THE DUTCH REPUBLIC AND BRITAIN
THE MAKING OF MODERN SOCIETY AND A EUROPEAN WORLD ECONOMY
SYLLABUS EXCURSIONS
Preface

As part of the seminar *The Dutch Republic and Britain: The making of modern society and a European world economy*, excursions will be made to various cities and museums. Professor Koot has asked me to write a small syllabus concerning the historical sites that will be visited. This syllabus is to be seen as an introduction to our visits, focusing on the historical background of the different cities. Emphasis is on the transition of the medieval period to the Golden Age, with the Dutch Revolt at the centre. On the excursions I will guide the various city walks and museum tours.

Our excursions take place in Brabant, Flanders and Holland. The cities of Brabant and Flanders played a dominant role in the Netherlands up to the beginning of the Dutch Revolt in 1568. With the Dutch Revolt Holland takes over and becomes the economical heart of the Dutch Republic. The County of Holland was formed in the 9th century AD. From the 13th century onwards the successive counts greatly enlarged their territory. In 1425 the last independent Count of Holland died and the county became part of the Burgundian state. It was in 1477 that Holland and the other Netherlands became part of the Habsburg Empire.

The different cities in Holland had always enjoyed a certain amount of autonomy, and had their own rules, politics and economy. The Habsburg King Philips II (1527-1598) tried to limit this freedom, in line with his centralistic policy. In addition, he tried to silence the critics of the Catholic Church, who had been declaring their disapproval since Luther had pinned his reforms to the doors of the church in Wittenberg. With the counterreformation well on its way the king took strong measures to put an end to all the Protestant upheaval. These two factors were at the root of one of the most interesting stages in European history: the Dutch Revolt.

It was precisely the Dutch Revolt that put the various provinces, united in the Dutch Republic, on the map. The war made the Republic into a bastion of religious freedom and a thriving economy was the result. It was especially Holland that profited the most. Though Amsterdam was at the very heart of Holland’s economy, it was certainly not the only city to be reckoned with. Many different cities together made up the economic pattern that lay at the basis of the Golden Age.

Reno Raaijmakers
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Antwerp

Antwerp lies in the Duchy of Brabant and is situated on the river Scheldt. The convenient location of the settlement turned it into a prosperous medieval town which became a metropolis in the 16th century. According to legend the city got its name from a giant called Antigoon. He extracted toll from those who wanted to cross the river. If they did not pay he severed one of their hands and threw it into the river. Finally the giant was slain by the hero Brabo. He cut off one of the hands of the giant and threw it into the river Scheldt. Hence the name Ant (hand) werp (warp). It is a fascinating story, but it belongs to folklore. Probably the name is derived from a man made hill along the river. The Dutch word ‘warp’ also meaning ‘to raise’.

First Settlers

The history of Antwerp starts in the Roman period. The oldest archaeological finds come from the second century AD. The settlement is mentioned for the first time in the 4th century by the Franks. There seems to have been a continuous occupation of the settlement throughout the early medieval period. In the 9th century AD a hill was raised on the east bank of the river and on it a small stronghold was built. Around the hill grew a modest medieval town. This town got a defence canal in the 11th century. In the following century Antwerp became part of the duchy of Brabant. The dukes of Brabant had great political ambitions and stimulated trade and the economic development of their duchy. Over the 13th century Antwerp grew and got its typical half moon shaped layout. An impressive sand stone city wall was built to defend the city. Furthermore the 9th century stronghold was replaced with a stone castle which stands to the present day.

The first economic boom

In the first half of the 14th century the economy of the city grew markedly. Antwerp got the right to become a staple place for English wool. This was of great importance for the further development of the city. It gave the Antwerp trade a welcome international dimension. Already in the late 13th century suburbs had grown outside the medieval city. In the beginning of the 14th century the city was enlarged to incorporate these suburbs. The city spanned more than 200 acres and would only be enlarged once again in the mid 16th century. The 14th century city got a new city wall with many gates and watchtowers. Along the river Scheldt there were 25 of these towers alone. Between 1356 and 1384 Antwerp was annexed by the counts of Flanders. This slowed down the economic development a bit, but does not seem to have been of too great importance. It was for example during this period that one started building the gothic cathedral of Our Dear Lady which would be the largest church in the Netherlands. At the end of the 15th century the Antwerp population had doubled to around 20,000 inhabitants. Over the 15th century the Bourgondians further developed the economy of the city which would lead to Antwerp becoming a true metropolis in the 16th century.

The 16th century metropolis

In 1501 a Portuguese ship with pepper and nutmeg arrived in Antwerp and many more ships would follow. The rich trades from the Indies turned Antwerp into a metropolis. But why did this Portuguese ship come to Antwerp? The rise of Antwerp coincides with the development of a worldwide trading network and the creation of an Atlantic economy. The Portuguese had found their
way to the Indies but lacked the resources and the network to develop this trade. Antwerp had in the previous centuries become the most important export centre for English cloth. Why could it not do the same for Portuguese pepper? Around 1500 the economic balance had shifted to the north of Europe. Much of the consumers of pepper and other luxury products lived here. Given its facilities and location Antwerp was the logical choice for the great merchants of those days.

What is fascinating about Antwerp is that it was not the city that chose to be the centre of European trade, but that Europe chose Antwerp and turned it into a metropolis. Antwerp was governed by a small group of regents coming mainly from the nobility. They formed a very close circle and upcoming merchants would never be part of this oligarchy. The regents themselves were forbidden to participate in trade and this law was stressed several times over the 16th century. Merchants in Antwerp had a modest fleet, not at all sufficient for the role Antwerp was to play. So it were not these locals but merchants from Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany and the Northern Netherlands that made it happen. They opened a trading office in Antwerp and docked their ships in the harbour. Antwerp was relatively tolerant towards these newcomers, several of which were non-Catholics. This led to the arrival of many Sephardic Jews from Spain and Portugal. These Jews introduced, among other things, the diamond trade.

In the same period that the Portuguese started coming to Antwerp many of the German bankers preferred Antwerp over Venice to export their copper and silver to Portugal. Portugal needed large amounts of these precious metals for its trade with the Indies. Firms like Schets from Aken or Fugger from Augsburg had their main office in Antwerp. In the early twenties the pepper trade declined drastically because Portugal got competition from Venice. Venice was importing higher quality pepper from the Levant. As a result of this Antwerp experienced some meagre years.

A new economic boom began with the Spanish colonization the New World. In the years of recession Antwerp had remained the centre for German bankers. The large sums of silver and gold that Charles V was importing from the New World were used to settle his debts. The bankers used the Antwerp financial infrastructure to conduct the payments. Eventually Spain was in the same position as Portugal before. It did not have the resources to exploit and develop the territories in the New World. It needed enormous ship loads of timber, grain, cloth and so on. This trade was set up and financed by Antwerp. The city experienced its heydays in this period, from 1535 to 1557. It all ended drastically with the bankruptcy of the Spanish crown in 1557 during the war with France. Antwerp experienced a third and final period of economic growth after the signing of the peace with France in 1559. In these final years leading up to the Dutch Revolt the city became a centre for the production of cloth, linen and tapestries.

It all ended very dramatically for Antwerp with the Dutch Revolt. The city played a leading role in the early years, but paid a heavy toll in the end. In 1585 Antwerp was recaptured by the Spanish Crown and the so-called Fall of Antwerp marks the end of this once flourishing city. Amsterdam in the north took over the position of Antwerp. To prevent Antwerp from regaining her losses the Dutch Republic decided to block the river Scheldt. This lasted for over 200 years. It was only in the 19th century that Antwerp got something back from its former glory.
City development in the 16th century metropolis

The population of Antwerp grew from around 47,000 in 1500 to over 100,000 people in 1560. This growth pressed the regents to enlarge the city on an impressive scale. A further motive for doing this was to upgrade the medieval defences. The old city wall was not at all equipped for the modern state of warfare. This had unfortunately become very clear in 1542 when the city was besieged by Maarten van Rossum. Uncomfortable merchants begged the regents to modernize the defences.

To the design of the Italian Donato Buoni di Pelllezuoli the cities defences were modernized and the city was enlarged between 1548 and 1552. These defences comprised of a half moon shape ring of bastions, several new city gates and a broad defence canal. These can clearly be made out on the map above. On the left hand side (south) the city was enlarged but after the Fall of Antwerp and the rapid decline of the cities’ population this area was never overbuilt. On the right hand side (north) an area was added that was to function as an industrial region. It was rationally laid out on a rectangular grid and had a convenient infrastructure consisting of spacious canals. Tragically it would turn out to be all in vain. The Dutch Revolt would change everything and Antwerp as a metropolis would seize to exist.
The rise of Protestantism and the Beeldenstorm

After the signing of the peace with France in 1559 king Philip II left the Netherlands for Spain. He was never to return to the Netherlands. Under his father Charles V Protestantism had spread rapidly throughout the Netherlands. For that reason Charles had set up the inquisition, a religious tribunal sentencing many heretics to death. Charles had always been a friendly monarch keeping a warm relationship with the ruling class. Philip was of a different character. He was stubborn and lacking the tact of his father. To strengthen the grip of the Catholic Church over its subjects Philip decided to create many more new archbishoprics and bishoprics. This was not only completely against the wishes of many Protestants but also of many liberal catholic nobles and regents.

Philip named his half-sister Margaret of Parma governess of the Netherlands. It was under here rule that the situation escalated. Margaret of Parma relied heavily on the advice of her council. Three of her main advisors, William the Silent and the counts of Horn and Egmond, advised her to relax antiheresy measures that Philip had introduced. They pleaded that this was crucial for the stability in the Netherlands. Margaret wrote to Philip for further instructions. Philip sent Margaret the so-called ‘Letters of Segovia’. In these letters Philip made it very clear that he was not willing to change a single thing and that he was determined to wipe out Protestantism all together. These letters were received with great displeasure in the Netherlands. A group of lower nobles decided to take matters in their own hands. On 5 April 1566 a group of 200 of these nobles forced their way into the palace of Margaret in Brussels. They demanded the dismantlement of the inquisition. Margaret was so overwhelmed that she agreed to ask Philip again and that in the mean time she would put the work of the inquisition on hold.

This temporary stop to the work of the inquisition was greeted with great joy throughout the Netherlands. By many it was interpreted as the first stage in the complete abolishment of this hated institution. Many Protestants came back from exile and many Protestant preachers started giving mass preachings in the open air. We call these preachings ‘hedge preachings’. In cosmopolitan Antwerp these hedge preachings were organized on the fields just outside the city. They attracted thousands of listeners.

With the central government in Brussels paralysed, the Catholic Church could do little. In that light it was inevitable that the frustrations that were built up over decades would erupt among militant Protestants in an act of violence against the church. On 10 August 1566 a militant preacher gave a sermon in the Flemish town of Steenvoorde. After the sermon crowds attacked the monastery of Saint Lawrence. They smashed the images. This iconoclastic fury is in Dutch called the ‘Beeldenstorm’ or ‘Image Tempest’. From Steenvoorde this iconoclastic fury spread over Flanders reaching Antwerp on 21 and 22 August. In Antwerp all 42 churches were attacked. The images, painting and alters were smashed to pieces. So intense was the frenzy that it continued over night. From Antwerp the Beeldenstorm further spread, reaching Amsterdam a couple of days later.

At the end of 1566 Margaret managed to get the situations under control. She demanded the loyalty of her nobles and with their support succeeded in ending the Protestant upheaval in the spring of 1567. When Philip heard what had happened, he was furious. He sent one of his most loyal subjects, The Duke of Alva to the Netherlands. In august 1567 Alva arrived in Brussels with 10,000 well trained soldiers. He set up the so-called Council of Troubles. This council was to investigate all people who had participated in the revolt. The council sentenced many to death. To keep a closer eye on the rebellious Dutch cities Alva built strongholds in several of these cities. The one in Antwerp can clearly me made out on the map. It is the star shaped fortress to the left. The repression of Alva marks the end of Antwerp’s flourishing economy.
The repression of Alva created much hostility towards the Spanish Crown in the Netherlands. Before the arrival of Alva many Protestants, including Willem the Silent, had left the country. Operating from Germany Willem the Silent started the Dutch Revolt in 1568. From the port of Emden the rebel fleet of William organized their attacks on the Netherlands. On 1 April 1572 they took the port of Den Briel. This is the true beginning of the Dutch Revolt. Following the capture of Den Briel the rebels succeeded in getting control of many more cities in Holland and Zeeland. The war that was launched by the Spanish Crown to recapture these cities costed enormous sums of money which led to the bankruptcy of the Spanish Crown in 1575. Soldiers that could not be paid ravaged the countryside and plundered several cities. The most dramatic being the Spanish Fury in Antwerp on 4 November 1576. For several days the metropolis was subjected to murder, pillage and rape. The exact amount of casualties is unknown, estimates run from a couple of hundreds to many thousands. William the Silent exploited the Spanish Fury to create a demonic image of the Spanish Crown.

After the Spanish Fury the Spanish army disintegrated and there was a power vacuum. A few days after the Spanish Fury the different States signed the so-called Pacification of Ghent. In it they agreed on setting up a States-General that would meet in Brussels and upon driving out the Spanish soldiers. The sovereignty of the Spanish King was never a matter of debate. The Netherlands were more than willing to remain loyal to their king. In the pacification it was stipulated that the Netherlands would remain Catholic, but that public practice of Protestantism was allowed in Holland and Zeeland. On 23 January 1579 the Northern Netherlands went a step further with the signing of the Union of Utrecht. The different states decided to set up a common army. Several cities in the south also signed the treaties. Antwerp did so on 29 July 1579.

William the Silent resided from 1577 till 1583 in Brussels and later on in Antwerp. These two cities were the most important cities in the Netherlands and in the vision of William the Silent the Dutch revolt had to be a revolt of all the Netherlands together. In 1579 the temporary setback of Philip II was over. Silver and gold from the New World had filled the treasury once again. In 1579 Philip sent the Duke of Parma to the Netherlands to regain control.

In July 1584 the Duke besieged Antwerp. The Spanish constructed a pontoon bridge over the Scheldt, making traffic impossible. The rebels tried to flood the country, a strategy that had worked very well in Holland, but failed in this case. On 17 August 1585 Antwerp surrendered. The fall of the city created a shock throughout the Netherlands. Parma ordered his troops not to plunder the city and not to harm its populace. With the Spanish Fury fresh in mind he wanted to create a new image of the Spanish as merciful and understanding. He gave the people of Antwerp a choice: They had to remain faithful to the Catholic Church or they would get two years to settle their affairs and leave the country. Many chose to leave. Out of a 100,000 people, only 40,000 remained. Merchants, bankers and skilled workers left. Many of them went north, to the promised land of the Protestants. They would turn Amsterdam into the new Antwerp.

Rubens and the counterreformation

Deprived of its talented populace and with the river Scheldt blocked Antwerp economy got into a severe recession. On a far more modest scale city life continued in 17th century. The Catholic Church did manage to regain what was lost. In the second half of the 16th century Rome developed the counterreformation as the answer to the reformation. Rome took part of the criticism expressed by the Protestants very seriously and tried to end the misbehaviour of the Catholic clergy. Once again the focus would be on the spiritual and not on worldly desires like money, status and pleasure. On the other hand the Catholic Church stressed the mysticism, splendour and glory of its religion. The holiness of the sacraments, the worship of Mary and the Saints and an overwhelming beauty were to recapture the hearts of the people. The mission to recapture the hearts of the people in the Spanish

1585 The Fall of Antwerp
Netherlands was accomplished with success. It is one artist that is the icon of the counterreformation in the Spanish Netherlands: Rubens.

During the iconoclastic fury that had raged through the country in 1566 many precious works of art were destroyed. Churches had to be almost completely redecorated which gave ample opportunity to artists like Rubens. Rubens was born in Siegen, Germany in 1577. After an initial training in Cologne he came to Antwerp where he became a master painter in 1598. As was expected from a painter in those days he went on a study trip to Italy. He travelled to Venice, Florence and Rome and studied the works of the great masters from the Renaissance like Michelangelo and Titian. But he also studied the works of contemporary Baroque artists like Carracci and Caravaggio. Rubens was able to draw all this inspiration together and create for the first time a truly international Baroque style.

Rubens set up a studio in Antwerp which became one of the most successful of its days. It was his classical and aristocratic education, his manners and tact, which formed the basis for his relationship with kings and princes. He became the court painter to the dukes of Mantua and the governor of the Spanish Netherlands. He advised people like the king of Spain or England in setting up an art collection. The confidence that Rubens enjoyed with his royal patrons and the tactful person that he was also made him the ideal diplomat. He was entrusted with many political missions. Apart from being a painter, Rubens was also an art dealer with an international clientele.

Back from Italy Rubens got the assignment to paint a number of triptychs for the Antwerp Cathedral. They perfectly illustrate the style that Rubens had developed in Italy and which he introduced in the north of Europe. The Elevation of the Cross was painted in 1610. In the painting Rubens plays with forces and counter forces. The giant like man lifts the cross up with tremendous force while the cross itself leans heavily backwards. The cross forms a strong diagonal in contrast with the rectangular picture frame. The musculature of the man lifting the cross owes much to the Renaissance work of Michelangelo while the strong light is indebted to the Baroque work of Caravaggio. The whole painting is filled with tension, physical and emotional. The very difficult foreshortening of Christ shows the talent of Rubens.
Monuments in Antwerp

The Cathedral of Our Dear Lady
The Cathedral of Our Dear Lady is the icon of Antwerp. With its one tower left unfinished it is a fascinating monument. With a length of 117 meters and a width of 65 meters it was the largest church in the Netherlands of those days. The church was built from 1352 onwards in a Gothic style. Several architects worked on it. In 1519 the building reached its climax with the completion of the tower. Subsequent plans to complete the other tower and to further enlarge the choir were never realized. During the iconoclastic fury of 1566 most of the interior was destroyed. With the fall of Antwerp in 1585 the church became Catholic again and the redecoration of the church was taken up energetically in the beginning of the 17th century. Of the many works of art produced for the cathedral, the triptychs of Rubens are the most significant.

The City Hall
The Antwerp City Hall can be seen as the apotheosis of the 16th century economic boom. The city hall was built between 1561 and 1565. It was inaugurated on 27 February 1565, one year before the iconoclastic fury that would change everything. The layout of the building as a rectangle with an inner courtyard still owes much to Gothic architecture. It is the façade that is the modest innovative part of the building. It is designed in the style of the so-called Dutch Renaissance. The façade was probably designed by the important Antwerp architect Cornelis Floris. Floris and fellow architects like Vredeman de Vries knew about Renaissance architecture in Italy through architectural treatises. It was the treatise published by Sebastiano Serlio in 1537 that influenced the Antwerp architects the most. An important Renaissance feature is the focus on the horizontal and not on the vertical. This can clearly be seen looking at Antwerp city hall. The Dutch Renaissance remains a typical Dutch interpretation though of Renaissance architecture in Italy. Classical ornaments are used to decorate a building in a way a child would decorate a cookie.

Saint-Carolus Borromeus Church
In the counterreformation the Society of Jesus played a leading part. The order was approved by Pope Paul III in 1540. Its goal was to defend and propagate the Catholic Church. The order was banned from Antwerp in 1578, but the Jesuits returned in 1585 and made Antwerp their main seat. The Jesuit church of Saint-Carolus Borromeus is the manifestation of Jesuit propaganda. Its precious façade with its curving lines, the interior with gilded sculptures and ceiling paintings by Rubens make it the most perfect example of Baroque architecture in the Spanish Netherlands.
Bruges

Bruges lies in the County of Flanders and is situated on the river Reie. The explanation of the name Bruges is not decisive. It could well be that it comes from the Celtic word for holy river, Ryggia. There could have been contamination with the old Norwegian word bryggja, which means docking area. The cities coat of arms is around 700 years old. The lion comes from the coat of arms of the Count of Flanders. The flanking lion and bear were added in the 16th century. According to a local legend the bear was the first inhabitant of Bruges.

First Settlers

The oldest archaeological remains come from the second century AD. They show that a modest Roman settlement existed. Probably the site has been inhabited ever since. Bruges is for the first time mentioned on coins from the late 8th century. The Carolingians built a stronghold in Bruges to defend the settlement against the raids of the Normans. It was the count of Flanders Arnulf I (918-965) who replaced this stronghold with a fortified stone castle. Around this castle a thriving medieval village developed. The settlement got an earth wall, a wooden palisade and a canal in the beginning of the 12th century. The boundaries of this early settlement can clearly be made out on the 16th century map below. It is the oval in the heart of the city.
Bruges Golden Age

Between 1280 and 1480 Bruges was the economic centre of Northern Europe. The city was enlarged on an impressive scale in the late 13th century. It got a stone city wall with seven imposing city gates. This is the Bruges that we see on the 16th century map above. With a population of around 35000 people Bruges was next to Ghent the largest city in the Netherlands. Bruges became known as the Venice of the north and was one of the most beautiful cities in Europe.

Bruges was the first centre of a uniform northern European economy. What is interesting about Northern Europe is that it was created out of nothing, ex nihilo. Since classical antiquity the Mediterranean had been the economic basin of Europe. Northern Europe was the end of the world. No large cities were to be found here. This all changed in the 11th century when new land was brought under cultivation and more and more cities appeared. The surrounding countryside turned these cities in commercial centres and centres of production. From the 11th century onwards these new cities created a trading network of which Bruges became the centre.

Already since the 12th century Bruges had been importing wool from England for its textile industry. But the wool was also exported to other nearby cities like Ghent and Ieper. The wool trade with England also made Bruges familiar with the English territories in France. Bruges merchants started importing grain from Normandy and wine from Bordeaux.

Meanwhile around the East Sea many cities sprung up. The most important of them was Lübeck. Lübeck was founded in 1158. This city became one of the principal exporters of grain from Northern Germany. Around the East Sea a trading network of cities was established. These cities founded the Hanse League in 1356. Merchants from these different cities had already been working together for over a century. They had set up guilds or Hanse with trading posts all over northwestern Europe. In many cities they got far reaching privileges. One of the largest of these so-called Kontors was the one in London. The building was used for storage and the merchants lived in it together.

In 1252 Lübeck tried to get permission for a similar Kontor in Bruges. While the Countess of Flanders did give privileges to the Hanse merchants, she did not give permission to found a Kontor. In that respect Bruges was different from the other Hanse cities. They merchants lived throughout the city and mingled with the locals. It was only in 1462 when the Hanse acquired a building in Bruges, which can be seen in the illustration. The Hanse chose Bruges because of its position. It was the most southern Hanse city and was the link with the Mediterranean. In 1277 the first ship from Genova came to Bruges. It would not be long before the much bigger Venetian galleys would choose Bruges as their destination. The cargo of these ships consisted of pepper, spices and other luxury products coming from the Levant. In Bruges the Italians would buy the sought after Flemish textiles. But it was not only goods that were brought to Bruges; also modern banking reached the city. The Medici, the iconic Florentine bankers, opened an office in Bruges in 1465.
In the 12th century the river Reie flowed into the Zwin, a sea arm of the North Sea. It was the perfect gateway to the sea and a decisive factor in the rise of Bruges. Due to the accumulation of sand the Zwin became more and more inaccessible. Bruges built several outer harbours of which Sluis is the most important. The map above shows the situation in the 17th century. Bruges is situated in the lower left corner and Sluis in the upper right. They are connected through a canal.

Around 1480 problems started to arise. The cloth industry contracted and the political climate was very unstable. In 1482 Mary of Burgundy had died, leaving her husband Maximilian of Austria as regent for her young son. Shortly before she died Mary had granted the so-called Grand Privilege to the Netherlands. This privilege gave Dutch cities like Bruges far greater autonomy. Maximilian tried to turn back the clock. This led to a period of chaos and war. During these troubled times the access to the Bruges harbour was blocked for 10 years with devastating consequences for the city's economy. To make matters worse, there was a new rising star: Antwerp. It was Antwerp that gave the final blow to Bruges. The transition from Bruges to Antwerp marks the transition from a medieval economy to the Renaissance economy of the 16th century.

In the 16th century Bruges tried to regain what was lost, but the competition was too strong. During the Dutch revolt Bruges was taken by the Spanish in 1584. The port of Sluis remained in the hands of the Dutch Republic. The canal that led to Bruges was blocked. It was the final blow. The city was never to recover.
Monuments in Bruges

The Belfort

The Belfort on the Grand Marked is the icon of Bruges and a manifestation of Bruges as the centre of Northern European economy. The Belfort’s imposing tower dominates the city and the surrounding countryside. The building is laid out on a square around an inner courtyard. In the wings around the courtyard are a number of large halls. These were used as inner markets. Among others the cloth and wool markets were housed in the building. On the first floor the archive and treasury were housed. The original building was built out of wood. From 1240 it was replaced by a stone building. A big fire in 1280 destroyed part of the original building. Sadly enough not only the building, but also the archive from before 1280 was lost. The Belfort was subsequently rebuilt. The first two rectangular stories of the tower were built between 1291 and 1296. It was crowned by a wooden spire. Between 1483 and 1487 this wooden spire was replaced with the Gothic octagonal.

The church of Our Dear Lady

The church stands on the spot of a Carolingian chapel from the late 9th century. The present church was built between 1230 and 1465. The 122 meter bell tower was completed in 1340 and is next to the Belfort the most important landmark. In the church Mary of Burgundy, who died in Bruges in 1482, lies buried. The remains of Charles the Bold who had died in Nancy in 1477 were transferred to Bruges by Charles V. Charles the Bold was probably buried in another church in Bruges, which does not exist anymore. In the church of Our Dear Lady a cenotaph was erected. The church is world famous for the sculpture of Michelangelo depicting Mary and Jesus. It was originally intended to be placed on the Piccolomini alter in the cathedral of Siena, but was never placed there. It was acquired by the Bruges merchant Jan van Moeskroen. He donated the sculpture to the church in 1514. The family Moeskroen got a grave at the feet of the sculpture.

The Begijnhof

The so-called Begijnhof was founded in 1244 by Margaret II of Constantinople, the Countess of Flanders. A Begijnhof is a typical Dutch phenomenon. It can best be described as women living together in a religious community. These woman did not want to enter a monastery and lead a secluded life and be bound to the many rules. Just like nuns they had taken a vow of celibacy and were married to Jesus Christ. Their lives focused on taking care of the sick and poor. Initially the pope in Rome was not very happy with this liberal way of living together. He wanted the woman to enter in a true nunnery. When he learned though what good work these woman were doing, the Begijnhof as an institute was approved. Since 1927 a group of Benedictine nuns has taken over the Begijnhof.
Ghent

Ghent lies in the County of Flanders and was founded at the point where two rivers, the Leie and the Scheldt came together. The origins of Ghent lay in the Celtic period. It could well be that the name Ghent is derived from the old German word ‘Gand’ which was the name for a water way. Ghent owed its prosperity to the booming cloth and linen industry. The prosperity of the city lasted from the 13th till the 16th century. In the illustration the personification of Ghent holds the cities coat of arms in her left hand. Just like the coat of arms of Bruges it shows the Flemish lion.

First Settlers

The oldest archaeological remains date from the early medieval period. It was around 650 in the Merovingian period that two large abbeys were built in Ghent. These abbeys were apparently of such great importance that Einhard, the biographer of Charles the Great, was in charge of both of them. Near these abbeys grew a medieval settlement that was attacked and destroyed by the Norman raids in the 8th century AD. The Vikings even settled in the neighbourhood. In the late 9th century the second count of Flanders, Baldwin the Bold erected a castrum at the site of the present castle. The Normans were expelled and a bright future lay ahead for Ghent. At various points around the castrum nuclei of houses formed that in the end all fused together to form a city.

The Mecca of cloth and linen

From the start Ghent turned out to be a problematic city for the counts of Flanders. It constantly stressed its rights and demanded new ones whenever there was an opportunity. Already around 1100 the city got the right to have its own court and further rights followed over time making Ghent a very autonomous city.

Ghent specialized in the medieval period in the production of cloth and linen. Cloth is made from wool and linen from flax. The wool was mainly imported from England and reached Ghent through the port of Bruges. So important was the English wool for Ghent that the city sided several times with England against the French and the Count of Flanders.

The textile workers in Ghent were very well organized in guilds. Between these different guilds there was many strife especially between the weavers and the fullers. During the hundred year war (1337-1453) between England and France the weavers were in charge of affairs in Ghent under the leadership of the wealthy cloth merchant Jacob van Artevelde. During the war Ghent initially tried to remain neutral but sided with the English King when the Count of Flanders openly decided to support the French king. The fullers killed Artevelde in 1345 and Ghent entered a period of great instability. Finally things came to a climax on 13 January 1349. Street fight between weavers and fullers resulted in many casualties and the streets were filled with blood. At the end of the day the weavers gave in. The affairs were settled and the day went down in history as ‘Good Tuesday’.

There was still much unrest in the city though and the only thing the count could do was to give Ghent even more rights in order to stabilize the situation. The political system was changed in such a way that next to representatives of the nobility, also the large textile guilds of weavers and fullers, and the different smaller guilds got seats in the city government. It is an interesting development towards a certain type of democracy in the medieval period.
From the 13th century till the Dutch Revolt the textile industry was booming. Ghent had around 50,000 thousand inhabitants and was the largest city in the Netherlands. It was only in the 16th century that it was surpassed by Antwerp (its population growing towards 100,000). In the bird’s eye view map above from 1534 we see the famous panorama of Ghent. In the foreground is the castle, the so called Count’s Stone. It stands till the present day. The heart of the city is formed by the Saint Bavo Cathedral.

The Flemish Primitives

The booming economies of Flemish cities like Bruges and Ghent gave rise to a flourishing art marked. Painters like Jan van Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden en Hugo van der Goes are world famous. The Flemish artists developed a style which is transitional between the late medieval and early Renaissance. We call this group of artists the Flemish Primitives. Jan van Eyck is probably the most famous. He was called the Dutch Appeles and until the 20th century was thought to have been the one to have invented oil paint. This turned out not to be the case, but nonetheless Van Eyck and his contemporaries showed the possibilities of the new technique to its maximum.

The most splendid example of the art of these Flemish Primitives is the Ghent Altarpiece that was painted by Jan van Eyck with collaboration of his brother Hubert in 1432. The triptych would only be opened on religious holidays and one can just imagine, looking at the bright colours and lovely details, how mind blowing this painting would have been in the eyes of someone living in the late medieval period.
In the centre of the altarpiece is Jesus flanked by Mary and Saint John the Baptist. Adam and Eva are to the far left and right. They have brought sin into the world. The inscription above the Lord’s head reads “This is God, all powerful in his divine majesty; of all the best, by the gentleness of his goodness. The most liberal giver, because of his infinite generosity.” The inscription marks the changed approach to God; from a stern medieval judge to e benevolent father to mankind.

The bright colours are typical for the work of the Flemish Primitives as is the eye for details like the garments and jewellery. The monumentality of the figures points to the Italian Renaissance, as do the naked bodies of Adam and Eve and the open space in the lower register. The horizon in this register is very high though, which is a typical medieval aspect of this painting. Also the very heavy garments with the intricate folds are rooted in medieval art. It is especially this combination between the old and the new, between medieval and renaissance what make this paintings so fascinating.

In 1566 the panels of the altarpiece were taken out of their original frame and hidden to protect them from the iconoclastic fury that raged through the city. The original Gothic frame was lost during this Beeldenstorm. In 1587 the painting was installed in a new frame and placed in its original position in the cathedral of Saint Bavo.

The Calvinist Republic of Ghent

In the Southern Netherlands there was a sharp distinction in the 16th century between the cities and the countryside. In comparison to the north cities like Antwerp, Bruges and Ghent were very large. Furthermore these cities enjoyed a lot of autonomy making them into self-conscious and self minded units. Especially Ghent stood out. Its population had always been rebellious and strong willed.
Protestantism was deeply rooted in Ghent especially among the textile workers. In 1537 Ghent clashed for the first time with the Habsburg government. Mary of Hungary, regent of the Netherlands asked the States-General to grant Charles V extra money for his war against France. Ghent refused to cooperate and a revolt broke out in the city. Charles sent an army to Ghent and it was only in 1540 that he regained control. He forced the Ghent nobility to go through the streets wearing a hangman’s knot. From that moment on the people of Ghent were known as ‘Knot Bearers’

Giving the militant character of its people and the popularity of Protestantism in the city, it is not surprising that Ghent wanted to play a leading role in the Dutch Revolt. It was on 8 November 1576 that in the Ghent town hall the Pacification of Ghent was signed. The Pacification stipulated that the Spanish should be driven out of the country and that the States-General in Brussels would be the main body of government. The Netherlands would remain Catholic, but public practice of Protestantism in Holland and Zeeland was allowed.

The religious peace that William the Silent was trying to establish was not popular in Ghent and in 1577 the city took matters in her own hands. Under the leadership of Jan van Hembyze and Francois van Ryhove a Calvinist city republic was formed. The people declared King Philip II not to be the legitimate ruler of the Netherlands. This was a step that the Northern Netherlands would only take in 1581. The radicalization in Ghent also had its down side. The government created an atmosphere that was very hostile against Catholics. Several monks were found guilty of sodomy and publicly executed to the joy of the people. The illustration below shows this execution.

![Execution of monks](image)

In 1579 Ghent signed the Union of Utrecht to further strengthen the bond with the north. But the situation in the south was much different from the north. While the main cities were strongly protestant the surrounding countryside and the nobility was not. In the south Catholics were also more willing to fight back. So when the Duke of Parma came to recapture the rebellious Netherlands he found ample support in the south. Radical Ghent was besieged and taken. In 1584 the Calvinist Republic of Ghent came to the end. Many people went north. Skilled textile workers relocated to cities like Leiden and Haarlem making them the textile centres of the 17th century.
Monuments in Ghent

The Gravensteen

The Gravensteen or ‘Count’s Stone’ is the only complete medieval castle of Flanders. The forerunner of this castle was built by Baldwin, the second Count of Flanders in the late 9th century. This building was of perishable materials. In the early 11th century count Robert I built a stone keep in the middle of the castle. This stone keep was just like the rest of the castle rebuilt in 1180 by count Philip of Alsace. The keep was enlarged and reaches to a height of 30 meters. In it was a big hall which the count used for his audiences. The castle got a stone outer defence wall with 24 towers. Various types of stone are used, giving the building a very rich appearance.

The Graslei

The Graslei is the most picturesque part of Ghent. The Graslei is the name of the quay along the canal. Ghent had the staple right on grain in the County of Flanders. This right stipulated that 25% of all the grain should be traded in Ghent. The quay was used for the grain marked. The low stepped gable in the middle of the picture is the guild house of the grain merchants. In two other houses there were facilities to measure grain. Along the Graslei there are also many other important buildings among others the late gothic guild house of the so-called ‘Free shippers’ built in 1531.

Saint Bavo Cathedral

On the spot of the cathedral stood a Romanesque church. This church was replaced with the present Gothic church form the beginning of the 14th century onwards. The 89 meter high tower, the most important landmark of Ghent, was completed in 1538. The cathedral is dedicated to Saint Bavo. Bavo was a Merovingian count born around 589 AD. He was a horrible and selfish person. Contrary to Bavo his wife was an intensely good person. When she passed away Bavo feared that she would go to heaven and that he would end up in hell, so he changed his life drastically. He gave up all his worldly goods and founded a monastery in Ghent. He spent the last years of his life living in a tree in complete isolation. The cathedral of Saint Bavo houses one of the most spectacular paintings in the world, the above discussed Ghent Altarpiece. Furthermore Rubens painted an altarpiece depicting the conversion of Saint Bavo.
Amsterdam

Amsterdam is mentioned for the first time in 1275.\(^1\) In that year the Count of Holland gave a so-called toll privilege to the ‘homines mantentes apud Amstelledamme’, in other words to the ‘people living near the dam in the river Amstel’. Clearly there was a settlement of some importance by that time, and a dam had been placed in the river. The people had chosen a convenient location for their settlement: situated on the banks of the river Amstel at the point where the river flows into the sea, it was an excellent basis for fishery and trade. The city’s coat of arms shows a vertical black band between two red ones. The black band symbolizes the river Amstel. It is decorated by three Saint Andrew’s crosses, a popular symbol in the medieval period. These three crosses are believed to be connected to the family coat of arms of Jan Persijn, governor of Amsterdam at the end of the 13th century. The emperor’s crown was added in 1488 as a gift from Maximilian I, the later Austrian Emperor. The two lions were added in the 16th century. The motto ‘courageous, firm, charitable’ was added after the 2nd World War.

Amsterdam around 1325. At the heart of the city we see the dam in the river Amstel. The two streets along the river are the original dikes. The dike running to the northwest is the Haarlemmerdijk, which ends at the Amsterdam Gate in Haarlem. The dike running to the southwest, towards the Zuiderzee, is the Zeedijk.

First Settlers

From the 11th century, the population of Holland started to increase rapidly. As a result of this growth, people began to reclaim the marshy areas in the Amsterdam region. The village of Sloten, a few kilometres southwest of Amsterdam, is one of the oldest settlements in the area. It is mentioned for the first time in 1063. The oldest archaeological remains found to date that show the existence of a settlement on the site of present-day Amsterdam are dated to the beginning of the 13th century. Yet it cannot be ruled out that a settlement existed already in the 12th century. Remains of such a settlement could have been wiped out by the All Saints Flooding of 1170-73. Initially, the people of

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\(^1\) There are older documents that point towards the existence of Amsterdam but these are not decisive.
Amsterdam lived on *terpen*, small dwelling mounds, on the banks of the river Amstel. These mounds were joined later on and turned into dikes. These dikes protected the land against the sea, along with the dam – with a water lock – in the river Amstel, which was in place by 1275.

**The Medieval Period**

The privilege of 1275 granted toll freedom to the village of Amsterdam. It is a clear manifestation of the rivalry between the Count of Holland and his main adversary, the Bishop of Utrecht. The bishop levied high tolls to cargo ships on the Vecht, a river which flows into the sea not far from the mouth of the river Amstel. By granting toll freedom to the people of Amsterdam the count anticipated attracting a diversity of economic activities to the area. This plan indeed succeeded, and made Amsterdam a town of economic importance in Holland over the course of the 14th century.

Shortly after 1300 Amsterdam was given city rights. Probably, the city was inhabited by only a few hundred people at that time, but it grew rapidly to 5,000 by 1350. Fishing and trade were two important branches of Amsterdam economy, but excavations have shown that Amsterdam was also a production centre of goods, ranging from shoes to heavy metal equipment.

**The Miracle of Amsterdam**

Amsterdam was put on the map by a religious event that took place in 1345. In the night of March 16th a man lay seriously ill in a house on the Kalverstraat. A priest came to his house to give him the last sacraments. Unfortunately the man had to throw up and the vomit was thrown into the fire. The next morning a servant girl saw the host, miraculously preserved, dancing in the flames. She reached for it and without burning her hands got hold of it. Usually it would take the Vatican five years to recognize a miracle, but this miracle was recognized within a year. This is seen as yet another indication of the growing importance of Amsterdam in this period. In 1347 a chapel was built on the site of the house where the miracle had happened. This chapel was replaced in the 15th century by a monumental gothic chapel. The miracle turned Amsterdam in a sort of Canterbury of the Low Countries. In the Holy Year 1500 the pope granted the city of Amsterdam the right to give out letters of indulgence to pilgrims that were not in the position to visit Rome. They could make up for this loss by visiting the Old Church and the Miracle Chapel. In the month of the miracle, approximately 30,000 pilgrims visited the city.

**City Development in the Medieval Period**

Around 1350 the city was enlarged. The soil behind the dikes was raised and on the east and west side an earth wall with a wooden palisade and a canal in front of it was constructed. In 1380 the city was enlarged once more. Its final medieval form was established in 1425 with the digging of the *Singel*, a semi-circular canal around the city. Between 1480 en 1508 a massive city wall was built to prevent the Bishop of Utrecht, still the city’s main adversary even at that time, from taking and pillaging the city. From the end of the 15th century Amsterdam started to participate in the East Sea trade with Scandinavia and the Baltic on a wider scale. Amsterdam never joined the *Hanse* and set up a trade network of its own. This network was far more flexible and low-cost than that of the *Hanse*, which contributed to their ultimate downfall. Shortly before the Dutch Revolt, Amsterdam had almost 30,000 inhabitants. The city had developed into an important commercial centre in North-West Europe, with fishery and the Baltic trade as the two pillars of its thriving economy.
The famous map of Amsterdam in bird’s-eye view by Cornelis Anthonisz, dated 1538. (original in the collection of the Amsterdam Historical Museum). The map shows the medieval city in its final form. To the lower left of the dam in the river the Old Church is to be seen, to the right of the dam the New Church. At the point where the river flows into the sea (called the IJ) the harbour is visible. Saint Anthony’s Gate, part of the medieval city wall (1481-1508), is visible on the left. In the top right corner we can also see the Haarlemmermeer (Harlem’s Lake); at the other side of this lake is the city of Haarlem (not on the map).

Anabaptism

For the first decades after Luther the Protestants in the Low Countries kept a low profile, with the exception of a radical group of Anabaptists that served as the Reformation’s arm and mouthpiece during these years. Anabaptism reached the Low Countries in the 1530s. The Anabaptists believed that their congregation would be the only one to receive God’s grace and that it was their right to destroy the godless society on earth. The revolution was preached by Jan Matthijsz., the prophet of Haarlem and Jan Beuckelsz., the prophet of Leiden. In 1534 the town of Munster was taken and all its inhabitants were forced to undergo a second baptism. The town was subsequently besieged, which heightened the feeling of the Anabaptists of being part of an apocalyptic change of sorts.

By this time there were around 3,000 Anabaptists in Amsterdam. In May 1534 five Anabaptists ran through the city shouting “in the name of the Lord, blessed is the left side; cursed is the right side of the city”. The same day dozens of Anabaptists left Amsterdam for Munster by ship claiming that “God would guide them”. On the February 12, 1535 twelve Anabaptists gathered by night in the house of Aagje Jans. The preacher told everyone that they should throw their clothes into the fire, and the party ran naked through the streets saying that they were “the naked truth”. They were all executed. On May 10 forty Anabaptists, seeing that the siege of Munster was not going well for them, seized the town hall. They wanted Amsterdam to be the New Zion. In the subsequent storming of the town hall by the militia, twenty-eight Anabaptists were killed as well as twenty civic guardsmen. The twelve captured Anabaptists were executed. “Their hearts were cut out and thrown

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2 See Israel, 84-96.
in their faces”, their bodies were quartered and body parts were hung near every city gate, their heads were put on stakes. The women were drowned or hung in the doorway of their houses.

Anabaptists running naked through the streets of Amsterdam on 12 February 1535.

Anabaptism in general became a pacifist movement from the 1540s onwards. One of the leading representatives in this period was Menno Simons (1496-1561) who worked mainly in Amsterdam in the years 1541-43. In 1539 he wrote the Fondament-Boeck that is known to American Mennonites as The Foundation of Christian Doctrine.

The Beeldenstorm

The uproar of the Anabaptists had been so traumatic that for decades to come Amsterdam would have a firm antirevolutionary Catholic city government. Nonetheless Protestant preachers held their bagepreken (hedge-preachings), sometimes even on little boats on the river Amstel. On the 23 August 23 1566 merchants from Antwerp showed remnants of statues that had been destroyed during the beeldenstorm, the iconoclastic fury that had raged through Flanders the days before, to the astonished Amsterdam merchants. Immediately the city government ordered the clergy to bring all valuables into safety. Seeing monks and priests going through the city bearing all sorts of objects, aroused unrest among the populace.
The Beeldenstorm in the Oude Kerk on 23 August 1566.

That afternoon, during the Vespers in the Old Church when some children were baptized, the priest recited the spell to cast out the devil. This expression of superstition was strongly rejected by the gathered crowd. Lange Weyn, daughter of a notary, took off her shoe and threw it at a statue of the Virgin. This was the start of the beeldenstorm in the Old Church. It took the civic guards several hours to get the situation under control. Out of fear for further disorder the city granted Protestants more freedom, but was immediately rebuked by the government in Brussels. A month later crowds stormed the monastery of the Minorites, the seat of the Inquisition. Politically there was strife between the Catholic families that had dominated the city for years and the new Protestant merchant elite. It was the Catholic faction that in April 1567 took control once again. Lange Weyn, the instigator of the beeldenstorm was sentenced to death. She was drowned in a wine barrel filled with water. This was an appropriate way of putting her to death; her last name ‘Weyn’ actually meaning ‘wine’ in Dutch.

The Alteration

The Dutch Revolt really began with the capture of the port of Den Briel by the Watergeuzen (Sea-Beggars) on 1 April 1572. Subsequently many other cities in Zeeland and Holland were seized by the rebels or on their own initiative joined the revolt. The Catholic faction in the civic government of Amsterdam made sure though that the city would remain loyal to the Church and State. The result was an exodus of Protestant merchants and an influx of thousands of war refugees from all over Holland. One of them was Wouter Jacobsz., prior of a monastery just outside the city of Gouda. In Amsterdam he kept an account of the events in those troubled days.

The rebels decided to block the Amsterdam harbour. By taking away the cities source of income, they would force the city to join the revolt. In May 1573 several old ships were sunk in the IJ. These obstacles were to prevent ships from leaving and entering the harbour. The sinking of these ships had not been done properly though. In October 1573 they came floating up. To Wouter Jacobsz it was a sign that God Almighty had not forgotten the poor people of Amsterdam.

Everything changed with the victory of the Geuzen fleet on the southern Sea on 11 October 1573. Now the Geuzen were in complete control of the Southern Sea and the Amsterdam harbour could
be blocked quite easily. The Amsterdam trade network collapsed completely and the Amsterdam economy was in a deep crisis. The taxes that were levied on goods such as grain, beer and wine, dropped from 9,500 Flemish pounds in 1572 to 6,000 in 1573 and a meager 5,200 pounds in 1575. The taxes on corn dropped from 844 Flemish pounds in 1571 to 113 Flemish pounds in 1574. Wouter Jacobsz describes the arrival of one of the last grain fleets in Amsterdam on 10 October 1573, one day before the battle on the Southern Sea. The fleet had been escorted past Enkhuizen by government warships. Crowds gathered to witness the arrival of the grain in Amsterdam; they had been waiting for it so long. In the following years grain and other supplies were transported to Amsterdam over land by the government. That was a dangerous undertaking, for most of the city was surrounded by the Geuzen. The grain was never enough; hunger and starvation are omnipresent in Wouter Jacobsz account.

In January 1578 the Geuzen were able to get into the city. In the months to come they would manifest themselves more and more and were able to win over a major part of the populace. The economic crisis was no longer tolerable for many of the citizens. Finally on 26 May 1578 the true ‘revolution’ took place. The Geuzen entered the town hall and laid down their terms, but the government denied its cooperation. The regents were subsequently removed from their posts and banished from the city on a boat, together with the Minorite monks and some priests. The change of government is known as the Alteration; as the last city in Holland, Amsterdam joined the Dutch Revolt. It can be considered a turning point for Amsterdam, stepping out of the medieval period into the Golden Age. The Amsterdam harbour was reopened and the city could retake its position as the leading port of the Holland.

**Economic growth**

On 26 July 1581 the Dutch Republic was formed. In this state form, the cities kept their independence to a considerable extent. State politics were dominated by Amsterdam, as a result of the spectacular economic growth in the 17th century, which made Amsterdam the economic centre of Europe. Many contemporaries were astonished by the rapid growth of the city’s economy from 1590 onwards. In the 17th century the Amsterdam population grew explosively from about 50,000 in 1600 to 200,000 in 1672.³

There are many different factors that contributed to the rapid development of Amsterdam’s economic situation. An initial factor of importance was the re-conquest of the Southern Netherlands by the Spaniards and the subsequent fall of Antwerp in 1585. The Geuzen blocked the Scheldt estuary and Antwerp lost much of its economic importance. Many merchants and artisans chose to relocate to Amsterdam, bringing their contacts and knowledge with them. It is estimated that in 1621 one third of the Amsterdam population came from Flanders.

Another important group of newcomers were the Sephardim, Spanish and Portuguese Jews who had chosen to leave their country because of the terrible persecutions that were taking place. The Jews introduced new professions in Amsterdam such as the cutting of diamonds and the refining of sugar. Their world wide trade network was another contributing factor.

The introduction of the rich trades from the 1590s was an important change in Amsterdam economy. Up to that point the economy had been based almost exclusively on bulk carrying. First came the domination of the Mediterranean trade, later that of the Indies and the Americas. It has to be said though that the European trade and fishery remained the two main branches of Amsterdam economy in the 17th century.

We should not forget that next to trade, Amsterdam factories produced various goods like soap, sugar and silk. One can also think of the many shipping wharfs and breweries to be found in and

³ Israel, 621.
outside the city. An important factor was the availability of a cheap labor force. Yet the key to the economic success was the Protestant merchant elite. With the Alteration they took over city politics and established a golden combination of regents and merchants. This resulted in an energetic civic policy to enlarge and defend the economical interests of the city.

The VOC and WIC

Dominance of the world trade during the 17th century was an important aspect of the Golden Age economy in general and that of Amsterdam in particular. It was on 2 April 2 1595 that the first East India Company, called the Compagnie van Verre (Long-Distance Company), under command of Cornelis de Houtman sent four ships to the Indies. Three of these ships returned in 1597. This success resulted in the formation of several East India companies throughout Holland and Zeeland. However, strong competition between these companies resulted in low profits. In 1602 it was decided that the companies should all unite in the Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (United East India Company). From that point on, the VOC held the monopoly on the East India trade. The VOC was divided into six chambers, of which the Chamber of Amsterdam was the most important. It invested the most and got fifty percent of all the returns. The VOC was governed by the Heren XVII, seventeen elite-merchants. For almost two centuries the VOC possessed a colonial empire and remained a factor to be reckoned with also in the 18th century, until it was liquidated by decree in December 1795.

When the Twelve Year Truce with Spain ended, a long cherished wish of the regents of Amsterdam was fulfilled: the formation of a West India Company. The WIC was divided into five chambers, and was governed by the Heren XIX. The WIC was intended to function just like the VOC; the establishment of a colonial empire in the West and the upkeep of a military force were an integral part of it. Yet the West India Company was far less successful in that respect. It got most of its profits by capturing Spanish ships and by the slave trade. It is estimated that about 50,000 slaves were deported from Africa by the WIC. The WIC was dissolved in 1691. Though the VOC and WIC are icons of 17th century economy we should not exaggerate their importance. It is estimated that they accounted for a bit less than 30 percent of the total turnover of Amsterdam.

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4 See Israel, 318-326.
5 See Israel, 326-327.
City Development

Given the growth of the population at the end of the 16th century the city government decided to enlarge the city on a massive scale. A master plan was drawn up to lay out a half-moon shaped canal ring around the medieval city. There were three main canals; the Herengracht (Regents Canal), the Keizersgracht (Emperors Canal) and the Prinsengracht (Princes Canal). A modern defence ring of earth bastions was laid around the city. The master plan was realized in two phases. In 1613 the city started work on the western part up to the Leidsegracht (Leiden Canal). In 1662 work started towards its completion.

Map of Amsterdam by Daniel Stalpaert, dated 1662. Next to the dam in the river we see the square called De Plaets, present-day Dam Square. Two buildings dominate the square: at the west side of the square is the newly built City Hall, at the south side the New Church. To the right of the medieval city there is a part of the new canal ring, which was completed in the first two decennia of the 17th century. Daniel Stalpaert was given the task of completing the ring of canals in 1662; the white colored area shows the projected plan that was completed from that year.

Architecture

In the architectural history of 17th century Amsterdam two styles are of importance. In the first decades of the 17th century Mannerism, called the Dutch Renaissance in Dutch art history, flourished. Just as in painting, the mannerist architect creates his own style, adjusting classical building schemes to a level where they tend to have nothing to do with classical Renaissance
architecture at all. Its most important representative in Amsterdam is Hendrick de Keyser (1565-6121). In 1591 he moved from Utrecht, where he was trained as a sculptor, to Amsterdam. In 1595 he was appointed as civic stone mason, which made him sort of a civic architect. De Keyser built three new Protestant churches in Amsterdam: the Southern, Northern and Western Church. He also worked for private individuals like Bartolotti, one of the richest people in the city. For him, he designed a house which to the present day is one of the most important monuments in Amsterdam.

From the 1630s onwards the Dutch Renaissance is replaced by Dutch Classicism. Contrary to the Mannerist architect, the classical architect closely follows classical design. Of major importance are the architectural treatises published by architects like Alberti, Palladio, Da Vignola and Scamozzi, and Vitruvius’ ten books on architecture. The two main classical architects in Amsterdam are Jacob van Campen (1595-1657) and Philips Vingboons (1607-1678). In comparison to De Keyser these classical architects are intellectuals rather than artists. Van Campen got important public commissions like the girls’ department of the civic orphanage, whereas Vingboons mostly designed canal houses. The most important classical monument erected in Amsterdam was the town hall, the current royal palace on Dam Square. It was built to the design of Van Campen.

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn

Up to 1620 the importance of Amsterdam lay in the selling of art, not in its production. This changed over the years, when many gifted painters came to the city to set up a studio. Their choice was undoubtedly inspired by the availability of numerous potential buyers.

The best known Golden Age painter, Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669) was born as the son of a miller in Leiden. There he also got his initial training as a painter and set up his first studio. Owing to his contacts with the Amsterdam-based art dealer Hendrick van Uylenburg (c. 1590-1673) he moved to Amsterdam in 1631. In 1633 he married Hendrick’s niece, Saskia van Uylenburg. In 1635 he bought a monumental house in the Jodenbreestraat, next to Van Uylenburg, which he would keep until 1659 when he was declared bankrupt. Contrary to popular belief, the bankruptcy did not have anything to do with a lack of appreciation for the work of Rembrandt. In his time he was one of the best paid and most sought after painters in the city. The fact that things did not go well was the result of personal mismanagement and Rembrandt’s temper - a strange and difficult man, prone to antagonizing his patrons. The later years of his life were spent in relative poverty.
With the rise of classicism in the 1640s Rembrandt’s style became slightly outdated. More and more, Rembrandt’s rough brush strokes and his use of a strong *chiaroscuro* (light-dark) were considered old-fashioned. The two most gifted students of Rembrandt in Amsterdam were Govert Flinck (1615-1660) and Ferdinand Boll (1616-1680). Initially they worked in the style of Rembrandt. In the 1640s they changed to classicism. As a result, they actually got more important commissions than their former master. Some of their most important works were made for the town hall; their classical paintings blended perfectly into the classical design. The one painting that Rembrandt made for the town hall hung in its intended position for a while, but was soon replaced with a more classical painting from another artist.

The Year 1672 and the End of the Golden Age

The high point in Golden Age economy were the 1650s and 60s. The turning point came in the year 1672, also known as the Year of Disaster. In that year France, England, the Prince-Bishop of Münster and the Elector of Cologne declared war on the Republic. With such a strong alliance, the overthrow of the Republic, which was a thorn in the eye of many European monarchs, seemed at hand. Fortunately the stakes turned in 1673 and peace was restored in the following year, under the leadership of the newly elected *Stadhouder* Willem III. Since the odds had changed in favor of the *Stadhouder*, the economic power of Amsterdam was no longer the only force to be reckoned with.

Economy gradually recovered after 1672 but never regained its former glory. For Amsterdam, the end of the Golden Age was near. Striking is the fact that urban development continued, with the completion of the half-moon shaped canal ring from 1662. Previously, the building lots at the *Herengracht*, in between the *Leidsegracht* and the *Amstel* had been sold for spectacular prices. After 1672, the lots on the east side of the *Amstel* were ready to be sold but there was far less interest. Consequently part of the newly developed area was not sold at all and was instead given the function of ‘*Plantagie*’, a sort of municipal park. Even considering the economic decline of the last decades of the 17th century, the real recession did not set in until the 1720s. In the course of the 18th century, the division between rich and poor, between bourgeois and laborer, became very distinct. The same societal change can be seen in other Dutch cities of the period. With it the dynamic combination of merchant-regent was no more and the glorious days of Amsterdam soon lay in a distant past.
Monuments in Amsterdam

Canals
Possibly the most important monument in Amsterdam is the network of canals that runs all through the city. Amsterdam has multiple the number of canals in other Dutch cities like Haarlem and Leiden. This has to do with the geological circumstances in this part of Holland. After the last Ice Age, a circa twelve meters thick layer of peat was deposited on a layer of sand. Peat contains a lot of water, which resulted in a marshy landscape. To drain the peat, canals were dug. So even if canals are very convenient for transportation, this is not the primary reason for their existence.

The drainage of the soil resulted in a lowering of the peat over time. Given this instability, houses cannot be built directly on the peat. One has to start by laying foundations that rest on the stable sand layer below. In the old days these foundations were made of wood, nowadays of concrete. The amount of piles needed for the foundation of a house varies from a few dozens for a minor canal house to many thousands for large public buildings and churches. Given the work and expenses involved in preparing a lot for construction, the city government was unwilling to give citizens permission to build spacious houses. Even houses constructed during the Golden Age remain very narrow; only the extremely rich could come up with the sum of money that was needed to obtain an exemption.

The Saint Nicolas Church or Old Church
The Old Church is the oldest monument in the city. The core of the tower is dated to the period around 1300. The tower was added to a church that was built at the end of the 13th century, possibly to replace a church of the 12th century. The late 13th century church was replaced again in the 14th century with the gothic church we see today. Over the 15th and 16th century the church was further enlarged and the various chapels were added.

The church was dedicated to Saint Nicolas and Saint John the Baptist. Saint Nicolas had been bishop of Myra in the 4th century. It is in the region of Myra that he performed several miracles. In one of these he saved three fishermen who were surprised by a tempest on open sea. A figure appeared in the dark thunder clouds and guided the fishermen to the harbour of Myra. In Myra, they went to the cathedral to say their thanks and there was Saint Nicolas, awaiting them. They immediately recognized him as the person who had guided them through the tempest. The cult of Saint Nicolas as the patron saint of seamen was established in the East in the Byzantine period. From the 10th century churches of sea bound cities in the West are dedicated to him. In the Saint Nicolas Church in
Amsterdam an almost life size silver statue of the saint stood on the rood-loft. With the Alteration the church became a Calvinist church and was thereafter referred to as the Old Church. The statue of the Saint was removed and melted down to mint emergency coins.

**The Town Hall**

Until 1808, the impressive royal palace on Dam Square was the Amsterdam town hall. The building was erected in the years 1648-1665 to a design of Jacob van Campen. It replaced a much older and much smaller medieval town hall dated to the period around 1400. The site chosen for the medieval town hall was at the very heart of the city, on the small square called ‘de Plaets’, to the west of the dam in the river Amstel. Given the spectacular economic growth of the first decennia of the 17th century, the modest medieval town hall soon became too small for the great number of city officials. Also, the medieval building did not at all express the economic power and magnificence of Amsterdam in those years. The impressive town hall that was subsequently erected did, and was referred to by contemporaries as the eighth wonder of the world.

Out of the various designs that were drawn up, the Amsterdam majors chose the most elaborate and expensive one: the design of Jacob van Campen in a classical style. The building is without a doubt the most important classical building in the Netherlands and without comparison in its magnitude. Van Campen tried to express the classical ideal in every aspect of the building. He successfully brought together architecture, sculpture and painting. Though the building remained partly unfinished it is an eternal testimony to the glory of Amsterdam in the Golden Age.

**The City Walls**

The medieval settlement was defended by an earth wall and a wooden palisade with a canal in front of it. It was in the years 1481-1508 that the city got a true city wall with several towers and three principal city gates. With these fortifications the city became a stronghold against the Bishop of Utrecht. One of the most impressive remainders of this medieval city wall is the Saint Anthony Gate on the New Market. The gate was built in 1488. To the front of the main gate a smaller gate is added with an open space in between. When the city expanded eastwards at the end of the 16th century the medieval wall was demolished and the gate was given the function of weigh-house.

The Golden Age city got a modern defence system consisting of outward pointing earth bastions and several fortified gateways with a canal in front of them. It was the completion of this defence ring that was the main reason for finishing the half-moon shaped canal ring in the second half of the 17th century. Preparing building lots in itself was of far less interest. Unfortunately hardly anything remains of the 17th century defence system, but the canal clearly indicates the former layout of the bastions.
Canal Houses

There are many lovely canal houses to be found throughout the city. The gables of these houses can be distinguished into five types. The oldest types are the stepped gable and the bottleneck gable, frequently designed in Dutch Renaissance style. Relatively few of these gables are preserved in Amsterdam because they were replaced with more modern types during the Golden Age. These are the neck gables, clock gables and gables with horizontal moldings, many of which in a classical style.

The Bartolotti House (Hendrick de Keyser, 1618-1621)

One of the most impressive stepped gables in Dutch Renaissance style is that of the Bartolotti House. The house was built to the design of Hendrick de Keyser in the years 1618-1621. It was commissioned by the beer brewer Willem van den Heuvel, who had inherited his uncle Bartolotti’s firm in Bologna on the condition that he would adopt his uncle’s last name. The façade is a rich and playful whole of classical motives. A house of such grandeur had not been built in Amsterdam up till then. In order to avoid severe criticism from orthodox Calvinists, Bartolotti had two labels placed on the house: ‘ingenio ed assiduo labore’ and ‘religione et probitate’. With these words he made clear that his fortune was justly earned.

A house of even more impressive dimensions is the Trip House. The house was built between 1660 and 1662 to the design of Justus Vingboons for the brothers Trip. In fact there are two houses united behind one façade. The classical façade has the form of a Corinthian temple front. The Corinthian order, as the highest of the classical orders, had always been considered too impressive for private dwellings and only suitable for public buildings. Another indication of the wealth of the Trips was the use of sandstone for the façade, which had to be imported from Germany. The manifest richness of the house is a clear indication of societal changes during the 17th century. In the years that the Trip House was built, it was far more accepted that merchants displayed their wealth and status. Contrary to Bartolotti several decades earlier, the Trips felt no need to give a public justification for their wealth on the façade.
The Rijksmuseum

The Rijksmuseum was closed for over 10 years, but has recently been reopened after an intense renovation. The result is magnificent and overwhelming. The museum discusses Dutch history and art history from the medieval period till the 20th century. The emphasis of the collection is on the Golden Age. The museum houses one of the most important collection of Dutch Painting in the world. The museum was designed by the architect P.J.H. Cuypers. It opened its doors in 1885. The museum is located on the edge of the former Golden Age city and newer suburbs to its south. Cuypers designed the building as if it were an imposing city gate. The decoration program pays homage to Dutch art, portraying over 80 Dutch artists in the façade. Cuypers designed the building in a neo-gothic style. He found this style to be superior to the neo-classical style that was used for so many other public buildings in those days. His choice was certainly influenced by the fact that he was a Catholic. The gothic style points directly backwards to the Catholic medieval period. It is clear that not everyone was pleased with the building, as many found it to be overly Catholic in its design. Had the Dutch Revolt not been about getting rid of Catholicism? Was Holland not a truly Protestant nation? Protestant critics of the day often referred to the museum as an ‘Episcopal palace’.
Den Haag

Den Haag was the political centre of the Dutch Republic. Den Haag started out as a hunting residence of the Counts of Holland. In 1230 count Floris IV acquired an estate along a large pond. The coat of arms of Den Haag shows a stork against a golden background with an eel in its beak. Eels were plentiful in the pond acquired by the count. It was count Willem II who in 1248 decided to build a fortified residence at this spot, the current Binnenhof (Inner Court) with the Ridderzaal (Knight's Hall) at its centre. Around the Binnenhof grew a village that initially was called Haga, later Den Haag. The name Haga means 'hedge' and it points to the hunting grounds of the count, lined with hedges. Contrary to other settlements in Holland, the counts did never give city rights to Den Haag. They chose to keep it as their own property. Also in the Dutch Republic it did not get city rights. The city became the seat of the States General and of the States of Holland, but in the States of Holland it did not have a vote. As such Den Haag was neutral territory and the embodiment of the Dutch Republic as a whole. Den Haag finally got its city rights in 1806, by king Louis Napoleon.

![The Binnenhof with the Ridderzaal at its centre (ca. 1600)](image)

The Medieval Period

During the Medieval period Den Haag developed into a prosperous settlement with a profitable textile industry. Around 1470 textile production was at its peak. But shortly afterwards the industry got into a recession, just like in Leiden and Haarlem. This was the result of growing competition from Flanders where drapers were producing modern fashionable low cost textiles, the so-called New Draperies.

In the 15th century Holland had become part of the Burgundian Netherlands under the ambitious Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good (1396-1467). Philip the Good pushed forward several political reforms. The most important reform was the creation of the States-General in 1464. The States-General met in Brussels. At that point Philips had already set up the States of Holland. In 1428 the
States of Holland are mentioned for the first time. It was formed by representatives of the Nobility and the cities of Dordrecht, Haarlem, Delft, Leiden, Amsterdam en Gouda. It is an example of the growing influence of cities in the late Medieval period. The States of Holland were to advise the Duke of Burgundy in his function as Count of Holland. The States of Holland met in Den Haag and already in the Medieval period several cities rented a house in the city to lodge their representatives.

Den Haag in 1649 (Joan Blaeu)

The Golden Age

Den Haag was not a city and thus did not have city walls. In the early years of the Dutch revolt Den Haag was ransacked by the government army. On 1 April 1572, when the Geuzen had taken Den Briel, stadhouder Bossu invited the cities to meet in Den Haag. He needed money to put down the revolt. It were only Amsterdam and Delft that sent their embassies. From 19 to 23 July 1572 several other cities organized their own States of Holland meeting in Dordrecht. This was the first true free meeting of the States of Holland in its history. In 1577 Holland, except for the city of Amsterdam, was entirely under control of the rebels. The States of Holland came back to Den Haag to stay there for good. There were 18 cities that formed the States of Holland during the Republic: Dordrecht, Haarlem, Delft, Leiden, Amsterdam, Gouda, Rotterdam, Gorichem, Schiedam, Schoonhoven, Brielle, Alkmaar, Hoorn, Enkhuizen, Edam, Monnikendam, Medemblik, Purmerend. Next to the States of Holland also the States-General were moved from Brussels to Den Haag, making Den Haag the centre of politics.

Between 1613 and 1619 Den Haag was enlarged. It got the shape of a rectangle as can be seen on the map of Joan Blaeu from 1649. In the centre is the Binnenhof with the pond to the northwest. Around 1650 Den Haag had about 20,000 inhabitants. Just like with many other cities the layout turned out to be too ambitious and still a large part of Den Haag is not used. Still, 20,000 inhabitants made Den
Haag one of the largest cities in the Dutch Republic. Being the political centre of the Republic meant that many wealthy people and families settled in Den Haag. Next to Amsterdam, most of the wealthiest people in the Republic lived in Den Haag. These people built impressive houses close to the Binnenhof. The lifestyle of these people and the presence of many politicians, staying in the city for a while, spurred the local economy.

The most important family to settle in Den Haag were the Oranges. In 1609 Prince Maurits moved into Paleis Noordeinde and in 1645 Prince Frederik Hendrik and his wife Amalia van Solms built Huis ten Bosch. The States-General and the Oranges had a difficult relationship, sometimes working together and sometimes being each other’s opponents. In 1648 the States-General decided to make peace with the Spanish King while Prince Willem II still had a dream of liberating The Southern Netherlands. After the death of Prince Willem II the States of Holland and several other States decided to abolish the stadhoudership in a famous meeting in the Ridderzaal in Den Haag. The following period would turn out to be the most prosperous in the history of the Republic. The Republic was led by the Grand Pensionary Johan de Witt. De Witt had so much power and prestige that Asians thought of him as King John.

The bodies of Johan and Cornelis de Witt hanging from the execution pole in Den Haag
Jan de Baen, 1672 (Rijksmuseum)

The leadership of the merchant elite was unchallenged during times of economic growth and stability, but in times of chaos the people would frequently turn to the Oranges for help. This happened in 1672 when a joined coalition of France, England, Münster and Cologne attacked the Republic. Prince Willem III was installed as stadhouder to lead the army. In this period of tumult the people turned their anger towards Johan de Witt and his brother Cornelis. They were brutally slaughtered by the people of Den Haag on 20 August 1672. The role of Willem III in these events remains unclear, but he did nothing to prevent the murder of his political opponents Johan and Cornelis de Witt. The murder traumatized the faction of liberal regents and led to a coup d’état by Willem III, installing regents loyal to him all over Holland. The events recall the execution of Johan van Oldenbarnevelt on 13 May 1619 on the Binnenhof in Den Haag and the coup d’état by Prince Maurits. It is these and other important political events that make Den Haag such a historical place.
Monuments in Den Haag

The Binnenhof

The Binnenhof (Inner Court) is the oldest part of Den Haag. This is where count Willem II in 1248 built his palace along a pond. The oldest buildings are the Ridderzaal or 'Count's Hall' (building E) and the building directly behind it (building I). They were both completed by Count Floris V in the late 13th century. Initially the complex was defended by a wall with a canal in front of it. Around 1400 the wall was demolished and replaced with various structures creating the situation as it exists today. The whole complex was restored around 1900: Later additions to buildings were removed and the complex got back its medieval appearance. The Ridderzaal was used by the Dutch Republic for meetings of the States-General. The States of Holland were housed in building H. This building was completely refurbished in the 17th century to express the power and status of the States of Holland.

Paleis Noordeinde

The forerunner of the current palace was bought by the States of Holland in 1595 and was used to house Louise de Coligny, the fourth wife of Willem the Silent. The States had invited Louise to come and live in Den Haag. In 1609 the States gave this house to Prince Maurits. In 1640 it was completely remodelled to the design of Jacob van Campen and Pieter Post in the then fashionable classical style. Today it is the workplace and office of King Willem-Alexander.

Het Mauritshuis

From 1630 to 1654 the West-India Company ruled parts of Brazil. In 1637 Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen was appointed governor-general of Dutch Brazil. Between 1633 and 1644 Johan Maurits built a new residence in Den Haag: The Mauritshuis. It is one of the most lavish houses in Den Haag. Just like Paleis Noordeinde it is a design by Jacob van Campen and Pieter Post in a classical style. Today the Mauritshuis is a museum. The core of the collection is formed by the collection of paintings of stadhouder Willem V and his son king Willem I. The building is undergoing an intense renovation and 100 masterpieces are on display in the Gemeente Museum in Den Haag.
**Hoorn**

Hoorn is one of three West-Frisian ports. The city is situated at the point where the West-Frisian peninsula makes a sharp turn to the south, creating sort of a ‘horn’. This is also where the name Hoorn derives from; ‘hornic’ means ‘angle’ in Medieval Dutch. The Frisian chronicler Winsemius tells a different story in his *Chronicle of Friesland* (1622). He states that Hoorn was founded in 719 by Hornus, a bastard son of king Radbout. Hornus thus named the city after himself. A founding date of 719 does not go with the archaeological record though. The oldest archaeological remains date from around 1200. The story of Hornus fits well in the Golden Age where chroniclers like Winsemius tried to give their cities a legendary origin. The coat of arms shows a hunting horn. The oldest representation of this coat of arms comes from 1361. The unicorn was added in the 15th century.

West-Friesland in 1650 (Blaeu). In the lower right angle is Enkhuizen. To its upper left is Hoorn, situated in a bay. To the upper right of Enkhuizen is Medemblik.

**The Medieval Period**

Hoorn was founded at the mouth of the River Gouw, flowing into the Southern Sea. It was a convenient base for trade and fishery. In the beginning of the 14th century people placed a dam in the river. The Medieval hamlet developed rapidly in a vivid medieval town. Hoorn was granted city rights in 1357 by Willem V, Count of Holland. From that moment onwards the city could have its own government, collect taxes and organize a market.
In 1341 the first major harbour was created. This harbour was further enlarged in the 15th century. On the map of Jacob van Deventer these medieval harbours can be seen in the lower right. In 1426 the city got an earthen rampart. In front of this rampart was a defence canal. On the map of Jacob van Deventer this is the canal running more or less from left to right. In 1508 the city was further expanded with the strip of land above the aforementioned canal. In 1508 the city started work on a stone city wall. This wall and its towers can clearly be seen on the map of Jacob van Deventer.

The 16th century was a period of rapid economic growth for the West-Frisian ports. The pillar of Hoorn’s economy was the bulk carrying trade. Merchants from Hoorn imported salt from France and sailed to the East Sea for timber. Only part of the cargo was for the local market. Most of it was exported all over Europe. The East Sea trade was one of the so-called ‘mother trades’. Next to timber merchants imported grain, especially from the port of Danzig. As ballast stones were used. In Danzig they were replaced with grain. The Dutch stones were used in Danzig to build houses in a Dutch style. The Dutch community in Danzig must have felt at home.

To gain access to the East Sea one has to pass the Sont, between Sweden and Denmark. The registers give us important information concerning the nationality of the different ships. In the 16th century 50% of all the ships passing the Sont came from the Netherlands, especially from Amsterdam and the West-Frisian ports. The economic growth in the 16th century created a class of wealthy merchants. Through their trading connections these merchants, at an early stage, came into contact with Protestantism; next to timber and grain protestant ideas were imported. They spread rapidly among the new merchant elite. For them Protestantism was a way to oppose the ‘old’ catholic ruling class that had been in power for generations.
The early years of the Dutch Revolt

After Enkhuizen had opened its gates for the Prince of Orange on 21 May 1572 the situation in Hoorn became tensed. Just like all the other cities in Holland Hoorn initially tried to keep its neutrality; the choice between the government army and the rebels was choosing between two evils. In the final decision to join the revolt and let the rebels into the city the civic guards played an important role. On 18 June 1572 Hoorn finally went over to the side of the rebels. After Hoorn all the other cities in the north of Holland followed. By the end of June the rebels were in control of the whole territory.

On 21 August 1573 the government launched an attack on the city of Alkmaar. On 8 October 1573 the siege ended without any result. The army withdrew and Alkmaar remained in the hands of the rebels. The siege of Alkmaar became legendary. It was the first time the Spaniards had been successfully opposed and people said that ‘Alkmaar led the way to victory’. During the final days of the siege of Alkmaar a sea battle was fought for control of the Southern Sea between the government navy and the Geuzen. This battle reached its final stage on 11 October 1573, just outside the port of Hoorn.

The so-called Bossu Houses in Hoorn (early 17th century)

In 1559 the Prince of Orange had been replaced with the Count of Bossu as stadhouder of Holland Zeeland and Utrecht. This Count of Bossu was in charge of the government fleet during the sea battle. On 11 October 1573 his ship got stuck on a sandbank close to Hoorn. The Geuzen boarded the ship and Jan Haring of Hoorn climbed into the mast. He replaced the flag of Bossu with the flag of the Prince of Orange. As he came down he was shot, though his deed would bring him eternal fame. After a ferocious battle the Geuzen conquered the ship and captured Count Bossu. As the other government ships saw that Bossu’s ship had been captured they fled to Amsterdam. Bossu was taken to Hoorn and incarcerated. The Geuzen were from that moment on in complete control of the Southern Sea. It was an unparalleled victory.
A final campaign to recapture the north of Holland was undertaken in February 1574. It was very cold and all water was frozen. This made it easier for the government troops to enter the north of Holland. Several rebel strongholds just to the north of the IJ-estuary were taken and several villages just to the north of Amsterdam were burned down. The government troops reached Purmerend but in the end had to withdraw. The campaign ended without any result. It was in these troubled days that Lambert Meliszoon decided to leave his village of Westzaan and flee to Hoorn. He put on his ice-skates, placed his old mother on a sledge and began his journey. At a certain point he was noticed by some government soldiers. He hid his mother in a reed marsh covering her with a blanket. He speeded up to seek safety for himself. The soldiers had seen him hiding something in the reed and went to have a look. The only thing they discovered was a little sick old lady. They left her without doing her any harm and continued their journey. A bit later Lambert came back to collect his mother. On 20 February 1574 Lambert safely reached Hoorn and found refuge. The heroic story of Lambert was one of many that people would tell for generations to come.

With the failed attack of February 1574 the war in the north of Holland was over. The rebels were in complete control of the Southern Sea and merchants could go back to their business. The economic heartlands of the Netherlands, Brabant and Flanders, were in complete chaos. The economy of these regions suffered greatly. Hoorn and the other West-Frisian ports profited from this setback of its competitors. Using the trade network that had already been set up over the 15th and 16th century they further strengthened their position. In 1574 a Golden Age was already within reach.

City development in the late 16th and 17th century
The new Calvinist government of Hoorn saw a bright future in front of them. Already in 1576 the city decided to expand. To the design of Adriaan Anthonisz of Alkmaar a new harbour quarter was created. It was defended on the inland side by three modern bastions. On the map of Blaeu the addition of 1576 can be seen in the lower left. In 1598 a new harbour was added, defended by a dike with one bastion. This is the harbour in the upper left on the map of Blaeu. In the middle of the 17th century the harbours in the upper part of the map were created.
Around 1570 Hoorn had around 7,000 inhabitants. In 1600 this number had grown to 12,000. In 1622 the city was at its peak with 16,000 citizens. The end of the 12-year truce was the beginning of a steady decline of the city’s economy. In the following years many trading ships were captured or sunk by the enemy. Merchants who operated in the bulk carrying trade had to offer competitive tariffs and made relatively small profits. They depended on the quantity of their trade. As such they were the most vulnerable and suffered most from the resumed war activity. In 1647 the city’s population had dropped to around 14,000. The economic decline was not as strong though as in Enkhuizen. The Enkhuizen economy was almost exclusively based on herring fishery while Hoorn profited from the expanding colonial trade over the 17th century. This made up for some of the losses in the bulk carrying trade. Furthermore Hoorn was the seat of the Gecontraerrede Raden van West-Friesland en het Noorderkwartier, the regional government of the north of Holland. This gave Hoorn prestige and attracted a lot of people, money and economic activity.

De VOC
Next to the bulk carrying trade Hoorn also participated in the colonial trade. The city had a chamber of the United East-India Company (1602), a chamber of the Nordic Company (1614) and was part of the chamber of the North of Holland of the West-India Company (1621). Out of these three companies the United East-India Company was the most successful and of the uppermost importance for the economy of Hoorn. In the 17th century the company made its profit mostly in selling pepper and spices. The company imported 3 to 9 million pounds of pepper. 50% of the European pepper was imported by the Dutch United East-India Company. The pepper was bought for around 11 cents a pound and sold for 45 cents. Pepper was good for 1/3 of the entire profit of the company in the 17th century. Next to pepper nutmeg and foil made huge profits. Nutmeg was
bought for 5 cent a pound and sold for 4 guilders. Foil was bought for 40 cents a pound and sold for almost 7 guilders.

Jan Pieterszoon Coen (Hoorn, 1587- Batavia, 1629) is the icon of the United East-India Company in Hoorn. He started in 1607 as a merchant on one of the company’s vessels. He was very talented and determined. In 1619 he was installed as governor-general. This governor-general was the company’s highest official in the Indies. Coen was a hardliner who did everything to strengthen the position of the company in the Indies. Near Jacarta on Java the company had already built a fort. Coen devastated Jacarta and on its ruins built the city of Batavia. Batavia became the central seat of the company in Asia. Coen had wanted to name the city New-Hoorn, but the directors of the company opted for a more national name. Coen conquered the monopoly on nutmeg and foil. Nutmeg and foil were exclusively to be found on the Banda Islands. To get the monopoly Coen slaughtered the native population and replaced them with farmers loyal to the company. The directors of the company praised Coen for what he had achieved. Though there were also men who criticized him. The merchant Laurens Reaal stated that the Dutch would go down in history as the most heartless people ever.

In the 18th century the importance of pepper and spices declined. Pepper for example was only good for 10% of the company’s profit. The company started trading in different products; especially the import of tea grew rapidly. Business went well in the 18th century and the company made great profits. The company’s shares reached their highest point ever in 1740. For Hoorn the company was as said of the greatest importance. During the 18th century it was the company that kept the economy of our West-Frisian port going.
Monuments in Hoorn

The city wall

In 1508 work began on the medieval city wall. Little remains of this wall except from a small defence tower and the very impressive Main Gate. This Main Gate was erected in 1532 and stood at the entrance of the medieval harbour. It is best to be compared with the Drommedaris (1540) in Enkhuizen. The Main Gate is built in brick, but the part fronting the sea is covered with bright white sandstone. It functioned as a beacon for ships sailing to the city. The areas of the city that were added in the late 16th and early 17th century got a more modern means of defence; they are protected by massive bastions.

The Statencollege

The most important building in Hoorn is the so-called Statencollege. The building was the seat of the regional government of the north of Holland called Gecommitteerde Raden van West-Friesland en het Noorderkwartier. The edifice was erected in 1630-1632. The façade is completely built up in sandstone, the marble of the Golden Age. The style of the building is a mixture between the Dutch Renaissance and the upcoming classical architecture. The façade is lavishly decorated with the coat of arms of West-Friesland, the Prince of Orange and the seven cities of the north of Holland. Since 1878 the West-Frisian Museum is housed in the building.

The Weighing House

Opposite to the Statencollege stands the weighing house. The weighing house was built in the years 1608-1609 to the design of Hendrick de Keyser, the renowned Amsterdam architect. The building is in the style of the Dutch Renaissance. It is completely covered with slabs of sandstone making it one of the richest buildings of the city. The scales on which goods were weighed are preserved. On marked days they would be shoved outside and cheese, butter, meat and other products would be weighed and taxed.
The house of Nanning van Foreest

Nanning van Foreest (1682-1745) was by far the richest citizen of Hoorn in the first half of the 18th century. He was elected major several times and among other things director of the East-India and West-India Company. His fortune is estimated at 1.2 million guilders. In 1724 Nanning gave his house on the Grote Oost a new dashing façade. It was covered with sandstone and designed in the fashionable Louis XIV style. The façade is crowned with sculptures of Mars and Athena and the personifications of Love and Faith. The balcony is carried by Caryatids and the frame shows the initials of Nanning. Nanning had 5 servants and travelled in a carriage drawn by 4 horses. The magnificence of the house and the wealth of Nanning make clear that for the upper class the Golden Age was not over in the 18th century. To the contrary, many rich families grew even richer. For them the 18th century was even more of a Golden Age than the 17th.
Enkhuizen

Enkhuizen is mentioned for the first time in the year 1299. By then a modest settlement existed, which may have been founded already in the 11th century. There is no decisive explanation of the name Enkhuizen. It could be that the name comes from *Enkele Huizen* (Some houses), *Enge Huizen* (Houses placed closely together) or *End Huizen* (Houses on the far end of the West Frisian peninsula). The location of the settlement, at the far east end of the West Frisian peninsula, was very convenient for fishery but turned out to be an ill-fated choice. With the gradual rising of the sea level of the *Zuiderzee* (Southern Sea, the present *Ijsselmeer*) the settlement had to be abandoned. At the beginning of the 14th century, New Enkhuizen was founded behind the West Frisian ring dike that had been raised to protect the land from the rising sea. The old Enkhuizen was taken by the sea somewhere in the 14th century. The city’s coat of arms points to the core of Enkhuizen economy: herring fishery. We see three crowned herrings in a deep blue sea with golden stars above them.

The Medieval Period

In 1355 the Count of Holland bestowed city rights on Enkhuizen, while joining together two different villages: the fishermen’s town of New Enkhuizen (just behind the dike) and the agricultural community of Gommerkerspel (circa 500 meters land inwards). The fact that Enkhuizen originated from two separate villages can be recognized in the city layout to the present day, among others by the two parish churches that were preserved. The church of New Enkhuizen was dedicated to Saint Pancreas, that of Gommerkerspel to Saint Gomarus.

*Enkhuizen in 1577 (Waghenaer and Muller). The church of Sain Pacncreas is right in the middle; the church of Saint Gomerus is at the top of the map.*

The many storms that swept over the country necessitated the digging of a sheltered harbour within the city in 1361, the *Zuiderhaven* (Southern Harbor). This was the first of many harbours that were to follow in the years that Enkhuizen rose to prosperity. Enkhuizen got a city wall in the years 1489-1546, as one of the many villages in Holland that were fortified during that period.
From the 14th century onwards Enkhuizen developed into a city of major economic importance. The larger part of the Holland herring fleet, one of the pillars of Holland’s economy, was based in Enkhuizen. From the 16th century, Enkhuizen participated in the Baltic trade on a vast scale. It is remarkable that mostly smaller towns like Enkhuizen played an important role in Holland’s economy over the 16th century, and not larger ones like Leiden and Haarlem. The revenues from herring fishery and bulk carrying resulted in the rise of a strong merchant elite in 16th century Enkhuizen. These nouveau riche were to play an important role in the revolt that was to come.

The Reformation

The central government in Brussels found the Northern Quarter, the region of Enkhuizen, to be deeply infected by the new heresy. Moreover civic governments were far from willing to cooperate with Brussels in prosecuting and punishing the heretics. One of the leading figures in the rise of Protestantism in the Northern Quarter was Cornelis Cooltuyn. He began his life as a priest in the city of Alkmaar. There he combined Catholic rituals with Protestant teachings. Later he became the parish priest of the Church of Saint Pancras in Enkhuizen. He was very popular with the people, who came to mass in large numbers. Yet his preachings got him into trouble with the central government. It was thanks to the protection of one of the inquisitors from Enkhuizen, Ruard Tapper, that the charges were dropped. Tapper advised Cooltuyn to lay down his vestment and dedicate himself to charity. Cooltuyn had been so popular among his parishioners that several civic guards attacked the house of Balthazar Platander, the orthodox parish priest of the nearby church of Saint Gommarus, whom they suspected to have reported Cooltuyn.

Andries Dircksz. van Castricum succeeded Cooltuyn as parish priest of the church of Saint Pancras. Just like Cooltuyn his preachings were influenced by Protestantism. In 1561 he was placed into custody in the nearby city of Hoorn. At night parishioners from Enkhuizen freed him from his cell. Van Castricum went into hiding in Friesland.

Hedge-preachings and the Beeldenstorm

The first hedge-preaching, or hagepreek, in the Northern Quarter was organized just outside Hoorn on 14 July 1566. More than a thousand people listened to the Protestant preacher. From Hoorn the hedge-preachings spread all over the Northern Quarter and had a strong impact on the local population. Contrary to Amsterdam, where the Old Church fell victim to the beeldenstorm on 23 August 1566, the churches in the Northern Quarter were all spared. Civic governments closed the parish churches until further notice. Several exiles returned at that time, Andries Dircksz. van Castricum among them. He resumed his Protestant preachings in Enkhuizen, using a saltern just outside the city wall as his church.

By spring 1567 the religious tolerance was over. The central government in Brussels was once again in complete control of the situation. Soon after Alva arrived with his troops to punish the people of the Netherlands for their rebellion. The Council of Troubles investigated and sentenced almost 9,000 people for treason or heresy. In the Northern Quarter 162 people were sentenced, 43 of them coming from Enkhuizen. Prior to the arrival of Alva many people had fled the country. People from the Northern Quarter mostly fled to the city of Emden in northern Germany. It is said that 350 people from Enkhuizen alone fled to Emden, crossing the frozen Southern Sea in what must have seemed a true exodus. This change of events did not mean that Protestant preachings were over, but

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6 See Israel, 117.  
7 See Israel, 25.  
8 Israel, 156-157.
it did become an underground movement. In Enkhuizen the preachings of Van Castricum were continued by a lay preacher.

The Dutch Revolt

The Dutch Revolt in the Northern Quarter began in Enkhuizen. On 21 May 1572 Enkhuizen was the first city to go over to the rebels. The story begins with the taking of the small city of Den Briel on 1 April 1572 by the Watergeuzen. It would be wrong to see this as the beginning of a spontaneous revolt throughout the Netherlands. In many cities there were those who sympathized with the Geuzen, but the majority of the people were moderates. They disliked the Geuzen, with their reputation of violence and destruction, just as much as the Spanish.

After the taking of Den Briel it had been very riotous in Enkhuizen. Just outside the city the central government had gathered a war fleet of 20 ships. The people from Enkhuizen suspected the civic government of inviting the soldiers into the city to defend it against a possible attack by the Geuzen. The tension could be felt throughout the city. Soldiers who were doing their shopping were forced out of the city by armed civilians. To prevent a possible occupation of the city by these soldiers, the population took drastic measures. They basically took over the city, placing canons on the city walls, arming themselves and checking the gates. Their goal seemed to be to remain neutral, keeping out government soldiers as well as Geuzen.

In those troubled days several exiles returned to Enkhuizen, with orders from the Prince of Orange to take over the city. They were a strong influence on many locals, especially unemployed fishermen and sailors. The civic government made itself impossible by strongly opposing the Geuzen and choosing the side of the central government. A following ultimatum by stadhouder Bossu, demanding the population of Enkhuizen to declare itself loyal to Alva, was enough to make the city go over to the rebels. Armed civilians forced themselves into the city hall and took the majors into custody. They enrolled the Prince of Orange’s banner from the city walls and declared their loyalty to him. The civic guards refused to intervene, as was the case in many other cities that were to follow the example of Enkhuizen. It was the militia that in the end made the difference.

Apparently this change of events had been foreseen and registered by the Prince of Orange. Already a day after the ‘revolution’ 26 ships arrived with 500 Geuzen. They had left the harbour of Emden days before. The whole operation in Enkhuizen had obviously been well prepared. On 2 June 1572 Diederik Sonoy arrived in Enkhuizen. He held a letter of the Prince of Orange naming him governor of Enkhuizen and the entire Northern Quarter. Sonoy made Enkhuizen the nerve centre of the revolt in the Northern Quarter and Friesland.

In return for its leading role during the revolt, Enkhuizen was given the so-called paalkistrecht (stake right). The paalkistrecht obliged Enkhuizen to upkeep the seamarks on the Zuiderzee, but in return entitled the city to levy toll on every ship that sailed the sea, and as such brought Enkhuizen substantial revenues. Up to 1572 the stake right had been in the possession of Amsterdam, but was taken from the city when it decided to remain loyal to the Spanish Crown. Enkhuizen also played an important role in the blocking of the Amsterdam harbour between 1572 and 1578. The resulting crisis in the Amsterdam economy was very profitable for Enkhuizen. It makes clear that the Dutch Revolt initially was a true civil war.

The Golden Age

Technically, by ‘Golden Age’ we mean the 17th century. However, one could say that Enkhuizen experienced its golden age already in the period 1560 to 1650. The city grew from 3,500 people in

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9 Israel, 172-173.
1500 to 7,500 in 1570 and to an impressive 22,000 in 1622. The medieval city wall was demolished as early as 1589, to allow for the expansion of the city. In 1593 the city began works on its new defence system, whereby a ring of bastions was laid around the inland side of the city – a design of the renowned architect Adriaen Anthonisz. van Alkmaar. It is a perfect example of the many innovations that took place in the field of fortification in the late 16th and early 17th century.

![Enkhuizen in 1650 (Blauw). In the centre of the map is the church of Saint Gomarus. The church of Saint pancreas is to its right. The ring of bastions from 1593 defends the new city.](image)

At the basis of Enkhuizen’s economy in its golden age were the traditional pillars of the Dutch economy: herring fishery, the bulk carrying trade and agriculture. For Enkhuizen, herring fishery was the most important and became the pride of the city. In the beginning of the 17th century there were around 1200 so-called herring busses in the Dutch Republic, one third of which were based in Enkhuizen. The city thus owned the largest herring fleet of Europe and was without doubt the queen of the Southern Sea. It must have been a breathtaking sight when the entire fleet left the port of Enkhuizen on Herring Bus Day: 400 ships with the flag of Enkhuizen in top-three crowned golden herrings in a deep blue sea.

Enkhuizen also participated in other branches of Holland’s economy. Merchants and investors participated for example in the different companies that were set up. One of the most significant was the United East-India Company that was set up in 1602. Enkhuizen invested 540,000 guilders on a total of 6,500,000 guilders, which made the city the most important investor next to Amsterdam. The company was divided into six chambers, Enkhuizen being one of them. Each chamber organized its own expedition on the basis of general guidelines that were given by the board of directors. This board was called the _Heren XVII_; one of the seventeen directors was a representative of the chamber of Enkhuizen.

In the development of Dutch trade with the Indies, two citizens from Enkhuizen played an important role. The first was the explorer Dirk Gerritsz. (1544-1608), who worked for the Portuguese between 1560 and 1590. He visited China and Japan twice, and was in all likelihood the first Dutchman to visit Japan. In 1604 Gerritsz. returned to Enkhuizen to spend his last years in relative peace, as a merchant. He would go down in history as Dirk China and as an icon of Dutch expansion in the East Indies.
Next to Dirk China it was Jan Huygen van Linschoten who contributed greatly to the knowledge of the Indies. He left Enkhuizen in 1577 and went to Spain and Portugal. Between 1583 and 1587 he worked for the Archbishop of Goa. The Archbishop trusted Van Linschoten to such an extent that he gave him access to non-public archives. Yet Van Linschoten violated the trust that was put in him by copying nautical charts and information about trade in the Indies. When he returned to Enkhuizen in 1592 he published his findings in two volumes. The first was about the nautical charts and described the sea way to the Indies, the second was about trade in and with the Indies. This information was crucial for Cornelis de Houtman, the captain of the first Dutch fleet that sailed to the Indies in 1595.

Enkhuizen also participated in setting up the Nordic Company in 1614. This company got a state monopoly on whaling between Newfoundland and Nova Zembla. The Nordic Company was divided into five chambers, of which Enkhuizen was one. In 1621 a long cherished wish was fulfilled, as the Twelve Year Truce ended and a West-India Company could be set up. Enkhuizen also invested in this company and formed a chamber together with the city of Hoorn. Enkhuizen invested 123,235 guilders on a total of 7,000,000. This was a very modest investment in comparison to the earlier investment in the East-India Company, and a sign of the contracting Enkhuizen economy after the Twelve Year Truce.

The economic decline did not only go for Enkhuizen, but also for the other West-Frisian ports such as Hoorn and Medemblik. A number of causes can be given for the contraction. After the ending of the truce, pirates resumed their activities in the Spanish Netherlands. The Enkhuizen herring fleet had much to suffer from these pirates. Enkhuizen paid for its own warships to defend the herring fleet, but losses were very heavy. In the year 1625 for example over a hundred herring busses were
lost. Apart from piracy the Enkhuizen bulk carrying trade got competition from Frisian merchants from the 1620's onwards. In 1620 the West-Frisian ports handled thirty percent of the bulk carrying trade in the Dutch Republic. By the end of the 1620's this had dropped to twenty-six percent, and to a mere eighteen percent in 1640.

With the signing of the Peace of Münster in 1648 the West-Frisian ports experienced an even stronger recession.\textsuperscript{10} The peace not only ended the Dutch Revolt but also the Thirty Year War in Germany. In Germany farmers could once again return to their business, causing the agrarian production to rise sharply. This resulted in a declining export from the Dutch Republic in general and the West-Frisian ports in particular. West-Frisian merchants, farmers and fishermen all had to deal with a declining demand. To make matters even worse the political climate in Scandinavia was far from stable. This was one factor that made the East-Sea trade contract. Whereas 1,200 Dutch ships sailed to the East-Sea in the 1640's, the number dropped to 600 ships in the late 1670's.

Merchants from Enkhuizen also had to deal with growing competition from England and the Southern Netherlands. In the 1640's the West-Frisian ports turned over twenty percent of the entire East-Sea trade. In the 1660's this had dropped to fifteen percent. The recession in the bulk carrying trade resulted in a smaller demand for ships, which had been another major source of income for Enkhuizen. As such the economic crisis was felt in every field, which caused tension within the city, especially in the summer of 1653. Enkhuizen had suffered much from the first Anglo-Dutch war (1652-1654) and during that summer citizens cooled their anger on the regents of the city.

Given the recession, a process of de-urbanization set in as early as the 1620’s.\textsuperscript{11} People relocated to Amsterdam or the countryside, causing the population to drop from 22,000 in 1622 to 18,000 in 1647. This is in sharp contrast to the growing population in other cities over the same period. It is illustrative that the annual number of baptisms in the Dutch Reformed Church reached its peak precisely in the year 1621. In that year 854 were baptized.\textsuperscript{12}

The economic process in Enkhuizen and the other West-Frisian ports was quite contrary to the economic development in other cities in Holland. The Peace of Münster caused crises in the traditional branches of Dutch economy. The decline in the bulk carrying trade, fishery and agriculture proved to be fatal for Enkhuizen, but other Dutch cities were less dependent on these traditional pillars of Dutch economy. The signed peace guaranteed a certain amount of stability and this was essential for the expansion of the trade in high quality products. The losses in the traditional branches of Holland’s economy were amply compensated for through the spectacular growth of the colonial, Mediterranean and Russian trade and the growing export of for example Haarlem and Leiden textiles. These cities reached their economic peak in the 1650’s and 60’s. In those years the prosperity of Enkhuizen was over and dealt with. The population had dropped from 18,000 in 1647 to 14,000 in 1688 and an embarrassing 11,000 in the beginning of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century. By which time it had become awfully quiet in Enkhuizen.

\textsuperscript{10} Israel, 617-618.
\textsuperscript{11} See Israel, 317.
\textsuperscript{12} Israel, 317-318.
Monuments in Enkhuizen

The West Frisian Ring Dike and the Zuiderzee

The most impressive monument, not only in Enkhuizen but in the whole region, is the West Frisian ring dike. The dike is mentioned for the first time in the year 1245 by the abbot of the monastery in Egmond, who tells us that in that year the dike burst. The dike had been raised in the years before to protect the West Frisian peninsula against the rising levels of the Zuiderzee. At the beginning of our era the Zuiderzee was a lake, the Flevomeer. Over time the sea level rose and high tides swept away part of the dunes in the northern Netherlands. The lake was opened up to the sea. In the 13th century the sea level rose sharply, to such an extent that the raising of a dike and in this case the abandonment of the old Enkhuizen was necessary. The dike itself is an impressive piece of medieval engineering. It is thought that in the 13th century the West Frisian peninsula was made up of tiny independent farmer republics, which had not been brought under the rule of the Count of Holland yet. They demonstrated an outstanding example of cooperation by raising the dike.

The Saint Pancreas or Southern Church versus the Saint Gomarus or Western Church

In medieval Enkhuizen the strife between the two united villages of New Enkhuizen and Gommerkerspel was omnipresent. The competition between the two communities led to rival building activities for their parish churches, with each community trying to outdo the other. In 1422 New Enkhuizen was given permission to demolish the church in the old Enkhuizen and to build a new church dedicated to Saint Pancreas in the newly founded village. The Gothic church is laid out as a double hall closed by a choir on the north side. The imposing 75 meter high bell tower was completed in 1526. Probably in 1427 the community of Gommerkerspel started work on their new parish church, dedicated to Saint Gomarus. The community succeeded in building an even larger church than their rivals, which is laid out as a triple hall. To the east of the church is a wooden bell tower, built in 1519. Actually, the community wished to replace it with a much higher stone tower. Yet it is said that the nuns of the surrounding monasteries were opposed to the plans because people would be able to peek into their courtyards from the tower. So, unfortunately for the people of Gommerkerspel the honor of having the highest bell tower went to the fishermen of New Enkhuizen.

The Town Hall

The Enkhuizen town hall was built in the years 1686-1688 to a design of Steven Vennekool. It is remarkable that the city was able to raise the funds to build such an impressive building, since the economy was in a real recession during that period. Steven Vennekool was the son of Jacob Vennekool, who had made the architectural drawings of the Amsterdam town hall for Jacob van Campen. The similarity between the two town halls makes us wonder whether Steven has not used his father’s drawings. The modeling of the town hall in an Amsterdam style fits into a larger pattern of cities copying the ‘eighth wonder of the world’, as the Amsterdam town hall was called. With its impressive dimensions and its sandstone façade the Enkhuizen town hall is a testimony of former glory.
The city wall

In the year 1489 the defence canal around the medieval city was completed and shortly afterwards work began on the city wall. Little of the medieval wall remains besides an impressive round bastion called the Drommedaris (dromedary), which is one of the loveliest monuments in Enkhuizen. The Drommedaris was built in 1540 and guarded the entrance to the various harbours of the city. It was raised to its present dimensions in the period 1649-1658. As mentioned before, a new defence system was laid around the enlarged city in the final years of the 16th century that consisted of seven massive bastions, three principal city gates and three so-called water gates. In comparison to the other cities this defence ring is very well preserved.

The Zuiderzeemuseum

The museum consists of two parts: a collection of artifacts and an open-air museum. The collection is housed in a historical building complex. A part of the complex is the so-called Pepper House. The pepper house was built 1625 and consisted of a residential part and a warehouse. The building was let to the VOC in 1682 and was used for storage of pepper and other goods. In this historical complex the Zuiderzeemuseum opened its doors in 1950. The museum was set up to preserve the typical culture of the cities around the former Southern Sea, which was disappearing rapidly. The open-air museum is relatively new and opened its doors in 1983. Around 130 houses, workshops and mills from many cities surrounding the former Southern Sea have been moved to the museum. They are an illustration of the period 1880-1930 and give the visitor the opportunity of experiencing the Southern Sea culture directly.
Leiden

Leiden was founded around the year 1000. The origin of the name ‘Leiden’ is thought to lie in the Roman period. ‘Lugdunum Batavorum’ was the name of a Roman military stronghold in Southern Holland, although its exact location is not known. In the early medieval period the name ‘Leithon’ was used for the district in which present-day Leiden is situated. When the village of Leiden came into existence it was named after the district. The village was founded at the intersection of two branches of the river Rhine. As such Leiden was of considerable commercial and especially strategic importance. The city’s coat of arms shows us the keys of Saint Peter, the patron saint of Leiden. The lion with an upraised sword points to the early years of the Dutch Revolt and the important role Leiden played at that time.

The Medieval Period

The first houses were built on the Southern Rhine Dike, the current Breestraat (Broad Street). Probably in the 11th century, the Count of Holland ordered the raising of a hill at the intersection of two branches of the Rhine. The hill was intended to be a place of refuge and a psychological reminder of the Count of Holland’s control over the main waterway in the region. The hill was transformed into a true citadel in the 12th century. In the same period, the Count of Holland had a courthouse built in Leiden and ordered the erection of a private chapel that was dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul. The location of the Count of Holland’s court gave Leiden prestige and importance.

Map of Leiden in 1574. In the centre of the city is the citadel; at the point were two branches of the Rhine meet. In the upper right corner is the North Sea. The region is crossed by many natural waterways. Roads were built on various dikes. The land around the city could be inundated by cutting the dikes.
Several privileges were bestowed on the city of Leiden due to its significance. These were converted into actual city rights in the year 1266. In the 13th and 14th centuries, it was the production of woolen textiles in particular that brought the city considerable wealth. The economic growth of the 14th century was followed by stagnation in the 15th century. The strong recession in many parts of Holland which lasted until the initial years of the Dutch Revolt made the population even more receptive to Protestant preachers and their cry for reforms. In Leiden the religious upheavals resulted in a Beeldenstorm on the September 25, 1566. Luckily the clergy had hidden some major works of art, among others the altar piece of the Church of Saint Peter by Lucas van Leyden (1494-1533). It is now on display in the municipal museum, De Lakenhal.

The Siege of Leiden

One of the most important stages in the entire Dutch Revolt was the epic siege of Leiden. In June 1572 it became clear that a major part of the Leiden population and militia, together with a large part of the city council sympathized with the Geuzen. The few royalists who remained in the council were soon overpowered and left the city. As a result of the internal pressure the city joined the revolt. It was only days later that the Geuzen entered the city.

The Spaniards reached Leiden at the end of October 1573 and laid a ring of entrenchments around the city. The people of Leiden were well prepared for the siege; every man was armed and the supplies were abundant. The Spanish planned to starve the city, but given the ample supplies the city held out. On March 21, 1574 the Spanish troops suddenly left their posts, because they were needed near Utrecht. The population of Leiden naively thought that the siege would not be resumed and the people returned to business. Given the high prices for food, the city neglected to restock on supplies.

Burgomaster Van der Werff is prepared to offer his own flesh to the starving population of Leiden. The gesture made such an impression that the population found the courage and will not to surrender to the Spanish.

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13 See Israel, 180-182.
14 Israel, 174.
The Spanish troops returned on the 26th of May. To their astonishment they could reclaim their former entrenchments, which the people of Leiden had not even bothered to demolish. During the following months the Leiden population almost starved to death. The Prince of Orange begged the population not to give in, since he was well aware that the loss of Leiden could put an end to the entire revolt. Meanwhile the dikes around Leiden were cut and the land was inundated. Unfortunately the water level did not rise fast enough to allow the fleet of the Geuzen to come near the Spanish troops. The more hopeless the siege turned out to be, the more inclined the population was to surrender. The story goes that at a certain point burgomaster Van der Werff told the gathered crowd that he would sooner let them eat his body than that he would surrender the city to the Spaniards.

Meanwhile, the Geuzen were constantly firing their guns to let the population know that help was on its way. Finally, on the 29th of September the wind changed and it started to rain very heavily. To Protestant preachers this seemed to be the work of the Almighty, helping his chosen ones. The water level rose sharply, and the Geuzen fleet could get near the Spaniards, who panicked and left their entrenchments in the night of October 3, 1574.

A legend in this saga tells us that a boy left the city to explore the surroundings on the morning of the city’s relief. In one of the entrenchments he found a kettle of hutspot, a typical Spanish dish. The hutspot was still warm: clearly the Spanish had left in a rush. He brought the kettle back to the city to feed the starving populace. And so, every year when the Leiden Relief is commemorated people eat hutspot. The kettle said to be the original, is kept in De Lakenhal.
The Golden Age of the Leiden textile industry

Similarly to Haarlem, Leiden rose like a phoenix from its ashes during the first decennium of the Dutch Revolt. The population of Leiden grew as a result of immigration, from 13,000 people in 1581 to 26,000 in 1600 and as much as 70,000 in 1688. This expansive growth made Leiden the second largest town in Holland. During the 17th century, the city borders also expanded and it was adorned with many new buildings. The main city development took place in the 1650s and 60s. An important reason for expanding the city was to provide relief for the ever increasing rent charges, which had been putting great pressure on wages in the textile industry.

![Map of Leiden in the Golden Age. At the heart of the city is the citadel. As compared to illustration 9, the city has been extended on the northern and western side. The city is now defended by bastions. The gate at the northeastern corner of the city is the Zijlpoort.](image)

Crucial for the economic growth was the immigration of skilled laborers from the Southern Netherlands, who were received with open arms. Especially for these newcomers, confiscated Catholic monasteries were turned into apartments and workshops. It was due to the immigrants that Leiden’s textile industry was rejuvenated. The textile production grew spectacularly and became the pride of the city. The story of Leiden’s Golden Age is thus largely a story of Leiden’s textile industry.

The immigrants from the Southern Netherlands introduced new kinds of techniques in Leiden, techniques that had previously made the Southern Netherlands the radiant star of European textile production. Very important was the introduction of so-called ‘new draperies’ like serge and baize, fashionable textiles that made great profits. The merchants who exported the textiles were in many cases also from the Southern Netherlands. Their vast trading networks were used to export the Leiden textiles as far as Japan.

During the 17th century, around half of Leiden’s population must have made a living in the textile industry. The industry was clearly present all over the city. Different pigments were used to color the
fabrics. After the coloring, the liquid waste was poured in the canals, turning them red, blue, brown or purple. Sheep skins and finished textiles were dried on big frames, but could also be seen hanging from bridges. In the quarter where the fullers worked there was the penetrating smell of urine that was used in the process. These fullers without doubt had the hardest job. They started work at two o’clock in the morning, after having been called to work by the fuller’s clock. They boiled the textiles in a combination of urine and earth. With their feet they treaded the fabrics in big containers to make them felt and condense. During the 17th century this unattractive work was taken over by fuller mills.

More than a hundred different fabrics were produced in Leiden. They were divided into seven main categories: cloth, camlet, serge, baize, fustian, ras and warp. Every category had its own branch organization. The board of such an organization was formed by various rich merchants and city officials. The board checked the entire production process, and its end result was examined by inspectors. The production process was divided up into 17 stages. It started with the washing of the wool in the city canals and ended with the so-called ‘shaving’ of the fabric until every last fluff was removed. In the beginning of the 17th century, every laborer was more or less independent. The important merchants would buy the wool and then hire independent fullers, spinners, weavers etcetera to do the work. From the 1630’s onwards, certain merchants took the whole production process into their own hands. Laborers became true employees, and the merchants improved themselves, becoming textile magnates.

Textile workers were subjected to severe rules. They were exploited by the textile magnates, but it was almost impossible for them to change their situation. Sometimes the workers were not paid in cash, but in kind. They would get rejected textiles or provisions, which they could trade. Leiden was also known for its child labor. Orphans were used in the process of spinning wool or weaving. Given the constant shortage of skilled labor, orphans from other cities were sometimes put to work in Leiden as well. The orphans started work at four o’clock in the morning, in humid and dark workshops, an atmosphere which prevented the wool from drying out. Many complaints were made about the inhumane treatment of these children. The main suspected culprits of mistreatment were the Walloon textile magnates. It was said that they made the children work fourteen hours a day, beating them with sticks and depriving them of food. In 1671, the Leiden orphans revolted against the Walloons, in one of the few uproars in the history of the city.

In the late 16th and beginning of the 17th century, the textile industry experienced its first major period of expansion. This was followed by a period of stabilization which lasted until 1648, when the Peace of Münster was signed. The end of The Dutch Revolt was the start of the most booming period in Dutch history. The number of weaving looms in Leiden grew from 2,675 in 1648 to 3,505 in 1661. The fabrics that were produced in this period were more labor-intensive and of higher quality. Around 1600, new draperies like serge and baize were produced in high quantities, and after 1648 cloth and camlet became the most important fabrics. In 1654, two thirds of all laborers worked in the cloth and camlet industry. In 1671 the cloth production reached its absolute climax, with an ultimate production of 138,000 pieces of cloth in one year.

The demand for Leiden textiles was so high that the labor force was not sufficient. To overcome this shortage of manpower, part of the production was relocated to the hinterland of the Dutch Republic. Especially around Tilburg and Helmond in Brabant, home workers were hired to do the job. Wages were considerably lower in this area. Brabant did not have a vote in the States General, the body governing the Dutch Republic, but was governed by this body. In 1651, Brabant petitioned to be admitted as a voting member of the States General. Leiden and Haarlem, cities who depended greatly on the low wages in Brabant, made sure that Brabant was not accepted. An independent Brabant would of course mean an independent Brabant textile industry, a development that would certainly not be in the interest of Leiden and Haarlem.
From the 1670’s onwards, Leiden had to deal with competition from other countries. Especially England and the region around Luik became important exporters of textiles. The high import duties levied on Dutch textiles in France played an important role in the decline of the Leiden textile industry. To lower the costs of production, more work was relocated to the Dutch hinterland. As a result, the textile production in Brabant increased sharply in the beginning of the 18th century. In addition, wages in Leiden were frozen, which led to several strikes among the work force. The first to go on strike were the fullers, followed by the weavers in 1701. A total of 1,500 weavers participated in a big demonstration. At first the city council tried to negotiate, later the civic guards ended the strike by force. Several ringleaders were arrested and put to death.

All this was in vain. By that time the pride of the city, the Leiden textile industry, had already contracted distinctly. The cloth industry had reached its peak in 1671, with the production of 138,000 peaces of cloth. Thirty years later, in 1700, a modest 25,000 peaces were produced. In the 1720’s and 30’s the industry was totally ruined; a mere 8,000 pieces of cloth were produced in the late 30’s. The same goes for the camlet industry. Whereas 36,900 pieces of camlet had been produced in 1700, this fell to 12,600 in 1750 and to a meager 3,600 in 1770. Given the decline of the textile industry, it became ever more quiet in Leiden. Hardly anything was left of the splendor of the Golden Age, leaving the city a shadow of its former self.

The University of Leiden

It is said that Willem van Oranje wanted to reward the people of Leiden when the Spanish siege had ended, as they had behaved in such a heroic manner. He offered the city a choice between a tax exemption for ten years or the founding of a university. The city opted for the university, which was founded on February 8, 1575 and is as such the oldest university in the Netherlands. As a motto the university chose ‘Praesidium Libertate’ (Stronghold of liberty). From 1581 to the present day the university is housed in the former chapel of the Dominican nuns that had been confiscated in 1572. Over the centuries many celebrated scientists taught in Leiden. From the 17th century professors, Justus Lipsius, Joseph Scaliger, Gerardus Vossius and Hugo de Groot deserve to be mentioned. The university kept its international significance up to the end of the 18th century, with scientific researchers such as Herman Boerhaave.

Freedom in teachings was very important to the curators of the university. This principle was challenged during the Twelve Year Truce. A scientific discussion between two professors of theology, Arminius and Gomarus, led to a sharp division in society. Among others Arminius argued in favor of more scientific freedom within the Protestant teaching. Gomarus wanted to keep with orthodoxy. The whole of Dutch society was divided into two groups: the Remonstrants (the supporters of Arminius) and the Contra-Romonstrants (the supporters of Gomarus). Finally in 1617 the Contra-Romonstrants, supported by the Prince of Orange had the Protestant synod condemn the Remonstrants. The public spokesman of the Remonstrants, the Pensioner of Holland Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, was publicly executed. The Leiden city council had supported Arminius and had been forced to barricade the town hall in their defence at the high point of the discussion. The city council and university staff were purged as soon as the Prince of Orange had secured his position in Leiden. The incident made clear that scientific freedom had its limits.

Pilgrim Fathers

In England the Calvinists were severely prosecuted by Queen Elisabeth and her successor James I, in particular those that wanted a separation from the Anglican Church. Many of them chose to leave

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15 Israel, 999.
England and went to the Dutch Republic, the safe haven of Protestantism. They arrived in Amsterdam in 1608. In 1609, Ds. John Robinson and 100 other Calvinists asked the Leiden city council permission to settle in Leiden, which was granted instantly. In Leiden they enjoyed complete religious freedom. They bought a piece of land, called the *Groene Poort* (Green Gate), near the Church of Saint Peter. On it, they built 21 small houses, and the gate became known as the *Engelse Poort* (English Gate). Next to Robinson, William Brewster was a man of importance. He headed the Pilgrim Press in the years 1617-1619. In 1617, discouraged by economic difficulties, the pervasive Dutch influence on their children, and their inability to secure civil autonomy, the congregation voted to emigrate to America. A small ship carried them to England, where they regrouped. On September 6, 1620 they left England on the Mayflower. There were about 102 passengers, fewer than half of them from Leiden.

**The Fine Arts**

Haarlem and Utrecht had been the artistic centers in the Netherlands since the end of the 16th century, but in the 1620s both Amsterdam and Leiden came to the stage. It can be said that Leiden was Rembrandt’s cradle. Rembrandt (1606-1669) was born in Leiden and set up his first studio there. In Leiden he developed the style of ‘fine painting’, which he chose to abandon entirely when he moved to Amsterdam.

Gerard Dou (1613-1675), one of his most gifted pupils, continued to paint in this style and could be called the founding father of the Leiden school of fine painting. With his smooth and highly polished brushwork he created an illusionist setting. In his time Dou was called ‘the Dutch Parrhasios’. In ancient Greece there had been two very gifted painters; Zeuxis and Parrhasios. Both painters tried to outdo the other. Zeuxis was known to paint such life-like grapes that birds would pick at them. When Zeuxis came to Parrhasios’ studio, he wanted to unveil the painting Parrhasios had just finished, but the veil itself turned out to be painted.

Next to our ‘Dutch Parrhasios’ we should mention Jan Miense Molenaer (c.1610-1668), who was trained in Dou’s studio. Both Dou and Molenaer were internationally renowned painters and among the best paid painters in the Dutch Republic. When Cosimo III de Medici came to the Dutch Republic, he visited Molenaer in his studio and bought several of his paintings.

**Architecture**

Given its wealth and importance Leiden wanted to surpass Haarlem and vie with Amsterdam. It was especially in the 1650s and 60s that Leiden’s wealth materialized. The most appealing examples are the classical buildings designed by the civic architects Arent van ’s Gravesande (c.1610-1666) and Pieter Post (1608-1669). ’s Gravesande designed the lovely Marekerk. This church has an octagonal shape with the pulpit placed in the centre. Such a design matches the classical ideal of the time and the Protestant service, in which the sermon forms the very centre. ’s Gravesande also designed the *Lakenhal* (Cloth makers’ hall), the headquarters of the newly set up laken industry. After ’s Gravesande left, Post took over as the leading architect. Among others he designed the weigh-house and the butter house.

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16 See Israel, 560.
17 See Israel, 868-869.
Monuments in Leiden

The Church of Saint Peter

On June 27, 1121 the chapel of Saints Peter and Paul was consecrated by Godebald, the bishop of Utrecht. As mentioned, the chapel was built as a private chapel for the Count of Holland. In 1268 the chapel became Leiden’s first parish church. The Romanesque 12th century building was replaced with a gothic basilica in the 14th century which was enlarged in the 15th and 16th centuries. The church originally had a very imposing tower, which was completed around 1350. It was 110 meters high and one of the highest towers in the Netherlands. The tower was called ‘the King of the Sea’ since it was used as a beacon by sailors. Unfortunately the tower collapsed in 1512 and was never rebuilt. During the Dutch Revolt the church became a Calvinist church. After the siege had ended a service was organized in the church on October 3, 1574. This became a tradition that has been kept up to the present day. Many famous people lie buried in the church, among others some of the Pilgrim Fathers.

The Town Hall

In the 14th century the city got its own town hall. In 1595, the Haarlem civic architect Lieve de Key (c.1550-1627) was asked to design a new façade for it, that would fit with Leiden’s newly acquired status. De Key designed one of the most imposing Dutch Renaissance façades. The remarkably long façade is topped with three ornamented gables. A very wide and high stoop leads to the central entrance. In the 17th century the interior was remodeled. Tragically, a great fire on February 12, 1912 utterly destroyed the building, as well as many priceless works of art. The city council ordered the town hall to be rebuilt in 1934. The architect C. J. Blaauw reconstructed the original façade and placed a modern building behind it. It was a complex task and ironically, the exact opposite of the assignment given to Lieve de Key.

The City Wall

At the end of the 15th century Leiden got a city wall. Unfortunately hardly anything remains of this wall, apart from the defence tower Oostenrijck. In the 1640s Leiden started work on fourteen earth bastions encircling the city. Eight magnificent gates gave entrance to the city. One of the loveliest gates is the Zijlpoort, built in 1667 to the design of Post. The gate has a beautiful marble relief made by Rombout Verhulst (1624-1698), who also worked with Artus Quellinus on the Amsterdam town hall. The relief
shows the war god Mars and the monster Medusa, which are meant to cast away evil. In many aspects the gate relates back directly to the Roman architecture of the past, the point of reference for the classical architect. Besides the gate part of the earth wall has been reconstructed.

**Municipal Museum ‘De Lakenhal’**

The museum is housed in the former Lakenhal. This hall was built to the design of Arent van ’s Gravensande in 1640. The monumental façade fits with the newly acquired status of Leiden as a major centre of textile production. The cloth merchants brought their bales of cloth to the Lakenhal, where the cloth was inspected in the forecourt. When the quality was in keeping with the set standard the bales were taken inside. In the great hall a lead seal was attached to the bales. Over the years Leiden seals have been found as far as Indonesia, South Africa and America. It was also in the Lakenhal that the various governors and assayers held their meetings. In 1874 the building was converted into a museum and opened up to the public. The many works of art range from objects that illustrate the history of the city to major works of art such as paintings by Lucas van Leyden, Rembrandt and Gerard Dou.
Haarlem

Haarlem is mentioned for the first time as an estate belonging to the property of the church of Saint Martin in Utrecht in the years 918-938. ‘Haar-lo-heim’ means something like ‘house on high sand grounds which are covered with woods’. Haarlem was founded at a convenient location, where the two main routes running north-south come up to each other, namely the river Spaarn and the land route on the sand grounds to its east. Legend tells us that the city’s coat of arms originally held four stars and that the sword and cross were added later, gifts from the Roman emperor and the Patriarch of Jerusalem. These gifts were bestowed on the city in return for partaking in the 5th crusade and for playing a key role in the successful capture of the Egyptian port of Damiate in 1218-19. The lions were added later. The motto ‘vicit vim virtus’ (Bravery has conquered violence) was added around 1900.

Map of Haarlem in 1646 by Blaen. Slightly off centre is the Grand Market with the church of Saint Bavo. The city hall is at the other side of the square. The river Spaarn crosses the city. At the top of the drawing is the Amsterdam Gate. The road in front of it lies on a dike which runs all the way to Amsterdam.

The Medieval Period

In the medieval period, Haarlem rapidly developed into a prosperous commercial centre. The location of the Count of Holland’s court in Haarlem, probably already in the 11th century, played an important role in this initial development. The courthouse was built on the Sant (Sand), the current Grote Markt (Grand Market), alongside the parish church. Haarlem was the second city in Holland to be given its city rights, by count William II in 1245. The city was defended by an earth wall with a
canal in front of it; it was not until 1274 that the city got a proper city wall. With the 14th century city expansion, a new set of city walls was built. Haarlem’s medieval economy was based on textile manufacturing, beer brewing and ship building. The textile manufacturers worked in the south-west part of the city, the beer brewers and ship builders on the banks of the river Spaarne. In the course of the 15th century the economy declined, to be revived only at the time of the Dutch Revolt. Just as in many other cities in Holland, the Catholic Church owned vast properties inside and outside the city walls. In 1577, there were twenty convents in the city and the impressive Saint Bavo church had been enlarged to its present size. Yet Haarlem was not to escape the Protestant cry for religious reforms that rung out in the Netherlands in the 16th century.

The Beeldenstorm

Protestant preachers were only allowed to gather outside the city walls, where they conducted their so-called ‘Hagepreken’ (hedge-preaching). When, in August 1566, Protestant sentiments resulted in the so-called ‘Beeldenstorm’, the Haarlem civic militia warned the civic government that they would not act against the iconoclasts and the Protestant preaching. As a result, the city council suspended Catholic worship – except in the monasteries – and authorized the forming of a Calvinist consistory. Yet when the government in Brussels gathered force and suppressed Protestant worship, the Haarlem city council regained its confidence and expelled the Protestants from the city. The thirteen ringleaders, well-to-do citizens including several brewers, were condemned.

1572 the siege of Haarlem

The news that the Watergeuzen had taken Den Briel reached Haarlem on April 3, 1572. Haarlem’s city council instantly expressed its loyalty to the Spanish King, but sent a letter to stadhouder Bossu that they did not need Spanish soldiers within the city. They stressed the fact that they were in complete control of the situation. This changed when at the end of July a group of people who had been in exile returned to the Haarlem. They had come in the name of the Prince of Orange to negotiate with the city council. Internal pressure and the threat of the Geuzen now forced the city council to express its loyalty to the Prince of Orange. He was declared the new stadhouder of Holland instead of Bossu. Bossu and the Duke of Alva were declared public enemies. All the same, the city remained loyal to the Spanish King. At the end of July the city council was suspected of collaboration with the enemy and was replaced by a new city council. The new mayors were all moderate Catholics and supporters of the Dutch revolt.

On the 25th of November, Bossu sent the Haarlem city council a letter. He strongly advised the city to give up its rebellious policy. If not, the city would be punished horribly, like Mechelen and Zutphen had been. Shortly afterwards, on the 2nd of December, the city of Naarden surrendered to the Spanish. But they did not show any mercy; the population was slaughtered and the city burned to the ground. The burning city of Naarden could be seen from the bell tower of Saint Bavo’s Church in Haarlem. The next day the city council met to discuss matters. If the city would remain loyal to the Prince of Orange, the Spanish would certainly not spare it. But, given the example of Naarden, the question remained whether the Spanish would be merciful if the city were to surrender.

Don Frederique, the son of the Duke of Alva, was in charge of the punitive campaign in the Netherlands. He had set up his camp in Amsterdam, a city that remained loyal to the Spanish Crown in every respect. The Haarlem city council decided to send three deputies to Amsterdam in order to negotiate. The Geuzen, under leadership of captain Ripperda, saw this as betrayal. They convinced the

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18 Israel, 151.
19 Israel, 158.
civic guards that armed resistance was the only option given the fact that the population of Naarden had surrendered to the Spanish, but had nevertheless been slaughtered. They argued that as the Spanish had not shown any mercy in Naarden, nor would they in Haarlem. A Geuzen army was subsequently sent to the city to strengthen its defence. When the three deputies returned from Amsterdam they were captured and put to death. The civic guards chose a new city council. Politically speaking, Haarlem was now set to be besieged.

![The siege of Haarlem. The Spanish have besieged the city on the northern side (left) and southern side (right). The Geuzen fleet is in control of the Haarlemmer Lake (top right).](image)

The city’s defences were however in terrible shape. Instant repairs were carried out. It was far from ideal, but it just had to do. On the 11th of December, Don Frederique appeared with an army of 14,000 soldiers. He did not bother to surround the whole city, but set up a camp to the north of the city. His plan was to bomb the city wall without end and take the city with one gigantic attack. What he did not know was that the people of Haarlem had used the debris of the destroyed wall to construct a second ring of defence. When, on the 20th of December, Don Frederique ordered his men to attack through a hole that had been bombed in the city wall, they were totally surprised to see the second line of defence. Many Spanish soldiers were shot or died of the burning oil and peck that was poured over them. It was estimated that 150 Spanish soldiers were killed. Over 300 were wounded and had to be taken to the military hospitals that had been set up at Dam Square in Amsterdam. Only a few dozen casualties were counted on Haarlem’s side. This battle was a turning point in the whole punitive expedition of Alva and his son. Haarlem would not be defeated so easily. In that cold winter of 1572/73 the Spanish had to prepare for a siege that would last for seven months.
The Spaniards long stuck to their initial plan; taking the city from the north. The city wall was bombed and mostly destroyed. In January 1573 the people of Haarlem built a half moon shaped rampart behind this destroyed city wall. All the buildings in the vicinity had been demolished for the sake of the city's defence. The population withstood every Spanish attempt to storm and take the city.

Women played an important role in the defence of the city. The most legendary of all was Kenau Simonsdochter Hasselaer (1526-1588). Together with 300 other women she defended the city, among others by throwing burning peck from the city walls. In the Netherlands she became the embodiment of women's capability to bear arms and a feminist avant-la-lettre.

During the siege, the population of Haarlem almost daily made a sortie to destroy Spanish artillery and capture fire arms. By launching these attacks they also made sure that food and supplies could enter the city. These were initially brought to Haarlem on sledges over the frozen Haarlemmer Lake. This strategically important lake was controlled by the Geuzen (ill.17). It is estimated that over 8,000 sledges reached the city during the siege and that 2,000 fresh troops were sent to Haarlem this way. When spring came, the Geuzen used ships to supply the city.

At a certain point the Prince of Orange sent a Geuzen army to relieve the city. This army, under the command of captain Koning, tried to reach Haarlem through the dunes. In Haarlem torches were lit during the dark nights and the bells of the Saint Bavo cathedral rung constantly to guide the army to the city. It was all in vain. Koning was surprised by the Spanish troops and his army was massacred. The Spanish decapitated Koning and threw his head over the city wall. A note was attached to it, which read ‘This is the head of captain Koning, he was sent to your relief.’ Haarlem responded by hanging eleven Spanish soldiers. They were decapitated and their heads were put in a barrel. The barrel was thrown over the city wall with a note that read ‘These are for Alva. It is our payment for the tenth penning. Because we are late the eleventh may be considered as interest.’ These and other war crimes are examples of a conflict that had totally escalated.

On the 26th of May, the situation changed dramatically with the defeat of the Geuzen fleet on the Haarlemmer Lake. Supplies could no longer reach Haarlem and for the first time the city was totally isolated from the outside world. The population was starved. A peoples count was organized, and it turned out that there were 20,772 people within the city walls. Food was handed out through coupons. In June the situation became intolerable. People ate cats, mice, rats, grass and leaves. The Prince of Orange used carrier post to let the population know that help was on the way, to encourage them not to give in. The promised help never came though. Because the situation seemed so hopeless mothers killed their children and then killed themselves. Day by day, tension grew between the suffering civilian population and the soldiers defending the city.

Executions on the Grand Market in Haarlem on 13 July 1573. Because these executions took too much time eventually people were drowned in pairs in the river Spaarne.
On the 1st of July the city negotiated its surrender. On the 13th, a treaty was signed. The ransacking of the city was bought off for 240,000 guilders, with payment in three terms. The treaty stipulated that the civilian population would be spared, but that the lives of the soldiers depended on the mercy of the Spanish. On the 14th of July, Don Frederique entered the city. The next day 300 soldiers were executed. Because the hanging and decapitating took too much time, they were drowned in couples in the river Spaarne. In total around 1,500 soldiers were killed. The Spanish had succeeded in taking the city, but losses had been heavy. It is estimated that around 5,000 Spanish soldiers died during the siege of Haarlem. Looking back, the siege turned out to be a turning point in the entire Dutch revolt. It showed that resistance was not useless: the Spanish army was not almighty and could be defeated.

In comparison with the fall of Naarden, the Spanish were merciful towards the civilian population. Nevertheless, the civic guards were facing a dangerous task. The Spanish forced them to take part in the siege of Alkmaar, a siege that they lost. It was the first true victory for the rebellious population of the Netherlands. ‘Alkmaar led the way to victory’ was the yell that rung throughout the Netherlands. For the people of Haarlem it was anything but a victory, as many civic guards died during the siege.

By now the Dutch revolt had developed into a civil war. Amsterdam and Haarlem were firmly controlled by the Spanish. The Geuzen made sure though that they were completely cut off from the outside world. The Geuzen brought death and destruction on the surrounding countryside. As the years went by, the situation became intolerable and the Spanish were forced to give up the city. In 1577 the city council started negotiations with the Prince of Orange, resulting in a treaty that became known as the Satisfaction of Haarlem. It was laid down that there would be religious freedom for Protestants and Catholics and that the Spanish troops would leave the city. This freedom of religion was abolished in 1581, when Catholicism was banned. From that point on the city would only follow the Calvinist path, a path that would lead Haarlem to its Golden Age.

The Golden Age

It was not until the middle of the 1580’s that the economic situation began to change with the influx of immigrants from all over Europe. In Haarlem the population grew from 14,000 in 1570 to 39,000 in 1622. Together with the penetration of the rich trade it was this influx that boosted the Dutch economy. In Haarlem the textile industry flourished like never before. Haarlem was one of the main production centers of linen and woollen textiles. Especially the manufacturing of damask, the weaving of intricate patterns into linens, became a symbol of civic pride. Haarlem replaced Kortrijk (in the Spanish Netherlands) as the centre of the damask industry. Many of the immigrants came from these Spanish Netherlands, among them the father of one of the icons of the Golden Age in Haarlem, the painter Frans Hals.
Initially there was enough space within the city walls to house all the newcomers. Catholic property had been confiscated and most of the monasteries that had filled the medieval city were demolished to make room for houses, small factories and shops. Given the fact that the city was constantly growing, the city council decided in 1642 to expand the city towards the north. These plans were finally realized between 1671 and 1679 and with it the city expanded by almost 50 per cent. By that time Haarlem’s economy was over its peak and was beginning to contract. This was mainly due to the fact that Amsterdam had gradually absorbed all the economic activity in the region. As a result, many of the lots were not sold. From 1720 Haarlem’s economy went into a real recession. The division between the poor and the rich became very distinct. This situation would not change until the second half of the 19th century.

The fine arts

Up to 1590, the art market had been relatively small. The subsequent economic growth greatly increased the demand for art, especially paintings. In the last decade of the 16th century and the first quarter of the 17th century Haarlem was, next to Utrecht, the main production centre. Three very gifted painters worked in Haarlem at that time; Cornelis Cornelisz. van Haarlem (1562-1638), Carel van Mander (1548-1606) en Hendrik Golzius (1558-1638). Among their works, the biblical and mythological paintings are the most appealing. They painted in a late mannerist style. The mannerist artist tends to adjust reality, making it more beautiful and as such creating his own style (maniera). Another talented painter was Hendrik Cornelisz. Vroom (1566-1640), who developed the realistic seascape. To improve his rendering of rough conditions on an open sea, he is said to have sailed through a storm. It is the realism of Golden Age painting that is its greatest achievement and that makes it unique.

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Map of Haarlem in 1742 by Isaak Triton. The city extension at the left hand side of the drawing is clearly visible. This part of the city is defended by bastions, while the rest of the city still makes use of the former medieval city wall. Only a minor proportion of the new building lots have been sold.

22 See Israel, 556-558.
The officers of the Saint George civic guard company, Frans Hals, 1627.

The most famous of all Haarlem painters is of course Frans Hals (c.1581/85-1666). In his portraits he captures the fleeting moment and the individuality of the sitter. His first dated work is from 1611. Contrary to popular belief, Hals’ genius was already recognized by his contemporaries. One of the few female painters of the 17th century was Judith Leyster (1609-1660), a pupil of Hals. Lay people and everyday events are the subjects of her paintings.

Architecture
From the late 16th century onwards, the city was remodeled. Responsible for many buildings was the municipal architect Lieve de Key (c.1550-1627). De Key worked in a mannerist style. The mannerist architect Vredeman de Vries (1527-c.1604) published many treatises on architecture that influenced de Key. For most of his life De Vries worked in Flanders, where De Key was born. De Key’s designs remain very Flemish compared to those of his contemporary in Amsterdam, Hendrick de Keyser. De Key’s designs are very ornamental. Façades are lavishly decorated with a playful variety of classical ornaments and motives. His most important work is the *Vleeshal* (Meat Hall) on the Grand Marked.
Monuments in Haarlem

The Church of Saint Bavo

The religious symbol of Haarlem is the church of Saint Bavo. Saint Bavo was born under the name of Alwin around the year 589 in present-day Belgium. As count of Haspenshire he led a sinful life. After the death of his wife he became repentant. He divided his possessions among the poor and joined the monastery of Saint Peter in Gent. He died around 653. When the city of Haarlem was besieged in 1268, the Saint appeared as a defiant knight, bursting through the clouds. In his right hand he held an upraised sword, in his left a falcon. The enemy was terrified and fled. As a result, the people of Haarlem rededicated their church to Saint Bavo. The church we see today replaced a church that was destroyed by fire in 1370. The new church was built in a late Gothic style. The oldest part is the choir, which was completed around 1400. Building went on until well into the 16th century. During the Beeldenstorm, people tried to pull down the statue of Saint Bavo that crowned the southern transept of the church. The sword of the Saint is said to have cut through the ropes and thus the statue was left in its place.

The Town Hall

The worldly symbol of Haarlem is the town hall. The core of the building complex is formed by the former Dominican monastery and the count’s hall. Both were built after the great fire that destroyed the monastery and the count’s court in 1350. The count’s hall was built as a replacement of the court but was soon afterwards presented to the city and given the function of town hall. Around 1460, the two Vierscharen (tribunals) were built. In the Vierschaar, death sentences were proclaimed. The smaller one has preserved its Gothic appearance. In the 1590’s the remodeling of the town hall began under supervision of Lieve de Key. The complex was enlarged and its façades were decorated with Renaissance motives.

The City Wall

The economic growth in the 14th century had made the construction of a new city wall desirable. This new city wall, consisting of a wall proper, watch towers and several gates, was completed at the beginning of the 15th century. The only city gate to remain is the Amsterdam Gate. The main gate was built around 1400. A smaller gate was added to the front at the end of the 15th century, with a small open space between the two. The foundations of the city wall can be seen next to the gate. The wall was approximately 1.5 meters wide and almost 7 meters high. In 1572, when it became clear that Haarlem was going to be besieged the city had to make use of this medieval city wall, which had been neglected over time. Within a brief period it was repaired and strengthened. It would withstand the enemy for a long time. When
the city was finally taken by the Spaniards a substantial part of it was destroyed. The medieval city wall was restored to its former glory in the years 1589-1593. The fact that it was decided to restore the medieval city wall instead of replacing it with a more up to date defence system, is a clear indication of the fragile economic position of Haarlem in these years.

Hofjes

Haarlem is known for its many lovely hofjes. There are about two hundred hofjes in the Netherlands, twenty-two of which are located in Haarlem. The word hofje means ‘houses surrounding an open court’. From the end of the medieval period it was used as a legal term to describe the social institution that it basically was. In most cases, Hofjes were founded by well-to-do citizens for poor elderly women. These citizens often did not have any children and the founding of a hofje was a way to perpetuate their name. In a hofje women could live for free. Depending on the financial position of a hofje they also received food, pocket money etc. In return they had to obey strict rules and were supposed to live a fruitful religious life. The inhabitants were supervised by regents, while a porter kept a watchful eye. Some hofjes were founded for women belonging to a specific religious group such as Lutherans or Catholics. In those cases a private chapel could be incorporated into the hofje. One of the largest hofjes in Haarlem is Teylers Hofje. It was built in the years 1785-1787. The monumental gate gives entrance to a spacious courtyard. Around it there are twenty-four one-bedroom apartments. The regent’s chamber is situated to the left of the entrance, the apartment of the porter to the right. Much of the interior of the regent’s chamber in Louis XVI style is still intact.

The Civic Guards

Already in 1374 there was a civic guards company in Haarlem. The civic guards were recruited from the social layer of citizens who could pay for their own armor and weapons. Their task was to defend the city, to keep order, to close the city gates in the evening and patrol at night. They played an important role in the emancipation of the city, gaining considerable political and military significance during the Dutch Revolt. In the 17th century the role of the civic militia changed profoundly. With their military role played out they became more and more like social fraternities. These are the merry companies we see immortalized in the paintings of Hals and his contemporaries. The quarters of the Saint George Civic Guard were built on the site of a former monastery in the years 1591-1593. It consisted of two wings and a monumental gateway. Its appearance has changed drastically over time. In 1682, the building was turned into a Gentlemen’s Lodge which points out the changed function of the civic militia.

The Frans Hals Museum

The museum is housed in the former Oudemannenhuis (Old Men’s Home). This home was built in 1608 with funds that had been raised through a lottery. It could well be that Lieve de Key had his share in the design. Since 1913 the Frans Hals Museum is housed in the apartment complex. In the various rooms, laid out around a charming 17th century court, an overview is given of 16th and especially 17th century Dutch painting. Very different from the 17th century paintings are the mannerist paintings of the late 16th century by artists such as Cornelis van Haarlem. The 17th century collection consists of various paintings by Jacob van Ruisdael (1628-1682), Jan Steen (c.1626-1679), Johannes Verspronck (c.1597-1662) and Pieter Saenredam (1597-1665). Five large civic guard paintings, three regent group portraits and various individual portraits by Frans Hals are on display.