

Stop 0 – Instructie Podcatcher

At the start of the exhibition, please activate your Podcatcher audio player at one of the consoles.

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The Podcatcher will guide you through the exhibition. At various points throughout the exhibition, you will find activation points for the audio commentaries. Hold the Podcatcher 30 centimetres from an activation point, as you would with a remote control, and the audio will start playing automatically. You do not need to press any keys.

There are three keys on the unit. Press the left key to lower the volume and the right key to increase the volume. If you want to pause and resume, simply press the key in the middle.

Where you need to select an option, the keys allow you to select options A, B, or C.

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Press A to start the tour.

Press B to repeat the activation instructions.

Press C to repeat the volume adjustments instructions.

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[A] You are now starting your exhibition tour. Activation points can be found throughout the entire exhibition. On completion of the tour, please return the Podcatcher to the audio desk. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask the attendants or Hermitage Amsterdam staff members. We hope you enjoy this tour.

[B] Hold the Podcatcher 30 centimetres from an activation point, as you would with a remote control, and the audio will start automatically. You do not need to press any keys.

[C] Press the left key to lower the volume and the right key to increase the volume. If you want to pause and resume, simply press the key in the middle.

Stop 1

Bovenaan de trap

Welkom + Inleiding tentoonstelling

Schuttersmaaltijd met kolonel Jan van de Poll en kapitein G. van de Poll

Spilberg, 1650

Welcome to the Golden Age, an illustrious chapter in Dutch history. Under the leadership of Holland, the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands experienced an unprecedented Golden Age in the 17th century and became one of the most powerful countries in Europe.

Using paintings from the collections of the Amsterdam Museum and the Rijksmuseum as its basis, this exhibition tells the story of the most important aspects of urban society in Holland; aspects that still characterise Dutch mentality.

A series of group portraits, as well as this banquet of the civic guard from 1650, enable the viewer to put a face to the influential men and women of that time, their roles, and the contributions they made to the society in which they lived.

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Stop 2

Kabinet 31: Grafische introductie vier protagonisten

AV MM van vier hoofdpersonen

Vooruitblik naar kabinet 32 waar de vier hoofdpersonen elkaar tegenkomen.

Allow us to introduce to you: Frans Banninck Cocq, Pieter Hasselaer, Isaac Commelin and Elisabeth Reael, four Amsterdammers of whom we will see more later.

Successful Amsterdammers, Amsterdammers of stature, certainly, but our choice could have been different. Actually, our four main characters symbolise the individuals who made up the collective. At various different levels, they jointly contributed to the administration of the city, and took the lead where necessary.

If you continue to the next cabinet, you will see various **cityscapes** that depict the surroundings in which these Amsterdammers lived.

[91]

Opmerking [NM1]: City views? Ooit hoorde ik dat 'cityscapes' meer het echte aanzicht van de stad betreft, niet het geschilderde

Opmerking [V2]: In principe betekent 'cityscape' exact hetzelfde als 'stadsgezicht'. In veel Engelstalige teksten die specifiek over Nederlandse kunst gaan wordt ook de term 'cityscape' gebruikt. 'Views of the city' is bijvoorbeeld een mogelijk alternatief. Ons advies is in eerste instantie om 'cityscape' te behouden.

Stop 3

Kabinet 33: Kennismaking III

Subthema: Hollandse burgers verenigen zich in groepen

Maaltijd van rot D van de voetboogschutters, De Braspenningmaaltijd, 1533

Cornelis Anthonisz

From the Middle Ages, the citizens of Holland defended their cities by joining local civic guard. Initially, members used crossbows and longbows as weapons, during the course of the sixteenth century they also used handguns and muskets, rifles.

Here we see the banquet of the crossbow militia guild in 1533. Two men are holding their bows aloft, civic guard members have their emblem embroidered onto their sleeves. Their patron saint, Saint George, is depicted in the window to the top right.

On the table, there is a roast duck and heron, a herring and some bread. Hardly lavish for a banquet, which is why the piece is jokingly entitled 'Brass-coin-banquet', a reference to a low value coin in circulation at the time. Local produce, not yet comparable to the wealth of exotic commercial products that would appear on tables in the seventeenth century. The guardianship of order and safety in the city was a civic duty, which at the same time did no harm to one's career. Many officers of the guard – in most cases wealthy traders who made up the urban elite – were also given roles of responsibility in other areas, some even went on to become burgomasters.

[199]

NL/EN Verdieping: [If you would like to hear more about the organisation of civic guards during the 16th and 17th centuries, press A.](#) [18]

Verdieping Stop 3: Schutterijen

The militia guilds originated in the late Middle Ages. During the course of the 16th century, they assumed an entirely independent position of power because of turbulent political circumstances and the advent of new Protestant religions. This greatly undermined citizens' sense of community, and city administrations sometimes lost control over the militias. No doubt, a great deal of discussion in this regard would have taken place during guild banquets.

The militia guilds were reorganised at the end of the 16th century as an initiative of William of Orange. The new civic guard had a clear structure: every neighbourhood had its own company. Members had to pay for and maintain their equipment themselves. That way, the poor were excluded, because in principle, every man between the age of 18 and 60 years who could afford a weapon, helmet and shield had to serve as a guard. In practice, members needed to use their weapons less and less frequently. The military aspect slowly faded into the background as the civic guards became more like associations.

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Stop 4

Kabinet 34: Kennismaking III

Subthema: Hollandse burgers verenigen zich in groepen

Schutters van Rot G

Dirck Barendsz., 1562

A gathering of the bearded men of the Amsterdam crossbow militia guild. Together with the longbow archers and the harquebusiers, they defended the city against attacks from outside and unrest from within the city walls.

They practiced at their target ranges called Doelen. However, **the bow cannot be drawn all the time**. In addition to target practice, members also relaxed by eating and drinking.

There is a jug of wine on the table and to the top left, a member is holding a note with the inscription 'in vino veritas': in wine there is truth.

This crossbow guild commissioned its group portrait from Dirck Barentsz, a Dutch painter who had just returned from Venice, where he had worked in the studio of the famous Titian. The Italian influence can be seen in the vibrancy of the group composition.

Group portraits of militia guild members were proudly displayed on the walls of the buildings of the civic guard in the cities of Holland. Increasingly so in the years that would follow...

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Before you enter the Great Hall, please activate your audio player, to the left of the entrance.

[188]

Stop 5.

Kabinet 34: Kennismaking III

Opmaat naar Grote Zaal: Oog in oog met invloedrijke burgers

HE-M-02 / Synchronisatie vier karakters

The show begins in 15 minutes.

(Admire the many beautiful group portraits so characteristic of the Dutch Golden Age – try to spot our four Amsterdammers.)

The show begins in 14 minutes.

The show begins in 13 minutes.

The show begins in 12 minutes.

The show begins in 11 minutes.

The show begins in 10 / 9 / 8 / 7 / 6 / 5 / 4 / 3 / 2 minutes.

The show begins in 1 minute.

The show begins in 30 seconds.

The show begins in 15 seconds.

[91]

Grote Zaal

AV MM Shows

Stop 6. HE-M-03 / Nachtwachtprojectie – hoofdpersoon Frans Banninck Cocq

Stop 7. SA 9909 / Hoofdpersoon Pieter Hasselaer

Stop 8. SA 995 / Hoofdpersoon Elisabeth Reael

Stop 9. SK-C- 442 / SA 7285 / Hoofdpersoon Isaac Commelin

Stop 10

Kabinet 39: Hollandse Steden

Subthema: Amsterdam als grootste stad

Gezicht op de Haarlemmerpoort, 1615

Hendrick Cornelisz Vroom (1566-1640)

The new Haarlem Gate is seen looming up between the city walls of west Amsterdam. It was designed by architect Hendrick de Keyser. On the left of the horizon, we see a flourmill is visible. A forest of masts to the right of the flourmill indicates-gives away the location of the harbour. At the front left, we see the start of the Haarlemmer Trekvaart, along which horses drag barges from Amsterdam towards Harlem according to a timetable.

Most cities of Holland were located along waterways; there were freight loads and people to be transported everywhere. Where there were no rivers, canals were built.

Holland was the most urbanised area in Europe. Over half the population lived in cities. Often one could see the neighbouring city from local church towers. In terms of size, Amsterdam outdid all other cities. Between 1580 and 1670, the number of residents multiplied six-fold to around 220,000. An urban development plan of unprecedented scale was to be the answer to accommodating growth: the Amsterdam canal district. The duration of its construction lasted almost the entire 17th century. The canal belt has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2010.

[186]

Opmerking [NM3]: On waterways?

Opmerking [V4]: 'Along' klinkt wat natuurlijker.

Opmerking [NM5]: Verschil?

Opmerking [V6]: Bij nader onderzoek: 'channels' zijn natuurlijke waterwegen. 'Canals' zijn aangelegd. Er bestaat in het Engels ook de term 'navigation', maar in de volksmond wordt het in principe allemaal 'canal' genoemd.

Stop 11

Kabinet 40: De Hollandse steden

De samenleving oftewel "het podium" waarin de burgers leefden

De Groenmarkt met gezicht op de Stille Rijn in Leiden, 1660

Hendrik van der/den Burgh

Lovely weather at the vegetable market beside the Rhine in Leiden. The woman in the red jacket is carrying her shopping in her apron. With her is a young boy on a hobbyhorse. The toddler to the left has a real animal at his disposal and is riding in a goat cart. The viewer does not begrudge the thin dog sniffing in the foreground a titbit, but for him there is nothing to be found at the vegetable market.

This was a daily scene in all the cities of Holland, which relied on the surrounding countryside for food. While the gigantic ships of the Dutch Republic sailed the seas of the world, ordinary life at home appeared to go on languidly. Nevertheless, appearances can be deceiving: the cities were growing exponentially, and the turnover of trade with them. To the left, we see the prestigious new Leiden Weigh House, where a flood of goods was weighed and sold.

[158]

NL/EN Verdieping: If you would like to hear more about the trade and specialist industries of Leiden and Delft, press A. [18]

NL Verdieping stop 11: Diversiteit economieën Hollandse steden
Specialiteiten Leiden en Delft

One of the cities of Holland that flourished in the 17th century was Leiden. That was largely due to the textiles industry, which provided all kinds of work for thousands of labourers. Leiden cloth was famous for its superior quality, which was inspected by special sampling officials. From 1640, this took place at the Lakenhal ('laken' being Dutch for 'cloth'). While the word 'laken' nowadays conjures up images of cotton bed linen, it used to be a woollen material, comparable to the covering on billiards tables.

Not far from Leiden, the earthenware industry was developing in Delft, inspired by the Chinese porcelain that was imported along with spices from the East, three times a year via Delft's East India Company fleet. Delft Blue imitations were so popular that around 1700 there were about 33 earthenware factories in Delft.

Many cities in Holland had their own specialist industries: pipes for smoking from Gouda, linen from Haarlem and jenever (or 'Dutch gin') from Schiedam.

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Stop 12

Kabinet 41: Amsterdam als grootste stad

Stadsgezichten van Amsterdam: buitenzijde (dijken) en binnenzijde (dam en grachten)

De Dam , ca.1668

Jan van der Heyden

The Nieuwe Kerk's sundial denotes the time as being nine o'clock. To left, we can see part of the new town hall, to the right we catch a glimpse of the Weigh House. This work brings a pleasant view of the Dam, the city's central square. A horse is straining under the weight of a load of many tonnes, a few gentlemen are in discussion as they walk. One of them is wearing a fez, another a turban: they are traders from abroad.

All in all, a peaceful scene. Indeed, peace prevailed! The Eighty Years' War with the Spanish was over, the second Anglo-Dutch war for control of the seas had just ended. The profits of trade were invested in, amongst others, a phenomenal new town hall that put Amsterdam on the international map, not to mention the canal belt, of which the construction was in full swing. Amsterdam had allure and the governors and residents were proud of their city. Painted **cityscapes** of the new buildings, canals and squares were much sought after, even overseas.

Opmerking [V7]: Zie ook het begin van de tekst. In principe is 'cityscape' exact hetzelfde als 'stadsgezicht' als het om schilderkunst gaat.

[167]

Verdieping NL/EN: If you would like to hear more about the painting of the burst dyke, hanging to the left of this painting, press A. [22]

Verdieping Stop 12

De Doorbraak van de St. Anthonisdijk in 1651

Willem Schellinks

Mighty Amsterdam may have been powerful, but disasters in the form of fire, floods, or epidemics were always lurking.

This painting shows how vulnerable the cities of Holland were. So violent was a storm on the night of 5 March 1651, the Diemer Sea Dyke to the east of Amsterdam burst its banks. Water surged through the hole in the dyke with great force. On what remains of the dyke, people are throwing their hands into the air in despair, the wind is drowning out their voices. The whole of the reclaimed Diemermeer polder flooded, and Amsterdam, visible in the background with its masts and church towers, suffered extensive damage.

Nevertheless, the city always triumphs: as symbolised by the Dutch Republic Lion shaped out of the earth, to the bottom left of the painting, roaring against the storm.

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Stop 13

Kabinet 41: Frans Banninck Cocq (Doorkijk in Grote Zaal)

De Nachtwacht, Rembrandt van Rijn, 1642

Overlieden Handboogdoelen, Bartholomeus van der Helst, 1653

A beautiful vista of the Great Hall, and the projection of one of the most famous paintings in the world, Rembrandt's Night Watch, with one of our four Amsterdammers featuring prominently in the foreground: Frans Banninck Cocq, as captain of his company of civic guards.

Frans' father arrived in Amsterdam as a poor immigrant from Bremen. He married the daughter of a wealthy pharmacist, a well-bred girl. An obvious case of 'marrying above one's station', there was probably a great deal of gossiping about that in the city. Therefore, son Frans had a firm foothold for taking another step up by marrying a mayor's daughter: Maria Overlander. He thus became part of the network of affluent families.

Eleven years after Rembrandt painted the Night Watch, Frans was busily building a career, both in the civic guard and city council. That is apparent in the group portrait by Bartholomeus van der Helst, hanging to the upper left of the Night Watch. Now we see Banninck Cocq at the height of his career, sitting far left, as headman of the longbow civic guard. He had even already been elected as one of four burgomasters of the city. The son of an immigrant had penetrated the upper echelons of Amsterdam society.

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Stop 14

Kabinet 42: Burgers in de steden

De burgers, oftewel "de spelers", die in het 17de-eeuwse Amsterdam werkten en woonden

IJsvermaak op het IJ voor Amsterdam, ca. 1621

Arent Arentsz Cabel

Quintessentially Dutch! The whole of Amsterdam appears to be on ice. And there is plenty of space, because the whole of the IJ, the port basin, is frozen over. On the horizon, ships are stuck in the ice, there is no chance of setting sail for the time being. The seventeenth century was known as the 'Little Ice Age' and this winter was exceptionally cold. Not everyone is dressed warmly. The boy in the red cloak looking at us from the centre of the painting need not fear the cold, but the fisherman to the left is hardly protected. There is plenty of skating going on.

The frozen water also offered an opportunity for trade and unprecedented modes of transport, on the left a calf is being transported by sleigh. Still: the ice is just as slippery for everyone. Even today, as soon as it is remotely possible, the Dutch head out onto the ice.... The joy of skating brings together young and old, rich and poor.

That did not apply to everyone, though. The illustration on the wall to the right depicts the gallows field on the opposite bank of the IJ. Those who did not adhere to the rules sometimes paid with their lives.

[206]

NL/EN Verdieping: If you would like to hear more about the gallows field, press A. [20]

Opmerking [NM8]: Check, enige uitweiding lijkt mij zinvol hier

Opmerking [V9]: Kan prima zo.

NL Verdieping Stop 14: Keerzijde vrolijke samenleving / Galgenveld

The gallows field was located directly opposite the port, a visible deterrent for all Amsterdammers – especially newcomers – and that was exactly the idea.

On the ice, it looks as if people from all walks of life lived together and that was the case here compared to other countries, but even in Holland, the lowest social classes had fewer opportunities than those from the upper echelons of society. The burgeoning economy gave rise to an influx of people wanting to seek their fortunes in Amsterdam. Sometimes that succeeded admirably, but sometimes things went very wrong.

For example, as it did in 1664 for Danish maidservant Elsje Christiaens, her corpse – with axe – hangs to the far right. Elsje had attacked her landlady with an axe. Self-defence or robbery with murder? The judge ruled the latter. Elsje was sentenced and hanged on Dam Square, after which her corpse was strung up in the gallows field. Below the gallows, one can see the pit into which the rotten remains fell.

Elsje is hardly hanging in the company of aristocrats. In the 17th century, poverty was often a direct cause of crime.

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Stop 15

Kabinet 43: De grote middenklasse

Subthema: Familienetwerken.

Familieportretten maken familienetwerken zichtbaar. Deze netwerken speelden een grote rol in de stedelijke samenleving. Daarnaast is de grote middenklasse zichtbaar, soms apart maar vaak in huiselijke taferelen van de gegoede burgerij.

Pieter Pietersz Hasselaer (en zijn vrouw Aeghje Hooft)

Cornelis van der Voort

One of our four Amsterdammers whom you would have seen in the Great Hall, is Pieter Hasselaer, an influential man who served eight terms as burgomaster of Amsterdam. Pieter's father Dirk started out as a brewer, but worked his way up via the business to become member of the city council and committee member of the Dutch East India Company. That was possible in Golden Age Holland, where entrepreneurship was valued above nobility or the church. Son Pieter was also destined to follow a career in politics, certainly after his marriage to burgomaster's daughter Aeghje Hooft. In doing so, he married 'above his station', a tried and tested method of gaining access to the upper echelons of society. He purchased a plot along the newly constructed Keizersgracht, upon which a huge canal house arose. His acquired status was reinforced through these portraits of the regent couple. After the death of his father in law, Pieter himself also became burgomaster. Via well-chosen marriages and a great deal of networking, the Hasselaers had joined the Calvinist ruling elite within two generations.

[179]

Stop 16

Kabinet 44: Burgers, Familienetwerken, De grote middenklasse

Familieportretten maken familienetwerken zichtbaar. Deze netwerken speelden een grote rol in de stedelijke samenleving. Daarnaast is de grote middenklasse zichtbaar, soms apart maar vaak in huiselijke tafereelen van de gegoede burgerij.

De familie Meebeeck Cruywagen bij de poort van hun buitenhuis aan de Uitweg bij Amsterdam, 1640-1645; Jacob van Loo, ca. 1642

The Cruywagen couple produced six sons. The two children to the right of the grandmother are also male, however they appear to be dressed as girls. All children wore dresses until the age of six.

The whole family is pictured in front of their farmstead along the Uitweg, to the west of Amsterdam. Father Hendrik had a sail-making enterprise in the city and his business was doing well. In summer, affluent urbanites escaped the stench, the plague, and the bustle of the city.

It must have been delightful, there is a large garden and one would have been able to ride in the carriage pulled by the beautiful black horse, or play with the goat. Yet no one in the painting looks particularly happy, only the little ones appear carefree. Life was a serious matter for 17th century Calvinists.

From the second half of the seventeenth century, Amsterdammers' country homes expanded into luxurious residences. They were never situated too far from the city, the River Amstel was a favoured location.

[170]

NL/EN Verdieping: [If you would like to hear more about country homes, press A.](#) [8]

The new polders around Amsterdam, such as the Purmer and the Beemster were very suited to country estates. Hydraulic engineer Jan Leeghwater described the Beemster as the place 'where all the beautiful, magnificent houses and orchards are established.' However, he may have been somewhat biased, because in 1612, he himself had ultimate supervision over the reclamation of the polder.

Many wealthy traders from the city purchased plots of land in the new polders where they built grand mansions, often with leasehold farms. Fruit and vegetables from greenhouses and kitchen gardens adorned the dining table but were also sold at market.

In summer, families would move to the country for a few weeks or months to relax. As poet and playwright Joost van den Vondel remarked after visiting the country estate of a friend: 'There is dancing and banqueting in the wealthy Koopmans district. This is the joy of the Golden Age, in delightful summerhouses'. Sadly, few of these summerhouses have been preserved.

[162]

Stop 17

Kabinet 45: Een veelzijdige samenleving

Tolerantie & Immigratie

De Hoogduitse en Portugese synagoge, ca. 1680-85

Berckheyde

For many Jews, Amsterdam was 'the Jerusalem of the North'. Certainly for the southern European Jews who fled persecution in Spain and Portugal from the end of the 16th century. In tolerant, cosmopolitan Amsterdam anyone could practice their chosen faith - within limits.

Between 1670 and 1675, the Jewish community built two synagogues [on the eastern edge of the city](#) near today's [Jonas Daniël Meijerplein](#). The wealth of the Portuguese and Spanish was evident in the monumental scale of their building, pictured right in the painting. The High German synagogue on the left bank of the river is somewhat smaller.

This tolerance benefited Holland. Englishman John Reresby described it as follows: 'They admit persons of all countries and opinions amongst them, knowing well that this liberty draws people, that numbers of people increase trade and that trade brings money.'

The Portuguese synagogue remains in use today, without heating or electricity. Visitors wear coats in winter and 1000 candles provide lighting.

[161]

NL/EN Verdieping: The Dutch are known for their tolerance, but how tolerant were they really in the Golden Age? Press A to hear more. [24]

Opmerking [NM10]: Zie ook mijn opm. in het NL

Holland was proud of its tolerance. As early as 1579, the basic principle of liberty of conscience had been captured in the Union of Utrecht treaty, a world first.

Religious persecution was abolished and no one needed fear being burned at the stake. However, not everyone enjoyed the same rights. Within the wider religious sphere, the Calvinists held sway, although these devout Protestants did not constitute the majority in many cities. Given the terror that had been generated by the Spanish in the cities of Holland only recently, Catholics were a distrusted population group. They were tolerated, but had to practise their religion in (semi)clandestine home churches until the end of the eighteenth century.

Lutherans were less feared, as were the more liberal Remonstrants and Baptists. Jews were considered second-class citizens in many respects and were prohibited from joining craft guilds. This meant they could not take up formal professions and therefore focused predominantly on free trade. They were visible everywhere in city life, just like their impressive synagogues.

[169]

Stop 18

Kabinet 46: Een veelzijdige samenleving

Tolerantie & Immigratie

Portret van Isaac Commelin, 1669

Gerbrand van den Eeckhout (1621-1674)

Isaac Commelin, you saw him earlier in the Great Hall as a governor. Here he is posing, now considerably older, as a printer and historian, surrounded by evidence of his erudition.

Isaac's family was from Brussels, capital of the southern Netherlands. After the beheading of Isaac's grandfather, the Commelins fled the Catholic Spanish because of their Calvinist faith. In Amsterdam, Calvinism was the dominant religion since religious conversion in 1578; but not to the exclusion of other faiths.

In his new place of residence, Isaac's father became a bookseller and publisher; a flourishing business sector, because virtually everything that was forbidden in surrounding countries could be printed here. Isaac followed in his father's footsteps and authored renowned works about Amsterdam and the Dutch East India Company. The book beside him is open on a page featuring the Maid of Amsterdam. A map of the free city that had afforded him so many opportunities is hanging behind him.

[157]

Stop 19

AV MM productie over hedendaagse Netwerken, ism fotograaf Taco Anema

HE-M-07 / 47

The tradition of 17th-century committee members having themselves immortalised in group portraits takes on a contemporary flavour in the photographs of Taco Anema. His portraits depict board members around a table, just like their predecessors; they gaze into the camera the way they would have looked at the artist. Here too, the compositions have no defined hierarchy. In his photographic study 'Meeting / Holland is managing itself', of which a number of photos are displayed in two places in this exhibition, Anema demonstrates that the tradition of working for non-profit organisations on a voluntary basis is still very much alive. However, something has changed: one no longer needs to hail from the upper classes to engage in board work.

Opmerking [NM11]: Titel vertalen! 'Meeting'? NB: dat 'Overleg' staat voor 'samenkomen voor overleg'

Opmerking [V12]: Wellicht 'the Netherlands' ipv 'Holland'?

[119]

Stop 20

Kabinet 48: Grote economie

Subthema: Overzeese handel

Beurs van Hendrick de Keyser

Vingboons, 1634

We have a view of the courtyard of Hendrick de Keyser's stock exchange, the first official trading house in Amsterdam. Clusters of men are trading on the courtyard of the building.

Until shortly before, trading had taken place on the street, but from approximately 1600 – and certainly after the establishment of the international trade imperium the Dutch East India Company – the economy grew exponentially, and thus the need for a dedicated trading house grew as well.

Architect Hendrick de Keyser's design was inspired by the stock markets of Antwerp and London. The building is situated near Dam Square, [overarching the Rokin on the Rokin](#). Small vessels could sail beneath it with lowered masts.

The trading floor was surrounded by covered galleries. Here, trading in goods, shares and options took place. Full of admiration, a contemporary wrote: 'At this stock market, people trade all the riches of the world, in a manner of speaking.' Traders identified one another by numbers on the pillars. For example, if you wanted to trade in goods from Riga, you needed to be between pillars 42 and 43.

[160]

NL/EN Verdieping: If you would like to hear more about the establishment of the Dutch East India Company, press A. [13]

Opmerking [NM13]: Into?

Opmerking [V14]: Opnieuw bekeken. 'Of' lijkt hier het meest passende alternatief te zijn.

NL/EN Verdieping Stop 20: Oprichting VOC – 's werelds eerste multinational

The first trade expeditions to Asia around 1600 returned to the port of Amsterdam with shiploads of exotic spices. There was an enormous sense of euphoria and people were left wanting for more. The Dutch East India Company was founded in order to attract capital for further development of this international trade, to counter mutual competition, and to assuage the risks of the dangerous sea voyages. Previously, capital had been generated separately for each individual expedition, but now a multi-annual plan was devised for numerous expeditions. There was a high level of optimism and everyone wanted a piece of the action. In 1602, within a short space of time, over 3.6 million Guilders were invested by no fewer than 1,143 people locally and abroad, small and large shareholders, including seven householders!

The shares were highly tradable; before the first ship had set sail from the port of Amsterdam under the flag of the Dutch East India Company, shares had already been traded onwards. In stock market terms, the Dutch East India Company is considered the first Limited Liability Company in the world.

[151]

Opmerking [GM15]: NL: het smaakt naar meer

Stop 21

Kabinet 49: Grote Economie

Subthema: Overzeese handel

‘Moortje’ / Moorkop, onbekend

Gevelsteen ‘D. Cormandelse Catoenbalen’, uit achtergevel Warmoesstraat 174

A so-called ‘Moor’s Head’ depicting an African, an exotic sight in the Holland of the seventeenth century. In this space, you also see a gable stone relief with a depiction of a foreign lad holding a parasol over the head of a trader. Between the palm trees, they are negotiating for bales of cotton from Coromandel, a coastal region to the south east of India.

On the wall, the Maid of Amsterdam is enthroned in all her glory between the gods. As a result of the income generated through trade, Amsterdam was experiencing exceptional prosperity. There were funds aplenty for construction of the canal belt, the design for which she is holding in her hand.

However, there was also another side to this wealth: from the end of the 16th century to the late 18th century, an estimated 575,000 Africans were shipped by the Dutch to American plantations as slaves. On homeward voyages, the hold was packed full with sugar, coffee and tobacco that had been cultivated on plantations by all those slaves. This so-called triangular voyage between Africa, America and Holland was a profitable trade route.

Slavery was prohibited in Holland, but the Dutch did well internationally with their slave trade and in Suriname in particular, many plantation owners from Amsterdam benefited from slave labour. Apparently, morals were looser away from home.

[223]

NL/EN Verdieping: [If you would like to hear more about the Dutch slave trade, press A.](#) [10]

NL/EN Verdieping stop 21: Slavenhandel

The Dutch West India Company in particular was heavily engaged in the slave trade. Similarly to the Dutch East India Company, which sailed to the east, the WIC was established in 1621 to engage in trade with West Africa and North and South America. Merchandise consisted of sugar, tobacco, wood, ivory, gold and 'Negroes apiece', amongst others.

Slaves could be ordered in the same way as other goods and the criteria to be met for 'saleable slaves' were stipulated contractually. For example, they could not be paralysed, blind, too old or too young. One in five Africans who were transported, died en route. Those that survived the journey were sold on arrival. There, they were often branded again, this time with the initials of the owner or the plantation.

Between 1630 and 1800, the Dutch traded approximately 575,000 Africans as slaves; roughly 6% of all slaves traded from that continent. In addition to the Dutch, the Portuguese, English, French and Spanish also participated in large-scale slave trade.

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Stop 22

Kabinet 50: Stedelijke economie

Subthema: Gilden / Ambachtslieden verenigen zich in groepen

De osteologieles van Dr. Sebastiaen Egbertsz.

Pickenoy, 1619

Dr. Sebastiaen Egbertsz, the older man in the hat, is giving a practical osteology lesson. Five members of the Amsterdam Guild of Surgeons surround him as he points to a rib. The skeleton was probably that of an executed English pirate, whose corpse the doctor had already dissected in 1615.

The Guild's regulations stipulated that osteology lessons be held twice a week, therefore the skeleton must have served frequently in practical teaching lessons.

From the Middle Ages, virtually every craft had its own professional association, called a guild. From bakers to masons, butchers to blacksmiths, peat carriers to surgeons; all were united by their own guild that managed their collective interests. Guilds also reserved the sole right to practice the profession in question.

The Guild of Surgeons was one of the wealthiest of the city, which is why they had themselves immortalised in group portraits more often than average.

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NL/EN Verdieping: [If you would like to hear more about guilds, press A.](#) [10]

In the 17th century, guilds formed an important part of the fabric of society. Aspiring members first became associates, and later masters. Only burghers, official citizens of the city, were allowed to become members. You could 'buy' your way in, or marry the daughter of a burgher. Certain population groups, such as Jews, were prohibited from becoming members, as were women. In 17th-century Amsterdam, as an exception to the rule, Jews were permitted to join the Guild of Surgeons.

Guilds looked after the interests of affiliated members and a large percentage of guild funds were used to support those who needed it. That meant quality assurance for clients and guaranteed work for affiliated members. However, it also meant stagnation. Change was seen as a threat and scrupulously excluded from the profession. This gradually led to some guilds being dissolved in the seventeenth century. Sometimes work was transferred to the country, where the guilds had no influence.

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Stop 23

Grafische wand hoofdpersoon Elisabeth Reael

Kabinet 51 / uitkijk Grote Zaal

De regenten en regentessen van het Oude Mannen- en Vrouwengasthuis

Moeyaert, 1640 (SA 995)

Another wonderful vista over the Great Hall and over the group portrait of the Governors and Lady Governors of the Old Men and Women's Almshouses (positioned lower centre on the wall) and to the far left of the portrait, one of our four Amsterdammers with whom we are already somewhat familiar: Elisabeth Reael.

Elisabeth is sitting rigidly in a chair, wearing a heavily fur-lined cloak. Together with another woman and four men from the moneyed middle classes, they formed the governing body of a care home for the elderly. Foreigners were surprised at the role of women, but in Holland, it was not unusual for women to have a say and to co-govern, although it was usually at institutions that catered predominantly to women, such as widow's almshouses, orphanages or women's institutions.

Board work was unpaid, but noble. Men and women worked together. Men managed the finances, while women were responsible for day-to-day administration. Elisabeth was very suited to her role. It ran in the family: in addition to being a soap manufacturer, her husband was also a governor, as was their son Joris.

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Stop 24

Kabinet 52: Zorg

Subthema: Sociale zorg

De trekking van de loterij van 1592 ten behoeve van het Dolhuis

Gille Coignet, 1593

A striking open air theatre which, at first glance, one does not associate with a lottery for a good cause.

It was not just the sick and the poor who needed care, the mentally ill also needed refuge. Such people were accommodated in the Madhouse. Treatment did not amount to much, but they had food and a roof over their heads at least. The original structure had become too small and the city of Amsterdam had approved a lottery of which the proceeds would be used to fund the extension of the Madhouse. Even in those days, lotteries were extremely popular and exquisite silverware and cash prizes could be won.

After a year-long sale of lots, the draw started on 14 August 1592. We see a crowd in front of the stage, which is illuminated by torches, where the draw is taking place. Two officials are drawing lots from baskets. There is even a fireworks display. The governors of the Madhouse commissioned this painting for posterity.

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Stop 25

Kabinet 53: Zorg

Subthema: voorzieningen in de stad

Inschrijving der behoeftigen / Inschrijving van armen en wezen in het Aalmoezeniershuis

Schilder onbekend, 1626

We see the Almoners Almshouse on the Singel in Amsterdam. At the back, people are drumming together to register themselves. The Almshouse supported the poorest of the city. In the foreground, we can see they are there with good reason; the boy is desperately in need of a new pair of trousers. To the right, a woman is being given a coin for bread.

Six almoners in their black governor's costumes are conducting the registration. One is writing down details, another is in charge of the kitty. As Christians, it was their duty to take care of those less fortunate.

Food was distributed in this building and orphans and foundlings were taken in, as they did not qualify for a place in the municipal orphanage or religious institutions because of their backgrounds.

Beggars had to work at hemp farms, making rope for the shipping industry. Love thy neighbour, says the Bible. However: those unwilling to work will not get to eat.

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Stop 26

Kabinet 54: Zorg

Subthema: voorzieningen in de stad

KA 8566 Collectebus

Onbekend

In the seventeenth century, there were collection boxes everywhere in the city, in shops, inns and churches. The money that was collected went to widows and orphans, people who had become impoverished due to illness or other misfortune, or who were struggling in some other way.

Poverty could befall anyone and therefore, social care was well organised in the 17th century. Churches relied on bequests for a large part of their income: donating money to your fellow man was part of your Christian duty. The city council filled the alms box by means of taxes and fines. In addition, there was the collection box... for impulse donations. Make a contribution: you are participating in a historic tradition*. Proceeds go to a charity in Amsterdam.

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Stop 27

Kabinet 55: Bestuursportret / Afsluiting

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AV MM productie

This is the end of the exhibition. We hope you have found it interesting to learn about the group portraits and the stories behind them.

To finish in a manner befitting, you can have yourself immortalised (as a Dutch governor) in this last hall. Take a seat at the table with your party or with other visitors, because serving on a **board** is something you do together and, according to the tradition of Holland – by mutual consultation.

If this is the end of your visit, we thank you for attending and ask that you return your Podcatcher to the audio desk. **Otherwise**, enjoy the rest of your visit to the museum.

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