aan Hans L.C. Jaffé*, Amsterdam 1984, p. 115.
- 60 'Monsieur, En revenant ce matin d'une course à Anvers j'ai trouvé votre lettre, qui me demande un rendez-vous pour demain lundi à Scheveningen. Je ne sais ci une réponse vous arrivera en temps, dans tous les cas vous me trouverais ici demain lundi et après demain mardi, à l'Hotel des Bains, ci vous voulez bien me faire l'honneur de venir de diner avec moi un de ces deux jours à 5 heures et demi, je serai heureux de faire à ma famille le connaissance d'un artiste dont j'apprécie et admire le talent.
- Votre gravure Monsieur est fort belle, elle reproduire dignement un des chef d'œuvre de l'art Hollandais. Je serai fier de la montrer à Paris comme l'œuvre d'un compatriote. Recevez monsieur l'assurance de mes sentiments les plus distingués, Ary Scheffer. Scheveningen, Dimanche 9.' Van Thiel, op. cit. (note 27), pp. 70-71.
- 61 A.J. de Bull, 'Van der Helst-Kaiser 1648-1848', *Kunstchronijk* 17 (1856), p. 60.
- 62 'Buitenlandsche Kunstminnaars verweten onze natie met regt: dat zij de verbreiding van den roem harer Kunstschool aan vreemden overliet. De onderneming eener gravure naar dit meesterstuk dat te weinig in het buitenland bekend was, is eene belangrijke stap om dit verwijt te ontgaan, de zes jaar van ingespannen arbeid en de belangrijke opofferingen die dit werk vereischte, het doel ten volle waardig.' W.J. Hofdijk, *De schuttersmaaltijd, door Van der Helst, Meesterstuk der Nederlandsche Kunst-school, berustende op 's Rijks-museum te Amsterdam; gegraveerd door J.W. Kaiser*, Amsterdam, 1856, unpagéd.
- 63 'geen voldoende afbeelding, wel integendeel zelfs eene slechte,' *ibid.*, p. 17.
- 64 'Kaisers kunstwerk is dat van Van der Helst waardig.' *Ibid.*, p. 20.
- 65 'épreuve d'artiste f 200,-; proefdruk op chinees papier f 150,-; proefdruk op wit papier f 120,-; gewone druk op Chinees Papier f 75,-; gewone druk op wit papier f 60,-'. C. Stolwijk, *Uit de schilderswereld. Nederlandse kunstschilders in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw*, Leiden 1998, pp. 151-54.'
- 66 Kaiser could keep one impression of every state and, under the terms of art. 11 of the contract between him and F. Buffa (note 50), received a further two standard impressions, two proofs and two of the very earliest proofs (épreuves d'artiste or artist's proofs) printed on Chinese or white paper.
- 67 'de reis en verblijfkosten door J.W. Kaiser te doen, tot het maken van inteekenaars buiten Amsterdam, zullen aan J.W. Kaiser door Frans Buffa & Zonen vergoed worden.' See art. 6 of the contract between J.W. Kaiser and F. Buffa (note 50).
- 68 'Geene conventionele zuiverheid, geene strengheid zonder leven, maar juiste en karakteristieke uitdrukking van het geheel en van de verhouding der details.' T. van Westrheene Wz., [on] 'De gravure van J.W. Kaiser, naar de schilderij *De schutters-maaltijd* van B. van der Helst in het Museum te Amsterdam', *Algemeene konst- en letterbode* 68 (1856), p. 101.

- 69 'Kaiser heeft zich en der vaderlansche kunst door zijne gravure een monument gesticht, dat bij de nakomelingschap alom grootsch van beide getuigen zal, maar de eerste steen tot dat monument was door uwe hand, vereeuwigde! gelegd, toen zij de teekening voltooid had, die den grondslag van Kaisers arbeid was.' De Bull, op. cit. (note 61), p. 60.
- 70 'Vijf en twintig koppen, dertig of vijf en dertig handen, acht of tien beelden ten voeten uit; talloze hoeveelheid wapenen, kleedingstukken van allerlei stof, eerebekers, tafelgereedschap, en wat niet al. En dit alles, niets uitgezonderd, moest tot in de kleinste bijzonderheden uitgevoerd worden als bij een portret, als bij een stilleven, omdat anders van der Helst niet is weergegeven. Wij verklaren het luide, deze onderneming, die den stoutsten graveur zou hebben doen verbleeken, omvat in zich alleen zoo veel werk als een groot aantal platen tezamen, want hier kan niets worden opgeofferd, hier kan geen rust worden genoten, en alles moet gedaan worden zonder dat nogtans het aspect en de harmonie er door lijden.' *Ibid.*, p. 60.
- 71 'Een fraaie gravure is meer dan een kopie; het is eene vertolking; het is een werk van geduld, van liefde. De graveur moet zijn origineel liefhebben, bewonderen, begrijpen; hij moet den geest er van in zich opgenomen hebben, en in zijn innigst wezen zijn doordrongen; want het is niet genoeg de lijnen der kompositie, de omtrekken der vormen naauwkeurig weer te geven, licht en schaduw op hunne juiste plaats aan te brengen, de halve tinten met talent te doen wegsmelten; neen van den graveur wordt meer geeischt!' *Ibid.*, p. 60. For a description of this work see P.J. Veth, 'De schuttersmaaltijd van Van der Helst', *De Gids* 21 (1857), pp. 537-66.
- 72 Kaiser worked actively and publicly for art education in the Netherlands, see J.W. Kaiser, *Voorstel tot Reorganisatie der Koninklijke Akademie van Beeldende Kunst*, Amsterdam 1863; J.W. Kaiser, *Is eene Akademie van beeldende kunsten noodig? Eene vraag, behandeld in de openbare zitting der Koninklijke Akademie van Beeldende kunsten te Amsterdam, den 7 July 1868*, Zwolle 1868. On Kaiser's role in art education see J. Reynaerts, 'Het karakter onzer Hollandsche School'. *De Koninklijke Akademie van Beeldende Kunsten te Amsterdam, 1817-1870*, Leiden 2001, pp. 227-38.
- 73 Van Thiel, op. cit. (note 26), p. 72.
- 74 'thans onderhanden zijnde plaat naar de schilderij van Rembrandt, bekend onder den naam van de "Nachtwacht" ... en verbindt zich genoemde plaat te voltooyen in der besten graveerstijl'. See art. 1 of the contract between J.W. Kaiser and Caramelli et al. dated 15 March 1864 in regard to Rembrandt's *Night Watch* in the Rijksmuseum.
- 75 Jacob de Vos Jacobsz was the moving spirit behind the extensive Historische Galerij De Vos, comprising oil sketches of historic scenes from the nation's past, depicted by contemporary artists. The project, started in 1850, covered Dutch history from AD 40 to 1861 in more than two hundred works and was finished around 1863. See Levie, op. cit. (note 8), pp. 199-201. The merchant banker Van Eeghen was also an eminent collector and later one of the founders of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam.
- 76 xx, 'La galvanoplastie appliquée aux arts', *L'Artiste*, 4th series (1845), vol. 4, p. 61.
- 77 See art. 5 of the contract between J.W. Kaiser and Caramelli et al. (note 74).
- 78 See art. 8 of the contract between J.W. Kaiser and Caramelli et al. (note 74).
- 79 The next known proof dates from 26 April 1865.
- 80 Van Thiel, op. cit. (note 26), p. 72. Van Thiel indicates that the print was completed in 1866. In view of the contractual obligation to deliver the print before 1 October 1865, this date seems more likely.
- 81 W. Loos, "De kleine burgemeester" en andere Amsterdamse impressies van Adolphe Mouilleron (1820-1881)', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 38 (1987), pp. 201-02. On this practice of copying and reproduction in the Rijksmuseum see Van Thiel, op. cit. (note 26), pp. 63-86. On Mouilleron's visit see P. Mantz, 'Mouvement de l'art', *L'Artiste* new series (1857), vol. 1, p. 87 and A. McQueen, *The Rise of the Cult of Rembrandt. Reinventing an Old Master in Nineteenth-Century France*, Amsterdam 2003, p. 266.
- 82 'Ge weet dat Flameng, de honderd gulden print gecopieerd heeft voor het Franse Gouvernement en nu naar Amsterdam [is] om als pendant de Nachtwacht te maken? De print is magnefiek uitgevallen en als de Nachtwacht zo goed gelukt, dan beloof ik U zal het iets mooyer worden.' See letter dated 28 May 1873 from L. Alma-Tadema to C. Vosmaer, in the Rijksmuseum.
- 83 See also S.E. Asser, 'Rembrandt in fotografische staat. Charles Blanc, Bisson frères en L'oeuvre de Rembrandt reproduit

- par la photographie, 1853-1858', *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 48 (2000), pp. 171-99, esp. p. 185.
- 84 S.E. Asser and R.M. Verhoogt, 'Photogrammen in roode omslagen', in N. Bartelings et al. (eds.), op. cit. (note 56), pp. 350-53.
- 85 'In onzen tijd, waarin men zulke volmaakte reproducties van schilderijen kan bekomen, als de Braunfotografiën zijn, heeft een vlijtige, maar zoodanig geestelooze, zoozeer koude, qua kleur dús gemankeerde ets, o.i. geen reden van bestaan. Wanneer dāt, wat in eens meesters werk zit, niet is weergegeven door iemand, die getuigenis kan afleggen, dat schoone dieper gevoeld te hebben dan wijzelf, dan doet de ets er beter thuis te blijven. Mijn geel geworden exemplaar van Mouillerons lithografie naar 'de Nachtwacht' was van den muur achter een meubel gegleden. In afwachting van Waltner's ets liet ik mijn ouderwetsche reproductie maar liggen. Doch ik heb haar weer te voorschijn gehaald, eens netjes geëncadreerd, en in eere hersteld. Daar zit toch zooveel meer begrip in! Zelfs Kaisers koude gravure, zoo nuchter en hard, wint het in veel opzichten van Waltner's ets.' S [Jan Veth], 'Waltner's ets naar "de Nachtwacht"', *De Nieuwe Gids* 2 (1887), vol. 1, p. 465.
- 86 Anonymous, 'New engravings', *The Magazine of Art* (1893), vol. 16, p. x11.
- 87 This was over and above his work for Museum Van der Hoop's catalogue. Since 1863, Kaiser, now fifty, had been a member of the museum's Supervisory Committee. In this capacity he put himself forward to make a revision of the 1855 catalogue of the collection: 'Wishing as far as possible to meet the requirements of the present day, the committee decided to replace the earlier catalogue with a brief description of the paintings and also to state the dimensions of the works of art. Mr Kaiser took this upon himself, and made use of the work of Mr Burger, *Les Musées de la Hollande*, in so far as he was in agreement with the judgement of this writer.' ('Wenschende zoo veel mogelijk aan de eischen van den tegenwoordigen tijd te voldoen, besloot de commissie den vroegere katalogus door eene korte beschrijving der schilderijen te doen vervangen en tevens de grootte der kunstwerken op te geven. De Heer Kaiser heeft zich hiermede belast, en gebruik gemaakt van het werk van de Heer Burger, *Les Musées de la Hollande*, voor zoo verre hij zich met het oordeel van dien schrijver vereenigen kon.') The catalogue was not illustrated. See *Beschrijving der schilderijen in het Museum Van der Hoop*, Amsterdam 1865, pp. iv-v. The committee was made up of C.P. van Eeghen (chairman), J. Messchert van Vollenhoven, J. de Vos (treasurer), J.W. Kaiser and P.E.H. Praetorius (secretary). The new catalogue was success. In 1865 the first edition was published in a print run of a thousand copies. They sold out within a couple of years, and a second edition was printed in 1868. The third was published in 1872, the fourth in 1876, and the fifth in 1881. See E. Bergvelt et al., *De Hollandse meesters van een Amsterdamse bankier. De verzameling van Adriaan van der Hoop (1778-1854)*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Amsterdams Historisch Museum) 2004, pp. 50-51.
- 88 Kaiser, meanwhile, also made a few 'odd' prints. He signed a contract with Buffa's, for instance, 'to engrave in line engraving (taille-douce) on copper measuring 44-32 Netherlandish Inches a Portrait of HM the King of the Netherlands, after a ... drawing by J.H. Neuman', ('te graveeren in lijngravure (taille-douce) op koper en ter grootte van 44-32 Nederlandse Duim het Portret van Z.M. den Koning der Nederlanden, naar een ... tekening van J.H. Neuman'. He was paid two and a half thousand guilders for the work and had to have it finished by 15 September 1868. See the contract dated 19 August 1867 between J.W. Kaiser and Messrs Buffa, in the Rijksmuseum.
- 89 '...la photographie ne pourrait pas reproduire aussi exactement que quand on emploie les mêmes moyens dont on s'est servi pour composer les originaux.' See also Asser and Verhoogt, op. cit. (note 84), p. 348.
- 90 'Met genoegen ontving ik het my toegedachte exemplaar der eerste aflevering van de *Curiosités du Cabinet d'estampes d'Amsterdam*, die mij reeds te Amsterdam eene groote voldoening was te beschouwen. Ik wensch u geluk met eene zoo wel geslaagde uitvoering, die tevens voor eene school eene oefening was en eene proef van hetgeen wij van haar mogen wachten. Voor eene tweede aflevering kan op gelijke ondersteuning van Regeringswege als voor de eerste, worden gerekend.' See the letter dated 14 June 1864 from the Minister of the Interior, J.R. Thorbecke, in The Hague to J.W. Kaiser, in the Rijksmuseum.
- 91 Heb zeer vriendelijk dank, We!Edel Heer, voor het vervolg van uw prachtige werk, dat



- uw school op zoo waardige wijze vertegenwoordigt, en tegelijk de geschiedenis der kunst verrijkt. Het is een geschenk aan den vreemde zoowel als aan ons. Het zal mij nog menig genot verschaffen, en bij herhaalde inzage telkens de erkentlijkheid jegens den meester onzer gravure vernieuwen. Met zeer bijzondere hoogachting heb ik de eer te zijn. UwEdel., Thorbecke'. See the letter dated 19 March 1869 from J.R. Thorbecke in The Hague to J.W. Kaiser, in the Rijksmuseum.
- 92 For a detailed description of the Six Family Collection see T. Beijer et al., *Nicolaas Tulp. Leven en werk van een Amsterdams geneesheer en magistraat*, Amsterdam 1991.
- 93 P. Zilcken, *Herinneringen van een Hollandsche Schilder der negentiende eeuw 1877-1927*, unpublished typescript, Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD), The Hague 1928, p. 109.
- 94 J.W. Kaiser was knighted as an engraver in France on 26 August 1869. On 1 October 1870 he was appointed professor at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten with an annual income of two and a half thousand guilders. See appointment resolutions in the Rijksmuseum.
- 95 'zal etsen een plaatwerk getiteld, De Kunstverzameling van de Heeren Six uitgegeven in acht afleveringen elk van zes platen en vier à acht pagina's text ...' See art. 1 of the contract dated September 1874 between J.W. Kaiser and A. Blomhert regarding the engraving of the Six art collection, in het Rijksmuseum.
- 96 See art. 2 of the contract between J.W. Kaiser and A. Blomhert (note 96).
- 97 See art. 7 of the contract between J.W. Kaiser and A. Blomhert (note 96).
- 98 In the first instalment Kaiser wrote an introduction to the Six family's collection. See the first part of *De Hollandsche School uit de kunstverzameling der Heeren Six. Album van 50 der voornaamste schilderijen uit dat kabinet gegraveerd en toegelicht door J.W. Kaiser*, Nijmegen/Amsterdam s.a., p. 4.
- 99 'Even alsof Rembrandt aan de famielje Six proeven van het uiterste vermogen van zijn veelzijdig talent heeft willen nalaten, schilderde hij het portret van Johan in tegenstelling met dat der moeder, in den stoutsten en breedsten stijl, zoo als hij alleen vermocht, en elke, die hem poogt na te volgen tot wanhoop moet brengen.' *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- 100 The printmaker's efforts to make an accurate representation of the original were also admired by Johan Gram in his discussion of the work of the lithographer J.J. Mesker, see J. Gram, 'Schilderij en lithographie', *Kunstkronijk* 17 (1875), pp. 50-51.
- 101 T. Fawcett, 'Graphic versus Photographic in the Nineteenth-Century Reproduction', *Art History* 9 (1986), p. 204.
- 102 P.-L. Renié, 'The Battle for a Market. Art Reproductions in Print and Photography from 1850-1880', in K. Stewart-Howe (ed.), *Intersections. Lithography, Photography and the Traditions of Printmaking*, Albuquerque 1998, pp. 46-47.
- 103 'Het gelaat dat u schijnt toe te spreken is, hoewel breed en stout geschilderd, uitvoerig afgewerkt; maar de kleeren en handen zijn ineens en als spelende aangezet, doch met een juistheid, van kleur en toon die geen grootere uitvoerigheid doet wenschen. ... het is alsof men het werk uit de hand des meesters ziet voortkomen en hij ons een blik gunt in de rijke schatkamer zijner verbeelding.' Kaiser was referring here to the poem about Rembrandt by Cornelis de Bie, see C. de Bie, *Het Gulden Cabinet van de edel vrij schilderconst*, Antwerp 1662.
- 104 Van Gogh, too, in a letter written to his brother Theo on or about 7 November 1885, pointed this out about Rembrandt's technique, see Jansen et al., op. cit. (note 42), pp. 309-10.
- 105 See the agreement dated January 1884 between J.W. Kaiser and Pauline Johanna Blomhert-Koopman, in the Rijksmuseum.
- 106 On 1 April 1875, Kaiser was appointed director of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. He had been a member of the museum's Board of Governors since 1860, as the successor to Nicolaas Pieneman, who died suddenly that year. He was paid twelve hundred and fifty guilders a year, and a house on the museum site was placed at his disposal. When he was appointed director, he was responsible for both the Museum of Paintings and the Print Room. Something over a year later, on 11 June 1876, however, he was relieved of his responsibility for the Print Room and succeeded there by J.P. van der Kellen. In his post as director, Kaiser set to work on a new catalogue of the museum's collection. The result appeared in 1880: *Beschrijving der schilderijen van het Rijksmuseum te Amsterdam*. Not long after the publication of the catalogue, the whole collection was packed up ready to move from the Trippenhuys, often called the 'paintings warehouse', to the new purpose-built accommodation designed by the architect Pierre Cuypers. In 1883 Kaiser

- turned seventy and retired as director, leaving the actual move to his successor Frederik Daniel Otto Obreen (1851-1896). For the appointment resolution of 5 February 1875 see *Beschrijving der schilderijen van het Rijksmuseum te Amsterdam, met historische aanteekeningen en facsimile's der naamteekens* | uitgegeven op last van den Minister van Binnenlandsche Zaken, The Hague 1880, p. xxi. For a detailed account of Kaiser as director of the Rijksmuseum and this publication see E. Bergvelt, *Pantheon der Gouden Eeuw. Van Nationale Konst-Gallerij tot Rijksmuseum van schilderijen (1798-1896)*, Zwolle 2005, pp. 207-23.
- 107 There are no known photographs by him, although it would not have been unlikely in view of his great interest in photography. He was actively involved in organizing the major exhibition of photography in 1855 and his nephew Pieter Jan Kaiser (1838-1916) was an enthusiastic photographer who was the first person in the Netherlands to use the new medium for astronomy, see H. Rooseboom, 'P.J. Kaiser, of: het gebruik van de fotografie in de sterrenkunde, 1839-1880', *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 42 (1994), pp. 263-86.
- 108 Various editions of his engraving after Bartholomeus van der Helst's *Civic Banquet* were available, ranging in price from two hundred guilders for the artist's proof (the most expensive print in Buffa's stock to sixty guilders for a standard print. His print after the *Night Watch* was available for a hundred and fifty to forty guilders and *The Syndics* for eighty to twenty guilders. See *Catalogue des éditions de François Buffa & fils. Fournisseurs de la cour, éditeurs, marchands de Beaux-arts, tableaux, aquarelles, gravures, eau-fortes, encadrements, ouvrages illustrés, restauration et vernissage de tableaux, etc. etc. Exposition permanente etc. etc.*, Amsterdam 1900, unpagged.
- 109 See letter dated 6 December 1900 from Lieutenant-General, Adjutant-General of HM the Queen, Chancellor of the Netherlandish Order to the heirs of J.W. Kaiser, Leiden, in the Rijksmuseum.