The Maid of Holland and Her Heroic Heiresses

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The Maid of Holland, or *Hollandia* as she was called, was employed in a variety of visual formats and types during the Golden Age. These varied allegorical renderings aided in the signification of diverse meanings circulating around the cult figure. She embodied religious, political, and – particularly important for the purposes of this article – gendered discourses. Her popular representation began to flourish at the time of the Revolt, as she came to symbolize the struggle for liberty against Spanish oppression.¹ While much has been asserted about her religious origins and her patriotic symbolism, there have been no attempts at theorizing her meaning for the female spectatrix specifically. I would argue that this gender-crossing archetype had the ability to shape cultural opinions regarding the female sex that would be enabling for women in this society. Instead of constantly imaging women within the traditional structures of the male gaze, Dutch artists of the seventeenth century – inspired by this masculine archetype – began to visually explore the active, strong, and skillful characteristics of women. In addition, it will be asserted that the representation of such powerful women had a long-lasting legacy, influencing the formulation of gender status and roles for women from the beginnings of the Revolt in the later half of the sixteenth century and continuing throughout

1 The Maid of Holland and the Dutch Garden are analyzed in W. A. Beelaerts van Blokland, “De oorsprong van den Hollandschen tuin,” *De Nederlandsche Leeuw* 47 (1929): 3–12, 57–59, 115–18, 322–26; P. J. van Winter, “De Hollandse tuin,” *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 8 (1957): 29–121; Carol Louise Janson, “The birth of Dutch liberty: origins of the pictorial imagery,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1982), 108–19; Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 69–71; Arie Jan Gelderblom, *Mannen en maagden in Hollands tuin. Interpretatieve studies van Nederlandse letterkunde 1575–1781* (Amsterdam: Thesis Publishers, 1991); Catherine Levesque, *Journey through landscape in seventeenth-century Holland: The Haarlem print series and Dutch identity* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); Helmut Georg Koenigsberger, “Republicanism, monarchism and liberty,” in *Royal and Republican Sovereignty in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of Ragnhild Hatton*, eds. Robert Oresko, G. C. Gibbs, and H. M. Scott (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 43–74; Alastair Duke, Judith Pollmann, and Andrew Spicer, eds., *Dissident Identities in the Early Modern Low Countries* (Farnham; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), vii; Anthony D. Smith, *The Nation Made Real: Art and National Identity in Western Europe, 1600–1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 33.

the seventeenth century and even beyond.² This analysis of a rather unique visual tradition provides important insight into how such images helped to shape the societal conditions that promoted greater independence and agency for Dutch women generally.

In doing so this article will contest much previous scholarship that has focused on the patriarchal character of Dutch art and will provide ample evidence of an alternative view of women that was influenced by this powerful allegorical figure. From this perspective, women were imagined as heroic and consequential contributors within a dynamically changing society. The intent of this article is thus to develop a discourse on Dutch art that addresses women spectators and their emulation of the gender-crossing Maid of Holland allegory.

The Low Countries's rebellion against Spain will be the starting point for this analysis, as this was a crucial moment for the overthrow of old socio-cultural traditions and the introduction of new ones.³ Importantly, this revolutionary moment of political reform also provided occasions for the restructuring of gender roles that assigned women greater significance in the public realm as traditional boundaries were blurred, altered, and even breached. Early on, women seized opportunities afforded by these shifting cultural terrains to rigorously participate in the Revolt and subsequently in the newly constituted socio-cultural framework. Consequently, each succeeding generation of

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- 2 The dates of the Dutch Golden Age are frequently debated amongst scholars. Economic historians Jan de Vries and A. M. van der Woude argue that the model for the Golden Age economy was already being established in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. They assert that this basic model remained in place until 1817 in *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500–1815* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Maarten Prak initiates his study of the Golden Age with the discontent and outbreak of revolt mid-sixteenth century and claims that it had ended by 1715 in *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century: The Golden Age* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 5. Peter Sutton dates the Golden Age from the beginnings of the Revolt in 1568 to the Rampjaar and the invasion of Louis XIV's troops in 1672 in *Vermeer and the Delft Style* (Tokyo: Hata Stichting Foundation with Random House Kodansha, 2008), 13. In Frans Grijzenhout and Henk van Veen, eds., *The Golden Age of Dutch Painting in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 5 the parameters of the Golden Age are set between 1580 and 1680. Jonathan Israel considers the different phases of the Republic's history to be 1. The Making of the Republic, 1477–1588, 2. The Early Golden Age, 1588–1647, 3. The Later Golden Age, 1647–1702, and 4. The Age of Decline, 1702–1806 in *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477–1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).
 - 3 The unique and original character of the Dutch Republic has been under constant discussion from the seventeenth century until the present. It is the particular subject of a collection of essays edited by Karel Davids and Jan Lucassen, *A Miracle Mirrored: The Dutch Republic in European Perspective* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

women built upon these power-engendering traditions to structure their own significant identity. Indeed, historical studies regarding women of the Dutch Golden Age have increasingly provided evidence that they enjoyed a relatively powerful position. By first grounding this article in these investigations of social practice, I aim to preclude the all-too-frequent art historical tendency to neglect women's actual lived experience. The societal features that reveal relatively significant levels of power for women in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic include: high education and literacy levels; public praise and recognition of capable, intelligent, and skilled women; and large numbers of female participants in business and other activities in the public domain.⁴ These conditions in combination with the tremendous cultural attention being paid to contemporary women in texts and images reveal a society in which women had enhanced opportunities to participate in the shaping of positive definitions of women and their contributions in both the public and private spheres.

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- 4 Research indicates that Dutch women enjoyed relatively high literacy rates and were able to engage in the public sphere during the seventeenth century, see Margaret Spufford, "Literacy, trade and religion in the commercial centres of Europe," in *A Miracle Mirrored: the Dutch Republic in European Perspective*, eds. Karel Davids and Jan Lucassen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 229–83 and note 350; and Erika Kuijpers, "Lezen en schrijven. Onderzoek naar het alfabetiseringsniveau in zeventiende eeuw Amsterdam," *Tijdschrift voor sociale geschiedenis* 23 (1997): 490–522, 507. Also, several studies have been conducted on the enhanced social and legal status of Dutch women and of their participation in trade. In part, this has been related to the greater degree of equality between spouses in Dutch marriages. For a discussion of women's rights and equality in marriage in the Republic see John Hajnal, "European Marriage Patterns in Perspective," in *Population in History: Essays in Historical Demography*, eds. David Victor Glass and David Edward Charles (London: Edward Arnold Publishers, 1965), 101–41; Alice Clare Carter, "Marriage Counseling in the Early Seventeenth Century: England and the Netherlands Compared," in *Ten Studies in Anglo-Dutch Relations*, ed. Jan A. van Dorsten (Leiden; London: Published for the Sir Thomas Browne Institute, at the University Press; Oxford University Press, 1974), 94–127; Donald Haks, *Huwelijk en Gezin in Holland in de 17de en 18de eeuw* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1982), 141–57; Schama, *Embarrassment*, 384–91; Ariadne Schmidt, "Vrouwen en het recht. De juridische status van vrouwen in Holland in de vroegmoderne tijd," *Jaarboek Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie* 58 (2004): 26–44; Manon van der Heijden, Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk, and Ariadne Schmidt, "Terugkeer van het patriarchaat? Vrije vrouwen in de Republiek," *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 6 (2009): 26–52; Ariadne Schmidt, "Gelijk hebben, gelijk Krijgen? Vrouwen en vertrouwen in het recht in Holland in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw," in *Het Gelijk van de Gouden Eeuw. Recht, onrecht en reputatie in de vroegmoderne Nederlanden*, eds. Michiel van Groesen, Judith Pollmann, and Hans Cools (Hilversum: Verloren, 2014), 109–25; Willem Frijhoff and Marijke Spies, *Dutch Culture in a European Perspective, volume 1, 1650: Hard-Won Unity*, trans. Myra Heerspink Scholz (Basingstoke; Assen: Palgrave Macmillan; Van Gorcum, 2004), 194. For specific discussions of Dutch women and trade see Danielle van den Heuvel, *Women and Entrepreneurship: Female Traders in the Northern Netherlands, c. 1580–1815* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2007).

In spite of the tremendous amount of research suggesting that early modern Dutch women possessed an unusually expansive ability to act within and shape their culture, little has been done to relate this power and independence to the art of the era. There are still questions to be asked about how the imaging of consequential women influenced public perceptions of the female gender. In response to these issues, discussions of imagining, subverting, emulating, empathizing, and assimilating via images will build upon social histories to provide a clearer understanding of female identity in the Republic. This realization that women were not absent in cultural practice and in influencing representations of their gender is crucial to the central thesis of this article. Influenced as they were by the Maid of Holland archetype, women significantly contributed to an empathetic attitude towards their gender with the images of female power that they inspired, created, and consumed.

Before attempting to argue for the emulating experiences of Dutch women as they viewed Maid of Holland imagery, it should be noted that during the last decade, evidence of women's impact on early modern cultural development has increasingly been brought forward. This shift has encouraged a greater interest in analyzing female activity than in indicting patriarchy, and it has opened intriguing new possibilities for theorizing about women's lives and about their contributions to culture. Furthermore, scholars have begun to more carefully investigate the limits of patriarchy and the options available to women by leaving behind discussions of oppression and instead concentrating on female agency.⁵ Such an approach has been characterized as "relational autonomy" by some feminist philosophers, and it argues for individual agency while at the same time acknowledging the import of social determinants. It has been suggested that a woman's autonomous ability to "imagine herself otherwise" in a male-dominated society is only possible when the "cultural imaginary" contains symbols, images, and representations that allow her to deliberate, self-define, and self-fashion without unassailable restrictions.⁶ It

- 5 Allyson M. Poska discusses this scholarship in "Upending Patriarchy: Rethinking Marriage and Family in Early Modern Europe," *The Ashgate Research Companion to Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Allyson M. Poska, Jane Couchman, and Katherine A. McIver (Farnham Eng. and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 195–211. Jutta Gisela Sperling's chapter in the same volume similarly reviews recent scholarship on women's agency in marriage – see "The Economics and Politics of Marriage," 213–32. She particularly points out that contrary to the situation in Italy and France, women in the Netherlands and other parts of northern Europe enjoyed greater agency in regards to property and other marriage rights, 221.
- 6 Catriona Mackenzie, "Imagining Oneself Otherwise," *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self*, eds. Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 124–150. The introduction to this text generally discusses the various critiques of autonomy.

will be demonstrated that the Maid of Holland was certainly one of those empowering symbols. Hence, the crucial redefining of women that resulted from the representation of various heroic, scholarly, artistic, and skilled maids of Holland, meant that the Dutch spectatrix had the freedom to at times subvert patriarchal prescriptions for sex-typed behaviors and to instead emulate the behaviors of the powerful female role models that were so well imprinted in the Dutch psyche.⁷

1 The Revolt and the Maid's Metamorphosis

As previously mentioned, the Maid of Holland became a particularly popular symbol during the rebellion against Philip II. It was amidst this Revolt that the Maid of Holland became a fashionable allegory representing Dutch independence and virtue. Although the tradition of allegorical city maidens had a long history throughout Europe, *Hollandia* began to metamorphose into a nationalistic symbol of the new federation generally. In several early images, the Maid is depicted with coats of arms in a wattle-fenced garden enclosure reminiscent of traditional representations of the Virgin Mary. Just as the unbreachable garden, or *hortus conclusus*, had symbolized the preservation of Mary's virginity, the *Hollandse Tuin* (Dutch Garden) came to signify the defense of Dutch territories and wealth against envious foreigners. This biblical allusion and the frequent inclusion of a martyr's palm of triumph signify divine sanction of the rebellion. Hence, early in the rise of the Republic both sacred and political allusions were propounded via this allegorical figure, as in a stained-glass window gift of 1595–1597 from the city of Dordrecht to the Sint Janskerk in Gouda by Gerrit Gerritsz. Cuypp (1555/1575–1644) after an anonymous artist (Fig. 3.1).

It was fitting during the revolutionary era that this type of Maid of Holland should evolve as subject matter for a replacement window in the Sint Janskerk. In 1552, much of the church had been destroyed by fire and afterwards a restoration project was undertaken to rebuild the church and replace the destroyed windows. The windows in the apse and transept areas were completed according to Catholic dogma, but when Protestants took over the church in 1573, the iconographical program was changed. Several of the new nave windows, such as the Maid of Holland, took on a much more political character and were

7 Patricia H. Miller's discussions of social learning theory in regards to gender development are important for understanding the significance of social interaction for the development of gender roles, see *Theories of Developmental Psychology* (San Francisco, CA: W. H. Freeman, 1983), 179–245.

FIGURE 3.1 Gerrit Gerritsz. Cuyp after an Anon. artist, *Maid of Holland*, detail 1595–1597, Gouda, Sint-Janskerk

funded by the cities of the new Republic.⁸ Nevertheless, the use of stained glass with this monumental female figure still recalls traditional depictions of the Virgin in this medium. Moreover, in later scenes of the Dutch Maid a Bible was added, which further indicates how Protestant veneration of the Maid and what she symbolized replaced, in certain ways, the worship of Mary in the old religion. And like Mary, *Hollandia* also became an important female role model.

In this window, the Maid is shown in contemporary dress prominently displaying the arms of Dordrecht, as it was the first meeting place of the rebels in

8 For a thorough discussion of the Gouda windows see Henny van Harten-Boers, Xander van Eck, Zsuzsanna van Ruyven-Zeman, Christiane E. Coebergh-Surie, H. Janse, and Andrea C. Gasten, eds., *The Stained-Glass Windows in the Sint-Janskerk at Gouda, 1556–1604*, 3 volumes (Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1997–2002).

FIGURE 3.2 Gillis Huppe, *Maid of Dordrecht*, 1618, Groothoofdspoort, Dordrecht

1572. In Dordrecht such imagery was already familiar, as the Maid of that city appeared conspicuously in relief sculpture on the Groothoofdspoort. This figure appears to have been an important early influence on Dutch Maid allegories; she is mentioned by Juan Cristobal Calvete de Estrella (c. 1526–1593), a courtier to Philip II, in his memoirs of their journey to Dordrecht in 1549.⁹ In 1618 this earlier sculpture was restored by Gillis Huppe (1576–1650) (Fig. 3.2). The relief depicts a classically draped Maid in a fenced garden and wearing a hat, an ancient signifier of freedom dating from Roman times indicating the liberation of slaves. She carries a triumphant palm and the Dordrecht coat of arms, surrounded by the shields of other Dutch cities. In similar fashion, the Maid in the Sint Janskerk is also ringed in the arms of other rebel cities, and in this manner the Maid of Dordrecht also becomes the Maid of the Union. In addition, she is framed by the allegorical virtues of Prudence, Temperance, Justice, and Fortitude. Other symbols include the palm, the arch, and the wreath as signifiers of triumph for this female symbol of the Republic who is peacefully, yet powerfully, ensconced in her garden.¹⁰

9 Juan Cristobal Calvete de Estrella, *El felicísimo viaje del muy alto y muy poderoso príncipe Don Felipe* (Antwerp: Martin Nucio, 1552), 276–77.

10 Van Ruyven-Zeman goes into great detail discussing the symbolism of, and scholarship on, this window. Unlike previous historians, she prefers to view this as primarily a Maid of

FIGURE 3.3 “Maid of Holland” coin, 1573

By this date, the Maid in her Dutch Garden was already an important signifier for the prosperity of the Republic and the need to protect Dutch riches from envious outside forces. The embedding of this allegory in the social imaginary was significantly assisted by her early appearance on coinage. From the late sixteenth century onward she had appeared on coins enclosed in her garden and wearing the hat of liberty (Fig. 3.3). While her protected status is indicated by the barricaded enclosure in this ubiquitous imagery, her temerity and bellicosity are also emphasized by her brandished sword. Consonant with these traditions, the Sint Janskerk Maid bears the attribute of preserved virtue like the Virgin, but she also carries apotropaic signifiers for the Dutch hope of victory in the ongoing struggle with the Spanish enemy. And in her church setting, the Maid assimilates the protective power that Mary exercised in behalf of those who worshiped her. In this manner, *Hollandia* shifts from a (Dordrecht) civic allegory rooted in a sacred Christian archetype to an important signifier of the newly liberated Republic at this important moment of unification.

Dordrecht, and she argues that the enclosure does not represent the “Garden of Holland.” Rather she interprets this as a view of Dordrecht as a unique and foundational city within Holland. Nevertheless, because this window was a gift to Gouda and the arms of other cities are included, it seems reasonable that Dordrecht also intended this allegorical representation as a symbol for the Republic generally. Furthermore, it is important to consider that the Maid in her Dutch Garden was already being represented on coinage by this date, and was thus already a familiar metaphor for the Republic. See *The Stained-Glass Windows in the Sint-Janskerk at Gouda*, 3:202–03.

Perhaps of even greater relevance for future depictions of the Dutch Maid was another visual type in which she wears the helmet and armor of Pallas Minerva, the goddess of war and wisdom. At times she also grasps a lance capped by the Hat of Liberty. In this Roman mode she also complies with Cesare Ripa's description of the allegorical figure, Liberty.¹¹ Such a portrayal added classical authority to Christian sanction in the Dutch struggle for independence. This militaristic Maid of Holland is represented in a window gifted by the States of Holland (also situated in the nave of Gouda's Sint Janskerk) by Adriaan Gerritsz. de Vrije (died in 1643) after a design by Joachim Wtewael (1566–1638) (Fig. 3.4). In this scene, a woman in classical warrior garb is identified by the inscription "Protection from Tyranny."¹² She carries a sword and a shield that bears the face of a lion, which would become the favorite companion to the Maid in future representations as an additional symbol of the Republic. Moreover, this bellicose Maid of Holland would be viewed as a protectress from despotism in visual culture for decades to come. She rides her chariot over the crowned figure of tyranny, who is surrounded by various instruments of subjection including the sword, halberd, whip, and shackles. Seated next to her on the chariot is a nude female allegory representing Freedom of Conscience. Hence, the warrior Maid protects this liberty from tyranny. Pulling the chariot are depictions of other virtues including Fortitude, Charity, Justice, Fidelity, and Unity. As with the enclosed Maid in the previously discussed window, this figure is framed by a triumphal arch and several Dutch coats of arms. Thus, in this guise, the Maid merges with the figure of Minerva and further adopts protective functions for the Republic through an assimilation of militaristic attributes inherited from her ancient predecessor.

During the last decades of the seventeenth century, it was this classically-garbed and helmeted Minervan Maid that was employed in Dutch coins (Fig. 3.5).¹³ Nevertheless, religious overtones are also present with the Bible

11 Cesare Ripa, *Noua iconologia di Cesare Ripa perugino, caualier de SS. Mauritio & Lazzaro*, first published in 1593 and first published illustrated edition in 1603 (Padua: Per Pietro Paolo Tozzi, nella stampa del Pasquati, 1618), 311–12.

12 Van Ruyven-Zeman discusses the previous misinterpretation of this figure, but identifies her via the drawing for the window. She does not identify her as a Maid of Holland but simply as "Protection from Tyranny." See *The Stained-Glass Windows in the Sint-Janskerk at Gouda*, 3:92–94.

13 While Henri van de Waal argues that the figure on Dutch coins represents the Maid of Holland, P. J. Vermeulen argues that she represents Minerva. However, Vermeulen neglects an analysis of previous imagery that clearly indicates how these two figures had become conjoined early on in the Republic. See Henri van de Waal, *Drie Eeuwen Vaderlandsche Geschied-Uitbeelding, 1500–1800, Een Iconologische Studie*, 2 volumes (Martinus Nijhoff:

FIGURE 3.4 Adriaan Gerritsz. de Vrije after Joachim Wtewael, *Freedom of Conscience*, detail, 1596, Gouda, Sint Janskerk

FIGURE 3.5 “Maid of Holland” coin, 1681

propping up the figure's left elbow. It was this hybrid religious and political Maid of Holland that was employed during the seventeenth century in order to create a powerful cultural symbol for the new Republic. And it has become clear that such symbols and memories of the Revolt helped construct much of Dutch identity.¹⁴ Furthermore, it is obvious that this cultural memory figure permeated all levels of society via a variety of media for a diversity of purposes. Through such representations, she was also linked to civic patriotism; cities such as Amsterdam, Haarlem, and Alkmaar all used the Maid as their symbol.

The Hague, 1952), 1:208–09; P. J. Vermeulen, “Over de Hollandsche Maagd en den Bijbel op onze oude munt,” *Kroniek van het Historisch Genootschap gevestigd te Utrecht* 21 (1865): 166–71.

- 14 The importance of political memory for the Republic is thoroughly discussed in several essays in Erika Kuijpers, Judith Pollmann, Johannes Müller, and Jasper van der Steen, eds., *Memory Before Modernity: Practices of Memory in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013), including Jasper van der Steen, “A Contested Past. Memory Wars during the Twelve Years Truce (1609–21),” 45–62; Marianne Eekhout, “Celebrating a Trojan Horse. Memories of the Dutch Revolt in Breda (1590–1650),” 129–48; and Erika Kuijpers, “Between Storytelling and Patriotic Scripture. The Memory Brokers of the Dutch Revolt,” 183–202. Also, see Hugh Dunthorne, “Dramatizing the Dutch Revolt, Romantic History and its Sixteenth-Century Antecedents,” in *Public Opinion and Changing Identities in the Early Modern Netherlands: Essays in Honour of Alastair Duke*, eds. Judith Pollmann and Andrew Spicer (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), 11–31.

In addition, she was used to promote nationalistic agendas on the part of the House of Orange, as will soon be discussed.

2 Contemporary Minervas

In certain instances, the hybridized *Hollandia* became increasingly bellicose in the early seventeenth century while the Dutch were still at war. In this constant militaristic reimagining during the Golden Age, the Maid also began to merge in form with equally popular depictions of actual, famed heroines in the Dutch struggle for independence. In particular, images of the Maid and of Kenau Simonsdr. Hasselaer (1526–1588) adopted similar traits as they both benefited from each other's ubiquitous display.

By the mid-seventeenth century Kenau had become one of the most celebrated Dutch heroes in art and text, thus revealing her importance for the collective memory of the Revolt.¹⁵ Successive histories began to greatly exaggerate her military feats during the siege of Haarlem from 1572–1573. These accounts created a sensationalized and mythologized cultural memory,

15 There are several sources on Kenau's life and her representation in art including: Jacques François Bosdijk (published under the pseudonym J. van de Capelle), *Belangrijke stukken voor geschiedenis oudheidkunde: zijnde bijlagen en aantekeningen betreffende het beleg en de verdediging van Haarlem in 1572–73* (Schoonhoven: Van Nooten, 1844); Cornelius Ekama, *Beleg en verdediging van Haarlem in 1572 en 1573* (Haarlem: Kruseman, 1872); Gerda Hendrika Kurtz, *Kenau Symonsdochter van Haarlem* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1956). For recent studies on Kenau see Henk Overduin, A. A. M. de Jong, and Els Vogel, *Kenau: beeld en werkelijkheid*, (Haarlem: Vereniging "Haerlem", 1973); Michiel Thierry de Bye Dölleman, *Kenau Simonsdochter Hasselaer: Haar voorouders en naaste familieleden* (Haarlem, 1973); Schama, *Embarrassment*, 88–89; Joke Spaans, "Toverij in Haarlem," *Haerlem Jaarboek* (1986): 8–35; Marijke Meijer Drees, "Vaderlandse heldinnen in belegeringstoneelstukken," *De Nieuwe Taalgids* 85(1) (1992): 71–82; Marijke Meijer Drees, "Kenau. De paradox van een strijd bare vrouw," in *Waar de blanke top der duinen en andere vaderlandse herinneringen*, ed. N. C. F. van Sas (Amsterdam/Antwerpen: Contact, 1995), 42–56; Martha Moffitt Peacock, "Proverbial Reframing – Rebuking and Revering Women in Trousers," *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 57 (1999): 13–34; W. G. M. Cerutti, *Het stadhuis van Haarlem. Hart van de stad* (Haarlem: Gottmer/Schuyt, 2001), 431–32; Els Kloek, *Kenau: de heldhaftige zakenvrouw uit Haarlem (1526–1588)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2001); Daniel R. Horst *De opstand in zwart-wit: Propagandaprenten uit de Nederlandse Opstand (1566–1584)* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2003), 146–50; Martha Moffitt Peacock, "Out of the Kitchen and into the Fire: The Dutch Heroine Tradition," in *War and Peace: Critical issues in European Societies and Literature 800–1800*, eds. Albrecht Classen and Nadia Margolis (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2011), 557–98; Els Kloek, *Kenau & Magdalena: Vrouwen in de Tachtigjarige Oorlog* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2014).

yet the tales were also based on a real woman of Haarlem.¹⁶ Kenau was most typically depicted in a confident hand-on-hip pose, as in a print by Matthias Quad von Kinkelbach (1557–1613) (Fig. 3.6).¹⁷ She holds a standing pike, while other male-gendered weapons such as sword, pistol, and powder horn hang from her waist. She also sports a medal of honor and sash across her chest that serve to enhance her heroic pose. Silhouetted against the sky and identified as “Capitain Kenou,” she becomes a triumphant, manly warrior. The inscriptions in German and Latin were obviously meant for an international audience; they reveal a great deal about the perceived character of the masculine Kenau and her growing international reputation. The text praises her legendary military feats by stating that she, armed as a man, drove the Spaniards from Haarlem in defense of the Fatherland. Furthermore, her army is compared to the Amazons and she is proclaimed a heroine whose fame is known far and wide.

This print evidences a desire to spread the legitimacy of the powerful, new Republic throughout Europe. It is one of those founding discourses that would form part of the cultural memory of the war for independence. It gave authority to Dutch claims that the war was fought in order to defend their rights and their Fatherland. But even more importantly for this discussion, the print provided a prototype of mingled male and female characteristics that would be greatly influential for future depictions and characterizations of the Maid of Holland. The warrior accessories, the manly pose with one arm akimbo, and the grasping of the pike were all elements that would influence *Hollandian* coinage and other media throughout the Golden Era. Significantly, both female archetypes – one an actual historical character and one an allegorical figure – celebrated women taking on masculine attributes and subverting traditional patriarchal notions of the female sex.

The militaristic character of the Maid of Holland was co-evolving with another type of repeated Kenau image, in which she is represented in half-length with all her weapons and the Haarlem church and landscape in the distance (Fig. 3.7). Although a likely sixteenth-century original has disappeared, there are several copies still in existence.¹⁸ Bok’s research regarding these copies sug-

16 For an overview of these diaries, see Kurtz, *Kenu*, 13–23.

17 The dating of the Kenau images is difficult because they frequently bear the date 1573, the time of Kenau’s heroic deeds. Quad’s image, however, appears to be one of the earliest. It probably dates to the last few decades of the sixteenth century since the inscription states that she is now an old woman. A similar anonymous print with German verses in the British library appears to be copied after this print, see Kloek, *Kenau & Magdalena*, 204.

18 Most versions of this painting are in private collections, but one is found in the Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem. The dating of these works is difficult, but it is certain that they were painted in the seventeenth century.

FIGURE 3.6 Matthias Quad von Kinkelbach, *Kenau Simonsdr. Hasselaer*, 1573, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

FIGURE 3.7 Anon., *Kenau Simonsdr Hasselaer*, c. 1590–1609, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

gests that they were probably commissioned and owned by family members who took pride in their famous and heroic ancestress.¹⁹ In the Rijksmuseum's painting, Kenau is situated in front of a dramatic, triumphal arch that recalls

19 Marten Jan Bok, "Heldhaftige vrouwen," *Kunstschrift* 2 (1991): 7–8. The importance of memory associated with family in enhancing one's status is also discussed in Kuijpers, "Between Storytelling and Patriotic Scripture, 183–202.

the *Hollandia* imagery already discussed. Her bellicosity is underscored by the included halberd, pike, pistol, powder horn, and sword and by the inscription:

See here a Woman called Kenou, Brave as a Man:
Who in that time, Gallantly fought the Spanish tyrant.²⁰

Such confrontational images demonstrate to what extent the legendary Kenau had overcome traditional female stereotypes. She is represented as a contemporary woman in her forties without idealization. Her unlovely and mannish features underscore the intent of the inscription that equates her with men. The exaggerated weaponry also emphasizes her masculine capabilities and poses a direct challenge to traditional displays of male power and authority. But perhaps most importantly for this discussion, the images also culturally liberate Kenau and the comparable *Hollandia*; they thwart the visual tradition of the lovely female painted as an object for a licentious male gaze.

Equally illuminating are the prints that compare Kenau to Judith, the biblical heroine, whose beheading of the tyrant Holofernes saved her people. These glorifying images, beginning in the late sixteenth century, are some of the first historiated portraits of the new Republic in which a contemporary figure is shown in the guise of a heroic figure from the past. This type of connection parallels the male tradition of William of Orange being identified with the Old Testament David or Moses and, more generally, the manner in which the Dutch associated themselves with God's chosen people of ancient Israel.²¹ Hence, this comparison truly elevates Kenau to the status of an historical "good woman" of the type that was frequently listed in catalogs of the early modern

20 *Siet hier een Vrouw,/ genaemt Kenou,/ Vroom als een Man:/ Dief alder-tijt,/ Vromelijck be-
strijt/ Den Spaenschen Tiran.*

21 Several historians have discussed the parallels drawn between the Dutch and the ancient Israelites in the seventeenth century, including: Hendrik Smitskamp, *Calvinistisch nationaal besef in Nederland vóór het midden der 17de eeuw* (The Hague: D. A. Daamen, 1947), 13–19; Gerrit Groenhuis, *De Predikanten. De sociale positie van de gereformeerde predikanten in de Verenigde Nederlanden voor +/- 1700* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1977), 77–107; C. Huisman, *Neerlands Israël. Het natiebesef der traditioneel-gereformeerden in de achttiende eeuw* (Dordrecht: J. P. van den Tol, 1983); Schama, *Embarrassment*, 93–125; G. J. Schutte, *Het Calvinistisch Nederland* (Utrecht: Bijleveld, 1988); Paul Regan, "Calvinism and the Dutch Israel Thesis," in *Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe Volume 2, The Later Reformation*, ed. Bruce Gordon (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1996), 91–106. Such biblical typing had already been employed for previous women rulers in the Netherlands, in which Margaret of York, for example, was depicted as Mary Magdalene in order to convey her similarly righteous traits, see Andrea Pearson, "Gendered Subject, Gendered Spectator: Mary Magdalen in the Gaze of Margaret of York," *Gesta* 44(1) (2006): 45–64.

age.²² Consequently, in one of several anonymous prints, Kenau is identified as the virtuous “Dutch Judith” who overcame the Spanish tyrant (Fig. 3.8).²³ The helmeted head of a Spaniard sits as a trophy on the table next to an armed Kenau who also wears a medal around her neck. Therefore, just as *Hollandia* was celebrated for her Marian apotropaic powers, Kenau was venerated as a biblical protectress of the Dutch people.

Other heroines of the Revolt, Trijn van Leemput (c. 1530–1607) of Utrecht and Trijn Rembrands (c. 1557–1638) of Alkmaar, were similarly represented in manly warrior guise, and they too were included in local and national histories and catalogs.²⁴ As a result of such bravery, several of these heroines were frequently included in histories of the Revolt and in contemporary Dutch catalogs of good women, such as the text *Van de Wtnementheyt des Vrouwelicken Geslachts* (*On the Excellence of the Female Sex*, 1639 and 1642) by Johan van Beverwijck (1594–1647).²⁵ With such cultural adulation, it should not be surprising that contemporary historians record how several Dutch women were discovered disguising themselves as men in order to go to battle during the Golden Age.²⁶

These early Dutch heroines were distinctive in many ways. First, several cities of the newly forming Republic took pride in and proclaimed in exaggerated fashion the brave deeds of one or more of their female citizenry in paintings,

22 For an overview of these catalogs and their contents, see Glenda McLeod, *Virtue and Venom: Catalogs of Women from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991). The following individuals also discuss these catalogs and female luminaries: Margaret L. King, *Women of the Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 182–83; Hilda L. Smith, *Reason's Disciples: Seventeenth-Century English Feminists* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 7; Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-Seventy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

23 *OMINE FOLICI DVX KENNAV HOLLANDICA Iudith Harlemo Excurens sauuos sic pulsat Iberos Sie da eijn frauu genamt kennau fris wie eijn lanskuucht gut Si brauckt sich im harlem aen storm und slacht wol gemut.*

24 For images of these heroines and further discussion, see Martha Moffitt Peacock, “Out of the Kitchen,” 557–98. Also see, http://centraalmuseum.nl/ontdekken/object/?img_only=1#0:840; and <http://resources.huuygens.knaw.nl/vrouwenlexicon/lemmata/data/TrijnRembrands>.

25 Johan van Beverwijck, *Van de Wtnementheyt des Vrouwelicken Geslachts. Verçiert met Historyen, ende kopere Platen; als oock Latijnsche, ende Nederlansche Verssen van Mr. Corn. Boy*, 3 volumes (Dordrecht: Hendrick van Esch, 1643).

26 Van Beverwijck, *Wtnementheyt*, 2:358 and 3:51. Petrus de Lange, *Batavise Romeyn; ofte alle de voornaemste heldendaden, ridderlijke feyten en listige oorlogs-vonden, in veld en zeeslagen, overwinninge van steden en schepen, en in andere gelegentheden, by de Hollanders en Zeeuwen verricht, zedert den iare 1492 tot 1661* (Amsterdam: Willem van Beaumont, 1661), 103, 174–75.

FIGURE 3.8 Anon., *Kenau Simonsdr. Hasselaer*, 1573, *Atlas van Stolk*, Rotterdam

prints, and city histories.²⁷ So, rather than producing a singularly extraordinary heroine, the Revolt generated a tradition that allowed for the much more common assimilation of heroic capabilities by women. Another unusual feature of the Dutch heroine tradition is the manner in which these women achieved their legendary status. Unlike the more familiar self-sacrificing heroines of the past, most of these women gained fame through courageous struggle in battle. Indeed, they purportedly competed with, and at times surpassed, their male compatriots in terms of strength and bravery. Thus, the future ability of women to envision themselves in traditionally male roles was greatly enhanced. Finally, a further distinctive feature of these heroines was their common status; they were not royalty, but were instead ordinary burgher women. Assuredly, this aspect of the Dutch heroine also made her a more accessible role model for women at large.²⁸

Some Dutch authors like Jacob van de Vivere and Simon de Vries asserted that this celebration of courageous heroines inspired later generations of women to go to war, become aggressive, rule their husbands, and take on male roles.²⁹ Such anecdotes relate directly to the research of Dekker and Van de Pol, whose investigations yielded a significant number of cases in which women dressed as males and enlisted as sailors and soldiers during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in the Netherlands.³⁰ Furthermore, they presume that the number of instances discovered only represents a small portion of actual cases in which women were donning the trousers. While the motivations of

27 Frijhoff and Spies discuss the significance of city identity via symbols and rituals in *Dutch Culture*, chapter 3.

28 There are examples of women engaging in warfare elsewhere in Early Modern Europe, however, women elsewhere did not become lauded heroines with lasting, cultural renown. Furthermore, their participation did not have an enduring effect in terms of patriotic memorializing or a breaching of future gender norms. See, for example, Bernadette Whelan, "The weaker vessel?: The Impact of Warfare on Women in Seventeenth-Century Ireland" in *Studies on Medieval and Early Modern Women. 4, Victims or Viragos?* (Dublin; Portland, OR: Four Courts, 2005), 120–42.

29 Jacobus Viverius, (published under the pseudonym Philologus Philiatros a Ganda), *De wintersche avonden of Nederlantsche vertellingen* (Utrecht: Lambert Roeck, 1650), 463–64. Simon de Vries, *D'Edelste Tijdkortingh der Weet-geerige Verstanden of de Groote Historische Rariteit-Kamer. Der sonderlinghste Natuerlijcke en Boven-natuerlijcke Saecken, Geschiedenissen en Voorvallen van allerley slaghe: Te gelyck voorsien met vrolijke Gemoeds-verlustingen. Voorgesteld by manier van ondersoekende Redenvoeringen tuschen Adel-Aert, Lees-Aert, Vroom-Aert, Vrolyck-Aert, Roem-Aert, Vreedegond en Rosemond*, 1 (Amsterdam: Jan Bouman, 1682–1684), 119–27.

30 Rudolf M. Dekker and Lotte C. van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early Modern Europe*, trans. Judy Marcure and Lotte C. van de Pol (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989).

these women were mixed, many of them claimed patriotic justifications and expressed a desire for glory. Surely, the conflicting opinions regarding female soldiers, particularly those extolling the patriotic foremothers of the Revolt, must have inspired several women to take on these male roles, as is described in various narratives. In addition, the ubiquitous *Hollandia* also provided a constant visual model of female strength and heroism. Consequently, the Dutch were influenced within this social framework to have esteemed perceptions of women's bravery and of their capabilities generally. Most importantly, there developed a shared cultural memory of women who were celebrated because they had transgressed traditional gender boundaries and were found to be the equal of men.

It seems likely that the visual coupling of the revolutionary heroine and the allegorical Maid was a natural consequence of the process by which unifying patriotic signifiers were established in the Republic. Clearly, the two female archetypes bolstered one another's popularity in the Dutch imagination. In a manner comparable to the heroine depictions, images of the Maid were quickly claimed by the visual culture of the new federation, as is demonstrated by her very public presentation in numerous media during the seventeenth century. So, it is essential to consider what this allegorical figure might have signified for women. In this regard, I agree with historian Marina Warner that, "... a symbolized female presence both gives and takes value and meaning in relation to actual women, and contains the potential for affirmation not only of women themselves but of the general good they might represent and in which as half of humanity they are deeply implicated."³¹ Thus, I would suggest that contemporary women not only emulated this powerful role model, as they would the heroines, they also referenced her as a tool for fashioning and constructing female identity generally. And that identity consisted of "manly" characteristics such as bravery and fortitude. In Claes Jansz. Visscher's *Batavian Mirror* of 1610, for example, the Dutch Maid is a powerful warrior but in contemporary dress like the heroines (Fig. 3.9). She grasps her lance in one hand and the seven arrows signifying the United Provinces in the other. She has become a protectress of the shields of the seven provinces and of religion and citizens' rights all situated around the base of her throne. The Maid's triumph is assured via her armed and dominating presence. In such an image, the militaristic conflation of the actual heroine archetype and the allegorical heroine archetype again becomes evident.

31 Marina Warner, *Monuments & Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (New York: Atheneum, 1985), xx.

FIGURE 3.9 Claes Jansz. Visscher, *Batavian Mirror*, 1610, detail, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

In a history of the Revolt by Famianus Strada (1572–1649), entitled *De thien eerste boecken der Nederlandsche oorlogen* (*The First Ten Books of the Netherlandish Wars*, first published in 1632 but written c. 1602) the titleplate displays an even more bellicose Maid of Holland (Fig. 3.10). Her clothing has taken on the hybrid form of Minerva's garb and the military attire of a Roman general. In addition to being surrounded by various coats of arms, she is deluged by weaponry in a manner comparable to Kenau images. Her militant character is in keeping with the content of the book, which records in great detail the events of the war with Spain including an account of Kenau. Significantly, in this text Kenau is described as the leader of a troop of women who pounced on the enemy with such zeal that they were thoroughly astonished.³² Perhaps this model of female bravery was the partial inspiration for the intrepid Maid on the titleplate.

It is likely that this book illustration influenced the design for a stained-glass window in the church at Biervliet from 1660 (Fig. 3.11). As in the previous engraving, a Minerva-like helmeted female is shown seated and grasping a spear with her right hand. Her left arm is akimbo and resting on a shield. The power of the Maid is further emphasized in this design by the familiar and ferocious Medusa head which decorates her shield as an allusion to Minerva's role in

32 P. Famianus Strada, *De thien eerste boecken der Nederlandsche oorloge*, 10 volumes (Dordrecht: Nicolaes van Ravesteyn, 1646), 7:524. Strada's book, *De Bello Belgico*, was published in Rome in 1632 and was translated into Dutch in 1646 by Guillaume van Aelst. The book draws from the memoirs of Cardinal Bentivoglio that were written ca. 1602.

FIGURE 3.10 Engraved frontispiece from Famianus Strada, *De thien eerste boecken der Nederlandsche oorlogen*, 1632

the Perseus myth. The Maid's bellicosity is once again accentuated by the surrounding profusion of arms, which includes halberds and spears. This abundant weaponry and the triumphal arch that accompany the armed female figure are significant continuations of Dutch heroine and *Hollandia* signifiers. Furthermore, like these precedents, this Maid was clearly meant to engender unifying patriotic sentiment – evidenced by the flanking window bearing the arms of William III (1650–1702). In 1660, William's mother Mary (1631–1660) and his grandmother Amalia van Solms (1602–1675) were in the process of trying to persuade several of the provinces to re-adopt the Prince of Orange as their stadtholder during the First Stadtholderless Period (1650–1672). It was hoped that the patriotic fervor invoked by the warrior Maid would aid this campaign.³³

As a result of this constant reimagining, by the mid-seventeenth century the warrior Maid of Holland had become a popular figure in prints and book illustrations like Strada's titleplate. For example, in her Minerva garb with her warrior lion, she dominates another titleplate for a history by Pieter C. Hooft (1581–1647) *Neederlandsche histoorien* (*Dutch history*, 1642, Fig. 3.12).³⁴ Once again, tales of the bellicose Kenau may have inspired the depiction, as Hooft claims within the text that the legion of housewives under Kenau's command was over three hundred. He praises Kenau as a brave "*mannin*" (female man), and describes her as being armed with spear, gun, and rapier while leading women against the enemy. By mid-century such exaggerated recountings of Kenau's deeds began to fashion her into a kind of revolutionary symbol. Hence,

33 The Maid of Holland had long been used as a unifying metaphor for the House of Orange. However, most of these instances represent the Maid in a less bellicose and more feminine guise. Such examples include a painting of young William III and the Maid of Holland that was done by the artist Daniël Haringh, but in this case he seems to be protecting the Maid. The present location of the work is unknown, but it appeared in a Christie's sale in London, 1998-10-30, lotnr. 38. Previously, the Maid had appeared in conjunction with William's ancestor, Maurits, in a painting by Jan Tegnagel (1601–1625), Stedelijk Museum Het Prinsenhof, Delft. In this painting Maurits, together with the Maid, holds the lance topped by the liberty hat. The Maid of Holland was used again as a patriotic, pro-Orange signifier in a 1681 painting commissioned by the Haarlem city council of the past stadtholder Frederik Hendrik next to the Maid of Holland. He is shown crowned with a laurel wreath in honor of his military victories. See, Neeltje Köhler and Pieter Biesboer, *Painting in Haarlem 1500–1850: The Collection of the Frans Hals Museum* (Ghent: Ludion, 2006), 412–15. A thorough discussion of the numerous depictions of the Maid of Holland, or Liberty, in connection with the House of Orange are discussed in Janson, *Birth of Dutch Liberty*, 108–19.

34 Pieter C. Hooft, *Neederlandsche Histoorien, seedert de ooverdracht der heerschappye van kaizar Karel den Vyfden op koning Philips zynen zoon* (Amsterdam: Louys Elzevier, 1642), 286.

FIGURE 3.11
Attributed to Cornelis
van Barlaer, *Maid of
Holland with Portrait
and Arms of William III*,
detail, 1660, Biervliet,
Reformed Church

FIGURE 3.12 Engraved frontispiece from Pieter C. Hooft, *Nederlandsche historien*, 1642

both types of militant female figures, as found in this text, were employed to glorify and reassure the Republic.

3 Assimilating Allegory

Through this continued merging of heroic female *topoi*, the Dutch significantly ritualized the depiction of powerful women. These “memory figures”³⁵ contributed to the stabilization of the new Republic, and they helped convey the society’s new self-image. Therefore, their myths had important functional properties in the establishment of social cohesion. And as Jan Assman has theorized, such myths are critical in the establishment of collective identity: “Myth is a story one tells oneself in order to orient oneself in the world; a truth of a higher order, which is not simply true but in addition makes normative claims and possesses a formative power.”³⁶ In this way, the images of heroic maids imbued an ideology that venerated women who had adopted traditionally male traits in the service of the Fatherland. In addition, they influenced positive cultural attitudes towards women who crossed “natural” gender boundaries. Thus, in addition to helping inculcate patriotic pride in, and support for, the new federation, these images also established distinctive and new conventions of behavior for future Dutch women. Consequently, they functioned as more than collective or cultural memories, they also symbolized female possibilities and aspirations in this new social construction.

In order to more fully understand the range of discursive possibilities around the invention of this newly developing semiotic field of heroic female prints, it is critical to theorize about the power and meaning of the medium in seventeenth-century Dutch culture. Specifically, it is important to understand how this new reproductive medium functioned in what was perhaps the first modern consumer culture. In the seventeenth century, the Dutch were establishing a standard of commodification and spectacle that became the envy of all Europe. It has been suggested, for example, that the many representations of luxury goods in the visual culture of the time created and fulfilled a longing and desire to own these objects.³⁷ In comparable fashion, owning representations

35 Jan Assmann introduces the designation of “memory figures” (*Erinnerungsfiguren*) in *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1992).

36 This translation of Jan Assmann is found in Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture*, trans. Sara B. Young (Houndmills; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 34.

37 John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London; New York: British Broadcasting Corp.; Penguin Books, 1972), 83–112; Bernd Wolfgang Lindemann, *From Rembrandt to Vermeer: Civil Values*

of the manly female celebrities and allegories of the era via the accessible print could satisfy another type of personal wish fulfillment and psychological projection of oneself that similarly subverted sex-typed behaviors.³⁸ Due to the easy access of these images, the social construction of women would obviously have entailed a familiarization with these allegorical and historical heroines. Furthermore, it would have inspired emulation in women's attempts to correspondingly acquire celebrated public status.

That women did imagine themselves in these roles will become evident in their use of these images as models and templates to fashion themselves throughout the century. A few scholars, for example, have discussed the interest of elite women of the Republic in having themselves portrayed as ancient exempla, just as the heroines of the Revolt were frequently associated with the biblical Judith and the ancient Amazons. Research suggests that such historiated portraits would have similarly endowed the sitter with the virtues of these renowned predecessors. The guises of both biblical and mythological women were employed to give women, especially women at the court of the Stadholder in The Hague, a forceful public presence.³⁹ Such power-engendering historiated portraiture was particularly important to Amalia van Solms, wife of Frederick Henry (1584–1647) Prince of Orange. Amalia significantly influenced both the culture and politics of court life at The Hague.⁴⁰ Therefore,

in *17th-Century Flemish and Dutch Painting: Masterpieces of the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin* (Milan: Motta, 2008).

- 38 Production of the subject via the consumption of art is the theme of several essays in Ann Bermingham and John Brewer, eds., *The Consumption of Culture 1600–1800: Image, Object, Text* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995).
- 39 Ilya Veldman first discussed the use of biblical role models in “Lessons for Ladies: A Selection of Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Dutch Prints,” *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 16(2–3) (1986): 113–27. Yvonne Bleyerveld continued this discussion of assimilation and introduced a few historiated portraits in “Chaste, Obedient and Devout: Biblical Women as Patterns of Female Virtue in Netherlandish and German Graphic Art, ca. 1500–1750,” *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 28(4) (2000–2001): 219–50. Alison McNeil Kettering particularly emphasized the use of Diana in historiated portraiture in “Gender Issues in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Portraiture: A New Look,” in *Rembrandt, Rubens, and the Art of their Times: Recent Perspectives*, eds. Roland E. Fleischer and Susan C. Scott (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 144–75. A very thorough analysis of how Dutch women of the court associated themselves with ancient heroines was undertaken in a dissertation study by Sarah M. Crawford-Parker, “Refashioning Female Identity: Women’s Roles in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Historiated Portraits,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 2006).
- 40 Scholarship on Amalia van Solms includes: Adriaan Willem Eliza Dek, *Genealogie van het vorstenhuis Nassau* (Zaltbommel: Europese Bibliotheek, 1970); Jan Joseph Poelhekke, *Frederik Hendrik, Prins van Oranje: Een biografisch drieluik* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1978);

it is not surprising that she, and other women at court, would choose to have themselves portrayed as powerful mythological heroines.⁴¹ For example, the goddess Diana and her associations with attributes of the hunt and warfare are emphasized in Gerard van Honthorst's (1592–1656) *Amalia as Diana at the Hunt with her Sister the Countess van Brederode* of 1627 (Fig. 3.13).⁴² The bellicose nature of this horde of warring Amazons is reminiscent of both descriptions and depictions of Dutch heroines. Another gender-breaching role model from antiquity was the familiar Minerva. In Honthorst's portrait of Elisabeth van Solms (sister to Amalia) as Minerva in armor, the manner in which the spear-bearing and cross-dressing female figure boldly confronts the viewer's gaze is reminiscent of both revolutionary heroines and Maids of Holland (1632, Fig. 3.14).⁴³ This recollection of celebrated patriotic signifiers would have greatly benefitted the desires of both Amalia and Elisabeth to expand their influence and power at the Dutch court.

For other women, modeling attributes of the heroic Dutch maids of Holland occurred in less combative and less political ways. An important example of this type of identity construction is found in Ferdinand Bol's (1616–1680) 1663 *Margarita Trip as Minerva, Goddess of Wisdom, Teaching her Younger Sister Anna Maria Trip* (Fig. 3.15).⁴⁴ Once again, there is a *Hollandian* conflation of classical and religious traditions, as depictions of Mary learning at the knee

Jan Joseph Poelhekke, "Amalia van Solms," in *Vrouwen in het landsbestuur: Van Adela van Hamaland tot en met koningin Juliana: Vijftien biografische opstellen*, ed. C. A. Tamse (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1982), 111–29; Marika Keblusek and Jorhanna Maria Zijlmans eds., *Vorstelijk vertoon: Aan het hof van Frederik Hendrik en Amalia* (The Hague; Zwolle: Haags Historisch Museum; Waanders, 1997); Peter van der Ploeg, Carola Vermeeren, Bernardus Petrus Jozef Broos, and Marlies Enklaar, eds., *Vorstelijk verzameld: De kunstcollectie van Frederik Hendrik en Amalia* (The Hague; Zwolle: Mauritshuis; Waanders, 1997); Luuc Kooijmans, *Liefde in opdracht: Het hofleven van Willem Frederik van Nassau* (Amsterdam; Ljouwert: Bakker; Fryske Akademy, 2000).

- 41 For discussions of such historiated portraiture, see Rose Wishnevsky, "Studien Zum 'portrait historie' in den Niederlanden," (Ph.D. diss., Munich, 1967), 75; Crawford-Parker, "Female Identity," 26–78.
- 42 The figures are identified and the provenance discussed in J. Richard Judson and Rudolf E. O. Ekkart, *Gerrit van Honthorst 1592–1656* (Doornspijk: Davaco, 1999), 114–16.
- 43 The figure is identified in Judson and Ekkart, *Gerrit van Honthorst*, 308. Honthorst also painted Charlotte de la Trémouille, wife of James Stanley, Lord Strange, 7th Earl of Derby in the guise of Minerva.
- 44 The figures are identified and the painting discussed as an allegory on the the protection of art and knowledge in R. Meischke, Eduard Reeser, and I. H. van Eeghen, *Het Trippenhuys te Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, 1983), 205–06.

FIGURE 3.13 Gerard van Honthorst, *Amalia as Diana at the Hunt with her Sister the Countess van Brederode*, 1627, present location unknown

FIGURE 3.14 Gerard van Honthorst, *Portrait of Elisabeth van Solms as Minerva*, 1632, present location unknown

of St. Anne are vividly recalled. Furthermore, the huge volume towed in by the struggling putti is likely to be the Bible so often associated with the Maid of Holland.⁴⁵ Beyond the religious overtones, however, there is a significant melding of the gender-breaching characteristics of Minerva as warrior and of

45 It is generally accepted that the Maid of Holland's accompanying text is a Bible, and this particular pairing would seem to support such a suggestion. Albert Blankert also considers the book to be the Bible, which corresponds to the symbol of immortality, the peacock, next to Minerva, in *Ferdinand Bol* (Doornspijk, The Netherlands: Davaco, 1982), 107. He interprets this painting as an allegory on education.

FIGURE 3.15 Ferdinand Bol, *Margarita Trip as Minerva, Goddess of Wisdom, Teaching her Younger Sister Anna Maria Trip*, 1663, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Minerva as wise scholar in order to bestow these manly and heroic attributes on the young Margarita.

This type of assimilation by contemporary women will perhaps be even better understood by first examining an interesting titleplate for the text *Lof der schilder-konst* (Praise of the Art of Painting, 1642) by the Leiden artist and theorist Philips Angel (Fig. 3.16).⁴⁶ Chapman suggests that the Maid of Holland's wattle fence was here combined with armored Pallas Minerva as goddess of

46 Philips Angel, *Lof der schilder-konst* (Leiden: Willem Christiaens van der Boxe, 1642).

FIGURE 3.16
Engraved frontispiece from Philips Angel,
Lof der Schilder-Konst, 1642

the arts and with the allegorical figure *Pictura*, or painting, via her palette and brushes.⁴⁷ She asserts that this hybrid maiden was thus a glorification of the modern Dutch painting tradition as equaling the renowned art of antiquity. It is important to remember, however, that the Dutch had already adopted Minerva as a symbol for the Republic. While the allegory certainly borrowed the goddess from antiquity, by 1642 she was already a patriotic symbol of the United Provinces and of Leiden in particular.⁴⁸ Hence, the title plate is a significant celebration of Dutch art in and of itself. And these two patriotic references to the Maid of Holland and Dutch *Pictura* would become important signifiers for women. Indeed, famed women artists came to be viewed as triumphant heroines and *Hollandias*.

47 H. Perry Chapman, "A *Hollandse Pictura*: observations on the title page of Philips Angel's *Lof der schilder-konst*," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 16(4) (1986): 233–48. References on Minerva as protector of the arts include: A. Pigler, "Neid und Unwissenheit als Widersacher der Kunst," *Acta Historiae Artium* 1 (1953–1954), 215–35; E. R. M. Taverne, "Pictura: enkele allegorieën op de schilderkunst," in *Het schildersatelier in de Nederlanden 1500–1800* (Nijmegen: De Waag, 1964), 31–46; Eddy de Jongh, "The Artist's Apprentice and Minerva's Secret: An Allegory of Drawing by Jan de Lairese," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 13(3/4) (1983): 201–17.

48 Eric J. Sluijter, *De lof der schilderkunst: Over schilderijen van Gerrit Dou (1613–1675) en een traktaat van Philips Angel uit 1642* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1993), 16–17.

Furthermore, female artists and scholars of the Golden Age who attained civic and national renown did so in part via numerous adulatory texts and images that employed these same associations. Characterized as heroines and Minervas by their contemporaries, these women, like their heroic predecessors, triumphed in the male, public sphere and acquired such fame that later generations of women followed in their footsteps. Their celebrity is, I argue, a compelling indicator of the lasting influence of the heroic Dutch Maid tradition.

For example, the scholar and artist Anna Maria van Schurman (1607–1678) was inarguably the most internationally famous woman of the Republic.⁴⁹ She received a great deal of acclaim for both her scholarly and artistic pursuits. Importantly, she devoted much of her artistic activity to the the production of self-portraiture. It is significant that some of these portrayals directly recall the depictions of heroic women, and indeed, she was considered a heroine by many of her contemporaries. For example, in Hubertus Beets's pro-female text, *Oratio in laudem mulieris*, 1650, he opens with an image of the heroic Judith beheading Holofernes and closes with a lengthy ode to the "Batavian miracle", Van Schurman – a pairing that recalls the famous Kenau.⁵⁰ And in more explicit connection with her allegorical and actual predecessors, others called her the "Utrecht Minerva" and labeled her a "heroine" and a "jewel of the Fatherland."⁵¹ Such glorifying publicity helped create and spread the fame of this woman who truly became an international celebrity as elites from around Europe anxiously initiated correspondence with her. Due to her writings and those of her circle, a kind of protofeminist sisterhood developed with women supporting one another via their laudatory art and poetry. Women's new

49 An enormous amount of scholarship documenting the life and works of Van Schurman has been published particularly since the 1970s. Perhaps the most thorough introduction to her life is found in Pieta van Beek, *The First Female University Student: Anna Maria van Schurman (1636)*, trans. Anna-Mart Bonthuys and Dineke Ehlers (Utrecht: Igitur, 2007, originally published in 2004). A more recent text on Van Schurman also summarizes this scholarship, see Anne R. Larsen, *Anna Maria van Schurman, 'The Star of Utrecht': The Educational Vision and Reception of a Savante* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016).

50 Hubertus Beets, *Oratio in laudem mulieris* (Haarlem: Vincent Casteleyn, 1650).

51 Comparisons with Minerva are found in the dedication of Van Beverwijck, *Wtnementheyt*. She is called a jewel of the Fatherland in Constantijn Huygens, *De gedichten van Constantijn Huygens naar zijn handschrift uitgegeven*, ed. J. A. Worp, 9 volumes (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1892–99), 3:48–49. Jacob Cats also refers to her as a jewel of national pride in, *Houwelyck, Vrouwe* (Middleburgh: Jan Pieters vande Venne, 1625), 48. Van Beverwijck and Adolph Vorstius both call her a heroine in Anna Maria van Schurman, *Opuscula Hebraea Graeca Latina et Gallica, prosaica et metrica* (Utrecht: Trajecti ad Rhenum, 1652, originally published in 1648), 319–64.

access to these voluntary circles of intellectuals greatly enhanced their abilities to have a social voice.⁵² Their art and writings all contributed to a sense of women as knowledgeable and skilled in many ways. As a result, these women were able to positively and collectively give shape to female identity in Dutch society, as they victoriously crossed traditional gender boundaries.⁵³

Van Schurman's further links with the heroic Dutch maids of the past are particularly evident in one of her texts, *Opuscula Hebraea Graeca Latina et Gallica, prosaica et metrica*, (*Little works in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and French*) which was first published in 1648 and reprinted in 1650, 1652, and 1672. The text opens with an iconic image of Van Schurman after an earlier self-portrait, which includes an inscription indicating that the full marvel of this woman will only be partially revealed in the text. Clearly, she understood that in order to compete in a man's world, she had to employ the male tactic of publicly representing herself and pronouncing her capabilities. Therefore, a portion of this text is completely devoted to acquaintances's praise of her abilities.⁵⁴ In these verses, frequent comparisons are made with the goddess Minerva, and she is also labeled a heroine and a virago, or a woman who does violent battle. One verse even familiarly compares her to the ancient Amazons. Such comparisons immediately recall the epithets applied to Dutch heroic female archetypes. Evidence that Van Schurman, herself, saw her life-long task of elevating the status of women as a heroic battle is found in her letter to the protofeminist Marie le Jars de Gournay (1565–1645) in *Opuscula*.

Anna Maria van Schurman congratulates
The great and noble-minded heroine of Gournay

52 Frijhoff and Spies, *Dutch Culture*, 217–19.

53 Annelies de Jeu discusses networks of female writers in the Republic in *'t Spoor der dichters: Netwerken en publicatiemogelijkheden van schrijvende vrouwen in de Republiek (1600–1750)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2000). Although she emphasizes that these women still needed men to publish and receive public notoriety, it is important to acknowledge the fact that, as these women published about each other, they did achieve social recognition. Van Schurman's networks outside of the Republic are discussed in Mirjam de Baar, "God Has Chosen You to Be a Crown of Glory for All Women!": The International Network of Learned Women Surrounding Anna Maria van Schurman," in *I Have Heard about You: Foreign Women's Writing Crossing the Dutch Border: From Sappho to Selma Lagerlöf*, eds. Suzan van Dijk, Petra Broomans, Janet F. van der Meulen, and Pim van Oostrum (Hilversum: Verloren, 2004), 108–35; Barbara Bulckaert also discusses Van Schurman's networks in "Self-Tuition and the Intellectual Achievement of Early Modern Women: Anna Maria van Schurman (1607–1678)," in *Women, Education, and Agency, 1600–2000*, eds. Jean Spence, Sarah Jane Aiston, and Maureen M. Meikle (New York: Routledge, 2010), 9–24.

54 Van Schurman, *Opuscula*, 319–64.

Strong defender of the cause of our sex.
 You bear the arms of Pallas, bold heroine in battles
 And so that you may carry the laurels, you bear the arms of Pallas.
 Thus it is fitting for you to make a defence for the innocent sex
 And to turn the weapons of harmful men against them.
 Lead on, glory of Gournay, we shall follow your standard,
 For in you our cause advances, which is mightier than strength.⁵⁵

All the familiar language surrounding heroic female icons is present in this poem. She not only calls De Gournay a heroine, but she speaks of doing battle with men by being armed as Pallas Minerva. Furthermore, she follows De Gournay's example, which will lead all women to victory and a crowning with triumphant laurels.

In addition to praising Van Schurman, these letters also celebrated the city of Utrecht, the home that she had made so famous. Undoubtedly, much of this rhetoric was inspired by the descriptions of past heroines who similarly bestowed fame on their cities. Furthermore, like the heroines, she was an important figure in the cultural memory of the Republic generally. In this manner, she became a proud patriotic symbol of the United Provinces. Her renowned scholarly contributions to the Republic were considered equal to the battling women of the Revolt and the warrior Maids of Holland. At the same time, her portraits and texts helped further structure definitions of "woman" and positive attitudes toward female transgression of traditional gender roles from early on in the Republic.

In fact, her image and praise of her abilities were consistently circulated in a variety of contexts, which ensured a cultural tradition that valued and paid homage to this legendary figure. This constructed visual and textual history created a cultural memory of this famed Dutch woman that would remain influential throughout the seventeenth century regarding perceptions of the ways in which a woman could take on traditionally male traits and abilities, especially intellectual genius and artistic skills. Importantly, the aggrandizing nature of the heroic female visual tradition was adopted in order to bestow similar status on Van Schurman. Traces of heroic female imagery of the past

55 Van Schurman, *Opuscula*, 303. The English translation is from Anna Maria van Schurman, *Whether a Christian Woman Should Be Educated and Other Writings from Her Intellectual Circle*, trans. and ed. Joyce L. Irwin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 13. "*Magni ac generosi animi Heroinae Gornacensi, Causam sexus nostri fortiter defendenti gratulatur Anna Maria à Schurman Palladis arma geris, bellis animosa virago; Utque geras lauros, Palladis arma geris. Sic decet innocui causam te dicere sexus, Et propria insontes vertere tela viros. I prae Gornacense decus, tua signa sequemur: Quippe tibi potior, robore, causa praeit.*"

are particularly evident in a bold self-portrait designed by Van Schurman and included in a Jacob Cats dedication to her at the outset of his text *'S Werelts Begin, Midden, Eynde, Besloten in den Trou-Ringh, Met den Proef-Steen van den Selven* (*The World's Beginning, Middle and End, Comprised in the Wedding Ring, With the Touch Stone of the Same*, Fig. 3.17). Accompanying the image is an inscription proclaiming her fame and glory and also a page-long description of all her talents in learning, art, and music.⁵⁶ In the image, the celebratory view of the Utrecht church under a triumphal arch is reminiscent of both Kenau and *Hollandia* imagery in its reminder of the religious, civic, and national pride attached to female heroines. Also comparable are the manly prostheses of fame and power: in heroine images, these were weapons and Spanish heads, and in Van Schurman's portrait these are scholarly manuscripts and writing implements. Importantly, the heroine images had already crossed gender boundaries by equating female bravery with that of men in the inscriptions and by picturing women armed like men in heroic hand-on-hip poses. Thus, when Van Schurman adopts these aspects and manipulates them to proclaim her celebrated status, there were already pictorial precedents that had bestowed public fame on female subjects. Significantly, Van Schurman's glorified self-portrait reappeared in multiple editions of Cats's *'S Werelts Begin* (first published in 1637) and in his collected works, thus disseminating her powerful and influential image throughout the Republic.

A profound example of the consequences of Van Schurman's fame for other women is found in the admiring verses of Charlotte de Huybert (c. 1622–after 1644). De Huybert, daughter of a Leiden lawyer, was praised as a skilled poet by Van Beverwijck, and he includes one of her poems in his text. The inclusion of this poem is significant because it provides a female perspective on Van

56 Jacob Cats, *Alle de Wercken, So ouden als nieuwe, van de Heer Iacob Cats, Ridder, oudt Raedtpensionaris van Hollandt, &c.* (Amsterdam: Jan Jacobsz. Schipper, 1655), forward to *'S Werelts Begin, Midden, Eynde, Besloten in den Trou-Ringh, Met den Proef-Steen van den Selven* (there are no page numbers, but it would be page 8 and verso). In his dedication, Cats states that the image is a self-portrait, but it is not known if Van Schurman engraved the work or whether it was simply done after her drawing. It is important to remember, however, that Van Schurman did other self-portrait engravings, so the print may be by her hand. Cats's inscription reads, "Nu soo isset alsoo dat niet alleen de hooghe Schole van het Sticht van Utrecht, maer oock menigh geleert man in Hollant met volle reden van wetenschap kan getuygen, dat al het gene voren is verhaelt, gelijckelick is te vinden in den persoon van Jonck-vrou Anna Maria Schuermans: wiens beelt na 't leven by haer selfs uyt een spiegel kunstelick geteyckent wy den Leser hier in 't koper ghesneden gunstelick mede-deelen; als een wonder niet alleen van onse, maer oock van de voorige eeuwen. En daer op besluytende, segge ick: O licht van uwen tijt, en Peerel van den douck! Ghy die ons Eeuwe ciert, verciert oock desen Bouck."

FIGURE 3.17 After Anna Maria van Schurman, *Self-Portrait*, from Jacob Cats, 'S Werelts Begin, Midden, Eynde, Besloten in den Trou-Ringh, Met den Proef-Steen van den Selven, 1655

Schurman and on women taking up male roles. Moreover, it fashions a place for De Huybert herself as a woman trying to make her own public reputation. Her praise of Van Schurman forcefully indicates how extremely important this celebrity had become as a role model for Dutch women:

To you, Miss, we are grateful, for your talented spirit was the motive for this praiseworthy work [speaking of Van Beverwijck's text].

Your virtue remains women's virtue, your wisdom women's wisdom: so that through your name all women are praised, your glory is glory to us ...⁵⁷

Importantly, this ode further enhanced the pro-female discourse that already celebrated both military and cultural heroines. Hence, the public discussion initiated by and around these women formed part of the social learning to which young women in the Republic were exposed. In this manner, the accomplishments of Van Schurman became part of the cultural imaginary and provided the necessary symbols for other women to self-determine and self-define in enabling ways. And just as Van Schurman employed her agency to successfully manipulate the schema of sex-typed behaviors and reshape notions of female identity, later generations of women were also agents who could give further voice to the less frequently verbalized discourses of female power.

Confirmation that Van Schurman was viewed as a role model for other Dutch women can be found in other numerous verses written by women in praise of her accomplishments.⁵⁸ These women include the poetesses Sybille van Griethuisen (1621–1699), Maria Margaretha van Akerlaacken (1605–c. 1670), and Johanna Hobius (c. 1614–c. 1643) who wrote a rhyming text lauding women generally and entitled *Lof der vrouwen* (*Praise of women*, 1643).

57 De Huybert's verse is included in the introduction to Van Beverwijck, *Wtnementheyt*, Book 3. The translation is from Van Beek, *First Female Student*, 153. Further literature on De Huybert includes: Marijke Spies, "Charlotte de Huybert en het gelijk. De geleerde en de werkende vrouw in de zeventiende eeuw," *Literatuur* 3 (1986): 339–50; Maria A. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, "Schrijvende Vrouwen in de Gouden Eeuw: Onmogelijke Mogelijkheid," in *Nederlands 200 jaar later*, ed. Hugo Brems (Woubrugge: Internationale Vereniging voor Neerlandistiek, 1998), 119; De Jeu, *'t Spoor der Dichteressen*, 177–78. "U Juffrouw dancken wy, dat u begaefde geest Van dit lofwaardigh Werck de oorsaack is geweest. U deught blijft 's Vrouwen deugt, u wijsheyt 's Vrouwen wijsheyt: Soo dat in uwen naem ock aller Vrouwen prijs leyt. U lof is ons tot lof..."

58 De Baar and Van Beek also point to Van Schurman as a role model in "The international network of learned women surrounding Anna Maria van Schurman" and in *First Female Student*. They both discuss Van Schurman eulogies by many women of the Republic at length.

This catalog of “good women” begins with biblical and ancient examples and concludes with her own era and effusive praise for Van Schurman. She extols this famed adornment of women whose radiance shines on all women and who stands as the most honored female in the midst of men. She details her knowledge and wisdom, her ability with languages and her writing, her glass engraving and painting (including a self-portrait), and her musical abilities. After this eulogy she puts out a call to all women who want to praise Van Schurman and crown her with laurels to think on this poem and how it will influence them.⁵⁹

Hobius, herself, sets an example for other women by following in Van Schurman's footsteps with her own poetic writings. This emulation was not lost on her contemporaries as is witnessed in a final inclusion to the text, which is a poem by Antonis de Huybert. He eulogizes Hobius and says that she has become the pride of her Fatherland. Moreover, he claims that Van Schurman's glory will fade in comparison with Hobius's fame.⁶⁰ The title plate to this small text is also an important reminder of the consistent signifiers associated with famed women of the Republic (Fig. 3.18). It depicts Minerva as goddess of wisdom and the arts, but also as the Maid of Holland, crowning a contemporary maid of Holland with a laurel wreath as she writes in a book. Above, a figure trumpets the glory of women who are celebrated because of their various accomplishments in learning, the arts, and music symbolized by the books, the embroidery frame, and the musical instruments.

Perhaps no praise of a woman's artistic abilities surpasses that lavished upon the turn of the century figure Joanna Koerten (1650–1715), whose talents were also compared to those of Van Schurman.⁶¹ This now little known paper-

59 Johanna Hobius, *Het lof der vrouwen* (Amsterdam: Cornelis Janssen, 1643), A7 and A8 recto and verso particularly discuss Van Schurman.

60 Hobius, *Het lof der vrouwen*, B8 recto.

61 For scholarship on Koerten see J. D. C. van Dokkum, “Hanna de knipster en haar concurrenten. Een studie over Oud-Hollandsche schaarkunst,” *Het Huis Oud en Nieuw* 13 (1915): 335–58; Michiel Plomp, “De schaar-Minerve: Joanna Koerten (1650–1715),” *Teylers Museum Magazijn* 12 (Summer 1986): 10–13; B. Bakker, E. Fleurbaay, A. W. Gerlagh, *De verzameling Van Eeghen: Amsterdamse tekeningen 1600–1950*, (Zwolle: Waanders, 1989), 117–22; C. G. Bogaard, *De schaar-Minerva Johanna Koerten (1650–1715) en de waardering voor de ‘papierren snykunst’* (Ph.D. diss., Utrecht, 1989); Michiel Plomp, “De portretten uit het stamboek voor Joanna Koerten (1650–1715),” *Leids Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 8 (1989): 323–44; R. J. A. te Rijdt, “Jan Goeree, het stamboek van Joanna Koerten en de datering ervan,” *Delineavit et Sculpsit* 17 (1997): 48–56; Jos Hiddes, “Kunstenaresen in de marge? Over knipkunst, calligrafie en roem,” in *Vrouwen en kunst in de Republiek. Een overzicht*, eds. Els Kloek, Catherine Peters Sengers, and Esther Tobé (Hilversum: Verloren, 1998), 107–18; Henk van

FIGURE 3.18

Engraved frontispiece from Johanna Hobius, *Lof der vrouwen*, 1643

cutting artist was at one time an internationally renowned figure, and the artist biographer Arnold Houbraken's praise of her is particularly striking.⁶² In addition, several of Koerten's contemporaries, both male and female, also wrote lauding verses and signed an autograph book, or *Stamboek*, in honor of this famous artist. This included national and international celebrities like Peter the Great, who visited her workshop. This collection of admiring drawings and poems was kept even after her death by her husband and was published twice in the eighteenth century.⁶³ This publication reminds us of Van Schurman's

Ark ed., *Joanna Koerten*, in several editions, *Nieuwsbrief van het Nederlands Museum van Knipkunst en de Stichting*; M. Roscam Abbing, "Joanna Koerten (1650–1715) en David van Hoogstraten (1658–1724). Een bijzondere relatie tussen twee bekende Amsterdammers," *Maandblad Amstelodamum* 94(2) (2007): 14–29; J. Verhave en J. P. Verhave, *Geknipt! Geschiedenis van de papierknipkunst in Nederland* (Zutphen, Walburg Pers, 2008), 20–24; Martha Moffitt Peacock, "Paper as power. Carving a niche for the female artist in the work of Joanna Koerten," *Nederlands Jaarboek voor Kunstgeschiedenis* 62 (2013): 238–65; Kees Kaldenbach, *Tekeningen uit het album amicorum (Stamboek) van Joanna Koerten Blok: een overzicht met index* (Amsterdam: published by the author, 2014).

62 Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderesen, waar van 'er vele met hunne beeltenissen ten tooneel verschynen, en hun levensgedrag en kunstwerken beschreven worden: zynde een vervolg op het Schilderboek van K. v. Mander*, 3 volumes (Amsterdam: published by the author, 1718–21), 3:293–308.

63 *Het stamboek op de papiere snykunst van mejuffrouw Joanna Koerten*, (Amsterdam 1735); *Op de papiere snykunst van juffrouw Joanna Koerten*, (Amsterdam 1736).

self-fashioning in *Opuscula*. Nevertheless, such attention to a female artist in these eulogizing collections was unprecedented. Moreover, there were a number of women who contributed to the text; this included a still-life drawing by Van Schurman.

Houbraken's son Jacob (1698–1780) was clearly linking Koerten's fame back to her famous female predecessor in his album drawing in which Van Schurman's portrait is paired with Koerten's and the two are accompanied by artistic and scholarly tools, including books and papers, palette and brushes, as well as a pair of scissors (Fig. 3.19). A sculpted figure of Minerva looks up in admiration toward these tremendously famous women. Minerva's inclusion reminds the viewer that both women were inheritors of the goddess's name as a meritorious appellation – Koerten was known as the Scissors-Minerva.⁶⁴ Moreover, Minerva's lance-wielding, militaristic appearance must also have conjured up cultural memories of the revolutionary heroines and the Maid of Holland in their subversion of manly roles. This cultural memory of heroic females becomes obvious in album verses which claim that Koerten's struggle eclipsed that of the Amazons and so deserved great fame.⁶⁵ Indeed, the poetess Gesine Brit often calls her the "*Kunstheldin*" (art heroine) of the Amstel River in her ode to Koerten from the *Stamboek* that was republished in Houbraken's biography.⁶⁶ Importantly, she claims that Koerten's heroism is particularly notable due to the fact that nature is against women in the arena of art. Thus, once again, it is a woman's ability to transgress gender boundaries and exemplify male abilities that makes her a heroine.

Many poems in the *Stamboek* elaborate on the fame that Koerten brought to the city and one author even calls her studio in Amsterdam, the eighth wonder of the world.⁶⁷ In this vein, another celebratory drawing, by Jan van Vianen, depicts the militaristic figure of the Dutch/Amsterdam Maid with her sword-bearing lion in front of the Stadhuis, or city hall (Fig. 3.20). This triumphant figure is accompanied by a god symbolizing Amsterdam's IJ River and by two putti carrying scissors and a portrait of Koerten.⁶⁸ In this manner, the citizens of Amsterdam are celebrating their own unique heroic maid.

64 *Stamboek*, 75.

65 *Stamboek*, 64.

66 *Stamboek*, 37–42.

67 *Stamboek*, patriotic inscriptions to the city of Amsterdam are found on the following pages: 28, 111, 124–30, 144–45.

68 In similar fashion, Mattheus Terwesten drew an apotheosis of Koerten in which her portrait is presented to the Dutch/Amsterdam Maid. The drawing is in the Gemeentearchief, Amsterdam.

FIGURE 3.19 Jacob Houbraken, *Double Portrait of Joanna Koerten and Anna Maria van Schurman*, c. 1720–1740, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

FIGURE 3.20 Jan van Vianen, *The Maid of Amsterdam with Tribute to Joanna Koerten*, c. 1726, Gemeente Stadsarchief, Amsterdam

In another drawing from the *stamboek*, there is significant evidence as to how dramatically this cultural heroine had been able to alter male attitudes in regards to representing the fame and glory of accomplished women. In a drawing with inscription by Philip Tideman (1657–1705), he praises Koerten by portraying her at her toilette gazing into a mirror (Fig. 3.21). She is accompanied by two eulogizing, allegorical figures. One wears a laurel crown and carries a triumphal palm. The other is the Minervan Maid of Holland who is ready to bestow glory on this Amsterdam artist with her ready scissors. The accompanying verses indicate how Koerten had helped to construct a positive female identity in Dutch culture.

Joanna Koerten, your jewels are ways of Virtue and Art that accompany and adorn you. Joanna does not wear ostentatious robes. She wears

FIGURE 3.21 Philip Tideman and Arnold Houbraken, *Monument for Joanna Koerten*, detail, c. 1720–1725, Gemeente Stadsarchief, Amsterdam

neither precious treasure nor gold; but she displays virtue and artistic adornment that never age.⁶⁹

An astonishing subversion of misogynist biases regarding women's character is accomplished in this drawing. The accompanying verses indicate how Koerten's fame had constructed a new identity for women; it was an identity that rejected traditional sex-typed characteristics such as female vanity and beauty and instead adopted manly skill. Furthermore, this was accomplished in part by referencing the familiar Minerva/*Hollandia* allegory.

Such female triumph is also reflected in Koerten's most beloved work, a cutting of the *Roman Goddess of Liberty*, 1697, that she kept throughout her

69 *Joanna Koerten, uw juweelen zijn manieren van Deugt en Konst die u versellen en versieren. Joanna draegt geen praalgewaden. Zij draegt kleinodien noch gout. Maar pronkt met deugt en kunstsieraden. Waar van de luister noit verout.*

FIGURE 3.22 Joanna Koerten, *Roman Liberty*, 1697, Westfries Museum, Hoorn

life and which she presumably chose to decorate the original title plate to the *Stamboek* (Fig. 3.22). The design for this image was likely inspired by another titleplate depicting the Maid of Holland. In 1660, Philipp von Zesen published his history of Amsterdam, *Leo Belgicus*, which included an illustration of male portrait heads (including both Roman and Netherlandish rulers) surrounding the enthroned *Hollandia* (Fig. 3.23).⁷⁰ Similarly, Koerten's heroic female figure surrounded by portraits of ancient emperors and the Roman she-wolf also celebrates the republican values of the Fatherland, but she further displays Koerten's Amazonian efforts in the amazingly detailed technique. This work received significant praise by several contributors to the *Stamboek*, and evidence that it was intended as a showpiece for visitors to her studio is indicated by the self-praising inscription cut at the bottom of the image. Obviously, the

⁷⁰ Philipp von Zesen, *Philippi Cæsii à Zesen Leo Belgicus, hoc est, Succincta ac di lucida narratio exordii, progressus, ac denique ad summam perfectione redacti stabiliminis, & interioris formæ, ac status, Reipublicæ federatarum Belgii regionum* (Amsterdam: Elzevir, 1660).

FIGURE 3.23

Engraved frontispiece from Philipp von Zesen, *Leo Belgicus*, 1660

artist wanted to be associated with an ancient allegory of female power just like the heroines and Minervas before her.

During the latter part of the seventeenth century, several women artists were achieving this type of heroic status. Maria Sibylla Merian (1647–1717), for example, was another important scholar-artist who achieved great renown. Although she was not born in the Dutch Republic, she came to the Netherlands later in life after leaving her husband.⁷¹ In a setting where famous women had

71 There are numerous studies on Merian's life and art including: J. Stuldreher-Nienhuis, *Verborgene paradijzen. Het leven en de werken van Maria Sibylla Merian, 1647–1717* (Arnhem: Van Loghum Slaterus, 1944); Elisabeth Rücker, *Maria Sibylla Merian* (Neurenberg: Germanisches Nationalmuseum, 1967); David Freeberg, "Science, commerce, and art: neglected topics at the junction of history and art history," in *Art in history, history in art: studies in seventeenth-century Dutch culture*, eds. David Freeberg and Jan de Vries (Santa Monica: Getty Center for the the History of Art and the Humanities, 1991), 377–86; Londa Schiebinger, *The Mind Has No Sex? Women in the Origins of Modern Science* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 68–79; Sharon Valiant, "Maria Sibylla Merian. Recovering an eighteenth-century legend," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 3 (1993): 467–79; Erika Gemar-Költzsch, *Holländische Stillebenmaler im 17. Jahrhundert* (Lingen: De Luca, 1995); Natalie Zemon Davis, *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 140–202; Irina N. Lebedeva, "De nalaten-schap van Maria Sibylla Merian in Sint-Petersburg," in *Peter de Grote en Holland. Culturele*

FIGURE 3.24
Jacob Houbraken after Georg Gsell,
Maria Sibylla Merian, 1708–1780,
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

previously been supported in artistic pursuits, she was able to develop a significant reputation for herself as a painter of plants and insects. She was so successful in selling her works that she was able to raise the funds necessary to travel to Surinam. After her return to the Netherlands, she once again established a successful art trade and published her book of Surinam studies in *Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium*, 1705.

Merian was also discussed in Houbraken's biography of artists. He included a cropped version of a portrait print of Merian made by his son, Jacob (1698–1780) after a drawing by Georg Gsell. The original print displays another powerful assertion of female accomplishment (Fig. 3.24).⁷² Like so many male

en wetenschappelijke betrekkingen tussen Rusland en Nederland ten tijde van tsaar Peter de Grote, eds. Renée Kistemaker, Natalja Kopaneva, Annemiek Overbeek (Bussum: THOTH, 1996), 60–66; Leen Huet and Jan Grieten, *Oude meesteressen. Vrouwelijke kunstenaars in de Nederlanden* (Leuven: Van Halewyck, 1998), 159–85; Kurt Wettengl ed., *Maria Sibylla Merian, 1647–1717. Kunstenares en natuuronderzoekster* (Haarlem: Becht, 1998); Helmut Kaiser, *Maria Sibylla Merian. Eine Biographie* (Düsseldorf: Artemis & Winkler, 1997); Katlijne Van der Stighelen and Mirjam Westen, *Elck zijn waerom: Vrouwelijke kunstenaars in België en Nederland 1500–1950* (Ghent: Ludion, 1999), 186–87; Ella Reitsma and Sandrine A. Ulenberg, *Maria Sibylla Merian & Dochters. Vrouwenlevens tussen kunst en wetenschap* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2008).

⁷² Merian's biography is found in Houbraken, *De Groote Schouburgh*, 3:220–24. A colored version of the print appeared in texts as early as 1717.

artists's portraits of the era, Merian is depicted in her studio surrounded by her drawings. The insects and plants from which she drew inspiration are also included. The nearby writing implements, books, and globe, as well as the cloth of honor overhead, are all familiar metaphors of accomplishment found in the portraits of Van Schurman. This artistic connection between the two women may have been so explicit due to the fact that they were also united by their faith. Earlier, both women had dwelt in the same religious community founded by the Protestant reformer Jean de Labadie. On the wall behind Merian hangs a shield with symbols from the Merian coat of arms: a stork with a serpent in its mouth. In front of this shield, a miniature female figurine trumpets Merian's fame next to another small, helmeted Minervan Maid of Holland figure that holds a pike and Hat of Liberty. In this manner, there is continuous meaning accruing to the heroine figure who comes to generally represent the triumph and freedom of the Revolt and also the glory of the Republic. Yet more specifically, she also signifies the celebrated women of the Fatherland who are revered as patriotic heroines and scholarly and artistic geniuses and who deserve the enduring association with Minerva.⁷³ In his text, Houbraken reprints the verse that accompanied the original portrait, in which is found a celebration of her art and a declaration that her name will live on. Thus, this portrait is one further example of the consistent Dutch desire to champion famous female citizenry, and the symbols in Merian's portrait now claim this new celebrity as one more "good woman" of the Republic. Moreover, as this portrait was reproduced in print form, it ensured the broad establishment of her fame in a manner comparable to that employed for her heroine foremothers.

Similar sorts of eulogizing are found in a presumed portrait of the internationally renowned paintress Rachel Ruysch (1664–1750) dated to about 1680 and attributed to Michiel van Musscher (Fig. 3.25).⁷⁴ Ruysch, an acclaimed still-life artist of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, is depicted in an exalted pose as she points with her brush to her artistic skill via her painted

73 Merian is referenced in connection with Minerva by Joachim Sandrart, *L'Academia Todesca della Architectura, Scultura e Pittura: Oder Teutsche Academie der Edlen Bau-, Bild- und Mahleren-Künste*, 1 (Nuremberg: Jacob van Sandrart, 1675–1679; and Frankfurt: Mathias Merian the Younger, 1675–1679), no. 283, 339.

74 There has been a great deal of informal discussion over the attribution of this painting and the identity of the sitter. Nevertheless, the specificity of the face argues that this is a portrait rather than just an allegory. Moreover, the grandeur of the eulogizing suggests a rather prominent sitter such as Ruysch. Currently, the museum agrees with the attribution of Van Musscher and the subject of Ruysch. A comparable self-portrait of a paintress at an easel has been attributed to Ruysch in Eddy de Jongh and Marjolein de Boer, *Faces of the Golden Age: Seventeenth-Century Dutch Portraits (English Supplement)* (The Hague: Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst, 1994), 65–66.

FIGURE 3.25
Michiel van Musscher, *Allegorical
Portrait of an Artist* (probably Rachel
Ruysch), c. 1680, North Carolina
Museum of Art, Raleigh

canvas with still life. On the table are sculptures and books as references to her artistic training and achievement. Allegorical figures trumpeting her fame and crowning her with a laurel wreath are reminiscent of other portraits of cultural heroines, as is the cloth of honor. These were fitting adornments and celebrations for the first female artist to be admitted to The Hague painters's guild and who also enjoyed international patronage. This acclaimed artist familiarly wears a medal across her chest – a traditional indicator of royal patronage and favor.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, this proudly displayed medal of honor also recalls Kenau imagery, as does the militaristic lance-bearing figure of the Minervan Maid of Holland in the background. Like Van Schurman and Koerten, Ruysch also received this goddess's epithet; she was known as the “Amsterdam Minerva.”⁷⁶

75 Specifically, Ruysch's medal identifies her as court painter to Johann Wilhelm, Elector Palatine of Düsseldorf for whom she painted until his death. Several male self-portraits of the era similarly represent artists with gold medals and chains given by their royal patrons. Julius Held discusses the use of the medal in self-portraiture as a sign of princely favor in *Rembrandt's Aristotle, and other Rembrandt Studies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 17–58.

76 Margaretha de Heer (c. 1600–1660) was another artist to receive this honor. In the anonymous *Klioes kraam* (Leeuwarden: Hendrick Rintjes, 1656–1657), 308–10, 343–44, she is called Pallas, a pearl, an art goddess, and a hero like Van Schurman by poets such as Sibylle van Griethuysen and Simon Abbes Gabbema. A further discussion of the odes to De Heer in which she is called an art goddess and heroine is found in Veerle Mans, Philippus H. Breuker, and Peter Karstkarel *Margareta de Heer (circa 1600–circa 1665): dé*

Such flamboyant commemoration of a female artist again witnesses how far some women had come in their ability to inspire public fame for themselves and their art.

In a process comparable to the gathering and publishing of eulogizing verses in honor of Van Schurman and Koerten, poems in honor of Ruysch appeared in a volume of 1750, *Dichtlovers voor de uitmuntende schilderessen Mejuffrouwe Rachel Ruysch* (Poems for the excellent painter Mistress Rachel Ruysch). It included many verses, by men and women, expressing awe over Ruysch's imitative skills in the genre of still-life painting, particularly considering that she was a woman. The text also proclaims that her fame and her art will endure eternally. In Johan van Gool's biographical *De Nieuwe Schouburg der Nederlantsche Kunstschilders en Schilderessen* (The New Theatre of Netherlandish Painters and Paintresses, 1750) he informs us that not only was Ruysch known as an "Art Goddess," she was also called an "Art Heroine." In addition, he includes verses that further identify her as the "Amsterdam Pallas" and the "Minerva of the IJ."⁷⁷ All of these epithets indicate how profoundly the cultural memory of the seventeenth century had continually renewed the associations among all of the celebrated women of the Republic. They were viewed as heroines and Maids of Holland who had brought fame to the Fatherland and their cities via their manly deeds. They were celebrated in art and verse, and civic pride did much to enhance their legendary status.

4 Domesticity and the Dutch Maid

In addition to this discussion of wealthy and famous "Maids of Holland," it is important to include an analysis of assimilating possibilities for Dutch women as a whole. Evidence of a consistent cultural connection between the heroic warrior Maid and women generally can be found in her representation on domestic products. For example, by mid-seventeenth century she frequently decorated the surfaces of protective fire backs (Fig. 3.26). These objects of material culture would have been daily reminders to those women cooking

Friese kunstenaars van de zeventiende eeuw (Leeuwarden; Ljouwert: Friese Pers Boekerij; Fries Museum, 2002), 89–92.

77 In *Dichtlovers voor de Schilderesse Mejuffrouwe Rachel Ruysch, Weduwe van Den Kunstlievenden Heere Juriaan Pool* (1750) with the contributions of several authors, the honor that Ruysch brings to Amsterdam is discussed on 6 and 21. On 22 she is called an "Art Goddess." In *De Nieuwe Schouburg der Nederlantsche Kunstschilders en Schilderessen* by Johan van Gool, 2 volumes (The Hague: published by the author, 1750–1751), 1:211–12 she is called an "Art Heroine" and is said to be armed with the favor of Pallas Minerva.

at the hearth of the Dutch struggle for independence and of women's heroism in establishing this new federation. In these reliefs, a bellicose Maid in her Dutch Garden boldly grasps a lance with the Hat of Liberty at its tip. The words *Pro Patria*, or for the Fatherland, are inscribed overhead. She wears the hat of a soldier, and her fierce companionate lion has also become militarized as it brandishes a sword and clenches the seven arrows. Therefore, the continued interest in, and elaboration on, both types of heroic female themes helped to establish a unifying and epic Dutch tradition, while also engendering patriotic fervor in the founding of the new Republic – all through the figure of a woman.

Previously in the discussion of the Gouda windows, the two types of *Hollandia* were introduced: the contemporary maiden and the manly Minerva. In the former characterization, she was employed in the early decades of the seventeenth century as a patriotic allegory of the divinely blessed and economically powerful new Republic. Perhaps no print on this subject has been given more attention than the titleplate of a pamphlet from 1615 by Willem Pietersz. Buytewech (1591/1592–1624). The image bears the inscription, *Merckt de Wysheit vermaert vant Hollantsche huyshouwen en siet des luypaerts aert die niet is te vertrouwen* (Note the wisdom of renowned Dutch housekeeping and see the leopard's nature that is not to be trusted, Fig. 3.27). The pamphlet further informs us that this is an allegory on the deceitfulness of Spain and the freedom and prosperity of the Seven Provinces. First and foremost, this print has been studied as an important political signifier of the imperative to remind the Dutch citizenry about the need for unity and to warn them to be vigilant against the Spanish enemy in spite of the Twelve Years Truce.⁷⁸ *Hollandia* is once again situated in her prosperous garden where she sits under the triumphant arch of Batavian *heerschappij* (dominion). She is surrounded by the arms of the provinces and of the Prince of Orange, while being protected by the Dutch Lion. Might, Reason, and the friends of the Fatherland further aid her victory. Her two-faced Spanish enemy enviously spies on *Hollandia* and lurks with an army outside the gate.

I would assert that with such images as these, in addition to the political purposes, there are also possibilities for the female spectator to equate the Maid generally with the power of Dutch women. The juxtaposition of *Hollandia* with signifiers such as *heerschappij* (dominion) and *huyshouwen*

78 Frederik Muller, *De Nederlandsche geschiedenis in platen; beschrijving van Nederlandsche historieplaten, zinneprenten en historische kaarten* (Amsterdam: F. Muller, 1863–1882), (note 37) nr. 1304; Egbert Haverkam-Begemann, *Willem Buytewech* (Amsterdam: H. Hertzberger, 1959), 14, 170–71; Clifford S. Ackley, *Printmaking in the Age of Rembrandt* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1981), 89–91; Chapman, “A Hollandse Pictura,” 241–42.

FIGURE 3.26 Maid of Holland fire back, 1644, Museum de Lakenhal, Leiden

(householding) significantly recalls the pronouncements of Van Beverwijck on the import of domestic roles. He firmly asserts the importance of family and home, proclaims that the family is the fountain and origin of a republic, and states that one must augment and preserve the family as one would govern and protect a city or state. He also declares that the housewife's reliable actions lay the foundation for a well-ordered society, considers the housewife's power great, and compares her domain to a kingdom. He immediately follows this discussion with a denial that his praise of the housewife is a means to restrict women to the domestic realm. He relates that many women are able to engage in trade and business, while other women practice arts and learning. Finally, he claims that if more women were allowed such opportunities, they would be found capable of all things. Moreover, and very importantly, he claims that

FIGURE 3.27 Willem Pietersz. Buytewech, 1615 *Allegory on the Deceitfulness of Spain and the Liberty and Prosperity of the Dutch Republic*, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

the assignation of gender roles is not due to nature, but is instead a matter of habit.⁷⁹

In this manner, the Maid became a model for women generally, whose rule over their own realms was so critical to the success of the Republic. This *heerschappij* of housewives is frequently represented in domestic genre scenes. Images of the home rarely contain fathers, and when they are present, they are usually relegated to an insignificant position, often in the background, of the composition. Women dominate these scenes and they are frequently shown instructing children, servants, and vendors in their duties. A significant example of this type of authoritarian imagery is depicted in a painting of 1663 by Quirijn van Brekelenkam (Fig. 3.28). Here the mother is enthroned in the center of the composition with children and a maidservant emulating her example and attending to her commands. The man of the household is only minimally referenced in the portrait on the back wall. It has been suggested that there is a possibility that this is a genrefied family portrait, in which case the husband's

79 Van Beverwijck, *Wtmentheyt*, 2:209–12.

FIGURE 3.28 Quiringh van Brekelenkam, *Interior with Three Women and a Girl*, 1663, Kunsthhaus, Zürich

authority has been significantly reduced in relation to the powerful position of his wife.⁸⁰ Thus, a kind of matriarchal ideal was constructed in which women reigned supreme in the domestic sphere without the interference of men.

80 León Krempel suggests that it may be a family portrait in the guise of a genre scene in "Bildnisse in Genrebildern," in *Face Book: Studies on Dutch and Flemish Portraiture of the 16th–18th Centuries: Liber Amicorum Presented to Rudolf E. O. Ekkart on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, ed. Rudolf E. O. Ekkart (Leiden; The Hague: Primavera Pers; Netherlands Institute for Art History, 2012), 351–58.

In regards to the powerful role of the domestic matriarch, it is essential to discuss a final artistic genre that demonstrates the import of imaging heroic maids for female viewers generally. These images were created by women and girls for the home in the form of decorative samplers. Not surprisingly, the Maid of Holland became one of the most favored motifs in Dutch needlepoint during the second half of the Golden Age. In these depictions, this powerful and intrepid woman is almost always posed in the familiar hand-on-hip heroine stance within her fenced garden, as in a sampler dated 1665 by Maria Block (Fig. 3.29). Also in the manner of previous imagery, *Hollandia* wields a spear with her other hand that displays the hat of liberty. In relation to this very popular motif, it is important to recall the theoretical construct of the “subversive stitch” as Parker labeled it several years ago.⁸¹ She suggests that meaning in needlework is culturally specific and must be examined within these contexts in order to ascertain how women both accepted and resisted patriarchal prescriptions for feminine behavior in relation to traditional women’s work. Furthermore, it has been pointed out that samplers like this one were also a demonstration of the artist’s literary and visual knowledge.⁸² I would suggest that in displaying one’s learning and in recalling famous and heroic Maids of Holland, both allegorical and real, such motifs were used as a subversive statement regarding female ability and influence in a medium to which women generally had access and with which they could communicate across domestic boundaries. Reciprocally, the constant visibility of these female-created motifs must have inspired the young woman viewer in her desire to similarly develop her own consequential identity. Like the many cultural heroines discussed, she, too, would have been responsive to this assimilating impulse as she imagined herself in a role of import. Hence, through the art of needlepoint, every woman who contributed to the glory of the Republic could visualize herself as a heroic Maid of Holland. And the avid re-representing of the glorious and

81 Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London: Women’s Press, 1984). Needlework in the cause of subversion and social criticism is also discussed by Heather Pristash, Inez Schaechterle, and Sue Carter Wood in “The Needle as the Pen: Intentionality, Needlework, and the Production of Alternate Discourses of Power,” in *Women and the Material Culture of Needlework and Textiles, 1750–1950*, eds. Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin (Farnham, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 13–29; and Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, first published 2000), 134–171.

82 Bianca F. C. Calabresi, “‘You sow, Ile read’” Letters and Literacies in Early Modern Samplers,” in *Reading Women: Literacy, Authorship, and Culture in the Atlantic World, 1500–1800*, eds. Heidi Brayman Hackel and Catherine E. Kelly (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 79–103.

FIGURE 3.29 Maria Block, *Sampler*, detail of the Maid of Holland, 1665, Amsterdams Historisch Museum, Amsterdam

inspirational Maid by females throughout the Republic is witness to both the adulatory and emulative impulses of the Dutch spectatrix.

In light of these heroic associations with Dutch female culture generally, a credible analysis of the visual arts produced in the Golden Age cannot ignore the public visibility these works provided for women. Clearly, such reimagining of strong females figured large in the discourse over the nature and significance of women. These images emphasized the importance of women in all their roles for the well-being, and even survival, of the society. Through participation in public discourse, such depictions surely bestowed a demonstrable degree of power on women generally.

5 Theorizing the Dutch Spectatrix

While I am certain that my assertions of female agency and power as modeled after the Maid of Holland will meet with skepticism amongst some art

historians, it should be remembered from the introduction that recent scholarship on early modern women has led to a much more nuanced sense of female agency. The many instances of female autonomy that have been discovered provide significant evidence of women's impact on cultural development. Habermas's redefining of the public sphere in the early modern era, for example, has allowed for the possibility of feminist interventions into that realm that did not previously exist. He asserts that by the eighteenth century the bourgeois public sphere was firmly developed, via the press, as well as reading societies, salons, and coffee houses.⁸³ Some feminists note that this model allowed women to influence the public sphere in informal ways via literary and artistic discussions.⁸⁴

In relation to this article, several historians have suggested that the formation of a bourgeois public sphere began even earlier in the Dutch Republic.⁸⁵ In fact, some see this society as one marked by constant debate in which all segments of the population were able to participate.⁸⁶ The discussions of

83 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991, originally published in 1962).

84 Several feminist scholars of eighteenth-century Europe have argued for a patriarchal view of this model including: Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988); Johanna Meehan, ed. *Feminists Read Habermas: Gendering the Subject of Discourse* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Kathleen Wilson, "Citizenship, Empire, and Modernity in the English Provinces, c. 1720–1790," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29 (1995): 69–96; Margaret C. Jacob, "The Mental Landscape of the Public Sphere: A European Perspective," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28 (1994): 95–113. For the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, Heide de Mare has particularly set forth a firm boundary between "House/street, inside/outside, pure/impure, female/male ..." in "The Domestic Boundary as Ritual Area in Seventeenth-Century Holland," in *Urban Rituals in Italy and the Netherlands: Historical Contrasts in the Use of Public Space, Architecture, and the Urban Environment*, eds. Heidi de Mare and Anna Vos (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1993): 109–131. Scholars who argue against this kind of patriarchal hegemony in the eighteenth century include: Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994); Dena Goodman, "Public Sphere and Private Life: Toward a Synthesis of Current Historiographical Approaches to the Old Regime," *History and Theory* 31(1) (1992): 1–20; Nicole Pohl and Betty A. Schellenberg, eds., *Reconsidering the Bluestockings* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 2003).

85 Frijhoff and Spies assert that a public sphere existed in the Republic in which both men and women were allowed to participate through the products of print culture and the organization of social groups, *Dutch Culture*, chapter 3. Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude also assert that the Republic had a modern, bourgeois economy in *The First Modern Economy*.

86 See various contributions to Judith Pollmann and Andrew Spicer, eds., *Public Opinion and Changing Identities in the Early Modern Netherlands: Essays in Honour of Alastair*

women, as well as men, are often reflected in the various forms of printed text and image of the era.⁸⁷ Also, literary and cultural societies, which included women, were established to discuss public concerns and ideas. In addition, women were involved in the producing and consuming of art in this middle-class society, which further aided their participation in structuring the new public sphere. For Habermas, the creation of an art for the people meant that now private individuals would be determining the meaning of these products through their own discussion.⁸⁸ In this manner, the art purchased and created by the Dutch spectatrix could engage in the structuring of public gender identity without necessarily conforming to the patriarchal ideologies of much prescriptive literature.

As previously discussed, recent scholarship has turned away from earlier patriarchal models that sharply contrasted male and female experience historically. Nevertheless, in art historical studies of the Dutch Golden Age, there has been less enthusiasm for this revisionist approach. For example, at the very moment when early modern historians were rejecting the oppressive public/private paradigm of the past, historians of Dutch art were embracing it.⁸⁹ These analyses agreed for the most part that a rather firm boundary existed between the public and the private with women relegated to the domestic realm under the control of patriarchy. In addition, as asserted by Westermann in her 2002 state of the research survey of Dutch art historical studies, the introduction of gender theory was having little impact on the field.⁹⁰ Therefore, the contention that women artists and patrons acted autonomously to overcome gender biases and create public, powerful reputations for themselves in a proto-feminist manner has previously met with, and will probably continue

Duke (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), especially Andrew Sawyer, "Medium and Message. Political Prints in the Dutch Republic, 1568–1632," 163–187.

87 Frijhoff and Spies illustrate this attention to female discourse in *Dutch Culture*, 223.

88 Habermas, *The Public Sphere*, 37.

89 Arthur K. Wheelock, Jr. and Adele F. Seeff, eds., *The Public and the Private in Dutch Culture of the Golden Age* (Newark; London: University of Delaware Press; Associated University Presses, 2000); Arthur K. Wheelock, Jr., Michiel Plomp, Daniëlle H. A. C. Lokin, and Quint Gregory, eds., *The Public and the Private in the Age of Vermeer* (London; Wappingers Falls, NY: P. Wilson; Distributed in the USA and Canada by Antique Collectors's Club, 2000); Martha Hollander, *An entrance for the eye: space and meaning in seventeenth-century Dutch art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Elizabeth Alice Honig, "Desire and Domestic Economy," *Art Bulletin* 83, no. 2 (2001): 294–315.

90 Mariët Westermann "After Iconography and Iconoclasm: Current Research in Netherlandish Art, 1566–1700," *The Art Bulletin*, 84, no. 2 (2002): 351–372.

to meet with, resistance from several scholars.⁹¹ Nevertheless, it is important to recall the embattled language of some of these women. They were obviously aware of the patriarchal construction of their societies, and their agenda reveals an early feminist strategy of celebrating the public accomplishments of women, of declaring women to be equal with men in their capabilities, and of encouraging other women to fight against certain traditional gender boundaries. Van Schurman's earlier quoted call to arms is particularly illuminating in this regard:

You bear the arms of Pallas, bold heroine in battles ...
Thus it is fitting for you to make a defence for the innocent sex
And to turn the weapons of harmful men against them.

These are the words of a woman consciously choosing to exert her agency to make women the intellectual and social equals of men. Furthermore, the demonstrated adulation of this woman by her female contemporaries suggests that they too must have desired some of this same autonomy. And finally, the constant visibility of a strong female archetype that conjured up both allegorical and actual cultural memories in domestic material culture suggests that women generally, not just female elites, were engaged in a constant reaffirming of consequential female influence and power in this society.

In most studies of Netherlandish art, however, there is an assumption that only men were capable of such individualistic behavior and free will in Dutch society. This hyperbolized sense of male autonomy has led to a very slanted perspective. Clearly, in certain instances of female fashioning, women were also innovatively attempting to construct public images for themselves that would promote them individually, but also the female sex as a whole. However, it was not only women viewers that were affected by these shifting definitions of female identity. As more Dutch women were integrated into the pantheon of allegorical and mythological heroines, it helped to alter views regarding female significance among both sexes. As a result, men of the era could also imagine a society where women were capable of attaining "manly" virtues such as bravery, intelligence, and artistic skill. So while many discussions of gendered gaze focus on biology, I have argued that spectators in this society were culturally

91 The term proto-feminist refers to the existence of seventeenth-century pro-female ideologies that foreshadowed actual "feminism" of the modern era. This term is used to describe the writings of Renaissance pro-female authors in Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil, Jr., "The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: Introduction to the Series," in *The Worth of Women* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

constructed. Therefore, males did not constitute a monolithic entity that persistently saw women in a negative or subservient light. Indeed, the positive fashioning of female identity as influenced by Maid of Holland imagery was greatly enhanced by the contributions of male authors and artists, as they too subverted traditional gender norms by remarkably praising women and their accomplishments in both the public and private spheres.

But perhaps more importantly, I have argued that the Dutch Republic was a society in which this type of imagining was particularly enhanced for women through the constant visualization of the heroic *Hollandia* and her heiresses. With this recovery of an autonomous spectatrix, there is still recognition that while the position it propounds may not have triumphed over patriarchy in some political and social ways, it was not without the ability to influence cultural opinions regarding female identity. Consequently, Dutch patriarchy was constantly being tempered by a discourse that was sympathetic to powerful women and that accorded them value, thus enhancing the agency of women to envisage themselves in roles that appreciably revolutionized their position in society.