The Problem of Images in Northern Europe and its Repercussions in the Netherlands

Underlying this paper is the assumption that no study of the art of the sixteenth century in the Netherlands can be complete without an assessment of the effects on art of both iconoclasm and the Reformation debate about images. While the first problem has much exercised political and social historians, and the second has been studied in some detail by theological historians, their significance for the history of art has been almost entirely overlooked. The present paper, therefore, will be concerned to show that this neglect has not been justified. It will attempt to summarize — in the very briefest fashion — the effects of first the Protestant and then the official Catholic contributions to the discussion about images and their validity; it will suggest that the relationship between such theoretical discussions and iconoclasm itself was a direct and practical one: in assessing the impact of both iconoclastic theory and practice on art, it will propose that the pro-image parties often had as negative an effect on art as the anti-image groups; and it will conclude by raising the problem of the effects on artists themselves of both iconoclasm and censorship — each of which may be said to have its origin to a large extent in the sixteenth century dispute about images.

It would not be very profitable, in the present context, to examine the content of the writings of the Reformation critics of images. Little of it is new. Much of their argument, from Luther and Zwingli at the very beginning of the Bilderdfrage controversy, through Calvin, right down to the Dutch critics of the seventeenth century, derived from earlier discussions of the problem. The early Church Fathers, from Tertullian to St. Augustine, many eighth and ninth century polemicists (especially St. John of Damascus), and even medieval critics of the order of Saints Bernard and Thomas Aquinas, were extensively pillaged for anything that could be turned into an argument against images. Instead of dealing with such material, therefore, one may turn immediately to a question which must occur to anyone concerned with the status of the image in the six-
teenth century: To what extent did the writings of these largely academic theorists affect anyone besides theologians? Was there any practical connection between such writings and the great iconoclastic outbursts of the sixteenth century? Although it is true that economic and social conditions are generally a factor in the motivation for iconoclasm, as they were in the Netherlands in 1566, and that they may aggravate latent hostility towards symbols of the established order (in this context the images of the Catholic church), one should not underestimate the direct influence of the image controversy on the iconoclastic impulse itself. Apart from the more or less active role of the great writers like Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, whose import was both popular and global, one should also consider the vernacular critics who wrote specifically against images. From Ludwig Hatzel and Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt in the early 1520s to men like the anonymous author of the tract *Van den Propheet Baruch* and Johannes Anastasius Veluanus, their polemics were forthright and inflammatory, couched in the strongest vernacular language, and while admittedly not directly accessible to the non-literate public, were clearly written with ordinary people in mind. Their often coarse language and popular tone leaves no doubt that their frequently reprinted pamphlets were not intended for theologians. They all utilize the arguments of the theologians, but in a more extreme and emotional form. There is a great deal of sarcasm: at the veneration of inanimate objects of mere wood and stone, at the investment of large sums of money in images when that money could have been more usefully spent on the poor (the living images of God), and at the helplessness of images of the saints to do any good. These are the ideas which are emphasized by the popular writers, rather than the intricate theological speculations about the meaning of the word *eikon,* for example, or the christological problems raised by giving material circumscribable form to that which was essentially divine. A writer like Veluanus in 1554 (and his work was reprinted in 1591, 1594, 1597, 1605, 1610, and as late as 1652) can conclude a section of his inflammatory work with the following appeal:

"Where the Gospel is accepted and believed, no images are necessary. Where the Gospel is not preached, they are altogether dangerous idols. Where images are idols, they should be thrown out of the temple and burnt. Even if they are not idols, it is right to throw them out and burn them, since they can never help us."

And immediately after iconoclasm broke out in the Netherlands in 1566, that great popular leader Marnix van Sant Aldegonde assured his audience that God was on the side of the iconoclasts – for how should so small a number of men, women and children have been able to cast down so many images, altars, and
church ornaments, in so impossibly short a space of time?\(^2\) The Netherlands iconoclasm, he went on, was nothing less than "the manifest providence of God, who wanted to show how much he regarded with horror and detestation the abominable idolatry".\(^2\) When justifications of this sort were provided, it is not surprising that people were prepared to listen to and to act upon the arguments of the opponents of images.

If anyone doubts that such notions filtered down into the popular imagination, then he should consider the widespread activity of the field preachers\(^3\) in the Netherlands, whose outdoor sermons under armed guard the authorities sought so desperately to prevent in the months leading up to the great outburst of 1566.\(^4\) It was they who, in an already highly unstable situation, put it into the minds of the populace that images were a possible target for their resentments. All over the Netherlands in the autumn of 1566 it was the preachers who led and organized local groups of iconoclasts, or stimulated noblemen to do away with the images on their domains.\(^5\) In Antwerp on the very day of the first great iconoclastic outburst there, the well known preacher Herman Moded preached in the Cathedral.\(^6\) After the singing of some psalms, he began a sermon against idol worship.\(^7\) Although we do not know the contents of most of the hagepreken held in these years, that of Moded on this occasion is well attested, and may be regarded as typical. Aside from the fact that images were contrary to the express commandment of God, he claimed that they had come to be worshipped as if they were gods themselves – even though they were only made of wood and paint.\(^8\) Not the slightest impression was ever made by the standard insistence that the honour paid to an image referred to its prototype.\(^9\) Images, according to such a preacher, represented the efforts of the Devil to exploit the weaker side of man’s sensual nature, and the latter-day idols should consequently be removed not only from the heart, but also from the eyes. The churches should be purified just as the Old Testament kings had purified their temples\(^10\) – a common appeal to precedent.

A few days later, Moded asserted that it was the priests who led the people into temptation; the church had become the Whore of Babylon, and the imagebreaking marked the beginning of its fall.\(^11\)

All these were current notions. They must have been expressed in the course of many sermons, although the criticism of images itself could hardly have been as thoroughly worked out as in some of the theological treatises. But the general idea, the message, was clear – even if the issues involved sometimes remained confused. In the tense and agitated months before iconoclasm, it may well not have occurred to anyone to set upon the paintings, statues, and books, had it not been for the fact that image worship was so insistently connected with pagan practice. The idea was repeated and reinforced so often that for at least some of the iconoclasts iconoclasm must have appeared as a necessary aid to salvation.\(^12\) Although the leading theologians and university trained pastors were often opposed
to the actual breaking of images, especially when it was unauthorized, most preachers actively encouraged it. In the Netherlands the climate had been prepared by those men of various Reformed inclinations who for months before iconoclasm had preached against the cult of images, and when the storm broke, took the lead in directing its course. The same applies to other iconoclastic movements in Europe, ever since Karlstadt's sermons and the disturbances in Wittenberg in 1521. In Zurich, Zwingli preached extensively against images before the official decision to take them down from the churches of that city in 1524. At about the same time, Guillaume Farel moved the people to pull down the images in Neuchatel; iconoclasm in Basel, Geneva, and Berne occurred a few years later. Although English invaders were responsible for some of the first acts of iconoclasm in Scotland, it was only after the return of Knox in 1559 and his active campaign against images that the movement there got under way - there too with the support of prominent nobles. Such examples could be multiplied, and much investigation remains to be done on the French, Scandinavian, and Eastern European phenomena.

It is true that there may have been immediate practical and political reasons for the sacking of churches in the Netherlands from 1566 on, and that the theological basis for the removal of images may sometimes only have been a pretext for the manifestation of opposition. Motley may not have been entirely correct in claiming that the iconoclasm was a war "not against the living, but against graven images", but there seems to be no doubt that the theological criticism of images, disseminated through popular writings and well attended sermons, provided the general populace with a ready outlet for their tensions and grievances. From this point of view alone, the historian of the art of Northern Europe in the sixteenth century would find it profitable to consider the contemporary polemic against images. The iconoclastic phenomenon and its theoretical bases have a great deal more to tell us about the status of the image and responses to it than is generally recognized. Before adducing further evidence in support of this claim, let us turn to the other side of the question, and consider the attitudes of the pro-image party.

At the outset, it should be noticed that Catholic writers only sprang to the defence of images in response to Protestant criticism, and - above all - in response to actual outbreaks of iconoclasm. This is the converse of that connection between image theory and iconoclastic practice that has just been suggested. The Council of Trent itself only passed its decree on images - hurriedly and under pressure at its final session in 1563 - as a result of recent iconoclasm in France. It had rather belatedly realized the need of the Church to formulate an official stand on the question of images. In the Netherlands, there was a veritable spate of works in defence of images in the wake of the 1566 iconoclasm. Older works were translated or reprinted, with prefaces explaining their relevance to that particular
situation,\textsuperscript{44} and both academic works and popular tracts in the vernacular appeared in an extraordinary flurry of pro-image polemic. Aside from the passages which even contemporary chroniclers felt it necessary to insert into their accounts,\textsuperscript{45} one thinks of the works of men like the Louvain theologian Johannes Hessels, the Ghent Augustinian Johannes Garetius, René Benoist (Renatus Benedictinus), Martin Donk, Nicholas Sanders, Alan Cope, the Bishop of Utrecht Schenk von Tautenburg, and Johannes Molanus, all of which were first published or reprinted between 1566 and 1570.\textsuperscript{46} The list may be continued until well into the seventeenth century, but that is not our present concern.\textsuperscript{51} All these writers who sprang to the defence of images were determined to do away with the abuses which characterized men's attitudes towards the ornaments of the church. It was as if everyone felt that by eliminating such abuses, often first pointed out by the critics, the charges of the Protestants against images would automatically fall away, and that images would thereby be made acceptable. This is why almost every Catholic apologist, and the Council of Trent itself, seems to be only a reluctant defender of images.\textsuperscript{48}

The abuses which these writers uncovered were many, but most of them had to do either with the need for historical, preferably scriptural, accuracy; or with the need for decorum; or both. In order to ensure that there were no lapses from the rigour of these newly articulated standards, the Council of Trent, and every Catholic writer after it, advocated the ecclesiastical control of images.\textsuperscript{43} The production of the artist was henceforward to be subject to the strict supervision of the Church. It is for this reason that one is justified in claiming that iconophile parties tended to show very little concern for purely artistic considerations: they were more interested in making images theologically and doctrinally acceptable. The difficulty of that task was never fully overcome. Writers like Ambrosius Catharinius continued to object to excessively luxurious – or lascivious – decoration\textsuperscript{44} in almost the same tone as St. Bernard’s letter to the Abbot William,\textsuperscript{55} and there is no need to discuss here the objections of Gilio da Fabriano and his ilk to the art of Michelangelo and its style.\textsuperscript{56} It is true that in the Netherlands many charges of indecency were levelled against paintings\textsuperscript{57} but the insistence on scriptural accuracy was even more frequent: that is why handbooks such as those of Molanus were produced, intended to cover not only every possible breach of decorum, but also any way in which a subject might deviate from the accepted, scripturally based norm.\textsuperscript{58} Later in the century, Paleotti’s De Imaginibus Sacris amounts to nothing less than an Index of proscribed subjects.\textsuperscript{59} He, we know, exchanged his copy of Molanus with Federico Borromeo.\textsuperscript{60}

All this raises a basic question for art historians: Did such strictures, and the call for ecclesiastical supervision, have any effect on the art of the time? Artists had, of course, long been required to submit their projects to the relevant authorities for prior approval, and the church continued to exercise its control over
iconographic matters well into the seventeenth century. This sort of control, however, seems to have been especially watchful and strict in the Southern Netherlands in the period of the re-establishment of Catholicism which followed the great iconoclastic outbreaks of 1566 and 1581. Something of the way in which contemporary recommendations were put into practice is revealed, for example, by the preparatory work for Marten de Vos’s new altarpiece for the Taverners in Antwerp Cathedral (the earlier one had been broken down in the riots of 1566). Even while work was in progress, de Vos and the other craftsmen engaged in work on the altar were subject to the watchful supervision of the church. On 5 October 1596, the deacons held a meeting with him to discuss his design on paper for a wooden statue of St. Martin. On 16 July of the following year they went to the home of de Vos in order to examine a new painting before it was placed on the altar. Unfortunately we do not know to what extent their comments affected the final state of his painting of The Marriage Feast at Cana, but clearly he was to be allowed no opportunity for the licence which had been displayed in the famous case of Veronese’s painting of a similar subject a few years earlier. There are, in fact, a number of cases in Antwerp where altarpieces were changed after they had been painted, as a result of disquiet over iconographic inaccuracies. In the case of Frans Francken’s Schoolmasters’ altarpiece of 1586, the painter was asked to repaint the whole of the left wing of the triptych (changing it from a Christ in the House of Martha and Mary to a Baptism of St. Augustine) as a result of the sudden discovery that there was no justification for the presence of Martha on the scene.

In Mechlin we have more specific records of how Church Visitors exercised their strictures. The Provincial Synods of that diocese in 1570 and again in 1607 repeated and developed the Tridentine insistence on decorum and control, in terms which are reminiscent of writers like Molanus. A few examples of its practical effects are recorded. In 1604 the Church Visitor to St. Romuald registered his disapproval of Michael Coxcie’s David and Abigail triptych for the altar of the Bakers, and J. le Sayve’s Transfiguration on that of the Tallow-Chandlers in the following way:

The Masters of the Building Office should see that those paintings which are on the altars of the Bakers and of that of Our Saviour (vulgo Vettewriers) and whatever others are similar, are expurgated; and henceforward they should allow no image, statue, or picture of any kind to be brought into the church, unless it has been agreed from a previous Visit that there is nothing indecent in the statue, image, or picture.

In the same year the Visitor demanded the correction of certain nude figures in Jan Snellinck’s Ascension, which he had painted for the altar of the Mercers three years earlier; and as late as 1633 they noted with satisfaction that Coxcie’s
Adoration of the Magi had been decently retouched and had had its nudities eliminated. Although these examples come from the early seventeenth century, and are not very drastic (similar examples could be found from all over Europe at this time), they show the persistence and Nachleben, one might say, of a problem which derives directly from the sixteenth century problem of images.

While alterations of the kind just mentioned are fairly easy to document, the
more complex question of the extent to which stylistic changes resulted from the embattled and controversial status of the image must await further study. For the present, the examples adduced above should suffice to show the inhibiting influence of those who purported to be in favour of images.

It would be wrong, however, to claim that all the writers were wholly insensitive to aesthetic needs and possibilities. Occasionally one finds writers like the Swabian jurist Conradus Brunus who, in his De Imaginibus of 1548, made an attractive and too little used argument in favour of images: he contrasted what happened in Reformed churches, where the congregation left immediately after the sermon, with Catholic churches, where the faithful would linger after the service to contemplate those works of art which grasped their attention. The idea was particularly important in view of the much cited Gregorian concept of paintings as the books of the illiterate, but was unfortunately suspect in the light of the lingering fear — going back to Clement of Alexandria — of sensibilia, and the distraction of the senses. Although few writers gave evidence of having taken note of, or indeed "responded" (in the modern sense) to particular works of art, there were some who did. Amongst them, surprisingly, was Molanus, who everywhere evinced a special interest in the works of art themselves. Often he was able to give concrete examples both of what he approved and of what he censured, rather than providing a discussion in purely abstract terms. It should be possible to find out exactly what he saw and noted. But this sort of sensitivity and awareness was unusual in the Catholic writers, and they did nothing, on the whole, to dilute
the general impression one receives of their mistrust of the visual image. This form of diffidence in what they set out to defend amounted in most instances to antipathy, and in this lies the paradox of the attitude of all the works supposedly written in support of art and images.

Here it is necessary to draw attention to the common factor which links, and underlies, both Protestant and Catholic mistrust of the visual, image: a belief in the primacy of the written word, the text. Now this is perhaps obvious in the case of Protestants, but it is less so in the case of Catholics. When Protestants throw out images or take over a church for their own worship, they whitewash the walls.85 The only decoration allowed or suggested by the polemicists, is the painting of biblical texts.86 When they preserve an altarpiece, they cover it over and paint on it, usually the Ten Commandments, or some other useful text.87 But what, then, of those who could not read? The answer, of course, lies in the importance attached by most Protestants to the sermon, to the preaching of God’s word – which everyone could understand. And with this we must link another of the great shifts in the religious practice of the sixteenth century: the adoption of the vernacular as a means of transmitting the holy and sacred. Sermons, naturally, are preached in the local tongue, but even when it comes to inscribing biblical texts on the walls of churches, or on altarpieces, the vernacular is used – and not merely because the Bible had recently been translated and thereby made more accessible. Such uses of the vernacular testify to a recognition of the religious needs of the lower levels of an increasingly literate public. This realization extended to Catholics as well. The notion that paintings were the books of the illiterate had to be modified as the numbers of the literate grew – even if their literacy only extended to a certain level. In the triptych by Marten de Vos – himself, ironically, a Lutheran – for the altar of the Furriers’ Guild in Antwerp Cathedral in 1574,88 the biblical text held open by the apostle is not only placed in a prominent position, as is common in these years. It is clearly written in the vernacular.89

There is another, more complex level on which the implications of the Gregorian dictum, so emphasized by the Catholic writers, may be examined. As the illiterate gradually learn to read, paintings are made to be, perhaps need to be, more like books. And it is the over-exploited parallel between the visual image and the written word, between painting and poetry,88 that makes so much of the discussion of the pro-image writers seem to be developed according to literary standards. In addition, the parallel may be turned against paintings: in an unhappily expedient use of the old Horatian dictum of ut pictura poesis,89 it was thought that paintings, like books, should be subject to censorship. Restrictive attitudes arose from this parallel with texts. Molanus began his long section on what one was not allowed to paint with a chapter headed “What is forbidden in books should even be forbidden in paintings, which are the books of the illiterate”.90 He went...
even further later on in this chapter, and denounced the Horatian tolerance of artistic licence quite explicitly.  

For after all, the wrong ideas could just as easily be purveyed in paintings as in books.  

And their effects on the illiterate masses had been a leitmotif of all pro-image writing since Gregory the Great. It was his justification of religious art which lay at the basis of this century's constant demeaning of the visual arts in favour of the written word. For both parties, therefore, there was an insistence on the primacy of the written word, the text. For Catholic writers, it even meant that paintings were to follow the text on which they were based as closely as possible. What both sides had in common was a debasement of the autonomy of the visual image, in favour of a renewed emphasis on the prime importance of the written word – and that almost always at the expense of the visual arts.

No discussion of the problem of images in the Netherlands would be complete without an assessment of the painter's position in this period. His response, not only to iconoclasm, but also to the whole question of images, has tended to be overlooked. That question was one which put the very nature of his calling in doubt, at a time when the validity of his production was being questioned and threatened on every side. There are a number of examples which might provide the basis for further discussion of this issue. We still do not know the meaning of Lucas van Leyden's _Adoration of the Golden Calf_, painted at the very beginning of the Reformation. Its significance in terms of the image controversy could hardly have gone unnoticed in Leiden in the early 1520s, and it is unlikely that Lucas himself would have been unaware of its tendentious nature – especially in the light of his employment by the printer Jan Seversz, whose Protestant sympathies are on record.

The same problem is posed by a number of engravings by Maarten van Heemskerck. On the one hand, there are prints in the famous _Clades_ series (such as the _Plunder of the Temple by the Chaldeans, the Destruction of the Temple by Nebuzaradan_ and again by _Titus_ which could be construed as critical allusions to the destruction of Catholic places of worship in the Netherlands; and, on the other hand, what are we to make of the ten plates of the _History of Bel and the Dragon_ and the eight of the _Story of Josiah_? The _Bel and the Dragon_ series was published in the crucial year of 1565 (and twice again); apart from the general criticism of idolatry – a live enough issue in these times – that this series implies, individual prints like the _Destruction of the Temple of Bel_ come very close to representing (in pictorial terms alone) a biblical version of contemporary iconoclasm. This particular engraving shows men attacking a statue with hammers and pick-axes – even a putto urinating on the head of a fallen idol – in a way not dissimilar to those prints which were later to represent the image-breaking in Antwerp Cathedral itself. Even more notable similarities occur in the series of the _Story of Josiah_ (the drawings for which survive in Copenhagen), which
was published in 1569, and can hardly have been conceived without the destruction of three years earlier in mind. Josiah — a precedent commonly cited in support of the removal of contemporary idols — destroys statues with a zeal which would have won the approval of even the most fervent of the critics. Again, there is not only an implicit historical parallel, but also striking pictorial ones, especially in the representation of Josiah destroying the Temples of Ashtaroth and Chemosh. Apart from the occasional scene from the stories of Josiah and, — more frequently — Hezekiah, one does not find either as extensive or as explicitly detailed a treatment of any of these subjects in earlier Bible illustration.

Here a word of caution may be necessary. It is, of course, possible that these images are not to be seen as allusions to the contemporary situation, and that, at best, Heemskerck simply drew on the disastrous events of 1566 for some pictorial ideas. In addition, one would be entitled to ask how else Heemskerck could have depicted the destruction of idols, and one should not exclude the possibility of
the flow of influences from biblical representation to pure reportage, and vice-versa. Nonetheless, it would be evading the issue if we did not ask ourselves questions of the following kind: What sort of comment, if any, do these prints offer on the much-argued relationship between idolatry and image devotion, and how topical are the references to the purification of places of worship? It may be going too far to suggest that either of these writers took a non-Catholic stand on images, but the issues such works raise were all too alive at the time for one to believe that their creators were unaware of their topicality.

Pieter Aertsen is perhaps an even more puzzling figure. One would like to know why, with a few exceptions, he stopped producing conventional religious works in the 1560s, and turned to painting kitchen and market scenes. Apart from the possibility that the religious and moralizing content of the latter group may simply have been hidden, was it because he realized that the iconoclasts were liable to destroy paintings whose religious significance was conventional and
Pieter Aertsen: The Idolatry of Nebuchadnezzar. Oil on panel, 113 x 84 cm. Rotterdam, Museum Boymans van Beuningen. Museum Photo.
obvious? Van Mander tells the not unlikely story that Aertsen almost came to blows with those image-breakers who had destroyed one of his works. Why and for whom did he paint his Idolatry of Nebuchadnezzar, showing in the background the three holy children, who were prepared to die for their opposition to idols, and in the foreground the worship of a massive pagan idol? In the climate of religious ideas I have tried to evoke in this paper, its implications can hardly have gone unnoticed.

A final question may be asked concerning the situation of the Protestant painters, many of whom were prepared to leave their homeland because of the strength of their religious beliefs. What did they feel about a religion amongst whose tenets was a fundamental antipathy towards the sources of their livelihood? Only a sense of uneasiness and diffidence in their calling can have resulted, and these are characteristics which may well be said to be reflected in much of Antwerp painting in the second half of the sixteenth century. For those artists who remained Catholics, there arose a form of ecclesiastical supervision which cannot but have inhibited their work. It is this diffidence, and this inhibition, which, I suggest, was engendered by the whole question of images. That controversy, as we have seen, was at least partially responsible for the great wave of iconoclasm which swept not only the Low Countries, but many other parts of Northern Europe as well. It may be difficult to gauge the extent of the artist's awareness of (and self-consciousness about) the debate on images, but it is probably safe to assume that few of them can have remained unconcerned about the ever present threat of their wo of damage and destruction to their work. All these questions may be reduced to the problem of the status of the image during the period, and it is this problem which needs to be more fully assessed before we reach a deeper understanding of the art of the sixteenth century in the Netherlands.

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NOTES


3 With the possible exception of Warnke, op. cit., and H. Bredekamp, "Autonomie und Askese", in Autonomie der Kunst, Zur Genese und Krisis einer bürgerlichen Kategorie, Frankfurt, 1972, pp. 88–172. See also E. Ullman, "Bildersturm und bil-


6 References to image-worship (along with the associated problem of devotion to the saints) occur too frequently throughout the Institutes to be cited here, but a useful if not wholly adequate selection of material is discussed in L. Wenecius, L'Esthetique du Calvin, Paris, 1937, to supplement M. Grau, Calvin's Stellung zur Kunst, Munich-Würzburg, 1927.

7 One thinks particularly of the passages on painting in works such as D. R. Camphuysen's translation of Johannes Geesterman's Iconolochus in the former's immensely popular Stichtelyke Rymen, Amsterdam, 1627, and Jacob Lydius' De Roomschyn Uylenpieeg, Amsterdam and Dordrecht, 1671. These and other such passages are discussed at greater length in D. Freedberg, Iconoclasm and Painting, pp. 97-104.


9 A translation of relevant passages from John of Damascus is appended, for example, to R. Benoist, Een Katholiek Traject van de Beelden en van het rechte gehuchty dierzelfde, Antwerp, 1567 (on which see note 48 below). The views of all the Byzantine writers are now easily accessible in the excellent collection of sources by C. Czaldy, The Iconography of Byzantium, Englewood Cliffs, 1972. Equally indispensable is E. Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images before Iconoclasm", Dumbarton Oaks Papers, VIII, 1954, pp. 83-150. It should be noted here that even if some of these writers were in favour of images, they could always provide useful references to anti-image views, as well as to the iconoclastic councils of 726/730 and 815, and to earlier anti-image decrees such as that of the Council of Elvira of 306. The latter was used, for example, by Calvin, in Institution de la Religion Chrétienne, ed. F. Baumgartner, Paris, 1888, p. 718. But councils such as these were cited in the arguments both for and against images with a bewildering degree of interchangeability, and the constant assertion of the authority of one council's decrees against those of another was a characteristic feature of much of the pre-Tridentine dispute about images. I pass over the whole question of the Libri Carolini, on which see W. Schrade, "Die Libri Carolini und ihre Stellung zum Bild", Zeitschrift für Kirche und Theologie, LXXIX, 1957, pp. 69-78.


11 This aspect of the Image Debate discussed at greater length in D. Freedberg, "The Structure of Byzantine and European Iconoclasm", in A. Bryer and J. Herrin, eds., Iconoclasm, Birmingham, 1977.

12 Extensively analysed from this point of view by R. van Boomwijk, Het Wonderjaar te Antwerpen, Antwerp, 1970; E. Knutte, Het Honderdjaar, Amsterdam, 1949; and many of the detailed regional studies, some of which are cited in M. Diericks, "Beeldenstorm in de Nederlan
den" (note 1); see also now J. Scheerd, De Beeldenstorm, Bussum, 1974, especially pp. 15-16 and the bibliography to Chapter I, pp. 121-122.


17 Countless examples, in almost every anti-image tract of the Reformation. A random example may be found in the popular work of Cornelis van der Heyden, Corte Instruccyce ende onderwijis, hoe een ingehalene mensche met God ende syne ende naensten, schuldig es, ende behoore te
18 A frequent criticism, which derives from St Bernard, Apologia ad Gulielmum Sancta Theodori Abbatis, P. L., CLXXXII, cols. 915-917: "Fugit ecclesia in parictibus, et in pauperibus egest", etc. Cf. also Luther's comments in Luther's Werke, i. Weimar, 1883, p. 246.

19 Again there are many instances of such taunts. Cf. Velthuysen, op. cit., p. 268, for a particularly acid view of saints' helplessness.


22 Johannes Anastasius Velthuysen, Der Lehren Wechseley, Strasbourg, 1554: details of the various editions given in the introduction by F. Piiper to his publication of this work in Bibliotheca Reformatorica Neerlandica, IV, pp. 117-118.

23 Ibid., p. 289. The passage in full reads: "War dat gepredicht evangelie nyt help, dar sullen gene beelden helpen. 2. War dat evangelien angenomen & gelovet wurt, dar zynt ock gene beelden nodich. 3. War dat evangelie nyt gepredicht wurt, dar zynt siet scadeliche afgoden. 4. War die beelden afgoden zyt, dar sal men se uyten den Tempeln werpen unde verbranden. Synt sie noch geen afgoden, nochtannisch ist nut, dat sie al uyте geworpen und verbrandt werden, want sie kunnen ons nimmer bitter noch geringe elendich schaden oder grote afgoden werden, als menichmaal is beveden in iamerlycke manieren".


25 "Une manifeste providence de Dieu, lequel a voulu montrer combien il a en detestation et horror eu l'obnombrable idolatrie, qui a este comice a l'entour des images au grand deshonneur du nom du Christ", Ibid., p. 100.

26 Their "hedge-services" are documented wherever outbreaks are recorded: for the meaning and etymology of the Dutch word "hagere", see R. Fruin, "Haagere", in Verspreide Geschriften, VIII, The Hague, 1903, pp. 307-313. For a description of these services in an early chronicle, see, for example, F. Haraeus, De Ininitis Tumultuam Belgicorum 1555-1567, Douai, 1587, pp. 221-222: for evidence of the active role of a preacher, see - as one example of many - J. Decavele, "Jan Hendriks en het Calvinisme in Vlaanderen (1560-1564)", Handelingen "Societe d'Emulation" te Brugg, CVI, 1969, pp. 17-32.


29 Herrmann Moded (see below) encouraged the Lord of Culemborg to do this. Cf. O. J. de Jong, De Reformatie in Culemborg, Assen, n. d., pp. 105 ff.

30 On Moded and his sermons, see G. J. Brutel de la Rivière, Het leven van Herrmann Moded, Haarlem, 1879; a lively account of his role on this occasion is given here and in F. G. V., Antwerpse Chronyke, sedert den jaer 1500 tot het jaer 1574, Leiden, 1743, pp. 87-89.

31 The sermon summarized in later histories such as P. Bor, Oorsprong, begin ende vervolg van de Nederlandse Oorlogen, I, Amsterdam, 1679, p. 83; as well as in Moded's own Apologie ofte verantwoordinge Herrmann Modelt, tegens de calvini en ende valtele beschuldigingen gestrest tot lasteringe des H. Evangelie, Maastricht, 1567, reprinted in Brutel de la Rivière, op. cit., pp. 12-70.

32 Ibid., p. 12.

33 The source of this recurrent formula is St Basil, De Spiritu Sancto, 18, 45, in P. G. XXXII, col. 149. It recurs in almost every pro-image writer from St Basil up to and including the Counter-Reformation.

34 H. Moded in Brutel de la Rivière, op. cit., p. 70.

35 Ibid., p. 60. Compare the answer given by one of the iconoclasts at Bril when asked whether justification for the breaking of images could be found in the Gospel; his answer, simply, was that "it was proper so and that the Whore of Babylon must fall", quoted in J. M. P. A. Wils, "De Reformatie en Beeldenstorm in den Briel", Haarlemsche Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis, LV, 1938, p. 410.


37 Lutherans in particular insisted that if images
had to be taken down, they should only be taken down by the appropriate authorities. Interesting light is cast on this attitude by another tract by Marinx, the *Van de Beelden afgebroken in de Nederlandsen in Augustus 1566*, also reprinted in *Philips van Marinx, Godsdienstige en Kerelijke Geschieden* (note 24 above), pp. 1–34. This seems to have been written specifically in order to pour scorn on “the assertion of a Martinist that the casting down of images is permitted to no one other than the highest authority”, *Ibid.*, p. 1.

38 It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the attitude of the various Protestant groups towards images differed greatly from one another. Luther, for example, was perhaps the most tolerant of the Reformed writers, Zwingli allowed the painting of historical scenes outside churches, and Calvin was critical of almost all religious imagery — to say nothing of the host of even more radical writers. See, for a summary of the most important views, the articles by H. F. von Campenhausen cited in notes 2 and 5 above. The various Reformed Creeds and Confessions — most of which contain statements about images and/or idolatry — are usefully collected in E. F. Müller, ed., *Die Bekenntnisschriften der Reformierten Kirche in Authentischen Texten*, Leipzig, 1903.


40 For a detailed discussion of Zwingli’s sermons, and on what happened in Zurich, see C. Garside, *Zwingli and The Arts*, especially pp. 93–105 (on the actual removal of images, see pp. 159–160). Although detailed studies of individual regions have subsequently been made, it is still worth looking at F. Fischer, “Der Bildersturm in der Schweiz und in Basel insbesondere”, *Basler Taschenbuch*, I, 1852, pp. 17–37, for a relatively early attempt to survey iconoclastic activity in one country.


43 Cf. the view of the Councilor of Assonville that “ce n’est plus la religion qui nous fait principalement cette tragédie, mais autre chose non moins dangereuse, car la religion, c’est plus que la masque”, *Correspondance du Cardinal Granvelle*, ed. E. Poullet, I, Brussels, 1877, p. 341.

44 On these, see now G. Scappini, “*La Teologia Cattolica e le Immagini durante il XVI Secolo*, *Storia dell’Arte*, XXI, 1975, pp. 171–213.


46 For example, in the (unpaginated) translator’s foreword to R. Benoist, *Ein Catholic tractat van de Beelden en van het rechte gebruyck dierzelfder*, Antwerp, 1567 (which had first appeared as *Le Traité catholique des images et du vrai usage d’elles*, Paris, 1564).

47 A good example of this sort of rudimentary attempt at a theological justification is inserted in the foreword of P. G. V., *Antwerpse Chronykje sedert den jare 1500 tot hef jafur 1574*, Leiden, 1743.


49 To the preceding note, however, may be added Johannes a Porta, *De Nett der Beeldsniers*, Antwerp, 1591, written in a vigorous and racy vernacular, obviously aimed at a more popular audience. See also note 7 above.
The same may be said of the complex attitude of Erasmus and of the poet Anna Bijns, on whom see E. Panofsky, "Erasmus and the Visual Arts", Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, XXXII, 1969, pp. 200–227, and D. Freedberg, Iconoclasm and Painting (note 4 above), pp. 99–97 respectively.


54. Quod vero omnium est ternerum, hoc tempus, in excellis templi saeculicis offenda pictures tantae lasciviae, ut quidquid naturae turpe occultum turpe nostrum ilbi letit contemptula ad excitandum non devotionem sed cuivis demortuacernis libidinem, Ambrosius Catullus, "Disputation de Cultu et Adoratione Imaginum, included in Encyclopaedia Imperialis in quinque priores capitab libri Genesessi ..., Rome, 1552, col. 144.


57. Apart from D. Freedberg, Johannes Molanus (cited towards the end of note 50 above, see also M. Donk, Een Cont Undertocht (note 50 above), A iv, recto and verso, and Anna Bijns, in Referenzen van Anna Bijns, ed. A. Bogers and W. L. van Halen, Rotterdam, 1875, p. 118. Both Donk's and Anna Bijns's criticism of indecent imagery could well be derived, either directly or indirectly, from Erasmus's comments in the Christiani Matrimonii, Instituto, in Opera Omnia, ed. J. Clericus, V. Leiden, 1766, col. 796 E.


64. Ibid., p. 432.

65. Oil on panel, 268 : 235 cm., now hanging in the south transept of Antwerp Cathedral.

66. Ibid., p. 102.

67. The misunderstanding arose from the fact that the Schoolmasters had previously shared an altar with the Guild of Pastrycooks, of whom St Martha - naturally enough - was the patron saint. For an account of the events leading up to these changes, see F. Prims, "Alaarsstudien" (note 63 above), pp. 400–426, and F. J. van den Branden, Geschiedenis der Antwerpse Schilderschool, I, Antwerp, 1883, pp. 345–346, with references to the appropriate archival sources. The whole triptych (oil on panel, 250 : 220/97 cm.) now hangs in the north transept of Antwerp Cathedral.

68. The decrees of these synods on painting are published in P. F. X. de Ram, Symodicon Beligicum, I, Mechlin, 1828, pp. 87 and 107.

69. Especially in their emphasis on decency and their discouragement of the pagan and pornographic. Freedberg, Iconoclasm and Painting (note 4 above), p. 165, discusses their relationship with the earlier writers in greater detail.


71. Mechlin, St Romuald, oil on panel, dimensions unknown.


73. Ibid., p. 234.

74. C. Brunus (recte Braun), De Imaginibus Liber Unus, Mainz, 1548.

75. H. Jedin, "Tricent Dekret" (note 47 above), pp. 155–156.


78 On this aspect of Molaus, see D. Freedberg, "Johannes Molaus" (cited towards the end of note 30 above), p. 231, and notes 13-15.


80 Suggested, for example, by Veluanus, op. cit., p. 28.

81 An illustration in J. Philips, op. cit., Fig. 29a.; for a good Netherlandish example (referring to the overpainting of a work by Hugo van der Goes), see Carel van Mander, Het Schilderboek, Haarlem, 1604, fol. 236.

82 The Incrédulity of St Thomas, oil on panel, 207 : 185 cm. (central panel), Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, No. 77.

83 The book is opened at Isaiah 33, 10-11. Of course, vernacular texts such as these do occur in other pictorial representations—in manuscript and book illustration, and in paintings for Protestant patrons, or ones not intended for altarpieces (cf. Marten de Vos's own painting for the Panhuijzen family now in The Hague, No. 249).


85 For the entire passage, see Horace, Ars Poetica, 365-366.

86 Quod in libris prohibetur, prohibendum etiam esse in picturis, quae sunt idolatorum libri", Molaus, De Historia (note 54 above), Book II, Chapter 2, p. 35.

87 "Neque ad sacras imagines extendendum est quod gentilis Poeta dixit: Pictoribus atque Poetis/ Quidlibet audendi semper fuit aquae potestas."

88 Ibid., p. 36 (quoting Horace, Ars Poetica, 9-10).

89 Barocchi, op. cit., p. 578, has a useful note on the use of this Horatian formula by Durandus, Catharina, Borghini, and Brunus.

80 Already in 1557, Dolce (writing in connection with Michelangelo's Last Judgment) had suggested that improper pictures, far more than improper books, should be placed on the Index. Cf. R. W. Lee, op. cit., p. 38.

81 In the letter to Scenius cited in note 76 above.

82 Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, oil on panel, 93 : 67 cm (central panel), 91 : 30 (shutters).


85 Hollstein, VII, p. 242, 202-223, Nos. 17, 18, 19, 22.


89 For example, as in the print by E. Hogenberg, in M. Aijsing, De Leone Belgico, Cologne, 1588. This is not, however, a contemporaneous depiction of the event, and the interesting possibility that it may have been influenced by Heemskerck's engravings should not be excluded.


91 As in Marinis, Maders, Veluanus, and many others.

92 Hollstein, p. 247, 240-247, No. 5; Tegning af Maerten van Heemskerck, No. 106. There are further prints showing the destruction of pagan images (and the slaughter of pagan priests) in the same vivid way: The Destruction of the House of Bael in this series, and in the series of The History of Athalith (Hollstein, p. 246, 414-417, No. 1; Tegning af Maerten van Heemskerck, No. 104. See also note 105 below.


94 On these, see especially P. K. F. Moxey, op. cit., and J. A. Emmens, op. cit.

95 Well discussed in J. A. Emmens, op. cit., pp. 94-98.

96 Van Mander, fol. 244v.

97 Oil on Panel, 113 : 84 cm, Rotterdam.
Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, No. 1907.
105 Daniel 3, 1–25. On the possible significance of this work, see the forthcoming article by P. K. F. Moxey, "Reflections on some unusual subjects in the work of Pieter Aertsen", Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen, XVIII, 1976. One might compare the similar depiction of the same subject in Maarten van Heemskerck, in The History of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Hollstein, p. 243, Nos. 264–267, No. 1).
106 There is a substantial literature on the various emigré groups; they are surveyed in H. Devogelaere, De Zuidnederlandsche Schilders in het Buitenland van 1450–1600, Antwerp, 1944, and discussed at greater length in D. Freedberg, Iconoclasm and Painting (note 4 above), pp. 175–186, 194–197.
107 The literature on painting in Antwerp after the death of Bruegel remains comparatively sparse, but see G. Faggin, La Pittura ad Antwerp nel Cinquecento, Florence, 1968, for a selective survey.