

## Striving for Unity

### *The Significance and Original Context of Political Allegories by Theodoor van Thulden for 's-Hertogenbosch Town Hall*

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Suzanne van de Meerendonk is a PhD candidate in art history at the University of California Santa Barbara. She has been responsible for the art historical and political-historical analysis of the paintings discussed in the present article, for which she served as the main author together with Margriet van Eikema Hommes.

Margriet van Eikema Hommes is an art historian specialized in historical painting techniques. She is Associate Professor at Delft University of Technology, and Specialist Interior Paintings at the Cultural Heritage Agency. She served, together with Suzanne van de Meerendonk, as author of the present article. In addition, she investigated the paintings' materials and techniques, and analyzed these technical findings to determine their intended pictorial effect as a decorative program in the context of the town hall interior.

Ester Vink is an independent historian. She researched the configuration of the town hall interior before and after 1670 based on archival data from the 's-Hertogenbosch Municipal Archive in the service of the Heritage Department, or *Afdeling Erfgoed*, city of 's-Hertogenbosch.

Ad van Drunen (*Afdeling Erfgoed*, 's-Hertogenbosch) provided partial reconstructions of the 's-Hertogenbosch town hall building before 1670 based on the most recent insights provided by ongoing research into the building archeology.

#### Abstract

This case study explores the original significance and contexts of a series of political allegories painted by Theodoor van Thulden (1606-1669) for the 's-Hertogenbosch (*Bois-le-Duc*) Town Hall. In considering their commission history, current attributions, their relevant historical and political contexts and their initial placement in the town hall, we aim to reconstruct the paintings' function as a decoration program between their installation in the late 1640s and their relocation following a substantial renovation of the building in the early 1670s. The article concludes with a reflection on the changing nature of the town hall's interior and its impact on the interpretation and appreciation of Van Thulden's paintings in the present.

*Keywords:* town halls, 's-Hertogenbosch, decoration program, painting ensembles, Staats-Brabant, Theodoor van Thulden

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From the middle of the seventeenth century, the town hall of the city of 's-Hertogenbosch in the Dutch province of North-Brabant underwent a series of rapid changes to its interior and exterior.<sup>2</sup> As a part of this process, local painter Theodoor van Thulden (1606-1669) was paid five hundred guilders 'for two paintings done and supplied for this town' on September 25, 1647.<sup>3</sup> On April 6, 1651 another payment of sixty guilders was recorded as 'still

<sup>1</sup> This article originated in a BA thesis and research paper written by Suzanne van de Meerendonk at the University of Amsterdam in 2007 and was reinvigorated in the research project 'From isolation to coherence: An Integrated Technical, Visual and Historical Study of 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Dutch Painting Ensembles' (2012-2017; supervised by Dr Margriet van Eikema Hommes), supported by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO), Innovational Research Incentives Schemes Vidi Grant. This project is based at Delft University of Technology (TU Delft). The Rijksmuseum and the Netherlands Cultural Heritage Agency (RCE) are partners in the project.

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<sup>2</sup> This article has greatly benefited from materials collected by historian Ester Vink as part of her research of primary sources documenting structural and decorative improvements in and to 's-Hertogenbosch Town Hall, commissioned by Afdeling Erfgoed, 's-Hertogenbosch. These sources include (but are not limited to) all city ledgers between 1496 and 1810 with appendices from 1629 onwards, 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, Oud Stadsarchief (hereafter OSA) inv nos. 1354-1841, as well as the registers, minutes and ordinances of the 'Commissie van Beledien' OSA 1689 t/m 1806 and OSA 4398 t/m 4415. The results of this archival inventory have furthermore been combined with the findings of buildings archeology research. Her research will be published as an appendix in a forthcoming publication: Vink, *De inrichting*. On the building's history: Ozinga, 'Het stadhuis'; Kolman *Monumenten*, 213; Van Drunen, *'s-Hertogenbosch*, 39-42, 324-353; Hurx, 'De zeventiende-eeuwse modernisering', 53-67; Köhl, 'Platz, Stube, Haus', 117-128.

<sup>3</sup> 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. no. 1498, city ledgers 1646/1647, fol. 262. See also Van Zuylen, *Stadsrekeningen*, II, 1443: 'Item aen Theodoro van Thulden, voor twee schilderyen voor dese Stadt gemaect ende geleverd, volgens ordonnantie in date 25 September 1647 ende quitancy, betaelt 500 gulden'.



Fig. 1 Theodoor van Thulden, *Justice and Concord*, signed and dated 1646, canvas, 147×192 cm, 's-Hertogenbosch, Town Hall.

owed for paintings supplied', without further specification.<sup>4</sup> These sums can be linked to a series of allegorical paintings Van Thulden produced for the 's-Hertogenbosch magistrate: *Justice and Concord* (1646), *The Right of the Four Quarters of the Meierij District to Appeal Before the Court of 's-Hertogenbosch* (1647) and *The Request for Admission to the Union* (1650) (figs. 1-3), which still hang in the town hall today. Two more paintings in the building, *Two Lions* (fig. 4) and *Wildman* (fig. 5) have been attributed to the painter, although their precise relation to this commission has remained uncertain.

The embellishments and expansions of 's-Hertogenbosch Town Hall are mirrored by other town halls that were improved or newly erected in the Republic during this period, not least the impressive new town hall built in Amsterdam between 1648 and 1665.<sup>5</sup> The

<sup>4</sup> 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. no. 1502, city ledgers 1650/1651, fol. 174r: 'Item den 6 dito aen Theodore van Thulden over een Accoort tusschen de heeren Schepenen ende Gesworens met hem gemaect over geleverde schilderijen noch competerende, volgens ordon. & quitancie betaelt 60 guldens'. See OSA 1542 appendices to the city ledgers 1650/1651 for the burgomasters' ordinance of payment and receipt signed by Van Thulden, also reproduced in Roy, *Theodoor van Thulden*, 37.

<sup>5</sup> Fremantle, *The Baroque*; Vlaardingerbroek, *Het paleis*. Another example is the town hall in Maastricht (1655), see Ottenheim, 'Het Stadhuis'. Significant additions were made to the town hall in Deventer: Koch, 'In en om'.



Fig. 2 *Theodoor van Thulden*, *The right of the four quarters of the Meierij District to appeal before the court of 's-Hertogenbosch*, signed and dated 1647, canvas, 240×297 cm, 's-Hertogenbosch, Town Hall.

end of the war with Spain undoubtedly created a mood of optimism in the country's towns and cities. The changing tides also generated a response in the periphery of the Republic's territory: 's-Hertogenbosch's city aldermen decided to commission paintings from Van Thulden during precisely these years.

Art historians have so far paid limited attention to the works, confining their interest to brief iconographic interpretations of the individual paintings or figures depicted in them.<sup>6</sup> The message the paintings convey collectively, and the precise political motives that fueled the decision to decorate the city's most prestigious civic building in this period, have not previously been addressed by scholars. This latter point is of particular importance considering the precarious position of 's-Hertogenbosch as the foremost political center of *Staats-Brabant* (fig. 6) – a fragmented border region seeking increased political autonomy and participation in the Republic's governmental structures during this exact period.

<sup>6</sup> Schneider, 'Theodoor van Thulden'; Hairs, 'Théodore van Thulden', 21-33; Vermet, 'Van Thuldens', 79-82; Huys Janssen, *Meesters*, 93-97.



Fig. 3 Theodorus van Thulden, *The request for admission to the Union*, 1650, canvas, 240×306 cm, 's-Hertogenbosch, Town Hall.

After 1629 's-Hertogenbosch and its surrounding area, the *Meierij* (Bailiwick), had become part of the 'Generality Lands', those parts of the Republic that did not have an autonomous provincial government or voting membership in the States General, and were governed by the States General in The Hague instead. *Staats-Brabant's* boundaries and territory remained insecure for the entirety of the Eighty Years' War, as towns and villages were gained and lost by the Dutch and Spanish armies. The instability of the region, both politically and geographically, as well as opposition from the other provinces, prevented the establishment of a provincial States of Brabant. Careful consideration of the iconographic program of the paintings commissioned from Van Thulden reveals that his compositions captured quite specifically the challenges facing 's-Hertogenbosch during the turbulent but optimistic years immediately preceding and following the Peace of Münster (1648).

The original locations and functions of the works in the town hall, a building that underwent significant changes in the decades after the paintings were installed, have likewise never been analyzed. To understand the rhetorical function and agency of the paintings, in particular during this uncertain period in the city's history, we need to know for which audiences and rooms the works were intended and how they were placed in these spaces. The present article aims to provide a comprehensive discussion of the commission's scope and significance as a decorative



Fig. 4 Anonymous after Pieter Paul Rubens (nineteenth century copy; formerly attributed to Theodoor van Thulden), *Two Lions*, s.d., canvas, 116×156 cm, 's-Hertogenbosch, Town Hall.

program by situating it within the relevant political contexts, and by addressing the processes through which the paintings acquired meaning in relation to their now long-lost surroundings.

#### *Theodoor van Thulden (1606-1669) and 's-Hertogenbosch*

Theodoor van Thulden returned to his native city of 's-Hertogenbosch around 1643, having spent more than two decades abroad, the last ten years in Antwerp.<sup>7</sup> With Van Thulden's return, potential patrons in 's-Hertogenbosch had access to a former associate of the famous Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), who similarly specialized in complex compositions and decoration programs with allegorical or mythological subjects, as well as portraits.<sup>8</sup> Van Thulden

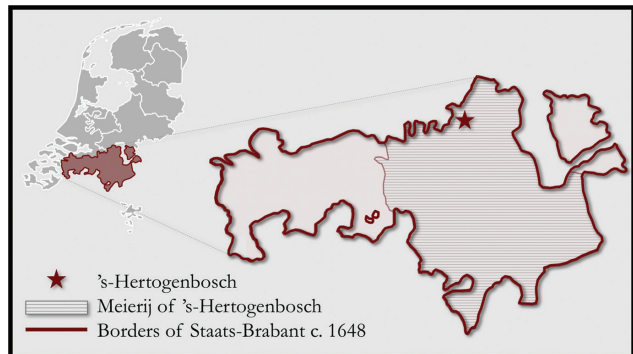
<sup>7</sup> Van Thulden is first registered as a pupil with the Antwerp master Abraham Blyenberch (1575/6-1624) in 1621. On Van Thulden's education: Roy, *Theodoor van Thulden*, 30-31, 51-53; Huys Janssen, 'Theodoor van Thulden', 86-88.

<sup>8</sup> Van Thulden worked with Rubens in preparing painted decorations for the Entry of Ferdinand, Infante of Spain, into Antwerp in 1635. Van Thulden reproduced these decorations in print after Rubens's designs: Gevartius, *Pompa Introitus*. Van Thulden painted two canvases for the *Torre de la Parada*, the hunting lodge of King Philip IV of Spain (1605-1665) which was lavishly decorated in the 1630s: Alpers, *The Decoration*, 221. Van Thulden is called a disciple of Rubens in contemporary sources, indicating that he was considered a close follower



Fig. 5 *Theodor van Thulden* (formerly attributed to *Theodoor van Thulden* or to an anonymous painter), Wildman, s.d., canvas, 124×190 cm, 's-Hertogenbosch, Town Hall.

Fig. 6 *Map of Staats-Brabant indicating territories and boundaries c. 1648*. Image: J. Michael Johnson, University of California, Santa Barbara.



not only modeled himself after Rubens's example stylistically. By producing compositions that were dense in symbolic content he sought to claim a place amongst those painters who, like Rubens, had the skills and erudition to win important commissions from those in power. The

and associate throughout his career: Gevartius *Pompa Introitus*, unpaginated preface; De Monconys, *Journal*, 244, who visited Van Thulden's studio in 1663.

Fig. 7 Justice and Concord (1646) as seen in its current location, the Council Room (Raadzaal) in the 's-Hertogenbosch town hall. The room's interior dates to the early 1670s and 1690s and includes a 1672 mantle, wall tapestries (1679) by Maximiliaan van der Gucht and a carved wooden ceiling with a clock at its center. Originally the ceiling had four medallions in the corners painted by Elias van Nijmegen after a design by Jacob Roman (1640-1716). These were removed in 1963 and are currently preserved in the collection of Erfgoed 's-Hertogenbosch. Photo: Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.



most notable among his patrons in the Republic proved to be Amalia van Solms, who commissioned him to produce six canvases for the Oranjezaal in Huis ten Bosch (1648-1652).<sup>9</sup>

Van Thulden, who hailed from a prominent local family, could expect favorable conditions for patronage in the city. Jan van Asten (1610-1655), who was appointed city notary in 1646, had previously been married to Van Thulden's cousin Maria van Thulden (1614-1643). The same year Hieronymus van Thulden (1611-1658), the painter's distant cousin, was a city alderman.<sup>10</sup> Important family connections such as these, along with Van Thulden's growing reputation and experience in executing large-scale decoration projects, would have made him a most suitable candidate for the town hall commission.

### *Three Signed and Dated Paintings*

*Justice and Concord* is dated 1646, making it the earlier of the two paintings recorded as executed and delivered by Van Thulden in the city ledgers of September 1647.<sup>11</sup> Currently in the council hall (*raadzaal*) (figs. 7), the painting depicts two women seated against a dark background, gazing intently at the viewer. On the left we see Justice with her scales and sword, dressed in a fur-trimmed white gown and a red mantle, wearing a tiara with a feather on her head. The woman on the right in a green robe holds a bundle of arrows, a symbol of concord, which she is in the process of securing with a ribbon.<sup>12</sup> She is covered by a lion's skin; an attribute of Hercules and an allusion to strength. As such, she symbol-

<sup>9</sup> Van Eikema Hommes, *De Oranjezaal*, 129-131, 136, 144, 152; Van Eikema Hommes, *De Oranjezaal catalogus*, cat. nos. 11, 12, 16, 23, 29.

<sup>10</sup> Adriaenssen, *Voorheen van Tuldell*, 113, 190-191. Hieronymus's and Theodoor's great-grandfathers were brothers.

<sup>11</sup> See note 3.

<sup>12</sup> The theme is reminiscent of Abraham Janssen's (1571/75-1632) *Peace and Abundance Binding the Arrows of War*, signed and dated 1614, canvas, 157,5×264 cm, Wolverhampton, Wolverhampton Art Gallery.



izes the power of the state by recalling the phrase *Concordia Res Parvae Crescunt* (literally: 'small states flourish through concord', often translated into Dutch as 'Eendracht maakt Macht': 'strength in unity'), which was the motto of the Dutch Republic.<sup>13</sup>

The second painting Van Thulden was paid for in 1647 must have been *The Right of the Four Quarters of the Meierij District to Appeal Before the Court of 's-Hertogenbosch*, dated in that year. This painting depicts the legal right of the constituents of the four quarters of the Meierij district to appeal before the city's court (the *vierschaaar*). The Meierij was an area surrounding the city and covering most of the eastern part of the present-day province of North Brabant. It was divided into quarters, Peelland, Maasland, Oisterwijk and Kempenland, here represented by the four women on the right carrying their respective coats of arms. They present their shields to a personification of Justice, who is seated on an elevated throne with the coats of arms of 's-Hertogenbosch, representing the city's court, on the left of the composition.<sup>14</sup> To Justice's right is a female figure with an anchor and palm branch, representing Security,<sup>15</sup> while in the foreground a river god reclines against an oak tree, presumably representing the River Dommel, which runs through the area.

*The Right of the Four Quarters* has a clear pendant, in terms of both size and composition, in *The Request for Admission to the Union* (1650), which means that the commission can be extended to include this painting as well. This work must be one of the paintings mentioned in the payment of sixty guilders to Van Thulden 'for paintings supplied' in 1651, a year after its completion. However, given the substantially higher amount of five hundred guilders that Van Thulden received in 1647 for *The Right of the Four Quarters* and the smaller *Justice and Concord* ('two paintings done and supplied'), a payment of sixty guilders would not have been enough. Unless the funds provided in 1647 already included an advance for *The Request for Admission to the Union*, we must therefore assume that not all payments are documented in the city ledgers.

A personification of the Union of Provinces or States General, dressed in a pink robe trimmed with ermine, is seated on a sculptural throne decorated with the word 'Unio' beneath an arch depicting the coats of arms of the Republic's seven provinces. She holds a scepter, the trident-like form of which signifies that her realm encompasses both land and water, further emphasized by the sculptural dolphins that decorate her throne, as well as two river gods flanking it; they may refer to the River Maas (Meuse) and the sea.<sup>16</sup> 's-Hertogenbosch personified as *Stedemaagd*, dressed in white, approaches from the left, presenting Unio with the crest of Brabant. Accompanying her is Mars, receiving a laurel wreath from Victory. Putti are grouped around the bundle of arrows in the foreground of

13 Vermet 'Van Thuldens', 79. Jacob Cats includes the motto under the subheading 'Saecten van State' ('Matters of State'): Cats, *Spiegel*, 113-114.

14 The composition seems rooted in the oeuvre of Peter Paul Rubens, who quite frequently used this device of steps leading up to an elevated platform or throne, see for example *The Stage of Isabella*, 1634, oil on panel, 68×70 cm, Moscow, Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts (Reproduced in Gevartius, *Pompa Introitus*, 94; Van Thulden, etching 49×38,4 cm).

15 Compare Rubens's use of the figure *Securitas* in the *Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi*, which Van Thulden may have used as a source: Martin, *The Decorations*, 134.

16 A drawing by Van Thulden (pen and brown ink, brown wash on paper, 14×19,7 cm, London, Victoria and Albert Museum), carries an inscription by Van Thulden identifying 'Unio sitting between the Sea and the Maas' ('D'Unio sittend tussen de See & Maes').

Fig. 8 View of the interior of the burgomaster's chamber (Burgemeesterskamer) with the wooden paneling that was installed in 1744. Originally the woodwork was painted in a light grey color: "parelkleur" (pearl color). From left to right: Two Lions (fig. 4), The right of the four quarters (fig. 2) and The request for inclusion in the Union (fig. 3). Photo: Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.



the composition, one of them turning to the viewer as he is about to add another arrow. Liberty, depicted as a winged putto and identified by his liberty hat, stands on the right of the throne holding a cornucopia. The woman holding a rudder and all-seeing eye to the left of the throne can be identified as Providence of Government.<sup>17</sup> Taken in its entirety, the painting allegorically depicts the anticipated admission of the province of Brabant to the States General. Both *The Right of the Four Quarters* and *The Request for Admission to the Union* are currently located in the burgomaster's chamber (*Burgemeesterskamer*; fig. 8).

### *Two Lions and Wildman*

The first of two attributed paintings, *Two Lions*, is an unsigned and undated copy after the lions depicted in the painting *The Meeting at Lyon* in Rubens's Marie de' Medici cycle.<sup>18</sup> This painting, which is fully inconsistent with Van Thulden's painting style, appears to be a later copy. The painting contains Prussian blue, a pigment that only became commercially available in the 1720s. The paint also contains relatively high levels of the mineral

<sup>17</sup> The figure Providence of Government is based on an iconographic invention 'Providentia Regis' by Rubens which appeared in the *Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi* as part of Ferdinand's Arch: Martin, *The Decorations*, 161-162. Schneider has erroneously identified this figure as Minerva based on the drawing mentioned in note 16: 'Theodoor van Thulden', 3. See also Roy, *Theodoor van Thulden*, 215.

<sup>18</sup> The painting is not listed in Van Zuylen, *Inventaris*, but does appear, attributed to Van Thulden, in a list of paintings recommended for restoration dated February 22, 1881: 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, 267 Archive of the Secretary and Municipality 1920-1996, inv. no. 10071. The painting is also attributed to Van Thulden in Roy, *Theodoor van Thulden*, 79, 177-178.

baryte, which did not become a common ingredient in artists' paints until the nineteenth century.<sup>19</sup>

While *Wildman* has been attributed to Van Thulden at least since the nineteenth century, its authorship by Van Thulden is rejected by current scholars.<sup>20</sup> This unsigned and undated painting shows the figure as a bearded old man in the nude with a club at his side and a shield depicting the crest of 's-Hertogenbosch in his right hand. As wild, rugged types symbolizing strength and fierceness, the Wildman had been a common heraldic figure in the Netherlands since medieval times.<sup>21</sup> It became associated with the city of 's-Hertogenbosch as a mythical reference to the city's founding in the woods, referred to in her name, and was eventually incorporated in the city's coat of arms.<sup>22</sup> The painting presently hangs on the chimney breast in the burgomaster's chamber (fig. 9) and must have been in the town hall as early as 1693, when carpenter Jan van Es was paid for reducing the size of its strainer and assisting with remounting the canvas.<sup>23</sup> It was seen in its present location by Johan Hendrik van Heurn (1716-1793), who recalls the local artist Anselmus Weeling (1675-1747) suggesting that the picture could have been painted by an Italian master.<sup>24</sup>

The *Wildman* can nevertheless be attributed to Van Thulden with certainty. The painting techniques and anatomical rendering correspond to those seen in Van Thulden's paintings of the same period. For example, the rendering of the facial features, fingers, modeling with light and shade and the use of contour lines in the *Wildman* figure strongly resemble those of the river gods in *The Right of the Four Districts to Appeal* (1647) and *The Request for Admission to the Union* (1650).<sup>25</sup> Cross sections further show that the *Wildman* has ground layers strikingly similar to *Justice and Concord* (1646), *The Right of the Four Districts to Appeal* (1647) and *The Request for Admission to the Union* (1650): a double ground consisting of an initial layer containing mainly chalk with on top a grey layer containing mainly lead white and charcoal black (figs. 10-11, tables 1, 2). The first ground layer used in the allegory dated

19 The painting also contains Naples yellow, which was seldom used by Northern European painters before 1700. Light microscopy and SEM-EDX analysis of paint cross sections of the left front paw of the rear lion revealed the presence of Naples yellow, and Prussian blue and baryte were found in the blue paint of the background. The size of the particles, approx. 5 microns, shows that the baryte used is of the natural sort and not the synthetic *Blanc fixe* that was commonly used later in the nineteenth century. The 's-Hertogenbosch copy, which indicates detailed knowledge of Rubens's painting, seems to have been made after 1793, when the Medici paintings became accessible to the public in the Louvre.

20 It was not included in the 1991 catalogue raisonné of Van Thulden's work: Roy, *Theodoor van Thulden*. The painting is first listed as by Van Thulden in the city's inventory by archivist Van Zuylen, *Inventaris*, 107.

21 Bernheimer, *Wild Men*; Van de Waal, *Drie eeuwen*, 1, 86-87; Husband, *The Wild Man*.

22 Peeters, 'Wildemannen'. According to Bossink, 'Het wapen', one of the earliest known permanent uses of the Wildman theme in the coat of arms was when the new façade of 's-Hertogenbosch Town Hall was completed in 1670, and two Wildmen were placed beside the coat of arms that decorated it.

23 Jan van Es received 15 stuivers for making a smaller strainer and re-stretching the canvas in 1693: 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA, inv. nos. 1584 and 1725: '24 dito [September 1693] het raem van de wildeman klijnder gemaect en op helpen spaennen 0-15-0.'

24 At that time the room was called Aldermen's Room: 'Kamer van Schepenen' or 'Klein Collegie': Van Heurn, *Beschrijving der geestelyke*, cited in Van Sasse van Ysselt, *De voorname huizen*, III, 469-470.

25 Paint cross sections show that the *Wildman*'s skin tone was achieved with a mixture of lead white, brown, yellow and red earth, black and a little organic red pigment, similar to the skin tones in Van Thulden's Oranjezaal paintings (see note 9).

Fig. 9 Alternative view of the burgomaster's chamber (Burgemeesterskamer) interior, showing the *Wildman* (fig. 5) on the chimney breast and *Two Lions* (fig. 4). Photo: Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.



1650 bears a particularly striking resemblance to the first ground layer in the *Wildman*. In addition to the chalk some coarse charcoal black and as a little red lead are also present.<sup>26</sup> This very similar mixture, used for the earliest ground layer, indicates that these paintings were primed and therefore probably executed at around the same time.<sup>27</sup>

It thus seems plausible that the *Wildman* was acquired by the city magistrate in the same period as the other three paintings by Van Thulden in the town hall. This is supported by payments to carpenter Dirck van der Lith for a strainer and frame in 1651.<sup>28</sup> It is evident that the city aldermen wished to emphasize the heraldic function of wildmen in this period: in 1649 they paid for a decorative window depicting the coat of arms of the city with the addition of a wildman figure in one of the town hall's reception rooms.<sup>29</sup> And, as we shall

<sup>26</sup> Red lead could have been added as a pigment to the paint, but from the distribution of the red lead particles – which are found mainly in and at the edges of strongly saponified areas – it can be deduced that most of them were formed over time. About the formation of lead soaps and red lead: Keune, *Binding Medium*.

<sup>27</sup> The reduction of the strainer recorded in the aforementioned ledger of 1693 means that a signature may have been lost, but a complete unframing of the work would be needed to confirm this possibility. This was not possible within the scope of the present research project.

<sup>28</sup> Dirck van der Lith received six guilders for a frame and two guilders for a strainer on January 12, 1651: 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. no. 1542 or 1543. The payments to Van der Lith in 1651 do not relate to Van Thulden's *The Request for Admission to the Union* from 1650, since Van der Lith was paid in 1650 for the strainer and frame for this painting, see note 65.

<sup>29</sup> 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. no. 1540. This decorative window was located in the *Plattelandskamer*, see note 72.

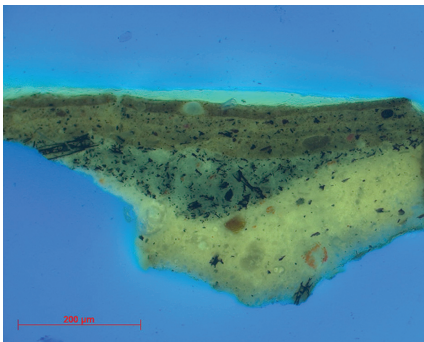


Fig. 10 The Wildman (fig. 5). Cross section from the heel of the wildman. Normal light (a), uv-light (b), microscopic magnification 200 $\times$ . See table 1. The first ground layer is similar to that of The request for admission, see fig. 11.

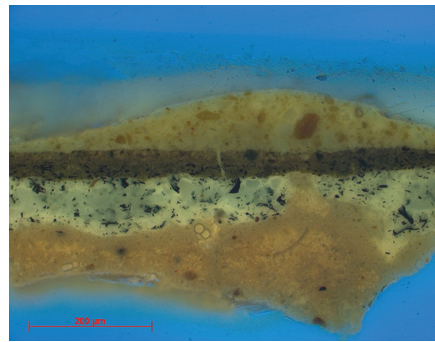
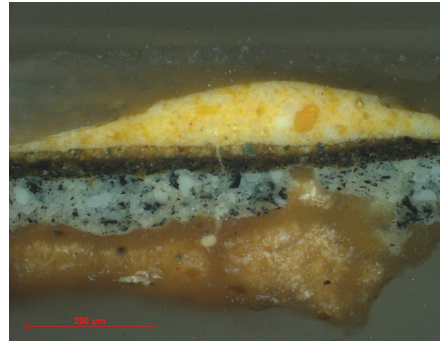


Fig. 11 The request for admission (fig. 3). Cross section from the bottom edge of the painting. Normal light (a), uv-light (b), microscopic magnification 200 $\times$ . See table 2. The first ground layer is similar to that of The Wildman, see fig. 10.

see, the subject of the painting may also be linked to the iconography of the other three works.

### *The Vienna Oil Sketch*

An oil sketch in which Van Thulden explicitly unites the theme of his *Justice and Concord* with the two large allegories sheds light on the iconographic relation that exists between his town hall paintings. This sketch, currently held in the collection of the Akademie der Bildenden Künste Vienna (fig. 12a), is an ambitious design for a painted allegorical scene containing numerous figures within a black frame, below which there is a design for an architectural wall decoration consisting of pilasters, niches and reliefs. Van Thulden has given almost every figure an inscription for identification. This must have been an earlier design for the city aldermen's consideration, apparently rejected, and may be dated in or shortly before 1646.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Roy, *Theodoor van Thulden*, 180. Van Thulden is known to have made other oil sketches that functioned as *modelli* for his patrons, for example Roy, *Theodoor van Thulden*, 237, 239. The Vienna *modello* contains a notable number



Fig. 12a Theodoor van Thulden, Allegorical depiction of the inclusion of 's-Hertogenbosch in the Union, c. 1646, canvas, 82,5×115,5 cm, Vienna, Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der Bildenden Künste. In several places the lining canvas is visible due to the loss of original canvas in the lower portion of the painting. This lower portion of the sketch has been heavily retouched, compare fig. 12b.

The figure identified as 'Unio' by Van Thulden is enthroned on a semi-circular base decorated with the arms of the seven Provinces and the motto 'Concordia Res Parvae Crescunt', which tells us that she embodies the Republic as a Union of Provinces. Unio, holding a rudder as a reference to government, is accompanied by Justice (left) and Mars (right), and this group is mirrored by the zodiac signs Libra, Virgo and Leo depicted on the arch above them. This important compositional element thus appears closely related to the themes communicated by *Concord and Justice*, but also incorporates ideas and forms that reappear in *The Request for Admission*.

Liberty (*Libertas*), located on a column directly to their right, is depicted as its counterpart in the 1650 allegory – a winged putto holding a liberty hat. Here, however, a companion holds a shield inscribed *Cum Arce et Gladio*, referring to the fortifications and military that secured the Republic's liberty and continued to protect it. An appropriate detail, since 's-Hertogenbosch was an important garrison town on the Republic's

of explicatory inscriptions, which appear more often on the drawings in pen and wash that Van Thulden used in the design process to clarify the content of his compositions to his patrons, for examples: Roy, *Theodoor van Thulden*, 220-221; Kolfin, 'Amalia's ambitions', 105-111. In some of his design drawings, van Thulden also indicated the surrounding architecture, for which he seems to have provided ideas as well, for example: Roy, *Theodoor van Thulden*, 173.

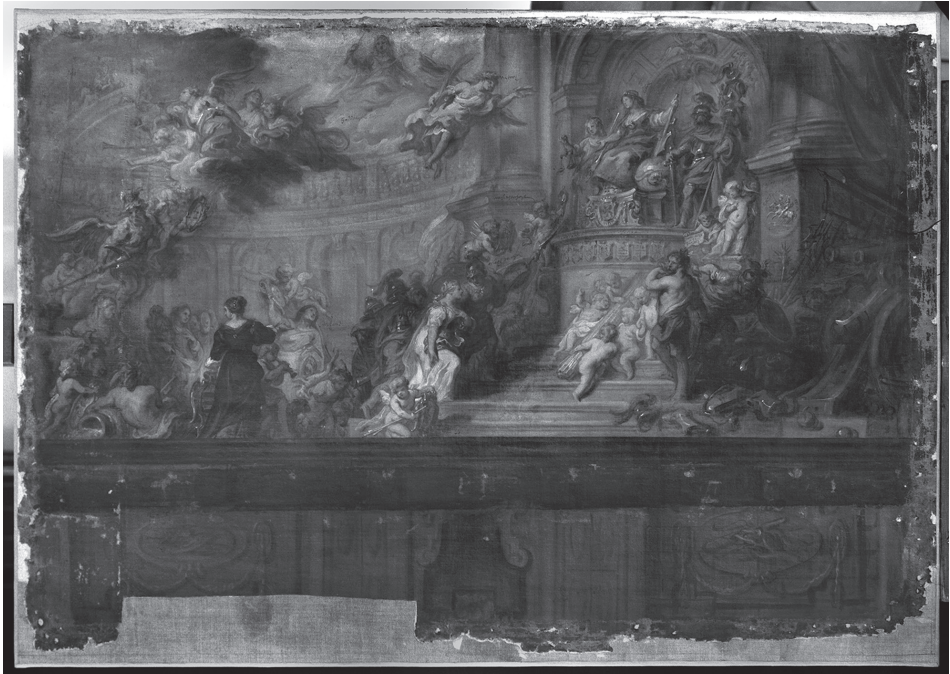


Fig. 12b The Vienna modello (fig. 12a) as photographed in 1957 during the restoration in which the lower portion was brought back to visibility. The black strip just below the depicted scene consisted of an overpainting that was subsequently removed. Extensive paint losses can be observed in this lower section and give an indication of the extent to which the current appearance of the painted architecture consists of restorations. Bundesdenkmalamt, photo: Karl Koster.

southern border. As in the 1650 painting, the Unio figure is approached by the Maid of 's-Hertogenbosch. In this case, however, she is chaperoned by Warfare (Minerva in the guise of *Oorlogspractyck*) and her soldiers, as well as a putto carrying her coat of arms. Following them is her delegation of *Meerij* quarters (*Maaslant*, *Oisterwyck*, *Kemp[e?]lant*, *Peelant*) as seen in the 1647 allegory with their respective arms, while the river god Maas in the foreground to the left forms a precursor to the inclusion of this figure in the 1650 work. Father Time (*Tyt*) with his sickle looks over them and holds a shield depicting scales, adding yet another connotation of Justice. In the clouds, Divine Government (*Goddelyk Bestier*) is depicted holding a staff, while 'Iris', messenger to the Gods, is seen riding the rainbow, Fame (*Fama ... Victoria*) blowing a horn and *Victori* wearing laurel wreaths. In the right lower corner *Labor* leans on a spade. Beside him, *Vigilance* (*Waekentheijt*) chases away a two-faced figure representing Discord (*Tweedraght*) while another iteration of this figure, depicted with a head full of snakes and a burning torch, has already fallen amidst abandoned weapons of war.<sup>31</sup>

The eye is drawn to the centrally placed Maid of 's-Hertogenbosch, conspicuously dressed in white, and the kneeling putto in front of her. The latter holds the coat of arms

31 Ripa *Iconologia*, 516-517.

of Brabant and an arrow while gazing out at the viewer. This arrow will shortly be added to the bundle of arrows placed on the steps leading up to Unio's throne by a group of seven putti, corresponding to the number of provinces represented in the bundle. The scene depicts a joyous arrival of Brabant, 's-Hertogenbosch and *Meierij* in the Republic, while emphasizing in particular the military victory this represented. The incorporation of this region and the strong natural defense line provided by the Maas River – here strategically placed to close the composition – is presented as a moment of unification and reinforcement for the Republic.

The scene's triumphal mood is continued in the decorative wall paneling depicted below it.<sup>32</sup> This part of Van Thulden's composition had long been tucked around the edges of the stretcher, but the canvas was restored to its original size in 1957 (fig. 12b).<sup>33</sup> Broad panels on the left and right contain oval reliefs depicting escutcheons (left) and what appears to be a Herculean club and lion's skin (right). Around each oval, gilded sculptural festoons with palm branches and a laurel wreath, symbols of victory, are suggested. In the center is a niche framed by elaborate carving with on either side semi-circular niches framed by pilasters that mirror the imaginary architecture in the allegory above. The pattern of large stone blocks visible on the right shows that Van Thulden wanted to demonstrate the effect of illusionistic rustication; a finish that would be used in the wooden paneling of the Oranjezaal a few years later.<sup>34</sup> The robust shapes of the architecture, reminiscent of stone decorations, may also be related to the effect of such faux masonry.<sup>35</sup>

Van Thulden's *modello* shows that he expected a very high room: the niches represented suggest that the paneling was of significant height.<sup>36</sup> It can also be inferred from the

32 We would like to express our gratitude to Eloy Koldewej, Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, Johan de Haan, The Central Government Real Estate Agency/Radboud University Nijmegen, and Ada de Wit, Radboud University Nijmegen, for their assistance in our analysis of the wooden paneling depicted in the Vienna *modello*. Previous scholarship has not included the paneling in its analysis of the *modello*. The 1927 catalogue of the Akademie der Bildende Künste describes the architectural elements, which were at that time hidden from view (see note 33), as 'of no importance' ('Ein 18 cm breiter Streifen mit einer belanglosen, in Braun gemalten Architekturdekoration ist unten umgeschlagen'): Eigenberger, *Der Gemäldegalerie*, 403-405, esp. 404.

33 Roughly two thirds of the paneling in the sketch had previously been tucked around the stretcher, while the upper part of it was painted over in dark paint, which was removed in the 1957 restoration. The damaged and only partially preserved lower portion of the canvas shows considerable retouching, making the forms here difficult to read. Restoration report in the Vienna Akademie der Bildenden Künste Documentation Archive. Information kindly supplied by Claudia Koch.

34 Van Eikema Hommes, 'Van "lusthuys"' 47.

35 This recalls the architectural style of Rubens and particularly the triumphal arches that Rubens designed for the *Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi* in 1635, see Gervatius, *Pompa Introitus*. Van Thulden was very well-acquainted with these designs since he had translated them into prints.

36 Head-high wainscot paneling, often incorporating benches, was a common element in Dutch and Flemish town halls at the time, particularly in the *schepenbank* and the *vierschaar*. Examples include the town halls of Ghent (1519-1539), Kampen (1543-1547), Nijmegen (1545-1555; demolished in 1944-1945), Veere (paneling and chimney from 1586, expanded in 1699), Naarden (1601) and The Hague (1671). The Amsterdam town hall *vierschaar* is the most luxurious realization of this concept, but with decorations made of white marble rather than good quality oak. Easel paintings were often hung above this paneling. There was a wainscot combined with a full wall painting above in the *vierschaar* in the town hall of Zutphen (now destroyed): see Tadama,



perspective that the allegorical scene was designed to be installed above the viewer's eye level: its horizon is located below the lower edge of the composition so that the viewer gazes at the figures and architecture from slightly below, as evidenced by the rendering of the steps and the figures in the lower end of the composition, which appear to recede behind the protruding cornice of the paneling. As the paneling on Van Thulden's sketch covers about a third of its height, this would indicate that the intended allegorical scene would have been around four meters tall. Van Thulden thus suggested a wall of up to six meters from top to bottom and about eight meters long. Evidently the artist initially envisioned a project of overwhelming ambition. Had it been realized, it would have been one of his largest paintings, outdoing even *The Maid of Holland Offering Frederick Henry Supreme Command* (1650) in the Oran-jezaal (321×758 cm).

This grand decorative scheme of paneling and painting was not realized as proposed.<sup>37</sup> Instead, Van Thulden was commissioned to execute four individual paintings. Since *Justice and Concord* (1646), *The Right of the Four Quarters* (1647), and *The Request for Admission to the Union* (1650) originated from a concept that united them into one work during the design stage, a more thorough analysis of their collective significance is warranted.

### *The Search for Unity*

The notable emphasis on concord and the regional justice system in both the *modello* and in the final paintings can be better understood in the context of recent legal and political developments of great importance to the city. After Brabant was incorporated into the Burgundian Netherlands in 1430, a hierarchical justice system was implemented that both solidified and relied on geographical stability in the region. The four *Meierij* quarters each had their own designated court (*vierschaaar* or *schepenbank*) but some cases could also be appealed before the *vierschaaar* of 's-Hertogenbosch. The city's aldermen were the highest authorities in the city government, which, unlike its counterparts in Holland, did not include burgomasters.<sup>38</sup> This court, as well as other regional (*Meierij*) courts in Brabant, were in turn overseen by the Council of Brabant (*Raad van Brabant*), located in Brussels.

*Geschiedenis der Stad Zutphen*, plate xix and 'Voorbericht' x-xi; Gimberg, 'Het stadhuis te Zutphen' 200-229, esp. 221-222; Krijnen, 's Gravenhof 1, 23. The wall division of Van Thulden's *modello*, with a head-height wainscot paneling and a painting filling the whole wall is surprisingly evocative of the institutional chambers in the Doge's Palace (*Palazzo Ducale*) in Venice, for example the *Sala del Senato* and the *Sala del Maggior Consiglio*. It is very likely that Van Thulden was informed on these famous interiors (for example via Rubens who was in Venice in 1600). Such combinations of wainscot paneling and paintings were also common in France. Famous examples can be found in Fontainebleau Castle, where the paintings are combined with sculptural elements. These and other French decorations could also have formed a source of inspiration for Van Thulden, who was in Paris from 1631 to at least 1633.

<sup>37</sup> In a forthcoming publication, the authors will discuss the locations in the town hall that could have housed such an ambitious design and the reasons why none of those spaces can be identified with certainty as the location depicted in the sketch.

<sup>38</sup> With the exception of a brief period between 1494 and 1498: Jacobs, *Justitie en politie*.

The Dutch Revolt and ensuing war with Spain complicated the functioning of this system from the late sixteenth century onwards.<sup>39</sup>

's-Hertogenbosch was captured by Stadtholder Frederick Henry in 1629 and a Protestant city magistrate replaced the former Catholic one, but confusion remained about the extent of the territories that could be claimed by the 1629 victory. The Republic laid claim to the *Meierij* quarters and the city, but the Spanish army only considered the city, not the *Meierij*, to have been taken. In 1635, a Spanish alternative to the 's-Hertogenbosch court was established in Breda to serve the *Meierij* inhabitants. Both Spanish and Dutch authorities urged the people of the region to appeal their cases before their courts, and instated penalties if they refused to do so.<sup>40</sup> However, the fact that city and *Meierij* were bound by a longstanding justice system, undoubtedly set a precedent for the legal unity of the area.

The jurisdictional unity of the four *Meierij* quarters was also a major argument in the ongoing debate on the admission of Brabant to the Republic's central government body, the States General.<sup>41</sup> A coalition of cities spearheaded by 's-Hertogenbosch, intensified the campaign for provincial autonomy and voting rights in the States General after 1629 and again after 1646.<sup>42</sup> The uncertainty about the status of the *Meierij*, a significant part of the Staats-Brabant territory, was a weak spot in this request for autonomy and provincial status, but that issue was finally resolved in favor of the Republic during the early stages of the peace negotiations with Spain in 1646.<sup>43</sup> Its outcome, which brought the *Meierij* district permanently into the Dutch Republic, was a specifically beneficial victory for 's-Hertogenbosch. Indeed, with peace negotiations underway and a significant part of Brabant territory now securely under Dutch rule, a foundation had been laid for the most effective campaign for regional autonomy and provincial status thus far.

This campaign provides a crucial historical background to the scene depicted in the *modello*; 's-Hertogenbosch and her *Meierij*, united by Time and Justice, are presented in this painting as entering the Union of Provinces under the guidance of Warfare and the watchful eye of Divine Government. The unity achieved through their inclusion brings liberty, prosperity, fame and victory to the Republic, while discord and fury are eliminated. Van Thulden thus envisioned in this design the longer saying from which the Republic's motto was derived: '*nam concordia parvae res crescunt, discordia maximae dilabuntur*' – 'for small states flourish through concord, while discord will destroy great things'.

This theme resurfaces in the paintings that Van Thulden eventually produced for the city government. *Justice and Concord*, dated in the crucial year of 1646, encapsulates the idea, establishing an explicit connection between the city's court and the Republic. Justice

<sup>39</sup> For the situation before 1629: Jacobs, *Justitie en politie*. For the appeal procedures in both civil and 'ordinary', as well as 'extraordinary' criminal cases: Broers, *Geschiedenis*, 69-72. On the history of the Dutch Council of Brabant: Jacobs, 'Voor vijand'; Broers and Jacobs, *De Staatse Raad*.

<sup>40</sup> Jacobs, 'Voor vijand', 104-107, 119.

<sup>41</sup> For a detailed history of the different requests that were made by Brabant: Christ, *De Brabantsche*. On the legal and political complications of Staats-Brabant as a borderland region: Van der Meij, 'Divided loyalties'.

<sup>42</sup> Christ, *De Brabantsche*, 143-152, 173-268.

<sup>43</sup> Christ, *De Brabantsche*, 153, 171, 182-184.

wears a robe trimmed with ermine, a symbol of sovereignty that can be interpreted as a reference to the jurisdiction of the city's aldermen over the larger *Meierij* area. The figure to her right, representing the Republic's motto, binds the arrows she is holding – implying a recent addition to the bundle that alludes to the hoped-for admission of Brabant to the Republic's central governing body.

This message is also emphasized in Van Thulden's two larger allegories. *The Right of the Four Quarters* of 1647 conveys the unity and sovereignty implied by the traditional justice system of 's-Hertogenbosch and its *Meierij*. The theme of 'binding' has been extended here to the iconography of the tree around which putti have tied an orange ribbon. The tree is a symbol of the city (*bosboom*) and also refers to the *gerechtsboom* – a 'justice tree'. These were old trees underneath which justice was traditionally administered in the Low Countries.<sup>44</sup> One of the figures points to it conspicuously, while beckoning the four quarters to entrust him, and the city, with their shields. This emphasis on the restored unity in the region can be explained by the importance of this jurisdiction to the ongoing campaign for the inclusion of Brabant in the States General. The desired outcome of this campaign is allegorically depicted in its pendant, *The Request for Admission to the Union* (1650). That the siege of 's-Hertogenbosch in 1629 was an important argument for admission is indicated in the painting by the figure of Mars accompanying the *Stedemaagd*, celebrating the war effort that had enabled the addition of 's-Hertogenbosch and the *Meierij* to the Republic's territories. In the background an orange tree, explicitly honoring Fredrick Henry's victory, is bound together with the *bosboom-Gerechtsboom* by a putto gazing at the viewer, creating a subtle interplay between the two pendants around the theme of restored unity. This effect may even have included the *Wildman*, where a similar orange ribbon established a visual and thematic connection to the two allegories. These Orangistic details also refer to the political influence of the Stadtholder, who held several hereditary titles in Brabant including Baron of Breda and Marquis of Bergen op Zoom. The successive Princes of Orange had generally supported the province's requests for autonomy, though this at times hurt rather than helped Brabant's cause, depending on the status of the relationship between the Stadtholder and the Province of Holland.<sup>45</sup>

The benefits of unification are also more broadly depicted as the basic principle through which the power of state is achieved. By bringing Brabant into the Union, again represented as an arrow adding strength to the bundle, the Republic is reinforced: a fitting visualization of the arguments used by Brabant in so many of its requests. In the context of the political aspirations of the city, this iconography based on the concept of unity – first regionally, then nationally and ultimately ideologically – would have proved very suitable. That concord was the central value stressed in the Republic's motto made it an all the more appropriate theme for this city's town hall decoration.

<sup>44</sup> About the *bosboom* as a symbol of the city of 's-Hertogenbosch: Koldewei, 'De "bosboom"'. On the theme of the justice tree in courts in town halls: Martyn, 'Hemels oordeel'.

<sup>45</sup> Stadtholder Maurice (1567-1625) had been the driving force behind one of the earliest requests in 1586. The support from Stadtholder William II (1626-1650), however, backfired during the crucial campaign of c. 1646-1650 due to his increasingly adverse relationship with Holland, which finally resulted in his attempted siege of Amsterdam in 1650. Christ, *De Brabantsche*, 29, 175, 179, 216-217.

### *Placing the Commission*

To fully understand the significance of these paintings it is necessary to know the rooms and audiences for which they were meant. An extensive renovation of the town hall building that took place in the early 1670s unfortunately leaves the modern-day researcher with limited knowledge of the internal structure of the building before this date. There are, however, several sources from which we can extract information about the early town hall building, starting with images of the complex dating from before 1670.

A drawing by Pieter Saenredam (1597-1665) gives a good impression of the town hall exterior as the artist saw it from the central market square in 1632 (fig. 13). The facade, shown in the drawing, unites three separate buildings that were acquired by the city at different points in time; the house in the middle, named *Herenhuis*, in 1366, the house on the left, named *Gaffel*, in 1481 and finally the house on the right, named *Sinterclaes* in 1599 (figs. 14, 15).<sup>46</sup> Not seen in this image is the structure located on lower-lying ground behind these three houses, connected to the town hall complex since the sixteenth century. This building, called *Griffiehuis*, built between 1562-1565, was not impacted by the 1670s renovation (compare figs. 14, 16).<sup>47</sup> It consists of two stories elevated on a rectangular plan, which is divided into two building parts and a gallery. These two parts, which could be accessed through separate entrances, were designed to house different branches of the city government, including the administration of justice and the offices of the town clerks.

### *The Original Location of Justice and Concord*

The appendices to the city ledgers for the year 1646/1647 inform us quite specifically about the original setting of Van Thulden's first signed painting, *Justice and Concord* (1646). Among the payments to carpenter Dirck van der Lith is one on June 13, 1647 for a strainer and frame that he made for an overmantel painting in the *raadkamer* (councilors' room).<sup>48</sup> The term *raadkamer* is used interchangeably with *schepenkamer* (aldermen's room) in archival documents. This latter room, 'a large and beautiful aldermen's room with a large retreat room' is praised by chorographer Jacob van Oudenhoven (1601-1690) for its beauty in his *Beschryvinge der stad ende Meyere van 's Hertogen-Bossche* of 1649.<sup>49</sup> A survey of the appendices to the city ledgers before 1670 indicates that this room, along with a significant part of

<sup>46</sup> Van Drunen, *'s-Hertogenbosch*, 39-42, 334-336.

<sup>47</sup> Bimmel et al., *'s-Hertogenbosch, Griffiehuis*, 42, 346.

<sup>48</sup> 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. no. 1538, appendices to the city ledgers for the year 1646-1647: 'Den 13 juni [1647] een raemt ende lyst om de schilderij die voor de schorsteen inde raetkamer staet waer voor 2-0-0'.

<sup>49</sup> 'Een groote schoone Schepen-kamer/ met een groote Vertreck-kamer': Van Oudenhoven, *Beschryvinge*, 54. In the second edition of this chorography of 1670, Van Oudenhoven has significantly abbreviated his discussion of the town hall. He now remarks that the aldermen's chamber is located to the front of the building. This reflects the situation after the renovation of the 1670s: Van Oudenhoven, *Een nieuwe ende vermeerderde*, 14: 'in het inkomen is een grooten sael/ende is dan voorts verdeelt in verscheyde plaetsen/ ende voorraen is eene groote schooner kamer/ daer de Schepenen hare vergaderinge hebben.'

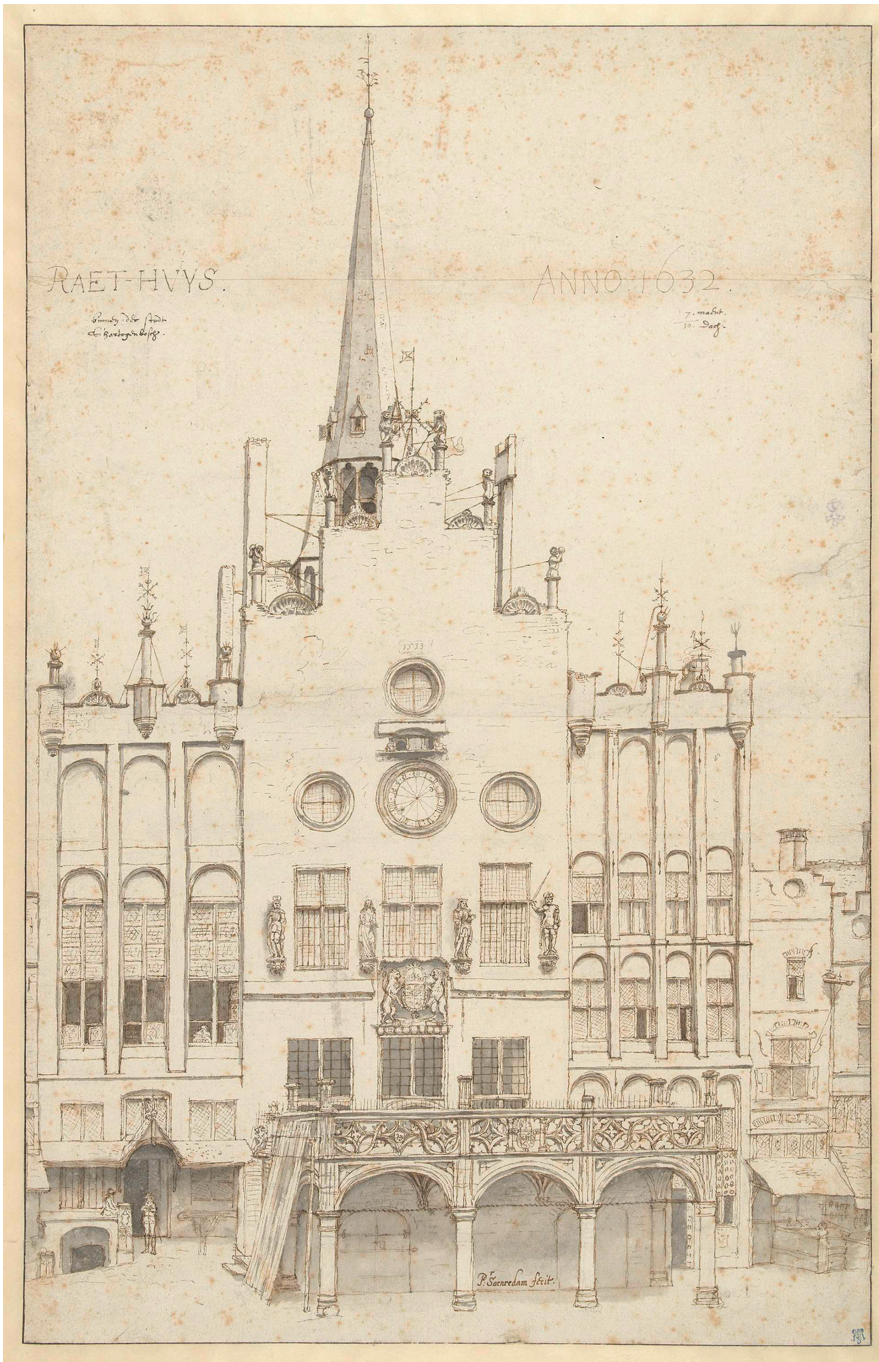


Fig. 13 Pieter Saenredam, Town hall of 's-Hertogenbosch, 1632, pen in brown, brush in gray, 48,5×37,1 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

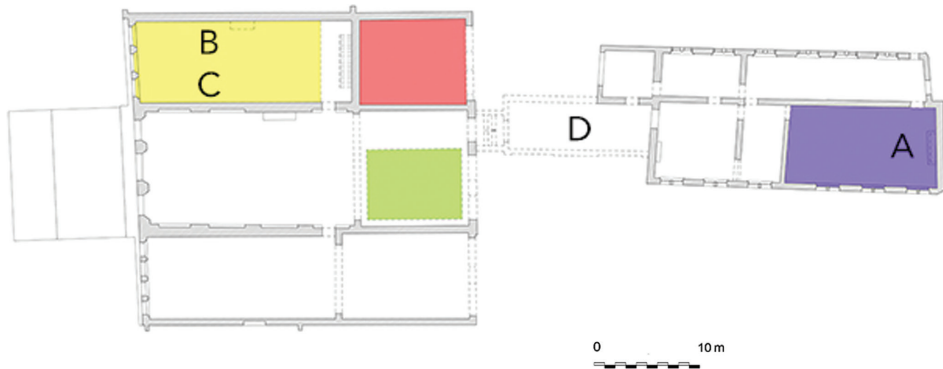


Fig. 14 Reconstructed plan of the 's-Hertogenbosch town hall complex situation c. 1650, with rooms indicated on the *bel-etage* of the *Herenhuis* and the second story of the *Gaffel-building* and *Griffiehuis*. Image by Maarten Jansen (Erfgoed 's-Hertogenbosch), based on research by the Municipal Heritage Department of 's-Hertogenbosch (Erfgoed 's-Hertogenbosch). Here indicating the approximate locations of the *Vierschaar* (green) on the *bel-etage* of the *Herenhuis*; the *Gaffelkamer* (yellow) and *Plattelandskamer* (red) on the second story of the *Gaffel-building* and the *Schepenkamer* (purple) on the second story of the *Griffiehuis*, and the former locations of *Justice and Concord* (A), The right of the four quarters of the *Meierij District* to appeal before the court of 's-Hertogenbosch (B), The request for admission to the Union (C). The location of *The Wildman* in this period is not known, but was possibly in the vicinity of the current corridor connecting the town hall to the *Griffiehuis* (D).

the city government's activities, was located on the second floor of the *Griffiehuis* (fig. 14).<sup>50</sup> The space will have served both the council, or *raad*, and the *schepenen* for the purpose of meetings and legal proceedings, and would have been at the heart of the city's government operations.<sup>51</sup> The allegory thus resonated with the justice administered within the room. The fact that the first painting Van Thulden completed would have been meant for the councilors'/aldermen's room (*raadkamer/schepenkamer*) further supports the hypothesis that his relative, alderman Hieronymus van Thulden, facilitated the commission.

Although *Justice and Concord* was dated a year before Van der Lith's work, it is quite possible that this painting was delivered in 1647, as indicated by the payment of five hundred guilders to Van Thulden in September 1647 for paintings 'done and supplied' ('gemaect ende geleverd').<sup>52</sup> The perspective of *Justice and Concord* is indeed consistent with a relatively high placement, as would be required for an *overmantel* painting. This can be demonstrated by the depiction of the figures and the scales, seen slightly

<sup>50</sup> The names and functions of the rooms described were determined by the extensive survey of Ester Vink of archival documents containing expenses relating to the town hall held in the 's-Hertogenbosch Municipal Archives (see note 2).

<sup>51</sup> This is reinforced by the fact that Van Oudenhoven does not mention a *raadkamer* in his list of rooms in the town hall: Van Oudenhoven, *Beschryvinge*. The shared use of space in town halls was not uncommon. For instance, the situation in Maastricht before the building of the 1655 town hall, see: Ottenheym, 'Het stadhuis', 35-36.

<sup>52</sup> See note 3.

Fig. 15 Cross section of the 's-Hertogenbosch main town hall complex before c. 1650, as seen from the market. Image by Maarten Jansen (Erfgoed 's-Hertogenbosch), based on research by the Municipal Heritage Department of 's-Hertogenbosch (Erfgoed 's-Hertogenbosch). Here indicating the location of the Gaffel-kamer (yellow) at the second story of the Gaffel-building, and the vierschaar and sael (green) at the bel-etage of the Herenhuis. Red lines indicate the outlines and floor levels of the building after the renovation of 1670.



from below, indicating a vantage point near the bottom of the painting. The light in the painting comes from the right, which means the work was placed to the left of the windows.

The councilors'/aldermen's room has seen many changes over the years and the city currently uses it as the *trouwzaal* – the room in which marriage ceremonies are conducted (figs. 17, 18). The beam and joist ceiling with decorative consoles has been largely preserved, however, and is still the same width (over six meters) and height (approximately 3.4 meters measured from below the joists) as it was in Van Thulden's day (fig. 19). The present fireplace in neo-rococo style, to the left of the windows, dates back to the late nineteenth century, but buildings archeology research has revealed that the smoke duct is in its original location, which means that the fireplace was in the same place during Van Thulden's time. The room currently has three modern, eighteenth-century style sash windows, but the position and size of the window openings have not changed (fig. 20). This means that the lighting in Van Thulden's painting corresponded with the direction of the actual light, from the right.

The figures of *Justice and Concord* are placed very low in the composition while a black background rises up from behind them. Just above the figures' heads is a visible seam,



Fig. 16 Plan of the (1) bel-etaage of the 's-Hertogenbosch main town hall complex and second story of the Griffiehuis, and (2) the second story of the main town hall complex, showing the building's internal division after the renovations of 1670 and 1693. Image by Maarten Jansen (Erfgoed 's-Hertogenbosch), based on research by the Municipal Heritage Department of 's-Hertogenbosch (Erfgoed 's-Hertogenbosch). Here indicating the location of the vierschaar (lime green) and trouwzaal (purple), centrale hal (blue), burgemeesterskamer (turquoise), raadzaal (orange), and stairwells (grey), and the current locations of Justice and Concord (A), The right of the four quarters of the Meierij District to appeal before the court of 's-Hertogenbosch (B), The request for admission to the Union (C), Wildman (D) and Two Lions (E).

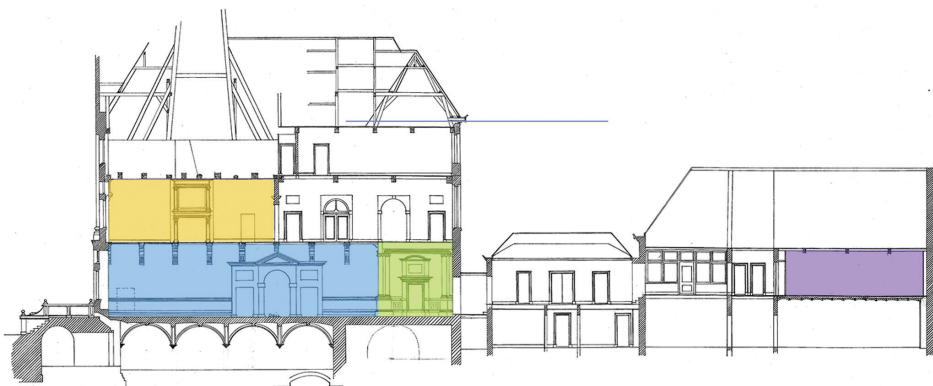


Fig. 17 Longitudinal cross section of the 's-Hertogenbosch town hall after 1670 (section c. 1930s), showing the height of the different building levels in relation to doors and chimney mantels. Here indicating the location of the vierschaar (lime green) and trouwzaal (purple), centrale hal (blue), and raadzaal (orange). Archive, Erfgoed 's-Hertogenbosch, with digital manipulation: L. de Moor.



Fig. 18 View of the current wedding room (trouwzaal). Photo: Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.



Fig. 19 Original consoles below the support beams. Photo: Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.



Fig. 20 View of the west wall of the Griffie-building, showing the original muntins on the ground floor. Brick patterns and natural stone ornaments indicate the original window openings, which correspond with the location of the current windows. Photo: A.J.M. van de Meerendonk.



indicating the presence of a strip of canvas at the top approximately thirty centimeters high; this in turn is made of two pieces with a vertical seam. The compositional imbalance, combined with the fact that Van Thulden consistently used large pieces of canvas for his other paintings in the town hall, led to the suspicion that the top part of the canvas was added at a later date and that the composition originally ended immediately above the two women.<sup>53</sup> Paint cross sections indicate that this is indeed the case. The narrow strip of canvas was not sewn on the top until after the original composition on the broad piece of canvas was finished and varnished. The narrow strip was then given a beige ground, applied a little over the seam in order to conceal it. The added strip was covered with a dark paint, which was – at least in part – painted over the brown background of the original composition (fig. 21).<sup>54</sup> This layer was subsequently covered by a blackish overpainting, which has been restored at a later date with numerous black retouches. These are also prevalent along the contours of the figures, resulting in their current hard, ‘cut-out’ appearance. The original composition of *Justice and Concord* was very low, with the heads of both figures nearly reaching the upper edge of the canvas (fig. 22). This scheme is in fact very reminiscent of the overmantel painting *Scaldis and Antverpia* by Abraham Janssen (1571/75-1632) in the Antwerp Town Hall, which similarly depicts two sculptural figures tightly contained in a horizontal pictorial frame (fig. 23). This work may have served as an exemplary precedent for Van Thulden’s own challenge to produce an overmantel painting in a town hall setting that supported the political ambitions of its city government.<sup>55</sup>

From shortened joists in the ceiling we can deduce that the chimney breast was approximately half a meter deep and 2,2 meters wide. Van Thulden’s canvas, which is 1,92 meters wide, therefore spanned most of the width of the chimney breast. Thanks to archival records, we are well informed about what the fireplace looked like and how the originally lower *Justice and Concord* was placed above it. The city ledgers tell us that

53 Both Van Thulden’s 240-centimeter-high allegories in the town hall are made of two horizontal strips of more or less equal width. *Justice and Concord* could have easily been made with only one canvas strip, given its moderate height of 147 cm. Bolts of canvas more than two meters wide were already available around the middle of the seventeenth century: Van Eikema Hommes, *Art and Allegiance*, 49-51.

54 Four cross sections were taken from the dark background – one from the upper strip of canvas just above the seam, and three from the lower, broader piece of canvas: one just below the seam, one from the black overpainting along the contour of *Concord*, and one along the left edge of the canvas. The samples show that the lower portion of the painting has a double ground (an initial layer of chalk with some charcoal black, and a second gray layer with predominantly lead white, coarse charcoal black and chalk). The original background paint consists of several light warm brown paint layers with a dark brownish-red transparent layer on top. Superimposed on these layers is an old layer of varnish followed by different phases of overpainting. The paint layers of the small strip of canvas on top are very different. The overpainting is present here as well, but the double ground, brown paint layers of the background, and old varnish are missing. Instead, only a dark paint layer consisting of mostly charcoal black and bone black is found on top of a beige paint composed of lead white, charcoal black and brown and yellow earth and umber. These two layers are also present in the paint sample that was taken just below the seam in the lower piece of canvas. Here, however, they are superimposed on the original background paint with old varnish and precede the later overpainting.

55 About the political function of Janssen’s painting: Vander Auwera, ‘Rubens’ Adoration’. See also Długaczyc, *Der Waffensteinstand*, 184-196.

Fig. 21 Schematic overview of the paint layers found along the horizontal seam connecting the original composition of Van Thulden's Justice and Concord (see fig. 1) with the strip of canvas which was stitched on top, most likely in 1675. Image: Margriet van Eikema Hommes.

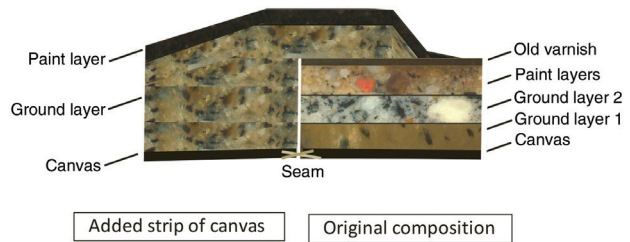


Fig. 22 Digital reconstruction of Justice and Concord (fig. 1) with its original dimensions. In the image the background is rendered with a somewhat lighter and browner color. Its precise tone and hue, however, are not known. Further technical research may be able to shed light on this in the future. The original tone of the green dress and cushion was presumably more intense and cool than in its present appearance, which has been indicated in this reconstruction; though the exact value of the original green is not known. Digital manipulation: L. de Moor.

Fig. 23 Abraham Janssens, Scaldis et Antverpia, 1609, panel, 174×308 cm, Antwerp, Royal Museum for Fine Arts. Lukas-Art in Flanders, photo: Hugo Maertens.



a mantelpiece of *wagenschot* – planks of quarter-sawn oak – ‘the ends corniced in the Doric order’ was constructed in 1637, in addition to a doorway in a matching style.<sup>56</sup> New supporting columns in stone with consoles were also made.<sup>57</sup> When Van Thulden’s painting was installed ten years later, the fireplace was upgraded again. Its back wall was renewed with seventy-eight tiles and an iron fire back plaque (*vuurplaat*) from Amsterdam, while the stonemason carried out work on the supporting stone columns, which were subsequently painted gray (*grauw*) together with the mantelpiece.<sup>58</sup> The two guilders Van der Lith was paid in 1647 for both a strainer and frame indicate that the frame for *Justice and Concord* must have been quite simple: payments to the same carpenter show that his strainers typically cost two guilders, while frames ranged between six and twelve guilders.<sup>59</sup>

The *schepenkamer* must have had stone mullions similar to those that can still be found on the ground floor of the *griffie* building. Archival records inform us that the room must have had a predominantly wooden interior in Van Thulden’s time, adorned with wainscot paneling that had been installed in 1579 and carved consoles below the support beams in the ceiling (1562-1563; still *in situ*, fig. 19).<sup>60</sup> A digital reconstruction based on the above information provides an impression of Van Thulden’s overmantel painting as it was situated in the room during this period, and helps us visualize how the pictorial aspects of the work were designed in relation to the room’s architecture (fig. 24). The pictorial lighting, which, as we have seen, corresponded to the natural light, the warm dark background against which the figures are contrasted, the low horizon, and the tightly framed format of the scene together produce a strong three-dimensional effect.

56 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. nos. 1488 and 1528: ‘teynden gecornist naer d’ordre van Dorica’. This Doric mantelpiece was seen *in situ* around 1780 by Van Heurn, who stated that ‘The fireplace has a frame [frieze] in the Doric order’ (‘De schoorsteen heeft ene lijst van de Dorische bouworde’). The authors have used a partial transcription of Van Heurn’s manuscript that was published in a limited edition on the occasion of Ad van Drunen’s retirement: Van Heurn, *Beschrijving*, 65 [fol. 265].

57 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. nos. 1488 and 1528. It concerns a payment in 1637 to the stonemason for ‘mantel pillars, swan necks, cartouches’ (‘schoure pilarnen, swaenen halsken, cartoessen’). A swan neck here presumably means a curved console, like the sort of curved corbel that was also known as a swan neck corbel (‘zwanenhalskorbel’) in the Netherlands. What exactly is meant by ‘cartoessen’ (cartouches) in the ledger is unclear. Other stone decorations may have been delivered at this time, either for the mantle or a different position in the room. In the ledger of 1562/1563 (see note 60), ten ‘cortousen’ were made to be placed below the six beams in this room, but they were carved out of wood.

58 For the payments to stonemason Thomas Willems, see 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. nos. 1497 and 1537; for the painting of the columns and mantelpiece, and new tiles and fire back plaque see OSA inv. nos. 1498 and 1538. The ledger which documents the purchase of the *vuurplaat* does not explicitly state that it was intended for the fireplace in the aldermen’s room, but this is indicated by the purchase of seventy-eight tiles for this room in the same period. These tiles were probably used in the back wall of the fireplace to flank its fire back in three rows of thirteen tiles.

59 See notes 28, 63 and 65.

60 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. no. 1430; inv. no. 1414.



Fig. 24 Digital reconstruction of the aldermen's room (schepenkamer) shortly after 1646, based on archival evidence (see note 2), building-archeological research of the Heritage Department of 's-Hertogenbosch (Erfgoed 's-Hertogenbosch), and material-technical research of Van Thulden's Justice and Concord (fig. 1). Digital manipulation: Maarten Jansen (Erfgoed 's-Hertogenbosch).

*Van Thulden's Justice and Concord is shown in its original lower format and with a dark brown background. The pictorial lighting corresponds with the natural light in the room. The painting has been given a modest frame and takes up almost the entire width of the plastered chimney breast. The stone muntins have been reconstructed based on original examples found on the Griffiehuys' ground floor level (fig. 20). The original beam and joists ceiling is mostly preserved and therefore has been used for this reconstruction. Trimmer joists found in this ceiling indicated the width and depth of the represented chimney breast. The wooden mantel has a cornice in the Doric order and stone Doric columns with so called "swan neck" consoles, described in archival records, which further indicate that the mantel, columns and consoles were painted grey. Based on a documented 'fire plaque' (vuurplaat), a floor plate and black fire back plaque have also been included in the reconstruction. The 78 tiles delivered for the room's fireplace in 1647 have been ordered in rows of thirteen, flanking the fire back plaque. The archival records further show that the room had a tile floor, reconstructed here in the form of a period-appropriate grey and red tile floor with a white tile molding, and make mention of wooden wainscot paneling and furniture, including a prominent boardroom table. Because precise information about the appearance of those elements is not available, however, they have not been included in this reconstruction.*

*Justice and Concord must have been enlarged when it was relocated to what is now the council hall (raadzaal) (figs. 7, 16). This probably happened in 1675, when painter Jacobus de Langhe (1648-1693) was paid for 'stitching on' ('aen lassen') an unspecified*

painting.<sup>61</sup> The work was also given its current frame in the council hall; the carving, like that of the chimney itself, is characteristic of the 1670s.<sup>62</sup> This room is 4,6 meters high, approximately 1,2 meters higher than the former councilors'/aldermen's room in the *griffie*, which could explain the desire to enlarge the composition.

### *The Original Location of the Two Large Allegories*

The appendices to the city ledgers also reveal the locations of Van Thulden's *The Right of the Four District Quarters* (1647) and *The Request for Admission to the Union* (1650). On February 27, 1646 Dirck van der Lith earned twelve stivers for mounting a painting located 'in the Gaffel', the house on the left in Saenredam's drawing of the town hall complex (fig. 13), and ten guilders on March 8 for making a large black frame around it.<sup>63</sup> It is specified that the expenses regarding the painting's mounting and framing should be addressed to 'those who employed him'.<sup>64</sup> On September 23, 1650, Van der Lith received payments again: two guilders and ten stivers for making a large strainer (*een groot raemt*) for a painting, as ordered by 'Sr. Thulde', in addition to a further twelve guilders for another 'large black frame'.<sup>65</sup> Coinciding with these payments to Van der Lith, locksmith Anthoni Claessen also received payments on April 16, 1646 and October 15, 1650 for hangers to secure the paintings (*ogen* and *houvasten*), again 'in the Gaffel'.<sup>66</sup>

These payments to Van der Lith and Claessen demonstrate that in 1646 and 1650 two large paintings received the exact same treatment in terms of framing and mounting, as would be expected for pendants. Since Van Thulden is mentioned by name in 1650, the painting in question must be *The Request for Admission*, signed that year, and consequently the payments

61 '[Jacobus] de Langh' was paid six guilders for cleaning two paintings as well as 'the stitching on' of another painting: 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. nos. 1566 and 1707: 'Comt voort' schoonmaken van twee schilderijen ende aenlassen van noch een door de Lange gedaen ende verdient 6-0-0.'

62 Based on information kindly provided by Ada de Wit, PhD candidate at Radboud University Nijmegen.

63 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. no. 1537, appendices to the city ledgers for the year 1645-1646: 'Den 8 Meert [1646] gemaect een groote swarte lijst om een schilderij hangende op de Gaffel daer voor 10-0-0/ Noch aen de selfde schildery verdient vant op spannen 0-12-0'; The payments are repeated a year later: OSA inv. no. 1538, appendices to the city ledgers for the year 1646-1647: 'Den 27 Februarij [1646] verdient van t'opspannen vande schilderij die op de Gaffel hanckt 0-12-0/ Den 8 Meert aen de selvde schilderij een groote lijst gemaect waer voor 10-0-0.'

64 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. no. 1537, appendices to the city ledgers for the year 1645-1646: 'Desen [items listed in connection to the painting] aengaende sich te addresseren aen dier jenigen die hem te werck hebben gestelt.'

65 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. no. 1541, appendices to the city ledgers for the year 1649/1650. Sept 23, 1650: 'Noch gemaect een groot raemt tot een schilderij door last van Sr. Thulde daer voor 2-10-0/ Ende daerom een groote swarte lijst daer voor 12-0-0.' The strainer was apparently requested by Theodor van Thulden. It is less likely that the aforementioned Hieronymus van Thulden, who had been an alderman in 1646, the year of the commission, is meant here, as he no longer held a position in the city magistracy in 1650.

66 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. no. 1537, appendices to the city ledgers for the years 1645/1646: '16. [April 1646] dito op de Gaffel opt Stadhuijs twee nieuwe oogen & twee nieuwe houvaste gemaect aen nieuwe schilderije t'same 0-18-0.' OSA inv. no. 1543, appendices to the city ledgers for the years 1651/1652: 'Item [October 15, 1650] op de gaffel aen een schijlderij twe groote houvaste met twe groote oogen. Dat same 0-17-0/ Item noch 2 stuijver nagel daertoe gedaen 0-2-0.'

from 1646 concern *The Right of the Four District Quarters*.<sup>67</sup> Both paintings were given black frames, recalling the black frame already represented in the Vienna *modello* (fig. 12a, 12b).

In his description of the town hall Van Oudenhoven singles out the 'Gaffel Room', which – as the name indicates – was located in the Gaffel building. According to Van Oudenhoven, the room had traditionally been used for meetings of a society of knights and nobles in the *Meierij* called *Gaffelbroeders*.<sup>68</sup> In Van Thulden's time, however, the room seems to have functioned as the building's main reception and banquet room. Not unlike examples in other cities, 's-Hertogenbosch maintained spaces specifically for the purpose of receiving, lodging and entertaining important visitors, which probably included delegates from other cities, and possibly even The Hague.<sup>69</sup>

Buildings archeology research has revealed that the Gaffel was over six meters wide.<sup>70</sup> It consisted of a front part, a *voorhuis*, on the market side, which was about eighteen meters long, and an *achterhuis*, a building in the rear, about eight meters long. Information in the ledgers places the Gaffel Room on the second floor on the market side of the building where it must have occupied almost the entire depth of the building (fig. 14).<sup>71</sup> Saenredam's drawing of the facade of the Gaffel shows very tall windows on the second floor, indicating that the building level of the *voorhuis* – and hence the Gaffel Room – was roughly six meters high (figs. 13, 15). In the city ledgers, the addition 'in the Gaffel' was commonly used as shorthand for the Gaffel Room, so that the two allegories must have been designed for this room.<sup>72</sup>

The two allegories depict two opposite directions in lighting: in *The Right of the Four District Quarters* it comes from the right, and in *The Request for Admission* from the left. It is therefore most likely that the paintings were placed opposite one another on either side of the windows: *The Right of the Four District Quarters* on the west wall and *The Request for Admission* on the building's east wall. In this configuration, the figure groups in both paintings would have seemed to move from the light towards the enthroned personifications of the city and the Republic respectively.

The horizon in both allegories can be found approximately 95 centimeters from the bottom of the composition. When the horizon in the painting corresponds to the viewer's

<sup>67</sup> It is surprising that the payments connected to the earlier painting are documented in 1646, since Van Thulden dated his canvas in 1647. Apparently there is a discrepancy here between the artist's date and the actual date of installation.

<sup>68</sup> Van Oudenhoven, *Beschryvinge*, 54.

<sup>69</sup> The reception and entertainment of politically significant visitors was an important, and often costly, aspect of early modern city government. While 's-Hertogenbosch had an 'in-house' approach, the civic militia *Doelen* reception halls were used for similar purposes in Amsterdam. See Van Gent and Hell, 'De Doelen'.

<sup>70</sup> Research in the building's basement has revealed that the old walls of the *voorhuis* and *achterhuis* of the Gaffel building survive. See also Van Drunen, 's-Hertogenbosch', 324.

<sup>71</sup> See notes 2 and 50. The internal walls and division of rooms on the second story of the Gaffel building's *voorhuis*, and therefore the precise dimensions of the Gaffel Room are not known. However, apart from this room there was probably only a staircase in the rear, because archival sources mention no additional rooms in connection with the Gaffel *voorhuis* other than the Gaffel Room. This staircase must have been much narrower than the present stairs, which date to the 1670s. Vink, *De inrichting*, see note 2.

<sup>72</sup> In addition to the Gaffel Room Van Oudenhoven also mentioned one other room of importance in the Gaffel building, the *Plattelands-kamer* (rural room). This reception room was located at the second floor of the *achterhuis*. The *Plattelands-kamer* seems to have usually been specified by name in the city ledgers: Vink, *De inrichting*, see note 2.

eye level, the illusion of pictorial space in the composition is most convincing. It is therefore quite likely that the works were hung at this level which, assuming a height of 160-170 centimeters for the average viewer's eye level, would be consistent with a placement of about 70 centimeters above the floor.

Van Thulden's paintings, in this original situation, would have been integrated in a monumental and very decorative interior. The Gaffel Room was very well lit by large windows on the market side. These were decorated with various coats of arms in stained glass, which had been updated after the 1629 shift in power.<sup>73</sup> Heraldic themes also figured prominently in the room's interior decoration, as is evidenced by payments made to Jan Reynders Cloot for painted crests (1605-1606) and in 1641 for green woolen cloth (*laken*) cushions with the city's coat of arms.<sup>74</sup> The large format of Van Thulden's canvases would have been ideal for the tall, bright Gaffel Room and for the prominent guests – city, *Meerij* and government officials – who made up their seventeenth-century audience. The coats of arms represented prominently in the paintings would have established firm links with the room's emphasis on heraldic themes.

The Gaffel Room had a tiled floor and a large fireplace decorated with painted tiles.<sup>75</sup> The room featured a large table and a sideboard. Twenty-four new Spanish chairs upholstered in green woolen cloth were added in 1636, and reupholstered in the same fabric ten years later.<sup>76</sup> The room was predominantly decorated in shades of green: in 1643 it was painted green and 'stone green' (*steengroen*) and just prior to the arrival of Van Thulden's allegories in 1645, Jan Janss Kerff's supplied three green kersey curtains and curtain rails for the three windows.<sup>77</sup> In the same year the walls were decorated with woolen cloth (*laken*) which was

73 These windows were damaged, presumably during the siege of 1629. 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. nos. 1481 and 1521, city ledgers and appendices for the year 1629/1630. In 1632 the glass manufacturer changed the coats of arms in the windows. OSA inv. nos. 1484 and 1524 city ledgers and appendices for the year 1632/1633.

74 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. no. 1457 the city ledgers for the year 1605/1606 contain payments to painter Jan Reynders Cloot for painted crests (these may be identified with painted crests preserved in the Noordbrabants Museum, inv. nos. 07109 and 07110); OSA inv. no. 1537, appendices to the city ledgers for 1645/1646 show that green cushions with the city coat of arms were purchased in 1641.

75 A large number of tiles were delivered for the Gaffel between 1548 and 1551 and again in 1567/1568. 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. no. 1400, city ledgers for 1548/1549, inv. no. 1402 for 1550/1551, inv. no. 1419 for 1567/1568. Painted tiles are used for the fireplaces of both the Gaffel Room and *Plattelands-kamer* in 1635. OSA inv. no. 1526, appendices to the city ledgers for 1634/1635. Where the fireplace was located cannot be determined with certainty. Buildings archeology research on the ground floor of the Gaffel building uncovered traces of a fireplace on the east (outer) wall of the building. This fireplace was located almost ten meters deep in the building. It is quite possible that the smoke duct of this fireplace was also used at some point for the Gaffel Room, in which case that fireplace was located roughly halfway into this room. Based on Saenredam's drawing, however, the possibility of a fireplace on the west (inner) wall cannot be ruled out.

76 Old 'fixed seats' (*vaste gestoelten*) that likely formed part of the sixteenth-century wainscot paneling were removed by carpenter Hendrick Gerits van der Lith in 1636, at which time twenty-four new Spanish chairs were purchased and the table was enlarged. 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. no. 1528. See for the reupholstering 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. nos. 1498 and 1538. Spanish chairs have solid upholstery secured with decorative nails and were extremely fashionable in Van Thulden's time. This luxurious chair, which could feature carved ornamentation, was often purchased for board rooms: Fock, '1600-1650', 41.

77 Anthoni Goossens was paid fl. 38-15-00 for painting in the Gaffel's '*Herenkamer*' in 1643: 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. nos. 1594 and 1634. For the payment to Jan Janss Kerff's, see 's-Hertogenbosch,





Fig. 25 Digital impression of the Gaffel-kamer with Van Thulden's *The right of the four quarters* (fig. 2) and *The request for admission to the Union* (fig. 3), based on archival evidence (see note 2), building-archeological research of the Heritage Department of 's-Hertogenbosch (Erfgoed 's-Hertogenbosch), and stylistic analysis of Van Thulden's paintings. Digital manipulation: Maarten Jansen (Erfgoed 's-Hertogenbosch). Because precise information about the appearance of the majority of the room's interior elements is not available, they have only been indicated schematically and in grey tints. Van Thulden's *The right of the four quarters* and *The request for admission to the Union* have been placed to either side of the windows, so that the pictorial lighting in the paintings, respectively from the right and from the left, corresponds with the natural light in the room. The canvases are shown at a relative height of c. 70 centimeters from the floor, which allows the horizon in the painting to correspond with the viewer's eye level. Archival records from 1645 make mention of a green woolen wall covering. Although we do not know how this fabric was applied, it was likely held in place by the long battens mentioned in archival sources that same year, and as such created a pleasantly proportioned background for Van Thulden's canvases.

held in place by two long wooden battens for which Dirck van der Lith was paid in 1646.<sup>78</sup> While the ledgers do not specify how the green woolen cloth was applied to the walls in 1645, it seems likely that it was only applied up to a certain height of the wall, thus creating a pleasantly proportioned background for Van Thulden's canvases (fig. 25).<sup>79</sup>

Municipal Archive, OSA inv. nos. 1497 and 1537.

<sup>78</sup> Dirck van der Lith was paid April 9, 1646 for two long battens (*lijsten*) used for wall hangings: 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. nos. 1497 and 1537, city ledgers and appendices for the year 1645/1646.

<sup>79</sup> When the Gaffel Room had been transformed after 1670 a similar wall division was maintained, as evidenced by a 1693 ledger documenting payments for the purchase of green wall coverings (October 8) and painting the

### *The Original Location of the Wildman*

The location of Van Thulden's fourth painting, the *Wildman*, cannot be pinpointed with certainty. No archival records referring to its intended location have survived. The pictorial lighting from the right does indicate that the work was meant to be placed to the left of the windows. It was probably never meant as an overmantel painting. We do not view this figure from below, but rather from slightly above, indicating that its position on the wall must have been originally lower. Its proposed date of around 1650 coincides with the relocation and new design of the *vierschuur*, situated in the rear of the 'large hall' (*grooten Saal*) on the *bel-etage* of the *Herenhuis*.<sup>80</sup> A painting could well have been ordered as part of this renovation, presumably in response to the political developments outlined earlier.<sup>81</sup> Another possibility is that the painting was located in a part of the town hall behind the *vierschuur*. In 1693, when its strainer was reduced in size, several offices had to make way for a new corridor connecting the *bel-etage* of the *Herenhuis* to the *Griffiehuis*, the so-called *Romangalerij* designed by Jacob Roman (1640-1716) (figs. 16, 17).<sup>82</sup> We might therefore have to look for its original location in these quarters.

### *With One Foot in the Golden Age? A New Reading of Justice and Concord*

While Van Thulden's paintings all communicated quite specifically the importance of regional and national unity to strength and prosperity, a closer examination of *Justice and Concord* in particular reveals another layer of meaning. For this the interior of the room in which the painting was originally placed, the *schepenkamer*, is highly relevant.

A painted edge, reminiscent of a painting frame, divides the pictorial space of *Justice and Concord* into a foreground and background. Justice sits in the foreground on a cushion, while Unity is seated on top of this depicted edge. Justice has crossed one leg over the other, with one bare foot placed on the ground and its missing shoe placed conspicuously next to it. What could this detail mean?

Van Oudenhoven provides a clue by referring to an intriguing Latin inscription at the entrance of the aldermen's room ('*schepenkamer*')

*Has Ducis è Sylva sedes Astraea poposcit  
Ut daret explicito cortice jura Themis  
Astraea demanded this seat from 's-Hertogenbosch  
for Themis to judge after explaining the law<sup>83</sup>*

wall 'above the wall covering' (*boven het behang*) in white (October 12). 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA, inv. nos. 1585 and 1726. Such a wall division can be seen in Hendrick Pot, *Lady and Gentleman in an Interior* c. 1632, panel 78,4×96,0 cm, Royal Collection.

<sup>80</sup> The current *vierschuur* dates from 1679-1680. Vink, *De inrichting*, see note 2.

<sup>81</sup> Designs for the new *vierschuur* were made in 1650 by carpenter ('*schrijnwerker*') Franchois Symons and wood arrived from Dordrecht the same year: 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. no. 1541. Limestone for the *vierschuur* was supplied by stonemason Thomas Willems in 1651: OSA inv. no. 1542.

<sup>82</sup> Kolman, *Monumenten*, 215; Vink, *De inrichting*, see note 2.

<sup>83</sup> Van Oudenhoven, *Beschryvinge*, 82. The original Latin presents a few complications. The verse is an elegiac couplet. As a result, the plural *sedes* in the first line has been used with poetic license here; adherence to metric

In mythology, Astraea, who was thought to be a daughter of Zeus, was considered a personification of Justice, as was her mother Themis. She had been said to have left earth in disappointment during the Iron Age and to have taken up a place among the stars as the constellation Virgo, while awaiting a new golden age to return to earth.<sup>84</sup> In early modern Europe, the allegorical comparison of those in power to Astraea had a long tradition and the theme was in vogue in the Dutch Republic as well.<sup>85</sup>

The fact that Van Oudenhoven made sure to record the verse on the entrance to the aldermen's room indicates its importance as a motto. In this light, we need to explore whether the Justice figure that Van Thulden depicted in this painting can be identified as the Astraea demanding a seat in 's-Hertogenbosch mentioned in the Latin inscription. In the painting a seat is in fact depicted in the form of a green cushion. The color green, as we saw, figured prominently in the ledgers of the Gaffel Room as well as the *schepenkamer*. In 1633, Spanish chairs with green woolen cloth (*laken*) upholstery featuring the city coat of arms had been acquired from Lille for this room.<sup>86</sup> And two years before Van Thulden's painting was installed, brand-new green cushions and a matching tablecloth were acquired by the city for the 'room of the gentlemen aldermen'.<sup>87</sup> It is therefore hardly a coincidence that Van Thulden also painted a green cushion. He had studied the interior of the *schepenkamer* carefully, witness his choice of lighting and horizon in his painting (fig. 22).

The painted architectural frame with the green cushion and Justice placed outside it makes the figures appear to transcend the boundaries of the painted surface, explicitly showing how the painting meant to evoke the effect of both women (but Justice, or Astraea, in particular) entering into the real world of the meeting room. As a *trompe l'oeil* effect this allegorical figure has been given 'a seat at the table' which, quite significantly, placed her on the side where archival records show the highest ranking official, either the

rule dictates that the singular *sedem* in conjunction with a word commencing with a vowel (as *Astraea* does) should be elided to *sed*, but this would have left the dactylic hexameter which forms the first half of the couplet one syllable short. *Cortice* in the second line, stemming from *cortex* (bark, outer layer), is completely out of context here and is in all likelihood a misspelling, either by Van Oudenhoven or the printer of the text, of the more appropriate *codice*, which in this context makes reference to written law. We are very grateful to dr. Dirk van Miert, Utrecht University, for his help in translating and interpreting the Latin verse.

**84** Yates, *Astraea*; De Armas, *The Return*. In Van Thulden's Vienna *modello* (fig. 12a) Virgo is accompanied by the signs Leo and Libra which makes it especially significant that the Unity figure on Justice's right in *Justice and Concord* is clad in a lion's skin.

**85** Yates, *Astraea*. The theme was alluded to in the Oranjezaal: Brenninkmeyer-De Rooij, 'Notities' 151-155; Van Eikema Hommes, 'Een triomftocht', 223-224.

**86** 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. no. 1528; OSA inv. nos. 1484 and 1524. At least seven of these chairs were upholstered in green woolen cloth (*laken*). On Spanish chairs, note 76.

**87** 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA, city ledgers for the years 1644/1645, inv. no. 1496, fol. 264 verso: 'Item aen Jan Jansz Kerffs, tot betalinge van een nieuw groen tafelleet, met een dosijn groen kussens mette toebehoorten, ende werkloon, volgens declaratie ende ordonantie in date 30 Sept 1645 ende quitancie betaelt.'; OSA, inv. no. 1536, appendices to the city ledgers 1644/1645. With ordinance of September 30 1645: 'Gemaect vor de here Schepenen Caemer 18 nieuwe cussens en een nieuwe taeffel cleet daer toe gehadt 12 elle groen laeken de el 5 gl 5 st -- 63-0-0/ tot de kussens gehadt 18 rooije felle -- 8-2-0/ En de ieder kussen 3 pont vere het pont 8 st -- 21-12-0/ Vorde binnenkussens gegeven 9-0-0/ Van maeken van ieder cussen 5 st -- 4-10-0.'

bailiff (*schout*) or presiding alderman (*president schepen*) was seated during meetings.<sup>88</sup> The conspicuous detail of the figure's bare foot resting on the ground outside the painted frame reinforces this effect and may also allude to the return of Astraea to earth, announcing the dawn of a new golden age. In light of the city's ambitions in the late 1640s, this golden age was thought to coincide with the end of the war and the province's incorporation into the prosperous Republic, while the city aldermen would have identified with the positive qualities needed to bring about its dawn. The optimism so strikingly depicted in Van Thulden's paintings was slightly premature in this case – the provincial autonomy of *Staats-Brabant* was not actually achieved until 1796.<sup>89</sup>

### *Epilogue: A New Situation after 1670*

The paintings did not remain in their original setting for long. During the 1670s renovation, the three buildings comprising the town hall complex on the market side were given a unifying facade, their floors were brought to a similar level, and new partition walls and passageways were constructed. The council chamber/hall (*raadzaal*) where *Justice and Concord* is located nowadays was created in the 1670s as the *groot college* (figs. 7, 16) – a large meeting and reception room on the market side on the second story of the former *Herenhuis*.<sup>90</sup> It is one of the most splendid rooms in the town hall, featuring full wall tapestries with landscapes (1679) by Maximiliaan van der Gucht (1603-1689).<sup>91</sup> During the 1670s, the ceiling of the room was raised to its present 4,6 meters and its wooden fireplace with pilasters, consoles and reliefs with putti was constructed by Gijsbert ter Lip.<sup>92</sup> Van Thulden's enlarged *Justice and Concord* is placed between pilasters in a prominently gilded carved frame that makes its *trompe l'oeil* effect hard to discern.<sup>93</sup> In its new setting, the

<sup>88</sup> In the same year *Justice and Concord* is dated (1646) a dispute erupted about the proper seating at the table in the *schepenkamer*. The table in the period before 1629 had been placed across the fireplace with the head of the table turned towards the windows, but in 1646 the table was placed lengthwise in the room ('gestelt geworden vanden schoorsteen aft midden in de kaemer') with four chairs on each side of the table for the aldermen, and one at the head of the table for the presiding alderman, leading to a new protocol to follow when the bailiff was present ('aen wedersyden van de taeffel stonden vier stoelen, ende aen t boveneynde eenen stoel wesende die van den President ende soo wanneer den hoochschoute binnen quam tot verrichtinge van eenige saecken syn ampt raeckende, dat alsdan syne stoel werde geset op het front van de taeffel op de boven hant van den President'). OSA inv. no. 278, resolutions, reg. Beresteyn 1645-1646, fol. 152r-156r, 163v-167v; OSA inv. no. 283, resolutions, reg. Beresteyn 1649-1651, fol. 21r-22r, 23v, 43v, 44r.

<sup>89</sup> Christ, *De Brabantsche*, 214-215, 239-264, 285-287.

<sup>90</sup> Vink, *De inrichting*, see note 2; Van Heurn, *Beschrijving der geestelyke*, cited in Van Sasse van Ysselt, *De voorname huizen*, III, 471.

<sup>91</sup> Kalf, *Waar legwerk hangt*, I, 132-133. About the room's painted ceiling: Van Drunen et al., 'Plafondschilderingen'.

<sup>92</sup> Van Drunen et al., 'Plafondschilderingen'.

<sup>93</sup> 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. nos. 1584 and 1725. It is not known if the wooden fireplace was originally painted, but in 1693 Elias van Nijmegen (1667-1755) of Rotterdam painted the mantelpiece and chimney breast, including their pilasters and cornices, in white and red imitation marble, and gilded the fireplace's capitals, bases and frieze, and painting's frame.

painting is positioned with the windows to its left, contradicting the situation in the old *schepenkamer* (fig. 24), so that the natural and pictorial light are no longer congruent.

The current burgomaster's chamber (*burgemeesterskamer*; figs. 8, 9, 16) where *The Right of the Four District Quarters*, *The Request for Admission* and *Wildman* can be found, was created in more or less the same location as the Gaffel Room, although its space is not nearly as deep.<sup>94</sup> The room was first known as the 'small board room' (*klein college*), functioning as the counterpart to the *groot college* next door, and was designated as the burgomaster's chamber in or shortly after 1808. Van Thulden's allegories were most probably given a place in the *klein college* in 1675 and the *Wildman* was in all likelihood first placed here in 1693.<sup>95</sup> The paneling in which the paintings are presently placed was installed in 1744.<sup>96</sup> Since the two allegories are both positioned on the wall to the left of the windows, while the *Wildman* is an overmantel to the right of the windows, the lighting depicted is now inconsistent with Van Thulden's original concept. And because the large allegories are now placed at approximately 135 centimeters above the floor, their horizon is positioned well above eye level, compromising the pictorial illusion.

### Conclusion

While the circumstances under which Van Thulden's paintings for the 's-Hertogenbosch town hall were commissioned had previously been largely unknown, this article has shed light on the number of paintings produced and located them in both their political context and their physical surroundings in the pre-1670s town hall building. As a result, the *Wildman* has been re-attributed to Van Thulden, while it is now clear that *Two Lions* can no longer be accepted. The analysis of his three signed works, *Justice and Concord* (1646) *The Right of the Four Quarters* (1647) and *The Request for Admission to the Union* (1650), as well as the *Wildman* (c. 1650) and his remarkable *modello* in Vienna revealed a surprising focus on topical issues – the dispute over territory which assumed a pivotal role for this borderland city, in addition to the quest for provincial autonomy that gained momentum just as Van Thulden returned to his home town. His ability to devise a striking and erudite decoration program to elucidate the city's arguments, coupled with his family connections to the city magistracy in 1646, must have contributed to the city's decision to award the prestigious commission to him.

<sup>94</sup> The burgomaster's chamber is approximately 6 by 9,5 metres deep and its floor level is roughly two metres higher than the Gaffel Room.

<sup>95</sup> In 1675 the two large allegories were cleaned and secured with new hangers: note 61; 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. nos. 1568 and 1709. The paintings can be placed with certainty in the *klein college* in 1718 when they were restored by J. Helderbeeck, who specifies his work as follows: 'on August 9 [1718] in the *klein college* the cleaning and varnishing of two large works earned for labor and varnish three guilders each f. 6-0-0' ('den 9. Augustus [1718] in het klijn kolei die twee groote stucken schoon gemackt en geverniet aen het stuck verdient voor arbijt en vernis drie gulden f. 6-0-0') 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. nos. 1609 and 1750. For the *Wildman* see p. 264 and note 23.

<sup>96</sup> 's-Hertogenbosch, Municipal Archive, OSA inv. no. 1635 and 1776. Van Sasse van Ysselst, *De voorname huizen*, III, 469, erroneously reports that the paneling was installed in 1742.

While Van Thulden evidently proposed a large-scale design at first, the program was eventually realized in four individual paintings. In this way, ironically, the iconographic focus on the concept of unity, as presented in the *modello*, became spatially and compositionally disparate. We may wonder if the uncertainty of the political situation played a role in the design process of these painted decorations – the *modello* reflecting the triumphant mood immediately after the *Meierij* victory, followed by a more cautious approach to the designs when political progress stalled. *Concord and Justice* emphasized the importance of these qualities for the government, victory and prosperity of the Republic, a theme synthesized in the Vienna *modello*. In the *schepenkamer*, for the select audience of bailiff, aldermen, councilors and suspects, it could function as a guiding principle during deliberations in regard to the way justice was meant to be administered.

But the theme is articulated further in the other two allegories, which decorated a larger and more public room in a part of the building that had historically been associated with the *Meierij* district. Functioning as a space for reception, meetings and entertainment, the paintings would have been seen here by visiting delegates, prominent visitors to the city and local officials in attendance. Making an explicit case for provincial autonomy and continued local recognition, the iconography of the paintings was strategically chosen to underline the legal and geographical structures that had historically signified status, as well as position the city in a proposed future relationship to the political structures of the Dutch Republic. Both aspects were tied to the concept of strength through concord, which was the Republic's motto and resonated with the city's ambitions as well.

The paintings' significance, therefore, was contingent on concerns surrounding the political situation in the middle of the seventeenth century and on knowledge of the concept as it was originally proposed by Van Thulden in his *modello*. It also relied directly on the interplay between the paintings and their physical surroundings. The arguments they communicated were strategically chosen to complement the rhetorical power of the spaces they occupied, achieved by taking into consideration the position of the viewer and lighting, and even the interior decoration of the intended locations. Van Thulden's paintings were thus part of an interrelated decoration program that received its full significance only when understood comprehensively. The paintings' surroundings have changed considerably over time, starting only a few decades after their installation, when the town hall on the market side was renovated after 1670. As a result, the significance of the paintings in relation to one another, and to the meaningful interior they were designed to be a part of, was quickly lost – a situation that was never rectified. The study presented here, however, has aimed to reconstruct the relationship between these ephemeral contexts and the more permanent traces in the artworks they informed.

## Appendix: Tables

Table 1 Layers found in a cross section from the heel of The Wildman (fig. 5) in normal light (fig. 10a), UV-light (fig. 10b), microscopic magnification 200×

7	Varnish
6	Particles of dirt
5	Brown binding medium paint layer, fluoresces in UV-light (0-6 µm). Organic red pigment (pale pink in UV-light), chalk.
4	Brown binding medium rich layer (< 20 µm). Lead white (quite coarse; particles up to 30 µm), chalk, carbon black, umber, bright yellow and orange earth pigment, organic red pigment (pale pink in UV-light).
3	Beige layer of flesh paint, fluoresces in UV-light (70 µm). In UV-light is visible that the paint has been applied in three layers. Lead white, charcoal black, umber, light brown and bright orange earth pigment, organic red pigment (pink and orange fluorescence in UV-light).
2	Second ground layer (110 µm). Lead white (partly saponified), red lead (for a part formed as a result of saponification of lead white), very coarse charcoal black, ivory black, a bit of chalk.
1	First ground layer, strong fluorescence in UV-light (incomplete). Chalk, coarse charcoal black, red lead (for a part formed as a result of saponification of lead white).

Table 2. Layers found in a cross section from the bottom edge of The request for admission (fig. 3) in normal light (fig. 11a), UV-light (fig. 11b), microscopic magnification 200×

10	Yellow green overpaint (< 15 µm). Lead white, yellow-brown earth pigment, yellow pigment, bright red pigment, black pigment, blue particle, transparent.
9	Transparent layer fluoresces in UV-light: varnish (<4 µm)
8	Transparent layer weak fluorescence in UV-light: varnish? (<4 µm)
7	Dark particles, dirt?
6	Light grey layer (c. 4 µm). Lead white, charcoal black, brown earth pigment, umber?, bright red pigment, chalk?
5	Translucent yellow-brown layer (10-25 µm). Binding medium rich, lead white, charcoal black, brown earth pigment, umber?, orange earth pigment, transparent, splinters, chalk?
3	Dark beige layer (0-30 µm). Lead white, coarse charcoal black, brown earth pigment, umber?, chalk?
2	Second ground layer (< 100 µm). Lead white, partly saponified, red lead (for a part formed as a result of saponification of the lead white), coarse charcoal black (splinters visible), chalk.
1	First ground layer, strong fluorescence in UV-light (incomplete). Chalk, coarse charcoal black, red lead (for a part formed as a result of saponification of lead white).

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