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FRONT COVER

Rubens, *The Judgement of Paris* (NG 194),  
detail of plate 1, page 4.

TITLE PAGE

Joachim Beuckelaer, *The Four Elements: Air*  
(NG 6587), detail of serving girl.

# The Design Practices of the Dutch Architectural Painter Bartholomeus van Bassen

AXEL RÜGER AND RACHEL BILLINGE

**B**ARTHOLOMEUS VAN BASSEN (c.1590–1652) was the first Dutch painter to specialise in the genre of architectural painting. He is now principally remembered for the pivotal role he played in the development of painting in this field, but he also worked as an architect and received commissions from the courts of Orange and Bohemia, and the city of The Hague.<sup>1</sup> Given these prominent appointments, as well as his sizeable oeuvre as a painter, it is somewhat surprising that his name is not mentioned by any of the contemporary writers on art and only appears in the literature in the early nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> The *Interior of the St*

*Cunerakerk, Rhenen* (PLATE 1) is the only painting in the National Gallery that can be reliably attributed to the artist.<sup>3</sup>

Van Bassen's beginnings are obscure. Neither the precise date nor the place of his birth is known.<sup>4</sup> It is generally assumed that he was born some time between 1590 and 1595.<sup>5</sup> Carla Scheffer was the first to discover documentary information that suggests a possible association with a family of the same name from the Dutch town of Arnhem.<sup>6</sup> Regrettably, nothing is known about van Bassen's training either.<sup>7</sup> The first document that mentions Bartholomeus himself is his registration as a fully



PLATE 1 Bartholomeus van Bassen, *Interior of the St Cunerakerk, Rhenen* (NG 3164), 1638. Oak, 61.1 × 80.5 cm.



PLATE 2 Bartholomeus van Bassen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, c.1618–20. Oak, 61.6 × 99.7 cm. Detroit Institute of Arts, Gift of Julius Weitzner, inv. no. 37.59. © The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan.

trained master with the Guild of St Luke in Delft on 21 October 1613.<sup>8</sup> By 1622 he had moved to The Hague where he became a member of the local guild.<sup>9</sup> Besides his continuous activity as a painter, from 1629 until 1634 he received architectural commissions from the stadholder Frederik Hendrik for the palaces at Honselaersdijk and Ter Nieuwburgh as well as work for the court of the Elector Palatine and King of Bohemia, Frederik V.<sup>10</sup> Possibly as a result of these commissions, van Bassen was appointed official architect to the city of The Hague in 1639.<sup>11</sup> The artist died in 1652.<sup>12</sup> Only Gerard Houckgeest (1600?–1661) can be identified with some degree of certainty as van Bassen's pupil.<sup>13</sup>

The recent investigation of the *Interior of the St Cuneraerk, Rhenen* with infrared reflectography (IRR) at the National Gallery was prompted by the interesting results that had been gained from the earlier examination of van Bassen's *Return of the Prodigal Son* in Detroit in 1996 (PLATE 2).<sup>14</sup> Until then technical research in the field of Dutch architectural painting had almost exclusively focused on the most prominent representative of this genre, the Haarlem painter Pieter Saenredam (1597–1665). In his case a large quantity of sketches and preparatory and construction drawings on paper have

survived and this, together with the insights provided by infrared reflectography, has greatly enhanced our understanding of Saenredam's working methods.<sup>15</sup> Several studies and exhibitions have been devoted to other architectural painters, particularly those from Delft, and much attention has been paid to their use of perspective, yet to date their works have hardly ever been the subject of any technical research.<sup>16</sup> The examination of the Detroit painting provided a first indication that IRR could supply us with helpful clues about the working methods of an architectural painter by whom no preparatory drawings on paper are known. The subsequent examination of the *Interior of the St Cuneraerk, Rhenen* at the National Gallery confirmed many of the first insights we had drawn from the findings in Detroit. We felt, however, that it was desirable to look at a greater number of works by van Bassen before we could come to more reliable conclusions. In 2001 we were able to examine two further works that were included in the Gallery's exhibition *Vermeer and the Delft School*, and in 2003 the Royal Collection made their *Palace Interior with The King and Queen of Bohemia dining in Public* available to us. Colleagues in other institutions have also kindly shared their findings. As a result, in this article we are able to sketch a

clearer and more reliable picture of van Bassen's design process and working methods than has previously been possible.

While architectural painting has its roots in the interior and exterior settings depicted in the works of fifteenth-century Netherlandish painters such as Jan van Eyck, Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Bernaert van Orley (1491/2–1541), it only developed into an independent genre in the sixteenth century.<sup>17</sup> In 1539 the Netherlandish painter, sculptor and architect Pieter Coecke van Aalst began to publish a Dutch edition of Sebastiano Serlio's treatise on architecture, the *Regole generali di Architettura*, a key publication that helped to introduce Renaissance architecture and perspectival principles to northern Europe.<sup>18</sup> In 1560 the architect, engineer and designer Hans Vredeman de Vries (1526–1607), after having studied the work of classical and Renaissance architects such as Vitruvius and Serlio, produced a number of books with model illustrations of perspectival constructions and architectural settings. These volumes, published simultaneously in Dutch, Latin, French and German, became enormously popular and were used by artists well into the seventeenth century.<sup>19</sup> An immediate follower of Vredeman de Vries whose publications were equally influential was Hendrik Hondius (1573–c.1649). He not only printed Vredeman de Vries's *Perspectiva* of 1604–5, but in 1622 also published his own treatise, the *Institutio artis perspectivae*, a book that became very popular and was widely used by artists.<sup>20</sup>

Drawing on these influences and traditions, architectural painting developed as an independent genre first in Flanders. Hans Vredeman de Vries, besides being an influential theoretician, architect and engineer, was one of the first artists to paint views of buildings in which the architectural structure began to take precedence. The settings he depicts are mostly richly decorated mannerist palaces, but he also painted Gothic and Renaissance church interiors. His son Paul (1567–c.1630) continued this tradition, yet focused more emphatically on the rendering of elegant palace interiors.<sup>21</sup> A close follower of the style of the two Vredeman de Vries was Hendrick Aerts who also favoured imaginary mannerist palaces and church interiors.<sup>22</sup> Another important pupil of Hans Vredeman de Vries, Hendrick van Steenwyck the Elder (c.1550–1603), is usually credited with having established the tradition of portraying existing church interiors, namely Antwerp Cathedral and the Carolingian chapel of the cathedral at Aachen.<sup>23</sup> Characterised by their use of central perspective, deeply receding spaces



PLATE 3 Hendrick van Steenwyck the Younger, *Interior of a Gothic Church looking East* (NG 1443), c.1604–15. Copper, 36.7 × 55 cm.

and rich detail, these images remained influential for many decades and are reflected in the work of Steenwyck's son Hendrick the Younger (c.1580–1649, PLATE 3), as well as Pieter Neefs the Elder (c.1578–1656/61) and his son Pieter the Younger (1620–after 1675).

As has been mentioned, very little is known about van Bassen's early life and training. His earliest surviving work, the *Interior of Antwerp Cathedral*, signed and dated 1614 – one year after his admission to the Guild of St Luke as a fully fledged master – must therefore be considered as the starting point of his career.<sup>24</sup> In this painting van Bassen depicts a Gothic church interior with a view down the central nave towards the choir, decorated with altarpieces and small staffage figures. Accomplished in its perspectival construction, the treatment of light and the carefully rendered details, the picture adheres closely to the Antwerp tradition of architectural painting.<sup>25</sup>

The ties to the Flemish predecessors, however, while still visible, seem to lessen in van Bassen's works from around 1620, for example the *Imaginary Church Interior with the Tomb of William the Silent* in Budapest (see p. 38, PLATE 8).<sup>26</sup> Although he retained the single-point perspective, after 1620 van Bassen started to emphasise light and atmospheric effects to articulate architectural space. A short while later he began to make more use of classically inspired architectural elements, turning his church interiors into monumental Renaissance structures. During the 1620s, van Bassen also painted most of his elegant palace interiors (PLATE 2). As Hans Jantzen has suggested, these interiors were less atmospheric than the church interiors and generally defined by stronger local colours and



FIG. 1 Infrared reflectogram mosaic of Bartholomeus van Bassen, *Interior of the St Cunera Church, Rhenen* (NG 3164).



sharper outlines.<sup>27</sup> In the 1630s and 40s, however, the artist concentrated once more on increasingly realistic effects of light and shade, a greater emphasis on an overall tonality in place of pronounced local colours and more complex spatial arrangements with overlapping architectural elements.<sup>28</sup> He continued this approach until the end of his life. Van Bassen's last painting is a church interior dating from the year of his death in 1652.<sup>29</sup> With the exception of some architectural plans, for which an attribution to van Bassen has been suggested, no drawings by the artist survive.

In general, throughout his career van Bassen stayed faithful to the subject of imaginary architecture with its artificially constructed spaces, central perspective – in contrast to the two-point perspective introduced by the subsequent generation of architectural painters in Delft<sup>30</sup> – richly decorated settings and auxiliary staffage figures. Yet van Bassen's style became gradually more naturalistic, which set him apart from his Netherlandish predecessors. With his church interiors he moved away from the artificial evocation of depth by means of strong orthogonals, in favour of more complex spatial configurations and atmospheric effects. Individual forms were now also being modelled by light effects rather than purely by outline. Furthermore, van Bassen reduced the pronounced emphasis on local colour of the Netherlandish painters, preferring a more muted overall tonality. He realised that these effects were as important for producing a convincing illusion of three-dimensional space as proper geometric perspective. As Walter Liedtke has observed, van Bassen's interiors appear more realistic than the 'airless boxes' of his Netherlandish predecessors.

The resultant effect was one of greater realism, albeit for imaginary settings. Liedtke coined the term 'realistic imaginary' for this type of church interior.<sup>31</sup> By adopting this approach van Bassen paved the way for the following generation of Delft artists, Gerard Houckgeest in particular, who concentrated on the rendering of actually existing architectural spaces, where the figures become more integral to the composition.<sup>32</sup> Van Bassen can therefore be seen as the critical link between the earlier Flemish tradition and architectural painting in Delft after 1650.<sup>33</sup>

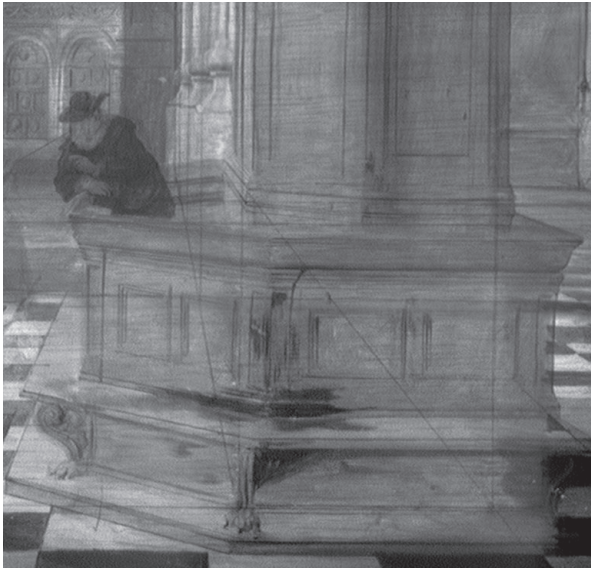


FIG. 2 Infrared reflectogram mosaic detail of Bartholomeus van Bassen, *Interior of the St Cunera Church, Rhenen* (NG 3164), showing the wooden enclosure around the pier in the right foreground.

### The Interior of the St Cunera Church, Rhenen

Bartholomeus van Bassen painted the *Interior of the St Cunera Church, Rhenen* (PLATE 1) in 1638, almost ten years after he had been commissioned with the designs for the remodelling of the adjacent monastery of St Agniet as a hunting lodge for the exiled King of Bohemia, the ‘Winter King’ Frederik V (1596–1632) and his wife Elizabeth Stuart, the sister of Charles I of England.<sup>34</sup> The church has its origins in the fifteenth century and houses the relics of the fourth-century saint Cunera.<sup>35</sup> With the remodelling of the monastery the church became the court chapel of the ‘Winter King’.

The painting shows the west end of the church with the entrance seen through the doorway underneath the organ. The low vantage point must be close to the north-east corner of the crossing. When the picture was acquired by the National Gallery it was called *Interior of a Gothic Church* and was catalogued as such by Neil MacLaren in 1960.<sup>36</sup> Liedtke was the first to identify the interior on the basis of a comparison with drawings by Pieter Saenredam of 1644.<sup>37</sup> Van Bassen’s image, however, deviates in some respects from the actual building. In the painting the brick walls, vaults and piers are represented as if constructed in stone.<sup>38</sup> The arches are less pointed, the original small impost capitals have been omitted while the curved bases above the pedestals of the piers have been added. Van Bassen has also replaced the stone floor with a more regu-

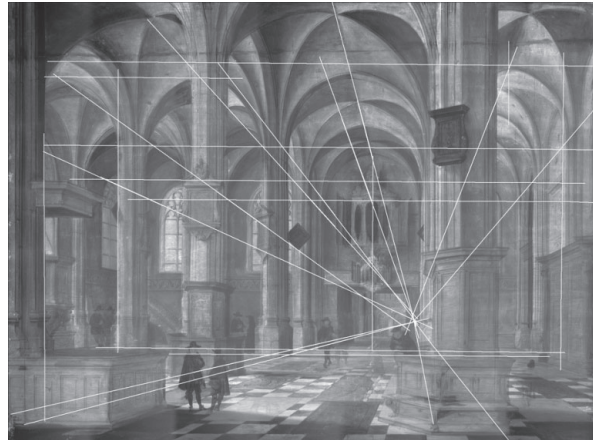


FIG. 3 Infrared reflectogram mosaic of Bartholomeus van Bassen, *Interior of the St Cunera Church, Rhenen* (NG 3164), with superimposed diagram of construction lines.

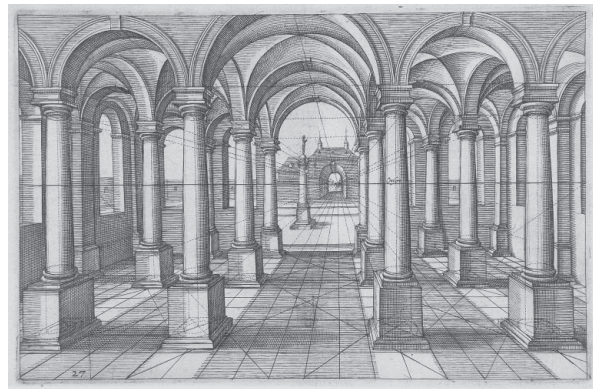


FIG. 4 Hans Vredeman de Vries, *Perspectives...*, The Hague, 1604–5. Building with ornaments of the classical orders. Engraving, 18.8 × 28.9 cm, no. 27.

larly tiled floor and added a doorway in the far bay on the right where there should be a wall with a window.<sup>39</sup>

As with all churches in the Netherlands that became Protestant with the Reformation, the interior is devoid of any pictorial decoration. There are only a few memorial tablets suspended from the piers. Van Bassen’s decision to depict stone walls and piers instead of brick adds to the starkness of the interior. The overall tonality is muted, ranging between shades of beige, ochre and brown. Suffused by sunlight streaming in through the windows on the south side of the nave, the interior reveals van Bassen’s accomplished handling of light effects, which structure the space and counteract the plunging single-point perspective. The large pier with the pulpit on the left casts a shadow across the foreground, thus effectively acting as a *repoussoir* that sets off the brightly illuminated part of the nave beyond. The piers and the shadows they cast across





PLATE 4 Bartholomeus van Bassen, *Interior of a Church with a Procession*, 1624, with figures by Frans Francken II, 1624, signed by both artists. Oak, 54.3 × 79.8 cm. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz. Photo: Jörg P. Anders. Inv. 695.



FIG. 5 Infrared reflectogram mosaic detail of Bartholomeus van Bassen, *Interior of a Church with a Procession*, Berlin (PLATE 4), showing the base of the pier in the left foreground.

the floor gradually lead the eye towards the far end of the nave beyond the organ screen. The bright and slightly hazy light of that space contrasts with the shadow of the doorway underneath the organ loft. The interior is further articulated by the alternately lit and shaded segments of the vaulted ceiling. Moreover, the figures help guide the viewer's eye, but it must be borne in mind that they were added after van Bassen had finished the interior, most likely by a different hand. Van Bassen seems never

to have painted his own figures. Indeed, most often he probably had little influence over the nature and placement of them, which means that he had to ensure that the space was comprehensible to the viewer without having to rely on the figures. The question of the collaboration between him and his figure painters is discussed below.

The infrared reflectogram mosaic of the painting (FIG. 1) shows that van Bassen produced a very detailed and precise underdrawing for the construction of the interior and its perspectival system.<sup>40</sup> There are no drawings known by the artist that relate to his paintings and the present underdrawing strongly suggests that he developed the composition directly on the panel rather than transferring a construction drawing from a sheet of paper as Saenredam had usually done. A multitude of thin straight lines define the general shapes of the piers, the pedestals, the furniture and the receding tiled floor. Straight lines running from top to bottom indicate the width of the individual piers. These vertical lines, as well as several horizontal ones and orthogonals that lead to the vanishing point (just to the right of the head of the man standing inside the wooden enclosure), are clearly visible in the right foreground underneath the wooden structure (FIG. 2). Throughout the picture one also can make out numerous 'construction lines'. These lines are used to aid the design of the perspectival system, but they often have no direct bearing on the shapes of the painted features. One such line, for example, determines the alignment of the apexes of the Gothic vaults along the ceiling of the nave. The horizontal and orthogonal lines at the level of the springing of the vaults, particularly visible in the upper left portion of the IRR mosaic, suggest that the artist devised a horizontal grid pattern suspended across the interior (FIG. 3). This helped him to structure the space and place the piers correctly. The delineation of the basic geometric shapes of the architectural features and the use of such a grid had been suggested by Hans Vredeman de Vries in his treatise on perspective of 1604–5 (FIG. 4).<sup>41</sup> This use of the underdrawing is also evident in the *Interior of a Church with a Procession* of 1624 in Berlin (PLATE 4). The base of the pier in the left foreground shows how carefully van Bassen constructed its basic shape (FIG. 5). His drawing even includes the outline of the pier's 'footprint' as well as an indication of its far corner that is otherwise invisible to the viewer. Again, this closely follows Vredeman's example.

In the National Gallery painting the regularity of the ribs of the vaults suggests that those lines



PLATE 5 Follower of Bartholomeus van Bassen, *Interior of a Church* (NG 924), probably 1644. Oak, 68.5 × 98.5 cm.

were drawn with a compass rather than free-hand. Generally it is noticeable that van Bassen concentrates his drawing on the definition of the bold geometric shapes, while the architectural ornamentation such as the curved bases of the piers atop the pedestals, the feet of the bench in the right foreground, and the volutes and pediments adorning the memorial tablets were not underdrawn but freely executed in paint only (FIG. 2).

#### Another church interior at the National Gallery

In 1875, some forty years before the painting by van Bassen arrived in London, the Gallery was given an *Interior of a Church* (NG 924), then attributed to Pieter Neefs the Elder on the basis of a false signature (PLATE 5).<sup>42</sup> In 1960 Neil MacLaren ascribed the painting to van Bassen because of the strong parallels in composition with other works by the artist, while noting that this picture was ‘coarser’.<sup>43</sup> The attribution to van Bassen was upheld by Christopher Brown in his revision of MacLaren’s catalogue in 1991. Indeed, the composition with the large tomb monument on the right and the dominant arch in the foreground opening onto the deeply receding nave of the church bears a certain resem-

blance to works by van Bassen of the mid-1640s.<sup>44</sup> However, the relative simplicity of the spatial arrangement and the faulty perspective of the ceiling suggest that this picture must have been painted by a somewhat less competent follower of van Bassen.

The underdrawing revealed in the reflectogram mosaic of the painting indicates further inconsistencies with van Bassen’s approach (FIG. 6). Clearly, the artist used a very detailed underdrawing for the construction of the space, creating a dense network of horizontal, vertical and orthogonal lines. Like van Bassen, he applied carefully ruled lines to define the columns, their bases and the baldacchino, as is particularly visible in the tomb monument on the right (FIG. 7). At the same time, however, the artist also drew the decorative details, such as the relief on the bottom front of the monument, the volutes running up its side, the large sculpture and the richly decorated cartouche at the top. The drawing is executed in a searching, loose manner. Equally unusual, when compared to van Bassen’s working methods, is the very free drawing that indicates the curved bases of the piers running along the nave (FIG. 8). Similar loosely executed underdrawing appears for most of the ornamental decoration



FIG. 6 Full infrared reflectogram mosaic of Follower of Bartholomeus van Bassen, *Interior of a Church* (NG 924).



FIG. 7 Infrared reflectogram mosaic detail of Follower of Bartholomeus van Bassen, *Interior of a Church* (NG 924), showing the tomb monument in the right foreground.



FIG. 8 Infrared reflectogram mosaic detail of Follower of Bartholomeus van Bassen, *Interior of a Church* (NG 924), showing the bases of the piers on the right side of the nave.

throughout the picture, particularly in the tomb monument on the right. As we have seen in the reflectogram of NG 3164 (FIG. 1) – and this has been observed in other works by the artist as well – van Bassen usually executed such details directly in paint without any underdrawing at all.

That the artist of NG 924 must also have painted it without any detailed preparatory drawings becomes most apparent in the area above the Gothic arches flanking the main round arch in the foreground. The reflectogram mosaic clearly shows hesitant sketches for these arches in two different positions above the painted ones (FIG. 9). Also revealed is a sketch for a sculpture underneath the memorial tablet on the front left pier which does not appear in the final painting.<sup>45</sup> Although van Bassen occasionally added a free-hand detail in the underdrawing (discussed below), the consistent use of underdrawing for all the ornamental details in NG 924 is fundamentally different from van Bassen's own approach. Therefore the underdrawing must be considered as a further argument for questioning the attribution of this painting to Bartholomeus van Bassen.

### Palace interiors

Besides painting churches Bartholomeus van Bassen developed a speciality in the depiction of lavishly decorated palace interiors, such as that seen in the *Return of the Prodigal Son* in the Detroit Institute of Arts (PLATE 2, p. 24). Characteristically, the interior is a box-shaped room with a tiled floor and coffered ceiling, illuminated by daylight coming in through the large windows along the left-hand wall.<sup>46</sup> The anteroom in the left foreground opens onto a courtyard. Just outside the doorway one can make out the small figure group representing the biblical parable of the Return of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15: 11–32). The scene shows the moment when the son, having squandered his portion of the inheritance, returns home and kneels before his father, asking for forgiveness. The father, overjoyed to have his son back, orders a calf to be slaughtered in honour of the event. Further back in the courtyard the fettered calf is being led to its death. The people at the table inside the room have interrupted their music-making and game of tric-trac (a form of backgammon) to witness the event.

The right wall is dominated by a richly decorated fireplace and a carved wooden doorway with the door opening into the room, a frequent feature in van Bassen's paintings. This motif derives from



FIG. 9 Infrared reflectogram mosaic detail of Follower of Bartholomeus van Bassen, *Interior of a Church* (NG 924), showing the arches in the right foreground.

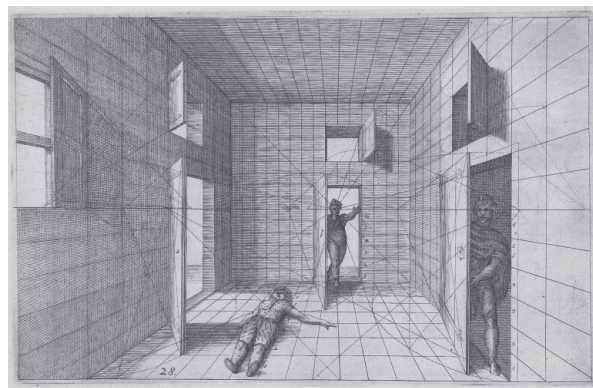


FIG. 10 Hans Vredeman de Vries, *Interior of a Church with a Procession*, 1604–5. Interior with figures, doors and windows, explaining the principles of foreshortening. Engraving, 19 × 29.4 cm, no. 28.



FIG. 11 Bartholomeus van Bassen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (PLATE 2). Infrared reflectogram mosaic.  
© The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan.



FIG. 12 Bartholomeus van Bassen, *Renaissance Palace Interior with Tric-trac Players*, 1620s. Panel, 56 × 80 cm. Private collection, on loan to the Dordrechts Museum.  
© Dordrechts Museum, Dordrecht.



FIG. 13 Bartholomeus van Bassen, *Renaissance Palace Interior with Tric-trac Players* (FIG. 12). Infrared reflectogram mosaic detail showing table and figures on the left.  
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Hans Vredeman de Vries's handbook on perspective and is mentioned by Karel van Mander as a praiseworthy achievement in perspectival construction (FIG. 10).<sup>47</sup> Here the doorway plays a visual trick on the viewer. Rather than seeing into an adjacent room, as one might expect, we see through another opening around the corner from the open door back into the main room. The left of the two chairs makes this clear. While its backrest is visible

through the door, one can see its left front leg to the left of the base of the column on the corner. The general atmosphere is one of sumptuousness and extravagance. Hardly any surface in the room is free of abundant ornamental and sculptural decoration.

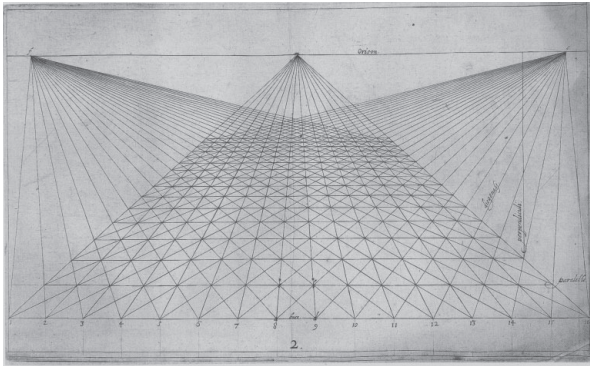


FIG. 14 Hans Vredeman de Vries, *Perspectives...*, The Hague, 1604–5. Explanation of principle, rule and measure of perspectives; perspective diagram with horizon. Engraving, 18.7 × 30.6 cm, no. 2.



FIG. 15 Bartholomeus van Bassen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (PLATE 2). Infrared reflectogram mosaic detail showing the skirt of the standing woman and two diagonal construction lines.

The significance of the iconographic details in the picture, such as the figure of King David above the fireplace, the figures of Faith, Hope and Charity above the door on the back wall, the wine cooler and the chained monkey, have been discussed more extensively elsewhere.<sup>48</sup> For our purposes it suffices to say that they refer generally to the dangers of wasteful living and the benefits of virtue and humility. It is debatable, however, whether such a moralising lesson is at the core of the painting. Pictures such as this were luxury items produced for a small class of sophisticated patrons – the courtly circles at The Hague and members of the aristocracy and regent class elsewhere – and connoisseurs who appreciated the highly accomplished perspectival construction, the visual intrigue of the spatial illusionism and the meticulous execution. This is reflected by contemporary inventories which usually referred to architectural paintings as ‘perspectives’ without necessarily mentioning the historical



FIG. 16 Bartholomeus van Bassen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (PLATE 2). Infrared reflectogram mosaic detail showing the central roundel of the ceiling.

subjects featured within them.<sup>49</sup> The biblical story and symbolic details in the present painting may therefore be no more than subtle moralising nudges in what is otherwise an expensive and finely crafted work of art.<sup>50</sup> The great care that went into the construction of the perspective is reflected by the very detailed and precise underdrawing that has been uncovered with the help of infrared reflectography (FIG. 11).<sup>51</sup>

The infrared reflectogram mosaic reveals a dense network of lines, drawn with the help of a ruler and compasses, for the perspectival system. Throughout the picture one can make out numerous construction lines, most notably in the floor and in the ceiling, that do not appear in the painted composition. This precision of the underdrawing is also very apparent in another palace interior, at present on loan from a private collection to the museum in Dordrecht (FIG. 12). Like the Detroit painting, the construction lines for the tiled floor and the left wall are clearly visible beneath the painted table (FIG. 13).<sup>52</sup>

In his treatise of 1435 Leon Battista Alberti suggested a somewhat complicated method for the proper construction of foreshortening, using the projection of the side elevation of the object to be shown.<sup>53</sup> However, a more practical method adopted by artists in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries involved the use of distance points. These are the points at which the projections of parallel lines lying at an angle of 45° to the picture plane converge. If these lines lie in a horizontal plane the distance points lie on the horizon. There are always two distance points at equal distance to the right and left of the central vanishing point. This distance is the same as the distance between the centre of projection and the picture plane.<sup>54</sup> The standard example to show how this system works is the construction of a receding chequerboard floor (FIG.



PLATE 6 Bartholomeus van Bassen, *Palace Interior with the King and Queen of Bohemia dining in Public*, c.1634. Panel, 55.2 × 86.4 cm. The Royal Collection, inv. RCIN 402967. © 2005, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Photo: Stephen Chapman.



FIG. 17 Bartholomeus van Bassen, *The King and Queen of Bohemia dining in Public* (PLATE 6). Infrared reflectogram mosaic detail showing a section of the ceiling.

14). First the ground line is divided into equal units and lines are drawn from these points towards the central vanishing point. Then a diagonal is drawn from the bottom right corner to the left distance point. The intersections of this diagonal with the orthogonals will provide the points through which the transversals, or horizontal lines, must be drawn.<sup>55</sup> Van Bassen used this system to determine the recession of the tiled floor in the Detroit picture. The two long diagonal lines across the standing woman's skirt are clearly construction lines of this type, running from the lower right-hand corner to the distance point on the left (FIG. 15). The diagonal line seen in drawing under the table of the Dordrecht picture fulfils the same function (FIG. 13).

In the *Return of the Prodigal Son* the lines that were intended to be seen in the painted picture were reinforced with paint. The coffered ceiling shows most clearly the difference between the thinly drawn

lines which simply aided the construction of the perspective and the reinforced lines which show on the surface. While van Bassen used rulers and compasses for most of these, it is evident that he could not draw the curvature of the foreshortened central roundel with the aid of a compass. The drawing reveals a rare instance of van Bassen's hesitant free-hand drawing (FIG. 16). Similar features can be observed in the ceiling depicted in the *Palace Interior with the King and Queen of Bohemia dining in Public*, now in the Royal Collection (PLATE 6 and FIG. 17). The underdrawing revealed consists not only of a rather detailed construction drawing but also of earlier ideas for the ceiling's decoration, such as the diamond-shaped coffers on all three sides of the lower part of the ceiling and the loosely drawn ovals set into the fields rising to the upper part of the ceiling above the back wall, which were omitted in the final composition.<sup>56</sup> Van Bassen clearly used the underdrawing to work out – and occasionally change – his compositions. The configuration of the interior of the *Return of the Prodigal Son* also seems to have undergone a change. There are, for example, two lines, one running parallel to the upper edge of the left-hand wall and the other running down to the right of the far left corner of the room, which suggest that van Bassen originally had a narrower back wall in mind. Such changes in



FIG. 18 Bartholomeus van Bassen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (PLATE 2). Infrared reflectogram mosaic detail showing sketched lines beside sculpture of King David.



FIG. 19 Bartholomeus van Bassen, *Renaissance Palace Interior with Tric-trac Players* (FIG. 12). Infrared reflectogram mosaic detail showing the painting above the door on the right. IRR: © Prof Dr. Molly Faries/Stichting RKD.



FIG. 21 Bartholomeus van Bassen, *The King and Queen of Bohemia dining in Public* (PLATE 6). Infrared reflectogram mosaic detail showing the sculptural decoration above the fireplace on the left.



FIG. 20 Bartholomeus van Bassen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (PLATE 2). Infrared reflectogram mosaic detail showing part of floor with wine cooler and sketched lines above.

the composition, as well as the occasional sketchy indication of decorative details, confirm once more that he must have developed his compositions directly on the panel or canvas without any elaborate preparatory drawings.

It is difficult to determine whether there is much underdrawing underneath the pronounced lines that appear in the painted surface of the abundant architectural and sculptural decoration in the Detroit *Return of the Prodigal Son*. It seems as if van Bassen followed his usual practice and drew only the geometric architectural features, adding the decorative details in paint at the final stage. There are, however, exceptions. In the decoration above the fireplace, to the right of the seated figure of King David, a few loose lines, unrelated to the final composition, suggest that van Bassen may have thought about a decorative detail (FIG. 18). In the picture from Dordrecht, a similar sketchy ‘notation’ appears in the painting above the doorway on the right (FIG. 19), while the architectural ornamentation does not seem to contain any underdrawing. The case of the *King and Queen of Bohemia dining in Public* is less straightforward. As usual, most of the rich decoration seems to have been created only in paint. Some ruled lines are used to indicate the



frames of the paintings on the walls and the backs of the chairs along the back wall, but in the sculptural decoration above the fireplace on the left one can clearly make out freely drawn thin lines, defining the location and shape of the consoles underneath the sculptures and the picture, the sculptures themselves and the consoles supporting the triangular pediment above (FIG. 21), while other details, such as the sculpted busts at the top, show no underdrawing whatsoever.

In the picture from Detroit there is one enigmatic aspect that seems very unusual for van Bassen. The reflectogram mosaic shows a number of inconclusive lines in the foreground around the wine cooler (FIG. 20). They seem to represent the outlines of a figure yet without any bearing on the final composition. It is possible that they reveal van Bassen's thoughts on the placement or dimensions of figures, even though he would not have had any intention of painting them himself.

### Staffage

Bartholomeus van Bassen's paintings are usually populated by small figures. In his palace interiors they frequently represent 'merry companies', that is groups of young and fashionably dressed people engaged in pleasurable activities, such as eating, drinking, conversing, making music and playing games.<sup>57</sup> Their comportment and elegant attire enhance the general atmosphere of wealth and luxury. A number of paintings, mostly palace interiors, including the picture from Detroit, combine such scenes with historical subjects. Two recurrent subjects are Lazarus and the Rich Man and the Return of the Prodigal Son.

As was standard for many architectural (and landscape) painters in the seventeenth century, the figures in van Bassen's paintings were almost always added by a collaborator. George Keyes has shown that Esaias van de Velde (1587–1630) frequently painted the staffage for van Bassen.<sup>58</sup> One piece of documentary evidence that supports this is the lottery held in 1626 by the Delft glass painter Cornelis van Leeuwen, which included several paintings by van Bassen with figures by Esaias van de Velde.<sup>59</sup> Another artist with whom van Bassen seems to have collaborated on several occasions is Frans Francken II (1582–1642). The most notable example is the *Interior of a Church with a Procession* from Berlin, which is in fact signed by Francken and van Bassen (PLATE 4).<sup>60</sup> Other staffage painters included Anthonie Palamedesz., Cornelis



PLATE 7 Bartholomeus van Bassen, *Renaissance Interior with Banquetters*, about 1620, with figures by Esaias van de Velde. Panel, 57.5 × 87 cm. Raleigh, North Carolina Museum of Art. Purchased with funds given in honor of Harriet Dubose Kenan Gray by her son Thomas H. Kenan III; and from Arthur Leroy and Lila Fisher Caldwell, by exchange, inv. no. 98.3. © North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh.

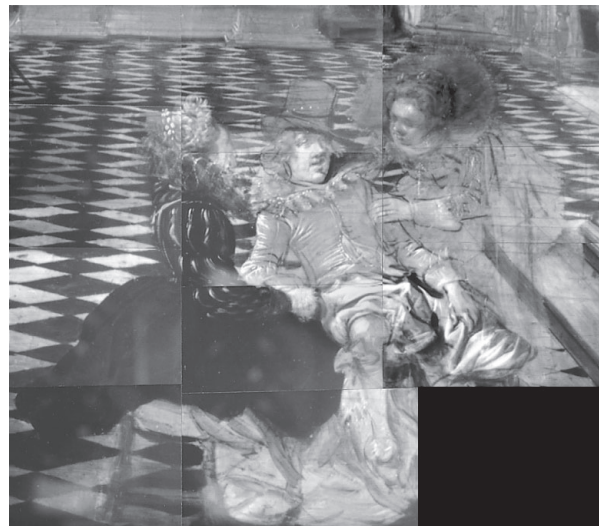


FIG. 22 Bartholomeus van Bassen, *Renaissance Interior with Banquetters* (PLATE 7). Infrared reflectogram mosaic detail showing figure group in the foreground. (Bottom right corner not recorded.)

van Poelenburgh, a certain Jan Martensen and Sebastian Vrancx.<sup>61</sup> The latter may well have been responsible for the figures in the Detroit picture.<sup>62</sup>

In all of the paintings so far discussed the figures were added after van Bassen had finished the painting. This was standard practice with most painters who added figures to van Bassen's interiors – and who often worked in different cities. There is, however, an interesting and unusual exception. In van Bassen's *Renaissance Interior with Banquetters* of about 1620 from the North Carolina Museum of



PLATE 8 Bartholomeus van Bassen, *View of an Imaginary Church with the Tomb of William the Silent*, 1620. Canvas, 112 × 151 cm. © Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest. Inv. no. 1106. Photo: Dénes Zózsa.

Art the painter of the staffage figures has been convincingly identified as Esaias van de Velde (PLATE 7).<sup>63</sup> When looking at the reflectogram mosaic of the seated figures in the foreground, it emerges that they are fully underdrawn in a loose style that suggests the hand of van de Velde (FIG. 22). What is more, van Bassen left a reserve for the figures when he executed the architectural setting (see the woman on the right). The figures are clearly drawn over van Bassen's underlying geometric structure, but seemingly before he painted the architecture. A similar *modus operandi* can be found in his *View of an Imaginary Church with the Tomb of William the Silent* of 1620 from Budapest which also contains figures by van de Velde (PLATE 8).<sup>64</sup> In the right background the outline of a figure is visible on the base of the column (FIG. 23). Here Esaias seems to



FIG. 23 Bartholomeus van Bassen, *View of an Imaginary Church with the Tomb of William the Silent* (PLATE 8). Infrared reflectogram mosaic detail showing figures in the right foreground and a sketch of a figure underneath the base of the column on the far right.

have sketched the figure, but van Bassen must have decided to paint it out rather than leaving a reserve for it. Further underdrawing can be detected in the couple in the right foreground, and here a reserve has been left for them (FIG. 23). There are further drawn lines around the man's hat and behind his back. When painting the figures Esaias adjusted the skirt of the woman (which contains some underdrawing in the pattern at the bottom) and extended it beyond the reserve left by van Bassen.

Thus van Bassen's collaboration with Esaias van de Velde was clearly different from that with other figure specialists. The evidence from the infrared examination indicates that van Bassen and van de Velde started collaborating on these pictures in the early planning stages, passing the painting back and forth between them. This was of course only possible because they lived close to one another, in Delft and The Hague respectively (and by 1622 van Bassen had moved to The Hague as well). In these pictures van Bassen evidently had a clear idea from the beginning about the nature and placement of the figures. However, when working with other figure painters, who often lived in more distant cities such as Utrecht and Antwerp, van Bassen would probably have been obliged to relinquish control over this aspect of the work. To date it is not at all clear what kinds of agreements existed between painters of landscapes and architectural settings and their figure painters. Did van Bassen, for instance, sell a painting without figures to a client in Antwerp and then send it to a local figure painter to add the staffage? And who decided the nature of the scene (biblical or genre?) and the number and appearance of the figures? Was van Bassen at all involved in the process or was the decision made between the client and the figure painter? Alternatively, it seems conceivable that the figure painter acted as an agent who would order an interior from van Bassen on behalf of a client and then add the figures according to his client's wishes. On the other hand, it seems less easy to imagine that van Bassen would have painted his labour-intensive interiors on speculation, in the hope of selling them to a figure painter who would add the staffage and sell them on. The issue of such collaborative works also raises the question of the point at which a painting would have been considered 'finished'. The traditional assumption is that the signature of the artist indicates that a picture is finished. Van Bassen, however, appears to have signed – and often dated – his works when the architecture was completed and the picture was ready to leave the studio, but, crucially,

before the figures had been added. There are a few paintings, for example the *Interior of a Church* from Berlin, in which the figure painter, in this case Frans Francken II, also signed the work (PLATE 4).<sup>65</sup> Clearly, the nature and circumstances of this kind of collaboration between artists merit further research.

#### Notes and references

- 1 This combination was not unusual in seventeenth-century Holland. See Koen Ottenheim, 'The Painters cum architects of Dutch Classicism,' in Albert Blankert et al., *Dutch Classicism in seventeenth-century painting*, exh. cat., Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Städtisches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt am Main 1999, pp. 34–53.
- 2 None of the contemporary writers on art such as Cornelis de Bie, Arnold Houbraken or Jacob Campo Weyerman mention van Bassen. Nor is he mentioned in Dirck van Bleyswijk's *Beschrijvinge der Stad Delft* of 1667. As Carla Scheffer has pointed out, van Bassen's name occurs for the first time in the notebooks of George Vertue in 1739. See Carla Scheffer, 'Bartholomeus van Bassen (ca. 1590–1652), architect en schilder van architectuurstukken', unpublished master's thesis (*doctoraalscriptie*), 2 vols, Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, Leiden 1987, p. 5. The first book to include van Bassen is R. van Eynden and A. van der Willigen's *Geschiedenis der vaderlandse Schilderkunst sedert de Helft der XVIII Eeuw*, 4 vols, Haarlem 1816–40; (see vol. 1, p. 66), which included a number of artists omitted by Houbraken. After that he appears in every handbook and encyclopedia on Dutch art and artists. The first documents on van Bassen were published in Abraham Bredius, 'De Haagsche schilders Joachim en Gerard Houckgeest', *Oud Holland*, 6, 1888, pp. 85–90, and idem, 'Bartholomeus van Bassen, schilder-architect', *Haagsch Jaarboekje*, 6, 1894, pp. 85–90. To date the only monographic study devoted to van Bassen is Carla Scheffer's thesis of 1987 cited above, which also includes a checklist catalogue of the paintings.
- 3 The picture was cleaned and restored in the National Gallery Conservation Department in 2003.
- 4 For a more detailed biography see the entry on van Bassen by the present author in Walter Liedtke, Michiel Plomp and Axel Rüger, *Vermeer and the Delft School*, exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; National Gallery, London; New York 2001, p. 222. Because of van Bassen's close association with the Antwerp tradition of architectural painting, it has in the past often been assumed that he was the son of Flemish immigrants or the descendant of a Flemish noble family of that name. See Hans Jantzen, *Das niederländische Architekturbild*, 2nd edn, Braunschweig 1979 (1st edn, Leipzig 1910), p. 58; Uwe M. Schneede, *Das repräsentative Gesellschaftsbild in der niederländischen Malerei des 17. Jahrhunderts und seine Grundlagen bei Hans Vredeman de Vries*, diss., Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, Kiel 1965, p. 175; Walter Liedtke, *Architectural Painting in Delft*, Doornspijk 1982, p. 26, note 20 (based on Jantzen); idem, 'The court style: architectural painting in The Hague and London', in Jeroen Giltaij and Guido Jansen, *Perspectives, Saenredam and the architectural painters of the 17th century*, exh. cat., Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam 1991, p. 37 and note 39.
- 5 Bredius (cited in note 2) was the first to suggest a birthdate of c.1590–5 (p. 87, note 2). See also Jantzen (cited in note 4), p. 58.
- 6 Scheffer (cited in note 2), pp. 27–8 and note 2. See also Bernard Vermet, 'Hendrick Aerts', and 'Architectuurschilders in Dantzig, Hendrick Aerts en Hans en Paul Vredeman de Vries', in *Gentse Bijdragen tot de kunstgeschiedenis en oudheidkunde*, 30, 1995, pp. 107–18, and 31, 1996, pp. 33–4, note 23.
- 7 Jantzen (cited in note 4) had suggested Hendrick Aerts as an important influence (p. 59). While Aerts, a pupil of Hans and Paul Vredeman de Vries in Dantzig, was certainly influential for van Bassen, there is no evidence that he was in fact his teacher (Giltaij and Jansen, cited in note 4, p. 80). For a discussion of Hendrick Aerts's origins and connection to Hans and Paul Vredeman de Vries see Vermet 1995 and Vermet 1996 (both cited in note 6); Jan Briels, *Vlaamse schilders en de dageraad van Hollands Gouden Eeuw 1585–1630 met biografieën als bijlage*, Antwerp 1997, p. 130.
- 8 For the documents see Fr. D.O. Obreen, *Archief voor Nederlandsche Kunstgeschiedenis*, 7 vols, Rotterdam 1878–90, vol. 1, pp. 4–5: register

- of the Guild of St Luke in Delft, under no. 40, without a date. While native Delft painters paid an entrance fee of 6 guilders, van Bassen, considered a 'foreigner', was required to pay 12 guilders. Further down (p. 12) van Bassen is mentioned as having paid 12 guilders on 21 October 1613. See also John Michael Montias, *Artists and Artisans in Delft, A Socio-Economic Study of the Seventeenth Century*, Princeton, New Jersey 1982, p. 178, notes to table 6.5, and p. 338, table A.2.
- 9 He became *deken* (dean) in 1627, and *hoofdman* (head) in 1636 and 1640. Obreen (cited in note 8), vol. 3, pp. 258, 271, 276, vol. 5, pp. 73, 74. That he was already *hoofdman* in 1636 is mentioned by Ariane van Suchtelen in her entry on the artist in Saur, *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon, Die bildenden Künstler aller Zeiten und Völker*, vols 1–, Munich and Leipzig 1983–, vol. 7, p. 395.
  - 10 According to D.H. Slothouwer, *De paleizen van Frederik Hendrik*, Leiden 1945, pp. 25–8 and documents in the appendix, pp. 262 and 292, it is unlikely that van Bassen was actually the architect of these palaces. Rather it seems that he was commissioned to produce plans for these buildings and paint a view of Ter Nieuwburch as it would look after completion. See also Scheffer (cited in note 2), pp. 36–7.
  - 11 Already in 1638 he had become *Fabrycquen Controleur van 's-Haags werken* (comptroller of municipal buildings), and from 1639 until 1652 he held the office of *Stadbouwmeester* (city architect). Bredius 1894 (cited in note 2), p. 88.
  - 12 Bredius 1894 (cited in note 2), p. 89, and Scheffer (cited in note 2), p. 51, note 103, with precise citation of the documents.
  - 13 Walter Liedtke concluded that this 'traditional assumption' is supported by the only known engraving by Houckgeest which he made after a painting by van Bassen and by 'a number of evidently dependent compositions'. He sees van Bassen as an intermediary who introduced Houckgeest to the approach of Saenredam. See Liedtke 1982 (cited in note 4), pp. 30–1. For an illustration of the engraving by Houckgeest see Liedtke's fig. 10 and Giltaij and Jansen (cited in note 4), p. 166, fig. 1. In 1635 Houckgeest also painted a copy with slight variations of van Bassen's *Palace Interior with the King and Queen of Bohemia dining in Public* of a year earlier. On the relationship of these works see Axel Rüger, 'Ein Palastinterieur von Bartholomeus van Bassen – Beobachtungen zur Arbeitsmethode anhand der Unterzeichnung', in Volker Manuth and Axel Rüger, eds, *Collected Opinions, Essays on Netherlandish Art in Honour of Alfred Bader*, London 2004, pp. 148–61.
  - 14 Some of the results discussed here were first presented at a colloquium on the value of technical examinations of seventeenth-century Dutch paintings, held at the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie in The Hague in October 2001.
  - 15 J.R.J. van Asperen de Boer, 'De ondertekening bij Pieter Saenredam: twee voorbeelden', *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum*, 19, 1971, pp. 25–31 and 77; Walter Liedtke, 'Saenredam's space', *Oud Holland*, 86, 1971, pp. 123–4; Walter Liedtke, 'The New Church in Haarlem series: Saenredam's sketching style in relation to perspective', *Simiolus*, 8, 1975/6, pp. 145–66; Martin Kemp, 'Construction and Cunning', *Dutch Church Painters. Saenredam's Great Church in Haarlem in context*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh 1984; Robert Ruurs, *Saenredam. The Art of Perspective*, diss., University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Philadelphia 1986 (for his working methods see especially chapter III); Gary Schwartz and Marten Jan Bok, *Pieter Saenredam. De Schilder en zijn tijd*, The Hague 1989; J.R.J. van Asperen de Boer and Liesbeth M. Helmus, *The Paintings of Pieter Jansz. Saenredam (1597–1665), Conservation and Technique*, Utrecht 2000; Liesbeth M. Helmus, ed., *Pieter Saenredam, het Utrechtse Werk, Schilderijen en tekeningen van de 17de-eeuwse grootmeester van het perspectief*, exh. cat., Centraal Museum, Utrecht 2000 (and at the John Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, in 2002).
  - 16 For an overview of infrared research undertaken during the exhibition of architectural painting in Rotterdam in 1991 (Giltaij and Jansen, cited in note 4) see Jeroen Giltaij, 'Scientific Examination of Underdrawing of Seventeenth-Century Architectural Painters', in van Asperen de Boer and Helmus (cited in note 15), pp. 32–55.
  - 17 Giltaij and Jansen (cited in note 4), p. 9. See also Martin Kemp, *The Science of Art. Optical themes in western art from Brunelleschi to Seurat*, New Haven and London 1990, p. 109. The most relevant studies on architectural painting include Jantzen 1910 and 1979 (cited in note 4); Schneede 1965 (cited in note 4); Arthur K. Wheelock Jr, *Perspective, Optics and Delft Artists around 1650*, New York and London 1977; Liedtke 1982 (cited in note 4); Michiel Kersten and Daniëlle Lokin, *Delftse Meesters. Tijdgenoten van Vermeer-een andere kijk op perspectief, licht en ruimte*, published in conjunction with an exhibition of the same title, Stedelijk Museum Het Prinsenhof, Delft; Zwolle 1996; Walter Liedtke, *A View of Delft, Vermeer and his Contemporaries*, Zwolle 2000; Liedtke, Plomp and Rüger (cited in note 4).
  - 18 Jan Briels, *Vlaamse schilders in de Noordelijke Nederlanden in het begin van de Gouden Eeuw 1585–1630*, Haarlem 1987, p. 270. Sebastiano Serlio, *Regole generali di Architettura sopra le cinque Maniere degli Edifici*, ed. Pieter Coecke van Aalst, 5 vols, Antwerp 1539–53. Briels also mentions a small treatise Coecke van Aalst published in Dutch (Antwerp 1539) as a handbook for artists on classical architecture. See further Kemp 1990 (cited in note 17), p. 109.
  - 19 Hans Vredeman de Vries, *Scenographiae sive Perspectivae ut Aedificia*, Antwerp 1560; idem, *Perspective dat is de hoochgheroemde conste eens schijnende in oft door-siende ooghten-ghesichts punt...*, 2 vols, The Hague and Leiden (Hendrick Hondius) 1604–5. See also Briels (cited in note 18), p. 270; Jeroen Giltaij, 'Perspectives, Saenredam and the architectural painters of the 17th century', in Giltaij and Jansen (cited in note 4), pp. 8–17, esp. pp. 9–11; Kemp (cited in note 17), p. 109. For the usefulness of these books see also Uwe M. Schneede, 'Interieurs van Hans und Paul Vredeman de Vries', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, 18, 1967, pp. 125–66, esp. p. 128; and Axel Rüger, 'Indebted to Hans Vredeman de Vries? The case of the architectural painter Bartholomeus van Bassen', in Heiner Borggreve and Vera Lüpkes, eds, 'Hans Vredeman de Vries und die Folgen, Ergebnisse des internationalen Symposions am Weserrenaissance-Museum Schloß Brake (30. Januar bis 1. Februar 2004)', *Studien zur Kultur der Renaissance*, vol. 3, Marburg 2005. Vredeman de Vries's career and oeuvre have been assessed in detail in Heiner Borggreve et al., *Hans Vredeman de Vries und die Renaissance im Norden*, exh. cat., Weserrenaissance-Museum Schloß Brake, Lemgo; Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp, Munich 2002.
  - 20 Hendrick Hondius, *Institutio artis perspectivae*, The Hague 1622. See Nadine M. Orenstein, *Hendrick Hondius and the business of prints in seventeenth-century Holland*, Rotterdam 1996, esp. pp. 49–50, 54–6, 106, and 115–19. Hondius also published the mathematician Samuel Marolois's, *Opera mathematica ou oeuvres mathematiques traiction de geometrie, perspective, architecture, et fortification*, The Hague 1614. Republished nine times between 1616 and 1662 with illustrations by Vredeman de Vries and Hondius (see Kemp, cited in note 17, p. 112). Marolois's book must have been very popular, yet, according to Arthur Wheelock, it was heavily oriented towards the geometry of Italian sixteenth-century theorists while Hondius's equally popular book was easier for artists to use and more applicable to their concerns. Hondius's book also saw several editions over a short period of time. See Wheelock (cited in note 17), pp. 12–13, and Orenstein (cited above), pp. 117–19. Finally, the treatise by the mathematician-engineer Simon Stevin (*De Schiagraphia (Der Deursichtighe)*, Leiden 1605), who worked in the service of Prince Maurits, was another useful theoretical source for seventeenth-century artists and for Saenredam in particular. See Kemp (cited in note 17), p. 112.
  - 21 See Borggreve et al. (cited in note 19), esp. nos 205–15.
  - 22 Vermet 1996 (cited in note 6), pp. 27–57; Borggreve et al. (cited in note 19), esp. pp. 166, 168, fig. 12.
  - 23 Liedtke 1982 (cited in note 4), pp. 23–4. For the interior of the chapel at Aachen Cathedral see Giltaij and Jansen (cited in note 4), no. 4, pp. 66–7.
  - 24 *Interior of Antwerp Cathedral*, signed and dated 1614, 101 × 134.5 cm. See Lord Clinton sale, London (Sotheby's), 19 July 1950, no. 6, and Marlon Davies sale, New York (Sotheby's), 14–17 November 1951, no. 81.
  - 25 This has been suggested by Van Suchtelen (cited in note 9), p. 22; and by Bernard Vermet in his entry on Bartholomeus van Bassen in Jane Turner, ed., *From Rembrandt to Vermeer, 17th-century Dutch Artists*, *The Grove Dictionary of Art*, London 2000, p. 13. Vermet suggests that it might be a copy after a painting by either Hendrick Steenwyck the Elder or Pieter Neefs I.
  - 26 Liedtke, Plomp and Rüger (cited in note 4), no. 6, pp. 222–4.
  - 27 Jantzen (cited in note 4), p. 61.
  - 28 Liedtke 1982 (cited in note 4), p. 28.
  - 29 *Church Interior*, with figures by Cornelis van Poelenburgh, monogrammed and dated 1652, panel, 35 × 45 cm, sale London (Sotheby's), 12 December 1984, no. 52, present whereabouts unknown.
  - 30 The first picture to apply this perspectival systems is Gerard Houckgeest's *Interior of the Nieuwe Kerk, Delft*, signed and dated 1650, panel, 125.7 × 89 cm, Hamburger Kunsthalle, inv. no 342. See Liedtke, Plomp and Rüger (cited in note 4), no. 37, pp. 296–8.
  - 31 Liedtke 1982 (cited in note 4), pp. 22–3.

- 32 Liedtke 1982 (cited in note 4), pp. 12, 23 and 28. See also Jantzen, p. 64, Schneede 1965, pp. 182–3, and Liedtke, Plomp and Rüger, p. 82–3 (all cited in note 4).
- 33 This view is further supported by Vermet 1995 (cited in note 6), p. 43.
- 34 Van Bassen is regarded as the designer because he commissioned the construction of the building in 1629 (see Ottenheim, cited in note 1, pp. 34–53, esp. p. 37 and p. 52, note 29). Built in 1630–1, the hunting lodge was pulled down again in 1812. See also H.E. van Gelder, 'Iets over Barthold van Bassen, ook als bouwmeester van het Koningshuis te Rhenen', *Bulletin van den Nederlandschen Oudheidkundigen Bond*, 4, 1911, pp. 234–40; D.H. Slothouwer, cited in note 10; Maria Kablusek, 'Het Bohemse hof in Den Haag' in Maria Kablusek and Jori Zijlmans, eds, *Vorstelijk Vertoon, Aan het hof van Frederik Hendrik en Amalia*, The Hague 1997, pp. 47–57, esp. p. 54 and p. 220, note 25. There is a painting by van Bassen in a private collection in Copenhagen showing the design for the façade of the remodelled palace: *Imaginary Palace for the Winter King*, signed and dated 1639, panel, 64 × 86 cm. For an illustration see Liedtke, Plomp and Rüger (cited in note 4), p. 80, fig. 91.
- 35 According to legend she was the daughter of Aurellus, the crown prince of York. She survived the murder of the 11,000 virgins who had gone on a pilgrimage to Rome with Saint Ursula. She came to live at the court of Rhenen where she was eventually murdered in October 340.
- 36 Neil MacLaren, *The Dutch School, National Gallery Catalogues*, London 1960, pp. 11–12.
- 37 Liedtke 1982 (cited in note 4), p. 28. For the Saenredam drawing see P.T.A. Swillens, *Catalogue raisonné of the works of Pieter Jansz. Saenredam, Utrecht 1961* (published alongside an exhibition on Saenredam in Utrecht), nos 104–10, esp. no. 9.
- 38 The present white plaster surface of the vaults dates from after the fire of 1897; at the same time the plastering of the walls was abandoned in favour of bare brick.
- 39 See also Neil MacLaren, *The Dutch School 1600–1900*, National Gallery Catalogues, revised and expanded by Christopher Brown, 2 vols, London 1991, vol. 1, p. 11.
- 40 Infrared reflectography was carried out using a Hamamatsu C2400 camera with an N2606 series infrared vidicon tube. The camera is fitted with a 36mm lens to which a Kodak 87A Wratten filter has been attached to exclude visible light. The infrared reflectogram mosaics were assembled on a computer using Vips-ip software. For further information about the software see the Vips website at [www.vips.ecs.soton.ac.uk](http://www.vips.ecs.soton.ac.uk).
- 41 Peter Fuhring, *Vredeman de Vries, Hollstein's Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts, 1450–1700*, Rotterdam 1997, XLVIII, part II, 1572–1630, p. 196, no. 546 (no. 27).
- 42 *P. NEEFS. f. 1644*, at the bottom of the wall tablet above the tomb on the right. The signature is of a different colour from the date, which is in the same colour as the simulated lettering of the inscription above. Jantzen (cited in note 4) considered it one of the elder Neefs's 'better works', p. 45. See also Neil MacLaren/Brown (cited in note 39), vol. 1, p. 12.
- 43 MacLaren (cited in note 36), p. 12.
- 44 See, for example, the *Interior of a Church*, signed and dated 1644, panel, 44 × 56.5 cm, sale London (Sotheby's), 30 October 1996, no. 110, col. ill.
- 45 Visible through the paint layers in the left foreground of the Berlin *Interior of a Church with a Procession* there is also a sketch for a sculpture placed underneath a triangular pediment at the top of the pier. The authors would like to thank Jan Kelch and Christoph Schmidt for examining the picture in infrared at our request and for making the results available to us.
- 46 On the origins and early development of these paintings of palatial interiors see Schneede 1967 (cited in note 19), pp. 125–66; Rüger 2005 (cited in note 19).
- 47 See the Vredeman de Vries illustration in Fuhring (cited in note 41), p. 196, no. 547 (no. 28), and Karel van Mander, *The Lives of the illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters*, edited with commentary by Hessel Miedema, 6 vols, Doornspijk 1994–9, fol. 266v (the life of Hans Vredeman de Vries).
- 48 See Axel Rüger's entry on the picture in George S. Keyes, Susan Donahue Kuretsky, Axel Rüger, and Arthur K. Wheelock, Jr, *Masters of Dutch Painting*, The Detroit Institute of Arts, London 2004, pp. 20–1.
- 49 On the use of the term 'perspective' for these pictures and their high prices see John Michael Montias's essay "'Perspectives" in 17th Century Inventories' in Giltaij and Jansen (cited in note 4), pp. 19–28. See also the essay by Rob Ruurs in the same volume, 'Functions of architectural painting, with special reference to church interiors', pp. 43–50. Most recently see John Michael Montias, 'How notaries and other scribes recorded works of art in seventeenth-century sales and inventories', *Simiolus*, 30, 2004, no. 3/4, pp. 217–35, esp. pp. 227–9.
- 50 There is another version of this painting recorded in the photographic collection of the Witt Library, Courtauld Institute, London. On the mount it is identified as by van Bassen and Esaias van de Velde, panel, 60 × 100 cm. The owner is given as 'Aug. Schubert, M.Glabdach [Mönchengladbach, Germany], c. 1630's [sic!].' The picture seems to be a faithful copy of the Detroit panel with a few slight variations in the figures. From the mediocre photograph it seems doubtful that the painting is an autograph copy.
- 51 The examination of the painting was conducted in the context of the 1996 *Summer Workshop Using Infrared Reflectography* at the Detroit Institute of Arts from 5 to 16 August 1996, under the direction of Molly Faries. Equipment from Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, was used for the documentation: Grundig 70 H television camera set at 875 lines, equipped with a Hamamatsu N 214 infrared vidicon, a TV Macromar 1:2.8/36 mm lens and a Kodak 87A filter, the source of light was a dimmed Philips quartz halogen lamp; the monitor was a Grundig BG 12; the reflectograms have been photographed with a Canon A-135 mm film and Kodak Plus X film. The reflectogram mosaic illustrated in this essay was assembled by Rachel Billinge at the National Gallery from digitised negatives using Vips-ip software (see note 40).
- 52 The infrared examination was conducted in 2002 by Margeet Wolters at the Dordrechts Museum with the infrared-reflectography equipment of the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie, The Hague, using a Hamamatsu C2400-07, with a N2606 IR vidicon, a Nikon Micro-Nikkor 1:2.8/55mm lens, a Heliopan RG 850 (or RG 1000) filter, with a Lucius & Baer VM 1710 monitor (625 lines). Digitised documentation was performed with a Meteor RLB framegrabber 768 × 574 pixels, colorvision toolkit (Visualbasic). The reflectogram mosaics were assembled by Rachel Billinge at the National Gallery using Vips-ip software (see note 40). We are enormously grateful to Margeet Wolters and to Sander Paarlberg, curator of the Dordrechts Museum, for undertaking the examination and for making the material available to us. Similar construction lines are also clearly visible underneath the table in the left background of the artist's *Renaissance Interior with Banqueters* from the North Carolina Museum of Art.
- 53 Ruurs (cited in note 15), p. 19; Leon Battista Alberti, *Della Pittura*, Florence 1435.
- 54 Ruurs (cited in note 15), glossary, pp. 159–80, esp. p. 170.
- 55 Ruurs (cited in note 15), p. 57, describes this system for Saenredam. According to Schneede, Hans Vredeman de Vries used this system in a rather different way. Instead of determining first the three points on the horizon he took a square at the bottom centre and determine its foreshortening on the premise that the transversal will be of the same length as the foreshortened orthogonals. Then he drew two diagonals through this foreshortened square which in turn determined the distance points (Schneede 1965, cited in note 4, p. 129).
- 56 We are grateful to Christopher Lloyd of the Royal Collection who allowed us to examine the picture in the conservation studio of the National Gallery on 2 December 2003 using the Gallery's equipment (see note 40). For a more detailed analysis of the painting and its under-drawing see Rüger in Manuth and Rüger (cited in note 13).
- 57 For the history and meaning of the 'merry company' see Elmer Kolfin, *Een geselschap jonge luyden. Productie, functie en betekenis van Noord-Nederlandse voorstellingen van vrolijke gezelschappen 1610–1645*, Leiden 2002; and more recently Wayne Franits, *Dutch Seventeenth Century Genre Painting – Its Stylistic and Thematic Evolution*, New Haven and London 2004, esp. ch. 2.
- 58 On the subject see George S. Keyes, *Esaias van de Velde 1587–1630*, Doornspijk 1984, pp. 39, 92–4, and pp. 169ff. Keyes's catalogue contains 27 of these collaborative pictures.
- 59 Abraham Bredius, *Künstlerinventare, Urkunden zur Geschichte der holländischen Kunst des XVIten, XVIIten, und XVIIIten Jahrhunderts*, Quellenstudien zur holländischen Kunstgeschichte, 7 vols, The Hague 1915–22, vol. 1, pp. 321–2; Lottery of Cornelis Cornelisz van Leeuwen, Delft 1626.
- 60 The signatures reads: *B. van Bassen/1624 and ffranck./figuravit*.
- 61 Giltaij and Jansen (cited in note 4), cat. no. 9, with figures by Antonie Palamedesz. For the collaboration with Cornelis van Poelenburch see Nicolette Sluijter-Seiffert, *Cornelis van Poelenburch (ca. 1593–1667)*, diss., Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, Enschede 1984, pp. 34 and 112. Bredius mentions a painting with figures by Jan Martens (Bredius 1915–22, cited in note 59, vol. 3, p. 973). For the collaboration with Sebastian Vranx see Schneede (cited in note 4), p. 177.

- 62 For a further discussion of this question see Rüger's entry on the picture in Keyes, Donahue Kuretsky, Rüger and Wheelock (cited in note 48), p. 20.
- 63 We would like to thank Dennis Weller, Curator of European Paintings at the North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, who kindly gave us permission to examine the picture with infrared reflectography while it was on loan to the National Gallery exhibition *Vermeer and the Delft School* in 2001. The examination took place in the Gallery's exhibition space on 16 August 2001, using the Gallery's equipment (see note 40). The reflectogram mosaic details were assembled by Rachel Billinge from 35mm photographs.
- 64 We are grateful to Ildikó Ember, Head of the Old Masters' Gallery of the Szépművészeti Múzeum in Budapest, who kindly gave us permission to examine the picture with infrared reflectography while it was on loan to the exhibition *Vermeer and the Delft School* in 2001. The examination took place in the Gallery's exhibition space on 16 August 2001, using the Gallery's equipment (see note 40). The reflectogram mosaic details were assembled by Rachel Billinge from 35mm photographs.
- 65 See note 60.

PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDIT

FIGS 11, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19 and 20

Infrared reflectography was performed with a Grundig 70 H television camera outfitted with a Hamamatsu N214 IR vidicon (1981), a TV macro-mar 1: 2.8/36mm lens, and Kodak Wratten 87 A filter cutting on at 0.9 micron placed behind the lens, with a Grundig BG 12 monitor set at 875 lines. Any photographic documentation is done with a Canon A-1 35 mm camera, a 50 mm macrolens, and Kodak Plus X film and/or Ilford film, ASA 125. The IRR assemblies reproduced here were made with VIPs ip and consist of images which were scanned from photo negatives belonging to the archive of Professor Molly Faries at the RKD.