The Lower-Middle Class at Work:
Paintings of Tradesmen in Interiors
by Quiringh van Brekelenkam

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INTRODUCTION

Dutch genre paintings of the seventeenth century occupy one of the key positions in our present view of that country's 'Golden Age.' A great number of major collections, both private and public, have among their treasures one or more of the small, realistically portrayed panels which depict scenes of everyday life in the Netherlands. Oddly enough, a major omission in the literature dealing with the art of the seventeenth century is the publication of a thorough study of the genre painters active in Holland. Such a survey is essential for a further understanding of the relationships between these painters, which has been emphasized in the literature only in the last decade or two. This has until recently been largely devoted to individual artists with little attempt on analyzing an artist in a larger context. Therefore the connections that authors had established between one artist and another were more often than not the master-pupil relationship, or the question of a 'school' as it can be applied to specific cities such as Leiden, Delft or Utrecht.

Broader approaches to individual artists and their works are now found in a number of the most recent studies, this constituting a
fundamental change in the manner in which the subject is now approached. While investigation dealing only with comparisons of genre painters and the pictures they produced does provide the most direct means to explore Dutch genre, it is becoming apparent that other avenues require exploration in order to realize a more complete understanding. The realization by scholars in the last generation that many of the paintings so admired for their charm, beauty and simplicity are invested with an involved symbolic content probably lies at the root of this reevaluation of Dutch genre scenes. An awareness of the artists' incorporation of emblematic literature in many of the depictions of everyday life allows for the elevation of the subject matter to a second level of meaning. Furthermore, the use of literature may be even more fundamental for the understanding of Dutch genre, as at least one recent study attempts to prove. Possible ties between an artist and author are examined in Svetlana Alpers' article "Realism as a Comic Mode: Low Life Painting Seen Through Bredero's Eyes." 

Literature is not, however, the only additional area that one should endeavor to explore. History, including its political, social, and economic aspects, must have held great importance for the artists in their genre representations. An obvious example of this concept relates to the decline in the quality of the art produced in the Netherlands in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. This decline ran parallel to an even greater influence of French culture
than before, foreign wars, including the French invasion of 1672, and a marked economic decline which particularly hurt the middle and lower classes. At this time a displacement of many of the qualities for which we admire Dutch art of the Baroque period occurred. Another relevant issue, and one more central to the topic to be examined in this paper, is the determination of events in Dutch society that were responsible for the decline of scenes of peasants painted in realistic, indeed often unflattering terms, in the middle years of the seventeenth century. Factors contributing to the decline of low-genre may also account for the development and the popularity of a higher genre which replaced it. This relationship, if it does exist, has never been sufficiently explored.

The aim of this paper is to examine a number of representations of the lower-middle class by the painter Quiringh van Brekelenkam. These will concern only individuals involved with trades and depicted in interiors, although the artist often painted merchants, particularly vegetable vendors, selling their products outside. The middle years of the seventeenth century in Holland saw an abundance of visual representations of figures at work. This was especially true in the centers of Rotterdam, Haarlem, and (largely due to Brekelenkam) Leiden.

A long-standing tradition of representing the trades in the arts had existed, but these were generally confined to an encyclopedic coverage of all occupations. In the sixteenth century throughout much of Europe one finds that many encyclopedic images of the trades and tradesmen were printed. Stemming apparently from the Seven Mechanical Arts which were an extension of the Seven Liberal Arts and Seven Virtues,
these representations blossomed into complete series of the known trades. The most accessible example is the *Standebuch*, or The Book of Trades ("Exact Description of All Ranks on Earth"), Frankfurt, 1568, with verse by Hans Sachs and woodcuts by Jost Amman. Other examples in Northern art include 'Scenes of Trade' woodcuts from Les Ordonnances de la Prevote des Marchands et Echevinage de la Ville de Paris, 1500-01, and painted miniatures by Nuremberg masters in the Mendel Housebook, Stadtarchiv, Nuremberg, representing occupations such as shoemaking and butchering.

In Holland, low-genre painters following the lead of the Fleming Adriaen Brouwer and Adriaen van Ostade did, however, represent tradesmen in a manner different from the encyclopedic examples, although strong moral interpretation remained. The emphasis in Brouwer's Village Inn (c. 1630-35, Munich, Alte Pinakotheke, fig. 1) for example, has shifted from the older tradition. Here the vulgarity of the individuals performing the occupation of barber/surgeon is as much the subject of the painting as the type of trade represented. The important question of an artist's attitude towards his subjects will be of primary concern in the following analysis of the trades painted by Quiringh van Brekelenkam. The lower-middle class at work may be viewed as a type of "respectable" low-genre in the middle years of the seventeenth century. Undoubtedly the changes in Dutch society brought on by increasing prosperity and peace contributed greatly to the upgrading of themes encountered earlier in the works of low-genre artists. One can discern a marked difference in the view taken by Brekelenkam in his
Tailor Shop (c. 1658-60, London, National Gallery, fig. 2). Compared to the Brouwer mentioned above, there is now a new sense of pride as a hard-working family labors at their craft in a comfortable, well-kept interior. The overall harmony of the composition is accentuated by the proud determination evident in these figures who neither revolt nor amuse the viewer.

The apparent change encountered between these two representations of trades is only one important aspect of Brekelenkam's painted scenes of tradesmen in interiors. This change of view raises a number of questions, the foremost of which involves an understanding of how Brekelenkam arrived at his mature view. Does Brekelenkam's view of the trades represent a gradual progress from one or more earlier traditions, or is there a virtual halt of the low-genre tradition, and a beginning of another, perhaps innovated by Brekelenkam? After an account of the few known documents concerning the artist, a study of his environment, both artistic and historical, will be undertaken to determine what may have inspired his paintings of the lower-middle class at work.

Quiringh van Brekelenkam, son of Gerrit Brekelenkam, was probably born in or about the year 1620. This is based on the dates of his activity, entry into the Guild of St. Luke in Leiden, and marriage. Besides the year of his birth, its location is also in doubt although most scholars cite Zwammerdam, a town approximately twelve miles from Leiden, as his birthplace. Prior to his activity as a painter he had moved to Leiden, where he is documented as having resided for his remaining years. Leiden, hometown of Rembrandt until he was
about twenty-five and later the center for the school of genre painting
led by Gerrit Dou, certainly had a great effect on the art of Brekelenkäm. It is tempting to identify Dou as his master, although there is no written evidence to substantiate this supposition. Records do reveal that on 8 March, 1648, Brekelenkäm was a founding member of the Guild of St. Luke in the city along with Dou and a number of other artists. Later in April of the same year the painter married Maria Carle in the Catholic church in Leiden. Their marriage, lasting only seven years before Maria died, resulted in six children. There is reason to believe, however, that at least one of the six died during this period. Brekelenkäm was remarried on the twenty-third of October, 1656, to Elisabeth van Beaumont, and three more children were born. Support for a family of this size appears to have created quite a financial burden on the artist, as additional documentation indicates that he took out a beer and wine license to augment his income from painting. Such a practice was certainly not out of the ordinary for Dutch painters, as a number of the most famous including Vermeer, de Hoogh, and Steen worked at a second occupation for additional income.

Thus Brekelenkäm labored at two occupations which in his time were considered lower-middle class, the same class which predominated in his interior scenes of tradesmen. A painting by Brekelenkäm, A Wine Merchant (1661, Vienna, Akademie, fig. 3) may well reflect the type of work that provided his second income. In the spacious interior the proprietor converses with a well-dressed patron, while
a woman sits behind the counter and works at her needlepoint. Generally it is from the position of a participant, and not as an onlooker with some type of preconceived judgement towards the workers, that Brekelenkam chooses to depict the activities of the lower-middle class. *A Wine Merchant* is evidence of this, as the artist has instilled an overall feeling of truth and sincerity in the interior and its inhabitants by means of each figure's appearance and positioning in the very recognizable shop.

The last document concerning Brekelenkam simply states "Quiring Gerritszoon Brekelinghkm Doot," which was written into the Guild register of St. Luke in Leiden next to an indication of the artist's non-payment of dues for the year of 1668. Therefore 1668 appears to be the year of the painter's death, a relatively early death as he lived only into his late forties.

The events documented in the lifetime of Quiringh van Brekelenkam are few in number and generally insignificant in regard to the light they cast upon his art. The most telling information is that he spent his entire career in Leiden, interesting since his art is by no means restricted to the concerns of Leiden's leading artists. Indeed, the majority of the works to be discussed in this paper tend to stand in opposition to their style. "Art historians have shown rather little interest in this painter of Dutch everyday life scenes, praying hermits, and occasional portrait and a few still lifes." This limited attention to the artist may be unjustified, given his numerous and inventive use of subjects. (Appendix 1) This abundance involves not only
his preference for occupational motifs depicted in a very participatory manner, but also as the author of a recent monograph on Jacob Ochtervelt suggests, the theme of commercial transactions taking place in an entrance hall, an important motif in Dutch art.11

Brekelenkam did repeat and copy subjects, and the quality of his accepted work ranges from minor masterpieces to works of poor quality, the latter diminishing his reputation considerably. Still, his range and familiarity with art beyond his immediate environment of Leiden are significant and worthy of examination. Indeed, artists such as Brekelenkam, who show both innovation and a knowledge of more than one tradition, are central to the understanding of Dutch genre painting in a broad view.
Notes to Introduction

1 The authors of three recent monographs have made great strides in approaching their subjects in a larger, overall context. See Albert Blankert's *Vermeer of Delft*, Franklin W. Robinson's *Gabriel Metsu*, and Peter Sutton's forthcoming volume on Pieter de Hoogh.

2 Svetlana Alpers, "Realism as a Comic Mode: Low Life Painting Seen Through Bredero's Eyes," *Simiolus* 8 (1975-76): 115-144.

3 Benjamin A. Rifkin makes mention of this evolution in his introduction to Jost Amman and Hans Sachs' *Book of Trades* (Standebuch), (Frankfurt am Main: Sigmund Feyerabend, 1568; reprint ed., New York: Dover, 1973), xv-xvi.

4 Ibid. Amman made woodcuts which illustrate an extensive number of contemporary professions, trades, and crafts. These were accompanied by Sachs' verse.

5 Ibid., ix-xlivii. Rifkin cites these examples of trades and tradesmen in his introduction to *The Book of Trades*.


7 For dates of the artist's two marriages, baptisms of nine children, entry into the guild and failure to pay guild dues the year of his death (all events which took place in Leiden) see H. Havard, *L'art et les artistes hollandais*, 102-106.

8 Ibid., 105-106. Brekelenkam twice had a child baptized Magdalena, indicating that the first had died prior to the naming of the second.

9 Ibid., 106.

Part One

Brekelenkam's Artistic Environment in Leiden, and his Social, Economic, and Historical Environment in the Netherlands at Mid-century

The documents indicate that Quiringh van Brekelenkam spent his entire career in Leiden. Consequently a great deal of information concerning the man and his art may be ascertained when he is placed in the context of Leiden and its artistic traditions. The inhabitants of the city in the seventeenth century could look with pride to its well-known university, and also, from approximately 1640 onward into the eighteenth century, to a unique and important school of genre painting. This school was characterized by a number of specific motifs and especially by a highly detailed and polished manner of execution. The style of painting and consequently the school were known as fijnschilderij, the Dutch work descriptive of their technique. The finished works are in part derived from the well-established tradition in Northern painting of a high degree of craftsmanship, traceable to Robert Campin and particularly Jan van Eyck. Christopher Brown writes of the Leiden school:

"The secret of the popularity of the Leiden 'fijnschilders' was the pleasure produced by an elaborately wrought object, whose careful finish testified not only the artist's infinite skill, but also to the immense amount of hard and patient work that has gone into its production."1

The role of one painter, Gerrit Dou, often thought of as the
master of Brekelenkam, was crucial for the development of Leiden's school of genre painting. He established the tradition that his students and followers continued for many decades. That there was indeed a "school" is relatively easy to establish, since Dou's stylistic innovations and subject matter are very apparent in the works of the artists who followed his lead. Brekelenkam can be included among these, but for the most part only early in his career. The small, meticulously finished paintings by Dou reveal specific motifs which, if not innovated by Dou, certainly lend themselves to his style. These include figures in niches involved in domestic tasks, representations of saints, and scenes where candlelight plays a major role. Seldom are tradesmen represented, and if they do appear, for example an artist in his studio or a physician (if one stretches the definition of a tradesman), their tradition is different than those occupations seem in the work of Brekelenkam.²

Once established, the specific motifs noted above were painted over and over again by the artists of the Leiden genre school. A comparison of two of Dou's paintings, The Hermit (c. 1640, London, The Wallace Collection) and A Girl with a Candle (1658, Munich, Alte Pinakothek), with two by Brekelenkam, A Hermit (1655, Utrecht, Central Museum) and A Woman at Her Toilette (Whereabouts unknown, fig. 4), reflect similarities in conception. Brekelenkam was very familiar with the fijnschilderij tradition in Leiden, although he could not approach Dou's proficiency in that style. It is of interest, then, that in a relatively short period of time he chose
to depict representations of the working lower-middle class in a style far from that of Dou and other painters of the school. In doing this, he draws upon traditions from both within and well beyond his immediate environment.

One must examine the various elements active in the university center of Leiden to understand more fully the *fijnschilderij* style and Brekelenkam's opposition to it. Before specifically looking at Dou and his sources, it is important to realize that a number of influences seem to have been at work on Brekelenkam, and that Dou, whose painting appears to stand in opposition to that of Brekelenkam's occupations, is not without consequence. Furthermore, Dou and Brekelenkam, whose precursors influenced them in either the point of view they adopted towards their subjects, the motifs they employed, or their manner of execution, did have common sources.

A relationship between Dou and his hometown is sensed especially in respect to the University of Leiden. In the forty years following its founding in 1585, the school changed from an academy of considerable liberality in spirit, in which the pursuit of theology had had a difficult start, into a university with a strictly Calvinist divinity school. Whereas vanitas representations, often connected with this religious outlook, most often take the form of still life, and since Dou's use of inanimate objects was extensive in his *fijnschilderij* compositions, definite ties between the two can be seen. Dou, perhaps drawing upon works by the onetime Leiden resident Jacques de Gheyn II like the *Vanitas* of 1603 (New York, Metropolitan Museum), incorporates the niche motif as well as the very tight
and precise handling generally associated with the Leiden genre tradition which followed. Although this is not the sole source for Dou's style or iconography, it is a major component. The effect of figures placed in niches and described in a manner "so finely painted as hardly to be distinguished from enamel," is that the subject is both physically and psychologically separated from the viewer. Even a work like Dou's Poulterer's Shop (c. 1670, London, National Gallery), with its active interplay between the two individuals, still retains a certain separation between the viewer and the figures located behind a parapet. An examination of Brekelenkam's paintings of tradesmen (e.g., fig. 2,3), suggests quite the opposite effect. A viewer approaches these works as a sharer. There are no barriers separating the onlooker and the scene, and in a final analysis of his interior views representing trades, it is this approach to the subject matter in combination with the motifs that Brekelenkam used which show his innovative character.

While this comparison between the work of Dou and Brekelenkam places them in opposition to one another, there appears to have been other Leiden traditions from which both artists could draw inspiration. The most important is that of Rembrandt, before he left Amsterdam in late 1630 or early 1631. Most accounts of Dou's career are quite sketchy in respect to his stylistic sources, except for the mention of Rembrandt, who was Dou's last teacher from 1628 until the end of 1630. Rembrandt's influence on Dou,
remaining at least superficially very strong in the work of Dou for approximately a decade, lasted until the latter developed his fijnschilderij manner. The impact by Rembrandt on his student must be looked at in two ways, for Rembrandt is important not only for innovations of his own which he passed on to Dou, but also for those elements transmitted by him from general trends in earlier painting in Leiden. At times the two are nearly indistinguishable, and this problem is compounded when one considers how tempting it is to credit Rembrandt with accomplishments beyond those of his own innovation.

Rembrandt seems to have inspired a number of interests in Dou, and also in Brekelenkam a generation later, although not in a similar manner. The relationship between Dou and Rembrandt is evident in the resemblance of themes in their years of association, and shortly thereafter in the work of Dou. Since Rembrandt was also in a formative period of development at the time, there are inconsistencies found in his paintings. In these Dou found a broad base from which to draw inspiration. When one compares Rembrandt's A Head Operation (c. 1627, Hoevelaken, N.J. van Aalst) with his Tobit and Anna with the Kid (1626, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum), a marked difference in the artist's handling of the brush is detected. The second painting, more precise and tighter in brushstroke, appears to have been important for Dou in the later development of his style. Seymour Slive observes that,
"During the years in Leiden Rembrandt was capable of working with infinite perseverance on the tiny, minutely executed pictures which soon established the Leiden school of feinmalerer. His early followers were attracted by the refinement of his finished paintings. They learned to imitate them, but they had no idea of the toughness and the blood and bones beneath their surfaces which give strength and vitality to their polished works."  

Rembrandt did, however, exhibit a style of execution in Leiden that is quite opposed to the one from which Dou drew inspiration. The looser handling evident in some paintings by Brekelenkam may not directly evolve from Rembrandt, but there is an interesting similarity. The Interior of a Pharmacy (Christie's sale 10 July, 1953, fig. 5) comes much closer to the looser brushstroke of Rembrandt's A Head Operation. In addition, Brekelenkam's figures, members of the lower-middle class, more closely resemble the type of figure represented by Rembrandt which have a source in the low-genre tradition. Rembrandt's stress on emotion evident in A Head Operation is not taken up by Brekelenkam, thereby allowing a completely different type of interpretation of the scene by the spectator. Without making any type of judgement, the viewer and the participants in The Interior of Pharmacy confront each other on equal terms.

Rembrandt's attitude toward his subject matter is not always of the kind seen in A Head Operation. Another look at Rembrandt's paintings in Leiden may further illuminate his effect on those works by Brekelenkam examined here. The majority of the paintings
executed by Rembrandt prior to his move to Amsterdam dealt with religious themes, while portraits date only from the end of this period. Less traditional and more personal interests are incorporated in the few genre paintings dating before 1631. These reveal Rembrandt's devotion to observing the world around him - 'naer het leven.' The environment around held his attention, and its depiction, often of family members and familiar interiors, is found in Rembrandt's Leiden genre works. Two of these will be discussed, serving to point out Rembrandt's attention to nature and how this relates to the art of Quiringh Van Brekelenkam.

The earliest surviving painting of a genre theme by Rembrandt is The Musical Party (1626, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum). The subject probably relates to the sense of hearing, as four figures are engaged in musical activity. While many of Rembrandt's early interests are evident in this painting, including his use of light and shadow, it is the artist's point of view taken towards the subject matter that is of the greatest importance here. Most of the literature concerned with The Musical Party deals with its meaning and whether or not the figures represented are members of the artist's family.7 Certainly there is evidence to indicate that the young harpist is a self-portrait and that the older woman to the right of the composition is Rembrandt's mother. In any case, Rembrandt has depicted all the figures with a familiarity that would indicate a close relationship between the artist and
the subjects. The viewer becomes an audience for the musicians, a relationship enhanced by the eye contact from the two men, the diamond-like shape of the composition which is easily entered by the spectator, and finally the still life of books, music, and a lyre in the foreground which seems to project beyond the picture plane.

Similar, but on a more intimate scale, is The Money-Changer (1627, Berlin-Dahlem, Gemaldegalerie). Here light and its effects are very important, as a candle is the source of illumination, later a motif used extensively by the fijnschilderij painters. The theme of gold-weighers, money-changers and corresponding professions occur in the art of the North at least as early as Quentin Metsys's famous painting of The Gold-Weigher and his Wife (1514, Paris, Louvre). Generally these scenes were intended to symbolize avarice. The actual mechanics of the trade are not stressed in Rembrandt's painting, as the old man examines a gold piece in his hand. Rembrandt does, however, show a great deal of interest in the character of the face of the man, which is neither highly emotional nor repellent to the viewer as were the faces encountered in The Head Operation. Instead the expression, while incorporating some elements of caricature, is nevertheless more sympathetic and accessible. This relegation of the specifics of the trade to a somewhat secondary level and the stress on the human character of the protagonist may have had much to say to
an artist like Brekelenkam. The *Cobbler's Workshop* (c. 1660, Zurich, Private Collection, fig. 6) by Brekelenkam represents a cobbler at his trade, while a woman on either side of the seated man attends to her business. The cobbler and Rembrandt's figure in *The Money-Changer*, possess a number of similar qualities, as they intently involve themselves with their work. Each man is of advanced years and is seen in a frank and a truthful manner in regard to his station in life.

Rembrandt influenced Leiden artistic traditions in other ways which may have been useful to Brekelenkam. One of these involves an artist who Rembrandt admired and appears to have been influenced by, Adriaen Brouwer. In Rembrandt's etchings and drawings of his early period (1630-35), there are many of peasant figures reminiscent of Brouwer. Besides this, the inventory of Rembrandt's estate does mention works by or after Brouwer. Rembrandt's certain knowledge of Brouwer may have begun before his move to Amsterdam from Leiden, if one accepts the earliest dates for the Rembrandt drawings that recall Brouwer. The *Head Operation* is imbued with a low-genre flavor in the strong caricature-like representation of the surgeon and his assistant, and the patient grimacing in pain. The low-genre element apparent as one trend of Rembrandt's painting in Leiden is of interest in the discussion of Brekelenkam and his tradesmen in interiors. Low-genre images by Brouwer and his Dutch follower Adriaen van Ostade were not
restricted to roudy scenes which took place in taverns or outside. Hofstede de Groot lists in his Catalogue of Dutch Painters a category for each of these two painters involving representations of peasants at work.¹⁰ The themes are varied, from shoemakers to dentists. Consideration of a more specific relationship between their low-genre motifs and those painted by Brekelenkam will be taken up in the section dealing with Brekelenkam's tradesmen.

Another Rembrandt-related influence for Leiden artistic tradition prior to the generation of Brekelenkam is the work of his follower Jan Joris van der Vliet. Between 1630 and 1634 he made at least a dozen etchings after paintings by Rembrandt. In addition, van der Vliet in the same years etched a series of eighteen trades which "show nothing of Rembrandt's influence,"¹¹ as they "are crude, and they are primarily of interest as social documents."¹² This series adheres to a long tradition of trade representations with which Brekelenkam was no doubt familiar. One of van der Vliet's etchings, A Wood Turner (fig. 7) of c. 1635, includes all the accessories peculiar to the trade, including a lathe. The character of the man who carries out the trade is not alluded to, as he is little more than another accessory. As noted, this type of image has a long history and is characteristic of the encyclopedic approach. Two recent discussions on the encyclopedic view of the trades are found in a long footnote by

The view taken by Brekelenkam in his representations of tradesmen is neither encyclopedic, nor is it involved with a quasi-religious or moralistic interpretation. Certainly Brekelenkam derives much inspiration from earlier traditions in Leiden, but he is also in his own time. A survey of events and changes occurring in Holland during his years of activity will partially serve to account for the positive quality encountered in Brekelenkam's paintings of trades and tradesmen in interiors.

The Republic of the United Netherlands experienced a number of important changes in the period between Rembrandt's activity in Leiden and that of Brekelenkam's. Political and economic developments prior to mid-century brought about changes in society directly relevant to this discussion of Brekelenkam. The representations of trades by Brekelenkam and other artists of his generation and later reflect the new role taken up by the middle and middle-lower classes in Dutch society.

The single most important event to occur was the signing of the Treaty of Münster with Spain, ratified May 15, 1648. Thus the independence of the Dutch Republic was at long last recognized.
The treaty in a sense reflected the sentiments of the majority of the Dutch leaders, as the peace party which had grown since the Truce of Westphalia in 1609 became much stronger in the 1630's and 1640's.\textsuperscript{15} It was their belief that satisfactory terms could be obtained from Spain, rather than that war was necessary. The principal difference separating the peace and war parties centered on the fact that the former could see the ending of the war as a desirable objective, while for the latter, peace with Spain was undesirable either for political or religious reasons.\textsuperscript{16} The chief underlying cause for the peace party's objective was, however, economic. The Republic's trade, industry and fisheries were so well developed, and depended so heavily on foreign markets and on a very complex system of commerce that its prosperity, in the view of the peace party, could be damaged by any disturbance of European peace.\textsuperscript{17} Their assumption appears to have been at least partially proven correct later in the century when war with France and other European countries in the 1670's had a nearly catastrophic effect on the previously strong economy.

Economics, as it touched all levels of Dutch society, is of paramount importance, for on it is based either directly or indirectly nearly all the accomplishments of the countries 'Golden Age.' In contrast with the rest of Europe, a Dutchman's social class rested almost exclusively on economic differences.\textsuperscript{18} The "upper class" of approximately 10,000 members controlled the large
economic enterprises. Furthermore, this class comprised the governing body for the nation. The wealth generated by this relatively elite although not courtly class, reached downward to all classes.

"It is clear that Holland's prosperity was not confined to one section of society alone. Although its merchants and manufactures undoubtedly benefited most, and most spectacularly, from Holland's economic development, large sections of the middle and lower-middle classes in the towns shared in this prosperity to an extent remarkable in the 17th century."

The bulk of the Dutch population was grouped in the middle and lower-middle classes. There was an unmistakable distinction made between the two, the middle class including professional workers, clergymen, professors, lawyers, and some of the wealthier and more ambitious shopkeepers. Brekelenkam and the class he tended most often to represent belonged to the lower-middle class. This class was made up of "workers whose employment was more regular, such as the self-employed, skilled labourers and artisans, small shopkeepers, junior clerks and small traders." To this group could also be added petty officials, small farmers, and master-mariners. The effect that the middle levels of the population had on the complexion of Holland was considerable. A view of the tastes and situation of Brekelenkam's class is informative, for the class appears to have comprised the market for most genre painters, and in particular Brekelenkam's tradesmen.
The Dutch lower-middle class was for the most part economically stable, relatively well-educated with higher literacy rates than those of their 'counterparts' in other countries, and unique in that they brought much art in Holland's open art market. The modest wealth of this class was certainly a result of the overall prosperity of the Republic, but the financial stability of the workers was inexorably linked to their membership in one of a number of guilds. Available guild records reflect the size and relative importance of the lower-middle class in the craft-based industrial character of the Netherlands. This situation continued without appreciable change for the entire century, as guild records for as late as 1688 in Amsterdam continue to reflect the strength of lower-middle class workers. The majority of the businesses in Amsterdam were still small, employing no more than six to ten people in a single shop. The largest guild was that of the tailors, with 881 members, while there were 343 shoemakers and tanners, 658 cobblers, 600 building workers, and 238 metal workers.

Economic security gave the lower-middle class the means to purchase the relatively inexpensive genre paintings, such as Brekelenkam's pictures of tradesmen, but the artist still has to interpret the tastes and concerns of the class to assure saleability. The buyers expected a suitable subject above all else, an appropriate interpretation, and finally artistic skill and technical accomplishments.
other genre painters were members of the lower-middle class, they had an intimate knowledge of the buyers' expectations and desires. These expectations and desires were then translated into the finished works of art now seen as characteristic of the Dutch people.

The Dutch, as travellers to 17th century Holland were apt to point out, are characterized not only by prosperity, but also a great simplicity of life, and a quiet domesticity. These virtues, rooted in reality and bred by a sense of actuality due to the precarious nature of the Republic's situation in European society, were expressed in the arts. While paintings crystalized this concept into discreet images and are most familiar today, literature was even more important for the Dutch in expressing the aspirations of their society.

Literature, made available through the Chambers of Rhetoric or in printed matter found within most Dutch households, provided recreation for "many thousands of shopkeepers, artisans, and even peasants."26 Owing to high literacy rate and flourishing printing and book trades in many Dutch cities, including Leiden (a university town), writers were widely acknowledged in their own lifetimes, more so than most painters. The most popular writer for the middle and lower-middle classes was Jacob Cats (1577-1660), affectionately known as 'Father Cats.' He captivated the reading public with style and content. His writings set a middle-class standard and
provide strong parallels to genre painting. A feeling for the overall character of Cats' moral adages provides an insight to his public, many of whom no doubt were in the pool of buyers for Brekelenkam's paintings.

It is said that an illustrated edition of Cats' writings in Dutch sold 50,000 copies by 1655, no small number when taken as a percentage of the entire population, and certainly reflective of the overall literacy of the United Netherlands. Reasons for such popularity centered around his ability to address the public so directly, so ingenuously and in so homely a fashion. Cat's themes involved the workaday world of man's place in society, so that by basing his writings on the attitudes and ideas of the Dutch middle and lower-middle classes he gave his readers what they "understood and liked, because the whole nation recognized itself in his often entertaining and always instructive musings." His work bespeaks infinite attention to details of domestic life, experiences with insight into the mind of the common man. The theme of the virtue of hard work was extremely attractive to Cats.

One example, 'Work' of about 1619 (illustrated by Adriaen van de Venne or a follower; fig. 8) is taken from Cats' Alle de Werken, Amsterdam, 1665. The Christian work ethic, with an allegorical struggle between the soul, spirit and life, is presented in the guise of a Dutch kitchen interior.

A more interesting example of emblem literature due to its
accompanying illustration is an emblem on the virtues of domestic labor by another Dutch writer, Johan de Brune. The adage 'Wat rust en ghewin gheeft luttel onderwin' is found with the scene of a domestic interior (fig. 9). This particular example is one of fifty-one emblems from de Brune's *Emblemata of Zinnewerck...*, Amsterdam, 1624. In the image two individuals, a spinner and a wood carver, are shown, and a truthfult and generally pleasing representation of the virtuous couple results. Brekelenkam's *Spinners* (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, fig. 10) reflects a mood similar to that of the 1624 book illustration. An old couple in a rustic interior confronts the viewer with the virtues of their domestic existence. There is, however, a more personal and involved relationship between the subjects and the viewer in the *Spinners* than in the illustration for de Brune's emblem.

The difference between scenes of domestic workers and those of tradesmen is not great, since both addressed the values of the middle and lower-middle class buyers. Paintings of both of these categories of related subjects could be found hanging in private homes and places of business. An interest and pride in one's environment was always the foremost requirement in a painting, and for a 'nation of shopkeepers' the development of representations of tradesmen at their work is not an unexpected phenomenon. Peter Munday, a 17th century English traveler to Holland states the relationship that the Dutch had with collecting art:
"All in general to adorn their houses, especially the outer or street room with costly pieces, butchers and bakers not much inferior in their shops, which are fairly set forth, yea many times blacksmiths, cobblers etc., will have some pictures or others by their forge and in their stall. Such is the general notion, inclination and delight that these country natives have to paintings."32
Notes to Part One

1 Christopher Brown, Dutch Genre Painting, Themes and Painters in the National Gallery, series 2, no. 6 (London: National Gallery, 1976), 26.

2 Artists of the 16th and early 17th centuries often depicted physicians in unflattering terms, indicative of their seeing a doctor as a quack. Hieronymus Bosch's *The Stone Operation*, Prado, Madrid, is an extreme example of this concept, as the surgeon removes the stone of folly.


7 Portraits identified as the artist and those of his mother bear a close resemblance to two of the figures in *The Musical Party*. See *Connoisseur* 192 (August 1976): 321-22.


9 Ibid., 40.

11 Rosenberg, 149.

12 Ibid.

13 Keith Moxey, Pieter Aertsen, Joachim Beuckelaer, and the Rise of Secular Painting in the Context of the Reformation (New York: Garland, 1977), 52-53. Moxey states that: "This subject may possibly be related to the growing interest in the representation of the different professions. This interest first manifested itself in Nuremberg where the Landauer Portratbuch in the Stadtbibliothek, Nuremberg, dating from the late 15th and early 16th centuries, contained a large quantity of miniatures representing the members of a monastic order busy at a wide variety of different tasks. These miniatures were most influential on subsequent woodcut series representing the different professional occupations. This is evident in the most important of these series, Joost Amman's Eygentliche Beschreibung Aller Stande, published in Frankfurt in 1568, for which he executed 104 woodcuts. A series of woodcuts representing the professions exists in Polydor Vergilius' Buch von den Erfinden der Dinge (Augsburg: 1537). Another series of woodcuts is contained in Johann Reymsweyss, Ain Nutzlich Buchlein...Da ein all Stand der menschen begriffen ordenlich un mit flyeys...den Jungen fruchtbarlich zulesen (Augsburg: 1531)."

14 See Benjamin A. Rifkin's Book of Trades introduction, xiv-xlili.


16 Ibid.

17 Ibid., 7.

18 Bertha Mook stresses the differences between the Dutch social classes and those found in other parts of Europe. See The Dutch Family in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1979), 2.

20 Price, 47.


22 Individuals of the middle and lower-middle classes often bought paintings to adorn the walls of their homes and businesses. This was testified to by a number of foreign travelers in Holland in the seventeenth century, (see page 25), and the many instances of paintings within paintings found in Dutch genre painting.


28 Huizinga, 66.


30 Landwehr, 62.
31 Johan de Brune, *Emblemata of Zinnowerck...* (Amsterdam, 1624).

32 Boxer, 171.
Part Two

The Paintings of Tradesmen in Interiors by Quiringh van Brekelenkam

-Cobblers-

The paintings of tradesmen in interiors by Quiringh van Brekelenkam, although closely associated with his representations of domestic interiors where women sew, spin, or prepare food, constitute one distinct and important category of his oeuvre. Two trades are dominant in his work, cobblers and weavers, but scenes of merchants and shopkeepers are also important. The tradesmen are all illustrative of Brekelenkam's desire to exhibit his fellow lower-middle class countrymen at work in a manner as dignified as their means could allow, and generally, if allegorical overtones are incorporated, they are greatly subordinated to the narrative. His treatment of this subject matter differs from the low-genre images of tradesmen that, after being developed earlier in the century, were still painted at mid-century and later in the Netherlands and in particular Haarlem.

The largest single group of tradesmen in Brekelenkam's oeuvre is cobblers. Henry Havard, as early as 1881 in the only catalogue
of Brekelenkam paintings, listed thirteen cobblers that he believed to have been executed by Brekelenkam.¹ The trade of shoemaking as an artistic motif had a long tradition prior to Brekelenkam's concern with the subject in the 1650's and perhaps the early 1660's. Included in an encyclopedic coverage of the trades is Jost Amman's woodcut of the 1560's which accompanies Hans Sachs's verse on 'Der Schuhmacher' in The Book of Trades (fig. 11).² Two cobblers busy with their work are seated at a table, while behind them a third offers shoes for inspection to a customer who stands outside the workshop at a ledge. Amman concentrates on the mechanics of shoemaking rather than on the individuals involved. The production, selling, and display of the product are all incorporated into the scene. The artist also evades the cobbler's involvement with the viewer by taking a point of view slightly above ground level, thus limiting their accessibility.

Other encyclopedic coverages of tradesmen in the sixteenth century included cobblers, but more interesting and important in relation to Brekelenkam's paintings are the contemporary and nearly contemporary low-genre artists active in the Netherlands who incorporated the subject of shoemaking in their works. A comparison between the works of these low-genre artists and those of Brekelenkam will serve to point out the innovative qualities found in Brekelenkam's paintings which stand in opposition to the low-genre tradition.
Adriaen van Ostade, the most famous native Dutch low-genre artist and the pupil of Adriaen Brouwer, etched and painted cobblers at their stalls. The well-known Cobbler (fig. 12), an etching of 1671, dates later than examples by Brekelenkam, but is nevertheless reflective of the artist's view of tradesmen at an earlier moment. The etching and a painted copy after Adriaen van Ostade (London, National Gallery) are not concerned with showing specifics of the trade, but the circumstances of the craftsman. The cobbler works in a structure attached to the front of a house and converses with a man sitting opposite him. The figures, rather stocky and unnaturalistic as is typical of van Ostade, clearly do not share in the overall prosperity of the Dutch Republic. Wilenski's description of the figures painted or etched by Adriaen van Ostade here applies, as "they still cling to the wall of their hovels as though afraid to venture far into the light."³ The cobbler occupies the small structure in a way that, probably suggestive of the cobbler's indolence, brings to mind a dog in its doghouse. This is doubtless intended by the artist as a dog is seen sleeping on the roof of the shed.

The importance of Adriaen van Ostade as a painter of tradesmen was great, for he influenced and at times collaborated with a number of low-genre artists active in Holland at mid-century. Two Haarlem low-artists working during this time period, Cornelis Beelt and Johannes Oudenrogge, the later originally from Leiden
and the brother-in-law of Brekelenkamp, painted cobbler in their workshops. The Cobblers' Workshop (Arnheim, private collection, fig. 13) by Beelt reveals their interests and approach. In a roomy but dimly lit interior are found three cobbler and a customer. While the production, display and sale of the product recalls Amman's woodcut of the previous century, they are not the major concern of the artist. The scale of the figures also differs, as the space tends to overwhelm the cobbler who are seated around a table which is set well within the room. Interesting is the positioning of the windows in the left wall, the table near the center, and a door opening to a room beyond at the extreme right, for it approximates the scheme found in many of Brekelenkamp's paintings of cobbler.

The figures in Beelt's Cobblers' Workshop are typically low-genre, their faces closer to doll-like caricatures than realistically portrayed individuals. The viewer reacts to these people with amusement rather than sympathetically or with approval. Beelt uses the van Ostade device of huddling the peasants in groups, "individually afraid to venture out on their own." "

Beelt and Oudenrogge frequently painted cobbler and other tradesmen, and their low-genre approach to the subject matter represents the most popular way to represent it at mid-century. Brekelenkamp, however, while painting similar themes, incorporates innovations which tend to separate his work from that of the low-genre Haarlem tradition.
One painting of the seven of cobblers by Brekelenkam discussed here, The Cobbler's Studio (Lyons, Museum, fig. 14), falls outside the artist's usual depiction of the subject. This undated work, which appears to be an early painting due to its coarseness and lack of finish, retains a likeness to the Haarlem low-genre tradesmen. To all other tradesmen by Brekelenkam, the term low-genre should not be applied. In the Lyons picture the artist depicts the cobbler in very unsympathetic, almost mocking terms, with a vulgarity in the laborers expression. This vulgarity is further enhanced by the man's generally unkept appearance, including whiskers and wrinkled clothing. Certainly the cobbler in this painting is much closer to the figures of Adriaen Brouwer than to other cobblers painted by Brekelenkam.

The Lyon Cobbler's Studio is confusing, for the artist has combined elements inherent to an unflattering low-genre representation with those that are involved in Brekelenkam's more accessible images of lower middle-class figures. Seated next to the cobbler and contrasting with him is his wife doing her needlepoint. She is the ideal of domestic virtue, a theme popularized at the time by Gerrit Dou in Leiden, and especially Nicolaes Maes in Amsterdam and after 1653 in his native Dordrecht. The woman occupies the central position in the composition, but adding to the confusion of the work and detracting from her importance is her placement in front of an open door to the rear, where another couple is
working. The viewer loses the full impact of the cobbler and his wife due to these inconsistencies in characterization and composition. Only the many still life elements are carried over to other cobbler's workshops by Brekelenkam. In these pictures the artist is more consistent, not discriminating in his positive attitude towards the subjects. The result is more successful works of art.

Brekelenkam's cobblers in their workshops appear to evolve from a single-figured to a three-figured composition. The Shoemaker in his Workshop, (1653, London art market, fig. 15) and the undated Shoemaker (Amsterdam, formerly the E. Wiersum collection, fig. 16) are two works involving one figure and exhibiting many of the elements common to the entire group of cobblers to be examined below. The workshop in each of the paintings is based on the same model. A double set of windows that also serve as a counter by means of the shutters which fold out and down are on the left near the rear wall, ceiling timbers are apparent, and occupying the left and center portions of the interior is a wooden platform on which the cobbler and his worktable are placed. The right half of the workshop varies from painting to painting, however. The cobbler assumes the same position in each painting, as he is seated in a three-quarter view with his back to the table on the right.

The Shoemaker, discussed by its previous owner in a 1939 Oud Holland article, appears to be the earlier of the two single-figured compositions, as it exhibits a greater simplicity and less
attention to detail. Both works, however, give early indication of Brekelenkam's innovative interest in recording tradesmen in sympathetic and approachable terms, as each cobbler is shown confronting the viewer directly. The 1653 Shoemaker in His Workshop shows a man of advanced years, peering intently through his spectacles to the work in his lap. The character of the man is revealed in agreeable and forthright terms; he looks rather like a friendly grandfather. While Beelt's Cobblers' Workshop similarly depicts the trade in a room with windows on the left and a doorway to the extreme right, there is a completely different effect in feeling when it is compared to the Brekelenkam. Beelt places his cobblers well within the space of the dimly lit room, isolated from the viewer. This effect is further enhanced by placing the figures on all four sides of the worktable, as the figure closest to the viewer is seen only from the back and with his arms outstretched, thus limiting the accessibility of the entire group. In addition, the characterization of each figure contrasts with that of the single, more accessible cobbler painted by Brekelenkam. Finally, Brekelenkam further familiarizes the observer with the figure by including a large number of objects in the scene which are not essential to the cobbler's trade, and may be symbolic. These include a map on the back wall, a birdcage, and numerous ceramic wares.

The lack of these motifs and less polished execution call for
an earlier dating of the Shoemaker, as mentioned above. Although Dr. Wiersum indicated his belief that this work was in all probability a study for a 1654 three-figured composition, A Cobbler in his Workshop (Amiens, Museum, fig. 17), intermediaries such as the 1653 Shoemaker in his Workshop make his assumption questionable. The author may be correct in suggesting that the Shoemaker was an early independent work which has since been cut down. This would account for the absence of the spatial extension to the right which one finds in the other Brekelenkam cobblers. Generally this additional space includes a doorway or staircase and often a woman involved in a domestic task.

The Shoemaker in his Workshop (1656?, Montgomeryshire, Wales, collection of David Davies, fig. 18) presents an example of a cobbler with a second figure present. The left half of the composition is nearly identical with the 1653 Shoemaker in his Workshop discussed above, as both show the cobbler seated at work near a table which is raised on a wooden platform. Similar also is the corner of the room depicted; strong illumination comes from a pair of windows on the left. A number of objects are positioned in a manner recalling the earlier painting, for example the shoes perched on the window sill, the map on the back wall, and the shelf and tool rack below the map. The figure of the cobbler appears at first glance to be the same man, but a close examination reveals considerable changes. Again the artist chose to represent an older man with
a white beard, balding, and looking through his glasses to his work, but here the cobbler is much more naturally rendered, as individual features and textures approximate more closely those of actual experience. A greater maturity and competence on the part of the artist accompanies the development of the theme of cobblers.

While there is still a rustic quality in this interior, it is less conspicuous than the activity of the individuals depicted. The cobbler is more actively involved in his work; his right arm is held away from his body in order to exert a greater pressure on the unfinished shoe in his lap. The woman to his left, certainly his wife, is also engaged in work. Brekelenkam positioned her behind a spinning wheel to stress the importance of domestic virtue. The image of a tradesman set in a domestic interior shows the artist drawing from two separate traditions and combining them in a novel way. Furthermore, a still life of pots and dishes before the spinning wheel to the right is reminiscent of those seen in works by fijnschilderij painters. Gerrit Dou's Old Woman Combing a Boy (c. 1650, Richmond, Sir Frederick Cook, fig. 19) includes a number of similar kitchen items. An examination of the two paintings indicates an attempt on the part of Brekelenkam to approximate a fijnschilderij handling. His still life is painted with a much tighter brushstroke and exhibits a polished effect.
While Brekelenkam usually painted in a doorway leading to another room at the right, he chose here to employ a circular staircase which brings to mind Isaak Koedyck's Foot Operation of the late 1640's or early 1650's, (London, art market, fig. 20). Both Rembrandt and Dou included circular staircases in painted interiors, but never in association with the well-defined and strongly lit space exhibited in Koedyck's work.  

A comparison of the Foot Operation with Brekelenkam's Shoemaker in his Workshop reveals other similarities besides the circular staircase. Both are well illuminated, with windows in the left wall, shelves on the back wall, and the incorporation of wooden beams in the ceiling. Koedyck may have been important to Brekelenkam, for as Franklin Robinson points out in his monograph on Gabriel Metsu, there is a connection between Koedyck and the Leiden school.

Returning to Brekelenkam's Wales Shoemaker in his Workshop, the accessibility of the figures found in the earlier one-figured compositions is heightened by the greater involvement of the cobbler and his wife with their tasks. A stronger naturalism enhances their believability and directness. This directness is intensified by the composition, as the still life in the lower right is illusionistic, and the curvature of the staircase serves to unify the horizontal and vertical elements in the painting.

Three additional representations of cobblers in their workshops by Brekelenkam serve to point out the increasing complexity
and competence found in this series. Viewed chronologically, the three follow the usual pattern in Brekelenkam's development, for the later the painting, the greater the detail and action, and the greater the viewer response and involvement. If one accepts this development, the earliest of the three pictures is The Cobbler's Workshop (fig. 6), dated by one source as c. 1660. The painting cannot date after the middle of the 1650's, however, for in comparison to the Wales Shoemaker in his Workshop, which appears to date 1656, the simplicity of the furnishings and items in the interior reflect the much less ambitious character of this work of art. The still-life elements in the room are reduced in number and in the case of the shelf on the rear wall, they are completely absent. In addition, the winding staircase has been replaced by a simple half door. The room with its bright and even illumination is consistent with other early examples, but here it enhances the static quality of the figures in the composition. An exchange between figures in the painting is restricted to the cobbler and his female customer at the window, as the cobbler's wife at the right cutting carrots is not involved.

Brekelenkam whose interest in themes of tradesmen is being considered here, was just as interested in depicting domestic interiors, and as we have seen, he often combined the two. An Old Woman Cutting Carrots (present whereabouts unknown, fig. 21) is an independent treatment of the motif included in the Zurich
Cobbler. The artist did not innovate the representation of domestic interiors with women spinning or cooking, as Nicolaes Maes and Gerrit Dou appear to have been more crucial to its development. While similarities between the work of Dou and Brekelenkam are obvious, Maes and Brekelenkam also have elements in common in their pictures. Maes' Old Woman Peeling Apples (Berlin, Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, fig. 22) and Brekelenkam's Old Woman Cutting Carrots both depict a seated woman preparing food to the left of a spinning wheel. Each figure directly and sympathetically confronts the viewer.

A Cobbler in his Workshop (fig. 17) of 1654 is nearly identical to the Zurich painting except for obvious changes including a male customer instead of a female, a doorway replacing the wooden half door on the right, and a different map on the rear wall. Subtle changes, however, mark a maturation by the artist. Spatially, the scale of the cobbler to the room is more naturalistic. The artist's increasing ability is further demonstrated by the greater complexity in the poses of the cobbler and his wife, and their surroundings.

The final shoemaker to be examined is The Cobbler's Workshop (Paris, art market, fig. 23). Brekelenkam in this very ambitious work combined elements from nearly all the preceding cobblers which seem to predate it. Only a portion of an arch near the ceiling just to the right of center is new. The slightly expanded
width of the room enables the figures to appear less cramped, but at the same time they are now more immediate to the viewer.

Although the participants in the painting maintain their positions in relation to each other, their actions have changed. The cobbler and his wife have stopped their work to enjoy a moment of relaxation. The younger cobbler, with darker hair which has yet to give way to gray or white, lights his pipe and awaits the mug of beer that his wife draws for him from a keg. Her kneeling pose is the most active one found in the series, and her clothing, a fur-trimmed jacket and a silky white headdress, is no longer that of a person of simple means. The third figure, again a woman at the window, also assumes a slightly different role, as she makes eye contact with the spectator while either counting money or gesturing with her hands.

The cobbler's workshops are not simply a series of copies executed by the artist. There is a greater maturity on the part of the artist exhibited in each successive work, as the compositions become more complex, the manner of handling of the brush more precise, and the characterization of the individuals further away from a rustic homeliness towards a growing sophistication. Brekelenkam's evolution along these lines is consistent with the general trend in Dutch genre painting in the 1650's and 1660's.
"The shift from low to high genre, from scenes in raucous or shabby taverns and simple kitchens and market places, to visions of polite and fashionable boudoirs and living rooms (brothels though they may sometimes be), is certainly one of the most striking aspects of Dutch painting in the fifties and sixties. Terborch, de Hoogh, Brekelenkam, and even Vermeer, as well as Metsu, go through this transition, and Steen actually achieves a synthesis of the two worlds."12

Brekelenkam's paintings of tailor's workshops in the 1650's and particularly the early 1660's demonstrate this development even further.
Tailors

Henry Havard in his 1881 catalogue of Brekelenkam's paintings lists a nearly equal number of tailors and cobblers. In these depictions of tailors the artist continued to reveal an original point of view in respect to the subject, but his innovation in these works may be more fundamental, since the motif of tailors in their workshops had not made few previous appearances. Unlike the pictures of cobblers that were often painted prior to Brekelenkam's concern with the trade at mid-century, the tailor's workshop was not a popular theme. The Haarlem low-genre painters, in a response to their environment, frequently depicted weavers, but not tailors. Haarlem was a center of the textile industry in 17th century Holland and consequently a number of artists drew inspiration from various aspects of the industry. Scenes of the bleaching fields, such as Jacob van Ruisdael's Bleaching Fields near Haarlem (The Hague, Mauritshuis), and weavers' workshops were painted repeatedly. Generally the artist takes an impersonal view towards the subject matter, and if the figures are represented, they are secondary to the industrial scene. Brekelenkam, on the other hand, extended the textile trade to its conclusion, the production of clothing. Pictures of this closely related aspect of the industry are consistent with the artist's goal to render lower-middle class tradesmen in a sympathetic
and accessible manner.

An understanding of how successful Brekelenkam was in attaining his goal can be better realized after viewing his work in comparison to scenes of weavers executed by Haarlem artists. Cornelis Beelt painted interiors with weavers which are similar to his cobblers in terms of the characterization of the individuals involved and their effect on the viewer. *Weaving* (c. 1665, The Hague, Bredemuseum, fig. 24) shows a dark and dirty interior that is much closer to a barn or shed than a house. A ladder on the right reaches up to the workshop from a lower level. The figures are without a true identity; the one person whose face can be seen is lost in the furthermost reaches of the room. The other figures, two women at work and two small children, appear doll-like in their posture and proportions. A dignified view of poverty is nowhere apparent, nor does the viewer respond to the individuals sympathetically.

Another Haarlem artist, Cornelis Decker, seems to have specialized in depicting weavers during the 1650’s. *Weaving* (Brussels, Royal Museum, fig. 25) reflects this artist’s low-genre approach to the subject matter. A loom occupies the central position in a darkly lit interior, which is closely related to the one by Beelt. Decker is, however, a more accomplished artist. The composition exhibits a greater coherence and balance, and
the accessibility of the figures to the spectator is closer to a mid-point between what is found in Beelt's Weaving and that which Brekelenkam employs in his tailors.

The figures were painted by Adriaen van Ostade, not Decker. This collaboration serves to reenforce the ties between van Ostade and other low-genre artists working in Haarlem. The weaver, his wife and children are seated to the right of the loom around a table where the remains of a meal are located. Although Adriaen van Ostade's figures do not approach those by Brekelenkam in terms of accessibility to the spectator, they are nevertheless favorably rendered in the midst of familiar everyday objects, including the family pet.

A third Haarlem artist to deal with weavers was Brekelenkam's brother-in-law Johannes Oudenrogge. Weaving (1651, whereabouts unknown, fig. 26) exhibits an affinity with the works of Decker and Beelt within the limitations of the Haarlem low-genre tradition. The composition includes two weavers actively engaged in their trade and a woman to their left at her spinning wheel. Again all the individuals in the room, which is lit with strong chiaroscuro effects, are placed well within its space, thus limiting the viewer's access to the narrative.

Brekelenkam, working in Leiden, was geographically removed from aspects of the textile trade painted by the Haarlem low-genre artists. He chose instead to restrict himself to depictions
of tailors. As we have seen, tailoring as an artistic motif had little precedent except in encyclopedic images of tradesmen (fig. 27). The tailor who "makes military tents, cloth for jousts and tourney, Italian and French style garments of silk and satin for courtiers and ladies, of wool for commoners," are shown at work, either cutting or sewing material. An assortment of finished products are displayed in the upper half of the composition, testifying to the ability of the tailors in handling different materials. Due to the nature of the scene, the individuals encountered here are not given careful study, nor do they avail themselves to the viewer.

Brekelenkam painted tailor's workshops many times, Havard noting ten such representations. None of the three works discussed below approach an encyclopedic treatment of theme, as the human involvement with the tradesman's station in life being emphasized as much, if not more than the trade and the finished products. Interestingly enough, when Brekelenkam's individual paintings are compared to cobbler's workshops of equal or later dates, a more complex composition is employed. This involves more figures, greater movement, and an increased contact with the spectator.

The Tailor's Workshop (1656, Worcester, Art Museum, fig. 28) dates closely to the London Shoemaker in his Workshop (fig. 15)
and the Wales Shoemaker (fig. 18). Although an early portrayal of a tailor's workshop, the composition in the Worcester picture is far in advance of the two cobbler paintings'. The general format of the room has not appreciably changed, however. A corner of an interior is shown which extends to the right. Windows in the left wall allow light to filter into the room and provide illumination for the trade taking place to the left of the composition. To the right and cast in deeper shadow, is a fireplace which has replaced the doorways and stairways found in the cobbler's workshops. The Worcester Tailor's Workshop surpasses both the one-figured Wales Shoemaker and the two-figured London Shoemaker in his Workshop in the complexity of elements arranged in the room. The artist incorporates an entire family in the scene, for accompanying the tailor who stands behind the worktable and his wife who cuts vegetables to his left are two boys sitting on the table and busy at work. All of their poses are naturalistically rendered and are well integrated into the space of the room. The room itself is of interest, for it takes on the character of a home as much as a workshop. Details including the family pet at the lower center, a meal cooking in a large cast iron kettle over a fire, and a cupboard to the extreme right, serve to intensify this feeling. Smaller items such as the fruit still-life painting and a birdcage on the back wall, decorative plates and a map above the fireplace, ceramic
wares on the floor and cupboard, and a barrel under the worktable carry the association of the workshop with the home even further while also soliciting a greater response by the viewer due to the inclusion of familiar objects.

The circumstances of this family are not as prosperous as tailors' families painted later by Brekelenkam, but viewed in the context of the cobbler's of the same years, it does appear better off. Their clothing has a great deal to do with this feeling, but the room and its furnishings are just as revealing.

**Interior of a Tailor's Workshop** (fig. 2) dates, according to Neil Maclaren, some years later than the Tailor's Workshop in Worcester. By applying the same criteria used in dating other works by the artist, it appears that the painting was executed in the second half of the 1650's and probably the last year or two of the decade. The composition is fundamentally the same as its earlier counterpart, with the most obvious difference in the area to the right where a younger woman is nursing a baby. One's first impression is that the scene has become much more 'finished.' The rustic quality of the Worcester Tailor is less obvious here, as many of the objects are no longer for everyday use. This overall elaboration and finish is accomplished in a number of ways. The first is the objects themselves, with many relatively ornate items in the later painting replacing simpler ones in the earlier work. For example, the chair occupying a
position in the left foreground of the London Tailor is no longer a simple wooden one, instead it now has a broad back, detailed wood carving, and probably plush cushions. The clothing of the figures is also more elaborate, and even the family pet who sleeps in the corner is reflective of better care, if not a better pedigree.

The impression of greater finish in the Interior of a Tailor's Workshop is also accomplished through artistic means such as the handling of the brush and the effects of lighting within the work. The tighter brushstroke employed by the artist results in a sharply defined image. The entire work is more polished in execution, with the painting of a still life on the rear wall best illustrating its effect. While the Worcester Tailor shows a fruit still life in a very summary and indistinct way, the London Tailor's Shop which contains a still life with a jug, glass, and fish on a plate, is more precisely painted, thereby giving the objects a greater definition. Maclaren, in describing this painting within a painting, notes its similarity with the work of the Dutch still-life painter Pieter Claesz. 18

The lighting, closely associated with the effects of a tighter brushstroke, reveals a greater contrast of lights and darks which serves to enhance the character of the items and figures. The highlights draw attention to the faces of the individuals, the entire foreground, and various elements on the back wall.
The figures in the *Interior of a Tailor's Shop*, their faces clearly seen, continue to express Brekelenkam's desire to make the protagonists accessible to the viewer. The two boys who sit across from each other on the table are at eye level with the spectator. Again the older of the two wears a hat, and although he is only seen from the back, he does not block the viewer's look to the younger hatless boy. The tailor, considerably younger than before, holds a piece of material, needle, and thread, and looks directly out to the spectator. He conveys an inescapable sense of pride in himself, his station in life, and no doubt his family. The wife of the tailor has changed the most, however. The woman is younger and dressed less conservatively, and sits in a position parallel to the picture plane with her feet resting on a footwarmer. Her pose with a child at her breast is similar to one found in the dated *Mother and Child* of 1661 (Oslo, Museum, fig. 29); only the look towards the spectator in this later work replaces the downward gaze by the tailor's wife.

A dated work of 1661 is the *Tailor's Workshop* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, fig. 30). The painting was executed when Brekelenkam was at the height of his ability, for he has created an interior that clearly and effectively captures a lower-middle class tradesman and his family surrounded by signs of their prosperity. Here the field of view has been reduced; the area where the wife of the tailor would normally be positioned is
eliminated. She joins her husband at his worktable, and due to the reduced space, the viewer is forced to concentrate more intently on the figures who occupy a larger portion of the composition.

The two boys and the tailor maintain their same roles and positions, but each is more fashionably dressed and wears hair to the shoulders. Besides a greater elegance in the figures, Brekelenkam attempts to involve them with the narrative more. The younger child appears to be whistling, perhaps an indication of his contentment with his work. The tailor, wearing an elaborate hat and white scarf, looks to his wife and gestures to her with his hands. He is no longer a humble tradesman wearied by years of hard work. The fourth figure, the tailor's wife, is possibly the most elegant person represented by Brekelenkam in the series of tradesmen. She wears a fur-trimmed jacket and holds a large shiny pail in ready for the market. The woman, whose beauty and grace the artist has expertly captured, could rather be expected to occupy an elegant interior by Vermeer or de Hoogh than a tailor's workshop by Brekelenkam.

Although the tailor does not make direct eye contact with the viewer as he does in the previous two workshops, the artist's usual point of view is still maintained. Larger and more accessible, the figures are seen as a family unit that one can associate with one's own experiences. The individualization of each person
is also taken to a degree previously unseen in the other works.

The motif of a tailor's workshop as it was developed by Brekelenkam points to at least one conclusion concerning this trade versus the cobbler's trade. The tailors appear to have worked at a more successful and prosperous trade, and consequently this makes itself apparent in the paintings by means of the advanced compositions and more elaborate dress and furnishings.
Shopkeepers and Merchants

Brekelenkam's paintings of shopkeepers and small merchants comprise the final group of tradesmen in interiors to be examined here. These works usually depict a shopkeeper in his place of business before a display of his merchandise. The artist shows less of an innovative character in these paintings, for many artists, and not just those oriented towards low-genre depictions, painted shopkeepers. Nevertheless, Brekelenkam imparts into the pictures a point of view that is consistently sympathetic, and this sets his works somewhat apart from those of his contemporaries.

The two works most representative of his treatment of this type of tradesman are his Interior of a Pharmacy (fig. 5) and A Wine Merchant (fig. 3). The London Pharmacy is often dated 1638 in the older literature, but more recently a corrected date of 1658 is accepted. The painting is of further interest, as it was engraved in the nineteenth century by the French artist Gustav Greux. (See figure 31)

The theme of an interior of a pharmacy shop had been included in The Book of Trades and other encyclopedias of trades, but depictions of pharmacists executed closer in date to Brekelenkam's activity do exist. Gabriel Metsu, a Leiden-born genre painter,
painted A Pharmacist in a Niche (Paris, Louvre, fig. 32) in the fijnschilderij style. A few objects associated with the man's profession are placed on the ledge of the niche and behind him, but their presence plays a minor role in the composition. The pharmacist dominates the scene, filling nearly the entire area behind the opening as he sits with a bound volume in his lap. Psychologically, however, he is far removed from the spectator. One detects a reflective and introspective character, and this tends to isolate him.

Interior of an Apothecary's Shop (1652, Stockholm, Museum, fig. 33) by an unknown artist, is much closer to the work by Brekelenkam, as both show an arrangement of figures before implements of the trade found on shelves along the back wall. The Stockholm Apothecary appears to involve a Delft influence for there is a similar stress on space and the effects of lighting. The painting is more sophisticated than Brekelenkam's in its incorporation of these elements, but a consideration of the figures and their relationship with their surroundings calls for a different conclusion. The 1652 panel is essentially a portrait of the pharmacist and his wife, with the shop serving as both setting and attribute. The couple's stiff poses and expressionless faces have little impact on the viewer.

The manner in which Brekelenkam combined his view towards the subjects with their environment is clearly reflected in Interior
of a Pharmacy. Three individuals occupy the room; a girl in
the foreground holding a glass bottle, another girl behind a
counter pouring spirits into a tankard, and an old man seated
and smoking a pipe. The artist describes in some detail the
objects essential for a pharmacist, including pewter mugs and
medicine flasks. Light enters the room from the left through
windows and an unseen doorway, highlighting certain of these
items on the back wall, as well as the tiles on the floor. The
tiles along with the ceiling timbers contribute to a grid pattern
which helps to define the limits of the small cube of space.

The impact that this intimate shop has on the viewer results
from the synthesis of the figures with their environment. The
artist's direct point of view endears the threesome who quietly
go about their daily business of running the shop to the spec-
tator. The orderly arrangement of the objects in the background
intensifies the near-balance of the entire composition. The
result is a plain but sincerely rendered image that makes a very
positive statement about its inhabitants and their profession.

A Wine Merchant of 1661 is thematically related to the
Interior of a Pharmacy. The pewter mugs and medicine flasks,
the octagonal mirror above the woman's head, the slope of the
tiled floor, and the ceiling beams are elements common to both
pictures. The painting of the wine dealer does, nevertheless,
reveal an advance both in the spatial configuration of the interior,
and in the subtle characterization of the wine merchant, his wife, and a customer.

The work is the most ambitious and unusual room found in the series of Brekelenkam tradesmen, as a counter runs the length of the right wall at a diagonal. Stocked shelves, ceiling timbers, and the floor tiles also follow the diagonal and serve to accentuate the deep recession, which is interrupted by the windowed rear wall. Still, the vastness of the interior does not detract from the importance given to the figures. Each is carefully positioned to afford the spectator access to his character. Margaret Poch-Kalous describes the wine merchant who extends a glass to a well-dressed customer as "a most unassuming representation of a wine dealer." Compared to Jacob Duck's Wine Connoisseurs (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, fig. 34) where a corresponding figure extends a glass of wine, her evaluation is apt. Brekelenkam's use of a wine merchant as a motif was a personal one for him since he had during the course of lifetime become a liquor dealer to supplement his earnings as a painter. In this light the painting takes on more of a self-portrait interpretation. The merchant, in offering a glass to a customer, may be inviting the spectator to partake as well. His wife, who sits behind the counter with her needlepoint, adds to the invitation by making eye contact with the viewer.

Other scenes of merchants painted in the seventeenth century
in Holland also show shopkeepers offering their products to the public, but usually this is accomplished in a less subtle manner. Job Berchheyde often addressed the theme of bakery interiors, and their dissimilarity to Brekelenkam's Wine Merchant is obvious upon inspection. Baker's Shop (Oberlin, Oberlin College museum) and Baker's Shop with Lace Making Woman (1661, Haarlem, Droste collection, fig. 35) both place a great emphasis on the items for sale. The Haarlem painting, by means of the immediate confrontation between the viewer and the breads and pretzels on the counter, downplays the role of the woman making lace while standing before a dark entranceway which frames hr. Brekelenkam's wine dealer and his wife are masters of their surroundings, as their presence fills the room. Individualized and approachable, the couple embody the positive qualities that the artist continually found in lower-middle class individuals.

The Barber Shop (New York, Parke-Bernet sale 17 May, 1972, fig. 36) completes this discussion of Brekelenkam's tradesmen in interiors. The motif, an extension on the theme of shopkeepers, is incorporated in this picture which appears to have been executed around 1658, the date of the Interior of a Pharmacy. The representation of barbers/surgeons was popular among low-genre painters earlier in the century as it afforded them an opportunity to depict pain and suffering. Brouwer's Village Inn (fig. 1) is typical of their approach. To the left the surgeon
operates on the foot of a patient who voices his displeasure, and at the right rear a barber shaves a customer whose fate is quite literally in the hands of a tattered looking barber holding a razor at his throat.

Breukelen, in contrast to Brouwer, Rembrandt, and others who dealt with the theme, concentrated on the positive aspects of the trade in his picture. The barber, in providing a service to the public, attends to a customer seated in the barber's chair and draped in a white sheet tied at his neck. A second patron sits to the left of them and waits his turn. The barber has attained a respectability altogether lacking in low-genre figures, as he concentrates fully on his task. Various implements associated with his trade decorate the walls. The combination of these items with the curtain to the left and the light which floods through the windows from the left casting long shadows, are similar to elements in the Interior of a Pharmacy.

The artist's point of view towards the subjects continues to be positive. The three figures, caught in an everyday act which is easily understood and today still experienced by the spectator, have been captured by an artist who had few peers in depicting their day-to-day existence.
Notes to Part Two


2 See Jost Amman and Hans Sachs' *Book of Trades* (Standebuch), (Frankfurt am Main: Sigmund Feyerabend, 1568; reprint ed., New York: Dover, 1973), 58. In describing the trade of shoemaking, the translation reads: "The shoemaker produces not only shoes, boots and slippers for all needs, but also such leather goods as bags, cases, crossbow holders and fire buckets."


5 Wilenski, 222.


7 *Ibid.*, 211.

8 Franklin Robinson in his monograph *Gabriel Metsu* (New York: Abner Schram, 1974), 98-99, makes this distinction between the well-lit and clearly defined space found in Koedyck's work and the space found in works by Dou and Rembrandt where these qualities are not present.

9 *Ibid.*, 92

10 This was the date indicated in the photographic files of Witt Photo Archives at the Courtauld Institute of the University of London. The date probably came with the photo from a sales catalogue.

Robinson, 68-69.

Havard, 98.

Amman and Sachs, 53.

Ibid.

Havard, 98.


Ibid. For further information on this Dutch still-life painter see Ingvar Bergstrom's *Dutch Still-Life Painting in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: T. Yoseloff, 1956), 114-123.


Amman and Sachs, 20.

Poch-Kalous, 186.
Conclusion

In this paper an attempt has been made to place the paintings of tradesmen in interiors by the Dutch genre painter Quiringh van Brekelenkam into their historical and artistic context. This group of tradesmen in interiors comprises one distinct and important category in his oeuvre, a category which, up to now, has attracted little attention. The execution of this group of works in the middle years of the seventeenth century follows a rise in popularity of representations of trades and tradesmen which had begun early in the sixteenth century. During this development, artists had not attempted to assess the true nature of the workers depicted in their compositions. Generally, either the functioning of the trade would be stressed, as in the encyclopedic treatments of the trades, or, in low-genre images, the shortcomings of the workers. Quiringh van Brekelenkam, however, chose to reveal the tradesmen as he saw them; sincere and hard working, and imbued with a sense of pride reflective of the rise of their class in the course of the seventeenth century in Holland.

The workers dealt with by Brekelenkam included cobblers, tailors, and shopkeepers, all members of the lower-middle class of which the artist was himself a member. The paintings were
tributes to the skill of the tradesmen depicted, for in their society they provided valuable services to the population. Hard and honest work was a great virtue for the middle classes, and consequently its representation in paintings of tradesmen was a suitable subject for those who bought paintings in Holland's open art market. Since the artist had to keep his eyes on the market as a prerequisite for any type of success, the changing tastes of the Dutch are reflected in the stylistic progression found in Brekelenkam's tradesmen in interiors. A greater refinement and elaboration in the settings and figures in the series reflect general trends in Dutch genre painting in the 1650's and 1660's. Throughout this development Brekelenkam did not deviate from his innovative point of view taken towards the subjects, as they remain very accessible to the viewer and continue to be presented in truly sympathetic terms. Consequently his innovativeness, his knowledge of popular trends in art beyond that found in his hometown of Leiden, and his skill as a painter, indicate the presence of an artist of considerable talent, and one deserving of more research and perhaps a better reputation than he now enjoys.
Appendix

H. Havard's list of motifs employed by Brekelenkam.¹

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fig. 12
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