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CHILDREN BORNE ALOFT:
NICOLAES MAES'S GANYMEDE PORTRAITURE AND THE CONTEXT OF
DEATH AND MOURNING IN THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY
NETHERLANDS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree Doctor of
Philosophy in the Graduate School of the Ohio State University

By

Wendy M. Schaller, M.A.

*****

The Ohio State University
2001

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Barbara Haeger, Advisor

Dr. Francis L. Richardson

Dr. Arline Meyer

Approved by

[Signature]
Advisor
Department of
History of Art
This study seeks to explain the function of an unusual group of images painted by the seventeenth-century Dutch artist Nicolaes Maes: portraits of children in the guise of Ganymede. Most scholars agree that the youngsters in these portraits represent deceased children, an idea that is based on the Neoplatonic and Christian interpretation of the spiritual associations of the myth that date back to antiquity. While I accept this memorial thesis, my investigation of these paintings in relation to relevant portrait conventions and within the broader culture of death in the Netherlands has revealed that Maes's Ganymede portraits were not simply memorials, but that they would have evoked multiple responses in viewers and thus served a variety of functions.

My research of Ganymede portraits and other Dutch images of deceased children within the context of consolatory literature of the period indicates that such images not only reflect attitudes toward death but are also participatory objects. In other words, some images were consoling, others helped to facilitate the grieving process, and some did both. While Maes's Ganymede portraits had the ability to both memorialize the deceased and offer comfort to grieving parents, their staged, artificial style generates other associations. As I argue, aristocratic pretensions underlie these curious paintings. Their theatrical nature,
portrait historié format, fanciful style, and use of symbolism allowed sitters to project an idea of elevated social status and link themselves with the intellectual elite.
For my grandmother. Vera Abrams
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VITA

March 18, 1965.................. Born - Winfield, Illinois

1990.................................. B.A., University of Tennessee, Knoxville

1994.................................. M.A., The Ohio State University, Columbus

1991-1999.......................... Graduate Teaching Associate, The Ohio State University

FIELD OF STUDY

Major Field: History of Art, area of concentration in Baroque art
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INTRODUCTION

Upon first encountering Nicolaes Maes's portraits of infants and young boys in the guise of Ganymede, I was struck by their oddity in both visual and iconographic terms. What would prompt an individual to have his/her child depicted in such a manner? After discovering that these images most likely represented children whose lives had abruptly and prematurely ended, I became even more intrigued. Did other seventeenth-century Dutch artists paint images of deceased children and if so how did these paintings relate to those rendered by Maes? I soon discovered that images of deceased children formed a significant subgenre of seventeenth-century Dutch portraiture, the function of which had yet to be satisfactorily explained. In addition to the Ganymede portraits, two other general types had already been defined in the literature: the family portrait, in which the deceased appears either as an angel flying in the clouds, or as a "living" member of the family; and the deathbed portrait, in which the child is shown lying in state prior to burial. As a group these paintings have been recognized primarily for their capacity to memorialize. While this is certainly an important feature of Maes's Ganymede portraits, their unusual subject matter, theatrical character, fanciful style, and emphasis on symbolism alert the viewer to further complexities surrounding these paintings. In this study I will demonstrate that Maes's Ganymede portraits were not simply memorial images, but that they would have generated a variety of responses and
thus served multiple functions. I will further reveal the multivalent nature of
other Dutch images of deceased children which I have observed as a result of my
exploration of the function of Maes's portraits.

Until fairly recently, seventeenth-century Dutch images of deceased
children had received little attention from scholars. Early considerations of these
paintings, although informative, were limited in scope and focused primarily on
deathbed portraits. A few of these images, for example, are mentioned in A.
Pigler's groundbreaking article "Portraying the Dead," which presents an
extensive survey of deathbed portraits from several European countries.1 In this
study, Dutch portraits of deceased children are mainly discussed in terms of
their compositional and iconographic relationships to posthumous portraits of
adults. Images of children on their deathbeds have also figured (though not very
prominently) in studies and exhibitions dedicated to the customs associated with
death in the Netherlands.2 In such instances, however, these paintings are
treated as little more than illustrations of cultural practices.

In recent art historical studies, Eddy de Jongh draws more thorough and
extensive connections between images of deceased children and Dutch funerary
customs. His findings appear in catalogues published in conjunction with two
separate exhibitions of seventeenth-century Dutch portraiture. In Portretten van
echt en trouw (Portraits of Marriage and Fidelity) (Haarlem, 1986) de Jongh
addresses the subject of death in family portraits, while in Faces of the Golden Age
(Yamaguchi, Japan, 1994), he considers deathbed portraits as well as family

2 See for example Renée Hirsch Doodenritueel in de Nederlanden voor 1700 (Amsterdam: A. H.
Kruyt, 1921); Centraal Museum, Dood en begraven. Sterven en rouwen 1700-1900 (Utrecht:
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begraven, cremeren en rouw (Houten: De Haan, 1986); Albert van der Zeijden, "Rondom de Dood,"
portraits in which deceased children are included. In both works his approach is primarily iconographic in nature, concerned with the symbolic vocabulary used in the representation of deceased children. Much of the information found in these catalogues is later compiled (along with some new observations) in a comprehensive essay on the topic of Dutch images of deceased children entitled "Bloemen in de knop gebroken".

Another study of paintings of deceased children as a group appears in the catalogue which accompanied an exhibition on deathbed portraits in the Netherlands from 1500 to the present that was held at the Teylers Museum, Haarlem in 1998. In this article, Jan Baptist Bedaux addresses a much debated issue among social historians regarding the existence of affective relationships between parents and their children during the seventeenth century. Bedaux's findings are recounted in the catalogue from a recent exhibition on Dutch portraits of children. A number of the previously determined connections between portraits of deceased children and funerary customs are also referred to in this text.

Maes's Ganymede portraits, the most elusive of all the works in my study, have primarily been considered in terms of how the myth has been traditionally presented in both art and literature. Although commonly noted for its

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homoerotic associations, the abduction of Ganymede was also explained in a more metaphysical/spiritual sense. The latter aspect was popularized in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by emblem books, such as Alciati's *Emblemata*, in which Ganymede is identified with the pure soul which finds its joy in God. Because purity and innocence were qualities traditionally associated with young children and because these virtues were stressed in emblematic treatments of Ganymede's abduction, most scholars view Maes's Ganymede portraits as representations of children who died at an early age.8

Although the above studies contribute much to our understanding of Dutch paintings of deceased children, significant issues remain unaddressed, most particularly with regard to purpose. As previously mentioned, the varied nature of these images suggests that each type could evoke different responses in viewers. While a few scholars have noted that some of these paintings would have been comforting to grieving parents9, this aspect has been overlooked in other types. I believe that this is due primarily to the lack of attention given to the role that grief played in the mourning process. I am also convinced that

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certain parallels between images of deceased children and the literature of consolation can also help us to better understand the participatory nature of these paintings.

Maes's Ganymede portraits, in particular, raise a number of unanswered questions. For instance, in some examples, the Ganymede child is shown in the company of the siblings who have survived him. Because these children also appear in fantasy costumes, some art historians have identified them as mythological characters. However, there appears to be no connection between the proposed identities and that of Ganymede. One also wonders as to the significance of the appearance of these fanciful images during Maes's Amsterdam period (1673-1693). The occurrence of this portrait type in a specific locale suggests that they were created for a singular group of patrons. Could the emergence of this type be connected to the taste of a particular social circle?

Maes's Ganymede portraits represent a form of portrait historié, or historiated portrait, the significance of which has yet to be developed. In this type of portraiture sitters are represented as a character from history, literature, or scripture. By taking on the guises of such figures sitters seek to identify themselves with the virtues of the original protagonists. Moreover, such role-playing allowed one to transcend one's everyday situation. An individual who had him/herself portrayed in this way could also display his/her knowledge and understanding of such characters. This type of portraiture was popular among the Dutch nobility (particularly at the court of the Stadholder Frederick Hendrick) but was later favored by members of the regent class who sought to link themselves with the aristocracy. These and other observations have prompted me to consider how Maes's paintings might have been used to assert social status.
I will begin my investigation by considering Maes's Ganymede portraits within the pictorial and literary traditions surrounding the myth of Ganymede's abduction from their origins in antiquity up to the seventeenth century. This will establish to which of the two primary traditions Maes's Ganymedes belong. I will further consider how these paintings have been interpreted, giving particular attention to the reasons behind the belief that these images functioned to memorialize children who died at an early age. Not only will I review pre-existing ideas in this regard, but I will also provide additional support in the form of documentary evidence and through the introduction of two previously undiscussed paintings by Maes. I will argue that these "new" portraits, which show a young girl as "Venus" being transported to the heavens in a dove-drawn chariot are the female counterparts to Maes's Ganymede portraits.

In chapter two I will investigate the various typologies used by Dutch artists to represent deceased children as well as the responses that they may have evoked. Moreover, by drawing parallels between Maes's Ganymede portraits and certain conventions found in other images of deceased children, I will provide further support for the Ganymede memorial thesis.

The following chapter will be devoted to the study of grief, grieving, and consolation in the Netherlands. Here, I will draw attention to similarities between images of deceased children and the literature of consolation and argue that the two functioned in similar ways.

Finally, a chapter will be devoted to revealing how Ganymede portraits were used to propose an identity for non-noble upper class urban families with aristocratic aspirations. These Ganymede images will be considered in relation to other role portraits as well as the fanciful portraits of well-to-do Dutch individuals and families that were especially popular in the second half of the
seventeenth century. I will also situate Maes's Ganymede portraits within the context of other ways in which members of the wealthy burgher class attempted to ennoble themselves. Such practices included purchasing country houses and noble titles, marrying into noble families, and commissioning other forms of funerary art.
CHAPTER 1

GANYMEDE PORTRAITS

During the 1670's and 1680's, Nicolaes Maes (and his circle) painted a number of rather peculiar portraits of children and infants in the guise of the mythological character, Ganymede, being carried aloft by an eagle. A total of fourteen such paintings have been documented, each showing, with some variation, an outdoor scene in which a full-length, semi-nude child swathed in a classical drapery sits astride a large eagle which will carry him to the heavens. Nine of these paintings are single portraits, while the remaining five show the Ganymede child in the company of one or more siblings.

In each of Maes's single Ganymede portraits (figures 1-8), the child, dressed all'antica, sits with his arms clasped around the mighty eagle's neck and gazes directly out at the viewer. The setting is minimal, consisting of little more than a cloud-filled sky above a distant, but lush landscape. In some examples, one can determine the time of day as early evening (around sunset) an effect that is suggested by the dark black clouds that appear to be encroaching upon those

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1 See Appendix nrs. A1-A9. I have been able to locate an illustration of a portrait listed by C. Hofstede de Groot, A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch Painters of the Seventeenth Century, vol. VI, trans. by Edward G. Hawke (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1916), p. 544, nr. 266 (hereafter HdG), as representing Balthasar Smissaert. This painting is last recorded in the collection of M.P. Smissaert, Utrecht. Hofstede de Groot describes the portrait as showing the child in the character of Ganymede riding on an eagle. He wears a red cloth around his loins and an ostrich feather on his head.

2 Maes's portrait Young Child as Ganymede (Sale New York, Sotheby, Nov. 17, 1985, nr. 28) (figure 6) is the only example in which a landscape is not visible. Rather, child and eagle soar through a cloud-filled sky.
defined by a combination of dark blue, turquoise, and rosy pink. Child and bird
are either already airborne or in mid-takeoff, in which case the bird, with its
powerful wings outstretched, is poised with one talon on the ground, the other
raised in the air. This action is accentuated by the child's billowing drape. In one
case (figure 4), a small springing spaniel barks at the child and his abductor.3
The incorporation of this feature has its basis in the Ganymede myth.

That these paintings, however, are portraits and not simply illustrations of
an event from classical mythology is suggested by the modish ostrich-feather
headpieces that many of Maes's Ganymede children wear. Moreover, these
Ganymedes strike affected poses as they gaze directly out at the viewer, and in
some examples one can detect a hint of arrogance in the way the child carries
himself. The portrait nature of these paintings is further underscored by the
individualized treatment of each of the sitters: one has short curling locks,
another has long straight hair, while several others have short, fine hair that is
almost completely obscured by the large hats that they wear. A difference in age
can also be discerned; for example, the Paris Ganymede appears to be a toddler
rather than an infant like his "comrades"(figure 7).

Three of these paintings have been associated with specific families living
in Amsterdam and Utrecht: George de Vicq (?) as Ganymede (figure 3), Balthasar
Smissaert (?) as Ganymede and A Child from the Ruytenbeecq Family as Ganymede
(figure 4).4 Although the exposed genitals of the boy in the last example allow
us to identify the gender of only this child with certainty, it is presumable that
the other Ganymede children are boys as well.5

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3 Child From the Ruytenbeecq Family as Ganymede, (whereabouts unknown).
4 See below pp. 37-40.
5 Russell, p. 9, cites one Ganymede painting by Maes that was listed for sale by the auction house
Mak van Waay on May 26, 1931, lot 11, that she says is a girl. However, it is unclear which
picture she is referring to and what specific features allow her to draw this conclusion. Frederik
F. Barends at Sotheby Mak van Waay, Amsterdam informed me in a private correspondence
The Ganymede child also occurs within the context of the group portrait. Five examples have been identified in which a portrait of a child as Ganymede riding the eagle (as described above) appears in a larger tableau where he is accompanied by his siblings (figures 9-13). In each case, either a brother or a sister clutches the Ganymede child by either his leg or by the trailing end of his garment in an effort to prevent the child's departure. The setting for all of these paintings is a lush, garden-like landscape. In keeping with the portrait historié theme established by the Ganymede motif, the child's siblings are dressed in fantasy costumes. Contemporary features have nevertheless been added in the form of the pearl necklaces and earrings that most of the female figures wear. While the presence of the barking spaniels in many of these pictures seems to have its basis in the Ganymede myth, other features, such as the deer and the lamb, have yet to be satisfactorily explained.

In some cases, scholars have associated some of these children with mythological characters unrelated to the Ganymede myth based on their attributes. I believe many of these identifications to be problematic and thus in need of further investigation. For example, in the Dordrecht painting, Children in a Landscape (figure 9), the young boy who aims his bow at the eagle that is abducting his brother has been identified as "Adonis." His sister, who offers a leafy branch to a small deer, is called "Pomona", whose attribute is the basket of fruit placed before her. The motif of a boy dressed as a hunter whose target is the bird that is taking his brother away from him is repeated again in another

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(June 10, 1998) that the first sale held by S.J. Mak van Waay and Son started on Monday, February 7, 1933. This sale did not contain a work by Nicolaes Maes.

6 See Appendix nrs. 10-14.

7 William H. Wilson, Dutch Seventeenth-Century Portraiture: The Golden Age (Sarasota, FL: Ringling Museum of Art Foundation, 1980), cat. nr. 43; Sumowski, p. 2036, nr. 1443. Russell, p. 9, identifies this child as "Diana" although it is clearly a boy who is represented.

8 Sumowski p. 2036, nr. 1443.
image (figure 10). Here the boy is accompanied by a barking spaniel, the same
type of dog that also appears in three of the other group paintings. The picture
also includes a small girl wearing a fanciful, plumed headpiece who holds onto
the Ganymede child's garment in a further effort to prevent his departure. To
her left stands her older sister who embraces a small deer with her left arm while
holding a shell under a stream of water that flows from a fountain.  
An angel,
hovering in the clouds above the group, is likely a previously deceased child.  
In a smaller group portrait, a young girl, accompanied by a large hunting dog,
who holds a bow in one hand, an arrow in the other and wears a quiver filled
with arrows strapped across her back, is identified as "Diana" (figure 11).  
Her
younger sister, "Pomona", holds tightly to Ganymede's leg, while the family
spaniel looks on.  
The boy in this example appears to be somewhat older than
the other Ganymedes. In the largest of the group portraits only "Pomona" and
Ganymede are represented (figure 12).  
Here, the young girl holds on to her
chubby little brother with both hands, while he looks off to the left with a
thoughtful expression. The last portrait in this group shows a more modestly
dressed Ganymede, who unlike many of the other examples has his chest
completely covered (figure 13).  
He is accompanied by his three sisters who sit

9 HdG 553; Kempter, nr. 122, identifies the boy with the bow as "Apollo" and one of the girls as
"Diana" (not specified). The portion of this painting containing the young hunter and his dog was
removed sometime prior to its arrival at the art dealer Arnot, London, 1920. Its current
whereabouts are unknown. Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorisches Documentatie (hereafter RKD)
LA6072.

10 See below, Chapter 2, pp. 66-75 on the representation of deceased children as angels.

11 Kempter, nr. 121; Russell, p. 9; Wilson, cat. nr. 43; Rose Wishnevsky, Studien zum "portrait

12 Wilson, cat. nr. 43; Wishnevsky, cat. nr. 88, identifies the child as "Ceres", based on the
presence of the basket of fruit.

13 Sumowski, p. 2036, nr. 1442 identifies the girl as "Pomona" and dates the painting to the early
1670's.

14 Sumowski, p. 2037, nr. 1446 dates this to the 1680's. According to William Robinson, this
portrait is not by Maes's hand, but should be attributed rather to a pupil or follower of the artist
(private conversation, September 1998). Although I agree with Robinson, I have included this
in a row across the front of the picture plane. The smallest girl pets a lamb, while her sister displays a wreath of woven flowers. The middle sister holds onto Ganymede's leg with her right arm while raising her left hand in a curious gesture of either salutation or farewell.

What remains the most intriguing question regarding these curious portraits of children is, why Ganymede? This particular mythological character does not seem to embody the types of virtues that one would necessarily want associated with one's child. Most scholars have come to the conclusion that the Ganymedes in Maes's portraits probably represent deceased children. This idea is based primarily on the Neoplatonic and Christian interpretations of the spiritual associations of the myth which date back to antiquity. Others, however, are more skeptical of this memorial thesis. Both Bedaux and Domela Nieuwenhuis find it problematic that we cannot be certain of the identities of any of the children in Maes's portraits. Without this information, they maintain that we cannot know if the child portrayed was already dead at the time that the painting was executed. Although this is a legitimate concern, I, like most scholars, will argue that there is evidence enough to make a strong argument for the memorial theory. The following pages will thus be devoted to an examination of the Ganymede myth and the relevant literary and pictorial traditions surrounding it.

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Sumowski, p. 2033, nr. 1423; Knipping, vol. 1, p. 45, no. 187; Russell, p. 9; Kempter p. 83; Wilson, cat. 43; Blankert et al., p. 198; Wieseman, in Dordrechts Museum, De zichtbare werelt. p. 250, cat. nr. 66; Saslow, p. 190; De Jongh, "Bloemen in de knop," pp. 44-45; Krempel, p. 98.

Jan Baptist Bedaux, "Kinderroof," Vitrine Museum Magazine 8 (Aug./Sept., 1995), p. 27 and Jan Baptist Bedaux, "Funeraire kinderportretten," p. 102; P.N.H. Domela Nieuwenhuis, "Vier kinderen in een landschap, Nicolaes Maes..." Jaarverslag Vereniging Rembrandt (1972), pp. 34-36. While we know the families who commissioned some of these portraits, we cannot be certain of any of the specific identities.
Literary Tradition

According to Ovid (Metamorphoses 10:155-161), Jupiter fell in love with the handsome Trojan youth, Ganymede. Transforming himself into an eagle, he snatched the boy from his earthly existence and carried him to Olympus where he was given immortality and made the cupbearer to the gods.\(^{17}\) The obvious amorous overtones of the myth\(^ {18} \) seemingly render it an inappropriate and consequently an unlikely subject for a portrait of a child. However, an explication of the carnal desires of the king of the gods is but one interpretation of the story. Xenophon (Symposium 8:28-30) viewed Ganymede's elevation to the heavens in a more spiritual sense. He explains that it is not bodily pleasure that Jupiter desires, but rather the beauty and purity of the youth's soul. As further evidence that such was the motivation for Jupiter's action, Xenophon explains that even the name Ganymede (ΓΑΝΕΥΣΘΕΙ ΜΕΞΕΙΣ, meaning 'to enjoy intelligence') is testimony to the fact that qualities other than physical beauty are what are desired by the gods.\(^ {19} \) Xenophon thus concludes that it was the purity of Ganymede's soul which gained him his immortality.

While the Ganymede myth was still known in both art and literature of the middle ages, it certainly did not enjoy the popularity it had had in antiquity.\(^ {20} \) Both spiritual and erotic associations of the myth were still present,

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\(^ {17} \) Ovid, Metamorphoses, trans. by Rolfe Humphries (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955): 239. Ovid's account of Ganymede's rape was the most familiar and influential one in the Renaissance; Saslow, p. 3.


\(^ {20} \) A number of illustrations of Ganymede are found in astrological manuscripts where he appears in the form of Aquarius, Kempler, p. 178, H2-H9. She cites two additional manuscripts which show a fully clothed Ganymede being presented to Jupiter by the eagle, p. 179, H10-H11. For a sculpted example of Ganymede's abduction see Ilene Forsyth, "The Ganymede Capital at Vézelay," Gesta XV (1976): 241-246.
but were subject to Christian interpretations or criticisms. The erotic dimension was often the subject of condemnation, as in the *Ovide moralisé*, a fourteenth-century French narrative poem.\textsuperscript{21} Another fourteenth century treatise, the *Ovidius moralizatus*, written by the monk Petrus Berchorius, omits any reference to the myth's erotic implications, and provides instead a Christian gloss for the story of Ganymede.\textsuperscript{22} The myth is discussed twice in this text. In the first chapter, under the section on Jupiter, Berchorius provides a detailed account of the battle of the Titans, which he concludes with the myth of Ganymede as told by earlier mythographers. The two stories are then interrelated to form a complex moral allegory in which Jupiter is seen as the antetype of the Christian God and Ganymede becomes the vehicle for the redemption of mankind. Ganymede is viewed as the innocent soul, and his rape as his achieving divine rapture. Berchorius connects this reading of the myth to the gospel of St. Matthew (XIX) and Christ's words "Suffer little children to come unto me...", which also emphasizes the purity and innocence of the child.\textsuperscript{23} This Christian reading of the myth is further elaborated in Book X where the author identifies Ganymede with St. John the Evangelist and the eagle as a symbol of his divine inspiration. He goes on to explain that the eagle also symbolizes Christ who takes the boy/child up to the heavens; Berchorius then cites Hosea XI (verse 1):

"The Child is Israel and I choose him."\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{21} C. de Boer, ed., *"Ovide moralisé*, poème du commencement du quatorzième siècle publié d’après tous les manuscrits connus...", vol. 4, bk. 10, lines 3383-85, in *Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam*, n.s. 37 (1936), 91. Saslow, p. 6, indicates that there did exist in the eleventh and twelfth centuries some positive literary references to the erotic aspect of the Ganymede myth.


\textsuperscript{24} "Ista aquila significat limpitudinem sucut ganimedes significat iohannem evangelistam iuuenem & gratiosum.... Vel aquila est christus qui istum puerum dilexit: & ad secreta coelestia
The Christian glosses given to the myth by medieval authors greatly affected the way that the rape of Ganymede was understood in the Renaissance. Italian humanists combined this understanding with their own reinterpretations of antique concepts of the myth. In Christophoro Landino's commentary on Dante's use of the myth in *Purgatorio* (9:19-24), he explains Ganymede's abduction as follows:

Ganymede, then, would signify the *mens humana*, beloved by Jupiter, that is: the Supreme Being. His companions would stand for the other faculties of the soul, to wit the vegetal and sensorial. Jupiter, realizing that the Mind is in the forest—that is, remote from mortal things, transports it to heaven by means of the eagle. Thus it leaves behind its companions—that is, the vegetative and sensorial soul; and being removed, or, as Plato says, divorced from the body, and forgetting corporeal things, it concentrates entirely on contemplating the secrets of Heaven.  

Like Xenophon, Landino explains Jupiter's desire for the young Ganymede as spiritual rather than carnal. Ganymede's abduction then, is viewed as a metaphor for the pure and unadulterated mind that is transported to a state of divine rapture. This Neoplatonic interpretation was accepted by a number of other Renaissance humanists who adopted it in their popular emblem books.

Among those authors that included the Ganymede myth in their texts was Andrea Alciati. His *Emblemata liber* was the first emblem book and therefore


the prototype for subsequent endeavors into this genre. This and other Renaissance emblem books were widely influential and consequently became the means by which the Neoplatonic philosophies developed by Ficino and his school in Medicean Florence were codified and propagated. In some editions of Alciati's Emblemata, Ganymede is the subject of emblem 4, and in other editions, emblem 32. In the earliest illustrated editions, the image portrayed is a rather crude figure of a nude child riding on the back of an eagle in flight. In the first edition, published February 28, 1531, the child grasps the eagle's neck feathers with his left hand while balancing himself with his right arm. His head shown in profile, Ganymede looks forward as he soars above a rather nondescript landscape (figure 14). Variations are found in the illustration for the second edition published April 1 of the same year (figure 15). While balancing himself with his left arm on the eagle's neck, the infant extends his


27 Saslow, p. 23.

28 Daly and Callahan, vol. 1, pp. 228-231; Kempter, p. 158, no. 224.

29 Green, p. 116.


31 Green, p. 119. The publication of a second edition only one month later was due to the multiple typographical errors and the inferior quality of the woodcuts in the February edition. It is presumed that these changes were made under Alciati's supervision; Kruszynski, p. 27 and Kempter, p. 69.
right arm toward the heavens. His gaze, however, is directed downward toward the earthly realm he leaves behind.\textsuperscript{32} In the illustration from the second edition as well as in various subsequent illustrations, the inscriptions 'GANYMEDES' and the Greek phrase \textit{ΓΑΝΕΥΔΗΟΙ ΜΕΔΕΩΣΙ} ("to enjoy intelligence") are included. The latter phrase, as previously mentioned, is taken from Xenophon's explanation of the derivation of Ganymede's name.\textsuperscript{33} The emblem's motto is \textit{In Deo Laetandum} ("delighting in God"), and the accompanying verse compares the youth's joyous heavenward journey to the flight of the pure soul to heaven of one who is devoted to divine contemplation:

See how the excellent painter has depicted the Trojan boy, Ganymede, being borne through the highest stars by the bird of Jupiter, the eagle. Who would believe that Jupiter was affected by boyish love? Tell me, from what source has old Homer fashioned this? He whose joys are in the judgment and mind of God is believed to have been snatched up to be with Jupiter on high.\textsuperscript{34}

This Neoplatonic reading suggests that man's greatest pleasure resides in his knowledge of God or the divine. The motto instructs us to rejoice in God, while the quatrain provides an allegorical explanation of the rewards of such fervent cerebral devotion. The image of the child/soul riding peacefully astride the

\textsuperscript{32} Kempter p. 67 indicates that the type with outstretched arm possibly derived from an image by Giovanni Maria Falconetto. In the Sala di Zodiaco, Palazzo dell'Arco. Mantua, (1482), Ganymede rides the eagle to the heavens with an arm outstretched to Jupiter who waits in the clouds. This gesture suggests that Ganymede goes willingly and joyfully. According to Kempter, Alciati would have had the opportunity to see Falconetto's painting as he made several trips to Mantua.

\textsuperscript{33} Xenophon, \textit{Symposium}, 8.31.

\textsuperscript{34} Aspice ut egregius puerum lovis alite pictor
Fecerit Illiacum summa per astra vehi
Quis ne lovem tactum puerili credat amore?
Dic, haec Maevius finxerit unde senex?
Consilium, mens atque Dei cui gaudia praestant,
Creditor is summo raptus adesse lovi."
As translated in Daly and Callahan, vol. I, emblem 4. The meaning of this verse as well as the emblem's motto remain constant in all subsequent editions of Alciati; Kruszynski, p.26.
eagle is thus a very appropriate illustration for this metaphysical interpretation. As Kruszynski has pointed out, Alciati refers to the eagle not as Jupiter in disguise, but rather as the god's messenger, which is in keeping with Virgil's account of the myth. This choice emphasizes the notion that Ganymede makes the journey of his own free will. It further serves to suggest that desire is not an emotion expressed by Jupiter alone, it is also revealed in Ganymede/human soul.

In several editions of Alciati's Emblemata, commentaries were appended to the individual emblems. In 1549, Bartholome Aneau edited a French printing of Alciati in which he included brief summaries that explain the allegorical content of each emblem. For the Ganymede emblem Aneau indicates that Ganymede represents the soul and that one can achieve divine rapture without separation from the corporeal when one is wholly devoted to contemplation.

Ganymede is specifically identified with child-like virtues in Sebastian Stockhamer's 1556 (Lyon) commentary. He explains that Ganymede is transported to heaven not only as a result of God's admiration for him, but also because he embodies purity and innocence; virtues distinctly associated with children. This Christian reading of the myth was not explicated by Alciati, but, as we have seen in Berchorius, was already being promoted by earlier authors. Stockhamer's commentary appeared only with the image of 1547, which like the

35 Kruszynski, p. 28. See also Kempter, p. 67.
36 Aneau's comments appeared in both French (Lyons 1558, 1561) and Latin (1566, 1574, 1580) editions of Alciati; Kruszynski, no. 137.
37 "Ravissement d'esprit à Dieu, sans séparation de corps, est contentement de l'ordonnance de Dieu en toutes les choses." Alciati 1549, p. 21 as cited in Kruszynski, p. 34. This interpretation is in opposition to Landino's which states that the soul must be "divorced from the body" in order to reach this state.
39 Kruszynski, p. 34.
earliest editions of Alciati depicts Ganymede as a nude child riding on the back of an eagle (figure 16). Considerably more refined then the previous images, this one shows the child both gazing and pointing in the direction of the seascape below him.

The Christian slant given Alciati's Ganymede emblem in Stockhamer's commentary is strengthened in that of Claude Mignault (Claudius Minos), a professor of law and philosophy in Dijon. First appearing in the Paris edition of 1571 published by Dion à Prato, Mignault's commentaries are the most extensive and important of the annotations to Alciati's Emblemata. In Antwerp, between the years 1565 and 1584, Christopher Plantin published eight Latin editions of Alciati's emblem book. Of these editions, his Omnia Andreae Alciati v.c. Emblemata Adiectis commentariis & scholiis, in quibus Emblematum ferme omnium aperta origine... (Antwerp, 1573) was the first to contain Mignault's commentaries. Several Latin editions of Alciati with Mignault's commentaries were also published in Leiden from 1591 to 1610.

Two image types occur in relation to this commentary. The first we have already seen in editions with Stockhamer's comments (figure 16). The second appeared for the first time in the Antwerp edition of 1577 (figure 17). In the latter image Ganymede is no longer a child, but a young man wearing a drape that wraps around his waist and over his left shoulder finally terminating behind him in an arc of cloth that billows in the wind. He rides side-saddle on the

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40 Green, pp. 91-93.
41 Green, p. 93.
42 After their first appearance in Plantin's 1571 edition, Mignault's comments were included in all subsequent editions published by Plantin. No Dutch translation was ever published. Landwehr, Emblem Books in the Law Countries, nos. 8-15.
43 The Leiden editions were published by Franciscum Raphelengium. Reprints of the 1591 Leiden edition were published in 1622 and 1648 in Antwerp by B. Moretus; Landwehr, Law Countries, nos. 16-23.
44 The image of 1577 (Antwerp) appeared nine times up to the year 1599 (Lyon). Kruszynski, no. 143.
eagle's back, as the two soar over land and sea while the youth's dog barks at them from below. The presence of the dog is in reference to Virgil's detailed account of the myth (Aeneid 5:250-57), in which Ganymede is described as a hunter who "with javelin and speedy foot, on leafy Ida tires fleet stags...." Ganymede's dogs, as Virgil explains, react to his abduction by barking savagely as the pair rise skyward.45

According to Mignault, the Ganymede emblem refers to those who are pleasing to God and thus will be rewarded with eternal happiness.46 Ganymede's abduction is not an act of pederasty, but rather a metaphor for the human soul that becomes enraptured through adoration of God. Mignault, like Berchorius, furthers this notion by associating Ganymede with John the Evangelist who beheld the glory of God through his divine visions on Patmos.47 Mignault also turns to the ancient philosophers to support his interpretation. He cites Plotinus, who views the Ganymede myth as symbolizing the human soul which disregards corporeal concerns and looks rather to Godly things. The abduction, for Plotinus, thus represents the process through which Ganymede arrives at a state of rapture. Mignault also references Plato who states that the soul can transcend the terrestrial plane only when it is freed from corporeal concerns.48 This interpretation was an extension of Xenophon's explanation of the myth which stressed that Jupiter loved not the body, but the soul of Ganymede and for this reason gave him immortality.49

Mignault further Christianizes his interpretation of the myth by connecting it to Christ's words "Sinite parvuli ad me veniant. & Nisi efficiamini sicut

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47 Alciati, p. 32.
48 Alciati, p. 28, sxn. III.
49 Ibid.
parvuli. & c." ("Suffer the little children to come unto me" & "...Unless [you] become as little children..."). These quotations refer specifically to Matthew (19:14), Mark (10:14-15), and Luke (18:16-17). In their texts from which the quotations are taken, the evangelists relate the story of some parents bringing their children to Christ so that he might bless them. The disciples, thinking that Christ had more important matters to attend to, reproached those who brought the children. But Christ said "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbidd them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Mark (10:15) and Luke (18:17) add Christ's explanation that no man may enter the kingdom of heaven unless he demonstrates the simplicity and innocence which characterizes little children. These virtues, as previously discussed, had already been stressed in Stockhamer's commentary, but without reference to the supporting verses from the gospels. It is significant that Calvin interprets the passage "for of such is the kingdom of Heaven" as referring not only to those who resemble children, but also to children themselves. Given its currency, it is likely that many members of the Dutch Republic would have been familiar with this idea.

In some emblem books the visual formula that is more faithful to Ovid's text and which emphasizes the abduction of Ganymede (rather than a journey made of his own free will) is used. Such examples are the result of adapting or reproducing Michelangelo's famous drawing for the Italian nobleman Tommaso de' Cavalieri. Although the original drawing is lost, the image is known

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50 Alciati, p. 30.
51 The story in its entirety is conveyed in Matthew (19:13-15), Mark (10: 13-16), and Luke (18:15-17).
53 Michelangelo's drawing, the Rape of Ganymede, is one of a series of four drawings of mythological subjects offered as gifts to Cavalieri. The other drawings include a Tityos, a Fall of
through contemporary copies (Windsor, Royal Collection) and what appears to be a preliminary drawing by the artist (1532/33, Harvard, Fogg Museum of Art) (figure 18). In the latter, Ganymede appears as a nude, heavily muscled young man who swoons in the grasp of the eagle's talons. Michelangelo represents Ganymede not as the hunter that Virgil describes, but rather as a shepherd. This is underscored by the presence of a bag and staff which lie on the ground next to the dog and the faint suggestions of a flock of sheep in the right background over which dog and master had been watching. Despite the forceful rendering of Ganymede's abduction, Michelangelo's drawing is generally understood as having a spiritual component, albeit a very personal one. As Panofsky demonstrates in his discussion of this image, it symbolizes *furor divinus*, or rather the sense of divine rapture that the artist experiences as a result of his platonic admiration for Cavalieri.54

It was not the personal content of Michelangelo's drawing, but rather the rendering of the image itself that had the greatest impact on other representations of the Ganymede myth in emblem books. For example, in Giulio Bonasone's engravings (LXXVIII and LXXIX) for Achille Bocchi's emblem book, *Symbolicarum quaestionum de universo genere* (Bologna 1555 and 1574), one can see the direct influence of Michelangelo's design, although the text itself stresses, as in Alciati, the spiritual over the corporeal.55 While the first emblem copies directly from Michelangelo's drawing, the second shows Ganymede clothed and accompanied by two dogs instead of one.56

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55 Kruszynski, p. 44-50; Saslow, p. 25; Mayo, pp. 111-113.
56 Panofsky, "Neoplatonic Movement," p. 216, no. 144, has explained the addition of clothing in the second emblem by referring to Pliny's comment on the Ganymede by Leochares which explains that the clothing prevents the eagle's talons from marring his captive, thus illustrating a perfect harmony between body and soul.
As several scholars have noted, in editions of Alciati's *Emblemata* printed between 1548-1551 (figure 19), the Ganymede illustration also has several elements in common with Michelangelo's drawing. These include the panoramic landscape, the barking dog, the arc of drapery that frames the youth's head, and the similar sensual interlocking of the forms of captive and captor. Some of these components, particularly the arc of drapery, also occur in the type of the boy riding the eagle, evidence of the impact that Michelangelo's drawing had on his contemporaries and thus on subsequent images.

**Dutch Emblem Books and Literature**

The Neoplatonic/Christian interpretation of the Ganymede myth is further evident in seventeenth-century Dutch emblem books and literature. An example is Gabriel Rollenhagen's *Nucleus emblematum selectissimorum*, published in Arnhem in 1611 with illustrations by Crispin van de Passe (figure 20). The caption surrounding the now familiar image of Ganymede riding on the eagle's back is "Quod opto non est mortale" ("What I wish for is not mortal"). Van de Passe's engraving was reused by George Wither in his *Collection of emblems* published in London in 1635. In addition to the Latin caption, Wither includes his own poetic lines: "Take wing, my Soule, and mount up higher; For, Earth, fulfills not my Desire." It has been suggested that a Ganymede by Antonio Tempesta made for an edition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Amsterdam, 1606) was the source for van de Passe's design.

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57 Saslow p. 23-24; Kempter p. 69 and nr. 233; Kruszynski, pp. 29-30. Kruszynski, p. 33, notes that the discrepancy between the erotic Michelangesque image and the emblem's Neoplatonic meaning soon led to the replacement of this image with a more decorous one.


59 Russell, p. 8 and fig. 5. Both de Jongh, "Bloemen in de knop," p. 44 and Krempel p. 98 assert that Maes was familiar with van de Passe's engraving and that it influenced his rendering of the Ganymede subject in his portraits.
The Dordrecht author, Margaretha van Godewijck, chose also to emphasize the Neoplatonic meaning in her treatment of Ganymede's abduction. In an unpublished manuscript titled simply *Gedichten* (c. 1653), she includes an emblem of Ganymede. The illustration is heavily dependent on van de Passe's engraving and the text is clearly influenced by Rollenhagen's caption. The text reads:

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O werelt vuyl, bemorst,
adieu, K'wil u begeven,
Het gene dat ik wensch en
is geen sterfflijk goed;
Met op geheven hooft wert
ick opwarts gedreven
By God, al waer ick gae de
vreugde te gemoet.61
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Further evidence of the persistence of the Neoplatonic meaning of the Ganymede myth in the seventeenth-century Netherlands is found in Carel van Mander's famous *Het Schilder-boeck* (Haarlem, 1604). The fifth part of this text, *Wtlegginge op den Metamorphosis Pub. Ovidij Nasonis*, is the only seventeenth-century Dutch translation of Ovid. Van Mander's translation of the *Metamorphoses* was based on Natalis Comes' *Mythologiae sive explicationum fabularum* (Paris, 1582), a text that relies heavily on the Neoplatonic symbolism of Renaissance emblem books.62 After recounting the Ovidian version of the Ganymede story, van Mander focuses on the Neoplatonic interpretation of the myth. Like a number of other authors, he sees Ganymede as a metaphor for the human soul that is in no way defiled by the impurities of physical desires, and

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60 Saslow, p. 188 and figure 5.11.
which is chosen by God and drawn to Him. Van Mander explains that just as
God is always desirous of wisdom, sincerity, gentleness, modesty, and other
virtues of the soul, he accepts the spiritual value of humans as sweet nectar, or
drink of the gods. In this way, he states, we can understand the abduction of
Ganymede, who was taken prematurely from his parents by death, which gave
rise to the allegorical invention of his abduction.\footnote{Van Mander, fol. 87r.}
Van Mander goes on to
explain that such is true of all humans who are sincere of mind for it is only such
people that God chooses to his service.\footnote{By Ganymedes wort verstaen/De Menschlijke Siele/De ghene/Die alderweynichst met De lichaemlijcke
onreynicheden der quade lusten is beoleckt: Desw vertaoen Gode vercoren/en tot hem ghetrocken. En
ghelijck als Godt altijt dorstigh en begheerigh is nae de wijsheyt/oprechticheyt/sachtmoedt/en
verslaghentheyt/en ander deughdten/oft schoonheden der Sielen: so neemt hy haer inwendighe wercken in
den Menschen aen/als lieflijck Nectar, oft Goden dranck. Dus mogen wy leertijk verstaen/
d'ontschakinge van Ganymedes, Die uytnemende schoon/Zijn Ouders vroegh ontstorf/en daerom ontrooft te
zijn was vorsiert." Carel van Mander, \textit{Wtlegginghe op den Metamorphosis} Pub. Ovidij Nasonis, in
\textit{Het Schilder-boeck} (Haarlem, 1604; reprint, Utrecht: Davaco, 1969), Book 10, fol. 87r.}
Given the popularity of van Mander's \textit{Schilder-Boeck}, it is likely that Maes was familiar with this text. Not only was it an
important source book for artists, dealers, and collectors, it was a fundamental
source for subsequent theoretical texts on Netherlandish art.\footnote{Walter S. Mellon, \textit{Shaping the Netherlandish Canon. Karel van Mander's "Schilder-Boeck."}
influenced by Van Mander's text, Philip Angel's \textit{Laf der Schilder-Konst} (1642), Samuel van
Hoogstraeten's \textit{Inleyding tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilderkonst} (1678), Gerard de Lairesse's \textit{Groot
Schilderboek} (1707), and Arnold Houbraken's \textit{Groote Schouburgh} (1718). As further evidence of the
popularity of van Mander's book, Mellon notes that the preface to the second edition (1618)
indicates that the first edition (1604) sold out almost immediately.}

\textbf{Boy Riding the Eagle Type}

It is important to note that the boy riding the eagle motif was not limited
to emblem books alone. Painted, drawn, and sculpted examples also occur
during the Renaissance. Both Kempter and Saslow have discussed a number of
these images in their extensive studies of the Ganymede iconography. Each has
concluded that the boy riding the eagle type, which places emphasis on a journey made willingly and joyfully, was more susceptible to spiritual interpretations than other Ganymede types. Kempter contends that in this particular compositional type, the eagle is a messenger, not Jupiter in disguise, a notion that further supports Ganymede's journey as one made of his own free will. Both scholars refer to the important role that antiquity played in both the development of this image type and its identification with the metaphysical. The idea of the soul-bearing eagle was frequently associated with the apotheosis of a Roman emperor. Images of a youth astride an eagle found on Imperial Roman coins and medallions both glorified and sanctified an emperor by showing his ascension to the heavens on Jupiter's eagle. Busts of the Caesars resting on an eagle in the act of taking flight also suggest this notion of their apotheosis. In addition, an image of an eagle was always fastened to the top of the pyre on which the corpse was to be burned at the funeral rites of Roman emperors. The bird was believed to carry the monarch's soul to a higher metaphysical plane.

The above spiritual associations are compounded by the depiction of the rape of Ganymede on Roman funerary monuments dedicated to both adults and children. Ganymede's abduction, like those images of the apotheosis of an emperor, is used as a metaphor for the ascent of the soul beyond the terrestrial

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66 See Kempter, pp. 62-79 and Saslow, pp. 164-166 and passim.
67 Kempter, p. 62. The idea of the eagle as messenger (rather than Jupiter in disguise) is first found in Virgil's account of the rape of Ganymede (Aeneid 5:250-257).
68 Saslow, p. 197. For examples of the imperial medallion see F. Gnecci, I medaglioni romani (Milan, V. Hoepli, 1912), vol. 2, pls. 43.5, 45.4.
69 Franz Cumont, After Life in Roman Paganism (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1922), 159. See also Arch of Trajan (Benevento), Apotheosis of Trajan.
70 See Franz Cumont, Récherches sur le symbolisme funéraire des Romains (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1942), 97ff. for a complete list of representations of the Ganymede myth on sarcophagi. See also Hellmut Sichtermann, Ganymed. Mythos und Gestalt in der antiken Kunst (Berlin: Gebr. mann, 1953), 88-90. According to Cumont, a grave monument from Igel which incorporated the motif of the rape of Ganymede was likely consecrated in honor of a deceased child. p. 97, no. 2.
plane. One example, a Roman grave stele from the imperial period (Copenhagen, National Museum), shows a young man, draped in a toga, partially reclining on the back of an eagle.\textsuperscript{71} Another type, this one a child's sarcophagus, shows the figures of Ganymede and the eagle situated directly beneath a portrait of the deceased.\textsuperscript{72} It has been noted that the theme of Ganymede's rape was a particularly suitable subject for a child's sarcophagus as it is an appropriate metaphor for a child's untimely death.\textsuperscript{73} As has been demonstrated above, these and other spiritualized associations helped shape the ways in which the Ganymede myth was interpreted in Renaissance emblem books.

It should be pointed out that not all representations of the boy-riding-eagle type are necessarily open to spiritual interpretations. I am referring specifically to its preferential use for illustrations of the rape of Ganymede in many editions of Ovid's \textit{Metamorphoses} that were published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A sixteenth-century example with illustrations by the Flemish artist Pieter van der Borcht is \textit{P. Ovidii Nasonis Metamorphose, Argumentis Brevioribus ex Luctatio Grammatico...}, which was printed in Antwerp in 1591 (figure 21).\textsuperscript{74} Van der Borcht's engraving of Ganymede adheres strongly to the formula popularized by Alciati's \textit{Emblemata};\textsuperscript{75} However, a notable difference is that this Ganymede soars above what appears to be a very detailed Flemish

\textsuperscript{71} See Kempter, figure 51 for illustration.
\textsuperscript{73} Huskinson, p. 102.
\textsuperscript{75} Visual similarities between the illustrations of Ganymede in Alciati and those found in illustrated editions of Ovid were first suggested by Svetlana Alpers, "Manner and Meaning in Some Rubens Mythologies," \textit{Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute} 30 (1967): 275, no. 16.
landscape that is complete with a windmill. These texts provide but a retelling of the Ovidian account of the Ganymede myth, which is devoid of spiritual connotations, and emphasizes rather one of the loves of Jupiter. It is likely that the boy riding the eagle type, which gained popularity and familiarity as a Neoplatonic image, was used by printers and illustrators of Ovid's text without reference to the Neoplatonic interpretation of the motif. This would not be unusual as prints were often used as illustrations for different texts without concern for discrepancies. Thus, illustrated editions of Ovid's text could be an important source for the dissemination of the boy riding the eagle motif without conveying the different meaning given the image in this other context.

Maes' paintings, which also show a child riding an eagle, have much in common with other images of Ganymede riding the eagle, particularly those found in the emblem books discussed above. In both cases, a child is shown dressed in a classicizing drapery (even down to the detail of the trailing arc of drapery), seated comfortably on an eagle (in either a side-saddle position or astride the bird) that soars above a landscape. In several instances, the boy's barking dog is also included. Such a representation of Ganymede peacefully riding the bird to the heavens rather than being bodily snatched from his earthly existence by the eagle's menacing talons (or beak) suggests that Ganymede makes the journey willingly. Because the emphasis is on presenting this episode as a joyful flight heavenward rather than a forceful rape, it is more susceptible to spiritual interpretations. It is easy to see how this image and the Neoplatonic-Christian meaning associated with it was extended to define a formula for the representation of a child whose life was cut short by an early death.

We cannot, however, disregard the fact that as paintings, Maes's images of Ganymede convey meaning differently from emblems and prints with
inscriptions. While the latter two types transmit ideas through the combination of text and image, paintings rely on a purely visual means of communication. In paintings, then, meaning must be sought in the visual presentation of the material, the visual traditions and conventions related to the subject, and the context of the whole. It is therefore important to consider Maes's portraits in relation to other Dutch treatments of the subject of the abduction of Ganymede before drawing any definite conclusions regarding interpretation.

**Dutch Images**

According to Saslow, the number of images of Ganymede produced in the seventeenth century decreased significantly compared to its popularity in late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century art. This is true not only in Italy, but in other European countries as well. In the Northern Netherlands, this subject was treated by only two artists in the sixteenth century. Cornelis Bos is

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76 Saslow, p. 197. In seventeenth-century France Ganymede occurs in only four unimportant works all of which were executed in Paris during the early years of the reign of Louis XIV. Two of these were by Italians working in France: Giovanni Francesco Romanelli’s, *Rape of Ganymede* (a cartoon for a ceiling that is neither dated nor connected with any specific project), is of the Michelangelo type, but shows a child rather than an adolescent; and Stefano della Bella’s, *Jupiter and Ganymede*, an engraved playing card that is one of 52 cards for a mythological game commissioned in 1644 by Cardinal Mazarin for 6 year old Louis XIV. This image is of the boy riding the eagle type and given its context, was unlikely to have had an amorous content. Two works, both for the Hôtel Lambert, Paris, Cabinet de l’Amour (1646-47), were also executed by Eustache LeSuer. One shows Ganymede as the boy riding the eagle and the other shows him offering a cup to Jupiter. Saslow, pp. 180-182. The context of these works suggests amorous associations. In Italy, Federico Zuccari portrayed the *Rape of Ganymede* for the Sala di Ganime in his home (c. 1593-98). This semi-public chamber was used for meetings of the Accademia di San Luca. In Zuccari’s treatises on art, he twice referred to the eagle as symbol of “divine spark of Design” and the “power of creative thought [that] sets us apart from brute beasts”. Saslow relates these statements back to the myth’s Neoplatonic interpretation, with “the artist-Ganymede representing the human mind drawn upward to higher realms through the quasi-spiritual transport of artistic inspiration.” Saslow, p. 170 and Kempter nr. 247. This association may have also been alluded to by the Dutch painter, Cornelis Bisschop, in a self-portrait in which the artist (in painter’s smock and holding a palette and brushes) lifts a curtain to reveal a painting of the abduction of Ganymede. See John Loughman, in Dordrechts Museum, *De Zichtbare Wereld*, cat. nr. 6, pp. 90-92

77 Saslow, p. 185.
responsible for three engravings of the abduction of Ganymede. Two of these works are copies after a *Battle of the Giants* (Ovid, *Met.* 151-162) by Giulio Romano wherein Ganymede appears as a small boy riding on an eagle (figure 22). This detail was used again by Bos for a separate small print, which shows child and eagle soaring over a landscape in the tradition of the illustrations found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and emblem books (figure 23). The third engraving is a copy after Michiel Coxie, which is highly dependent on Michelangelo's famous drawing for Tommaso de' Cavalieri. In contrast to Bos's other works, the last type adheres to a formula that is more in keeping with the myth itself. Ganymede is shown as an idealized nude young man who is lifted from the earthly realm clutching in the eagle's sharp talons, a more traditional rendering of the rape that was very popular with Italian Renaissance artists. Because Ganymede is represented as an idealized youth rather than a child, the amorous associations of the myth are more strongly evoked in terms of Jupiter's physical desire for the boy. This aspect is emphasized in that Ganymede is shown in either a swoon or an awkward struggle with the bird, suggesting a certain reluctance to accompany his abductor.

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79 Schéle, p. 139, explains Ganymede's presence in this image as simply a "symbol of Jupiter."  
81 In several cases, however, an artist suggests a more intimate relationship between boy and bird while maintaining this formula (Ganymede in the eagle's clutches). This is evident in Giulio Romano's design for a stucco relief of the *Rape of Ganymede* for the Camerino dei Falconi in the ducal palace, Mantua (1536-40). An idealized nude youth with parted legs and prominently displayed genitals, is shown tightly gripped in the eagle's claws. His head is turned to meet the kiss of the eagle's beak. See Saslow fig. 3.30 and Kempter nr. 88 for illustration. Annibale Carracci's *Ganymede* from the Farnese Ceiling, Rome (1596-1600) also suggests a more intimate relationship between Ganymede and the eagle. The youth is shown with his arm around the eagle's neck as the two gaze into each other's eyes. See Saslow for a thorough consideration of the Ganymede myth and its homoerotic implications.
Abraham Bloemaert also painted an Abduction of Ganymede, which is known only through an engraving by Jan Saenredam (figure 24). In this work, Ganymede is shown as the boy riding the eagle type complete with an arc of drapery billowing behind him. The pair are shown soaring above a farm in the countryside where a farmer busily attends to his labors. At the bottom of the print is a Latin inscription that explains that even the gods are touched by love. The combination of the reference in the text to Jupiter's physical desire for Ganymede and the boy riding the eagle motif suggests that this work comes out of the tradition of the illustrated Ovid. According to Roethlisberger, this print can be viewed in one of two ways. In keeping with the verse, one might see the contrast between figure and landscape as conveying the opposition between daily life and the desire for divine love. Those with a penchant for the spiritual, however, might see the rugged rural setting as a contrast to the divine aspirations of the soul embodied by Ganymede. Similar associations had been common in Flemish landscapes since the time of Bruegel.

In the seventeenth-century, the subject is given greater attention in the Northern Netherlands, but is still only treated by a handful of artists. In

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84 The subject of the abduction of Ganymede was only given minimal treatment by Flemish artists as well. Images by Paul Bril, Joos de Momper, and Kerstiaen de Keuninck are primarily landscapes in which the motif of Ganymede riding on the eagle is but a small component; see Kempter nrs. 34, 35,104, 159. Three additional examples are of the Michelangelo type. One is an engraving by Querin Boel for David Teniers's *Antwerpensis pictoris et a cubiculis Ser. mis principibus Leopoldo Gul. Archiduci & Joanni Austriaco theatrum pictorui* (Antwerp, 1684), pl. 11; Kempter nr. 104. Another is a drawing by Michiel Coxie (London, British Museum), see note 80 above. The third is an etching by Jan Miel, signed "Mielom Romae"; Bartsch I. 224, 9; Kempter, nr. 154. In a sketch for a ceiling fresco, Cornelis Schut uses the "boy-riding-bird" type but emphasizes Ganymede's role as cupbearer to the gods by including his wine jug and cup; Kempter, nr. 206.
addition to Maes' paintings, only five other representations have been
documented and two of these are no longer extant.  

A rather unusual use of Ganymede in his role as cupbearer to the gods is
illustrated in a painting by Jacob van Campen executed sometime after 1647 for
the chapel of the Oranjezaal in Huis ten Bosch (figure 25). After the death of
Frederick Hendrick, his widow, Amalia van Solms, had this room decorated as a
memorial to her husband. The elaborate allegorical scheme was devised by the
prince's secretary, Constantijn Huygens. Venus and Juno (with her peacocks
close at hand) hover amongst the clouds in a chariot drawn by doves and swans.
The two goddesses are accompanied by a host of music-making putti.
Ganymede is also present, in the form of a small child riding on the back of
Jupiter's eagle, in a manner that suggests the visual influence of emblem books
and/or illustrated editions of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In this representation,
however, Ganymede holds a wine jug that refers to his role as cupbearer. This
composition is directly related to Honthorst's *Allegory of the Marriage of Frederick
Hendrick and Amalia van Solms*, which is situated directly below it. According to

The best known Flemish examples of Ganymede are by Rubens. His ca. 1611 *Ganymede* (Vienna, coll. of Prince Karl Schwarzenberg) shows the youth seated on the eagle's wing, with his left arm outstretched to receive a goblet from one of two female figures. According to Alpers, *Rubens Mythologies*, pp. 273-276, this scene is an allegory representing the immortal soul. Alpers further suggests that the immortality bestowed upon Ganymede was possibly meant to honor his brother Philip, who died in 1611, p. 276, no. 18. For Abraham van Diepenbeeck's copy after Rubens's painting see Kempter, nr. 60. A second painting by Rubens shows Ganymede's forceful abduction. This work is part of the series of Ovidian subjects painted ca. 1635 as decorations for the Torre de la Parada in Spain. See Svetlana Alpers, *The Decoration of the Torre de la Parada*, Corpus Rubenianum, ed. Ludwig Burchard, pt. 9 (Brussels: Arcade Press, 1971), pp. 210-211, fig. 100.

Sluijter, p. 96, records a now lost painting of the abduction of Ganymede by the hand of either de Grebber or Couwenbergh (1638) for the trapenhuis at Honselaersdijk. He also mentions another lost painting of this subject as having been located in the dining room of Noordeinde palace.

For earlier examples of Ganymede's roles as cupbearer to the gods see Mayo, p. 62-66 and Kempter, pp. 34-41, illus. 12-16. For an example by Rubens, see above note 85.

Peter-Raupp, Venus (goddess of love) and Juno (goddess of marriage) are present to convey the gods' approval of the marriage of Frederick Hendrick and Amalia van Solms. She explains Ganymede's presence as having a similar function, and one that is conveyed in some of Vondel's marriage poems. She cites as example, the poem written on the occasion of the marriage of P.C. Hooft and Helionora Hellemans, *Bruiloftbed van den E. Here Pieter Cornelisz. Hoofd, en de E. Joffre Helionora Hellemans* (1627) which communicates the gods' endorsement of the union of these two mortals. In this poem, Jupiter sends Ganymede to the earthly realms to honor the bride and bridegroom by serving them and their wedding party the nectar of the gods. Peter-Raupp maintains that Ganymede serves this same function in Van Campen's painting.89

Certainly the best known representation of Ganymede by a Dutch artist is that by Rembrandt. In his 1635 painting of the *Rape of Ganymede* (Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen), Rembrandt takes a unique approach to the subject (figure 26).90 Ganymede is a chubby infant who has been brutally seized by a

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89 Peter-Raupp, p. 123. B. Breninkmeyer-de Rooij, *Notities betreffende de decoratie van de Oranjezaal in Huis Ten Bosch,* *Oud Holland* 96 (1982): 144-147, offers an alternate, Neoplatonic interpretation of this painting, that I find less convincing. She argues that the women in the chariot represent the heavenly and earthly Venuses. The former is identified by the mandorla of light that surrounds her and the latter by the apple she holds as a symbol of lust (sensuality). Earthly love looks down at the peacocks of Juno, while heavenly love turns her gaze toward Ganymede on the eagle, a motif that she interprets in the Neoplatonic sense as the pure soul who finds its joy in God. She concludes that this image conveys the idea that the earthly love between Frederick Hendrick and Amalia van Solms will ultimately lead to divine love. Although intriguing, this interpretation is somewhat problematic. First of all, it disregards Ganymede's role here as cupbearer. Furthermore, the figure identified as "Heavenly Love" prominently displays a sceptre, which is an attribute associated with Juno, queen of the gods and deity of marriage.

90 A painting by Carel van Mander III, now lost, but preserved in an engraving by Albert Haelwegh (Kopenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst, Kupferstichsammlung), is the only known work that reflects knowledge of Rembrandt's Ganymede. Van Mander III adopts the infant type as well as its pose and disposition. High above the group he adds a feast of the gods and changes the cherries that the child holds to an apple (?). Kempter, nr. 124. This painting also appears as a picture within a picture by Pieter de Hooch entitled *Gallant Company* (Lisbon, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga). In this context, the Abduction of Ganymede has been interpreted as signifying a contrast between worldly pursuits and more spiritual pursuits. See E. de Jongh, et al. *Tot lezing in vermaak: betekenis van Hollandse genrepresenteringen uit de zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1976), cat. 29, pp. 131-33 and Kempter, nr. 91.
fierce eagle, who with its beak, snatches up the child by his right arm while taking his left arm in one of its talons. The terrified child responds to his abduction by crying out in pain and distress and by urinating. Rembrandt has also replaced Ganymede's traditional classical drapery with a tasseled nightshirt of contemporary design and his wine jug with a bunch of cherries. Margarita Russell explains this painting as Rembrandt's ingenious solution to the problem of devising a formula in which he could represent the dual role of Ganymede as the pure soul rising to God, and as Aquarius providing rainwater for the earth. This, she explains, was in order "to do justice to all the aspects of the mythological tale" as related in van Mander. Russell relates the motif of urination to van Mander's etymological explanation of the astrological symbolism of Ganymede. According to van Mander, "Hebe means youth..., her fall indicates the end of youth..., the falling leaves in autumn... She is replaced by Ganymede who is Winter, in Greek Hyein, which means to rain. Thus Ganymede is transformed into the heavenly sign of the Waterman, pouring down for us if not nectar yet water in abundance." To refer to this astral identity of Ganymede, Rembrandt turned to representations of the urinating small boy or putto that was an especially popular motif for Renaissance fountains. Probably the most famous example is Jerôme Duquesnoy's *Manneken-Pis*, which was commissioned in 1619 by the city of Brussels to provide water for

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91 For other examples of Ganymede as Aquarius see Kempter, pp. 34-41, 178-179 (H1-H9, H14-H15) and illus. 12-16. In these examples Ganymede supplies water to the earth by pouring it from a jug. On the calendar page for February from the *Grimani Breviary* (early 16th century), Ganymede provides water by both pouring it from jugs and by urinating. See Russell, p. 16 and fig. 15.

92 Russell, pp. 12-13 (her translation).
the townspeople. An inventory of Rembrandt's estate made in 1656 indicates that the artist owned either a replica of Duquesnoy's bronze or a similar statuette.

I find the Aquarius aspect of Russell's argument convincing, but believe that her Neoplatonic explanation is problematic. Rather, I am inclined to agree with Sluijter, who has pointed out that the emphasis in Rembrandt's work appears to be not only on depicting Ganymede's role as Aquarius, but also on conveying in a most convincing manner, the actions and reactions associated with a particular event -- Ganymede's abduction. That this "rape" is unwanted is underscored by the violent attack by the eagle and the child's natural response to such an unexpected fright. In this light it is hard to see this particular representation of the subject as an allegory of the pure soul rising to the heavens. As Sluijter indicates, this notion might certainly have been evoked in some viewers, but it seems unlikely to have been at the heart of the representation.

When one considers Maes' paintings in relation to other seventeenth-century Dutch treatments of the subject, the likely conclusion is that Maes was not drawing his inspiration from his contemporaries. Rather, it appears that Maes was inventive in his use of the subject. Although the homoerotic aspect of Ganymede's abduction was familiar in the seventeenth-century Netherlands, it does not appear to have been of interest to artists treating the subject. Perhaps

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93 Ibid, p. 14, no. 36.
94 Russell, p. 10, explains the eagle's forceful abduction of the child in Rembrandt's painting as making reference to the "death of a child" (where the eagle is death) as being not without pain and terror. She asserts this notion specifically in relation to her discussion of Rembrandt's preparatory drawing which includes two figures in the lower left corner which she identifies as "parents". This drawing, she explains, "suggests that he (Rembrandt) may have initially accepted the 'death of a child' idea as the major motif of the Ganymede story."
95 Sluijter, p. 97, no. 6
96 De Jongh et al, p. 132.
they shared the view expressed by Samuel van Hoogstraeten in his *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderkonst* (Rotterdam, 1678). Hoogstraeten states that the rape of Ganymede was the kind of unedifying subject that should be avoided as it does not present a good example, but rather is upsetting. In formulating his version of the subject, it appears that Maes has drawn from images of the child riding the eagle made popular by emblem books and illustrated editions of Ovid. There are however, visual differences which distinguish Maes's images as portraits. Because his Ganymedes engage the viewer directly by eye contact there is a much greater sense of immediacy, and a connection between the sitter and the beholder is established. The affected poses of the figures as well as the incorporation of contemporary fashions further define these paintings as portraits. As such characteristics do not occur in other versions of this subject, one can assume that either Maes or one of his patrons was responsible for the invention of this specific *portrait historié* type. Maes's use of the Ganymede motif to memorialize a dead child is, however, not without precedent. As Saslow has asserted, the Italian poet Margarita Costa dedicated a poem entitled *Flora fecunda* (Florence, 1640) to Grand Duke Ferdinand II on the occasion of his wife, Vittoria della Rovere's first pregnancy. When the child died shortly after birth, Costa added a final verse in which she compared the child to Ganymede using the tradition of the Christian-Neoplatonic idea of the pure soul being drawn to God.

Because three of the Ganymede portraits have been associated with specific families, we have further means of substantiating the identification of children in these images as being deceased. The child in the painting in the Fogg

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97 Samuel van Hoogstraeten, *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderkonst*, Rotterdam, 1678, p. 94. The critical passage is reproduced in de Jongh et al., p. 132.
98 Saslow, pp. 176 and 190.
museum has been identified as representing various members of the prominent de Vicq family of Amsterdam. A typed inscription dating from 1935 on the reverse of the painting identifies the sitter as René de Vicq. This son of Guillaume de Vicq and Judith Adriana Velters was born in 1683 and lived to the age of 54. However, this identification is shaky as it is based simply on family tradition. Moreover, it does not accord with Moes' earlier identification of the infant as a "child of Francois de Vicq as Ganymede." Using Moes as a basis, F.G.L. O. van Kretschmar concluded that the child in Maes' painting was Gerbrand de Vicq (1674-1712), third son of Francois de Vicq and Aletta Pancras. He further contends that his identification disproves the theory that the Ganymede motif represents a deceased child. However, it is not precisely clear why van Kretschmar selected Gerbrand as the sitter in Maes's painting when it could just as easily have been one of his three brothers. An alternate identification has been proposed by S.A.C. Dudok van Heel, one which would support the deceased child argument. According to his research, the child is most probably George de Vicq, Gerbrand's younger brother, who was only eight months old when he died. Unfortunately, a definite identification cannot yet

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102 Johan E. Elias, De Vroedschap van Amsterdam 1578-1795, vol. 2 (Amsterdam: N. Israel, 1963), pp. 588-589, records the birth of five children to Francois de Vicq and Aletta Pancras: Francois the younger, Nicolaas, Petronella, Gerbrand, and George. Krempel's dating of the painting in question to the years between 1679-1686 (Phase VII) casts further doubt on the identification of the sitter as Gerbrand de Vicq who was born in 1674: p. 129 no. 159.

103 George de Vicq was baptized in Amsterdam at the Nieuwe Zijds Kapel on December 18, 1680 and was buried in the Nieuwe Kerk on August 23, 1681. Dudok van Heel's conclusion is cited in C.J. Matthijs, "De Portretten uit de Families van Bredenhoff en de Vicq," Jaarboek van het Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie en het Iconographisch Bureau, The Hague, Vol 37 (1983), pp. 188, 192. That the child is probably George de Vicq is currently the identification accepted by the Iconographisch Bureau. See record nr. 78083.
be made for the child in Maes's painting. What we can conclude is that the evidence thus far available can be used to argue both for and against the memorial thesis.

A similar case can be made for the now lost portrait whose sitter was listed by Hofstede de Groot as Balthasar Smissaert. Balthasar (1677-1741) was one of seven children born to Johan Carel Smissaert and Constantia Coymans, a well-to-do Utrecht couple. If we accept this identification, as Wishnevsky has indicated, then the memorial theory behind the Ganymede motif once again becomes problematic as Balthasar lived a long and successful life. However, documentary evidence from the municipal archives in Utrecht reveals that two of the couple's children did not survive to adulthood. The couple's first born child, Johan Carel (8-1-1675) is presumed to have passed away prior to 1684, the year in which another boy was baptized with that same name. An additional child, Gerard, was baptized on November 12, 1680. According to Utrecht burial records, "een kint van de heer Smetser" died on December 14, 1680 and was buried six days later in the Dom church, Utrecht for 50 guilders. In contemporary values, this was quite an expensive funeral (the maximum burial fee for an adult was two and one half guilders) and only affordable by a family of Johan Carel Smissaert's status. Gerard, who would have been less than a

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104 HdG, p. 544, no. 266.
105 Elias, pp. 375-377, indicates a total of seven children, but only discusses four of them by name.
106 Wishnevsky, p. 84 and nr. 86.
107 J.J.J. van Meerwijk, Utrecht Municipal Archives, personal correspondance, September 7, 1998. (This child is not mentioned in Elias). Only the child baptized Johan Carel in 1684 is discussed in Elias, p. 376. Iconographisch Bureau nr. 14476, under the assumption that the memorial thesis is correct, records the sitter in Maes's portrait as this child, Joan (Johan ) Carel Smissaert (?), indicating only that the child was born in 1675/76 and that he died young.
108 Utrecht Burial Register, book 126, fol. 305.
109 J.J. Meerwijk, personal correspondance, September 7, 1998. The other family living in Utrecht with this surname (not related) belonged to the lower class and would not have been able
month old, is possibly the child buried in the Dom on this date, or it could also have been five year old Johan Carel. What is most significant is that there are candidates from this family who fit the criteria associated with the use of the Ganymede motif to represent children who died at a young age.

Another Ganymede portrait is listed by Hofstede de Groot as representing a child of the Ruytenbeeck family (figure 4). This youngster has been specifically identified (but on no certain evidence) as one of the children of the Amsterdam merchant Everard van Ruytenbeeck and his wife Sara Ingelbrechts. This unfortunate couple died with no heirs after having buried six children between the years 1669-1679. Although Maes painted pendant portraits of Everard van Ruytenbeeck and Sara Ingelbrechts in 1675 we can not say with certainty that they were indeed the parents of the Ganymede child. Though the evidence provided about these families does not allow us to make absolute identifications of the children represented in Maes's portraits, neither does it allow us to dismiss the memorial theory. Rather, I believe that the number of plausible dead candidates serves to strengthen the memorial thesis regarding Maes's Ganymede portraits.

to pay for such a costly funeral. For further discussion of excessive funerary spending in the Dutch Republic see below, Chapter 4, pp. 151-152.
110 This painting is now lost and I have not been able to locate any reproductions. It is thus impossible to determine whether the painting's style is in accordance with a dating to the early 1680's.
111 HdG, p. 540, nr. 248.
112 The Iconographisch Bureau records this child as Jan Ruytenbeeck, baptized 7-30-1672 and buried 6-19-1676. This identification was made while the portrait was in the collection of F. Muller, Amsterdam, 1920. No explanation is provided. Iconographisch Bureau, record nr. 21758. Russell's theory (p. 9 no. 18) that five of the single paintings of Ganymede represent children of Everard van Ruytenbeeck and Sara Ingelbrechts cannot be substantiated.
113 All six children were buried in the Westerkerk, Amsterdam. Amsterdam Municipal Archives, Burial Register, book 1101, folios 27 and 114; book 1102, folios 18,48,54 and 78.
114 HdG 246 and 247. Krempel, nr. A150, A151. All three portraits had the same provenance until 1906. The date at which they were first brought together is unknown. See Appendix nr. A4.
Venus Portraits

In light of the above findings, I would like to introduce two additional paintings by Maes which I believe to be the female counterparts of the Ganymede portraits (figures 27 and 28). These images also fall under the category of portrait historié, as each shows a young girl as "Venus". In each portrait, the girl is posed quite confidently in a small chariot that is being pulled through the sky by a pair of doves. As in the Ganymede portraits, these girls wear fantasy costumes complete with a long scarf that is knotted at their left shoulders and which forms the familiar flowing arc behind them. In one example, the girl rests her arm on a leopard skin that was likely added as a further allusion to the painting's mythological theme. Both girls wear pearls and one wears the fanciful ostrich-plumed headpiece that is characteristic of the Ganymede portraits. The situation of these "Venuses" in a cloud-filled sky above a distant landscape is also similar to the Ganymede portraits.

The identification of these two girls as "Venus" is based primarily on their mode of transportation. Venus's triumphal chariot was drawn by either two swans or two doves. Just as Ganymede seemed an inappropriate guise for a

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115 Buijsen, p. 52, has also come to this conclusion stating that Maes developed an alternate formula for representing deceased girls but does not identify the girls in Maes's portraits with Venus or any other mythological character.

116 Vishnevsky, p. 85 and nr. 123 also makes this identification, but only with regard to one of the images. The other is not mentioned. She links them with Maes's Ganymede portraits only in as much as they are both examples of the artist's elegant late portrait style.

117 Leopard skins were sometimes part of the romantic costume worn by males in arcadian portraiture. See for example Cornelis van Poelenburch, Portrait of Jan Pellicorne as a Shepherd, Baltimore, The Walters Art Gallery (in Joaneath A. Spicer, Masters of Light. Dutch Painters in Utrecht During the Golden Age (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1997, cat. 60).

portrait of a young boy, so too does the goddess of love for a young Dutch girl.\textsuperscript{119} However, Venus, like Ganymede, could have both carnal and spiritual associations. This shared duality further supports the notion that the Venus paintings were developed as female counterparts to Maes's Ganymedes. Certainly, it is significant that Maes's paintings appear to be the only portraits wherein "Venus" is a child who is pulled through the sky in her chariot.\textsuperscript{120} I believe that a possible explanation for Maes's use of the type can be found by considering the Neoplatonic philosophy of the 'Twin Venuses' as put forth by Marsilio Ficino in his commentary on Plato's \textit{Symposium}.\textsuperscript{121} Ficino explains the nature of love as being two-fold. Aphrodite Urania (whom Ficino calls Venus Humanitas) is the daughter of Uranus who was born without mother from the foam of the sea that was fertilized by her father's castrated seed. The earthly Venus, or Aphrodite Pandemos, was the product of the lustful union of Zeus and the nymph Dione. The first of the two, described as "the heavenly" or "spiritual" to distinguish her from the other incarnation, personifies love that is generated through contemplation of the eternal and divine.\textsuperscript{122} She is thus believed to embody pure intellect, the same virtue that Xenophon attributes to Ganymede in

\textsuperscript{119} Most role portraits in which Venus is the subject show her in the company of other characters from her mythology such as Adonis, Mars, Cupid, and Bacchus. See Wishnevsky cat. pp. 180-212ff. Very few single portraits of women as Venus were painted in the seventeenth-century Netherlands. Wishnevsky cites a total of three including one of the Maes paintings, p. 210, nrs. 122-124.

\textsuperscript{120} Images of Venus in her triumphal chariot drawn by doves occur in 15th and 16th-century Italian painting. This can be explained in relation to the popularity of civic processions (many of which celebrated the triumphs of pagan deities) in Italian cities. Hall, p. 319. See for example an 1546 engraving by Cornelis Bos after Marcantonio Raimondi entitled \textit{Venus in Her Car}. Images of Venus in her chariot also occur in some illustrated editions of Ovid's \textit{Metamorphoses}. See for example P. Ovidii Nasonis \textit{Metamorphose}, p. 343.


his explanation of the etymology of the youth's name. In contrast, Venus Pandemos represents material beauty and sensual pleasures. I believe that it is highly possible that Maes's "Venuses" are associated with the idea of the celestial Aphrodite Uranus.

The Neoplatonic idea of the 'Two Venuses' was also known in the seventeenth century as is evidenced by it's mention in van Mander's *Witlegginge op den Metamorphosis* Pub. Ovidij Nasonis. Van Mander describes the heavenly Venus as being pure and chaste and credits her with inspiring in humans a fervent love that allows their souls to be united with the divine. In his extensive discussion of Venus' mythology, van Mander also makes mention of her chariot which he indicates is drawn by two doves and two swans. Maes' depiction of "Venus's" flight heavenwards can be understood as a literal translation of the pure soul's journey toward unification with God.

Even more significant in relation to Maes's "Venus" portraits is Ripa's reference to the heavenly Venus in his discussion of the personification of *maeghdelijke staet*, or maidenhood. He explains that the heavenly Venus represents pure love which springs from actions that are chaste and unadulterated. The heavenly Venus was thus a devotee of chastity.

123 Saslow, p. 23.
126 Ripa, p. 223, "Jonghvrouwschap, Maeghdelijke Staet ".

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Because one of the Venus portraits is equipped with its original frame which is decorated with what appear to be carved doves (figure 28), I think it appropriate to discuss additional associations that this bird might have evoked in contemporary viewers. Doves could symbolize both simplicity and purity. For example, in the engraving accompanying the poem "Maeghde-Wapen" ("Maiden's Coat of Arms") in Jacob Cat's marriage manual, *Houwelick* (1625), two young women are represented. One personifies docility ("leersucht"), the other simplicity ("eenvoudicheyt"), and together they characterize the virtue of chastity. The attributes of Simplicity are a dove and a lamb, both symbols of innocence and virtue.

Ripa also includes the dove as one of the attributes of the personification of Simplicity, or Innocence. He explains the dove in reference to Christ's words: "Let the children come unto me," indicating that it represents sincere and praiseworthy innocence, qualities that allow one to enter into Heaven. It is significant that this biblical passage has also been tied to the abduction of Ganymede. Such associations of the dove do not detract from the meaning conveyed through the Venus imagery, but rather act to reinforce it.

It is not unreasonable to suggest that Maes's two portraits of young girls in the guise of "Venus" being drawn to the heavens in her chariot represent deceased children. This explanation is especially appealing when one considers the similarities shared by the Ganymede and Venus portraits. The parallel

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127 The RKD lists this painting as being mounted in its original sculpted, gilt frame.
129 Ripa, p. 101, "Eenvoudigheyt, Slechtigheyt".
nature of the Neoplatonic philosophies regarding the two also lends credence to this idea as both can represent the virtuous soul whose greatest goal is comprehension of the divine. In addition, the use of a chariot to transport an individual from the terrestrial to the heavenly realm is not unusual. For example, images of the Apotheosis of Hercules show the hero being carried to the heavens in a horse-drawn chariot. Nor should one forget the Christian image of Elijah’s ascent to heaven in a fiery chariot, an image that was understood as a prefiguration of Christ’s Resurrection. Of prime significance to my argument however, is the use of chariots on Roman children’s sarcophagi to symbolize the deceased’s journey to the next world. In her study of these monuments, Huskinson discusses examples in which a chariot journey is the last of a sequence of events in a child’s life. Such biographical sarcophagi include events such as the child being nursed by its mother, its first bath, and its first lesson. These episodes are followed by a final image that shows the child being carried off in a chariot led by Mercury. In one late second century example (Rome, Museo Torlonia), the child is directed into the chariot by Pluto while a cupid hovering above encourages the child to look upwards to the heavens. In another example from the same period (Rome, Villa Doria Pamphili) the dead child is shown on the back of an eagle which is situated in a horse-drawn chariot. Like the rape of Ganymede, that of Persephone has also been recorded on antique children’s sarcophagi. A chariot ride figures prominently in this type as well. Examples show the unfortunate girl being hauled away from the world of the living in a chariot drawn by her captor, Pluto.

131 For the prominence of this motif in antiquity see Cumont, Roman Paganism, pp. 156-157.
133 Huskinson, pp. 22, 96, 118.
134 Huskinson, p. 22, cat. nr. 1.31 and plate 3.1.
135 Huskinson, p. 22, cat. nr. 1.33.
136 Huskinson, pp. 117-118 and cat. nrs. 2.26 and 2.27.
Given the above investigation, I believe that Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits both served to memorialize children who died at an early age. Maes's plump babies show no trace of the beautiful and sensuous youth who sparked Jupiter's desire in Greek mythology. To conceive of a portrait of a young child with such implications surely would have been viewed as indecorous. These children do not carry the wine jugs or chalices which identify Ganymede's role as cupbearer, nor do they urinate in reference to the water providing role of Aquarius. Rather, Maes's portraits draw from both pictorial and literary traditions which define Ganymede as a child who rides peacefully and willingly aboard an eagle which journeys toward the heavens. This type as we have seen readily lends itself to spiritual interpretations. Its roots lie in antiquity with images of the apotheosis of Roman emperors who journey on the back of an eagle to be united with the godhead. Analogous to this type is the use of the Ganymede myth on antique funerary monuments as a metaphor for the soul's journey to the heavens. This myth was eventually given a Christian interpretation and associated with Christ's invitation to let the children come to Him. As John B. Knipping first suggested, Mignault's identification of the image of Ganymede's abduction with Christ's words led to its use "as a kind of consolation for the parents who bewailed a dead child." Pleasing to God in their innocence, such deceased youngsters were certain to enjoy the eternal salvation implied by these biblical passages. An added feature in many of Maes's paintings further suggests that the children represented were deceased. Although possibly simply a reference to the end of day and the coming of night,

137 Knipping, p. 45, no. 187.
the dark clouds that frequently fill the sky cast an air of gloom on the image and could also be understood as a reference to the sad circumstances under which the portrait was conceived.

Maes's Venus portraits provide further credibility for the memorial thesis proposed for his Ganymede portraits. These portraits were likely devised of the artist's (or possibly a patron's) own invention in response to the need to develop a female counterpart for the Ganymede type. Both Ganymede and the Heavenly Venus embody the idea of the pure soul which unites with the divine. Moreover, there is significant evidence which connects a chariot ride with the soul's final journey to the heavens.

In the following chapter I will present further evidence to support the idea that Maes's portraits do indeed represent deceased children. By investigating other Dutch images of dead children I will show that the Ganymede and Venus images, which emphasize a skyward journey, fit well within the context of other images of deceased children that are not disputed.
CHAPTER 2

DUTCH IMAGES OF DECEASED CHILDREN

In order to best understand the nature and function of Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits, it is necessary to investigate the various ways that deceased children were represented in the seventeenth-century Netherlands as well as the responses that these images may have evoked. In addition to Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits, images of deceased children can be placed in two basic categories: family (group) portraits and funerary (deathbed) portraits. Prior studies of these images have provided us with interesting insight into the ways that these paintings may have been understood. For example, scholars like Hirsch and de Jongh have very successfully connected some deathbed portraits with Dutch funerary customs and superstitions. Bedaux, on the other hand, has convincingly shown how representations of deceased children as a whole provide tangible proof of the affection that Dutch parents had for their children in the seventeenth century. In the following pages, I will define the different types of representations of deceased children and the ways they have been

interpreted. In some instances I will expand on these ideas, particularly with regard to those features which can provide further support for the memorial thesis put forth in chapter one for Maes’s Ganymede portraits. Moreover, I will point to certain conventions which I believe provide clues as to other ways that these paintings might have functioned.

For parents living in early modern Europe, high infant mortality was a fact of life. In the Netherlands, demographic studies reveal that one of every four children died before their first year and equally as many before the age of twenty-five.³ For those children fortunate enough to survive the birthing process, a variety of other dangers awaited them. While the countless childhood illnesses and infections that medical science was still helpless against posed the greatest threats, children also perished as a result of parental neglect, accidents, malnutrition, and poor hygiene.

It was not entirely unusual for those families who could afford it, to have a child who died prematurely memorialized in paint. Although many examples of such images have survived, they may represent but a fraction of the total that were executed. In time, many of these images, deathbed portraits in particular, likely fell prey to indifference and/or feelings of distaste and were subsequently destroyed or painted over.

As with adults, an artist had a number of options from which to choose when recording the likeness of a deceased youngster. If the child was older, the

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artist might work from a pre-existing image, or if he knew the child, he might simply rely on memory. Deathbed sketches could also assist the artist in making the final painting.6

Although children were represented in some of the same ways that adults were, there also appear to have been types developed specifically with children in mind. Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits fit into the latter category, as do examples in which the deceased child is represented as a cherub hovering amongst the clouds. A deceased child could be the sole subject of a portrait, or part of a larger family group. In some examples, the child is obviously dead, while in others s/he appears as if still alive.

Funerary Portraits

Certainly the most touching representation of a deceased child is that of the child lying on its deathbed. Wholly intimate in character, these images convey the reality of loss with a directness that is not evident in other types of representations of deceased children. The paintings that comprise the deathbed (funerary) portrait category follow a standard format that is similar to that used to represent deceased adults.7 The dead child, usually an infant,8 is shown in the traditional pose associated with individuals lying in state (figures 29-36).9 Reclining in a bed or cradle with its head resting on a pillow and its eyes closed, the child appears almost as if it were merely sleeping. A blanket is usually

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7 For the evolution of the adult mortuary portrait in the Netherlands see Ekkart, "Nederlandse doodsporret," pp. 66-84. For a general survey of deathbed portraits in both western and eastern Europe see A. Pigler, "Portraying the Dead." pp. 1-74.
8 For examples of older children on their deathbeds see Monogrammist AVR, Child of the Van Tuyll Van Serooskerken Family (?), 1660, private collection (in Sliggers, p. 213) and Jan Albert Rotius, Anonymous Girl, 1661, Delft, private collection (RKD).
9 See below p. 63.
drawn up to the child's waist sometimes covering its arms and hands, while at other times revealing them carefully placed at the child's side or folded across its lap or chest. In many cases a curtain has been drawn aside to reveal the child. Additional objects, such as flowers or candles, which can be explained in relation to funerary rituals and customs, may also be present. The inclusion of such features gives these portraits an element of the ceremonial and alerts viewers to the fact that they are not just looking at a peacefully sleeping child.

The earliest extant example of this type produced in the Low Countries dates from 1584 and is probably Flemish in origin (figure 29). Here, the artist presents a simple rendering of a young boy with closed eyes and with his head propped on a large pillow. A blanket is drawn up to his shoulders just revealing the ruffed collar and top of the child's doodshemd, or shroud. Despite the early occurrence of this type in the Southern Netherlands, only a few examples from this region are known from subsequent decades. The greatest number of extant funerary portraits of children were executed in the seventeenth century in the Northern Netherlands and the greatest concentration of these appear to have been executed between the years 1625 and 1665. In the fourth quarter of the

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10 Oil on panel, 34x29.5cm, dated 1584 on upper left. Sold at auction in Paris (Ader Tajan), 4-13-1992, nr. 105 as by Otto van Veen (whereabouts unknown). Ekkart, no. 42, p. 84.
11 A doodshemd is generally shown as a white linen garment with sleeves and a collar. A sleeveless type is less common in the seventeenth century. Saskia Kuus, in Bedaux and Ekkart, Pride and joy, pp. 132 and 192. See also A.M.J. Florusbosch-Voeten, Wikkeldodjes, gebonden rand geboorte, doop en doopkleding (Hattem: themanummer van de Vereniging Heemkunde Hattem, 1988), p. 3.
12 Ekkart, "Nederlandse doodslotret," p. 80. A seventeenth-century Flemish example is by Matthias van den Bergh. Oil on panel, 62.5x79cm, 1659. Antwerp, Rubenshuis. Over 30 examples are known to have been produced in the Northern Netherlands; Bedaux, "Funeraire kinderportretten," p. 107. Many of these images are listed in Sliggers, pp. 210-219. The earliest known Dutch example is A Child of Ruurt van Juckema and Edwart van Cammingha, Friesland, Epema State, Ijsbrechtum, painted ca. 1600-1625 by an anonymous Friesland artist. Ekkart, "Nederlandse doodslotret," p. 80, has indicated that the task of organizing these works into any definite chronological order is made difficult by the fact that most of the paintings are neither signed nor dated. Many are also hard to date stylistically.
century, there is a noticeable decline in the production of deathbed portraits of children and shortly after 1700 the genre becomes virtually nonexistent.\(^{13}\)

As stated above, our understanding of deathbed portraits of children has been shaped primarily by their inclusion of objects linked with funerary customs, rituals, and superstitions. The use of flowers and greenery is probably the most common of these features. A representative example is Anthony van Ravesteyn's 1628 portrait of an anonymous child (The Hague, Haags Historisch Museum) (figure 30).\(^{14}\) In this portrait a child is shown lying in state in the traditional pose, on a bed covered with fine, lace-trimmed linens. Encircling the child's head is a crown of greenery and in each hand a large rose has been placed. A careful arrangement of flowers and herbs, including a cross crudely fashioned from sprigs of rosemary, decorates the coverlet. In the Netherlands it was customary to adorn the heads of both male and female children and also other unmarried persons on their deathbeds with crowns of flowers, rosemary, palm, and laurel branches.\(^{15}\) Children apparently made such crowns for their deceased playmates. The great seventeenth-century poet Joost van den Vondel poignantly describes this practice in "Uitvaert van mijn Dochterken" ("Funeral for my little Daughter"), a poem written in remembrance of his daughter Sara, who died at the tender age of eight. During the course of the funerary ceremony, Vondel

\(^{13}\) This decline is also characteristic of deathbed portraits of adults. The genre as a whole does not become popular again until the nineteenth century. The last known painted funerary portrait of a child from the seventeenth century is of two-year-old Catharina Margaretha van Valkenburg, painted ca. 1680 by the Haarlem artist Johannes Thopas. Oil on panel, 58x71.5 cm, Van Valkenburg Collection (in Sliggers, p. 109). A 1691 drawing of five-year-old Johanna Werckhorst on her deathbed by Abraham de Ridder is the last known example of this type produced during the seventeenth-century in the Netherlands. Black chalk on parchment, 98x101 mm, Amsterdam, Museum Amstelkring (in Sliggers, p. 214); Ekkart, "Nederlandse doodsportret, p. 82.

\(^{14}\) Oil on panel, 66x54 cm.

\(^{15}\) H.L. Kok, *De Geschiedenis van de laatste eer in Nederland* (Lochem: N.V. Uitgeversmatschappij de Tijdstroom, 1990), p. 173; Spruit, p. 40; de Jongh, *Portretten van echt en trouw*, pp. 226, 241; Le Francq van Berkhey, Johannes, *Naartrijke historie van Holland*, vol. 3 (Amsterdam: Yntema, 1769, 1811), p. 1850. This custom has its roots in ancient Roman burial practices; Le Francq van Berkhey, p. 1850 and Hirsch, pp. 42, 44.
reflects back to a time when his little girl laughed and played in the world of the living. Nevertheless, the reality of his daughter's death can not be denied as he watches one of Sara's playmates weave a crown of rosemary for her beloved friend.\textsuperscript{16} This custom is also indicated in a song, "Op't Hoedtjes maecken" ("On Making Little Hats"), which extends an invitation to young maidens to help make crowns of flowers and greens to adorn the head of a deceased child "so that the youthful corpse receives its final honor."\textsuperscript{17} In this poem reference is also made to an additional custom of decorating the child's shroud with bunches of palm, rosemary and other herbs, as well as silver spangles and tiny stars. The adornment of the corpse is made complete by the placement of a bouquet in the child's hands.\textsuperscript{18}

The meaning behind the custom of crowning the deceased can be variously explained. For the superstitious individual, such garlands were believed to have had an apotropaic function. The garland's circular shape was believed to protect the deceased from the powers of evil on all sides. Even the Dutch verb "behoeden" (a derivation of the word "hoed"[hat or crown]) means "to protect".\textsuperscript{19} Flower crowns were also commonly understood as symbols of innocence and purity, a meaning that is underscored by their use as adornments for individuals both young and old who died without having married.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{16} Joost van den Vondel, \textit{Uitvaart van mijn dochterken} (1633) in Vondel: \textit{volledige dichtwerken en oorspronkelijk proza}, ed. Albert Verwey (Amsterdam: H.J.W. Becht, 1986), p. 881. For additional examples of this custom in Dutch poetry see Constantijn Huygens, "Biecht gesproken binnen Zierikzee" (1654) in J.A. Worp, ed., De gedichten van Constantijn Huygens, vol. IV (Groningen, 1894), p. 23 and Jacob Cats, 's Werelts begin, midden, eynde, besloten in den Trou-ringh... (Amsterdam, 1661), p. 215. Hirsch, pp. 42-43, indicates that such crowns were mostly made for a fee, by women called 'hoetjesmaecksters'.


\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{19} Hirsch, pp. 44-45.

\textsuperscript{20} See above note 15. Nuns often wear flowered crowns in deathbed portraits. See for example Abraham de Ridder's 1694 portrait drawing of Sister Margaretha Werckhorst, Amsterdam,
morning of their wedding, brides traditionally donned a crown of either roses and rosemary, or myrtle and only removed it upon entry into the nuptial chamber. A much more divine union awaited the departed. The wedding of the deceased is part of an ancient, universal belief. With the advent of Christianity, this idea was reinforced by Catholic doctrine, which promotes the idea of the heavenly marriage, or the union of the soul with Christ. This theme was inspired by the Song of Solomon in which the marriage of bride and bridegroom is understood in a spiritual sense. A reference is made to this belief in a lengthy poem written in 1696 to console a mother whose three daughters had died: "You shall never see Lavina (...) as either bride or mother, Think how

Museum Amstelkring (in Sliggers, p. 214) and Sister Barbara Godtschalk, Bruges, Hôpital Saint-Jean (in Philippe Ariès, Images of Man and Death, trans. by Helen Weaver [New York: Knopf, 1981], fig. 295). A woman's purity was often suggested by a garland on her head in genres outside of portraiture as well. See for example images of virgins with unicorns (Raimond van Marle, Iconographie de l'art profane au moyen-age et à la renaissance, vol. 2 [The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1931], fig. 474) and the Virgin Mary (M. Geisberg, The German single-leaf woodcut, vol. 1, revised and edited by W. Strauss [New York: Hacker Art Books, 1974], p. 171). There are also numerous references in literature of the time to the flower crown as symbol of purity. For example, Ripa, p. 223, lists a flower crown as one of the attributes of the personification of "Maidenhood": "she wears a flower crown on her head, because, as the poets say, maidenhood is nothing other than a flower, that when plucked, loses its beauty and pleasantness" ("De bloemen heeft zy op't hooft, om dat, gelijck de Poëten seggen, de Maeghdom niet anders is als een bloeme, diewelcke soo haest zy geplukt is, al haer schoonheyt en aerdigheyt verliest.").


21 Pigler, "Portraying the Dead," p. 41; Knipping, vol. 1, p. 105. The medieval theologian, Bernard of Clairvaux interpreted the Song of Solomon as an elaborate allegory in which the bride of the poem was identified specifically with the Virgin Mary. Knipping cites Vondel's "Howlijcks-Sang" as making reference to Christ as the Bridegroom of his Church. He further cites an engraving by Adriaen Collaert after Phillip Galles' design of Christ and his Bride which shows the betrothed standing before a garden with flowers strewn beneath their feet. Each figure is crowned with a flower garland and the groom extends a bouquet of lilies and roses to the bride; Knipping, p. 105. The metaphor of the betrothal of the spirit to God is most commonly realized in pictorial form in images of the Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine. According to Jacobus de Voragine's Golden Legend (ca. 1275), this Egyptian queen converted to Christianity, ca. 300 A.D., was baptized, and subsequently experienced a mystical vision in which the Christ Child married her; Hall, 58-59.
much better it is, for her strong faithfulness to be engaged in Jesus above, Who
cushions her in his love, as Bridegroom of Souls, And bids her welcome.\textsuperscript{23}

It is significant that rosemary was often selected to don both the heads
and bodies of deceased children. Its fragrant aroma could pleasantly mask the
odor of the corpse. Rosemary could also be viewed as a symbol of salvation,\textsuperscript{24} a
meaning that is underscored by its use in forming the small crosses placed on the
chest of dead children in some examples (figures 30 and 33). Also fitting within
the funerary context is rosemary's association with remembrance.\textsuperscript{25}

Despite the apparent popularity of the practice of adorning the corpse in
the above described manner, this custom was highly criticized by some members
of the Reformed Church. For example, Winandus van den Beke, a Zoetermeer
minister, referred to the making of garlands for the deceased as 'a Papist
superstition' and a 'heathen and idolatrous practice'.\textsuperscript{26} Municipal authorities also
fought to stifle this custom by issuing official proclamations forbidding its
practice. In 1664 in Deventer, for example, a bylaw was passed which not only
prohibited individuals from making wreaths for their deceased sons and
daughters but also from carrying laurel or rosemary twigs before the corpse. The

\textsuperscript{23} "Sult gy LAVINA noit (...) / Of Bruid of Moeder sien / Denk, hoe veel beter is't, sijn vaste trouw
hier boven / Aen Jesus te verloven / Die kust haer in sijn liefd', als Zielen Bruidegom,/ En heet
haer wellekom." Vertroosting aen Lavina de Grand, Wed: van Johannes Terwe, over 'T schielijke en
Junius 1696. binnen Utrecht, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{24} Mirella Levi D'Ancona, \textit{The Garden of the Renaissance} (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1977),
p. 358.

\textsuperscript{25} Miss. Carruthers, \textit{Flower Lore. The Teachings of Flowers Historical, Legendary, Poetical, Symbolical}
(Belfast: McCaw, Stevenson, & Orr, 1879; reprint, Detroit: Singing Tree Press, 1972), p. 205. The
association of rosemary with remembrance likely stems from one of of the medicinal qualities
attributed to the herb. Gerard's Herbal (1597), for example, states that rosemary 'comfortheth the
brain, the memorie, the inward senses...'. Quoted in Eleanour Sinclair Rohde, \textit{The Old English

\textsuperscript{26} A.T. van Deursen, \textit{Plain Lives in a Golden Age. Popular culture, religion and society in seventeenth-
penalty for this infraction was a fine of twenty-five guilders. Later, on August 13, 1656, the bailiff and aldermen of Wormer proclaimed that "No one, be they young or old, shall promote the weaving of any flowers, palm or other plant to decorate the dead or the making of caps, or hanging any cap on [the casket]." Such concerns in some ways reflect the opinion of the reformed church, which stressed simplicity in the burial rites of both children and adults. Nevertheless, the use of the word "papist" to describe this practice possibly refers to the Catholic tradition of draping garlands around holy images on religious holidays and feast days, a custom that Protestants viewed as an act of idolatry. As van Deursen explains, the synods and reformed church councils felt a certain obligation to discard Catholic practices as well as many of the folk beliefs that had become intertwined with them. To some reformed preachers, both were manifestations of superstition.

A 1654 portrait by the Groningen artist Jan Jansz de Stomme likely shows an infant from a Catholic family (figure 31). The baby lies in state with a crown

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30 According to Catholic custom, the adornment of holy images with garlands was a means of confirming the status and validity of images as objects of veneration. It also conveyed the devotion of those who bestowed the gift. Although all theological treatises which defended holy images insisted that the honor paid to an image was passed to its prototype, Protestants continued to view this as an act of idolatry. David Freedberg, "The Origins and Rise of the Flemish Madonnas in Flower Garlands" *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* 32 (1981), p. 127.
31 Van Deursen, pp. 241-253. The author further notes that despite the protestations against the continuance of Catholic customs by reformed ministers, some members of the reformed church displayed a certain reluctance to relinquish many of these traditions.
32 Oil on panel, 84x68cm. Jan Stratingh, *J.F. de Stomme, een 17e-eeuws schilder in Groningen* (Groningen: Groninger Museum, 1984), cat. nr. 31.
of rosemary and flowers on its head and a sprig of rosemary in its hands. In accordance with Catholic custom, the child is wrapped in what appears to be a chrysom cloth. This cloth was given to an infant at its baptism and was worn until its mother received the rites of purification from a priest. If the baby died during that time it was buried in the chrysom cloth. The initials 'IHS' are boldly emblazoned across the star-patterned garment. A cross extends from the cross-bar of the letter 'H'. This sacred monogram was originally an abbreviation of the Greek form of the word Jesus and thus adorns a variety of religious objects. Although not discussed in the literature on this painting, the stars which decorate the child's garment are possibly an allusion to the heavens. According to Van Mander, however, stars could also be understood as a reference to God or sometimes to the soul of the deceased. Certainly, any one or possibly all of these meanings would be appropriate in this particular context.

It would be incorrect, however, to conclude that all children wearing such crowns while lying on their deathbeds are from Catholic families. A portrait of Joost van den Bempden (Amsterdam, Six Collection) painted in 1659 by Ferdinand Bol is testimony to the contrary (figure 32). A chaplet of flowers encircles the three-month old child's head, while a single bud rests in his hands.

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34 Charles G. Herbermann et al., eds., The Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. VII (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, Inc., 1910), p. 649. For further information on this monogram in the Netherlands, particularly on its adoption as the emblem for the Society of Jesus, see Knipping, vol. 1, pp. 109-110. The letters, "HGK", which also adorn the garment are not as easily identified. According to Kok, Laatste eer, pp. 159-160, the deceased's monogram was sometimes embroidered on his/her shroud. This might possibly explain the presence of the "HGK" in de Stomme's portrait.
35 According to Ripa, p. 192-193, the personification of "De Hemel" ("The Heavens") wears a mantel covered in stars.
36 Van Mander, Van de Wetlegginghen der Figueren, folio 134r.
The latter could have a metaphorical significance, identifying the child, like the flower, as having been "plucked" before its time. But this child was not from a Catholic family. Joost was the son of the merchant Aegidius van den Bempden (a member of the Amsterdam town council) and Susanna de Neufville both of whom were members of the Reformed Church.

I think that it is significant that in spite of protestations by reformed ministers and municipal bans, the practice of adorning the heads of the deceased continued to be a convention in Dutch portraiture. Such persistence suggests that the meanings evoked by this symbolic gesture continued to be desired. While this practice might, in some cities, be forbidden in public, one could still make reference to it in the privacy of one's home where these deathbed portraits would have been displayed. Although Bedaux discusses the crowns worn by deceased children solely as a means of protecting their wearers from evil spirits, I believe that greater significance should be given them as symbols of purity and innocence. As a visual expression of the virtuous state of the child, such crowns could provide comfort for the parents by strengthening their hopes that their child had achieved eternal salvation. The reference to salvation could be reinforced by the use of rosemary. Should this theory be correct, it would not only explain the continued presence of crowns in deathbed portraits, but it might also explain to some degree the later emergence of Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits, which also emphasize a child's innocent state. While an allusion to a

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40 See Chapter 3, pp. 117-118.

41 Bedaux in Bedaux and Ekkart, *Pride and Joy*, cat. nrs. 19,46, and 78.
child's purity (a quality much desired by God) continued to be desired by parents commissioning portraits of their deceased children, some preferred a new, more innovative way of expressing this characteristic.

A 1645 portrait of an unknown child by Bartholomeus van der Helst (Gouda, Stedelijk Museum Het Catherina Gasthuis) (figure 34) illustrates yet another deathbed portrait convention. An infant's small body has been placed on a simple bed of straw. Were it not for the pallid coloring of the child's face and hands (a telltale sign of death in several of the paintings in this group), one might draw parallels between this image and those of the Christ child asleep in a manger. Straw had multiple purposes in the funerary context. The placement of the dead or dying on a bed of straw is prechristian in its origins. It became a common practice among the indogermanic peoples where it was maintained until the beginning of the twentieth century. This custom had a very practical function as straw absorbed the moisture given off by the body. Those who were superstitious, however, believed that the soul or evil spirits could cling on to the bed, thereby making it unusable for others. The straw was meant to intercept these spirits, and was burned immediately after the burial of the corpse.

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42 The bodies of adults were also placed on straw. See for example the anonymous Portrait of Hermanus Kuysten, ca. 1666, oil on canvas, 80x100cm, Amsterdam, Museum Amstelkring (in Sliggers, p. 201). Sometimes the straw has been woven into a mat which is rolled up at one end to form a "pillow" for the deceased as seen in Emmanuel de Witte's painting the Tomb of Willem the Silent in the Church of Delft, 1656, Lille, Palais des Beaux-Arts (in Aries, Images of Man and Death, p. 56). See also the anonymous portrait of a Child of the Honigh Family, ca. 1650, oil on panel, 45.5x57.6cm., The Hague, Mauritshuis (in Pigler, "Portraying the Dead," fig. 53).

43 In Zeeland, North Brabant, Limbourg and Gelderland, bundles of straw were placed on the door of a house where someone had died. Kok, p. 183. In Den Bosch the hay was cut and arranged into neat bundles which were held together by ribbons and also placed before the door. Placed on top of these bundles were painted wooden planks. To indicate if the deceased was male or female, married or single, child or adult, adjustments were made with regard to the size of the bundle, the number of planks used, and the colors and arrangement of the ribbons. Gerard Rooijakkers, Ritual repertoires. Volkscultuur in oostelijk Noord-Brabant 1559-1853 (Nijmegen: SUN, 1994), pp. 474-476.

44 Some scholars believe that the burning of the straw bundle was in reference to the ancient practice of cremation which was now forbidden. Kok, Laatste eer, pp. 165-166; Hirsch, pp. 84-88.
Another convention of the funerary portrait is the inclusion of a torch. In both van der Helst's portrait and Bol's portrait of Joost van den Bempden an extinguished but still smoking torch has been placed across the lower body of each child. The presence of this object has been explained in relation to its use within the context of Renaissance funerary monuments. In such cases, a torch is usually carried by putti who hold it with the extinguished end pointing downwards as a symbol of terminated life. A painting by Abraham Hondius of twins lying on their deathbed (figure 35) incorporates a similar, but more unusual motif that has not been discussed in the literature. Carved on the wooden frame of the infant's bed is a naked putto that holds a burning torch in its right hand. This motif is possibly a reference to the eternal happiness that these dead children will experience in heaven. As Ripa explains, the burning torch was one of the attributes of the personification of "Heavenly Bliss," and symbolized God's love. Further support for this meaning can be found in the use of lighted torches as symbols of Resurrection on some Renaissance tomb monuments. The presence of this motif in the Hondius portrait could thus be construed as yet another allusion to salvation.

A more common source of light and fire in funerary portraits is the candle. Although candles more frequently occur in deathbed portraits of adults, particularly clergymen, they also appear in a few portraits of children. A child

46 Abraham Hondius, *Anonymous Twins*, 1654, oil on panel, 52x84.6cm, private collection.
47 Ripa, p. 151, "Gelucksaligheyt die eeuwigh is." "De brandende vlamme vertoont de Liefde Godes:..."
49 For examples of clergymen see, Paul Dirkse, "En ging gerust te bed, om vrolijck op te staen in 't ander leven. Doodsportretten van Noord-Nederlandse katholieke geestelijken (1625-1750)," in *Naar het lijk*, pp. 128 and 154. See also the portraits painted by anonymous artists of Count Frederik van den Bergh,1618, Carmelietenklooster, Boxmeer (in Sliggers, p. 72) and Count Herman van den Bergh, 1611, Huis Bergh, 's Heerenberg (in Sliggers, p. 195). Jacques de Gheyn II's drawing
of Ruurt van Juckema and Edwert van Cammingha lies in a wicker cradle over which a blanket has been draped that covers the child up to its chest (figure 36).

A circle of rosemary adorns the child's head. In addition, three burning candles have been placed at the top of the bed and in the upper right corner is the heraldic shield of the parents. Another painting of a child, this one with a rosemary crown, sprigs of the herb in each of its hands and a cross placed upon its chest, includes only one candle (figure 33).

In Catholic practice, candles were burned during the vigil, the funeral, and the burial ceremony. Candles were placed around the bed of the deceased as in these portraits, or in some cases a single candle was placed in the deceased's hands. This practice reflects Catholic doctrine, which identifies a lighted candle with the presence of Christ. In the funerary context, a burning candle would thus seem to assert the blessed state of the deceased. In reformed circles, the lighting of candles, like the weaving of garlands, was forbidden as part of the burial ritual. Nonetheless, as we have seen, some Protestants continued to include such features. Given this knowledge it is difficult to determine the religious preference of the families of

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50 Oil on panel, 55x73cm, Friesland, Collection Epema State, Ijsbrechtum. A. Wassenbergh, *De portreetkunst in Friesland in de 17de eeuw* (Lochem: N.V. Uitgeversmaatschappij de tijdstroom, 1967), p. 44, no. 20.

51 No flame is visible as the tip of the candle is almost flush with the top of the painting. Oil on panel, 28x52cm, private collection.

52 The origins of this custom can be connected to the Early Christian practice of carrying out the dead with lamps and torches. Hirsch, p. 59; Kok, *Laatste eer,* p. 172. For further discussion of Catholic funerals and burials in the seventeenth-century Netherlands see Staal, in Centraal Museum, *Dood en begraven,* pp. 75-77.

53 According to Hugo de S. Victore (1096-1141) Christ is like a candle: the wax represents the pure flesh of the Saviour born of the Virgin Mary; the wick symbolizes His soul; and the flame His divinity (Miscell. II, lib. 4, c.9). In addition, Benedictus XIV writes that candles were lit to give corporeal form to the true light that is Christ (Commentarii, 142). J.J.M. Timmers, *Symboliek en iconographie der christelijke kunst* (Roermond and Maaseik: J.J. Romen & Zonen, 1947), pp. 105-107, nrs. 168 and 170, pp. 653-654, nrs. 1497, 1498, 1500, 1501.

54 Staal, in Centraal Museum, *Dood en begraven,* p. 77. Van Deursen, p. 244.
the children in these two portraits. It should be mentioned, though, that the presence of the rosemary cross in figure 34 could further support an association with the Catholic faith. A similar cross has been placed on the chest of a nun, Margaretha Werckhorst, in a 1694 deathbed drawing by Abraham de Ridder (Amsterdam, Museum Amstelkring). Moreover, in other deathbed portraits of individuals whose religious preference is known to be Catholic, a crucifix or cross has been included and often combined with the presence of burning candles. Nonetheless, there is still not enough evidence to allow us to conclude with any certainty that this child was from a Catholic family. As with other funerary customs, the use of light and fire could also have more superstitious associations. For those steeped in folk traditions, it was believed that the use of light and fire in the presence of the deceased had the power to ward off the devil and other evil spirits.

There are three additional paintings which can be considered variants of the typical deathbed portrait as discussed above. The first is an image by an anonymous artist entitled the *Dordrecht Quadruplets* (s'-Hertogenbosch, Noordbrabants Museum), which serves as a record of the remarkable birth of the children of Jacobus Pietersz. Costerus and Cornelia Jans Coenraadsdochter (figure 37). This painting brings together both living and dead children while

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55 See Sliggers, p. 214 for illustration.
56 For examples see no. 49 above.
58 Oil on panel, 75x104cm. So sensational was this occurrence, that it warranted mention in Matthijs Balen Janszoon's 1677 *Beschrijvinge der Stad Dordrecht* (Description of the City of Dordrecht). His text records that on the ninth day of a summer month in 1621 a son and three daughters were born to Jakob Pietersz Kosterus and Cornelia Jans. Three of the children (the fourth being dead) were baptized in the Augustinian Church and were named Pieter, Jannette, and Maria. Noordbrabants Museum, 's-Hertogenbosch, *Kinderen van alle tijden. Kindercultuur in de Nederlanden vanaf de middeleeuwen tot heden* (Zwolle: Waanders Uitgevers, 1997), p. 87; Ekkart and Bedaux, cat. nr. 19.
adhering to the deathbed portrait formula. The three living children are arranged side-by-side, propped up in a rather unusual upright position. Each is dressed in its baptism clothing and has open eyes. Inscriptions above the head of each child identify the living babies as Pieter (five days and five hours old), Jannette (three days and fifteen hours old) and Maria (three days old). Elizabeth, the third child born, died after only an hour and a half of life. She lies with closed eyes on a large pillow at the head of the curtained bed. Like some of the other infants in deathbed portraits, she wears what looks to be a simple white gown with a ruffed collar, but what in reality is a doodshemdj, or shroud. Carefully arranged around the infant’s body are bits of greenery and on her head is a crown of rosemary. In the lower left foreground of the painting is an unfurled scroll on which a verse from Psalm 127 is written: “Lo, children are a gift of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is a reward.”

It is my contention that in yet another variant of the deathbed portrait the idea of death as a state of dormancy is suggested. A ca. 1660 painting by Jurrian Ovens, A Child on His Deathbed (figure 38) shows an interesting divergence from the conventional pose of the body lying in state. A child rests on its side with its head cradled in its right arm which is lying on a pillow. The infant’s hair is disheveled and it wears a loose fitting gown that is open up the middle revealing

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59 Wim Cappers, “Van effigie tot fotoboek. Het doodsporret in de publieke en private sfeer,” in Naar het lijk, p. 212, also mentions a painting by an anonymous Enkhuizen artist of a dead child between two sisters (ca. 1640, Semeijns de Vries van Doesburgh Collection). At some point the painting was cut down so that it now exists in two panels. When these panels were being restored and the overpaint was removed from areas on the black and white tile floor of each panel it was discovered that the center section of the original work had been removed. Beneath the overpaint on one of the panels were the tiny feet of a child and on the other panel, the crown of a child lying dead.

60 A.M.J. Florusbosch-Voeten, p. 3.
61 Ibid.
63 Location unknown. Oil on canvas, 65x76.5cm. Sliggers, p. 213.
a pudgy belly and chest. In this very natural and informal pose, the child looks as if it is asleep. That this baby is no longer a member of the living, however, is indicated by the winged hourglass that is carved on the front of the bed. The hourglass is one of the attributes of Death, but in its winged form symbolizes the brevity of human existence. In addition, two angels stand behind the bed, one of which pulls the petals from a flower and drops them on the child as yet another allusion to the passing of time. I believe that the break from convention with regard to the child's pose was intended to suggest sleep and the concept of transition which is underscored by this state. While death implies termination, sleep anticipates a waking. By having this child rendered as if asleep reference is made to the hope of resurrection, the awakening from eternal sleep.

The child's pose and informal attire can be compared to those of two separate tomb effigies by Rombout Verhulst. Frits Scholten very convincingly discusses these images in relation to the ancient, yet constant characterization of death as sleep. Scholten draws attention to the sleeping attire and unconventional poses of the effigies of Johan Polyander van Kerckhoven and Adriaan Clant (figure 39). In each example, the marble figure lies on a mattress with his head propped up on a pillow wearing his nightgown, slippers and a nightcap. In addition to his informal attire, the figure is shown turned slightly toward the viewer with his head resting on his left hand and his eyes closed in the classic attitude of sleep. This pose is in contrast to the traditional manner of laying out the deceased for burial in which the body is placed on its back while the arms are either placed on the chest crossed one over the other or in an

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64 Hall, pp. 157-158.
attitude of prayer. A painting that is frequently cited as suggesting sleep rather than death is Anthony van Dyck's ca. 1633 portrait of Venetia Stanley, Lady Digby on her Deathbed (London, Dulwich Picture Gallery). Lady Digby is shown lying in a pose that is practically identical with that described above. In fact, Sir Kenelm Digby wrote in reference to the portrait that 'One could not distinguish whither it were of a sleeping or of a dead bodie; and so, lying in such a posture as requireth neither speech nor motion, it had the advantage to deceive one in judging whither it were a picture or not'.

The metaphorical relationship between sleep and death is conveyed in both the Christian liturgy and in funerary art. Examples of the latter frequently take the form of such epitaphs as hic dormit or hic requiescit (here sleeps or rests) that have been commonly used since the middle ages. The idea of sleep as a metaphor for death was also current in the seventeenth-century Netherlands. Scholten notes the presence of this theme in Dutch funerary poetry of the period, an example of which is Vondel's poem to Constantijn Huygens regarding the death of his wife Susanna van Baerle, Aan den heer Constantijn Huygens: "... of the grave wherein his spouse lies/ Asleep, waiting for eternity." 

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67 Ariës, Images of Man and Death, pp. 52-53.
69 Gittings, p. 59.
70 In medieval liturgies there is mention of the nomina pausantium (the names of those who sleep). Moreover, Extreme Unction was referred to as dormientum exitium (the sacrament of those who sleep). Philippe Ariës, The Hour of Our Death, trans. by Helen Weaver (New York: Knopf, 1981), pp. 22-24.
71 "...van 't Graf waarin zijn Ega leit/En slaapt en wacht op d'eeuwigheid." quoted in translation by Scholten, p. 346. For the poem in its entirety see Vondel, p. 882. See also "Lijkbedde van wijlen Joan Banning Wuytiers, lines 1-3, Vondel, p. 889.
A third variant of the deathbed portrait is a painting by Nicolaes Maes of
a dead child being carried to the heavens by two angels (figure 40). As Buijsen
has asserted, it appears in this image as if Maes has Christianized the idea of the
ascent to heaven as depicted in his Ganymede paintings and combined it with
the image of the child on its deathbed. This unusual painting shows a rather
plump child with a pallid, gray-green complexion and partially closed eyes.
His/her limp right arm further underscores its lifeless state. A red sash drapes
over the child's right shoulder and wraps modestly about its waist and a flower
wreath reminiscent of those worn by children in deathbed portraits encircles its
head. The child is being transported through a mass of dark clouds by two
golden-haired angels. A noticeable contrast exists between the vital pink
fleshtones of the angels and the pallid coloring of the child. Although unusual in
Dutch painting, images of the deceased being transported to heaven by angels
were not uncommon in funerary art as a whole. One finds many examples of
this motif on Gothic tomb sculpture. With this manner of representation, one

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72 Oil on canvas, 64x52cm. The Hague, Hoogsteder & Hoogsteder. Buijsen, p. 53, dates the
painting to the second half of the 1670's based on style.
73 Buijsen, pp. 50-53.
74 While partially closed eyes are not typical in representations of the dead, they are not wholly
unusual. As one also finds this characteristic in photographs of the dead, it might be the result of
capturing the deceased's features "naar het leven" ("from life"). It seems that the eyes, like the jaw,
do not always remain closed in death. For additional painted examples see Pigler, "Portraying
the Dead," fig 8 and Ariès, Images of Man and Death, figs. 294, 296. For photographs see Ariès,
Images of Man and Death, figs. 359, 360.
75 Bedaux, in Bedaux and Ekkart, Pride and Joy, cat. nr. 78, p. 276, suggests that the child might be
a female. He argues that because Maes's Ganymede type was limited to the representation of
boys, the artist had to devise an alternate iconography for girls and this is possibly the result.
Rather, as I argue in chapter one, I believe that Maes's Venus portraits are the female counterparts
of Maes's Ganymede children.
76 Although Buijsen, p. 53, suggests that these angels might possibly represent previously
deceased siblings of the child there is no evidence to support this idea.
77 Ariès, Images of Man and Death, pp. 48-51 and figs. 73, 76, 77, 82. In some examples, it is only the
soul that is borne to heaven. In such cases, the soul is usually represented as a nude child (or
miniaturized version of the deceased) that is carried to heaven in a cloth held by two angels (see
figs. 208, 209, 212). Ariès, Images of Man and Death, p. 139, explains this iconography in relation to
can be assured of the deceased's blessed state. Although this painting is a much more obvious depiction of a deceased child than Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits, the two types share an emphasis on a child being lifted up to the heavens, or more specifically the transition between earth and heaven. This important similarity helps lend credence to the idea that Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits also represent deceased children.

Family Portraits

The most frequent occurrence of images of deceased children is in the context of family portraits. It was not uncommon in paintings of prosperous families, many of whom resided in such cities as Amsterdam, Dordrecht, Utrecht, and The Hague, to include children who had died prematurely. The most popular manner in which to represent deceased children in this context is in the form of tiny angels who are usually found hovering in the clouds above the living members of the family.\(^78\) As yet another example of airborne children being identified as deceased, this type also supports the memorial thesis that has

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\(^78\) This type of portrait is probably Netherlandish in origin. An early Flemish example is Jacob Jordaens's ca. 1616 Family Portrait, St. Petersburg, Hermitage. The type was ostensibly introduced to England by artists such as Anthony van Dyck and Jacob Huysmans, both Flemish painters working in England. For Van Dyck's 1635-36 portrait of the Earl of Pembroke and Family, Wilton Castle, see Alfred Moir, *Anthony van Dyck* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994), p. 114. For Huysmans's portrait of Four Children of John Coke of Melbourne, Melbourne Hall, Derby, see Mario Praz, *Conversation Pieces. A Survey of the Informal Group Portrait in Europe and America* (University Park & London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971), fig. 299. According to a study by Bedaux, "Funeraire kinderportretten," p. 97, the majority of family portraits with deceased children represented as angels occur in the Northern Netherlands after 1630, with the peak years being between 1630 and 1660. Jan Mijtens's portrait of the Martini Family, 1647, New Orleans Museum of Art (in Wilson, cat. nr. 57) shows an unusual occurrence of an adult portrait among the group of eight angels who frolic in the clouds. This woman has been identified as Jacques Martini's first wife, Philipote van Sypsteyn who had died two years prior to the painting's execution.
been proposed for Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits. Jan Mijtens's portrait of *Willem Van den Kerckhoven and His Family* (The Hague, Haags Historisch Museum) is representative of this type (figure 41). A well-to-do family is situated in a lush, park-like setting. A group of five virtually nude angels emerge from the clouds above, creating what might appear to the modern viewer as a rather unusual commingling of heavenly and earthly realms. As in most examples of this type, the features of the little angels are not individualized to the point of true portraiture. They can perhaps be more precisely understood as representations of the souls of deceased children. We do know from archival documents, however, that these cherubs do represent specific children of the van den Kerckhoven family who died at early ages. Willem van den Kerckhoven and his wife Rijnburgh Sebastiaens de Jonge had fifteen children, all of whom are depicted in this portrait. The five angels fluttering in the clouds above the group are Jacob, Willem, Cornelia, Debora, and Cornelis all of whom died in infancy.

Often, the nude or loosely draped angels in such family portraits have attributes which take the form of laurel (or less frequently flower) crowns and palm branches. We have already witnessed the important role that the garland played in Dutch funerary practices. It should, however, be pointed out that in these examples the children hold the crowns rather than wear them. Moreover, it is primarily rosemary and/or flowers that comprise the garlands that we have

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79 Oil on canvas, 134x182cm, signed and dated 1652 and 1655. The youngest living son, Pellegrom, who was born after the completion of the painting in 1652 was added in 1655. The date appears on the edge of the child's sleeve. De Jongh, *Portretten van echt en trouw*, p. 231 and de Jongh, *Faces of the Golden Age*, p. 46.

80 An exception is Nicolaes Maes's portrait of the *Cuyter Family*, 1659, North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh (in Krempel, fig. 106), which shows the family on a dock in Dordrecht harbor. Job Cuyter, who was a ship's captain and owner of a number of merchant vessels, clearly preferred a setting that underscored his profession.

81 De Jongh, *Portretten van echt en trouw*, p. 231 and de Jongh, *Faces of the Golden Age*, p. 46. The Iconographisch Bureau, record nr. 80016, identifies all of the family members represented in this portrait including the children shown as angels.
seen in deathbed portraits. The laurel crown has a number of meanings that are appropriate in relation to a dead child. Laurel was commonly understood as a sign of triumph, a meaning that has its roots in antiquity. In addition, Ripa includes a laurel crown as one of the attributes of the personification of "Deughd" ("Virtue"). He explains that because this plant is always green and is not affected by lightning, it also became a symbol of virtue, a quality that allows one to persevere through all manner of adversity. The evergreen state of laurel has led to its further association with eternity and immortality. It is significant that in the portrait of the van den Kerckhoven family, as well as in other examples, an angel appears to offer the laurel crown in the direction of the father who still exists in the earthly realm. This gesture, which makes one question with whom the meaning of the crown is to be associated, has not been satisfactorily explained. By engaging in this action, these angels take on a sort of allegorical presence, and one is reminded of the multitudes of public fame images in which individuals are awarded a triumphant laurel crown by putti or angels. Important marriages, military victories, or excellence in literature and the arts are all celebrated using this motif. The deceased van den Kerckhoven children,
who because of their purity and innocence have earned their own laurel crowns and now function as angels, have been placed in a position which allows them to confer honor upon another deserving individual.

A comparison between Mijtens's portrait and Jan de Baen's painting of *The Glorification of Cornelis de Witt* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum) (figure 42) works well to illustrate the similarities between family portraits with this motif and public fame images. De Baen's modello for a much larger piece that originally hung in the Dordrecht state house celebrates a national hero. In 1667, during the second Anglo-Dutch war, de Witt led the Dutch fleet to victory at the battle of Chatham. De Witt, wearing armor and holding his staff of command, sits atop a hill which overlooks a sea battle that takes place to his left. On his right a woman and two putti display an overflowing horn of plenty, a symbol of the abundance that is associated with times of peace. Two additional putti fly above de Witt as they prepare to honor him with a crown of laurel. Fame, who holds a palm branch and sounds praises to de Witt on her trumpet, completes the picture.

In Mijtens's portrait, the allegorical trappings which are predominant in public images of triumph like de Baen's have been reduced significantly. Still, the theme of glorification is clear due to the presence and gesture of the angel children. While de Witt is hailed as a military hero whose actions benefited an entire country, van den Kerckhoven is celebrated in his role as patriarch. Placed centrally amongst his large family, he extends his left arm to display his familial achievements. The idea of abundance is expressed both in terms of family size and material wealth. The latter is conveyed not only through the family's fine clothes, but also by the leisurely lifestyle and suggestion of land ownership that

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87 *Dordrechts Museum, De zichtbaere werelt, cat. nr. 3, p. 81.*
is connected with the painting's country setting. The fruit that some of the children hold identify them as the product of a "fruitful" marriage and as the result of proper upbringing. Objects held by other children can also be understood as alluding to positive virtues that are associated with the well-ordered family. For example, the string of pearls displayed by the young lady on the far left, while signifying wealth (particularly in combination with the nautilus shell), could also be a symbol of chastity. This virtue, as we have already seen, was also associated with the flower garland, like that held by the girl on the far right. In addition, the rose that her sister plucks from a bush can, as Robinson has suggested, represent her choosing the righteous path over the corrupt one which is represented by the bush's thorns. This high regard for family even extends to the frame where the coats of arms of both husband and wife are found. It is thus my belief that this and other portraits that incorporate this motif can best be understood as adaptations of public fame images in which the family role is celebrated rather than the public one. The two were certainly interrelated as the family was thought of as the basic building block on which the whole of the Dutch Republic was grounded. While these family portraits would have

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88 For further discussion of this idea see Chapter 4, p. 127.
92 On this concept see Simon Schama, The Embarrassment of Riches, pp. 385-391.
been displayed in the home, they, like their public counterparts, would have been placed in a prominent location where they could be viewed by all.

The palm branch that the deceased child sometimes holds can be much more easily explained in these family portraits. Originally, the palm was viewed as a symbol of military victory and was carried in triumphal processions. However, the early church adopted the palm as the symbol of the Christian's victory over death, a meaning which makes it a fitting attribute for Christian martyrs and likewise for the tiny souls that hold them in some Dutch family portraits. As Bedaux has pointed out, the palm may also be a symbol of eternal bliss.

Further evidence of the practice of representing deceased children as angels in Dutch portraiture can be found in a seventeenth-century document from the Harinxma family archive. A receipt for a portrait of the children of the Frisian nobleman, Pieter van Harinxma theo Slooten and his wife Suzanna van Burmania (Beesterzwaag, Harinxma State) from the artist Wybrand de Geest identifies the deceased child Jon Julius Botnia van Harinxma as 'een vliegende Engel in de lucht' ('a flying angel in the sky'). Four children dressed in elegant pastoral costumes are situated in a lush landscape (figure 43). The lamb, which frequently appears in pastoral portraits of children, underscores the virtue of

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93 D'Ancona, pp. 279, 283-285; Hall, p. 231-32. Van Mander, in Van de Wijckghingen der Figueren, folio 134v, simply identifies the palm as a symbol of "overwinninghe", or victory.
94 Bedaux, "Funeraire kinderportretten," p. 97, bases his conclusion on Ripa's identification of the palm frond as one of the attributes of the personification of "Heavenly bliss"; see note 85 above.
95 Oil on canvas, 164x209cm., signed and dated lower left, 1654.
96 'Anno 1656. Den 22 September geleevert het overleden kint van den Heere P. van Harinxma tot 30-0-0 het panel I-16-o. Het selfde kint te weten Jon Julius Botnia van Harinxma als een vliegende Engel in de lucht van't groot stuk geschildert 6-0-0=43-16-0. Bekenne van dese bovenstande somma in danke voldoon en betalt te sijn. V. De Geest 1656.' Quoted in K. Bauch, Jakob Adriaensz. Backer, ein Rembrantschüler aus Friesland (Berlin: G. Grote, 1926), p. 61, note 35.
97 The children are, from left to right: Tieth (1652-1715); Luts (1653-1684); Jeltje (1649-1677); and Ernst Mockema (1648/51-1725). Wassenbergh, p. 87-88.
innocence that is already suggested by their ages. Three angels hover above the
group, the center one of which is about to be crowned by another. It is likely that
this middle angel represents the dead Harinxma child. The two additional
angels are probably representatives of the divine realm who have come to
welcome the child into heaven with a triumphant crown of laurel. This portrait
is a reminder that the presence of angels in family portraits does not necessarily
indicate deceased children. One must exercise caution before drawing definite
conclusions.

A portrait by Jan van Bijlert provides a very fitting subject for the
incorporation of deceased children as angels. *Family Group as Cornelia, Mother of
the Gracchi, Displaying her Children* (Orléans, Musée d'Orléans) is an example of
a portrait historié which underscores the virtues of maternal love (figure 44). The
classical Roman story, taken from Valerius Maximus, tells of Cornelia, a
daughter of Scipio Africanus Major, and her meeting with a Roman matron who
ostentatiously showed off her jewelry. When the woman asked to see

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99 Julius Held, "Jordaens' Portraits of His Family," *Art Bulletin* 22 (1940), p. 72, note 19, disagreeing with Bauch's belief that all three angels were added to the painting in 1656. Held argues that the receipt from the artist indicates that only one child was added in that year. He asserts that the other two angels were most likely painted with the rest of the portrait in 1654 and that these angels represent previously deceased children. As there is no evidence to support the latter claim and since the group of angels appears to have been conceived as a unified whole, I am inclined to agree with Bauch. Another example is found in the 1634 portrait of *The Family of Godard van Reede van Nederhorst* by Cornelis and Herman Saftleven (oil on canvas, 210x143cm, Zuien, Stichting Slot Zuylen)(see above fig. 55). The five angels holding laurel crowns which hover in the upper left corner of the painting cannot represent deceased children. Godard van Reede and Emerentia van Wijngaerden only gave birth to nine children during their marriage, all of whom can be accounted for in the earthly realm of the painting. De Jongh, *Portretten van echt en trouw*, p. 218. See below p. 112 for further discussion of this painting.


101 A Dutch translation of this book was published by Conratus Mirkinius in 1614: *Valerius Maximus...Negen Boecken...Overghesest...in onze Nederduytsche tale*, Rotterdam 1614; Cited by Huys-Janssen, p. 173, note 1. Johan van Beverwijk also refers to this story in his discussion of the
Cornelia's, the latter pointed to her children and said that they were her jewels. In Bijlert's portrait, the mother of the family, as Cornelia, watches a younger woman as she displays a long string of pearls taken from her jewelry box. Six children stand beside "Cornelia". But it is not exclusively these living children that she refers to as her treasures. Both the man at the far left, who is probably the father, and one of his children direct the viewer's attention through the open portico to five tiny angels that can be seen hovering in the sky. This mother's love is also extended to her deceased children who are obviously still considered to be an important part of the family.

Although the majority of deceased children shown as angels in the sky lack portrait features, there do exist some examples in which the children receive a more individualized treatment. This is certainly evident in Jan Mijtens' 1645 portrait of the Family of Pieter Stalpart van der Wiele (The Hague, Haags Historische Museum) (figure 45). In a format that is similar to that used in his portrait of the Van den Kerckhoven family, Mijtens presents The Hague burgomaster, his wife, Maria van Libest and their twelve children all finely dressed and situated in a landscape. Three of these children emerge from a dark cloud directly above the group. The nude, winged child in the front is Paulus who died in 1639 at the age of five. Behind him, also nude, is his sister Elisabeth who died in 1635 at the age of four. Her hair has been pulled back in a neat bun.

\[^{102}\text{Unfortunately, these angels were removed during an overly harsh restoration and can only be seen in old photographs. Huys Janssen, p. 173.}\]
\[^{103}\text{Oil on canvas, 128x163cm. An individualized treatment of a deceased child as an angel can also be found in Mijtens' portrait of the Family of Pieter van der Graaf (1654, oil on canvas, 140x161cm, whereabouts unknown). The deceased Petronella, as an angel holding a laurel crown and palm branch, wears her hair pulled back in a bun with loose curls in the front and facial features that are very similar to those of her living sisters Magtild and Cornelia on the ground below her. See also J.J. de Stomme, Portrait of Three Children from the Family Tjarda van Starkenborgh, 1654, Groningen, Groninger Museum (Stratingh, cat. nr. 29).}\]
with tight curls falling on her forehead. She points with her left hand toward her mother and the three sisters who are situated around her. With rather mature features for a child of her age, she looks over her shoulder to her brother, Adrianus whose features are the most portrait-like of the three. Looking out at the viewer, he and his brother Paulus extend a laurel crown in the direction of their father. In contrast to his younger siblings, he is clothed in a simple, loose fitting garment. This feature can likely be explained by the boy's advanced age at death. It was probably considered inappropriate to show a young man of seventeen as a nude.

In one example the angels that usually reside in the heavenly realm, have flown down to earth in order to visit with their parents. The painting by Juriaan Ovens of an unknown family shows a well-dressed man and woman on a terrace that looks out on a formal garden that is just visible in the distance (figure 46). The man leans against a column which was commonly included in portraits as an indicator of status or a symbol of fortitude, or both. While sometimes identified with worldliness, the globe could also be understood as a reference to the intellectual pursuits of the sitters or perhaps to the man’s profession as a philosopher or scientist. The dog that gazes affectionately at its master, a common feature in family portraits, is generally viewed as a symbol of fidelity. Two nude cherubs flank the woman; one blows bubbles while the other plays a flute. A sense of individualism is evident in each child that manifests itself most

104 Location unknown.
105 In Van de Wilegghen der Figuren, folio 134v., Van Mander defines the column as a symbol of "vasticheyt" or fortitude. See also Ripa, p. 484.
106 On the globe as a symbol of worldliness see Peter Sutton et al., Masters of Seventeenth-Century Genre Painting (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1984), cat. nr. 78. For the globe as a symbol of intellectual activity see Alan Chong and Wouter Kloek, Still-Life Paintings from the Netherlands 1550-1720 (Zwolle: Waanders Pub., 1999), cat. nrs. 18 and 34. For the globe as a reference to an individual's profession see Wilson, cat. nr. 70.
107 See Chapter 4, pp. 137-139 on the symbolism of dogs in portraiture.
prominently in the contrasting hairstyles of the two. The child blowing bubbles has long, straight hair, while the other one has short, tightly curled hair. That these winged infants represent the couple's deceased children is further suggested by the loving gesture of the mother who gently caresses the head of one of the angels. The actions of each of the angels can be construed as vanitas symbols. Although a common children's game, bubble-blowing could also be a reference to the theme of 'homo bulla', which compares the fragility of human life to a soap bubble. The other child's flute playing reiterates this meaning. Music, that swiftly fades, was a common metaphor for the fleeting nature of worldly existence.

Not all parents found it satisfactory to have their deceased children represented as angels in family portraits. Some avoided the supernatural effect and chose instead to have their dead children shown as if they were still living members of the family, a format also used to represent adults who had passed away. In such instances certain attributes or symbols are incorporated which

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108 In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the theme of 'homo bulla' ('man as soap bubble') was shown in a purely symbolic manner. This is illustrated in an engraving by Christoffel van Sichem of a putto sitting on a skull blowing bubbles. The word "Homo" on one of the bubbles makes its meaning explicit. This allegorical mode of representation was transformed in the seventeenth century and incorporated into genre scenes which show children blowing bubbles. Christopher Brown, Images of a Golden Past (New York: Abbeville Press, 1984), pp. 38 and 40. See also de Jongh et al., Tot lering en vermaak, pp. 44-47.

109 Flutes are sometimes included amongst other musical instruments in Dutch vanitas still life paintings. See Chong and Kloek, cat nrs. 31,36,38,42, and 65. A flute (among other instruments) and a boy blowing bubbles are combined in Jan Miense Molenaer's 1633 Woman at Her Toilet (Lady World), Toledo. The Toledo Museum of Art. These features, among others, have been interpreted as references to the vanity of worldly concerns. For this painting see Peter Sutton et al., Masters of Seventeenth-Century Genre Painting (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1984), cat. nr. 78 and plate 20.

110 For examples of deceased adults portrayed as "still living" family members see Jan Steen, Fantasy Interior with Jan van Goyen, ca. 1661-1663, Kansas City, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art (Mariët Westermann, The Amusements of Jan Steen [Zwolle: Waanders Pub., 1997], fig. 146); Jan Mijtens, Johan van Wassenaar van Duvenoorde and His Two Deceased Wives, 1643, Duivenoorde Collection (de Jongh, Portretten van echt en trouw, fig. 29); and Jan Miense Molenaer (attrib.), Family Group Ruyschauer-Van der Laen, Amsterdam, Museum Van Loon (de Jongh, Portretten van echt en trouw, fig. 47).
alert the viewer to the child's non-living status. An example of this type is a portrait by Jan Mijtens of *Govert van Slingelandt and His Family* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum) (figure 47). Van Slingelandt, named Lord of Dubbledam in 1653, married a year later, the twenty-two year old Christina van Beveren shown seated beside him. Their first son, Barthout, who holds a bunch of grapes (a common symbol in family portraits for fertility), was born by the end of that same year. However, the birth of their second child ended in tragedy. Archival sources establish that Christina van Beveren and her baby died during childbirth in 1657, a fate shared by many women and children of her time. Mijtens's portrait was apparently conceived shortly after their deaths as a memoriam. In contrast to the elaborate gown and hat his brother wears, the infant, held in his mother's lap, is draped in a simple, toga-like garment, and wears a crown of flowers on his head. The combination of the child's partially nude state, the flowered crown, his pallid coloring, and his action of making bubbles all provide clues regarding the child's deceased state. It is interesting to note that the artist does not incorporate similar clues which might alert us to the fact that the mother had also passed away prior to the painting's execution. One might, however, regard the bubble-blowing infant not only as a portrait, but also as a sort of allegorical attribute which alludes to the mother's deceased state. If this hypothesis seems plausible, then we should perhaps consider the possibility that the woman in Ovens's family portrait (figure 46) was also deceased at the time.

111 Oil on canvas, 1657, 99.5x86.5cm.
113 One should exercise caution when identifying deceased children in family portraits based solely on their wearing a flowered crown. As this object can have multiple meanings, and it occurs in a variety of contexts. The garland, for example, is often worn in pastoral portraits of children who were very much alive when the painting was executed. See for examples Kettering, *The Dutch Arcadia*, figs. 73, 79,82, 85.
114 While a death's head is sometimes included as an indication of an adult sitter's deceased state at the time a portrait was executed (see note 123 for an example), we must usually depend on archival documentation for this information.
that the painting was executed. The angel children, one blowing bubbles and the other making music, which flank their mother on either side could function in the same way as the child in Mijtens's portrait. Consequently, the globe, which, given its location in close proximity to the mother, might be a vanitas symbol further underscoring the woman's status.\textsuperscript{115}

The rendering of a young child as nude or partially nude (as above) can be an indication of a child's deceased state in other Dutch portraits, although as with the floral wreath this is not always the case.\textsuperscript{116} Originating in the fifteenth century, this convention became more widely used in portraiture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.\textsuperscript{117} A frequently cited example is the portrait of the princess of Orange-Nassau, Albertina Agnes and her children painted by Abraham van den Tempel in 1668 (figure 48).\textsuperscript{118} Seated on the far left is thirteen year-old Amalia who holds a sprig of orange blossom in her left hand.\textsuperscript{119} Beside

\textsuperscript{115} Should the globe in Ovens's portrait be identified as celestial rather than a terrestrial one, it could identify the right side of the painting as representing the "celestial" or "heavenly" realm, which would lend support to this argument. Unfortunately, the details of the globe are not clear in the reproduction making this theory difficult to confirm.

\textsuperscript{116} Like the garland, nudity is not always an indication that a child is deceased. To support this notion, Bedaux, "Funeraire kinderportretten," p. 107, cites the 1563 painting by Bernard de Rijckere of Anna Hertsbeeke and Her Children Catharina van Santvoort and Jan Baptiste van Santvoort (private collection). Genealogical documents indicate that baby Jan, shown nude on his mother's lap, was three months old and very much alive when the portrait was painted. Seventeenth-century examples include Jan Mijtens' 1662 portrait of Cornelia van der Meer with her Son Anthony Vivien (1661-1707) (See sale Sotheby's New York, October 7, 1994) and Paulus Moreelse, Maurits van Nassau at the Age of Twenty-Nine Weeks, 1619, private collection (Seymour Slive, Dutch Painting 1600-1800 [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995], fig. 334). An argument for nudity in portraiture as a means of identifying a human child with the Christ Child is found in P.J.J. van Thiel "Catholic Elements in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting, apropos of a Children's Portrait by Thomas de Keyser," Simiolus 20 (1990/91): 39-62.

\textsuperscript{117} An early example is an altarpiece of the Assumption of the Virgin painted by a follower of Geertgen tot Sint Jans ca. 1500. Two donors kneel in prayer on either side of the miraculous event, while behind the mother, in a diminutive scale, kneels a nude child. Bedaux, "Funeraire kinderportretten" pp. 104-105 with illustration.

\textsuperscript{118} Leeuwarden, Fries Museum, oil on canvas, 140x189cm. Wassenbergh, p. 50.

\textsuperscript{119} While symbolizing both chastity and purity, the orange blossom could also refer to ties with the House of Orange (a number of paintings show Orange princesses holding orange blossoms). De Jongh, Faces of the Golden Age, p. 61.
her, dressed in hunting clothes and holding a flintlock rifle is eleven year-old Hendrik Casimir II. The youngest child, Sophia Hedwig, balances with some assistance on her mother's lap. The child is nude save for the red ermine-lined robe that her mother partially drapes around her. In actuality, however, the child had died in January of the previous year, having never reached her third birthday. It has been suggested that the practice of depicting deceased children, like Sophia Hedwig, nude or in a state of undress stems from the age-old tradition of symbolically representing the human soul as a naked child. Certainly the fact that the majority of Maes's Ganymede babies are also shown nude or partially nude is further evidence of their deceased states as well. When depicted in this way, these children are removed from an ordinary context and evoke instead a sense of the eternal.

Although a death's head was sometimes used to indicate the presence of a deceased adult in a family portrait, it was not usually used to designate dead children. A unique example of its possible use in the latter context is found in a painting by the Dordrecht artist Jacob Cuyp of the Three Children of Sebastiaan Francken and Jacobmijna van Casteren (Rotterdam, Boymans-van Beuningen) (figure 49). Three stylishly attired children, each of whose age is inscribed beside him/her, are shown in a wooded landscape which opens up in the background.

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120 According to de Jongh, *Faces of the Golden Age*, p. 61, the girl's pose was borrowed from that of the Christ Child in one of Anthony van Dyck's paintings of the *Virgin and Child* (London, Dulwich Picture Gallery). He offers no explanation for this quotation beyond the assertion that it must have some contextual significance.

121 Wassenbergh, p. 50.


123 In a portrait of the Ruychaver-Van der Laen family attributed to Molenaer (see note 110), the elderly Maerten Ruychaver rests his hand on a skull as an indication that he was already dead when the portrait was painted. David Smith, *Masks of Wedlock. Seventeenth-Century Dutch Marriage Portraiture* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1982), pp. 67-68. See also de Jongh, *Portretten van echt en trouw*, cat. nr. 47.
to reveal a view of The Hague. On the right side of the picture the two older children who have been identified as Jacob (age eight) and Elisabeth (age six) stand hand in hand in a very formal, adult-like pose. Opposite them is their two and one fourth year old sister, Cornelia, who extends a small bouquet of wild flowers toward her siblings. On her right hand she wears a ring with a skull on it, which has been interpreted as a sign that she was not alive when the painting was executed. The skull, certainly the most familiar reminder of the inevitability of death, was one of the motifs found on mourning rings, a form of commemorative jewelry that was distributed to friends and relatives of the deceased. Given this information, it is possible to conclude that the youngest child was not dead, but rather in mourning. Nevertheless, as Ekkart has explained, the preciseness with which Cornelia's age is given in contrast to that of the other two children in Cuyp's portrait could further indicate that she was dead when the painting was executed. To the existing evidence I would like to draw attention to the considerable gulf that exists between Cornelia and her two

125 Alan Chong, "Aelbert Cuyp and the Meanings of Landscape," (Ph.D. diss., New York University 1992), p. 533. Additional support for the theory that Cornelia was dead at the time that this portrait was painted is provided by Ekkart, in Bedaux and Ekkart, Pride and Joy, pp.154-156 and no. 7. While acknowledging that the exact year of Cornelia's death is not known, he points out that she is missing from a family portrait by Pieter Codde entitled Sebastiaan Francken with His Wife and Children on the Beach at Scheveningen (location unknown) that was painted between 1638-1639. Her absence indicates that she was dead by this time.
127 Ekkart, in Bedaux and Ekkart Pride and Joy, p.155 and no. 7, states that although age is often quoted in months for children under two, this occurs only occasionally for older children. Moreover, in other group portraits in which the ages are stated more precisely this is done for all of the children present.
siblings. This sort of pictorial severing might be an allusion to the physical separation that is an inevitable consequence of death. By distancing the dead child from the living, the artist makes reference to the idea of departure from one realm to another, something that is also stressed (though much more dramatically) in Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits. These Maes images also share the subtle or minute reference to death that marks both Cuyp's and van den Tempel's paintings. Thus, there is less to disturb the memory of the child as s/he was in life.

Next to Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits, probably the most interesting way in which deceased children were represented was in reference to the story of "Christ Blessing the Children." An unusual example of this subject is a family portrait that has been attributed to the Gorinchem artist Gerard van Kuijl (figure 50). In this painting we see a finely dressed family gathered together on a terrace that looks out upon a distant landscape. On the right, a heavy drapery hangs behind the father which adds a touch of elegance to the image, while the books placed before it convey an air of distinction. The upper left hand corner, however, reveals a much more curious detail of a heavenly vision. In this scene a small, nude child is being offered by an angel into the welcoming arms of Christ. This child is most certainly a deceased member of the

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128 From the second half of the sixteenth century, this story, conveyed in Matthew 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16, and Luke 18:15-17, was popular among both Protestants and Catholics in the Northern and Southern Netherlands. The German artist, Lucas Cranach, was instrumental in the development and dissemination of this subject in the North. Cranach's paintings of Christ Blessing the Children have been connected with Martin Luther and his opposition to the Anabaptist view which denied the validity of infant baptism; Knipping, vol. 1, pp. 206-209. The subject of Christ Blessing the Children eventually lost its polemic background and by the seventeenth century was more commonly understood as a lesson for parents regarding the proper Christian upbringing of their children; De Jongh, Portretten van echt en trouw, pp. 325-326. See also Wishnevsky, pp. 59-63 and 164-165.

129 Family Portrait (present location unknown), 1649, oil on canvas, 199x282cm.
family shown below. It is perhaps the child's mother who has conjured up this divine sight. With her head inclined heavenward, she displays a slight smile of satisfaction, confident that her baby has achieved eternal salvation.

The adoption of this particular theme to represent deceased children provides considerable support for the memorial thesis proposed for Maes's Ganymede portraits. As discussed in the previous chapter, the biblical verses which convey this story stress the innocence of children, reminding us that "of such is the kingdom of heaven." The Gorinchen portrait provides a rather literal translation of this theme by showing Christ actually receiving the dead child into heaven. Maes's Ganymede portraits, which have also been connected to Christ's words, provide a metaphorical and thus more intellectual illustration of the pure soul embarking on its journey to heaven. Regardless of their different approaches, both examples would have provided comfort for grieving parents.

Quite a different approach to the subject of Christ blessing the little children is taken by Werner van den Valckert in his 1620 portrait of Michiel Poppen and his family (Utrecht, Museum het Catharijneconvent)(figure 51). By adopting the portrait historié format, van den Valckert's painting is more in keeping with the majority of portrait representations of this subject. Genealogical information indicates that when Michiel Poppen and his family were represented in this religious context, four of his nine children were already dead. The scene is crowded with figures who might possibly be members of the extended family. Although it has not been done in the literature, it is possible to theorize the identification of the four dead Poppen children. Drawing

from what we have observed in other examples, it is likely that the three small, scantily clad children in the center foreground to whom Christ directs his attention, are shown posthumously. The fourth child is harder to pinpoint as there are two likely candidates. One is the child on the left who stands next to its mother and wears a toga-like garment. This child looks out at the viewer while reaching out with both arms to Christ like the smaller child next to him. Another possibility is the child who also wears a toga-like garment but stands between Christ and his father. The flower garland that he alone wears could, as we have seen, be an indication of his deceased state.132

In some instances, the incorporation of deceased children in a family portrait is covert. Although it does not contain any of the previously discussed symbolic clues, a family portrait painted in 1638 by an anonymous Enkhuizen artist is generally accepted as incorporating deceased children (figure 52).133 This family has been tentatively identified as that of the Enkhuizen ship owner, Jan Gerritsz Pan.134 A mother and father stand behind a window that looks out onto a ship-filled seascape. Before them, in a modestly furnished room are the couple's eleven children. To the left of the window, seated in a chair is a three-year-old boy and standing on the right a two-year-old girl who holds a rinkelbel (rattle) and wears a coral necklace.135 Three wicker cradles each containing three

132 The paper that this child holds is not legible.
133 Oil on panel, 114x196cm, Semeijn de Vries van Doesburgh Collection. R.E.O. Ekkart, Portret van Enkhuizen in de gouden eeuw (Zwolle: Waanders Uitgevers, 1990), pp. 82-83, has argued this point which has subsequently been accepted by both Bedaux, "Funeraire kinderportretten," p. 110 and de Jongh "Bloemen in de knop," p.39.
134 The identification of this family as that of Jan Gerritsz Pan is based on the portrait's provenance and the family tradition connected to it. As Pan was an Enkhuizen shipowner, it is postulated that the view of ships at sea is a reference to the sitter's profession; Ekkart, Portret van Enkhuizen, p. 83.
135 The ages of the two children and the man and woman (thirty-two and thirty-one respectively) are indicated by an inscription on the painting. Ekkart, Portret van Enkhuizen, p. 82. Rattles are a common attribute of children in Dutch portraiture. Not exclusively toys, rattles were thought to protect the wearer from sickness and misfortune. Most have tiny bells attached to them, the tinkling of which was believed to frighten away evil spirits. Precious materials such as rock
reclining infants dominate the foreground. Of these nine babies, six have closed eyes which gives the appearance that they are sleeping. Three other infants, one in each cradle, have open eyes. Eight of these children are tucked beneath blankets, each swaddled in white and wearing a red cap with lace trim. A much larger and presumably older child wears a red garment and is not swaddled as its free arms have been placed on top of the blanket. With a turned head and open eyes, this child looks out toward the viewer. None of the symbols previously associated with death are present in this painting. The healthy skin color of these infants serves to further dissuade us that they are dead.

Nevertheless, Ekkart has concluded that all of the infants in the cradles were dead at the time that the portrait was painted, rendering it a unique example in Dutch portraiture. Those children with closed eyes are explained as representing still-born babies and those with open eyes as having lived only a short time before dying.136 Certainly, the sheer number of infants and their uniform size,

crystal, ivory, mother-of-pearl and red coral, which also had apotropaic associations, were often used to form the rattle's teething piece. The rattle in the Enkhuizen portrait is an example of a type that contains a wolf's tooth, which likewise was thought to have protective powers. Kinderen van alle tijden, pp. 100-101.

Ekkart, Portret van Enkhuizen, p. 82. I know of one seventeenth-century Dutch example in which children, who are indisputably dead, are shown with open eyes. A painted plaque which hangs in the Netherlands Reformed church in Groenlo, commemorates the death of quadruplets and their mother in 1648. Four swaddled infants with wide, staring eyes are arranged side-by-side in an upright position above an inscription which recounts the situation surrounding the birth, baptism, and early deaths of these quadruplets (and their mother): 'Anno 1648 in Martio/heeft een Moeder alhier te Groll by/Eene dracht gebaert vier kinderen/Sijnt samen gedoopt, en ontrent 8a9 dagen hebbede geleef, zijn gestorre/en liggen met de Moder in desen hoeck begraven.' H.L. Kok, Erfenis onzer voorouders. Begraven, rouwgebruiken en rouwsymboliek (Lochem: N.V. Uitgeversmatschappij de Tijdstroom, 1990), pp. 18-19 (with illus.). As the inscription states, these infants lived approximately 8 to 9 days, so their rendering with open eyes seems to support at least part of Ekkart's theory. Similar in its presentation is a painting by an anonymous artist of the twins of Jacob de Graeff and Aeltge Boelens who died in infancy (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum). See for an illustration, P.J.J. van Thiel et al. All the paintings of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1976), p. 675. The two swaddled infants have been placed side by side in an upright position against a dark background. In the upper corners are the family shields. Both children have open eyes and it is not clear if they were dead or alive when the painting was executed. It is also unclear whether the inscription in the center of the painting directly above the children which reads den 7 April 1617 refers to the date of
which suggest close if not equal ages, is enough to call in question that all were alive at the same time. As Ekkart asserts, multiple births often resulted in stillborn or short-lived children, and it is thus likely that most of the babies shown here were twins or triplets. I am not certain as to the state of the larger and presumably older child. Nevertheless, if all of the cradled infants indeed appear posthumously, we can deduce from the lack of any reference to death that the parents preferred to remember them in a positive state of health.

Deceased children may also appear as a portrait within a family portrait. However, this format is more frequently used to represent dead adult family members and relatives. It has been suggested that the oval portrait of a young girl that Maria de Kinderen holds in Jan de Baen's Self-Portrait with His Wife (The Hague, Museum Bredius) represents the couple's deceased daughter (figure 53). It is also likely that the prominently displayed portrait of a two-year old girl on the back wall of a family portrait attributed to Jan van Teylingen represents an early-deceased child. By using the portrait-within-a-portrait execution or if it marks the birth or death of the twins. As the portrait of the Dordrecht Quadruplets (above figure 37) illustrates, the arrangement used in the portrait of the de Graeff twins was also used to commemorate birth. Ekkart, Portret van Enkhuizen, p. 83, also concludes that the two children (possibly twins) with open eyes who lie in a cradle situated on a black and white tile floor in a painting by an anonymous Dutch artist are also dead (private collection). He bases this conclusion on iconographic and stylistic similarities between this image and the Enkhuizer family portrait (Jan Gerritsz Pan and Family?), both of which he believes were painted by the same Enkhuizer artist. As nothing is known about the identity of these two children and there are no visual clues to indicate that these children were indeed dead at the time the painting was executed, it is difficult to be certain that this portrait actually represents dead children.

137 For examples see Honthorst's Portrait of Amalia van Solins, Berlin, Staatliche Museen in which the widow is dressed in mourning clothes and holds a portrait of her late husband Frederik Hendrik (Scholten, fig. 8); Aegidius Sadeier's 1600 engraving, Portrait of Bartholomeus Spranger and his late Wife, Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet (Scholten, fig. 9); and Molenaer's Family Making Music, ca. 1635-1636, Haarlem, Frans Hals Museum (de Jongh, Portretten van echt en trouw, fig. 69).

138 Oil on canvas, 101x93cm, ca. 1673-74. De Jongh, Faces of the Golden Age, pp. 19-20 and de Jongh, Portretten van echt en trouw, cat. nr. 67. He interprets this portrait as signifying the idea that art is born of love.

139 An inscription on the portrait includes the girl's age and the date 1635. It is unclear whether this date identifies the year in which the portrait of the girl was painted, the year that the family portrait was painted, or the date of the child's death; Bedaux, "Funeraire kinderportretten," p. 99.
format, family members acknowledge that their loved one no longer exists in the world of the living. Memory of the deceased, however, is preserved by way of an "artificial likeness" of that individual which captures him/her in the full bloom of life. The insistence of the parents in these portraits on including their deceased children suggests that for them, the bond of family exceeds the physical separation imposed by death. This notion of posthumous familial harmony is also applicable to other family portraits which include dead children, as both Bedaux and de Jongh have pointed out. It seems a particularly effective solution for those paintings which show a dead child as living, while still acknowledging its passing.

As previously mentioned, Bedaux's study of images of deceased children offers additional conclusions about child-parent relationships. He addresses a theory supported by several historians, that affective relationships between parents and their children were lacking in early modern Europe. High mortality rates are a determining factor in this rather bleak point of view in which the typical parents are purported to have harbored feelings of indifference toward their offspring. Other historians have fervently responded to this theory.

It is likely that a 1635 Portrait of a Mother and Her Two Children by Thomas de Keyser also uses the portrait within a portrait format to represent a deceased child. In 1660, the painting on the back wall which shows three angels flying heavenwards, was added by Gerbrand van den Eeckhout. Although these angels do not have the requisite crowns or palm branches, their late addition suggests that they might represent infants that died at an early age. The use of this format to incorporate the angel/children does not detract from the realism of the original design; Bedaux, "Funeraire kinderportretten," p. 99-100 (with illustration).

many providing evidence to the contrary in the form of diaries and other personal documents. Bedaux's investigation of representations of deceased children provides art historical evidence. Using the volume and types of painted representations of dead children, he demonstrates that this genre would not have come into existence if there had not been a bond of love between parents and their children.

Bedaux's study and those advancements made in the establishment of a relationship between representations of deceased children and Dutch funerary customs have contributed much to our understanding of these fascinating images. Nevertheless, I believe that there is still more to be learned from paintings of deceased children. In considering these images as a group, I have noticed that despite the various approaches to this genre, there appears to be a common thread that until now has not been pointed out. In my opinion, a conscious effort has been made to render the majority of these paintings so that they might provide comfort for bereaved parents. In some types, particularly those in which the deceased child is shown as an angel, this suggestion is quite obvious. However, in deathbed portraits, such allusions are more covert, at least as received by modern viewers who tend to get lost in the tremendous poignancy of these images. Though, as I have pointed out, most of these deathbed portraits make some symbolic or metaphorical reference to the notion

their children. Conversely, both Shorter and Badinter assert that the lack of parental affection (i.e. neglect) was the source of the high level of death among children.

of salvation and eternal life. By considering images of deceased children in relation to attitudes toward grief and grieving as well as the literature of consolation I believe that we may better understand how these images might have functioned to evoke an experiential response in viewers.
CHAPTER 3

DEATH, GRIEF, AND CONSOLATION

It has been suggested that the Protestant Reformation might have contributed to the increased popularity of funerary portraits of children in the seventeenth-century Netherlands. Under the reformed religion there was a significant reduction of commemorative ritual. Traditional Catholic customs such as masses for the dead and the prayers of the living were forbidden by the Reformed Church which believed that the judgment of the soul after death was definitive and the living therefore could do nothing for the dead. This rejection of Catholic funerary practices was compounded by the Church's desire to do away with what they considered to be papist superstition. The absence of these practices, which had allowed the living a sense of continued contact with the dead, might have inspired the reformed population to find alternative forms of remembrance for their deceased loved ones.\(^1\) Unfortunately, this theory has not

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been developed into a more substantial argument. However, as we have seen in the previous chapter, there was a certain reluctance to relinquish some funerary customs among some followers of the reformed faith despite their being stigmatized as being "popish". In portraiture, this is exemplified by the continued adornment of the heads of deceased children with garlands as they lie on their deathbeds. Although this custom was forbidden in public, there were no laws restricting individuals from making reference to this practice within the privacy of the home where these portraits most likely would have been kept. Such desire to hold on to old practices demonstrates a need for a feeling of connection between the deceased and the living. I believe that images of deceased children could have filled that void by evoking an experiential response in some viewers, which addressed certain aspects of the mourning process itself. While the intent to comfort is readily discernible in some images, it has been overlooked in others. It is my contention that this is the result of insufficient attention being given to the beneficial role that grief played in the consolatory process. In this chapter I will consider how people dealt with loss as well as the attitudes surrounding those reactions. Moreover, I will demonstrate the existence of parallel relationships between images of dead children and the literature of consolation. These connections will form the basis for my theory regarding the participatory nature of Dutch paintings of deceased children.

**Grief and Grieving**

The hope that a loved one's death was but the gateway to a new and everlasting life in heaven was a powerful source of comfort for the bereaved. A resolution made by the Synod of Dordrecht helped to secure this belief for parents of the Reformed faith. Chapter I, article 17 states that 'We must judge
God's will from his words, which testify that the children of the faithful are holy, not by nature, but by the power of the covenant of grace, in which they and their parents are included: Therefore, Godly parents should not doubt the election and salvation of their children, whom God has taken from this life in their infancy' (Gen. 17:7; Acts 2:39; 1 Cor. 7:14).

Although reason might suggest that parents should rejoice in their children's salvation, some still experienced real outpourings of grief. As Dekker has revealed in his study of grief over the death of children in the Netherlands, expressions of parental sorrow, though usually brief, were sometimes recorded in seventeenth-century Dutch personal documents. One example is a passage from the autobiography of Elisabeth Strouven, (1600-1661) founder and first prioress of the cloister of the Sisters of Calvary in Maastricht. Regarding the death of a four-year old girl for whom she was a nanny, she wrote that she was 'extremely sad' ('uitermate droef') when the child died from smallpox. So strong was her grief that a mother could not have felt more sadness over the loss of her own child. Similarly, the Amsterdam

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3 Dekker, pp. 207-214, finds that just after the middle of the 18th century more extensive expressions of grief in response to the deaths of children can be found in personal documents. He attributes this difference in part to the changing character of the diary and autobiography. By that point these types of documents were being viewed as an appropriate place to express personal feelings. A shift in both the attitudes toward death as well as the pattern of reaction toward death that was anticipated by society also contributed to this change.

4 "...ik niet en mene dat een moeder meer droefheid zoude konen gevoelen om haar kins, als ik om dit kind en hadde..." Quoted in Dekker, pp. 207-208 and 267, nr. 13.
resident Jan Lansman recorded in the family album the death of his two year old daughter Titia in 1659 as having caused 'great misery' ('grote ellende').

Some who succumbed to their bereavement exhibited psychosomatic symptoms and sometimes even died. In the seventeenth century grief was regarded not only as an aspect of people's emotional and spiritual lives, it was also considered a possible health hazard if extreme. The Dutch physician, Johan van Beverwijck supports this idea in his *Schat der gesontheyt* (Treasury of health) when he indicates that people can die of grief over the loss of close family members. This is also the opinion of the clergyman Franciscus Ridderus, who, in addressing the health risks associated with excessive mourning in his *Historisch sterfhuys* (Historic House of Death), illustrated his discussion with the example of parents who died of grief after the death of a child.

A well known example of parental grief regards the death of the daughter of Maria Tesselschade and Allard Crombalch. On May 28, 1634, their oldest daughter, nine year old Teetgen, died of smallpox. Her father was so completely consumed by grief that he was given sedatives, which being too strong, caused excessive vomiting of blood and ultimately his death on the very same day that his daughter passed away. Less than a month later, Tesselschade wrote a poem in which she explained how the sadness her husband felt at his daughter's death had broken his heart.

During the seventeenth century it was believed that there was a link between grief and mourning and melancholia. According to the pathology of the

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5 Dekker, p. 207 and p. 268, nr. 17.
period, melancholia was attributed to an excess of black bile, one of the four bodily humors which were believed to play a crucial role in health and disease. These humors determined an individual's temperament based on their relative preponderance. Although this affliction was commonly characterized as "sadness without cause," it could also stem from grief and sorrow generated by losses and other disturbing circumstances. As is explained in *A Golden Practice of Physick* (London, 1662), excessive grief could 'beget a Melancholik Perturbation of the Mind' that might degenerate into a true melancholia 'if it take deeper roote and disturb the Spirits, and change the Temperament of the Body.'

Timothy Rogers in his *A Discourse Concerning Trouble of Mind, and the Disease of Melancholly* (London, 1691) writes that the "the loss of Children" was one of the causes that might trigger melancholia even in those who were not naturally inclined to the disease. This is possibly the case in an event described by Hugo de Groot in a letter announcing the death of the Amsterdam regent Laurens Reael in 1637. He explains that Reael was never able to overcome the grief occasioned by the premature deaths of two of his children, the blow of which sent him into such a deep melancholy, that he forgot all other thoughts and having never recovered died shortly thereafter.

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9 Stanley W. Jackson, *Melancholia and Depression* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 7-10, 312-320 and passim. Jackson, p. 5, explains that during the Renaissance, the terms melancholia, melancholie, and melancholy were all used to denote both the disease and "almost any state of sorrow, dejection, or despair, not to mention respected sombreness and fashionable sadness." In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, melancholy continued to have these associations, while the term melancholia was gradually restricted to specifying the disease alone. He notes that similar trends are discernible in other western European languages.


12 For the relevant passage in Dutch see Dekker, p. 213.
Consolation

There was a body of literature to which those forced to deal with the loss of a child or other loved one could turn for support. This genre of consolation has its origins in the classical consolatio. Composed by Greek and Roman philosophers, this body of work consisted of treatises, dialogues, and letters in which the themes of comfort and consolation were developed into a set repertoire of arguments that could be offered to those needing solace for such problems as bereavement, fear of death, illness, despair, and misfortune. The Christian consolatio incorporated the rhetoric of theology into a form significantly influenced by its classical predecessors. A rich tradition of consolatory texts, as well as epistolary manuals, which functioned as guides for prospective consolers, was developed by subsequent authors, not the least of whom were such Renaissance humanists as Petrarch, Ficino, and Erasmus. An investigation of consolatory texts from both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries reveals the prevalence of a more sympathetic attitude toward mourning in the latter period than what was present in the former.

In the early sixteenth century, as Pigman demonstrates, grieving was generally considered as an exercise in futility and those who succumbed to it revealed their lack of self-control, reason, and faith. The bereaved were therefore encouraged to display fortitude in the face of the loss of a loved one and to suppress their sorrow, a philosophy first prescribed by the ancient Stoics. In an effort to do away with or at least subdue grief and suffering, the

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15 On the restraint of feeling as essential to 'civilized' behavior, see especially N. Elias, The Civilizing Process, trans. by Edmund Jephcott (New York: Urizen Books, 1978), passim. This
sixteenth-century consoler used reason as his primary weapon, with the goal of proving that it was irrational to be sad. In addition to this plea to reason, other standard topics of consolation were also promoted: all men must die, life was but a loan from God, and immoderate sorrow was unnatural and profited neither the mourner nor the deceased. The tone of these consolations was often harsh and admonishing as authors such as Erasmus took a very stern view of the mourner's suffering. In the popular and influential treatise, *De conscribendis epistolis* (1522), Erasmus promotes his Neo-Stoic arguments regarding the futility of grieving, and proffers the universality of death as the most comforting reason not to grieve. He simultaneously condones moderate grief, and argues that all grief is unworthy of a self-respecting man, and so attempts to shame the bereaved to prevent them from mourning. In essence, Erasmus appeals to the individual's self-image by indicating that he would demean himself by succumbing to emotion. Erasmus disdains those who are overcome by their

concept has obvious class implications, since the less 'civilized' peasant classes are generally credited with more 'natural', unconstrained behavior of all kinds. See van Deursen, pp. 96-114. Among the most psychologically austere of the ancient philosophers were the Stoics, who promoted the idea of *apathia*, a freedom of excessive and irrational emotions. Cicero's *Consolatio*, which the author wrote in 45 B.C. to console himself over the death of his daughter Tullia, is a major contribution to this genre. Although Cicero followed in the Stoic tradition, he is generally considered to have been less harsh than the typical Stoic. Cicero believed that the passions were disorders of the soul and that those distressed by them were distinctly unwise. He thought that it was the philosophers' job to serve as physicians of the soul by employing philisophical wisdom to heal such souls. McClure, pp. 4-9. For further discussion of *apathia* in consolation see von Moos, III, pp. 88-93.

16 McClure, passim; Pigman, passim.

emotions and respects those who can suppress and conceal their sadness by means of reason: "we wish to rejoice in his fortitude rather than cure his grief."\textsuperscript{18}

Erasmus's beliefs regarding grief and consolation are most clearly expressed in his \textit{De conscribendis epistolis} in a fictive letter to Antonius Suketus on the death of his son, which was originally published as the \textit{Declamatio de morte} (1517). Erasmus opens his letter with brief expressions of condolences, conveying how inhumane it would be if he tried to prohibit Suketus's grief. Shortly thereafter, Erasmus nevertheless proceeds to do just that. He underscores the shame that is involved when a man of Suketus's wisdom cannot exercise restraint in the face of adversity. Assuming that Suketus will moderate his grief, Erasmus urges him to cast it off entirely. After citing examples of Stoic philosophers whose fortitude and self-control in enduring bereavement is preeminent, he asserts the universality of death. He then goes on to imply that those who grieve are claiming self-indulgent exemption from the fate of mortality. Finally, Erasmus offers the harsh words of Suketus's son who speaks from heaven. The son emphasizes the selfishness of those who would wish him back amongst the miseries of earth, asking if their hate for him is so great that they would deny him his happiness, or if they are simply envious of his current situation. Erasmus concludes his letter with a final question to Suketus: "If that your sonne (I saye) shulde saye these wordes to us: myghte we not well be ashamed thus to lament and mourne as we do?"\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{18} 'nos illius fortitudini gratulari velle potius quam dolori mederi' (p. 433) quoted in Pigman, p. 13. Another popular Latin treatise in which the author, like Erasmus, attempts to "shame the bereaved out of grief" is Georgius Macropedius' \textit{Methodus de conscribendis epistolis} (1543). Thomas Wilson's \textit{Arte of Rhétorique} (1553) includes a section on consolation which is also heavily indebted to Erasmus. Pigman, pp. 16-19 and 132-133, no. 12.

In the seventeenth century as well, specifically among the Dutch literati, the ideas of the Stoic philosophers regarding grief were quite fashionable.\(^{20}\) An example can be found in Vondel's poem to Constantijn Huygens on the death of his wife Susanna van Baerle. In his poem, Vondel likens Huygens to a column, steady and strong. He further expresses that sorrow cannot comfort the dead, but only trouble the living, a position that is reminiscent of the rationalist thought of Erasmus.\(^{21}\)

The most often cited example of a seventeenth-century Dutch individual adhering to the Stoic ideal of fortitude in the face of the death of loved ones, however, is that of Maria Tesselschade. Having suffered the loss of both her husband and her daughter on the same day, she wrote to P.C. Hooft that she confronted the tragedy 'with a weeping soul, oppressed heart and grieving spirit, but with dry eyes...'.\(^{22}\) While admitting to experiencing inner pain, Tesselschade maintains an outward appearance of composure. Hooft also attempted to behave stoically upon the death of his wife, but he was not so successful. Upon hearing of her friend's profound grief at this loss, Tesselschade wrote to Hooft that she was astonished at his behavior: "How now, dear sir, could you, who


\[^{22}\] 'met een wenende ziel, benauwd hart en treurende geest, doch droge ogen...' Smits-Veldt, *Maria Tesselschade*, pp. 64-65.
have acquired such a large store of steadfast wisdom, be made miserable by the necessary course of the world?23 In response, Hooft explained that "I did not look for grief, but she knew where to find me."24

For some seventeenth-century individuals facing adversity, a more Christian-based stoicism was adopted, as various personal documents reveal. Of the examples which illustrate this attitude toward grief, the reactions expressed by parents reflect not insensitivity but rather submission to the will of God. Such acceptance of divine will was clearly expressed by Pieter Peereboom, merchant and burgomaster of Purmerend, who wrote in his autobiography (1651-1735) regarding the death of a son just one day old: 'it occurs of God's will, thus it was over and we remained silent.'25 A more formal expression of such Christian fortitude is found in Johann de Witt's announcement to relatives of the death of his seven year old daughter Catharina. He assures his relatives "that it is permitted to us to accept willingly the disposition of Almighty God in this and all similar events."26

Dying children also displayed Christian stoicism, as can be found within the rather interesting context of the child biography. These texts, usually distributed in the form of a pamphlet, conveyed the exemplary lives and deathbed behaviors of specific Dutch, English, and American children.27 The

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24 "...Ick en zoek de rouw niet, maer zij weet mij te vinden." Hooft, p. 494.
25 't geschieden van Gods wille, Dit was aldus voorbij en hielden ons voort stille.' Quoted in Dekker, p. 213.
27 A number of examples of exemplary deaths of children were collected in a volume entitled Twintig zonderlinge exemplen van vroeg-bekeerde en jong-stervende kinderen that was published in Amsterdam in 1679 by Jacobus Koelman. The popular text was reprinted a number of times prior to 1800; Leendert F. Groenendijk and F.A. van Lieburg, eds, Voor edele staat geschapen. Levens-en
purpose of these texts was to instruct and console other youngsters, especially the deceased child's playmates. In the Netherlands these child biographies were written about children who were followers of the Reformed faith, with the earliest appearing around 1600. The emphasis placed on recording the exemplary deathbed experiences of these devout children parallels the didactic function of *ars moriendi* (art of dying) texts, which provided instruction to the general Christian public on how to die well.

A representative example of the child biography is that of fourteen-year-old Susanna Bickes, who died from the plague in 1664 in Leiden. Susanna's final hours actually span a two day period during which she speaks to both her parents and the *ziekentrooster* (a comforter of the sick), Hermanus ter Steegh. The account opens with a description of the girl as being pleasant, humble, dutiful to her parents, and most importantly, pious. Susanna had been properly instructed in her faith and was reported to have cited a number of Biblical

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28 Groenendijk, p. 12.


30 See Groenendijk pp. 89-103 for a facsimile of the *Laatste Uren van Susanna Bickes* (Rotterdam, Hermanus Kentlink, 1735).

31 Groenendijk, p. 18.
passages on her deathbed, which had both an edifying and comforting effect on those present. Her exhortations were not only a means by which to express her own spiritual convictions and give her the strength to endure her failing state, they were also intended to comfort her grieving parents. When her father began to cry Susanna asked him "And do you not pray every day, that the Will of God may be done upon Earth as it is in Heaven? Now Father, this is God's Will that I should lie upon this sick bed, and of this disease; shall we not be content when our prayers are answered? Would not your extream sorrow be murmuring against God, without whose good pleasure nothing comes to pass?" She continues by offering her own steadfastness as example: "Although I am struck with this sad disease, yet because it is the Will of God, that does silence me, and I will as long as I live, pray that God's Will may be done, and not mine." She

Susanna further warns against excessive grieving and urges the necessity of death. When her parents respond with tears to her warning that they must soon part, she says: "I go to Heaven, and there we shall find one another again; I go to Jesus Christ." Similarly, Susanna finds her own comfort in thoughts of soon being reunited in heaven with her brother and sister who died before her. Susanna's exemplary deathbed experience not only illustrates her faith and acceptance of God's will, but it also serves to facilitate the process of separation of child from parents.

Although a stoic attitude toward death was still present in the seventeenth century, there is a noticeable shift in sensitivity in the discourse of consolation. While some seventeenth-century authors of epistolary manuals adhere to the

32 I quote from a 1700 edition of Janeway's *A Token for Children* that is reproduced in Francelia Butler, p. 130, verse 21. Janeway's account of Susanna Bickes's death is essentially the same as the Dutch version reproduced in Groenendijk (see above note 26).


34 Ibid, verse 57.
severe attitude of sixteenth-century consolers, many others prescribe a gentler, more sympathetic type of consolation. In Pieter Jansz. Twisck's *Troostbrief der weduwen* (Hoorn 1630) the author offers a warning against adopting an overly Stoic attitude upon losing a loved one:

> It is not my intention, dear Lijsbeth Pieters, to change your nature into a solid mass or to make wood or stone of you, or to rob you of all natural movement... as if you felt no sadness at the death of your husband, child, father, mother, sister, brother, friends or acquaintances, as it is said of the stoic philosopher, namely that they were as happy at the death of their friends as they were at the loss of their enemies.

Instead of imposing self-restraint on the bereaved, there was, in the seventeenth century, a therapeutic emphasis placed on the acknowledgment and ultimate cure of sorrow. Although moderation was still advised, it became increasingly more acceptable to view grief as a natural, and probably necessary response to the death of a loved one. This was not a new idea, as it was promoted, among others, by Martin Luther in his letters of consolation. Luther maintained that

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35 Pigman, p. 3 and passim. The author indicates that the shift in attitude toward mourning is also evident in elegy and moral-theological tracts.

36 "Mijn voornemen is niet geliefde Lijsbeth Pieters u te veraerden in een block of om van u hout of steen t maken, ende alle natuierlijke beweeginghen te ontnemen... alsof ghij gheen rouwe van de doodt uwes mans, kindts, vader, moeder, suster, broeder, vrienden of bekenden soudt ghevoelen ghelijck van de stoische Philosophen geseyt wordt die even vrolijck in 't sterven van hare vreinden als in 't verliesen van hare vyanden soudt zijn." Pieter Janszoon Twisck, *Troostbrief der weduwen* (Hoorn, 1630), p. 8.

37 On the English therapeutic tradition see Pigman, passim.

38 Luther's letters of spiritual counsel were first published shortly after his death in 1546. See U. Mennecke-Haustein, *Luthers Trostbriefe* (Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte, 56), Gütersloh: G. Mohn, 1989, 99-134, esp. 132-133. For a compilation of English translations of Luther's letters see Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel*, vol. 18, *The Library of Christian Classics* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), pp. 53-81. Crantor (ca. 335-275 B.C.) in his treatise *On Grief*, which he wrote for a friend whose children had died, is one of the earliest authors to view grief and sorrow as natural, though needing to be kept in bounds. McClure, p. 6. Crantor's work was influential on Augustine who in Book Fourteen of his *City of God* (413) admits that the tears shed by survivors of the dead are natural, even in Christians (14,9). Sister
grief was normal and even proper when faced with death as long as it was practiced in moderation and informed by Christian faith. In a letter addressed to the Knudsens from October 21, 1521 regarding the death of their son John, Luther wrote: "It is quite inconceivable that you should not be mourning. In fact, it would not be encouraging to learn that a father and mother are not grieved over the death of their son. The wise man, Jesus Sirach, says this in ch. 22: 'Weep for the dead, for light hath failed him; but do not mourn much, for he hath found rest.' That it is in fact one's Christian duty to grieve the loss of a loved one is conveyed in a letter of 1539 to Catherine Metzler also regarding the loss of a son: 'It is natural and right that you should grieve, especially for one who is of your own flesh and blood. For God has not created us to be without feeling or to be like stones or sticks, but it is his will that we should mourn and bewail our dead.'

As Pigman explains, the prevalence of a more tolerant attitude toward mourning during the seventeenth century was not an indication that mourners in the sixteenth-century felt less sorrow. Rather, the existence of a multitude of religious and moral strictures suggests that mourning seriously disturbed a large number of people. What changed was the ability to live with the process of mourning not only in oneself, but in others as well. Thus, the fervent emotions stimulated by grief and loss were increasingly accepted as inevitable, natural reactions to misfortune. Grief, then, was acknowledged as part of the mourning


39 Tappert, p. 61.
40 Tappert, p. 72.
41 Pigman, p. 3 and passim.
process. As one historian so aptly explains with regard to his study of mourning in seventeenth-century England, "to grieve was to cope, to register one's loss, and to work through the rift of separation."\(^4^2\)

A number of seventeenth-century epistolary authors devote attention to expressing condolences, adding models for the expression of sympathy and support for the bereaved. Puget de la Serre, in his popular letter-writing manual published in English as *The Secretary in Fashion*, advises writers of letters to those who have suffered some great disaster to be empathetic and offer condolences. He further recommends "That you will not perswade him from grieving, for that will seeme a cruell and blame-worthy inhumanity, having sustained so great a loss as of a Wife, Husband, Father or Mother, & c. That is true, he hath cause to weep, especially the wound being so green."\(^4^3\) The Dutch humanist, Hugo Grotius wrote in a letter to Monsieur de Maurier, the French Ambassador at The Hague, on the death of his wife: "we must seriously consider, whether the grief of the heart be in the number of those things, over which our labour and industry hath any power."\(^4^4\) In a model letter from Daniel Mostart's *Nederduytse Secretaris oft Zendbriefschryver* (1651), the opening condolences are particularly grave: "I was so surprised about the news of the death of Lord. M. that I am

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beside myself. Between thoughts of my loss and the certainty of your grace's grief, I feel an unbearable sadness: and I am not only bereaved, but I despair of consolation."

After the initial offering of condolences, most authors of consolatory texts urged the bereaved to moderate his/her sorrow. Almost all authors emphasize the necessity of moderation of grief, be it for religious, moral or social concerns. Consolatory counsel is then offered in an effort to assist the grief-stricken in his/her return to a normal life. For some authors it was believed that consolations would be more effective "when the first storm of sorrow is past, and that pleasure (if I may so speak) of grieving is abated; when the minde now wearied with its disease begins to be willing to admit of remedies, and to suffer the touch of some helping hand." While faith in the Will of God was offered as the ultimate remedy for the bereaved, other palliatives were also prescribed to help facilitate the mourning process. Among these were biblical study, prayer,

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45 "Ik ben zoo verbaest geweest over de tydingh van de doodt van den Heer M, die ik by nae als buyten my zelve ben. Tusschen de ghedachtenis van mine schaede ende de zekerheidt van uwer Gen: verslagenheitd, ghevoele ik een ondraeghsame droefheidt: ende en ben niet alleen berooft, maer ik wanhoop van vertroostinge." Daniel Mostart, Nederduytse Secretaris oft Zendbriefschryver, for Joannis van Ravesteyn, Amsteldam, 1656, pp. 329-330.

46 Although moderation of grief is the general rule for most authors, there are rare cases when one finds a defense of immoderate mourning at least for a limited period. In a model letter to a father who has a son the consoler writes "you must confess that unavoidable evils are to be endured with constancie. I speake not this to condemn your Sighs and Tears, for I do willingly approve of them, yea, even in excesse: but to let you know, that after you have satisfied your humour, you must a little give place to reason being you shall receive as much glorie in drying up your Teares, as you did once pleasure in shedding them." Puget de la Serre, II, G2r.

47 Grotius, A3. See also Puget de la Serre, II, G3 "I had sooner condoled with you the losse of you Father, if I had sooner judged you capable of Consolation. I thought it fit to afford you some time to pay, (with the abundance of your Teares) the debt you owed to nature: but now having satisfied your selfe, by the publique Testimonie which you have given of your sorrow." See also the ars moriendi text by James Cole, Of Death a True Description : And against it A good Preparation: Together with A sweet Consolation, for the surviving Mourners (London, 1629), pp. 166-167, "And very fitly doth a man take the time of certayne dayes, to ease his heart of the burthen of greife, it surchargeth him by lamenting and weeping. For this desease having so passed the worst, is then the easier to be cured. The sorrowfull finding himselfe wearied out, gives way the more willingly to comfort."
active involvement in life, hard work, gratitude for the joys that one still has (i.e. health, friends, and love), and the reading of consolatory texts. Certainly the most effective consolation that could be offered to the bereaved was the Christian doctrine of Resurrection and the belief in life hereafter. The hope of being reunited with the departed in heaven was also comforting as was the assurance that the deceased was better off because he/she was no longer among those who struggled through the turbulence of earthly existence.

The trend toward a greater sympathy for the bereaved and increased tolerance for the process of mourning that one sees in seventeenth-century epistolaries is also apparent in funerary verse. Funerary elegies were frequently written in the seventeenth century and as might be expected with the high mortality rate, a number of them were specifically addressed to the loss of a child. While the primary function of funerary elegy was the praise and commemoration of the deceased, the expression of feelings of sorrow as well as the offering of words of comfort were also significant elements. According to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century laws of rhetoric, funerary elegies had a standard three-part construction. The laus offered praise for the deceased. This was followed by the luctus, the actual lamentation, and finally the consolatio or consolation. Not all poets, however, adhered to this form, as might be expected in view of the number of amateur ventures into this genre.

The authors of funerary poetry range from such venerable poets as Joost van den Vondel, to amateurs who were very often surviving members of the family of a deceased child. Prominent in their works is the Christian theme of

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resurrection with its promise of eternal joy and everlasting life. Several of these poems use the image of the deceased child speaking to the bereaved parents from the heavens. In Vondel's poem "Vertroosting, Aan de Ouders van Isabelle" ("Consolation, To the Parents of Isabelle") the child urges her parents not to cry for she is happy to leave earth and await their arrival in heaven, the reward for the faithful. There she waits in joy amongst the angels and hopes to share with her parents the eternal bliss of those who praise God. The pleasures of the heavenly life versus the falseness and deceit of earthly existence is also offered as comfort to the bereaved. Vondel's 1632 poem "Kinder-Lyck", a play on the words for "childish" and "child-corpse", was written on the occasion of the premature death of his infant son Constantijn. As in the above example, the child speaks from heaven, offering consolation to his mother who weeps over his earthbound corpse. He asks her why she cries, and assures her that he is better off, separated from the vanities of the world, and living in heaven where God provides great abundance to all souls who abide there. The emphasis on faith in these poems parallels that which we have also seen expressed in the deathbed exhortations of Susanna Bickes.

50 "Mijn ouders, weest gerust,/Ik ben met groten lust/Van d'aarde hier gescheiden,/Om u te gaan verbeiden/In 't hemelse priëel;/Daar hoop ik mijn behoeder/En ook mijn lieve moeder/t' Aanschouwen met geneucht/In endeloze vreugd;/Bij d'Engelen daарboven;/Die hunnen Schepper loven." This poem was written in 1636. Vondel, p. 880. The topos of the deceased consoling the living has a long tradition in consolatory literature. Marsilio Ficino indicates in a letter of 1462 that his deceased brother Anselmo appeared in a vision to reassure his grieving family that he had entered a state of heavenly bliss, released from servitude to freedom, from darkness to light, from sleep to waking, from death to life. 'Pistola consolatoria a' suoi propinqui della morte de Anselmo suo fratello dilectissimo,' quoted in Dickey, p. 354.

51 "Constantijntje, 't zalig kijndtje;/Cherubijntje, van omhoog,/d' Ijdelheden, hier beneden,/Uitlacht met een lodderoog./Moeder, zeit hij, waarom schreit gij?/Waarom schreit gij, op mijn lijk?/Boven leef ik, boven zweef ik,/Engeltje van't hemelrijk;/En ik blink er, en ik drink er,/'t Geen de Schinker allés goeds/Schenkt de zielen, die daar krielen,/Dertel van veel overvloeds./Leer dan reizen met gepeizien/nar palaizen, uit het slik/Dezer werreld, die zo swerreelt./Eeuwig gaat voor ogenblik." Vondel, p. 880. See also "Grafdicht op jonkvrouw Isabelle Le Blon" (1636), Vondel, p. 880.
Although "Kinder-Lyck" specifically seeks to console the child's mother, it is more than likely that Vondel himself gained some comfort in writing it. Many poems were conceived on the occasion of the loss of a child as a means of providing consolation for the authors themselves. In the same way that reading consolatory texts was therapeutic for the bereaved, so too was writing them. Writing could be a means of exorcising one's sorrow, thus serving to facilitate the process of mourning. In 'Op de doodt van mijn kint' ('On the death of my child'), published in 1669, Adriaan Steyn comforts himself after the death of his eighteen day old infant with the words "He is with his Jesus, and where has he a dearer friend? Now the soul (...) lives happier than here as a King's child." Just a year after composing "Kinder-Lyck", Vondel lost his eight year old daughter Sara, whom he commemorated in the poignant, "Uitvaert van mijn dochterken" ('Funeral of my little daughter'). In this poem Vondel takes a comparatively different approach. Rather than having the deceased child offer consolation from the heavens, Vondel finds comfort in reminiscing about the child as she was in life. A major portion of his poem is a recollection of Sara singing, laughing, and playing games and dolls.

In "Lykzang, over myn jongste zoontje" ('Funeral song about my youngest son'), Jan Baptista Wellekens (1658-1726) similarly recalls the childish pastimes of his deceased son Michiel. In a manner that is reminiscent of the child biography of Susanna Bickes, the author further stresses that his seven year old child led a

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32 McClure, p. 21, notes that Petrarch sometimes used his letter writing as a means of catharsis after the deaths of friends.
33 "t Is by sijn Jesus, en waer heeft 'et liever vrint?/De Ziel (...) / Leeft nu geluckiger als hier een Koninghskint." From De puntige poëet in de wapenen of de stapel nieuwe punt-dichten (Rotterdam: Isaac van Lochem, 1669). This poem is reproduced in Dekker, pp. 216-217.
34 1633, Vondel, p. 881.
Godly life and died an exemplary death. Wellekens assures himself that with the pure soul that God granted little Michiel in his innocence, the child now rejoices "in eternal light, ..." and "endless tranquillity."  

J. de Decker takes a highly dramatic approach to the tragic death of his nephew in his cathartic poem, "Op 't graf van Mijns Swagers Soontjen Willem Verjannen" ("At the grave of My Brother-in-law's Little Son Willem Verjannen"). Although the child passed away a year earlier, the author is still trying to come to terms with his grief. He does this by recalling in vivid detail the events of the child's terrible death from choking. De Decker notes that even as he writes he weeps, so that the ink mixes with his tears. A poem by W.V. Heemskerk regarding the premature death of his son, Joos, shows the author's progress through the mourning process. As in Vondel's poem about the death of his own son, this poem's title, "Hik-Snikken, Over 'T Kinderlijk-Lijk" ("Hiccup-Sobs Over the Childlike Corpse"), plays on the words child-like and corpse. Different however, is the immediate reference to the sorrow that this author feels over his loss. The poem begins by comparing the pallid, lifeless child to a rose that has been prematurely plucked from its stem. This loss, he explains, causes pains that reason cannot disperse. Although acknowledging that his sighs do not bear fruit, he says that they raise the spirit of the timid while simultaneously clearing a path for a harder flow of tears. The father ultimately finds comfort in imagining his child speaking to him from Heaven, assuring him that he should

55 "in't eeuwig licht, ..." and "in endeloze rust." From Jan Baptista Wellekens' posthumous publication, Zedelyke en ernstige gedichten. Met het leven van den dichter, in 't kort beschreven door wylen den heere Pieter Vlaming (Utrecht, 1737). This poem is reproduced in Gerrit Komrij, De Nederlandse poëzie van de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw in duizend en enige gedichten (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1986), pp. 731-733, 1365.

56 From J. de Decker, Lof der geldsucht, ofte vervolg der Rijm-oeffeningen. Verdeelt in twee boecken, behelsende gedichten van verscheydene stoffe (Amsteldam, 1667); reproduced in Komrij, pp. 327-328, 1315.

57 "Met int doormengt van tranen-dou geschreven", Komrij, p. 328.
rejoice because now the child is free from pain. Finally, the author reminds himself that in order to be victorious, he must overcome the complaints of the flesh through his faith in God.  

As these examples show, poetry, like other forms of consolatory literature, could provide instruction to the bereaved through faith in God. Moreover, it could serve as an outlet for the expression of personal sorrow, while also providing a means by which to work through this grief.

As I have demonstrated, the literature of consolation had become more sympathetic by the seventeenth century. Emphasis was placed not on treating grief as a character flaw, but rather on acknowledging it as part of the process of mourning. Both the reading and writing of consolatory literature were an accepted means by which one could help overcome the loss of a loved one. I believe that paintings of deceased children had a similar function. Such portraits served not only to memorialize a child and commemorate its passing (and in many cases record its likeness), but could also have had a participatory function. In other words, some of these paintings were consoling, some facilitated the grieving process, and some did both. Where the literature of consolation relied on language to console and heal the bereaved, painting relied on the power of the visual image to achieve this effect. Although other scholars have drawn attention to the likelihood that some paintings of deceased children would have

58 Lieve Joosje!'/k Zie uw roosje/Zonder boosje/Van zijn struik,/Neergedoken,/Afgebroken,/En gelijken/als ter sluik./Uw voorleden/Vriend'lijkheden,/Geven weeden,/Die natuur/Door geen zeden/Van de Reden,/Kan vertreden,/Dan heel zuur./O die zuchten./Doen geen vruchten!//Maar verluchten/De kleinmoed./Om de kranen/Van de tranen./Weer te banen/Harder vloed./'t Zoete Mann'tje./Na't verstandje./Lei zijn handje/In de mijn;/Rechts, of 't zeide;/Lach vrij beide./Want ik scheide/Uit mijn pijn;/Om te leven./En te zweven,/Dicht beneven/'t Hemel-Rot./'t Welk hier boven,/d'Heil'ge-hoven,/Staag met loven./Vult bij God./O gedachten!/ die's Vleeschs klachten,/Door's Geest's krachten,/Overwint.'/k Wensch in't sterven,/Te verwerven/'t Wis-heil-erven/Van mijn Kind. From Bloemkrans van verscheiden gedichten, door eenige liefhebbers der poëzi bij een verzamelt (Amsterdam, 1659). Reproduced in Komrij, pp. 350-351 and 1326.
provided consolation for those who suffered the loss of a child, no one has sought to substantiate these claims beyond the explanation of simple logic. By asserting parallel relationships between prominent topoi in the literature of consolation and their equally prevalent occurrence in the representations of deceased children, I will provide concrete evidence with which to support this theory.

A passage from Grotius' letter to the French ambassador Benjamin Du Maurier on the death of his wife makes reference to the effect that certain mental "images" have on the bereaved. He writes: "I would have her live in your thoughts perpetually, but so that the memory of her may delight, not torment you. ... Let her come then, when she may come, in the quality she was wont to come, fair, kinde and cheerfull. This image of her, which now occurrers to your minde, sorrowfull, and leaving a troublesome remembrance of her, is false and resembles her not." Visualizing his beloved wife dead is torturous and brings only sorrow. But to picture her as the good and pleasant woman that she was in life brings comfort. As Dickey has asserted, such mental picturing recalls the function of portraiture to preserve an eternal likeness of the deceased. The power to make the dead live is a characteristic that has long been associated with portraiture. As Leon Battista Alberti wrote in 1435 in On Painting, 'The face of


60 Grotius, p. 8. An earlier reference is made by the humanist Juan Luis Vives, A very fruteful and pleasant booke called the instruction of a christen woman (London, 1557), Lliw: 'For our frendes lyve wyth us thoughge they be absent from us or deade if the lyvely image of theme be imprinted in our hartes wyth often thynkyng upon theym, and daiei renewed, and theyr lyfe ever wareth fresche in our myndes.' Quoted by Scholten, p. 336. Vives original text, De institutione feminae christianae (Antwerp, 1524), was translated into several languages in the sixteenth century, including English, German, and Dutch. Scholten, no. 25 and no. 28 for the above passage from a Dutch edition of the text.

61 Dickey, p. 348.
one already dead through painting lives a long life." It is thus easy to understand the desire to have one's dead child represented in painting as a living, breathing, individual. The image of the child becomes a substitute for reality, an idea that is most readily conveyed using the portrait-within-a-portrait format. In Jan de Baen's representation of his family (figure 55), his wife literally holds on to her child's memory. In other portraits, where a dead child is portrayed alive like the siblings and/or parents who accompany him/her, allusions to death are usually present, but are minimized. For example, in Mijtens's portrait of the van Slingelandt family (figure 47), the infant's bubble-blowing and its flower crown can be understood as suggesting the ephemeral nature of human existence, and death, respectively.\(^\text{63}\) Death is even more subtly intimated in Jacob Cuyp's portrait of three children in a park (figure 49) by the tiny \textit{memento mori} ring that the youngest child wears.\(^\text{64}\) Despite these references to death, life, although fictive, is what is emphasized. As the "image" of their children laughing and playing was comforting to Vondel and Wellekens, so too were these "living" portraits of deceased children.

Grotius's quote not only refers to the comforting effects of a positive likeness of the deceased, it also suggests that visualizing an individual in death can cause grief. One of the recurring "images" in funerary poems about children is that of the child's corpse evoking tears in those who encounter it. The classic Dutch example of this is found in Vondel's "Kinder-Lyck" when the dead child Constantijn asks: "Mother, ..., why do you weep? Why do you cry, over my

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\(^{63}\) For a discussion of this painting see Chapter 2, pp. 78-79.

\(^{64}\) For a discussion of this painting see Chapter 2, pp. 78-79.
corpse?" The implications obviously refer to the power that the lifeless body of the child possesses to stimulate outward expressions of sorrow in individuals prone to it. As much of the literature of consolation demonstrates, by the seventeenth century such a response was an accepted part of the process of mourning. It is very likely that portraits of deceased children lying in state, particularly those like Bartholomeus van der Helst's Portrait of a Dead Child (figure 35) where the emphasis on the lifeless, bloodless body is unmistakable, would have also evoked expressions of sorrow in many of those who viewed them. A documented example of a deathbed portrait having this effect regards Anthony van Dyck's painting of the deceased Venetia Stanley, wife of the Englishman Sir Kenelm Digby. That some of Digby's friends felt that this portrait had the ability to evoke sorrow is evident in their warning against commissioning the portrait. Digby wrote that his friends were trying 'to direct my bootlesse thoughts from this sad object that can never be recovered.' As I have indicated, many of the authors of epistolary manuals accept and even encourage grieving as an important part of the mourning process. We can thus understand this attitude as one that was current in the seventeenth-century Netherlands, and not simply the imposition of modern sentiment.

Although I know of no paintings from the seventeenth century which show family members grieving over a loved one's body, there is a sixteenth-century example, the portrait of the Family of Ivo Fritema? (Groningen, Groninger Museum) which has been attributed to the Monogrammist of Valenciennes

65 "Moeder, ..., waarom schreit ghy?/ Waarom greit ghy, op mijn lijck?", Vondel, p. 880. For additional examples see Joost van den Vondel, Uitvaart van mijn dochterken, in Vondel, p. 881; W. van Heemskerk, Hik-Snikken, over 't kinderlik-lijk; J. de Decker, Op 't graf van mijns swagers soontjen Willem Verjannen, in Komrij, pp. 327 and 350-351; Adriaan Steyn, Op de doodt van mijn kun, in Dekker, pp. 216-217.

66 Quoted in Sumner, p. 61.
The painting shows a family situated in a landscape complete with classical ruins. Four children, three boys and one girl, stand between their two parents. In accordance with tradition, the boys are situated close to their father, while the girl is next to her mother. The family stands behind a long table on which is spread an elaborately decorated cloth. On this table lies the body of an infant that is wrapped in a white cloth and seemingly displayed to the viewer through the mother’s gesture. The dead child shares the same golden hair as his older siblings and father. Nevertheless, his pallid flesh and bloodless lips sharply contrast with the rosy glow of life that emanates from his living brothers and sister. Although the majority of deceased individuals are shown with their eyes completely closed, this child's half-closed eyes are not unusual (see figure 40 and note *). The overall mood is a somber one, and the mother's expression is especially telling. With wet, tear-filled eyes, she stares off into space. Her daughter gazes up at her woefully. A redness around the eyes of the boy standing closest to his father betrays his sorrow. They all seem to be suffering their loss. Even the father, whose action of pointing to the child with his left hand and to a large, open book with his right (which although the text is not legible is most certainly a Bible), in an effort to assert an attitude of Christian stoicism, cannot completely conceal his grief. The family in this painting displays real, although controlled sorrow over the loss of the child shown in the foreground.

De Jongh describes this painting as both portrait and memento mori. He argues that the dead infant provides the members of the family with a stimulus with which to contemplate their own mortality. Symbolic references to death

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67 Ca. 1530-1540, oil on canvas, 127.5x165cm. Ivo Fritema was a local man of power in Freisland who held a number of administrative posts. His wife, Tjaertcke van Donia was a rich heiress. He died in 1540 and she sometime after 1542. The couple had a total of ten children. De Jongh, Portretten van echt en trouw, p. 202.
and transience underscore this notion. Both the obelisk and the pyramid (situated directly above the dead child's head) have funerary associations and the classical ruins were a common vanitas symbol.\(^6\)

From a modern point of view, it seems unlikely that one would choose to contemplate one's own mortality using the corpse of a close family member, let alone a child or tiny baby, as a focal point. Nevertheless, Cornelis and Herman Saftleven's portrait of Godard van Reede van Nederhorst and his Family (1634, Oud-Zuilen, Zuylen Castle) (figure 55) is evidence that such was not unheard of in the seventeenth century Netherlands.\(^6\) With his left hand resting on a death's head Godard sits in contemplation of his dead wife, Emerentia Oem van Wijngaarden, who died in childbirth and is shown lying in state under a baldachin.\(^7\) Also telling is Petrarch's reference to the medieval concept of *memento mori* as demonstrated by monastic ritual:

[[In certain religious orders of the stricter kind, there has survived even down to our own time (which is so corrupt) the custom of allowing the members to watch the bodies of the dead being washed and put in shrouds for their burial, clearly so that the sad and lamentable spectacle placed before their eyes may be a memorable warning and may frighten the minds of the survivors from holding any hope in fleeting worldly things.\(^7\)

However, it is the expressed grief in the Fritema family portrait that forces me to question de Jongh's interpretation of this image as *memento mori*. The

\(^6\) De Jongh, *Portretten van echt en trouw*, pp. 202-204, cat. 43. The so-called Fritema family painting has been cited as an early example of an unusual type of portrait in which the deceased is shown lying in state surrounded by one or more family members. These paintings have also been discussed as having a *memento mori* theme. See Luiten et al., cat. 260, p. 588.

\(^6\) A closely related English example is the portrait of *Sir Thomas Aston at the Deathbed of his Wife* (1635-36, Manchester City Art Galleries) painted by John Souch. For this painting see Llewellyn, pp. 47-48 and fig. 33.

\(^7\) For further discussion of this curious painting see de Jongh, *Portretten van echt en trouw*, pp. 219-220, cat. 48.

\(^7\) From Petrarch, *Secretum* (ca. 1347-1353); quoted in translation by McClure, p. 24.
sorrowful mood of this portrait does not correspond well with the stoic austerity one generally finds in portraits with a *memento mori* theme. Moreover, the death's head, on which van Reede van Nederhorst rests his hand in the Saftleven painting, and which is an essential element in other *memento mori* portraits, is noticeably absent from the Fritema image. Ivo Fritema does not place his hand on a skull, but rather on a Bible. With his other hand he directs attention to his dead infant. Although the passage of scripture to which this father points is not discernible, I believe that this action is to be understood as a reference to the consolation that one finds through faith in God. I suspect, based on the presence and placement of the obelisk and pyramid that this family finds comfort in the hope of their child's eternal salvation. As de Jongh acknowledges, both the obelisk and the pyramid had funerary associations, as is evidenced in Raphael's hybridization of these two forms in his designs for the tombs in the Chigi Chapel, Rome.\(^2\) While de Jongh only views these objects as further references to the theme of death, I believe that they could also have evoked a more specific association. As a symbol of immortality, the pyramid tomb becomes tied to the theme of the Christian triumph over death.\(^3\) The placement of these monuments from antiquity directly above the dead child in the Fritema family portrait underscores the relationship between these objects. This family is thus consoled by their faith and their belief that for the child before them, death is but the threshold one must pass to achieve Christian immortality.

Additional support for my interpretation of this portrait is found in the relationship that is suggested between the dead child and images of the sleeping

\(^2\) For an explanation of the iconography of Chigi Chapel in its entirety see Shearman, pp. 129-155.
Christ child. One can certainly see the similarities between the Fritema child and the sleeping Christ child in the center panel of Dürer's ca. 1496 Dresden Altarpiece (Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen). In both images the child, placed as if on an altar, is presented to the viewer by its mother. As Frederick Hartt has explained, representations of the sleeping Christ child are generally understood as a prefiguration of Christ's death. The Christ child's eventual awakening is thus understood as a reference to His Resurrection. We can therefore infer the resurrection and consequential salvation of the dead child in the Fritema portrait by its visual relationship to the slumbering Christ child. Although I do not wish to deny the possibility that this portrait might stimulate some viewers to contemplate their own mortality, I do believe that this image can be understood on another level. Although sorrowful over their loss, the members of this family will find consolation through the powers of Christian faith.

Many deathbed portraits of deceased children had the ability both to evoke sorrow and to provide consolation for the bereaved. In essence, they could, like the consolatory literature of the period, help facilitate the mourning process. For example, in de Stomme's portrait of a dead child (figure 31), the parents' initial response to the sight of the pale, lifeless body of their child would likely be sorrowful. Nevertheless, there are features in the painting which could also provide comfort for the bereaved. Most obvious is the child's chrysom cloth, an indication that the infant had been baptized prior to its death, and was thus

75 For an illustration of this painting see Erwin Panofsky, The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), fig. 64.
among the blessed. The holy monogram IHS further denotes the child as belonging to Christ, and it is possible that the stars which decorate the garment are a reference to God and the heavens. One might also find a reference to salvation in the rosemary placed in the child's hand and garland. In other portraits (figures 30 and 33), this meaning is made even more overt by the use of this herb to form a cross on the child's chest.

The flowered crowns that so frequently adorn the heads of tiny children on their deathbeds could also provide solace for the bereaved. As has been indicated, garlands like those worn by babies such as the twins in Hondius's portrait (figure 35) were common symbols of innocence. By visually underscoring this most treasured of virtues, the child's blessed state is also emphasized. This simple object, while making reference to a specific funerary custom, could also, I believe, have a comforting effect. Its presence could reassure viewers that their child was among those who now dwelt in the Kingdom of Heaven. In fact, it is possible that this interpretation might explain why the use of garlands persisted in portraiture even after they had been banned by government decree. The presence of the burning torch in the Hondius portrait, with its allusion to resurrection, can further this association of the flower garland.

Like the burning torch, candles could also be a reassuring indication of salvation. In the portrait of a child of Ruurt van Juckema and Edwert van Cammingha (figure 36), the burning candles at the head of the dead child's cradle could be understood as representing the presence of Christ and consequently the child's blessed state. The symbolism of this feature combined with that of the

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77 See Chapter 2, pp. 55-56 for a complete explanation of this portrait.
78 See Chapter 2, p. 59.
79 See Chapter 2, pp. 59-61.
child's rosemary crown, would certainly have provided comfort to those seeking it. Both the garlands and the candles, while drawing attention to the ceremonial customs surrounding death (and thus to death itself), could function doubly as objects of consolation.

In other images, like that painted by Ovens (figure 38), solace can be found in the reference to the metaphor which compares death to sleep. In this image, there is not a denial of death, but it does seem to be subverted. Death is merely suggested by the presence of the winged hourglass and the plucked flower, both symbols of transience. However, sleep, rather than death, is intimated by the child's informal pose and dress. This arrangement offers hope of resurrection, or the waking from sleep to life eternal, an idea that is made more explicit by the presence of angels.80

A painting of a deceased child which seems to more obviously address both the need to grieve, and the need to be consoled as part of the mourning process, is Nicolaes Maes's portrait of A Dead Child Carried to Heaven by Two Angels (figure 40). The emphasis placed on death by the presentation of the lifeless corpse of the child is unavoidable and would most likely have evoked feelings of sorrow in viewers. However, the child again wears a garland which attests to its innocence and the certainty of heavenly salvation that is provided by the actions of the angels would have offered almost immediate comfort. This painting, like the majority of deathbed portraits of children, thus has a function that is similar to much of the literature of consolation, which allows for an initial period of grieving that is then followed by the proffering of consolations.

Knowing what we do about the therapeutic possibilities associated with writing funerary verse, we would expect a similar effect was to be had from the

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80 See Chapter 2, pp. 62-64.
act of making images of one's deceased child. In the process of recording a visual likeness of his/her deceased child the artist would be forced to dwell on the subject at hand. This process could stimulate the artist to undergo the sort of emotional catharsis experienced by some authors of funerary elegy. It is possible that Gerard Ter Borch experienced such an effect when recording in his personal sketchbook the touching drawing of his daughter Catharina lying in her coffin wearing a doodsliemd and holding what appears to be a sprig of rosemary (figure 56).\(^{81}\)

Although it is difficult to say with certainty where deathbed portraits of children were hung, there is some evidence that allows us to speculate on this question. According to a study by Ekkart, the highly intimate nature and relatively small scale of such portraits suggests that the majority were kept in a private location, within the confines of one's home.\(^{82}\) In the private sphere, grief was allowed a fuller range of expression than in the public sphere, where one was expected to adhere to the ideas of social decorum and conduct oneself

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81 Pen and brown ink, 105x162mm. The inscription below the coffin reads: 'mijn tweede Cattrinken gestorven den 27 Junij Anno 1633.'

82 Ekkart, "Nederlandse doodsportret," p. 72. The average size of painted deathbed portraits of children produced in the Netherlands is about 22x27". By the seventeenth century there was a noticeable migration of representations of the dead from the church into the private sphere. As Wim Cappers, "Van effigie tot fotoboek. Het doodsportret in de publieke en private sfeer," in Sliggers, pp. 16-21, explains, the Protestant, middle class character of the Dutch Republic led to a decline in the number of sculpted effigies in churches. Not only were they considered too expensive, but they were also associated with the grandeur of the nobility. Painting was cheaper, and the two-dimensional character and smaller measurements made placement in other public spaces and in private homes possible. Secular authorities used churches for monuments constructed in honor of the dead who had made significant contributions to the political and economic importance of the Republic. The virtues of these individuals were to serve as examples to those visiting the church. According to C.W. Fok, "Kunstbezit in Leiden in de 17de eeuw," in Het Rapenburg, Geschiedenis van een Leidse gracht, vol. 5a, eds. Theodoor H. Lunsingh Scheurleer et al (Leiden: Afdeling Geschiedenis van de Kunsthistorie, 1990), pp. 23-27, paintings were hung throughout the house in the seventeenth-century Netherlands. In wealthy homes there was usually a large room ("grote zaal") where the majority of images were displayed including those with the greatest value. In smaller, middle class homes, paintings were generally hung in the kitchen and the front room, the two most important rooms in the home.
An inventory compiled in 1650 of the paintings which hung in the small Amsterdam home of the poet/painter, Jan Sijwertsz Kolm (1589-1637), lists a small painting of '3 doode kintgens' (three dead children). This image was probably painted by Kolm and likely represents his three little girls who died at an early age. Although it is not specified exactly where this painting hung, we do know that it was not among the paintings displayed in the formal living room. Additional examples are found in portraits of deceased adults. Willem Lodewijk van Nassau, Stadholder of Friesland, is known to have kept in his bedchamber both a "living" portrait of his wife as well as one of her on her deathbed. The Englishman Sir Kenelm Digby was also reported to have kept with him at all times Van Dyck's portrait of his dead wife Venetia Stanley.

In other images of deceased children, the emphasis is placed primarily on consolation. This is most clearly expressed in paintings which depict the child as an angel in the heavens (figures 42-46). The "image" of a child offering comfort from above is, as I have indicated, a recurring theme in funerary elegy. Both literary and painted types convey with certainty, the fate of the deceased child's soul after death. The viewer/reader is left with no doubt that the child has been awarded eternal salvation. One might even find the painted representation of the child in heaven more effective than that created through words because of the power of images to suggest reality. The laurel crowns and palm branches which many of these angels hold serve to further the theme of the triumph over death.

83 Dickey, pp. 343 and 349-350.
85 Scholten, p. 336.
86 Llewellyn, p. 32.
I believe that one can also see in these family portraits an allusion to resurrection and the hope of being reunited with loved ones after death. These too, are comforts frequently proffered in the literature of consolation. In a letter to a son upon the death of his father one consoler writes:

Live honestlie as he did, and die in the same manner; you are in the right way to the place whither he is gone; and if he have anticipated you some few daies, those will seem but a Moment, when you are arrived at the end. Solace your self then in his absence, since the innocencie wherein you live, is an infallible Assurance to you, that you shall see him verie suddainlie.⁸⁷

While the letter offers but a future reunion of the living and the dead, Jan Mijtens's portrait of the van den Kerckhoven family (figure 42) makes this possible in the present. Through the magic of the painter's brush, which combines the earthly and the heavenly realms, both living and deceased members of the van den Kerckhoven family are brought together again. With this arrangement an impression is made which suggests that the surviving family members, like the children who died before them, will also have a place in heaven. In the van den Kerckhoven portrait, this notion can be supported by the allusions to this family's moral probity. The gesture of one of the angel children extending a laurel crown toward the father in a sort of token of heavenly approval further underscores this idea.⁸⁸

The certainty of a dead child's salvation is also very convincing conveyed by the subject of Christ blessing the little children. In the family portrait attributed to Gerard van Kuijl (figure 50), viewers, like the family itself,
can actually witness the child as he/she is presented directly into the accepting and loving arms of Christ. Unlike Werner van den Valckert's *portrait historié* of the Poppen family (figure 51) which takes place on earth, the child in van Kuijl's painting is already in heaven. This is evidenced by the presence of the angels, not to mention the somewhat surreal appearance of the scene itself, which plays out in the sky above the family's terrace. In the Poppen family portrait, it is not only the deceased children that are blessed, but also those who still remain in the world of the living. Both images, nevertheless evoke Christ's words regarding children, "...for of such is the Kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14).

That the theme of Christ and the Little Children was indeed regarded for its ability to provide consolation in seventeenth-century viewers is indicated in a painting by Jacob Appel which records the appearance of the dollhouse of Petronella Brandt-Oortman (1655/56-1716). One of the rooms represented is a "rouwkamer" ("mourning room") in which five small children pay their respects to a child who lies in state in the center of the room. On the fireplace hangs a painting by Jacobus Voorhout with the appropriate theme of Christ and the Little Children. This subject was obviously selected for its ability to provide solace to those who suffer over the loss of the young child that is depicted. It is thus not surprising that some families chose to have their child represented in this context.

The consoling potential of Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits is multifaceted. As in a number of other portraits of deceased children, the youngsters in these paintings are shown as if they were still living. That they are actually dead is only subtly indicated. The advantage of this formula, as we have

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89 *The Dollhouse of Petronella Oortman* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum), vellum on canvas, 87x69cm. (illustrated in Bedaux, "Funeraire kinderportretten," p. 105).

seen, is that it does not disturb the memory of the child alive. A considerably different type of consolation was offered the informed viewer who recognized the mythological guises that the children in these portraits had assumed and who was familiar with the Neoplatonic associations of these characters. Members of this audience could take comfort in the metaphorical identification of both Ganymede and Venus as the pure soul that is drawn to God. This concept is convincingly expressed visually by representing these children as they depart from earth, bound for the heavenly realm. The Ganymede portraits have also been connected to the story of Christ blessing the children, which as we have seen, would have also provided solace for those grieving the loss of these youngsters.

Like consolatory literature, paintings could also have a therapeutic function, and in response to the increased tolerance of expressions of grief, images were given a more active role in consolation. Not only could paintings of deceased children help to facilitate the process of mourning, but they could also provide comfort for the bereaved. By engaging with one of these pictures, the viewer, be it mother, father, brother, sister, or other close relative, could be comforted by visual consolations which parallel many of those offered in the literature of consolation. This is not to imply that all viewers had this sort of interactive experience when viewing the painting. The consolatory effect was more likely to occur amongst those viewers more closely related to the child (i.e. family, playmates). For others, they were simply visual remembrances of the child. With the passing of time the memorializing association would likely be more common for all viewers. By functioning as objects with which one could
work through one's grief and/or gain solace, images of deceased children would have been a useful alternative to other forms of remembrance that were no longer permitted in the Netherlands.
CHAPTER 4

GANYMEDE PORTRAITS AND THE DUTCH ELITE

Thus far I have discussed Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits as having both a memorializing and a consoling function. I believe, however, that the *portrait historié* (historiated portrait) component of these curious paintings raises additional questions as to how they might have functioned. Not only did the *portrait historié* format enable sitters to assume the virtues associated with the character in whose guise they were portrayed, but it also gave them and their families the opportunity to assert a particular degree of learning and thus identify themselves as part of the intellectual elite. It is also significant that the fanciful style and emphasis on symbolism which characterizes Maes's portraits fits well with a type of portrait that was popular among the wealthy members of the Dutch Republic during the second half of the century. The demand for such elegant and symbolically charged portraits at this particular point in time can be connected to a desire among those belonging to the wealthy upper class to portray themselves as aristocrats rather than as burghers. I believe that Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits reflect similar pretensions. In the following pages I will address this issue by looking at role portraiture and its associations while also investigating other ways of asserting status in the Dutch Republic.
The Dutch Elite

It is significant that the emergence of "Ganymede" and "Venus" portraits in the second half of the seventeenth century corresponds with a phenomenon that has been termed the "aristocratization" of the regent/patrician class. Merchants, professionals, and especially members of the governing class who had accumulated wealth during the first half of the century were eager to display their prosperity and to assert their status as transcending that of the middle class. For many members of the urban patriciate this involved the adoption of a lifestyle that mimicked that of the aristocracy, a phenomenon that reached its apogee during the second half of the century. This is not to imply that the regent class had literally turned into a nobility, but rather that they were consciously imitating aspects of a noble lifestyle in order to differentiate themselves from the bourgeoisie. Individuals with a penchant for social climbing assumed many of the manners, habits, and tastes of the nobility. Some purchased country estates, often from impoverished nobles, to which they could retreat to escape the pressures of urban life. Others acquired foreign titles of nobility or drew up elaborate, sometimes fictional family trees to assert their noble origins, or simply married into noble families. As an English visitor,
William Carr, remarked in 1688, 'The old severe and frugal way of living is now almost quite out of date in Holland... The Hollanders now build stately palaces, have their delightful gardens and houses of pleasure.'

The above tendencies were accompanied by a desire for sartorial elegance and consequently a high regard for international fashions particularly those flaunted by the French. A preference for French food, fashion, and other refinements had already been expressed at the court of Frederick Hendrick. The stadholder, who had been raised with an appreciation for French manners under the authority of his French Huguenot mother, Louise de Coligny, even preferred that French be the language spoken at court. For many young men from noble families outside of the court, French was considered an important part of a proper education and some, like the stadholder himself, even journeyed to France for first hand experience. Such francophilie among the Dutch nobility was commented on by the English ambassador, William Temple:


5 Quoted in Burke, p. XVI.
7 Huguenots were instrumental in the propagation of French culture among the Dutch nobles as many of these refugees took appointments as tutors or governesses in noble families. Peter Geyl, *The Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century. Part II 1648-1715* (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1961), pp. 195-199.
need; making sometimes but ill Copies, whereas they might be good Originals, by refining or Improving the Customs and Virtues proper to their own Countrey and Climate.

The eventual adoption of French practices among the patriciate was nevertheless met with some criticism. Pamphlets dating from 1672, the year of the French invasion of the Dutch Republic, complained about the increased haughtiness, displays of grandeur, and desire for luxury among this class. J. Antonides van der Goes wrote 'Drive out the enemy, but first drive out their customs.' Despite such criticisms, French influence was at its height in the last quarter of the century in the Netherlands.

For many members of the Dutch Republic, portraiture was a particularly successful and comparatively inexpensive means by which to display one's wealth and international tastes. Around 1640, the elegant courtly style of Anthony van Dyck began to have a noticeable impact on Dutch portraiture. Adriaen Hanneman and Jan Mijtens, two artists working in The Hague, specialized in this style of portraiture and helped to make it fashionable amongst the city's aristocratic patrons. A painting of an anonymous family by Caspar Netscher (figure 57), another proponent of this stylish mode, exemplifies many of

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10 'Verjaagt den vijant, maar verjaegt eerst zijne zeden'. J. Antonides van der Goes, Oorspronk van 's Lands ongevallen. Aen Joachim Oudaen (Amsterdam, 1673), quoted in Roorda, Partij en factie, p. 42.
11 After a ten year stay in England, Adriaen Hanneman returned to The Hague ca. 1637 bringing with him van Dyckian motifs. Slive, p. 253. Daniel Mijtens, having worked as a court painter in England, also brought van Dyckian influences with him upon returning to The Hague which must have certainly had an impact on his nephew Jan's stylistic development. Van Dyck's visits to The Hague in 1628 and 1632 must have also had an impact on local artists and patrons. Kettering, The Dutch Arcadia, p. 65. On painting at the Dutch court in The Hague see van der Ploeg and Vermeeren.
the features which characterize these fanciful portraits of the well-to-do. A couple and their six children pose in a garden decorated with classicizing statuary. A stately building, also adorned with sculpture, rises above the trees in the distance. The mother and her children are well dressed in colorful, shimmering satins and several of the youngsters wear feathered headpieces. Also finely clad is the father, whose most impressive feature is his long wig of the type favored by the French. Another feature of this painting and others like it, is the incorporation of symbolism. The statue of Justice situated in a niche directly behind the father suggests his occupation as a lawyer or magistrate. In the left foreground, a potted poppy plant has been interpreted as a symbol of fertility. One of the children also weaves a crown of flowers which, as has been previously discussed, was often associated with innocence and chastity.

Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits are representative of this elegant style, which the artist adopted around 1660 when he began to devote himself exclusively to portraiture. The children in these paintings are clothed in fine materials and the females wear pearl necklaces and earrings. The influence of French fashion is also present in the ostentatious ostrich-feather headpieces that

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13 According to de Jongh, the skating Cupid that three of the girls adorn with a garland is a personification of Winter. This statue appears in other Dutch paintings and was also represented in sculptural form (as part of a series of the Four Seasons) up into the eighteenth century. De Jongh indicates that the "florification" of the statue in Netscher's painting was probably intended as a playful joke. The other sculpture of a boy and his dog is not explained. De Jongh, *Portretten van echt en trots*, p. 254 and de Jongh, *Faces of the Golden Age*, p. 51.
15 On the symbolism of the flower garland see Chapter 2, pp. 52-57.
16 Arnold Houbraken, *De Groote Schouburgh der Nederlantsche Konstschilders-en Schilderessen*, vol. II (Amsterdam, 1718; reprint, Maastricht, Leiter-Nypels, 1943), pp. 275-276 suggested this change as a result of a trip to Antwerp that Maes allegedly made where he viewed paintings by Rubens and van Dyck and actually met Jacob Jordaens. There is, however, no evidence to substantiate this journey. Nevertheless, as William Robinson, "The Early Works of Nicolaes Maes, 1653-1661" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1996), pp. 186-187, points out, Maes could have easily been exposed to the Flemish style by travelling only as far as The Hague.
many of the children wear in these paintings. The costly plumes of the exotic ostrich were a mark of distinction and thus were preferred as accents on many of the costumes worn by participants in the masquerades held at the court of Louis XIV.  

The landscape settings which characterize Maes's Ganymede portraits can also be shown to have had associations with a prosperous lifestyle. While his single Ganymede portraits provide a view into an extensive landscape, his group portraits have elegant, park-like settings. A similar taste for outdoor or veranda settings is certainly evident in the numerous "society portraits" that were painted in the 1660's not only by Maes, but also by such artists as Bartholomeus van der Helst and Caspar Netscher. Not only do the landscape settings in these and other such portraits reflect a desire to emulate the elegant and courtly van Dyckian tradition, but they also allowed the sitter to convey or project the image of land ownership and country living. The much desired lifestyle of the landed gentry was one that allowed an escape from the pressures of urban life and the chance to bask in the tranquillity associated with the countryside. Here, one could take pleasure in such leisure activities as hunting, reading, and cultivating flowers. Because this mode of life was intimately tied to the land, a sense of harmony between man and nature was strongly emphasized.

18 The exception is Young Child as Ganymede, Sale, New York, Sotheby, Nov. 17, 1985, lot nr. 28.
19 See Krempel, passim, for examples.
20 The literary counterparts to those images which celebrate the pleasures of rural life were the country house poems, or hofdichten. A form of Georgic poetry, hofdichten were composed by such authors as Jacob Cats (Sorgtioilet, 1656) and Constantijn Huygens (Hofwyck, 1653), and many are autobiographical. Usually didactic, these poems favor the simplicity and repose of country life over the stress of urban life. Kettering, The Dutch Arcadia, pp. 26-27.
In some portraits the suggestion of country living is made even more explicit by showing families posing before manor houses that either belonged to them or were fantasy creations of the artist. An example of the former is Cornelis Holsteyn's portrait of *Reinier Pauw and His Family* (figure 58). Reinier and his wife Adriana stroll hand-in-hand through the tree-filled grounds of their country estate. Adriana points to the couple's two sons who have just returned from a successful hunt. In the background is the family manor, Westwijck, which looks out over a formal garden complete with antique sculpture. The introduction of classical statuary, urns, and architectural forms was becoming more and more prevalent in Dutch art as tastes became increasingly refined and cosmopolitan. Such references to antiquity not only reflect more decorative tastes, but could also indicate an interest in collecting and classical studies, pursuits that were generally associated with the educated elite. Although considerably abbreviated, the classical column just visible among the trees in the group portrait painted by a follower of Maes (figure 13) could evoke similar associations.

**Portrait Historié**

Maes's paintings of children in the guises of Ganymede and Venus belong to a subgenre of portraiture called *portrait historié*, in which sitters dressed in the

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22 Such accessories were frequent in paintings by Dutch Italianate landscape painters and became increasingly popular under the influence of such academic artists as Gérard de Lairesse and Adriaen van der Werff. The decorative gamepieces of Jan Weenix and Melchior d'Hondecoeter are also characterized by classical motifs. See Scott Sullivan, *The Dutch Campece* (Montclair, NJ: Abner Schram Ltd., 1984), pp. 61-67 and figs. 124-131, 134, 135.
guises of characters from the Bible, mythology, history, or literature. Such role-playing allowed the sitter to transcend his/her everyday situation while also asserting certain virtues or noble ideals associated with the original protagonist. This practice had long been connected with the privileged classes, and dates back to antiquity when emperors and other noble citizens masqueraded as the gods and demi-gods of Olympus. A revived interest in such role-playing had been expressed in the Renaissance in the form of court masques. In seventeenth-century France its connections with the Précieux, a group of aristocrats that focused on cultivating a social life that stressed the enjoyment of culture furthered the association of the portrait historié with an elite patronage. With Louis XIV at the forefront in his self-appointed role as the Sun King, the portrait historié enjoyed a tremendous amount of popularity at the French court.

In her study of role portraiture in the seventeenth-century Netherlands, Rose Wishnevsky drew similar conclusions about the patronage of this type of portraiture. She found that the portrait historié had been particularly favored by the aristocrats associated with the court circles of the stadholder Frederick Hendrick, and the King and Queen of Bohemia, who were living in exile in The Hague. A number of non-noble upper-class families from the urban centers of the Dutch Republic were also drawn to this type of portraiture. Given the

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25 Wishnevsky, p. 127 and catalogue. Wishnevsky's catalogue also includes portraits of non-Dutch sitters (painted by Dutch artists) that comprise members of the English royal family and a number of European princesses, counts, and countesses. In contrast to the modest courts maintained by his predecessors, William the Silent and Prince Maurits, Frederick Hendrick and his wife Amalia van Solms wished to establish a court that would rival that of the French. Their plan included the creation of a large art collection which would reflect their high regard for subjects of an ideal and classical nature. Kettering, _The Dutch Arcadia_, pp. 12-13. On the stadholder's art collection see van der Ploeg and Vermeeren.
courtly and aristocratic associations of this portrait type, it is easy to understand its appeal among the prosperous members of the patrician class.\textsuperscript{26} For those interested in social climbing, taking on the guise of a historical or mythological figure was a tangible display of economic and social success. Role-playing, one could say, was a kind of virtual equalizer.\textsuperscript{27} Moreover, it allowed individuals to display their intellect through their knowledge of such characters and the noble and virtuous ideas that they embodied.

Like the Ganymede children in Maes's group portraits (figures 9-13), their surviving siblings are also dressed in fantasy costumes. The young ladies wear fashionable dresses of shimmering satins with jeweled highlights and flowing scarves draped casually over their shoulders and around their waists. Boys, masquerading as hunters, wear fanciful slashed doublets that are also accented with scarves. Other boys are dressed in much simpler toga-like garments that drape over one shoulder while leaving the other bare. As stated in chapter one,\textsuperscript{28} a number of art historians have been prompted by these costumes and the presence of the Ganymede motif to identify some of these children with specific characters from classical myth, relying on the presence of certain attributes to support their claims. The boys who have quivers strapped across their backs and who aim their bows and arrows at the eagles which threaten their brothers (figures 9 and 10) have been associated with Adonis, one of the most notable

\textsuperscript{26} Wishnevsky, p. 135, asserts that aristocratic pretensions were the motivation behind the commissioning of the majority of portrait historiés in the seventeenth-century Netherlands. Kettering, \textit{The Dutch Arcadia}, pp. 9, 16-18 and passim, draws similar conclusions regarding the appeal of pastoral portraiture particularly among the Amsterdam elite.

\textsuperscript{27} In a costume book by Crispijn de Passe II, \textit{Les Vrais Pourtraits de quelques unes des plus grands Dames de la Chrestienté desguisées en Bergères} (1640), a song, "Chanson à la mode des Bergères de la cour et de la ville", conveys this idea with specific regard to the donning of pastoral costumes. The last lines of the song indicate that in pastoral guise even a country girl could become a lady and lead a noble life. The poem is quoted in its entirety (in English and Dutch) in Kettering, \textit{The Dutch Arcadia}, pp. 154-155, no. 80.

\textsuperscript{28} See Chapter 1, pp. 10-12.
hunters from ancient mythology. Likewise, the girl who has these same accessories (figure 11) has been called "Diana", goddess of the hunt. Finally, the girls, near whom a large pile or basket of fruit is situated, are identified as "Pomona", protectress of gardens and orchards. I, however, find these identifications to be problematic, particularly as none of these characters are related to the Ganymede myth.

Diana was the most popular guise in which privileged Dutch women chose to be painted. Early patrons of the "Diana" portrait were members of the aristocracy who were associated with the House of Orange-Nassau. An example is Willem van Honthorst's 1643 painting of Louise Henriette of Orange as Diana (Rijksmuseum Paleis Het Loo) (figure 59). Like Maes's "Diana" (figure 11), this  

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29 Sumowski, p. 2036, nrs. 1442, 1443; Wilson, cat. nr. 43. In contrast, Kempter identifies the boy with the bow in figure 10 as "Apollo" whose many attributes include a bow, arrow, and quiver.
30 Kempter, p. 121; Wilson, cat. nr. 43; Wishnevsky, p. 84, cat. nr. 88; Russell, p. 9. Regarding the Berlin portrait (figure 10), Kempter (catalogue nr. 122) identifies the girl standing by the fountain with her arm around a deer as "Diana". Although Diana is often accompanied by deer, the girl has no additional attributes which could confirm this identification. Kempter further identifies the boy with the bow as "Apollo" which also cannot be substantiated as her argument seems to rest solely on her identification of the girl as "Diana", the sun god's twin sister.

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31 Sumowski, nr. 1443, p. 2036; Wilson, cat. nr. 43; In the case of the Rojtman Foundation painting (figure 11), Wishnevsky, p. 84, identifies this child as Ceres, goddess of agriculture, whose attribute is a cornucopia which is overflowing with both fruits and vegetables. Ceres, however, is particularly associated with corn and thus wears a crown made of ears of corn; Hall, pp. 62-63. As this important element is missing it is not likely that this association be drawn.
32 See Wishnevsky, pp. 75-78 and catalogue nrs. 44-79. Diana had already proven to be a popular subject for allegorical portraits in sixteenth-century France. During the reign of Henry II, a Diana cult developed around the king's mistress Diane de Poitiers and the Chateau d'Anet, which was designed for her, was filled with representations of the goddess. A painting by the School of Fontainebleau, Diana at the Hunt (Paris, Louvre) is probably a portrait of Diane de Poitiers. de Jongh, Portretten van echt en trouw, cat. 5, pp. 77-78 and fig. 5b. Elizabeth I of England was also portrayed in this role. Roy Strong, The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), pp. 47-48. The title character from P.C. Hooft's Granida was also linked to the goddess Diana. This is evident not only in the text but also in painted scenes and portrait historiés based on the text. Kettering, The Dutch Arcadia, pp. 102-106.
33 Oil on canvas, 205x141cm. A 1627 painting by Gerard van Honthorst, Diana and Her Nymphs (formerly Berlin, Schloss Grunewald) is possibly a portrait of Amalia van Solms, Princess of Orange. See de Jongh, Portretten van echt en trouw, p. 77, fig. 5a for illustration. Honthorst also painted a portrait of the children of the King and Queen of Bohemia (Rectory of the Dean of Winchester Cathedral) in which their daughter princess Elisabeth is shown in the role of Diana. Her three brothers are also dressed in fantasy hunting costumes. Illustration RKD.
daughter of Frederick Hendrick wears an elegant dress that is adorned with pearls, a string of which she also wears around her neck. The long sash and strap sandals that each girl wears add a theatrical flair to their appearances. Their costumes are accessorized with bows and arrow-filled quivers, and the hunting dogs at their sides complete the illusion. The explanation for the popularity of Diana as a subject for role portraiture is twofold. First, Diana was the embodiment of chastity, an ideal virtue for a proper young lady. Second, Diana was associated with the hunt, an activity that was considered a privilege of the nobility (see below). For the informed viewer, then, a lady who had herself portrayed as Diana assumed her moral virtues as well as the status associated with the hunt.

Unfortunately, one cannot as easily support the identification of the other children in Maes's group portraits as "Adonis" and "Pomona". When these guises are assumed in Dutch portraiture of the period, they tend to be paired with another character who is recognized as part of their particular mythology. For example, Adonis was usually shown with Venus, and Pomona with Vertumnus, both favorite guises for married couples because of their amorous themes. It is also significant that not all of the figures in these group portraits have attributes which can be connected to a specific mythological character, so scholars have neglected to offer any explanation for their presence. One should not forget that the Ganymede motif was used in Maes's paintings for a very specific purpose. It identifies the child who wears this guise as deceased and bound for his heavenly reward. The surviving children in the group portraits do not require this sort of distinction and it is therefore not necessary that they be identified with a particular mythological character. By showing these children in classicizing

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34 See Wishnevsky catalogue nrs. 127-128 for portraits as Venus and Adonis; and nrs. 129-131 for Vertumnus and Pomona.
dress, Maes simply maintains the continuity of style prescribed by his use of the Ganymede motif. While I cannot entirely dismiss the possibility that some contemporary viewers might have made the particular character associations described above, I do think that by confining ourselves to these identifications we limit our understanding of these peculiar paintings. I believe that a more productive approach would be to resist the desire to assign specific identifications to these problematic cases and look rather to the various other associations that might have been evoked by the motifs that Maes has used in his group portraits.

Ganymede Group Portraits

An important element in Maes's Ganymede group portraits is the use of symbolism, a feature which characterizes many of the highly refined portraits of the Dutch elite that were produced during the second half of the century. Through the incorporation of symbols in these portraits, sitters were able to identify themselves with the learned elite, or those who could understand the references implied by the inclusion of specific objects. In two of Maes's portraits, for example, fountains are included. In the Dordrecht portrait (figure 9), a young girl sits with her left arm resting on a rustic stone basin into which water trickles from a wooden spout. In another portrait (figure 10) a very mature looking young lady stands before a fountain and holds a shell beneath its flowing stream. Although traditionally associated with love gardens, fountains and basins

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35 Fountains, often decorated with sculpted Cupids, were an important component in the allegorical love garden. Such settings were considered highly appropriate for the depiction of married couples as in Frans Hals's portrait of Isaac Massa and Beatrix van der Laen. E. de Jongh and P. Vinken, "Hals als Voortzetter van een emblematische Traditie," Oud Holland 76 (1961), pp. 117-96. See also de Jongh, Portretten van echt en trouw, cat. nr. 33, pp. 171-174. Kettering, The Dutch Arcadia, p. 106, notes the unusual occurrence of a sculpted fountain in some artists' conceptions of the scene from Hooff's pastoral play when princess Granida requests a drink of water from the shepherd Daifilo (figs. 147, 149, 153). She asserts that the purpose of the fountain
appear in all sorts of symbol-laden images. These objects were an especially popular motif in portraits of well-to-do patrons both young and old that date from the second half of the century.\textsuperscript{36} Elegantly dressed women sitting on garden terraces dip their hands into a fountain's stream or pool in paintings by artists such as Caspar Netscher, and Adriaen Hanneman (figure 60). Maes's clientele were especially fond of this motif for the representation of their young daughters, an example of which is found in his ca. 1672 portrait of the \textit{Van den Brandelener Family} (Geneva, Musee d'Art et d'Histoire) (figure 61).\textsuperscript{37} Although the motif is generally associated with females, a few examples show a boy next to a fountain.\textsuperscript{38} It is interesting to note that compared to the decorative fountains depicted in Netscher's portraits, for example, those in Maes's \textit{portraits historiés} have a much more rustic appearance that is in keeping with the historicizing theme. As emblems of purity, fountains are certainly an appropriate feature in these sophisticated portraits of young women and children. The significance of the fountain is in its function as a source of water, long recognized for both its literal and metaphorical cleansing properties.\textsuperscript{39} Cesare Ripa, in his \textit{Iconologia}, explains that the stream of water symbolizes the purity of the human soul and describes the personification of Purity as "a maiden ... standing as if about to


\textsuperscript{37} A. Staring, "Vier familiegroepen van Nicolaas Maes," \textit{Oud Holland} 80 (1965), pp. 172-176. For additional examples see Kremple, figs. 93, 97, 102, 157, 198, 200, 245, 265 and 281.

\textsuperscript{38} See for example Nicolaes Maes, \textit{Young Boy With Bird, Dog, and Fountain}, ca. 1675-80, private collection (ills. in Sumowski, 1419) and \textit{Portrait of the Wassenaer van Vosswieten Children in Pastoral Dress}, anonymous, 1677, Voorschoten, Duivenvoorde Foundation (in Kettering, \textit{Dutch Pastoral}, fig. 85).

\textsuperscript{39} The metaphorical cleansing power of water is Biblical in origin. See for example Jeremiah 4:14; Acts 22:16; James 4:8. The fountain is also an attribute of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception; Hall, p. 128.
wash both hands in a basin, beside which a sheep or lamb is standing."\textsuperscript{40} Maes seems to follow this formula rather closely in another portrait of a woman and her daughter in which a lamb peeks out from behind a fountain (figure 62). Ripa further writes that "The Innocence or Purity of the human soul is as clear as water flowing from a living stream."\textsuperscript{41} The action of dipping one's hand into the water was thus an explicit declaration of chastity making the fountain, by association, a fitting attribute for proper young ladies from distinguished families. In portraits of boys and girls alike, it is an appropriate symbol for underscoring the innocence of childhood.

The baskets or piles of fruit that some art historians have identified as attributes of Pomona can also be explained in a more satisfying manner and one that is much more in keeping with pictorial tradition. Not only is fruit the most favored accessory in Dutch portraits of children, but it is also frequently included in family portraits. As Jan Baptist Bedaux has convincingly argued, the presence of fruit of any kind or in any quantity in such portraits would have been understood as a reference to a generalized concept of fertility. A basis for this idea is found in Psalms 1 and 128 which liken the virtuous husband to a fruit bearing tree and his wife to a fruitful vine.\textsuperscript{42} Because the idea that begetting children also implied raising them properly was current in Dutch society, this concept of fertility, Bedaux stresses, would have been understood in terms of both quantity and quality. Just as nature has to be cultivated in order to produce fruit, so too do children need to be properly reared. If not, nature runs wild, and as Ripa indicates in his personification of "Education" produces not fruit, but

\textsuperscript{40} "Een maeghdeken ... staende als of het beyde handen. uyt een becken. wilde wasschen, waer by een Schaep of Lammeken sal staen." Ripa, p. 367.

\textsuperscript{41} "De Onnoselheydt of Suyverheydt in de Menschlijcke ziele, is als het klaere waeter, dat uyt een levendige stroom af vliet...". Ripa, p. 367.

\textsuperscript{42} Bedaux, "Fruit and fertility," pp. 150-168.
thorns and thistles. Fruit, then, could identify the subject as the product of a prosperous marriage while also asserting the children's virtuous upbringing.

A variety of animals also figure prominently in Maes's group portraits. Lambs, like the one nestled between two of the girls in figure 13 were a popular motif in pastoral portraits of children like that painted by Wybrand de Geest (see figure 43). Youngsters pet, feed, or embrace these tame and gentle creatures which were the natural companions to shepherds and shepherdesses. Lambs are also the traditional symbol of innocence making them an appropriate attribute for any proper youngster, even those who are not dressed in pastoral costume. Maes's patrons must have found the lamb a particularly appealing motif for it is frequently included in his individual portraits of little girls (figure 63). In the Ganymede group portrait (figure 13), the garland of flowers that the oldest child seems about to place around the lamb's neck can also have pastoral associations, as weaving flowered crowns was a common activity for shepherdesses in pastoral poems and plays. But, as discussed earlier, this motif was also symbolically charged, and could be an indication of the virtue of chastity. Given the garland's relationship to the lamb as well as its use in the context of

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44 See Kettering, figs. 64, 67-69, 71, 80 and 85 for examples.
45 See note 69. Ripa, p. 367, further indicates that "Christ calls them (i.e. Innocence and Purity) his people and his flock using the term Sheep to show that Innocence and Christian Purity should be kept unsullied and inviolate." ("Christus noemtse zijn volck en kudde, gebruyckende den naam van Schaepen, om hier door te kennen te geven, dat de Onnoselheyt en Christlijcke Suyverheyt, moet onbetast en ongeschent bewaert worden"). See also Van Mander, Van de Witbeeldinghen der Figueren, fol. 129r. who defines the lamb as symbolizing "onnooseleyt" (innocence) and "sachtmoedicheyt" (gentleness). A lamb is also one of the attributes of 'eenvoudicheyf' (simplicity) in the engraving "Maeghtde-Wapen" ("Maiden's Coat of Arms") in Jacob Cats's Huwelick (Marriage), first published in 1625.
46 See for additional examples Sumowski figs. 1420-1421 and Krempel, figs. 157, 243, 282, 297, and 352.
47 Kettering, The Dutch Arcadia, pp. 93-94.
48 For the flowered garland as a symbol of chastity see Chapter 2, pp. 52-54.
children, it is likely that it also symbolizes innocence in this portrait. One should also not rule out the possibility that the garland simply functions to draw attention to the symbolic significance of the lamb itself.

In two of the group portraits, the lamb has been replaced by a small deer (figures 9 and 10). This was again a favored motif among Maes' patrons during the latter part of his career. Fancifully costumed girls and the occasional boy are portrayed in the company of these woodland creatures.\(^4\) Like the lambs, these "wild" animals are embraced and hand-fed as if they were pets. It is possible that these animals are present as references to the hunt.\(^5\) However, the lack of aggression toward them as well as the fact that this motif is usually associated with girls who possess none of the attributes that would identify them as huntresses, makes this theory problematic. Rather, I believe the deer's presence is meant to underscore the country setting as well as symbolize that desired balance between man and nature that was so firmly associated with country living. As is expressed in many of the Dutch country house poems, or hofdichten,\(^6\) one could experience both physical and spiritual enjoyment by participating in tasks such as tilling the soil and pruning trees, or by simply observing the wonders of creation that are embodied in the various plants, flowers, and animals. Through such harmonious bonding with nature, one could achieve a state of moral bliss.\(^7\)

Dogs appear in four of Maes's group and one of his single Ganymede portraits. This is not an unusual feature as dogs are mentioned in Virgil's account of the Ganymede myth (\textit{Aeneid} 5:250-257). A number of emblem book

\(^4\) For examples see Krempel, figs. 198, 200, 202, 245 and 264.

\(^5\) This is de Jongh's explanation regarding the deer that a boy dressed in hunting attire embraces in Maes' portrait of \textit{A Man and His Son}, 1676, The Hague, Hoogsteder & Hoogsteder (in de Jongh, \textit{Faces of the Golden Age}, cat. no. 26A, pp. 40-41).

\(^6\) On the Dutch country house poem see above note 20.

\(^7\) Sullivan, p. 42.
illustrations of the myth include a dog, as does Michelangelo's drawing (see figures 17-21). The small brown and white spaniels and the greyhound that appear in Maes's group portraits could nevertheless evoke further associations. As will be discussed below, both types of dog were used in the hunt. Obviously, this connection is more likely to have been drawn from those images in which one or more of the children is outfitted with accouterments of the hunt. Dogs were also commonly understood as symbols of fidelity, a characteristic desirable in any youngster. The dogs in Maes's portraits could also be present in their role as guardians. This idea is readily conveyed in Goltzius's 1597 engraving of Frederick de Vries, the son of the artist's friend, Dirck de Vries. Goltzius's portrait, made while the youngster was in his care, shows the boy in a landscape holding a dove and accompanied by a large dog. As Petrus Scriverius's inscription explains, the boy represents innocence, a meaning that is underscored by the dove, while the dog represents loyalty. It has further been suggested that this dog is a reference to Goltzius's role as the child's guardian. Support for this notion is found in Van Mander's assertion that "The dog signifies the upright teacher, who must bark fearlessly and constantly, and keep watch over the souls

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53 Dogs are identified as symbols of fidelity in numerous texts. For example, in Van de Witbeeldinghen der figueren, folio 128v, Carel van Mander writes: "With the dog is meant fidelity: because the dog is very faithful/ and also never forgets a benevolent act." ("Met den hondt wort beteeyckent de getrouwicheyt; want den hondt seer ghetrouwe is/ oock geen weldaet vergetende."). See also Ripa, pp. 162-163.

54 Ger Luiten in, Dawn of the Golden Age, cat nr. 51, pp. 396-397.

55 'You may not understand what is contained in this panel: Here is the meaning for you in a few words. Simplicity seeks and loves faithfulness. The faithful dog and the innocent boy, that Goltzius faithfully rendered with a Phidian hand in copper. P. Scriverius.' Quoted in translation by Ger Luiten in Dawn of the Golden Age, p. 396. The author also reproduces the original Latin text.
of men and punish their sins.\textsuperscript{56} The energetic little spaniels that bark at their master's heels in Maes's portraits seem almost a literal translation of van Mander's explanation.

By applying the above findings to Maes's Dordrecht group portrait, we can easily see how the symbols employed work together to emphasize the virtuous nature of the children present in this and the other group portraits. The juxtaposition of the young girl with the rustic fountain emphasizes the child's innocence and purity, the same virtues that are stressed in her brother through the use of the Ganymede motif. Her action of feeding the deer that has come to drink from the fountain's basin can underscore these notions of moral probity for those familiar with the philosophies associated with the harmonious relationships between humans and the natural world. The brown and white spaniel that bounds at the young hunter's feet can allude to the child's loyalty, a quality that is demonstrated in his gallant, but futile, attempt to prevent his brother's departure. Finally, the fruit, believed by some to be the attribute with which to identify the girl as "Pomona," designates all of the children present as the products of not only a fruitful marriage, but also of a proper upbringing. By employing the use of symbolism in this and other portraits patrons could assert specific notions about those represented while also linking themselves with the educated elite.

Another important component of several of Maes's group portraits that requires further exploration is the presence of a hunting motif. As stated earlier, hunting as a leisure activity was a prerogative of the nobility and had for centuries been associated with this class. European aristocrats from the middle

ages on decorated their palaces and hunting lodges with tapestries and wall paintings of courtly images of hunting and hawking. Despite the insignificant number of aristocratic families in the Dutch Republic, as in the rest of Europe, hunting was still officially reserved for the nobility.\(^{57}\) According to Hugo Grotius, the right to hunt was one of the only remaining privileges exclusive to the nobility (in addition to membership in the Ridderschap).\(^{58}\) In Paullus Merula's treatise on hunting, a law issued in 1595 lists knights, nobles, and high officers of the state as those entitled to hunt.\(^{59}\) These restrictions were expressed again in an edict from 1674 regarding the '[...] hunting, capture and shooting of all kinds of game, inside the Forestry of Holland and West Friesland.'\(^{60}\) With their newly acquired wealth, many distinguished burghers sought the right to legally pursue this gentleman's pastime. At a meeting of the States Assembly in 1660, members of the town councils of several Dutch cities suggested that as members of the 'sovereignty' they ought to possess hunting rights.\(^{61}\) However, it was not until the eighteenth century that the regent class was officially permitted to enjoy the hunt.\(^{62}\)

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57 See van Nierop, passim, on the state of the nobility in the seventeenth-century Netherlands. Hunting was an important recreation at the Dutch court and game preserves and hunting lodges such as Honseelaardijk (begun in 1621) and Het Loo (1685) were built to serve the court. It was also the stadholder's duty to oversee the administration of gaming laws. Sullivan, pp. 35-36.

58 Van Nierop, p. 37.


61 Van Nierop, p. 37.

62 There is some discrepancy regarding the actual date in which this right was achieved by the Dutch patriciate. Van Nierop, p. 38, indicates that this occurred in 1716, while Sullivan, p. 34 maintains that it was not until much later in the century with the formation of the Batavian Republic in 1795. Sullivan also notes the difficulty in determining to what extent wealthy burghers or patricians may have usurped hunting privileges during the seventeenth century.
The social prestige accorded hunting as a leisure activity resulted in a growing interest in paintings with hunting themes during the second half of the century.\(^63\) Portraits of well-dressed hunters accompanied by their dogs or holding falcons as well as scenes of fashionable ladies and gentlemen on horseback departing for or engaged in the hunt became prevalent.\(^64\) In particular, there is a noticeable increase in the number of family portraits with this theme. For the cost of a painting anyone could be portrayed as a hunter, even if he had never actually participated in the sport. In such portraits, family members can appear in contemporary hunting attire or in theatrical costumes like those in Maes's portraits. Examples of the latter are usually found in a type of *portrait historié* that was particularly popular in the Netherlands, the pastoral.\(^65\) Pastoral portraiture was favored because it was a tangible expression of the idyllic and leisurely lifestyle that the patron was privileged enough to lead. In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Dutch pastoral plays, hunting was the sport most favored by members of the bucolic community, so it is not surprising to find that hunting motifs comprise part of the repertoire of pastoral imagery.\(^66\) It has been suggested that in pastoral family portraits many men preferred to dress as hunters rather than shepherds because this was viewed as a

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\(^63\) Sullivan, p. 42; Chong, pp. 128, 141. For a discussion of the Dutch gamepiece as a mark of the aristocratic ambitions of the wealthy burgher see Sullivan pp. 38-45 and Chapters 5 and 6, passim.


\(^65\) On the Dutch pastoral portrait see Kettering, *Dutch Arcadia*, passim and Spicer, pp. 30-37 and pp. 316-318.

\(^66\) References to the hunt are found in theatrical productions of Guarini's *II Pastor Fido*, Tasso's *Aminta*, Coster's *Itiys*, and Cats's *Aspasia*. Kettering, *The Dutch Arcadia*, p. 66, no. 21. An abundance of hunting motifs are also present in Dutch painted representations of *II Pastor Fido* (Kettering, *The Dutch Arcadia*, figs. 157, 174, 178-183) and Hooft's *Granida* (Kettering, *The Dutch Arcadia*, figs. 37, 56, 145, 149, 151, 154, 155).
much more commanding role. A number of portraits of known families are discussed as portrayals of those desirous of elevating their social status by a pictorial association with hunting. One example is a portrait by Matthias Withoos of the Kaysers, one of the most prominent bourgeois families in Hoorn (Hoorn, Westfries Museum) (figure 64). The Kaysers are shown in a clearing of a wooded landscape with trophies of the hunt, including rabbits, partridges, and a variety of other birds, lying in a heap in the foreground. Other elements of hunting are also present. On the far left, Cornelis Kayser, in contemporary dress, wears a game bag at his side and holds a rifle. A spaniel jumps at his feet, an action that frequently occurs in Maes's portraits of children, including the group portraits with the Ganymede motif. Three greyhounds are also present. Each breed of dog had a specific function during the hunt. When used together, as in this painting, the spaniel's job was to flush the game from its lair, while the greyhound, with its speed and keen eyesight, would pursue and ultimately capture the game. Cornelis' young son, Nanning, stands apart from the rest of the group as he is dressed all' antica and holds a lance in his right hand. His appearance is similar to that of the young hunters in Maes' portraits. Behind the child are two members of the hunting party who are not members of the Kayser family.

Another painting that has been discussed as reflecting a family's penchant for social climbing is Jan van Bijlert's portrait of Johan Strick van Linschoten and

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68 1676, oil on panel, 157x187cm. de Jongh, Portretten van echt en trouw, cat. 63, pp. 261-264.
69 For examples see K Crempel, figs. 158-160, 199,201, 203, and 244.
70 De Jongh, Faces of the Golden Age, p. 26. Even ownership of the noble greyhound was restricted to those possessing hunting privileges; Sullivan, p. 34.
71 Kettering, The Dutch Arcadia, p. 66, indicates that the spear was a common attribute of pastoral hunters in 16th-century theatrical productions and in early book illustrations from Il Pastor Fido. See figs. 188-189.
Christina Taets van Amerongen and their Children (Utrecht, Castle Linschoten, G. Ribbius Peletier Stichting) (figure 65). The family is again placed in a landscape where attributes of the hunt abound. Strick draws attention to his two young sons, Johan and Adriaan, who are armed with a bow and a lance and dressed (like their father) in fantasy hunting costumes. A slain roe-buck lies before the boys' mother, with an arrow protruding from its side as an indication of the youngsters' hunting prowess. Greyhounds and a hunting party, seen in the distance, complete the scene. The now familiar angel in the sky has been identified as the couple's deceased child, Jan Jacob. This portrait was part of a gallery of ancestral portraits that was installed in the newly constructed manor house at Linschoten. The house had the appearance of a medieval castle although it was newly completed ca. 1647. Strick's father, Johan Strick (1583-1648), an Utrecht patrician and dean of the Utrecht chapter of St. Marie, had purchased this country estate from the chapter in 1633. The elder Strick continued to elevate himself socially by purchasing the title of knight in France in 1634 and by acquiring a coat-of-arms. His son maintained this pursuit of a noble status by marrying Anna Christina Taets van Amerongen, a member of an old noble family and by purchasing in 1649 three additional country estates. Despite these actions, the Strick van Linschoten family was not recognized as being of equal status with members of the nobility. By having himself and his two living sons depicted as hunters, he is able to refer to his status as a landed gentleman while asserting the continuation of the family line. Because Strick did

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72 1653, oil on canvas, 150.5x189cm. Huys-Janssen, pp. 160-161 & 164.
74 Huys-Janssen, pp. 160-161; Ben Olde Meierink and Angélique Bakker, "The Utrecht Elite as Patrons and Collectors," in Spicer, Masters of Light, pp. 82-84.
75 See van Nierop, pp. 22-29, on the complexities of defining "nobility" in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Netherlands.
own property, he received certain manorial rights which allowed him to hunt, but only on his own estate, so his adoption of this motif is not entirely inappropriate. What should be stressed however, is that many members of the Dutch Republic, not the least the aristocracy, viewed the pursuit of this leisurely pastime by non-nobles as displaying social aspirations.

A motif that can be related to the hunt is that of a boy in a landscape with a small bird perched on his finger. Portraits of youngsters in this guise enjoyed a certain popularity among Maes's patrons. The portrait of a youth that forms a pendant to one of Maes's Ganymede portraits (figure 66) is shown in this manner. The fanciful antique costume with a feathered beret, the excited spaniel at his side, and the landscape setting are all typical of Maes's treatment of the subject of young boys holding birds. In some examples, a bow and arrows are present, underscoring the child's role as a hunter (figure 67). The pursuit of finches and other small birds was a popular recreation for hunters of all ages, but killing the bird was not always the primary intent. In the seventeenth century the finch was a favorite toy for children. The birds that appear in portraits of children are usually identified as finches and most of them are attached to strings, the opposite end of which is held by the child. In some instances, the string was fastened to a T-shaped perch to which bells were sometimes attached.

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76 See Sumowski, figs. 1418-1419 and Krempel, plates 12, 18, and figs. 158-160, 199, 203 and 244, for examples.
77 Sullivan, p. 38, indicates that there were no restrictions on the hunting of small birds such as finches, sparrows and thrushes so anyone could engage in this activity.
78 A bird attached to a string is one of the many children's games depicted in two prints by Adriaen van de Venne which accompany Jacob Cats's poem Kinderspel. Cats used Kinderspel as a preface for both his Houwelijck and for some editions of Silenus Alcibiadis. Schama, p. 499 and figs. 249 and 256.
79 See for example Cornelis de Vos, Family Portrait, 1631, Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunst (in Eddy de Jongh, Zinne-en minnebeelden in de schilderkunst van de zeventiende eeuw [Amsterdam: Nederlandse Stichting Openbaar Kunstbezit, 1967], p. 45). For other Flemish examples of the bird motif in portraits of children see Peter Paul Rubens, ca. 1626 Portrait of Albert
In some of the literature on paintings which incorporate a captive bird, this motif has been discussed as having a metaphorical significance. Maes's portraits in particular have been interpreted as allusions to captive love. De Jongh identifies the boys in Maes's paintings as representing "Cupid" based on the presence in some of these portraits of a bow, arrows, and quiver. Images of Cupid holding a bird attached to a string appear in emblem books where they sometimes symbolize the oppressive constraints of love. In particular, de Jongh cites an emblem by Jan Harmensz. Krul which shows a nude, winged Cupid with a quiver strapped at his side and a bow in his left hand. In his right hand he holds a string that is fastened to a bird that tries with no success to fly away. In the background a well-dressed man turns his back on a woman. The emblem's motto is 'Mijn verblijven, is maer lijden' ('My joy, is only suffering') and the accompanying verse likens the bird's inability to fly away with the loss of freedom associated with captive love. Identification of Maes's portraits of boys holding birds with this meaning is highly problematic. An essential element to Cupid's identity is his wings, which are lacking in Maes's images. Moreover, the presence of the couple in the emblem is essential to its amorous meaning. Maes's portraits make no allusion whatsoever to notions of love.

and Nicolaas Rubens (Vaduz, Liechtensteinsche Gemaldegalerie) and his ca. 1614 Portrait of a Child Playing with a Bird (Berlin-Dahlem, Staatliche Museen); See also the Dutch artist, Caesar van Everdingen's Portrait of a Boy, Aged Two, Holding an Apple and a Bird, Liverpool, 1664, Walker Art Gallery (in Bedaux, "Discipline for Innocence", fig. 70). In these examples the motif's association with hunting is not emphasized. Though richly dressed, the children in these paintings do not wear the fantasy hunting costumes worn in the paintings by Maes. Moreover, these children appear indoors or on verandas rather than in the rustic wooded landscape settings that are typical of Maes's portraits.

80 De Jongh, Zinne-en minnebeelden, pp. 42-47.
81 Jan Hermansz. Krul, Minne-spiegel ter Deugdiden, Amsterdam, 1639.
82 Sumowski does illustrate one painting by Maes that can more readily be accepted as a portrait in the guise of Cupid as the boy does have the requisite wings as well as the bow and quiver. See Sumowski, III, p. 2029, nr. 1400.
83 De Jongh, Zinne-en minnebeelden, p. 47, also discusses a religious meaning for the motif of the bird attached to a string that is just as unlikely an explanation for Maes's portraits. It regards an
An interpretation that does seem plausible in relation to Maes's portraits views the captive bird as a metaphor for proper upbringing. Jan Baptist Bedaux sees this motif as one of a number of accessories included in portraits of children that denote the importance of proper education. He contends that the "toy" birds, which could be trained to perch on a stick or finger, metaphorically illustrate Plutarch's theory of education put forth in his *De liberis educandis*, which significantly influenced pedagogical literature after the fifteenth century. This theory is based on Aristotle's view that natural aptitude (*natura*) must always be improved by rules that can be taught (*ars*) and which must constantly be practiced (*exercitatio*). Only a combination of the three could guarantee a successful education. Like the bridle on a horse, the string is used to restrain the bird from attempts to fly freely and teach it rather to perch on a crossbar or a child's finger. Because the captive bird motif is a particularly popular attribute in portraits of young boys from well-to-do families, it is certainly fitting that such parents would be eager to convey their child's educability. This interpretation accords well with the use of symbolism to denote virtues of innocence and chastity in other examples of portraits of children. It should be noted however, that the spaniels that bark and jump frantically beside their masters in Maes's paintings are the antithesis of the well-trained dog (that sits up and begs obediently), which Bedaux also interprets as a symbol of proper upbringing.

emblem by Adriaan Poiriers, a Flemish Jesuit priest, in *Afbeeldinghe van d'eersle eeuwe der societeyt lest ....*, Antwerpen, 1640, which shows a putto holding a bird attached to a T-shaped perch with bells on it. This perch symbolizes the cross of Christ's sacrifice, while the bird represents one's love of God. The emblem thus conveys the didactic message that the proper road in life is that which leads to God. As Maes's paintings lack the crucial element of the cross-shaped perch, this interpretation is not applicable. For another interpretation of the captive bird motif that is also an unlikely explanation for Maes's portrait see Martin Warnke, *Flämische Malerei des 17. Jahrhunderts in der Gemäldegalerie Berlin* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1967), p. 9.


I believe that Maes's use of the captive bird motif in his pendant portrait can best be explained by its appearance in other role portraits which allude in a general sense to the mythical hunt. Cornelis van Poelenburch's 1628 group portrait of the Children of the King and Queen of Bohemia in a Landscape (Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts) (figure 68) can shed some light on how Maes's use of this motif might have been understood. The boys in this image are clad in antique style-dress, while the girls wear the contemporary fashions popular at court. Trophies of the hunt are piled in the right foreground and one child holds a falcon, a reference to a form of hunting that had been the particular domain of royalty since the middle ages. Seated beside this boy is a younger child who holds a tiny bird that is seemingly much more suited to his size. This arrangement seems to suggest that in order to practice falconry, one must first master, through imitation, a considerably smaller bird. A sixteenth-century illustrated German broad sheet that comprises twenty woodcuts representing personifications of the ten ages of men and women confirms this meaning. Illustration 'X. Jar ein Kind', shows a well-dressed child who holds a small bird in his left hand. In illustration 'XX. Jar ein Jüngling', the figure of a young man holding a hunting falcon is represented. The child's action can thus be viewed as an imitation of that of the older boy. I contend that Maes's portrait of a young boy holding a bird (figure 66) can be similarly interpreted. The dapper child, self-confident in his pose, as a small bird perches on his finger and his spaniel jumps at his side, represents the preliminary stage to the more noble practice of

86 Oil on panel, 38x65.3cm. A. Pigler, Katalog der Galerie Alter Meister, Museum der Bildenden Künste, vol. 1 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1967), p. 552. A replica of this painting, also dated 1628, was sent to Charles I of England, who was the brother of the Queen of Bohemia, Elizabeth Stuart; Spicer, cat 60, p. 316.

falconry. This image, then, can be understood as presaging the child's future activities. Such an interpretation corresponds well with the pretensions of the *nouveau riches* and thus makes a fine pendant to the Ganymede portrait.

Having considered the various features of Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits in detail, I believe that it is clear that these portraits convey the social aspirations of the families that commissioned them. In the single Ganymede and Venus portraits, this notion is most readily conveyed by the *portrait historié* format with its courtly associations, the influence of French fashions, and the elegant international style in which they were executed. In the group portraits these features are combined with other characteristics which further support such pretensions. A reconsideration of the Dordrecht group portrait (figure 9) serves well to illustrate how the picture as a whole works to convey this idea. The country setting with its implications of land ownership and the pursuit of leisurely pastimes reinforces the suggestion of wealth that is evident in the richness of the children's attire and the fanciful style of the portrait as a whole. A young hunter, accompanied by his dog, reminds the viewer that this is a noble pursuit, while the boy's target, a large eagle that is making off with his younger brother, draws attention to the unusual circumstances surrounding this portrait. Allusions to the virtues of country living and its emphasis on bonding with nature are further underscored by the presence of the deer that the young girl lovingly feeds by hand. Just as the Ganymede motif refers to the purity and innocence of the deceased child, the artist's incorporation of additional objects suggests the virtuous nature of the other children that are present. The pile of fruit in the left foreground, while identifying these children as the products of a "fruitful" marriage, also alludes to their proper upbringing, an idea that is further stressed by the presence of the fountain. True or not, there can be no mistake
about what sort of image the patron of this painting wanted to project about
himself and his family. In order for this and Maes's other Ganymede and Venus
portraits to have been effective in displaying the social pretensions of the families
who commissioned them, they would have needed to have been hung in
prominent, public locations within the home where they would have had the
greatest impact on visitors. Given their relatively large scale, particularly with
regard to the group portraits, I think that we can safely conclude that this was
indeed the case.

Death and Social Climbing

My thesis that Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits were conceived of
as a means of shaping the identity of non-noble individuals with aristocratic
pretensions is further supported by the fact that other forms of funerary art were
also being used to make claims of ennoblement. Although the erection of tombs
and mortuary chapels was traditionally associated with the nobility, some
members of the burgher elite also adopted these practices. Rombout Verhulst's
1663 tomb for Johan Polyander van Kerckhoven in the Pieterskerk in Leiden is an
excellent illustration. Polyander van Kerckhoven is another example of a
nouveau riche with social pretensions. A descendant of a respectable regent
family from Ghent, Polyander van Kerckhoven, was a favorite of the stadtholder
Frederick Hendrick, and had advanced to the posts of chief forester of Holland
and West Freisland. He acquired an English title of nobility and purchased the
Dutch manor of Heenvliet from the noble van Cruyningen family which was

88 The de Graeff family, members of the Amsterdam elite, had a mortuary chapel in the Oude
Kerk for which Cornelis de Graeff commissioned a tomb with sculptures by Artus Quellin.
Burke, p. 116. In Gouda, the regent Hieronymus van Beverningh purchased the old mortuary
chapel of the Bloys van Treslong family in the Church of St. John. Among the changes made to
the chapel in 1668 was the addition of a banderole with a Latin inscription indicating the
thirteenth-century origin of the name van Beverningh. Scholten, p. 348, no. 84.
experiencing financial difficulties. He even married a member of the high English nobility, the widowed Lady Stanhope.\textsuperscript{89} It has been proposed that Polyander van Kerckhoven's tomb was a final attempt by his widow to assert for posterity his semi-noble status. As Frits Scholten has argued, the erection of tombs like this one by prosperous members of the Dutch upper class was regarded as a threat to the prestige and exclusiveness of the aristocracy. The Dutch nobility's renewed interest in commissioning elaborate tombs in the third quarter of the century can be seen as a means of reclaiming this practice as a privilege of the aristocracy.\textsuperscript{90}

An alternate form of funerary art used to provide historical justification for an individual's claim to social eminence was the painted epitaph. Originally, these images, which usually consisted of full-length portraits of the deceased kneeling in prayer before the Virgin and Christ Child were liturgical in function. After the Reformation, however, families in the Northern Netherlands used these same epitaphs primarily as evidence of pedigree.\textsuperscript{91} In the province of Utrecht, where such disputes were often political, epitaphs were sometimes forged in order to add luster to one's ancestry. Such epitaphs were done in an archaizing style, and could include coats of arms and fictional ancestor portraits with identifying inscriptions linking them to noble families. A similar practice

\textsuperscript{89} Van Nierop, p. 15 and Scholten, pp. 343 and 348.
\textsuperscript{90} Scholten, pp. 347-349. The commissioning of tombs by non-nobles was, like similar pretensions, highly criticized. Scholten, p. 348, no. 85 cites as example an emblem from Roemer Visscher's \textit{Sinnepoppen} (Amsterdam, 1614), p. 47 (1st schock, nr. XLVII). "Pracht voor't gheslacht." ("Pomp for the clan") is illustrated with a tomb across from which hangs an elaborate coat of arms. An inscription on the wall above the tomb reads: "Here lies Mister Valiant, the boldest brigand in the land, a freebooter on the highways and byways, his delight was to mow other men's grass." ("Hier onder leyt mijn Heer vailliant/ De koenste Ruyter van dit landt: Een Buyter vry op s'heeren pas/Hy maeyde garen eens anders gras.")
\textsuperscript{91} Bok, 209-226. He states, p. 223, that those owners of epitaphs who were disturbed by the "papist images" that appeared on these images (usually on the central panel), had no qualms about removing the offending portion and gluing together the doors which contained their ancestral portraits.
developed in some of the less aristocratic cities such as Amsterdam. Privileged families eager to assert their "natural" right to govern the cities sought ways to link their families with past members of the urban patriciate. So fervent were these attempts, that in many cases genealogical documents, epitaphs, and even portraits were forged.\(^2\) Of such social climbers, one critic commented that they had taken their family trees "out of the air or wrought them from Amadis of Gaul."\(^3\)

On a related note, funerals could also be a means by which to enhance or assert a family's social status. For some, funerals were not only an occasion to celebrate the dead, they were also an excuse to display family wealth. In an effort to connect themselves with the aristocracy some adopted customs specifically associated with this group, like the use of noble titles in reference to the deceased and the display of family coats of arms at funerals and in processions. These practices were often criticized as is evidenced by the complaints of the Utrecht humanist, Aemout van Buchell, who in 1640 wrote in reference to the blatant display of the coat of arms during the funeral of an Amsterdam merchant, Pieter Belten, 'Thus our merchants make a mockery of noble prerogatives.'\(^4\) Other fashionable funerary luxuries included extensive corteges, parades of carriages, night funerals, and the hiring of multiple "aansprekers," or messengers who passed the news of a death throughout the city.\(^5\)

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\(^2\) Bok, p. 226, cites as example the Amsterdam councilor and genealogist, Gerrit Pietersz. Schaep who commissioned two large panels representing his ancestors on both his mother's and father's side. These paintings comprise both copies of real ancestors' portraits and creations of the artist's imagination. In the mid 1640's, Schaep planned to have an episode from his invented family history painted as a triptych that would look 'as if it had taken place in about 1362'. The irony of Schaep's actions is that, as a genealogist, he was highly critical of others who engaged in such falsities.

\(^3\) "...uut de lucht geraept, off uut Amadijs van Gaule gesmeed". Johan Elias, p. LXXXII.

\(^4\) Quoted in Bok, p. 218.

\(^5\) So lucrative was the "aanspreker's" business that in 1696 the Amsterdam Town Council instituted a law which placed their profession under the control of the city government (made civil servants). This decision resulted in a rebellion that lasted from January 30-February 2, 1696.
So excessive were some Dutch funerals that on more than one occasion local
governments were forced to impose taxes on many funerary practices.\textsuperscript{96}

\textbf{De Vicq and Smissaert Families}

As I discussed in chapter one, the surnames of three of the youngsters
dressed as Ganymede are known. It is significant that of these three, both the de
Vicq and the Smissaert families can be placed among society's elite. This is not
surprising when one considers that during the 1670's and 1680's, Maes's clientele
consisted primarily of prosperous burghers.\textsuperscript{97} Francois de Vicq and his wife
Aletta Pancras, the parents of young George de Vicq (figure 3), were both
members of distinguished Amsterdam regent families. According to Elias,
Francois, the son of a doctor, held several administrative appointments, among
them church warden of the Oude Kerk (1668), Dike-reeve (1671) and Director of
the Dutch West Indies Company (1674). He also held important government
positions in Amsterdam including Alderman (1673), Councillor (1679-1707),
Sheriff (1694-1696; 1701-1705) and burgomaster (1697, 1700, 1706).\textsuperscript{98} His wife
Aletta, was the daughter of Nicolaes Pancras, who was both an Amsterdam
burgomaster and director of the East India Company.\textsuperscript{99}

\textsuperscript{96} In some Dutch cities, the carriages used in funeral processions were subject to taxation. In
Dordrecht at the end of the century such taxes reached the sum of one hundred and twenty-five
florins for a cortege of six carriages bearing the deceased's coat of arms. Moreover, funerals
celebrated at night by torch light were forbidden in 1661, but reinstated the following year with a
special tax that could reach as high as one hundred and fifty florins, Zumthor, p. 160. Because
\textit{aansprekers} were dispersing printed burial announcements in such great quantities, regulations
were placed on both their size and number. For example, in Amsterdam in 1667 it was decreed
that one guilder be payed to the chaplain of the town orphanage (with a minimum of three
guilders) for every 100 burial announcements produced, Kok, \textit{Laatste eer}, pp. 193-194.

\textsuperscript{97} Robinson, "Early Works of Maes," pp. 13-14, indicates that Maes had more commissions from
his rich clientele than he was able to fulfill by his death in 1693.

\textsuperscript{98} Johan Elias, p. 580, nr. 219 and p. 588, nr. 226.

\textsuperscript{99} Johan Elias, nr. 161. I know of two sets of portraits of Francois de Vicq and Aletta Pancras,
both of which show the couple in fashionable dress. The first pair was painted by Gerard ter
The Smissaert family belonged to the Utrecht elite. Joan Carel Smissaert, father to the boys in Maes's lost pendant portraits, was the son of an Amsterdam merchant. In 1668 Joan Carel was appointed Canon of the Dom church in Utrecht, a position reserved exclusively for members of important families. Between 1674 and 1700, he was Sheriff of Rhenen, the smallest of the five cities which comprise the province of Utrecht. In 1700, he was elected to the States of Utrecht and in 1704 became a member in the Hof van Utrecht, the highest court of justice in the provinces. Smissaert's wife, Constantia Coymans, was the daughter of Balthasar Coymans and Maria Trip, both members of important Amsterdam families. Joan Carel the younger, shown as a child with a captive bird in the pendant to Maes's Ganymede portrait, further contributed to his family's social status upon reaching adulthood. He engaged in a military career, achieving the rank of Lieutenant-General of the Infantry (1742) and became Lord of Sandenburgh and Coninxvrij upon his marriage to Eleonaora Sophia Borre van Amerongen in 1721.

Having carefully considered the various features of Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits, it is my contention that these paintings represent an attempt by members of the ambitious upper class to evolve a new type of memorial image which had the added distinction of being able to link them both socially and

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Borch in 1670, when the couple was in their early twenties (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum). See S. J. Gudlaugsson, Geraerd Ter Borch (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1959), pp. 216-217 and figs. 240-241. Another pair was painted by an anonymous artist some twenty-five years later (England, private collection). In the background of the portrait of Aletta Pancras is a black servant for whom she purchased freedom and became his guardian. See Matthijs, pp. 182, 191, and figs. 36-37.

100 Johan Elias, p. 375, nr. 122 and J.J.J. van Meerwijk, personal correspondence, 9/7/98. HdG, p. 544, nrs. 267-268 lists pendant portraits of Joan Carel Smissaert and Constantia Coymans that were painted by Maes, but are now lost. Both are described as half-lengths, with the male figure in "Roman dress and wearing a large wig." The female figure wears a "rich gown, cut low, with a pearl necklace."

intellectually with the aristocracy. During the second half of the seventeenth century, due to the economic success that many families experienced in the Northern Netherlands, there was a considerable surge in the patrician class, many of whose members displayed aristocratic pretensions in an effort to define their place in the social hierarchy. Art was a relatively inexpensive tool to help them achieve this end. For the cost of a painting one could suggest all manner of distinctions and Maes's "Ganymede" and "Venus" portraits embody a number of the ways in which individuals sought to assert these aspirations. These paintings are characterized by a refined and elegant style and the sumptuous costumes show the influence of the French court. Both the portrait historié format and the hunting motifs present in some of these paintings also have courtly associations. The landscape setting utilized in the majority of these portraits is suggestive of a country estate, an idea that is underscored in some examples by the presence of tame deer. The use of symbolism in portraiture was also a popular mode of expression among the intellectual elite. In Maes's group portraits objects such as the lamb, the dogs, the fruit, and the fountain indicate that the children pictured are virtuous and well bred. This emphasis on the purity of the surviving children corresponds well with the Neoplatonic meaning of both the Ganymede and Venus motifs which identify the deceased child as one whose unadulterated soul is desired by God. Finally, two of the boys shown dressed as Ganymede belonged to families known to have been members of important Dutch families.

It should nevertheless be noted that similar suggestions of social climbing are already present in many of the family portraits in which deceased children are shown as angels hovering in the clouds. Evidence of such pretensions can be found in the portrait of the van den Kerckhoven family (figure 42) for example, with its natural setting and high regard for international tastes. The
incorporation of the black servant who leads a horse in the painting's background is also considered a symbol of this family's prestige and wealth.\textsuperscript{102} In addition, the van den Kerckhoven's desire to assert their family lineage is expressed most clearly by the incorporation of both paternal and maternal coats of arms on the top of the painting's elaborately decorated gilt frame.\textsuperscript{103}

A 1665 portrait of an anonymous family by Anthonie Palamedesz. (figure 69) also includes many of the features associated with social pretensions.\textsuperscript{104} The eight subjects represented were probably the children of an important family from Delft, the city in which the artist was working at the time.\textsuperscript{105} These figures are situated in a landscape before a large classicizing manor house. The three boys are dressed in the contemporary attire of hunters, as they proudly display their catch. Before them are two large greyhounds. Each of these features, as I have explained, is associated with the aristocracy. Symbolism has also been used to assert the presence of certain desirable virtues. The young lady on the far left holds her hands beneath a stream of water that flows from an elaborately carved fountain, as a symbol of purity. Meanwhile, her two sisters stroke a lamb, a common symbol of innocence, which reclines beside them wearing a circlet of flowers around its neck. Directly above them, five tiny angels representing previously deceased children peek out from an opening in the clouds.

Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits can be distinguished from the above portraits in their adoption of the \textit{portrait historié} format, which adds further prestige by contributing an intellectual component to portraiture.

Nevertheless, we see that this too had already been adopted by sitters such as the

\textsuperscript{102} De Jongh, \textit{Portretten van echt en trouw}, p. 231. For additional discussion of black servants in Dutch portraiture see Chong, pp. 135-137.

\textsuperscript{103} For further discussion of this painting see Chapter 2, pp. 66-70.

\textsuperscript{104} Anthonie Palamedesz., \textit{Family Group}, oil on canvas, 171x263 cm, Rotterdam, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen.

\textsuperscript{105} Ekkart, \textit{Nederlandse portretten}, p. 161.
Strick van Linschotens (figure 65) and the Harinxma thoe Slootens (figure 43), who are portrayed in pastoral costumes. It is interesting to note, when comparing these portraits with that by Palamedesz., that the angels which fly about in latter create a rather disjunctive effect. These figures do not belong, an effect that was perhaps intended as a means of drawing attention to an otherworldly presence. However, the incorporation of winged children in pastoral portraits like those of the Strick van Linschotens and the Harinxma thoe Slootens are considerably more natural. As the harbingers of profane love, putti are often present in paintings of scenes from the great pastoral plays of the time. Even Maes's group portrait which combines the Ganymede motif with that of the angel (figure 10) is believable since winged children are also not an unusual feature in the world of myth. This particular amalgamation suggests that at the time that the portrait was conceived, two children from that family had passed away.

What further distinguishes Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits from other historiated portraits which include deceased children is their association with Neoplatonic philosophies. The Ganymede and Venus motifs play a primary role in asserting these elevated references, whereas the angel/children which appear in other portraits are rather incidental. The Neoplatonic content of Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits, by implying an educated viewer, reinforces the pretensions conveyed by the style. It is this same elitist content that works to the advantage of the patrons whose awareness of these lofty ideals ostensibly raises them to a higher intellectual plane. Not only do Maes's portraits introduce a new form of memorial portrait, they also add another dimension to our current understanding of the means by which the Dutch upper class shaped their identity.
CONCLUSION

This study has sought to explain the function of an unusual group of Dutch paintings: Nicolaes Maes's portraits of children in the guise of Ganymede. Through this endeavor, I believe that I have shed considerable light on our understanding of these images and the different roles that portraits could play in the lives of those for whom they were created. Although most frequently regarded as memorial images, my investigation has demonstrated that Maes's portraits would have generated multiple responses in those viewing them and thus were not limited to this single function.

While the amorous overtones surrounding Ganymede's abduction might seem to render it an unlikely metaphor for the representation of a dead child, its spiritual associations render it quite suitable. First expressed by Xenophon in antiquity, the idea that Ganymede's abduction was prompted by spiritual rather than carnal desires was adopted in subsequent centuries and given Christian and Neoplatonic explanations. The idea that Ganymede, in scenes of his abduction, was a metaphor for the pure and innocent soul that is drawn to God was broadly disseminated through Renaissance emblem books like Alciati's Emblemata, so that it was current in the seventeenth century when it was used by Nicolaes Maes in his paintings. Moreover, Maes's portraits draw from the pictorial tradition which most readily lends itself to spiritual interpretations, that which shows the
child on a peaceful journey made of his own freewill. Such is the basis for most scholars' belief that Maes's portraits represent children who suffered premature deaths.

There is however, additional evidence which supports this thesis. Of significance is the discovery of a female counterpart that is similar in style and in its emphasis on a child embarking on a journey that will take it from the earthly and into the heavenly realm. Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits also have a shared basis in Neoplatonic philosophy which identifies the protagonists with the virtuous soul whose greatest goal is comprehension of the divine. Documentary evidence also serves to strengthen this argument by providing a number of plausible dead candidates among the children of the families known to have commissioned Ganymede portraits from Maes.

Further support for the idea that the children in Maes's portraits of this kind are represented posthumously is found by looking at these paintings in relation to other Dutch images of deceased children. One finds, for example, that it was not unusual to show dead children as if they were still living with only subtle references to their true state. Moreover, it becomes apparent that the concept of representing children in flight, whether they be on the back of a giant bird of prey, in a chariot drawn by doves, carried bodily by angels, or as angels themselves, was a conventional means in seventeenth-century Dutch portraiture by which to indicate that a child was no longer among the living. By using this formula the artist could stress the idea of separation from the terrestrial world that is replaced by a new eternal existence in the heavenly kingdom.

Yet another feature that Maes's Ganymede portraits have in common with other representations of deceased children is the desire to underscore the child's innocence. Not only is this concept inherent in the Neoplatonic interpretation of
Ganymede's abduction, but it is also a fundamental component in Berchorius and Mignault's association of the myth with Christ's words "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

As we have seen, the story of Christ blessing the little children was also a subject used to represent dead children. In some paintings, the dead child's innocence is indicated by the incorporation of certain symbols, most commonly a garland made of flowers and/or other greenery. Because a pure soul makes one desirable to God, such allusions to the deceased child's virtuous state would be comforting to grieving parents who could be assured that their youngsters lived eternally in the kingdom of heaven.

The ability to comfort, as I have stated, is a common feature in the majority of Dutch paintings of deceased children. While this feature is quite evident in some images, it is not so obvious in others. This, as I have argued, is due to insufficient attention being paid to the role that grief plays in the mourning process. Through our investigation of grief and grieving we have seen in the seventeenth century the prevalence of a more tolerant attitude toward expressions of grief than was typical in the previous century. As the literature of consolation reveals, the emotions stimulated by grief and loss were increasingly accepted as inevitable, natural reactions to misfortune, provided they were expressed in moderation. In a number of seventeenth-century consolatory texts a sympathetic view toward grief was taken and much attention was devoted to the offering of condolences.

For the grief-stricken, both the reading and writing of consolatory literature was a common means by which to overcome the loss of a loved one. As I have argued, paintings of deceased children could have a similar participatory function which allowed them to help facilitate the mourning
process. Certain parallels exist between the literature of consolation and images of deceased children. In some texts the mourner is instructed to visualize a positive image of the deceased in life. We find a similar reference to this idea in images of dead children where the child is shown as still living or as a portrait-within-a-portrait. Deathbed portraits, on the other hand, would likely have evoked an initial response of sorrow in some viewers. This idea corresponds with the recurring "image" in funerary poems about children in which the child's corpse evokes tears in those who encounter it. As much of the literature of consolation demonstrates, a moderate period of grieving was an accepted part of the process of mourning. Many deathbed portraits address both the need to grieve and to be consoled. This was achieved through the incorporation of such symbolically charged objects as crowns of flowers and/or rosemary, or burning candles, which could have evoked positive thoughts regarding the dead child's salvation.

In some images, emphasis is placed primarily on consolation. This is most clearly demonstrated by those portraits which show the dead child as an angel in the heavens, which is also a recurring theme in funerary elegy. Other images, like Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits and those which draw on the theme of Christ and the little children are equally comforting as they also stress the idea of eternal life.

While Maes's Ganymede and Venus portraits had the ability to both memorialize the deceased and offer comfort to grieving parents, they were not limited to these particular roles. Certain signals within the pictures themselves alert the viewer that there is something more to Maes's images than just these functions. Maes's portraits, particularly those in which the Ganymede child is accompanied by his siblings, have a very staged and theatrical quality to them.
that is most obviously conveyed through the portrait historié format. Especially dramatic are the actions by which "Ganymede's" brothers and sisters try in vain to prevent their brother from leaving the earthly realm. The motif of a youngster holding fast to Ganymede's leg or trailing garment is particularly poignant. An element of the tragic can also be read in the dark clouds that fill the skies in many of these paintings. These characteristics are nevertheless countered by the consoling effect that is generated by the incorporation of the Ganymede motif and its promise of salvation. Yet, there is an undeniable formality to these portraits that conveys connotations of prestige and refinement to those viewing them. The children in these images are distinguished in their carriage and wear elegant, internationally inspired fashions. In some examples, the park-like settings allude to a life of leisure that was commonly associated with the landed gentry. The hunting motifs that sometimes occur as well as the portrait historié format as a whole can also be linked to the nobility.

Symbolism is another important component in Maes's group paintings. Objects such as fountains, fruit, and a variety of animals convey certain desired virtues that were appropriate for members of a well-bred family. By using this mode of representation, patrons could establish themselves as belonging to an elite group of intellectuals who were knowledgeable of the complicated language of symbols.

As I have argued, aristocratic pretensions underlie these curious paintings which were executed after the artist's move from Dordrecht to Amsterdam in 1673. By associating themselves with particular styles, actions, virtues, ideas, and even locations, these sitters convincingly project certain conceits about themselves. In essence, Maes's portraits reflect a desire to develop a specific type of memorial image with multiple advantages. Not only could they provide
comfort to grieving loved ones, but they could also encourage other viewers to
draw conclusions about the patron's distinguished status in society. The
Neoplatonic content, by implying an intellectual viewer, thus reinforces the
pretensions conveyed by the elegant style that characterizes these fascinating
portraits.
APPENDIX

Ganymede Portraits by Nicolaes Maes

SINGLE PORTRAITS

A1.
Figure 1.
*Young Boy as Ganymede*, Amsterdam, K. & V. Waterman, oil on canvas, 66x56 cm.

**Provenance.** Sale, Amsterdam (Mak van Waay), October 12, 1971, lot 335; Art dealer K. & V. Waterman, Amsterdam.
**Literature.** Knipping, I, 1974, p. 45, note 17; Russell 1977, p. 9; Sumowski, III, 1983, p. 2033, nr. 1424 with color illustration (late 1670's); Blankert et al. 1983, nr. 53, pp. 198-199 with color illustration (late 1670's); Bedaux 1995, p. 27.

A2.
Figure 2.
*Young Boy as Ganymede*, location unknown, oil on panel, 43.5x31.5 cm, signed and dated lower left: NMaes/1677.

**Provenance.** London, Brod Gallery, 1957; Art dealer J. Böhler, Munich.
**Literature.** Wishnevsky 1967, pp. 84, 194 nr. 84, fig. 17; F.W. Robinson 1975, p. 47 note 2; Kempter 1980, pp. 83, 193 nr. 117; Blankert et al. 1983, p. 198; Sumowski, III, 1983, p. 2033, nr. 1423 with illustration; Buijsen 1995, fig. 1; Krempel 2000, p. 100, Nr. A 197, and fig. 283.
**RKD Nr. L 22 698**

A3.
Figure 3.
*George de Vicq (?) as Ganymede*, Cambridge, Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, oil on canvas, 99x84.5 cm. (97x82 cm per IB 78083).


IB 78083

A4.

Figure 4

Child from the Ruytenbeeck Family as Ganymede, location unknown, 65.5x56 cm, signed in full, lower middle.

Provenance. Van Drogenhorst collection, Amsterdam; Van Iddekinge collection, Amsterdam; J. van de Kasteele collection, The Hague; Sale, Van I (ddekinge) van D (rogenhorst), Amsterdam (Muller), November 27-28, 1906, lot 19; Sale, Amsterdam, April 13, 1920, lot 31; Sale, W.F.E. (=Egeman), Amsterdam (Muller), December 13, 1927, lot 508.


IB 79686

A5.

Figure 5

Young Boy as Ganymede, Moscow, Pushkin Museum of Fine Art, oil on canvas, 1.13x1.04 m., signed and dated lower left: N^MAES. 1678.

Provenance. Herzog Georg M. von Leuchtenberg, St. Petersburg, ca. 1908; E. Braz, St. Petersburg; Leningrad, State museum reserve, until 1928; Moscow, Museum of Fine Art, 1928; Moscow, Pushkin Museum of Fine Art, 1937.


A6.
Figure 6
*Young Child as Ganymede*, location unknown, 44x33 cm, signed in full lower right.

**Provenance.** Sale, Amsterdam (Mak van Waay), April 26, 1974, lot 204; Sale, Amsterdam (Mak van Waay), April 29, 1985, lot 25B [with pendant, 25A]; Sale, New York (Sotheby), November 7, 1985, lot 28.

**Literature.** Russell 1977, p. 9, fig. 6.

**This portrait has a pendant, Young Boy Holding a Bird, location unknown, 44x33 cm., signed in full lower right. See figure 62.**

A7.
Figure 7
*Young Boy as Ganymede*, location unknown.

**Provenance.** Paris, Art dealer F. Kleinberger, ca. 1930.


RKD Nr. L 263 744

A8.
Figure 8
*Portrait of a Child as Ganymede*, location unknown, oil on canvas, 48x36.5 cm, signed in full.

**Provenance.** Sale, H.C.J.C. van Stockum, Dordrecht (Mak van Waay), February 25, 1941, lot 9.

**Literature.** RKD.
A9.
Not illustrated
Joan Carel or Gerard Smissaert (?) as Ganymede, location unknown, oil on canvas, 43x31.5 cm, signed in full lower right.

Provenance. M.P. Smissaert, Utrecht.
IB 14476

GROUP PORTRAITS

A10.
Figure 9
Children in a Landscape, Dordrecht, Dordrechts Museum, oil on canvas, 103.5x124.5 cm, signed lower right: N.MAAS 1674.


A11.
Figure 10
Five Children, One as Ganymede, location unknown, 86.2x105 cm (later 88x68 cm). This portrait was cut down sometime between 1910 and 1920 removing the young archer and his dog (RKD).

Literature. Hofstede de Groot 6, 1915, p. 596, nr. 553; Kempter 1980, pp. 83, 193, nr. 122 and fig. 82; Sumowski III, 1986, with nr. 1443 (Erroneously cites the cut down version of this portrait as a separate work by Maes which shows "a young
boy as Ganymede and two girls with their mother in the clouds”); Dordrechts Museum 1992, with nr. 66 (In note 5, the cut down version of this portrait is erroneously cited as a separate portrait with the title Four Children as Shepherds); Palace Huis ten Bosch Museum, with nr. 5, fig. 1 (cut-down version).
RKD Nr. L46 072.

A12.
Figure 11
Three Children as Pomona, Ganymede, and Diana, New York, Rojtman Foundation, oil on canvas, 187.9x139.6 cm, signed and dated lower left: N Maes. 1673.


RKD Nr. L 46 186.

A13.
Figure 12
Young Girl as Pomona, Young Boy as Ganymede, New York, Otto Naumann, 132x100.3 cm.


Literature. Sumowski III, 1986, p. 2036, nr. 1442 (early 1670's); Kempter 1980, p. 192, nr. 115 and fig. 80; Bedaux and Ekkart 2000, fig. 5 (ca. 1672-1673).

A14.
Figure 13
School of Nicolaes Maes (per a private conversation with William Robinson, September 1998) Four Children, One as Ganymede, location unknown, 77.5x92.5 cm.

RKD Nr. L 46 067


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Figure 1. Nicolaes Maes, *Young Boy as Ganymede*. n.d., 66x56 cm. Amsterdam. K.&V. Waterman. (Blankert et al., p. 199)
Figure 2. Nicolaes Maes, *Young Boy as Ganymede*, 1677, 43.5x31.5cm. Location unknown. (Krempel, fig. 283)
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(Auction catalogue, Sotheby. New York, Nov. 7, 1985, lot nr. 28b)
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