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Antiquairs

Catalogue 2014

Introduction

Dutch 17th century silversmithing is characterized by an explosion of inventiveness. In our new catalogue we present several examples of how this was applied on silver and mother-of-pearl, with virtuosity and artistry.

Flowers so highly embossed as to be almost palpable, mostly springflowers such as tulips and carnations, cover the rim of an outstanding '*ploischotel*' made by Lucas Draeff in 1657.

An important place in the great 17th century collections were works of art in vegetable materials such as ivory, tortoise or mother-of-pearl. We have managed to acquire two plaques of the well known mother-of-pearl worker Cornelis Bellekin one of which comes from the famous collection of Albertus Seba and is depicted in his '*Thesaurus*'.

Typical Dutch is the art of engraving in high quality on every day, useful objects such as brandy bowls, beakers and dishes. The engravings on the brandy bowl by Jan Sjoerds and beaker by Jan Willemsen Van Velsen are unparalleled. The silver '*Allegory of the trade and commerce*' signed by P. Evers is an example of how you can use an engraving as a painting.

We hope you will enjoy the result of our year-long treasure hunt and we will be happy to see you in our booth 233 at TEFAF Maastricht.

John and Dick Endlich
Haarlem, February 2014

Brandy bowl

Bolsward, 1639
Jan Sjoerds

Height: 8.9 cm

Width: 25 cm

343 gram



A plain oval silver brandy bowl on a domed foot cast with cherubs' heads. The vaulted bowl is ornamented with strapwork and bunches of fruit. The bowl's cast handles are in the shape of double-headed eagles.

This Bolsward brandy bowl was made by the silversmith, Jan Sjoerds, who based its engraving on the renowned prints made for silversmiths by his Groningen colleague, Adriaen Muntinck (active from 1586 until ca. 1646).

In Frisia, the brandy bowl was placed on the table on special occasions. When a couple had become engaged to be married, the brandy bowl was filled with brandy and raisins and everyone took three spoonfuls from the mixture to wish the couple good luck. When a child was born, the brandy bowl was also passed from hand to hand in order to wish the young mother good luck.

This brandy bowl features unusual handles in the shape of double-headed eagles, the coat-of-arms of Bolsward, ornamented with two coat-of-arms. Frisian family arms are often difficult to identify. Most Frisians did not have their arms registered, resulting in a corresponding loss of knowledge concerning them. As both a masculine coat-of-arms and a feminine coat-of-arms was engraved in the handles, it can be concluded that the bowl was made on the occasion of an engagement in Bolsward.

Jan Sjoerds married twice. In 1607, he was married to Imck Jansdr., and 1646, following Imck's death, to the widow of Tettie Fongers Inthiema. Sjoerds is mentioned in the Bolsward guild register from 1608 up to 1649. In 1655 he was a Bolsward councillor.

Associated literature:

J.W. Frederiks, *Dutch Silver*, vol. III, Den Haag 1960, no. 214, plate 176.



A fire-gilt 'Ploischotel'

Amsterdam, 1657
Lucas Draeff

Ø 46.5 cm, 870 gram



An octafoil shaped, embossed, silver-gilt 'ploischotel'. The rim, fluted at intervals, is chased with flowers and foliage divided by swirling auricular ornaments. In the centre a repoussé plaque depicting the story of Susanna and the Elders which is based on a plaqueette made by Paulus van Vianen in 1612.

The story of Susanna and the Elders is an apocryphal addition to the biblical Book of Daniel. According to the biblical story, Susanna took a bath in the privacy of her garden, without realising that two men, referred to as 'the Elders,' were spying on her. The Elders tried to seduce Susanna, but she resisted them. In revenge, the Elders accused Susanna of illicit behaviour, for which she could have been given a death sentence. Suspecting that something suspicious was going on, the prophet Daniel decided to interrogate the two men separately. The inconsistencies in their stories provided proof of Susanna's innocence. Her waylayers were executed.

The story of Susanna and the Elders was a subject in wide general use in the visual arts in Holland. Painters as Rembrandt and his apprentices regularly employed Susanna and the Elders as a subject. It occurs particularly frequently in those works which were disseminated by means of engravings and etchings.

'Ploischotels', nearly all of which date from the same period, were primarily used for fruit. A simpler plooi-schotel appears in the Lottery Print of Durgerdam, dating from 1689. Here, it is referred to as a 'fruytschaal' or fruit bowl. 'Ploischotels' displaying fruit appear in genre paintings from the 1660s by Frans van Mieris the Elder and Gabriël Metsu.



Lucas Draeff, a native of Westphalia, was born in 1615. In 1642 he became a master of the Amsterdam silversmiths' guild. He married three times. First he married Geertruyd ter Meisen, widow of Hans Gerrits Schots. She already had a daughter, Margaretha Schots who married the well known silversmith and medallist Juriaen Pool. The few extant works of Draeff show that he was an eminent craftsman whose chasing reveals as high a degree of skill as his engraving. He excelled in the treatment of flowers.

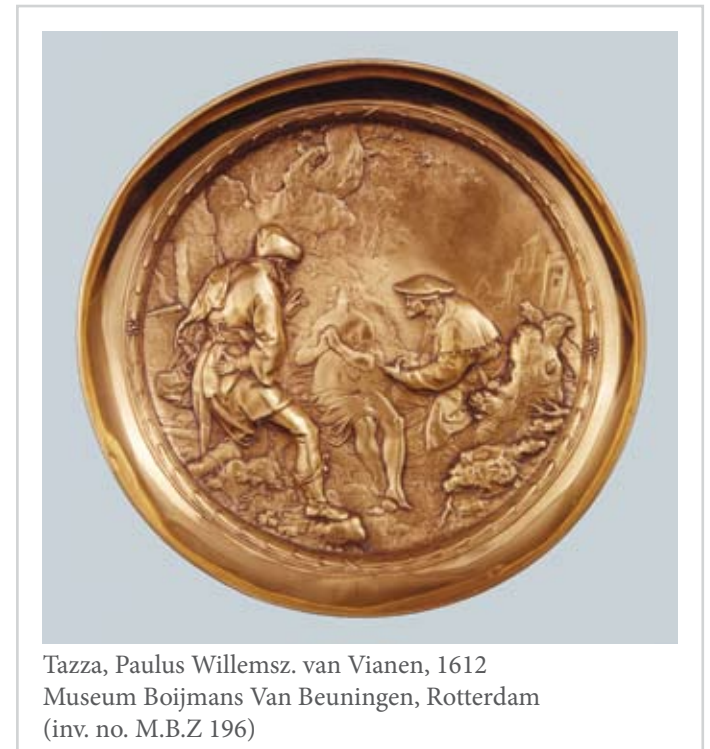
This dish shows eight different flowers. All are executed in the most delicate manner. The combination of flowers with supple scrolls and lobes makes it one of the richest examples of Dutch baroque art in silver. German influences as well as those of Van Vianen and Lutma are evident.

It is thus with good reason that this *'plooischotel'* is regularly mentioned in the literature as an extremely early and exuberant example of silver in the so-called Dutch flower style, which prevailed particularly in the 70s and 80s of the 17th century. Even in respect of English silver, this dish is referred to as the continental prototype.

Baroque fire-gilt silver dishes from The Netherlands are extremely rare. A few examples are now in the collection of the Armoury of the Kremlin Museum in Moscow. They were brought to the Tsar as gifts by the Dutch embassies of 1648, 1665 and 1676.

The scene on the plaquette depicting Susanna and the Elders was based on a plaquette by the renowned silversmith, Paulus van Vianen, dating from 1612, today preserved in the collection of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. In view of the fact that the plaquette was in the possession of King Charles I of England as early as 1640, it is improbable that Draeff ever saw the original.

Various lead and bronze casts were also made from Van Vianen's works. These were not generally made with collectors in mind, but, rather, were primarily intended to serve as models for silversmiths, who kept them in their studios. Numerous paintings and other depictions of silversmiths' studios show such plaques hanging on the wall. It can be stated with certainty that Lucas Draeff used such a cast.



Tazza, Paulus Willemsz. van Vianen, 1612
Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam
(inv. no. M.B.Z 196)

Provenance:

Collection J.W. Frederiks, The Hague, before 1952

Thence by descent until 1999

Private collection, The Netherlands

Literature:

J.W. Frederiks, *Dutch Silver*, vol I, Den Haag 1952, no. 187 illustrated.

Nederlands Zilver / Dutch Silver 1580-1830, exhibition catalogue Amsterdam, Toledo, Boston, 1979-1980, cat.no. 66, p. 136, 137 illustrated.

I.Weber, *Deutsche, Niederländische und Französische Renaissanceplaketten*, München 1975, no. 942.

J. ter Molen, 'De Susanna-schaal van Paulus van Vianen nader belicht', in: *Boymans Bijdragen, opstellen voor J. Ebbinge Wubben*, Rotterdam 1978, p.72, ill. 8.

Henry Hawley, 'An English Silver Dish' in: *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, vol. 71, no. 10, (Dec. 1984), pp. 334-340.

J. ter Molen, 'De loterijprent van Durgerdam', in: *Antiek 27* (1992-1993) pp. 112-132, p. 115.

J. Ter Molen, *Zilver catalogus van de voorwerpen van edelmetaal in de collectie van het museum Boymans-Van Beuningen*, Rotterdam 1994, p. 64, 65.

J. Ter Molen, *Van Vianen een Utrechtse familie van zilversmeden met een internationale faam*, two volumes, 1984, volume I, p. 58, Volume II, p. 37, no. 117.

Exhibition:

Nederlands Zilver / Dutch Silver 1580-1830, Amsterdam, Toledo, Boston, 1979-1980.



Beaker

Haarlem, 1676

Attributed to Jan Willemsen van Velsen

Height 18.5 cm, Ø 11.8 cm

333 gram



A silver trumpet-shaped beaker on a moulded footrim. The upper part is engraved with strapwork, pending fruit, scrolling foliage and three oval medallions containing symbols for faith, hope and love. Along the underside, a coat of arms is engraved, featuring an erect lion in a crest beside a chaise carrying four persons drawn by two horses, as well as a small house, trees and a cow being milked by a woman.

The engraved scene is of particularly high quality; aside from the peculiarity and rarity of such a scene, such thoroughness of execution is also highly unusual. Engraved in the inner bottom are a crossbow and the text: “Jan Willemsen Van Velsen Eygen Merck 1676 Arejaentie Aris van Warmenhooven”.

Silversmiths did not marry before they had been admitted to the guild. The text engraved in the inner bottom of the beaker could be construed to mean that a silversmith named Van Velsen produced the beaker for his own marriage to Arejaentie van Warmenhooven in 1676. It could also be inferred from the text that Jan Willemsen Van Velsen employed the crossbow as his own mark.





An engraved calender notebook

German, circa 1680

5.0 cm x 9.4 cm

63 gram

A rectangular notebook containing three ivory leaves. The front side is engraved with flowers and foliate decoration, mounted with rotating disc titled 'Calendarium Pertpetuum' showing the days of the week and the zodiac signs. The other side is also engraved with flowers and foliate decoration, mounted with a rotating disc showing the lengths of days and nights and the hours of the sun's rising and setting . On the inside of the notebook a set of tables is engraved. The ivory leaves would have been covered with thin layers of wax which could be inscribed with a pointed stylus.

The *Calendarium Naturale Magicum Perpetuum* is a renaissance grimoire and esoteric print of calendar engravings. Based on this calendar a calculation of the day of the week for a given date in the future is possible. This was made easier after the introduction of the Gregorian calendar in 1582.





CALENDARUM PERPETUUM

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Sonntag -	Montag -	Dienstag -	Mittwoch -	Donnerstag -	Freitag -	Sambstag -				

A mother-of-pearl plaquette

Dutch, circa 1670
Attributed to Cornelis Bellekin
(circa 1625 – before 1711)

Ø 11.7 cm



This double plaque is carved and engraved on both sides. One side shows a bathing Venus, accompanied by Amor with a bow and arrows. In the background are nymphs and putti. A classically inspired palace after Italian models completes the picture. On the other side, gods in heaven can be discerned in the foreground. Venus is displayed with a burning heart in her hand. In the background, Mars is seen with a shield. A nymph is seated on a horn of plenty, out of which a putto snacks on grapes. Water pours from a ewer into a tazza held by a putto. Based on stylistic grounds and technical aspects, this plaquette is attributed to Cornelis Bellekin.

Bellekin is presumed to have been a son of Jean Bellequin (or Belkin), a mother-of-pearl craftsman born between 1596 and 1597 and subsequently active in Amsterdam. Between 1619 and 1625, Jean Bellequin married three times. His last marriage was to Annetje Cornelis, who, in view of her name, is, of his three wives, the one most likely to have been the mother of Cornelis. Among Jean's several children were the painter, Claes Bellekin (a child by his first marriage) and the mother-of-pearl engraver, Joannes Belkien (a son of Annetje), about whom no further details are known. No archival documents have been found confirming the birth of Cornelis by Jean Bellequin's marriage to Annetje.

Hailing from Metz, and an armourer by trade, Jean Bellequin established himself in Amsterdam in 1608. His switch to the occupation of mother-of-pearl craftsman was not as great a step as it may seem at first: one need only think of the firearms and guns of the time with their splendidly crafted mother-of-pearl inlays.

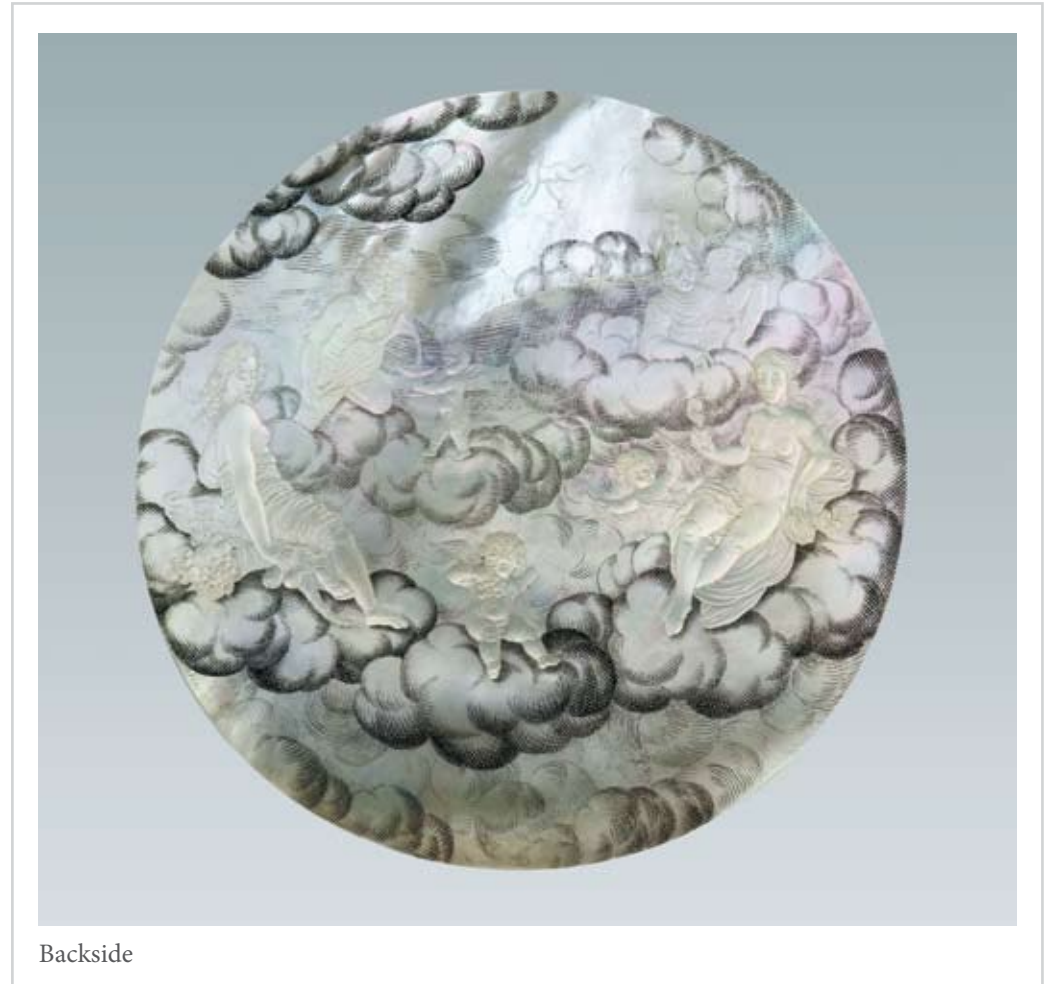


Little is known about the life of Cornelis Bellekin, except for the fact that he attained great fame. On 2 February 1696, he placed a newspaper advertisement that is nevertheless highly revealing: *“Cornelis Bellekin, artist, has invented an Instrument enabling him to bore into diamonds, pearls, agates &c. in as thorough a manner as has ever been practiced; he improves, amongst other things, all pearls exhibiting yellow or impure films or large holes; he makes them purer and reduces their cavities, polishes all manner of sea denizen and red coral, and also modifies delicate East Indian rarities and cabinets of all types, and carves, amongst other things, likenesses on mother-of-pearl, amber and red coral and all manner of histories on various materials, on exterior as well as interior surfaces; he resides in the Koestraat, at the home of the widow Witteling, at Amsterdam”*.

As reflected in the advertisement’s opening words, Bellekin justifiably regarded himself as an artist. This shell bearing carved and engraved scene on both sides represents one of Bellekin’s greatest technical achievements.

Shells carved and engraved on both sides are a rarity. The only example mentioned in 18th century auction catalogues is as follows: Lot 90 at the auction of 23 March 1746 at F. de Haas Rotterdam: *“an exceptionally beautiful double-valved mother-of-pearl shell, featuring astonishingly handsome carvings, on both sides, by the renowned Belkin”*.

The collection in question, which consisted of coins, medallions and shells, included a few other shells with carvings by Bellekin. The intensity of the 18th century shell collectors’ mania led to high prices being paid at auctions for Bellekin shells, which almost always were given separate descriptions.



Backside

In his account of his visit to Amsterdam in 1711, Zacharias von Uffenbach says about Bellekin in connection with his visit to a certain Luther: *“In addition, he showed us many drawers containing all manner of shells, including many beautiful nautili and mother-of-pearl shells carved by C. Bellekin, who was the city’s best carver of mother of pearl. They were worked cleanly and beautifully...”*.

Uffenbach refers to Bellekin by name, indicating that he was famous and also makes it clear through his remarks that Cornelis Bellekin is deceased. In addition to von Uffenbach’s remarks, numerous words of praise for Bellekin are to be found in many 18th century auction catalogues. For example, in that of Petronella Oortmans La Court (21 October 1707), his work is celebrated as follows: *“Below, various mother-of-pearl conches and shells, all of which were carved with the greatest of artistry by the renowned Bellekin”*.

The auction catalogue featuring the rich collection of Simon Schijnvoet (26 August 1744) is preceded by an announcement that *“this highly reputed and extremely exceptional collection of the rarest of conches, shells and coral etc. of every possible kind, including many which are no longer known, a number of which were carved with great artistry by Belkin..., shall not be auctioned, but shall be for sale directly”*, this in order to keep the collection intact – a vain ambition, as it turned out. The collection was described and commended in a separate catalogue. It is certain that Schijnvoet possessed at least eleven shells of Bellekin’s, encompassing a range of subjects. When Arnoud Leers’ shell collection was auctioned in 1767, the title page contained the following announcement: *“Catalogue systematique d’un magnifique cabinet de très belles coquillages et crustacés parmi lesquelles il y en a dextrêmement rares, & d’autres gravées & sculptées avec art par Belckin...”* (Systematic catalogue of a magnificent collection, containing exquisite shells and crustaceans, including some extreme rarities, as well as others artistically engraved & sculpted by Belckin, see illustration, page 20).

Bellekin’s mythological scenes form the highpoint of his oeuvre. He clearly had a great affinity for the world of gods, demigods, wood nymphs and satyrs, as attested to by various examples which have found their way into museum collections. Unfortunately, though, most of them feature constellations of mythological creatures that defy pinning down, making identification with the help of 18th century auction catalogues extremely difficult, as then as well, their subjects could not be determined, such that their descriptions frequently state nothing more than mythological scene.

Associated literature:

Zacharias von Uffenbach, *‘Merkwürdige Reisen durch Niedersachsen, Holland und Engelland’*, 1754, Dritter Theil.

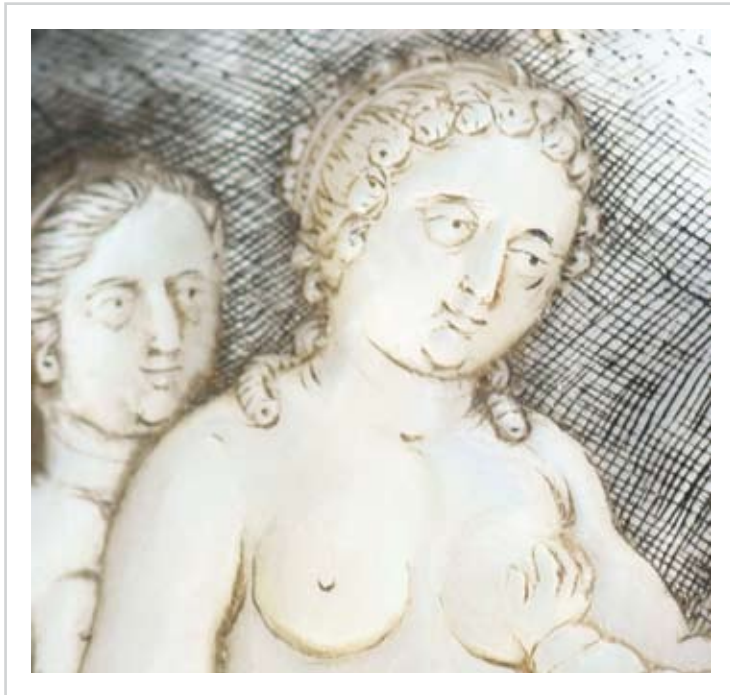
H.W. van Seters, ‘Oud-Nederlandse Parelmoerkunst, Het werk van leden der Familie Belquin, parelmoergraveurs en schilders in de 17e eeuw,’ in: *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 9,(1958), pp. 173–237.

*A mother-of-pearl plaquette from the
Seba collection*

Venus with nymph and two cupids by a waterfall

Cornelis Bellekin (circa 1625 – before 1711)

8.4 x 7.1 cm



In a pearl oyster shell, Venus, a nymph and two putti are carved in relief. The background is comprised of an engraved woodland scene with a waterfall.

The work bears the signature, *c. bellekin F.* Its maker, Cornelis Bellekin, probably descended from a family of mother-of-pearl craftsmen. Precious little is known about him, but it is generally assumed that he was born around 1625 in Amsterdam and died there after 1697 but before 1711.

The renowned Amsterdam apothecary, Albertus Seba (1665–1734), was the first known owner of this shell. Despite the great size of his famous collection of Bellekin shells, it formed only a small part of his total collection. Seba, the son of an East Frisian farmer, underwent his master's examination in Amsterdam in 1697 and was, in addition to being an apothecary, a wholesale dealer in medicines. He lived in Haarlemmerstraat in a large house known as 'De Duitse Apotheek,' or The German Apothecary's Shop.



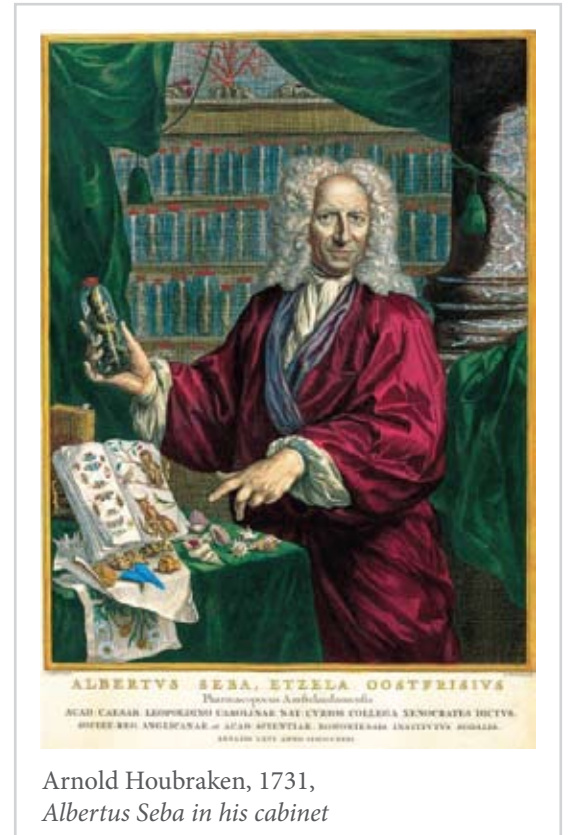


Seba based his formulae on animal products and exotic plants. But his interests did not end there. From seafarers, he purchased a great variety of exotica. In the course of the first decade of the 18th century, his collection of birds, lizards and snakes in ethyl alcohol, and that of insects, butterflies and seashells attained immense proportions. In 1711, Seba became a purveyor to Czar Peter the Great. In 1716, he sold his collection to the Czar for the, at that time, colossal sum of 15,000 guilders. With Seba's help, the Czar a year later also purchased the collection of preserved animals of the famed anatomist, zoologist and botanist, Frederick Ruysch. A member of the Royal Society, Seba was famed for his wide-ranging knowledge.



Having sold his great collection, Seba began on a new one, and from 1728 started cataloguing it, in the so-called 'Thesaurus'. Part I of the 'Thesaurus' appeared in 1734, Part II, in the following year, also the year of its author's death. Shortly before Seba's death, the Swedish botanist and zoologist, Carl Linnaeus, paid a visit to his collection. The two final volumes of the 'Thesaurus' were published posthumously, in 1759 and 1765. Seba's collection ultimately became dispersed when it came under the auctioneer's hammer at Amsterdam in 1752.

At the auction, Bellekin's shells brought high prices. One of the biggest purchasers was Arnoud Leers, lord of Ameide, Rotterdam alderman and director of trade with the Levant. Leers' collection was comprised, among other things, of paintings, a cabinet of curiosities and a seashell collection. The latter consisted of purchases made at various auctions, including at that of Seba's collection. Leers was proud of his Bellekin shells, which are extensively described in his catalogue. All objects from the Seba Collection are given prominent mention, and for many of them, the corresponding volume and page in the 'Thesaurus' is indicated.



The Bellekin shells are named and described piece by piece in a separate portion of the catalogue:

“Omitted conches and duplicate shells / Unusual bas-relief [shells] carved and engraved on the inside by the renowned artist C Pelckin [!] and other engravers.” The shell in question is described under Lot 1424, as follows: *“An exceptionally handsome oval, like the one on the recto and bearing a bas-relief on a mother-of-pearl shell representing Venus with her nymphs and two cupids on a rock by a river, &c., by the same artist (the aforementioned C. Belckin), S. 85.11 (Seba, ‘Thesaurus,’ Part III, p. 85, No. 11).”* Lot 1425 states: *“Like the one on the recto, one equally attractive, with playing wood nymphs, a flute-playing Satyr and three dancing cupids, &c., being a piece, by the same artist, S. 85.9”.*

On 13 November 2001, the latter shell, also from the Seba Collection, and represented opposite ours in the ‘*Thesaurus*,’ was purchased at an auction at Christie’s Amsterdam for € 88,125.00 by the Amsterdam Museum, with help from the Rembrandt Society / Vereniging Rembrandt, in commemoration of the 75th year since its founding.

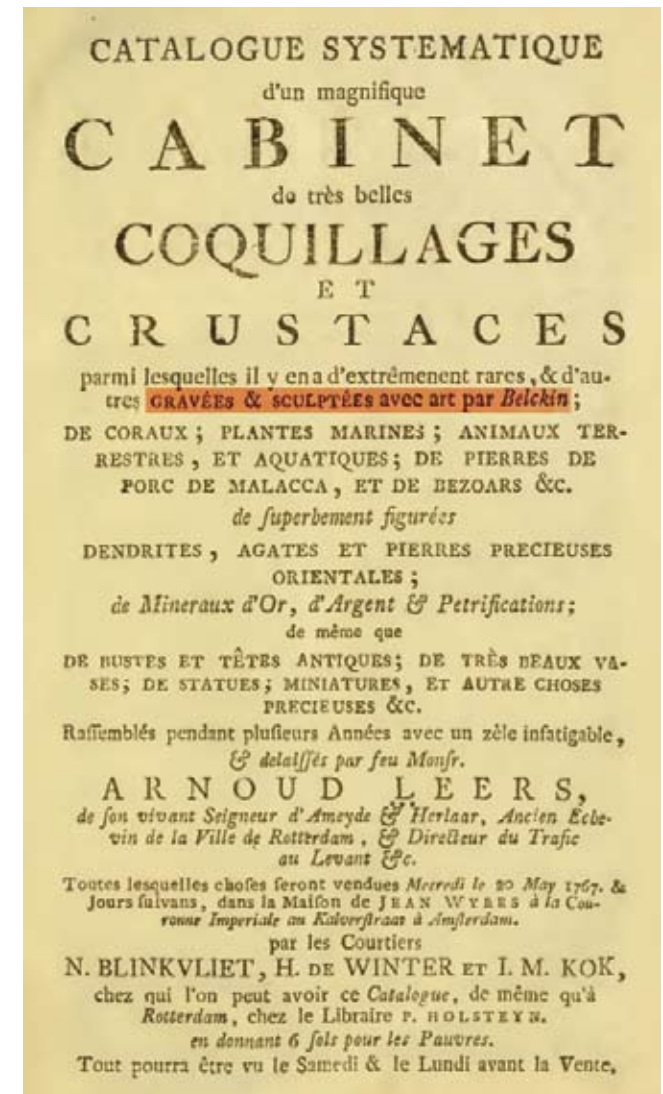


Detail of plate 58 of the ‘*Thesaurus*’

At the start of the 18th century, Dutch naturalia collections attained great importance as a source of knowledge for naturalists. Seba played a particularly significant role with regard to the research carried out by naturalists. This explains why Linnaeus visited him during his stay in Amsterdam, as well as why Seba was inducted into the august company of the Royal Academy.

The impulse to collect did not disappear during the 18th century. On the contrary, it became even more widespread. Visitors to The Netherlands regarded it as one of that nation's most well-known pastimes, and even translated the term '*liefhebber*', in English, devotee, in their reports about such collectors.

The great collectors typically commissioned portraits of themselves together with their collections. Such portraits, e.g., Houbraken's engraved portrait of Seba and Schouman's sketch of Arnoud Leers, served to represent the knowledge, societal standing, acquired wealth and self-confidence of their subjects. The auction catalogues of such collections also contributed to the prominence of the collectors. Due to the fame attained by the collection of Arnoud Leers and the great importance which came to be attributed to it, its auction catalogue was ultimately reprinted and published as a book. As a result, as with Seba's collection by means of his '*Thesaurus*', the collection, though dispersed through sale, remained intact – albeit only in book form.



Arnoud Leers' auction catalogue (1767)

Provenance:

Albertus Seba (1665–1736); his sale, 1752

Arnoud Leers (1698 –1766); his sale at Amsterdam on 14 May 1767 and the following days

Possibly, the collection of Bernardus Nieuhoff Harderwijk; his auction at Amsterdam on 28 May 1832

Literature:

Thesaurus: Albertus Seba, Lucopletissimi rerum naturalium thesauri accurate descriptio, et iconibus artificiosissimis expressio, per univ. physices historiam. extoto terrarum orbe collegit, digessit, descripsit. A.S., four volumes, volume III, Amsterdam, 1758, pl. 85, no.11, ill.

Albertus Seba, auction catalogue, *Catalogus van de uitmuntende cabinetten, met allerly soorten van ongemeene schoone gepolyste hoorns, dublet-schelpen/... nagelaten door wylen den heere Albertus Seba*, Amsterdam, 1752.

Arnoud Leers' auction catalogue, *Catalogue systematique d'un magnifique cabinet de très belles coquillages...*, Friedrich Christian Meuschen, Amsterdam, 1767, p. 154, no.1424.

H.W. van Seters, 'Oud-Nederlandse Parelmoerkunst, Het werk van leden der Familie Belquin, parelmoergraveurs en schilders in de 17e eeuw,' in: *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 9,(1958), pp. 173–237, p. 220.



Mother-of-pearl plaquette, Cornelis Bellekin
Amsterdam Museum, aquired with support from
the Vereniging Rembrandt, inv.no. KA 20835

Potpourri

Zutphen, 1758
Peter Schemkes

Height 8.2 cm
113 gram



A circular silver potpourri on a domed foot. The plain, chased bowl has a wavy rim with six open-work lily-shaped pelmets in Louis XIV style. The bulging lid is finely open-worked with floral rosettes and leaves and is further ornamented with smooth, narrow strips which ultimately form a kind of shell motif. The lid is crowned by a plain baluster-shaped finial.

Although already in use in the 17th century, potpourris first attained true currency throughout Western Europe in the 18th century. A mixture of dried flower petals, sometimes supplemented with herbs, cinnamon and salt in such a container was used to spread a pleasant fragrance in an interior. For the most part, vases or bowls executed in, e.g., Meissen or Sèvres porcelain, were employed for such purposes. In The Netherlands, such bowls were made in Amstel and Loosdrecht porcelain.

It is thus remarkable that, in The Netherlands, potpourris were already being made in silver early on. Even more remarkable is the fact that the largest part of these 'noble' potpourris attained great popularity within a relatively short period of time and were made almost exclusively by silversmiths in the provincial town of Zutphen or the surrounding area. Some thirty examples are known in silver. Twenty of these originated in Zutphen or such nearby towns as Deventer, Doesburg or Arnhem.

Literature:

Glans langs de IJssel, exhibition catalogue, Zwolle, 1999, p. 50.

K.F. Kerrebijn, J.P. van Rijen, 'Zilveren Potpourri's Een overzicht van Nederlandse exemplaren', in: *De Stavelij*, 2002, pp. 25-37, illustrated on the frontispice and p.28, no. 4.

Exhibition:

Glans langs de IJssel. Zilver uit Zutphen, Deventer, Zwolle en Kampen, Municipal Museum Zutphen, 1999.



Tea chest

Mother of pearl, with silver tea caddies

Rotterdam, 1768
Rudolph Sondag

21.2 x 25.5 x 15 cm



A mother-of-pearl veneered tea chest, decorated with carved motifs of birds on flowering sprigs, leafy vines and flowers. The lock plate is in the shape of a lotus blossom. With a silver hinge and four silver feet. Contained in the chest are three silver caddies with exquisite rococo lids.

The precious mother of pearl of this exceptionally handsome tea chest was crafted in Canton. At the time, China was closed to the outside world. Trade with China was carried on via Canton, where the Portuguese, English (from 1715), Dutch (from 1729), Danes and Swedes (from 1731) and French (from ca. 1736) had comptoirs. It is quite likely that the mother of pearl of this chest was produced on order. The chest was assembled in The Netherlands, where the tea caddies, silver feet and hinge, all by the Rotterdam silver smith, Rudolph Sondag, were also added. The hinge and feet are decorated with flowering sprigs, a natural motif which harmonises perfectly with the Chinese mother-of-pearl carvings of foliage and bird motifs.

The superb rococo decoration on the silver lids, featuring flowers and S-volutes, from which leafy vines shoot, mark a high-point in rococo silver.

Such an interplay of Dutch silver and Cantonese mother of pearl is extremely rare. Although, or indeed, for the very reason that Chinese decors had already been known in The Netherlands since the early 17th century, the Chinoiserie fashion, which held sway in England, France and Germany during the 18th century, largely passed over The Netherlands. As a result, such mother-of-pearl tea chests were doubtless a rarity in Dutch interiors.



When, in 1610, the Dutch East India Company began bringing a modest quantity of tea to The Netherlands, it was looked upon as a curiosity. It was not until later that the Company started importing large quantities of tea. The tea was first transported from China to Batavia, from where it in turn was shipped to The Netherlands. Once tea drinking had, in the 18th century, become commonplace, the East India Company began importing tea directly from Canton.

To preserve the aroma and flavour of the tea leaves, tea was normally kept in tea caddies. In aristocratic circles, silver tea caddies were used. In the mid-18th century, the tea chest became fashionable. It normally contained three caddies, in which tea and rock candy were kept, and was fitted with a lock. Most tea chests were made of veneered wood. Rare examples feature unusual tropical woods, such as Amboina. Exceptionally rare are tea chests of tortoiseshell or mother of pearl, imbued with an allure as rich and exotic as the tea they housed. This mother-of-pearl tea chest, with its handsome caddies, is a relatively early example of a tea chest with the silver caddies typical of those employed in the 18th century. The earliest example of a tea chest with silver caddies, dating from 1756, is preserved in the Rijkmuseum.

Rudolph Sondag (1726–1812) was one of the foremost Rotterdam silver smiths of the 18th century. During his long career – he was active from the time of his marriage in 1746 until his death in 1812 –, Sondag created numerous highly original objects while at the same time adhering to prevailing fashions. Of particular note is a chest made entirely of silver with silver tea caddies, dating from 1771. In view of the fact that Sondag in 1796 became a member of the executive committee of the draughtsman's society, '*Hierdoor tot Hooger*'. It can be concluded that he was a gifted draughtsman and, thus, that he himself produced the design drawings for his silver. These tea caddies with rococo decoration are superb examples of Sondag's work.

Lady Charlotte Schreiber was a 19th century collector of ceramics who in 1885 donated her collection to London's Victoria and Albert Museum. A driven collector, Schreiber journeyed across Europe with her second husband, leaving no stone unturned in search of additions to her collection. She regularly came to The Netherlands, where she knew every small antique dealer in the country. Schreiber kept a record of all her purchases in a journal.



Rotterdam, 1771, Rudolph Sondag
Private collection

After her death, her son, Montague Guest, published an abridged version of all her journals in two volumes, under the title: “*Lady Charlotte Schreiber’s Journals: Confidences of a Collector of Ceramics and Antiques throughout Britain, France, Holland, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Austria and Germany from the year 1869–1885*”. Although the tea chest in question is not mentioned in her journals, it is highly plausible that Schreiber did purchase it from a Dutch antique dealer, perhaps in Rotterdam itself, between 1860 and 1880.

Provenance:

Lady Charlotte Schreiber (1812–1895)
Thence by descent until 1998
John Endlich Antiquairs
Private collection, The Netherlands

Literature:

Rococo in Nederland, exhibition catalogue, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 2001, cat. no. 181, pp. 286–287.

Exhibition:

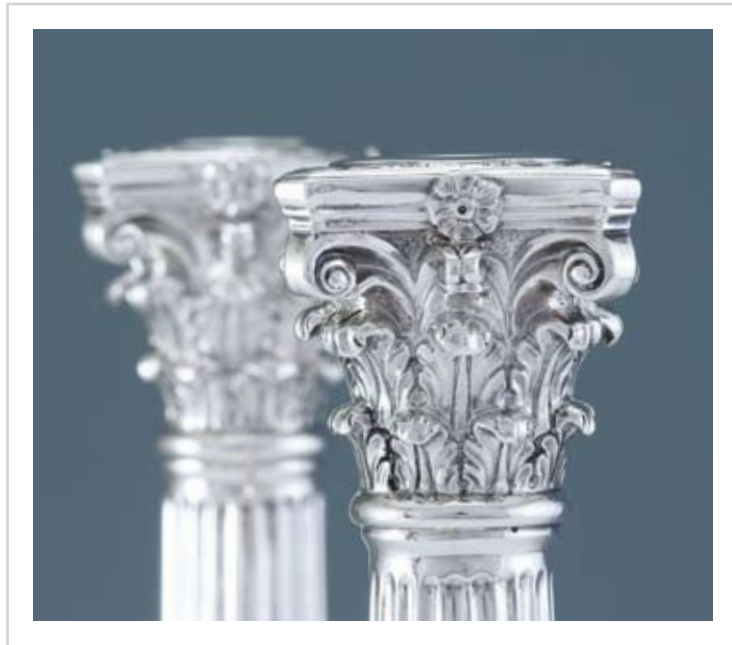
Rococo in Nederland, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 2001–2002.



A pair of silver candlesticks

Amsterdam, 1778
Dirk Evert Grave

Height 28.8 cm
1337 gram



A pair of silver candlesticks classicistically modelled in the form of a Corinthian column, on a fluted square base with canted corners. The stem is applied with swags and garlands

The second half of the 18th century witnessed a revival of classical antiquity, and art and architecture became imbued with admiration for the period. Neoclassicism, as this movement was called from the 19th century onward, came about simultaneously in France, The Netherlands and England. The excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum, as well as the many publications which appeared as a result of them, exerted a strong influence on the development of the neo-classical style. The art of classical antiquity was regarded as the art to emulate.

The trend was particularly apparent in the field of architecture, and resulted in a range of classicistic buildings, whose Dutch highpoint was Haarlem's Villa Welgelegen. But in the applied arts, as well, a wide range of objects in classicistic style were produced, for the most part inspired by French models. The innovative pieces were touted in newspaper advertisements as '*antique*' or '*à la grecque*'. These candlesticks are an outstanding example of '*antique*' candlesticks.

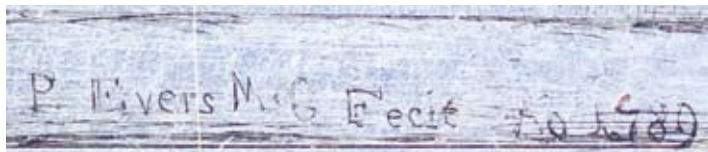


An allegory of trade and commerce

Dutch, 1789

Signed: P. Evers M.G Fecit Ao 1789

10.7 x 19.3 cm



A rectangular silver engraved scene of a wharf. In the background a ketch bearing the name Laudon and trading vessels at anchor. Figures conversing and playing cards in the foreground right. A comptoir with a bookkeeper is shown on the left. The comptoir is crowned by a caduceus. In the comptoir a sheaf of corn is depicted.

Based on the caduceus and the sheaf of corn it can be concluded that this allegory refers to the Dutch trade with the countries around the Baltic Sea which is called 'de moedernegotie' (Mother Of All Trade).

Driven by merchants from Amsterdam from the Late Middle Ages this trade was the main source of wealth in Amsterdam. And because of that wealth, the city could develop into the economic center of Holland and the entrepot of Europe. The lucrative Baltic Trade laid the foundations for the Golden Age of the Dutch Republic.



Porridge bowl

Gorkum, 1807
Jacob Schrader

Height 6.5 cm
Width 15.4 cm
266 gram



A plain circular silver porridge bowl on a round base with beaded rims. The handle is ornamented with engravings of a flower, twigs and crosshatching. The raised rim of the separate lid features open work with ovals, which are bordered with beaded rims.

Porridge bowls were produced primarily in the 17th and 18th centuries. They were often given as christening gifts by godparents to their godchildren.

Jacob Schrader Sr was a successful and productive maker of silver for everyday use. Schrader was born in Leeuwarden in 1743 as the son of a merchant. He was married to Johanna Bel in 1770 in Gorkum, where he also died, in 1820. In his workshop, Schrader trained a number of apprentices. He was master, assay-master and commissioner of the silversmiths' guild.





Miniature pineapple cup

Attributed to Jan van Ossevoort
Dordrecht, 1620 - 1656

Height 67 mm



Miniature tombola

Amsterdam, 1759
Arnoldus van Geffen

Height 113 mm



A miniature virginal

Dutch 17th century

Height 8 mm, 25 x 52 mm



A miniature chest

Amsterdam, 1727-1734

Willem van Strant

Height 55 mm, 30 x 43 mm



Colofon

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