Play and Learning in Pieter Bruegel's *Children's Games*

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Abstract

This thesis offers a reassessment of Pieter Bruegel the Elder's painting *Children's Games* (1560, Kunsthistoriches Museum, Vienna). Addressing the lack of historically accurate interpretations of Bruegel's panel, I use a wide range of sixteenth-century sources to develop fresh insights into how the work might have been understood by its original audience. The Introduction opens with a description of the painting's iconography, provenance, current condition and conservation history. A review of previous literature relating to the panel sets *Children's Games* within the trajectory of scholarship on Bruegel and other related works in his oeuvre and serves to highlight areas of scholarly difficulty and disagreement as well as current methodological trends. Considering the reception, rather than the inception, of *Children's Games*, the third part of the Introduction outlines broader cultural developments which shaped habits of looking in the sixteenth century, including encyclopaedic texts, atlases, *Wunderkammern* and memory systems. Surmising that Bruegel's viewers would have been adept at searching for arguments within abundant collections of material, I then introduce a number of sixteenth-century sources which detail contemporary attitudes towards game-playing. The Introduction ends with an outline of the structure and methodological approach of the thesis.

Chapter 1, 'Artistic Precedents: Illuminated Manuscripts', considers the panel in relation to the iconography of popular games found in the borders of illuminated manuscripts produced in France and the Netherlands in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. After highlighting areas of shared iconography, I discuss how *Children's Games* differs from illuminated manuscripts, concluding that Bruegel rejected the 'game of the month' tradition found in the calendar borders and instead amalgamated a variety of children's games and festive customs to create a humanistic encyclopaedia of children's culture. A second sixteenth-century source which details popular games is François Rabelais's book *Gargantua* (1532). Chapter 2 presents my

research into why Rabelais's writing is relevant to Bruegel scholarship, including archival evidence that Rabelais's books were available in Antwerp and an analysis of the *Songes drolatiques de Pantagruel* (1565), a collection of woodcuts which combined Rabelais's name with Bruegelian imagery. I then compare *Children's Games* with the list of 217 popular games played by Gargantua and discuss how these fictional lists related to the factual compilations of the period.

Gargantua's game-list occurs in the context of his humanist education, a context which is also relevant to Bruegel's panel. During the sixteenth century a wealth of material on children's play and deportment emerged in the form of humanist school colloquies and treatises. A number of these were closely related to the education system in Antwerp and were penned by members of Bruegel's circle of associates. These have never been brought to bear on *Children's Games*, and are used in chapter 3 to develop a new, historically-accurate reading of the painting. The pedagogical texts suggest that during the sixteenth century children's play was viewed positively and was closely bound to education, and so challenge the canonical view arising chiefly from c.17th emblem books and paintings that *Children's Games* makes moral points about adult behaviour.

Appendix 1 - Enumerates Bruegel's games and records comparable depictions found in manuscripts, printed images and paintings from the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Appendix 2 - Presents versions of Gargantua's game-list from original editions of Rabelais's text alongside standard translations and modern critical editions.

Introduction: Pieter Bruegel's *Children's Games*

For the twenty-first-century viewer, encountering *Children's Games* for the first time is an experience which is both bewildering and enchanting. Hanging in the Bruegel room in the Kunsthistoriches Museum in Vienna, the painting's grand scale, unusual composition and life-like details render it instantly striking (Fig. 1). Beyond the Bruegel room the gallery walls are filled with elegant portraits, heroic narratives, classical nudes and picturesque landscapes. But inside the Bruegel room we are transported back to the sixteenth-century Netherlands and the lives of ordinary people, which are captured in vivid detail. In the case of *Children's Games* and it's sister work, the *Battle Between Carnival and Lent*, which hangs nearby, these life-like details are presented in a curious, encyclopaedic format. Stretching to a distant horizon, the ochre ground of *Children's Games* is studded with over two hundred children playing around eighty different games. The game motifs are roughly equal in size, and although each is given its own space none is given preference over another. There is no sense of narrative order to this collection; events at the centre of the picture appear no more charged with importance than those at its edges and the image offers no obvious way in. The effect of this listing compositional technique is to present a catalogue of occupations for the eye which is both overwhelming and seemingly without an end.

Lacking the support traditionally provided in paintings by familiar subject matter or clear narrative signposting, all we can do is stand and gradually absorb the complex panorama, detail by detail. We cannot fail to be drawn in by the immediacy of these details: the flushed cheeks and raised arm of a boy riding on his playmate's back; the tender manner in which a girl rocks a loaf of bread back and forth as though it were a baby; a looped belt, stretched tight between two teams in a tug-of-war; a red cap, discarded on the ground. Despite its haphazard initial appearance, on closer inspection the individual motifs in *Children's Games* reveal themselves to be carefully organised. A wide street sweeps from the lower left corner of the painting, encompasses the players

in the central square, and extends to a distant vanishing point in the upper right. The dramatic recession of this diagonal lends the painting an asymmetric thrust, which is intersected by a less obvious diagonal running from the playing children in the lower right of the panel to the verdant countryside in the upper left. These two diagonal lines meet at the centre of the panel. Here eleven players partake in two different games, five playing leap-frog, and six involved in a mounted game of tug-of-war. The players are all adolescent males, and although the games are quite separate, their actions appear to mimic each other. Both games require some of the players to bend while others leap over them or ride on their backs. These eleven figures thus appear to be partaking in some kind of elaborate dance, the positioning of the two games effectively forming a ring at the heart of the panel, the shape of which is further exaggerated by the bare, light-coloured surrounding ground.

Wheeling around this central ring of players are more clusters of playing figures, who exhibit a diverse range of body language. Some adopt low, crouching positions, such as the hunched figure walking on stilts, or the small girl calling into the bung hole of a barrel. Others tilt their heads back and adopt expansive gestures, such as the blindfolded boy wielding a large stick, or the two boys rocking a barrel. Beyond this secondary 'ring' of activity the games branch out along the diagonal trajectories dictated by the architecture of the square. A solemn line of girls trudge from the centre of the square out towards the lower left corner of the painting, their skirts flipped up over their heads to form make-shift hoods. The blue-wrapped bundle carried by the lead figure in this procession has led to this game being identified as a 'mock baptism'. Towards the upper left of the square a similarly solemn procession of girls and boys approach the centre of the painting. The black-robed girl at the centre of this group and the flowers carried by her attendants have led to this game being identified as childish mimicry of another adult ritual; marriage.

In the lower right of the panel a large wooden beam discarded on the floor follows a diagonal trajectory and is utilized for play in a variety of ways. At its upper end a group of boys suspend a playmate above the beam by his arms and legs. Further down, the

beam forms an anchor for a game of 'bucca', with one boy seated on the beam while other players bury their heads in his lap. Beside this boisterous game, nearest to the viewer, a girl uses the beam as a table on which to set out her tools. Quietly labouring with a brick, a funnel and a set of scales, the girl's activity has been interpreted as another form of mimicry, this time of the trade of making red paint pigment from brick dust. As the German artist Albrecht Dürer noted in his diary of his journey to the Netherlands, this trade was particular to Antwerp.[1] The city of Antwerp was Bruegel's home for most of his short life; from at least 1551, the date his signature appears in the register of the city's artists Guild of St Luke, until 1563, when he relocated to Brussels. It is therefore surely no accident that Bruegel chose to place his signature and the date of the painting below this particular motif. As though carved into the end of the beam appears the inscription: '*BRVEGEL 1560*'.

Delight in the life-like details of *Children's Games* soon gives way to the irresistible desire to make sense of the picture as a whole. As Johann Huizinga stated: 'In play there is something 'at play'…. all play means something'.[2] Eventually, the diligent viewer will drag their eyes from the children and turn their attention instead to the architecture of the space, searching for a location or context which might explain the children's games. It is at this level that I seek to engage with the painting, putting forward an interpretation of *Children's Games* which pays attention to the details of the games, but which is also firmly rooted in the wider historical attitudes towards play in the sixteenth century. An important context for the painting is already evident in the architecture of the square in which the games are pictured. Like the girl making pigment from bricks, the buildings which provide a backdrop for the games are also suggestive of the city of Antwerp. In the upper right corner of the panel the games continue down a long urban street which is filled with step-gabled houses and shops. While such a street could belong to any town in the sixteenth-century Netherlands, the large church with a filigree spire and onion dome which marks the distant end of the street is strongly reminiscent of Antwerp's *Onze-Lieve-Vrouwkathedraal* (Cathedral of Our Lady) (Fig. 2). The building

[1] See Hindman, 1981, p. 469.
[2] Huizinga, 1950, p. 1.

of this church was completed in 1521 but the diocese of Antwerp was not created until 1559.[3] Thus the Church of Our Lady was elevated to the status of Cathedral just a year before *Children's Games* is dated. Details found in the upper left of the panel further support the notion that *Children's Games* is set in an approximation of Antwerp. Beyond the central civic building roofs recede into the distance. Rising amongst them is a black, lantern-like spire which resembles that of Saint Michael's Abbey, Antwerp's oldest and most important medieval monastery.[4] Both of these architectural landmarks made an impression on Albrecht Dürer, who visited the city in August 1520 while travelling through the Netherlands. Dürer noted in his diary:

'The Church of Our Lady at Antwerp is so very large that many masses are sung in it at one time without interfering with each other. The altars have wealthy endowments, and the best musicians are employed that can be had. The church has many devout services, much stone-work, and in particular a beautiful tower. I have also been into the rich Abbey of St Michael. There are, in the choir there, splendid stalls of sculptured stone-work. But at Antwerp they spare no cost on such things, for there is money enough.'[5]

Dürer also recorded the appearance of the Abbey of St. Michael in his sketchbook (Fig. 3). The proximity of the Abbey spire in relation to the Cathedral in *Children's Games* suggests that we are regarding these landmarks from inland. Following this logic, the stretch of grey which is just discernible from the paler grey of the sky at the upper left of the painting might be understood as the broad surface of the river Scheldt. The river was as much a landmark of Antwerp as any building; as the city's main trading artery it was the source of Antwerp's immense wealth and power during the sixteenth century.

This was not the first or the last time that Bruegel would incorporate elements of his home city into image. The print *Ice Skating before the Gate of Saint George* (c.1558) pictures skaters just outside Antwerp's city walls with the Saint George Gate, the Church of Saint George and the Kronenbourg Tower visible in the background.[6] A depiction of

[3] Aerts, 1993, p. 39.
[4] Van Isacker and Van Uytven, 1986. Edward Snow also identified the cathedral and Abbey of St. Michael in the background of *Children's Games*. Snow, 1997, p. 84.
[5] Dürer, 1971, p. 60.
[6] Engraved by Frans Huys, Bruegel's original pen and ink drawing for this print survives, see Orenstein, 2001, cat. no's. 62 and 63.

Antwerp's busy harbour is visible through the arched window in the painting *Two Monkeys* (Gemäldegalerie, Berlin, 1562). The viewpoint adopted in *Children's Games* is, typically of Bruegel, somewhat composite. Neither the rustic building in the left foreground of the painting nor the yellow stone building at the back of the square can be readily identified with specific structures in Antwerp, and their purpose has perplexed scholars. I suggest in chapter 3 that these buildings may represent different types of schoolhouses, but it is very difficult to be certain about this. Other elements in the painting support the notion that the background is a composite of familiar landmarks rather than an actual space. Sixteenth-century maps of Antwerp do not picture meandering tributaries to the river Scheldt, such as the stream that the children are swimming in at the upper left of the panel. The rural idyll created by the stream, grass, trees and half-timbered houses in this part of the painting is at odds with the urban vista on the opposite side of the panel. While the urban street on the right resembles Antwerp's city centre, the area surrounding the stream on the left evokes the countryside which lay immediately outside of the newly-built city walls. These walls are nowhere to be seen in Bruegel's image. It would seem that in creating the setting for *Children's Games* Bruegel drew on features of his home city but did not trying to reproduce a specific place. Nevertheless, we can imagine that the distinctive spires and distant expanse of river would have been enough to connote the city of Antwerp for Bruegel's sixteenth-century viewers, and for this reason the city provides an important context for the panel.

Provenance and Condition

As with so many of Bruegel's paintings, we know nothing about the circumstances surrounding the creation of *Children's Games*. The work is painted in oil on oak panel, measures 118cm x 161cm, and has been in the possession of the Habsburg dynasty for many years, but beyond these basic facts much of the provenance of *Children's Games* remains fairly speculative. As yet no letters, contracts or inventories have come to light to provide clues to the original patronage of the work and no preparatory sketches for the painting survive to illuminate Bruegel's working method. The earliest reference to the painting occurs at the close of the sixteenth century in the Account Book of Archduke Ernst, who was Governor-General to the Habsburg Netherlands between 1593 and 1595. Dated 16 July 1594, the entry was made by the Archduke's secretary, Balasius Hütter. It lists *Children's Games*, along with several other paintings, as being supplied by the art dealer Hane van Wijk.[7] Archduke Ernst died the following year, and his Bruegel paintings are all listed again in the probate inventory made on 17 July 1595.[8] What happened to the paintings after Ernst's death is unclear.

Two copies of *Children's Games* attributed to Brueghel the Younger are listed in an inventory of 1614, but there is no mention made of the original composition in any seventeenth-century inventories.[9] While it is possible that Ernst's collection of Bruegel paintings went to his younger brother, Albert (1559-1621), who took over the role of Governor-General of the Netherlands in 1596, it is more likely that they entered the

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[7] Algemeen Rijksarchief, Brussels, Manuscrits Divers No. 2924, fol. 148v: '*Item von Juan von Wükh erkhaufft ettliche gemahl als Kinderspil des Bruegls.*' Glück, 1951, p. 54; Buchanan, 1990, n. 11. The Account Book was translated and published in part by Coremans in 1847. The entry reads: '[Juillet 16] *A Jean de Wukh, acheté quelques tableaux, tels qu'un jeu d'enfants, de Breugel, item, un tableau representant les Trois Rois; item, un autre representant N.D. ; item, pour un cadeau qui lui été fait, 1,000 florins de Brabant…fl. 538.40.*'

[8] The inventory lists '*Khinderspil von Bruegell*' (*Children's Games*), '*Sechs Taffell, von 12 Monathenn des Jars*' (six paintings showing the *Twelve Months*), and three additional paintings by Bruegel, a *Conversion of Saint Paul*, a *Peasant Wedding* and a *Crucifixion*. See Maeyer, 1955, pp. 259-261.

[9] The 1614 estate inventory of the collection of the Antwerp art dealer Filip I van Valckenisse lists two versions of *Children's Games* and two of *Netherlandish Proverbs*, all of which are attributed to the younger Brueghel. The inventory also lists a *Carnival*, a *Triumph of Death*, a *Christ Carrying the Cross*, several *Peasant Kermises* and a *Massacre of the Innocents*. Denucé, 1932, doc. 10, pp. 14-27; Duverger, 1984, I, pp. 299-311. The two copies of *Children's Games* are no longer extant.

collection of Ernst's older brother, Rudolf (1552-1612). The eldest son of Maximilian II and Maria of Spain, Rudolf spent his formative years in the court of Philip II of Spain, and inherited the title of Holy Roman Emperor. In 1583 Rudolf moved the Habsburg capital from Vienna to Prague, and proceeded to amass a vast collection of art and curiosities at Prague castle.[10] Although *Children's Games* is not recorded in any of the extant inventories of Rudolf's collection, the Emperor's fondness for works by Bruegel is attested in Karel van Mander's 1604 *Schilder-boeck* (Book of the Painters). In his biography of Bruegel, Van Mander went into some detail describing the many works by Bruegel owned by Rudolf II.[11] *Children's Games* does not feature in Van Mander's enumeration of paintings owned by the Emperor; however, Van Mander does describe the work in a later sentence, without attributing its ownership:

'He [Bruegel] also made a piece in which Lent fights against Shrove Tuesday; and another in which all remedies against death are used; and another with all manner of children's games, and innumerable allegories.'[12]

Despite the fact that Van Mander does not include *Children's Games* in his description of Rudolf's collection the painting is usually seen as belonging to the Emperor. Van Mander expressly acknowledges that his enumeration of Rudolf's collection is incomplete – stating that there are 'some other pieces' in the Emperor's palace besides those described. This, combined with the fact that *Children's Games* and the *Battle Between Carnival and Lent* both appear in the Imperial collection in the eighteenth century, suggests that the paintings were once owned by the Emperor. It is generally

[10] For an introduction to this see Fučkicová (ed.), 1997.

[11] 'Some of his [Bruegel's] most important works are now with the Emperor, to wit: a large piece with a *Tower of Babel* in which there are many handsome details to be seen; it is shown in bird's eye view. And another of the same subject only small, or at any rate smaller. And two pieces with the *Carrying of the Cross*, very natural to look at, in which there are always some burlesque details. Then a *Massacre of the Innocents* in which many effective details can be seen, ….Then a *Conversion of St Paul* with very subtle rocks. It would be difficult to relate all that he made with regard to sorceries, hells, peasant scenes and other things. He made a *Temptation of Christ* in which, as in the Alps, one looks down from above onto towns and countries with clouds swirling above them, through which one sees in some places; and a *Dolle Griet*, carrying away plunder in the face of hell, who looks quite crazy and wierdly kitted-out in a higgledy-piggledy way. I believe this, as well as some other pieces, to be in the Emperor's palace too.' Van Mander, 1994-1999, vol. 1, p. 193.

[12] Ibid., p. 193

assumed that upon Rudolf's death in 1612 *Children's Games* travelled, along with the other Bruegel paintings, from Prague to Vienna.[13]

The first reference to the painting in the Habsburg collection in Vienna appears in Christian von Mechel's catalogue, which was published in German in 1783 and French in 1784.[14] An engraver and art dealer from Basle, Mechel had been appointed by Emperor Joseph II to redesign the interior of the Belvedere palace and arrange the paintings collection into a 'visible history of art'.[15] Mechel's was the first catalogue to be drawn up according to modern principles. Serving both public and specialist alike, its arrangement reflected that of the gallery itself, with the pictures ordered historically by schools. The catalogue records that *Children's Games* was hung in the second room on the second floor of the Belvedere palace, on the main wall facing the entrance. Mechel's entry on the work is brief. Mentioning the public square and church, Mechel describes the painting chiefly in terms of it being a representation of 'Spring' in a series of the four seasons.[16] In keeping with this interpretation, Mechel hung three other panels by Bruegel thought to depict the seasons beside *Children's Games*: the *Harvesters* (summer), the *Return of the Herd* (autumn) and the *Massacre of the Innocents* (winter).

Mechel's seasonal interpretation of *Children's Games* is unique, and has been uniformly rejected by later scholars. The version of the *Massacre of the Innocents* in the Imperial collection ('Winter' in Mechel's series) is now recognised as a copy by Pieter Brueghel the Younger, with the original composition being the version in the London Royal Collection.[17] Scholars have usually interpreted this work, which locates the Biblical slaughter of the Holy Innocents in a Flemish village, as a stand-alone piece containing

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[13] 'Van Mander erwähnt das Bild ohne Besitzerangabe, hat e saber wohl bei Rudolf II. in Prag gesehen, nach dessen To des nach Wien gekommen sein wird.' Demus et. al., 1981, p. 68.
[14] Mechel, 1784. The painting does not feature in the 1659 inventory of Leopold Wilhelm's paintings, which was published in the first volume of the *Jarbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchten Kaiserhauses*, 1883.
[15] Prohaska, 1997, p. 12.
[16] '*61. à 64. Les quatre Saisons représentées d'une manière singulière & par quantité de figures. Le Printems est désigné par un grand nombre d'enfans qui s'amusent à toutes fortes de jeux dans une place publique près d'une Église. Sur le tableau est écrit : BRVEGEL. MDLX*.'
[17] Campbell, 1985, no. 9, pp. 13-19.

an overt political message.[18] The other two works in Mechel's series, the *Harvesters* and the *Return of the Herd,* are now recognised as belonging to a larger series representing the seasons. A document dated the same year as these paintings suggests that a series of works by Bruegel representing the twelve months of the year was once owned by the wealthy Antwerp merchant Niclaes Jonghelinck.[19] Although we cannot be sure, it is likely that the series comprised of six panels, each representing two months.[20] Later references record how a series of six paintings representing the changing times of the year were purchased by the City Council of Antwerp from the art dealer Hane van Wijk and presented to Archduke Ernst in 1594.[21] As with *Children's Games*, Ernst's probate inventory confirms this, listing '*Sechs Taffell, von 12 Monathenn des Jars von Bruegel*.'[22] The series now numbers only five extant paintings: the *Hunters in the Snow,* the *Gloomy Day*, and the *Return of the Herd,* all still in Vienna, *Haymaking*, now in the Prague National Gallery, and the *Harvesters*, in the Metropolitan Museum, New York.[23]

The Napoleonic invasion of Austria marked the next great upheaval for the Imperial collection and *Children's Games*. Napoleon's art commissioner, Dominique-Vivant Denon, arrived in Vienna in June 1809, armed with a letter of authorization from the Emperor permitting him to lay hands on works of art '*qui méritent d'être choisis et séparés*'. Denon's ambitions were to an extant thwarted by the gallery staff, who had been quick to evacuate fifty-four cases containing many of the most prized works to the safety of Hungary before the French troops arrived.[24] However, it is interesting to

[18] Kunzle, 2001; Ferber, 1966.
[19] Stadsarchief, Antwerp, Tresorij 1711, no. 1551, 21st February 1965, '*De Twelff maenden*', cited in Buchanan, 1990, n. 1.
[20] This explanation has not been universally accepted. Both Grossmann, 1973, and Gibson, 1977, argue that the series originally consisted of twelve panels.
[21] References to this transaction were made in Archduke Ernst's Account Book and in a Book of Expenses relating to the Archduke's Triumphal Entry into Antwerp in July 1594. For the Account Book entry see Algemeen Rijksarchief, Brussels, Manuscrits Divers No. 2924, fol. 147v and Coremans, 1847, pp. 85-147 for a French translation. For the Book of Expenses see Stadsarchief, Antwerp, Privilegekamer 1632, no. 36. These sources are discussed in full in Buchanan, 1990, pp. 541-542.
[22] Algemeen Rijksarchief, Brussels, Pap. D'État et de l'Aud. No. 1196. See Buchanan, 1990, n. 9.
[23] Scholars are divided over precisely which months are represented by the five extant panels, but Mechel's original attribution of 'summer' certainly befits the *Harvesters*, which is generally understood to represent either July-August or August-September, while the *Return of the Herd* - 'autumn' in Mechel's series - is thought to depict either September–October or October-November. On the order of the series see Tolnay, 1934, Novotny, 1948, and Buchanan, 1990.
[24] Gould, 1965.

note the fate of the Bruegels in this episode. Although today they are among the most famous works in the Imperial collection, they were not so highly valued in the nineteenth century. *Children's Games*, along with at least five other works by Bruegel and Rubens's huge *Assumption of the Virgin* (which had to be sawn into three pieces before it could be moved) were among the 401 works seized by Denon and taken to Paris.[25] What happened to the works once they were in Paris is unclear; the list of what was taken has never been fully published, and the episode is barely mentioned in later catalogue entries on the Bruegel paintings.[26] From the French side, the Bruegel works do not feature in Antoine Filhol's catalogue of engravings of works displayed in the Musée Napoléon.[27] Perhaps, like the Viennese, the French were not overly enamoured with Bruegel's peasant scenes and the works were taken to France but never actually put on display. The majority of the Bruegels were returned to Vienna in 1815; only one panel, the *Harvesters*, was to leave the Imperial collection for good as a result of this episode.[28]

In 1871 work was begun on a new building which would befit the grandeur of the restored Imperial collection. Designed by the Viennese architect Karl Hasenauer, and revised by Gottfried von Semper, the outside structure of the Kunsthistoriches Museum was completed in about 1880. Over the next ten years Hasenauer oversaw the work on the opulent interior of the museum, and the gallery was finally opened to the public in 1891. This development also marked the beginning of genuine art-historical research into the collection and of conservation work on *Children's Games*. A new three-volume descriptive catalogue of the paintings was compiled by the gallery

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[25] Ibid., p. 101; Demus et al., 1981, p. 68.

[26] Most of twentieth-century catalogues of the Vienna collection don't mention this event in their discussion of Bruegel's works (Schaeffer and Gluck, 1906, no. 708; Baldass et al. 1928, no. 708; Heinz and Klauner, 1963, no. 46). The only catalogue to record which pictures went to Paris is Demus et al., 1981. The *Battle Between Carnival and Lent*, *Children's Games*, the *Procession to Calvary*, the *Peasant and the Bird Nester*, the *Peasant Wedding Feast* and the *Peasant Kermis* are all noted as being in Paris between 1809 and 1815. Demus et al., 1981, pp. 61-117. The Kunsthistoriches Musuem has no documentation relating to the paintings stay in Paris (author correspondence with Karl Schütz, Head of Paintings Department, Kunsthistoriches Museum, July 2009).

[27] Filhol, 1804-28.

[28] This work fell into the hands of comte Antoine-François Andréossy, French ambassador to Vienna, and remained in French and Belgian collections until it was purchased by the Metropolitan Museum in New York in 1919. Virch, 1969. It is not clear whether the *Harvesters* was seized with the other Bruegels or taken at a separate time.

director Eduard von Engerth and published between 1883 and 1886.[29] Engerth's entry on *Children's Games* recorded the panel's medium, dimensions, and key compositional traits, including the fact that it contained over two hundred figures, each approximately 15cm high. Dismissing Mechel's interpretation of the work as a representation of Spring, Engerth suggested instead that it was Bruegel's intention to bring together all of the common children's games of the time.[30]

As this thesis deals with reading and interpreting *Children's Games* it is important to establish whether any changes have occurred to the painting over the centuries which affect its legibility. While curators at the Kunsthistoriches Musuem have provided helpful answers to my enquiries, my insights are limited to observations made in front of the painting and I have not been in a position to undertake extensive technical analysis of the work. Although to the naked eye *Children's Games* appears to be in a good condition, the painting is in a delicate state. The panel was cradled in the first half of the nineteenth century (approximately 1820-1830) and has been in a fragile condition since then. This was not helped by problems with the heating system in the newly-constructed Kunsthistoriches Museum, which caused blisters to appear on the surface of *Children's Games*. Conservation work to consolidate these blisters is documented in 1892, 1894, 1895 and again in 1929, after a particularly cold winter caused a great deal of damage to works in the gallery. [31] No major conservation work has been carried out on *Children's Games* in the last sixty years, meaning that the painting has not been subject to technical analysis using modern techniques such as infrared reflectography, pigment analysis and dendrochronology. This makes it is difficult to ascertain important information about the work, such as whether some of the pigments may have changed colour over the centuries, or the extent to which the painting was mapped out using an underdrawing. Recent analysis of other works by Bruegel and his son Pieter Brueghel the Younger using these techniques has provided

[29] Engerth, 1883-1886.
[30] Ibid., vol. II, no. 744. '*Es scheint, dass Brueghel die Absicht hatte, sämmtliche damals gebräuchlich gewesen Kinderspiele zur Darstellung zu bringen.*'
[31] For these insights into the conservation of *Children's Games* I am grateful to Dr. Karl Schütz, Head of Paintings Department, Kunsthistoriches Museum.

fruitful insights into the artists' working methods, and I am sure that the Vienna Bruegels would benefit from similar levels of technical analysis.[32]

[32] See a number of the essays in Van den Brink (ed.), 2001.

Previous interpretations of the panel

Children's Games may be very well known, but the painting has never received the scholarly attention it deserves. The panel's unusual subject matter - playing children - has proven to be an immediate and emotive one for viewers. Perhaps because of this attempts to understand the painting within the historical context in which it was created have been distinctly lacking. The diverse range of interpretations which the work has elicited over the centuries owes more to personal feelings than solid, critical analysis. As a result opinions on the work vary wildly: some scholars have seen the children in the picture are sinister and deformed, and have argued that their games are emblematic of adult folly. To other interpreters the children appear to be innocents, their actions filled with a childish delight in the physicality of play which transcends the centuries. I seek to fill this void in the centre of scholarship on *Children's Games* by setting aside modern notions about children and play and immersing myself instead in attitudes towards childhood and games which were prevalent in the period in which Bruegel was working. It is my belief that only by doing this can we come close to interpreting the work 'correctly' – i.e, according to the interests, mores and tastes of its original audience.

An additional factor in the panoply of interpretations of *Children's Games* is that during the course of the twentieth century scholarly opinions on Bruegel have swung from one extreme to the other. At the heart of this is a basic problem: very little documentary evidence concerning Bruegel's life survives. A record of his entry into the Antwerp painters' guild of St Luke, a commission for a painting and a note of his marriage are all that we have.[33] The place of Bruegel's birth remains open to question, his birth date is unknown although is usually calculated to between 1525 and 1530 on account of the date of his entry into the guild of St Luke.[34] During his lifetime the Italians Ludovico

[33] The guild of St. Luke register reads '*Peeter Brueghels, schilder*' (Pieter Brueghels, painter); the recorded commission was for the outer wings of an altarpiece for the glove maker's guild in the catherdral of Saint Rombout in Mechelen; the marriage register states '*Peeter brùgel Mayken cocks soluit*.'These documents are transcribed and listed in chronological order in Marijnissen, 1988, pp. 11-16. Orenstein, 2001, pp. 3-11, Grossman, 1973, pp. 9-28, and Gibson, 1977, provide excellent introductions to Bruegel's life.

[34] On the debate about Bruegel's place of birth see Grossman, 1973, p. 13. Bruegel's inscription into the Antwerp guild of St Luke is dated 1551, and because artists normally joined the guild between the ages of

Guiccardini and Giorgio Vasari both described Bruegel as a notable painter whose style was indebted to Hieronymous Bosch.[35] Posthumous sources on the artist include an engraved portrait and verse in Dominicus Lampsonius's *Effigies* (1572), where Bruegel is again praised as a 'Second Bosch'. [36] A more detailed tribute to Bruegel, which praises the artist as 'the most perfect painter of his age', is included in the *Album amicorum* ('Friendship album') of the learned geographer and arch-humanist Abraham Ortelius.[37] The two-page biography published in Karel Van Mander's 1604 *Schilder-boeck* provides by far the fullest account of Bruegel's life, but as it was penned some forty years after the artist's death we must bear in mind that it is not necessarily a reliable source.[38]

Despite this caution, many of Bruegel's extant works fit into the story told by Van Mander. Numerous surviving sketches support Van Mander's assertion that early in his career Bruegel travelled through France to Italy. [39] The artist was clearly impressed by the Alpine landscape encountered on his journey, as craggy mountain passes and dramatic sea views were to fill the background of many of his future paintings. Returning to the Netherlands, Bruegel settled in the thriving city of Antwerp, where he produced panel paintings as well as designs for the print publisher Hieronymous Cock. In 1563 Bruegel moved to Brussels and married Mayken Cocks, the daughter of Pieter Coecke van Aelst and Mayken Verhulst.[40] Bruegel had two sons, Pieter and Jan, both of whom became painters. Scholars estimate that Bruegel would have been in his forties

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twenty-one and twenty-five most scholars calculate the artist's birth date to sometime between 1525 and 1530.

[35] '*Pietro Brueghel di Breda grande imitatore della scienza, & fantasie di Girolamo Bosco'*, Guiccardini, *Descrittione di …tutti i Paesi Bassi* (Description of All the Low Countries), 1567, p. 99. Vasari mentioned Bruegel twice: in relation to his Boschian style: '…Franz Mostaert, who was passing skilful in painting landscapes in oils, fanatasies, bizarre inventions, dreams, and sucklike imaginings. Hieronymous Bosch and Pieter Brueghel of Breda were imitators of that Mostaert…' and then as an excellent master: 'Pieter Brueghel of Antwerp, likewise, they celebrate as an excellent master'. Vasari, 1996, vol. II, 'Divers Flemings' pp. 863-865.

[36] Lampsonius's verse opens 'Who is this new Hieronymous Bosch, appeared again in the world?' Dominicus Lampsonius, *Pictorum aliquot celebrium Germaniae Inferiores effigies*, 1572. The portrait, which is unsigned, is now given to Johannes Wierix.

[37] Ortelius's *Album amicorum* is now housed in Pembroke College, Cambridge, and was published in facsimile by Jean Puraye. For the entry on Bruegel see Ortelius, 1969, fols. 12v-13r, pp. 21-22.

[38] For an English translation and notes beside Van Mander's original text see Van Mander, 1994-1999, vol. I, pp. 190-194 and vol. 3, pp. 252-265.

[39] On these see Martin Royalton-Kisch 'Pieter Bruegel as a Draftsman: The Changing Image', in Orenstein, 2001, pp. 14-26; Mielke, 1996, especially cat. no's 5, 10, 16, 23, 24 and 25; and Oberhuber, 1981.

[40] The register states '*Peeter brùgel Mayken cocks soluit*.' Brussels City Archive, Church of Notre-Dame de la Chapelle, Register of Marriage, fol. 5. Reproduced in Marijnissen, 1988, p. 12.

when he died in 1569. Ortelius described how Bruegel was 'snatched away from us in the flower of his age', but the details of the artist's untimely death remain as mysterious as those of his life.[41]

Known for centuries as 'Peasant Bruegel', scholarly opinion on the artist's social class underwent something of a volte-face during the course of the twentieth century, when the full extent of Abraham Ortelius's admiration for Bruegel was uncovered.[42] In addition to the fond epitaph on Bruegel included in his *Album amicorum,* Ortelius owned Bruegel's grisaille of *The Death of the Virgin* (c. 1564, National Trust, Upton House). Evidently this work was held in high regard by Ortelius and his circle of erudite friends, for in 1564 the geographer asked Philips Galle to copy the composition in copper so that he could give away printed reproductions.[43] Letters to Ortelius confirm that he presented impressions of the work to at least two friends, the Dutch writer and philosopher Dirck Volckertsz. Coornhert and the Spanish theologian Benito Arias Montano, both of whom wrote to thank Ortelius and praise the gift.[44] This discovery began a gradual shift in the understanding of Bruegel's prints and paintings; as Bruegel's own social status was elevated, scholars began to question why the artist chose to paint peasants and speculate upon the kinds of moral messages that might be contained within Bruegel's works.

In 1994 Margaret Sullivan ambitiously proposed that a network of Bruegel's associates could be established using three interrelated sources - the humanists listed in Ortelius's *Album amicorum*, the artists and associates of Bruegel's print-publisher Hieronymous

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[41] Ortelius wrote: 'He [Bruegel] was snatched away from us in the flower of his age – but whether I should attribute it to Death, who thought him more advanced in age when he observed the distinguished skill of his art, or rather to Nature who feared that his genius for dexterous imitation would bring her into contempt, I cannot say.' Bruegel was buried in the church of Notre-Dame de la Chappelle in Brussels, where today he is honoured by a memorial erected years later by his son Jan Brueghel.

[42] This began with the publication of Arthur Popham's article in 1931, which highlighted references made to Bruegel in both Ortelius's *Album amicorum* and his correspondence. Popham, 1931.

[43] Orenstein (ed.), 2001, no. 117, pp. 258-260.

[44] Coornhert wrote thanking Ortelius in July 1578, stating: 'from top to bottom I viewed [the sheet] with pleasure, and in admiration for the artful drawing and the meticulous engraving. Bruegel and Philips [Galle] have surpassed themselves. I do not think that either has ever done better…'. Montano requested an impression of the work after seeing the grisaille at Ortelius's house and describing it as 'painted in the

Cock, and the associates of the Antwerp printer Christopher Plantin, who was friendly with both Ortelius and Cock.[45] Sullivan argued that the interests and preferences of this group of around eighty Christian Humanists provided a frame of reference for interpreting Bruegel's works. In recent years an even clearer picture has been forming of the kinds of people who enjoyed Bruegel's paintings, based on the publication of a number of inventories of Antwerp merchants. We have already come across Niclaes Jonghelinck, the wealthy Antwerp banker and Zeeland toll collector who owned Bruegel's series of the *Months*, as well as a *Procession to Calvary* and a *Tower of Babel*.[46] It may have been through Jonghelinck that Bruegel was introduced to his most notable patron, Cardinal Granvella, Archbishop of Mechelen. [47] President of the Netherlands Council of State and trusted advisor to the acting regent of the Netherlands, Margaret of Parma, Granvella was known to be an admirer of Bruegel's work. How many Bruegels Granvella owned is unclear; forced to abandon his art collection and flee the country in 1564, the Cardinal then spent some time attempting to replace works that had been looted. An inventory of the contents of Besançon palace taken in 1607 confirms that on his death Granvella owned at least one work by Bruegel the Elder, which can be identified with the *Flight to Egypt* now in the Courtauld Gallery, London.[48]

In addition to these noted individuals, a significant number of Bruegel's patrons were drawn from Antwerp's merchant class. Jean Noirot, a former master of the Antwerp mint, was pronounced bankrupt in 1572. Documents relating to the sale of his goods list no fewer than five works by Bruegel, including a winter landscape, two paintings of peasant weddings, and two peasant kermis scenes.[49] Bruegel's *Twelve Proverb Plates* appear in the inventory of another Antwerp banker, Nicolaes Cornelius Cheeus, in

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most skilful manner and with the greatest piety'. In April 1591 he acknowledged receipt of the engraving. See Ortelius, 1887, pp. 175-76, pp. 428-29 and p. 471.

[45] Sullivan, 1994.

[46] Buchanan, 1990, pp. 541-550; Denucé, 1932, no. 5, p. 5.

[47] Niclaes Jonghelinck's brother Jacob Jonghelinck was a sculptor and medallist, and one of Granvella's favourite artists.

[48] Other works listsed in the Besançon inventory which may have been by Bruegel the Elder or one of his sons include a 'Landscape with Jonah', 'Ships on a calm sea, with small figures and a distant landscape', and 'The blind leading the blind'. Inventory of the contents of Granvelle Palace in Besançon, 1607, cited by Allart, 'Did Pieter Brueghel the Younger See His Father's Paintings? Some Methodological and Critical Reflections', in Van den Brink (ed.), 2001, 46-57, p. 49, doc. 9.

[49] Smolderen, 1995; Goldstein, 2000; Gibson, 2006, chapter 3: 'A Bankrupt and his Bruegels', pp. 67-76.

1621.[50] Hans Franckert represents another patron of Bruegel's who was an Antwerp merchant. Although no evidence of Franckert's collection has ever come to light, Van Mander described how Bruegel 'worked a great deal' and also 'associated… very companionably' with an Antwerp merchant named Hans Franckert, a man with a noble, good disposition. [51] Thus Bruegel's circle of known patrons and admirers consisted of scholars and intellectuals, merchants and bankers, politicians and theologians.[52]

While we now know more about Bruegel's interpretive community, it is not so easy to characterise Bruegel's own religious, political and philosophical views. It is impossible to know, for example, whether Bruegel was a devout Catholic or a secret Protestant rebel, a fond painter of peasant mores or a pessimistic moralist.[53] His paintings seem deliberately designed to encourage divergent readings. Resistant to one over-arching interpretation, they frequently contain paradoxical elements, apparently inviting condemnation with one hand and then mocking seriousness with the other. Added to this is the fact that Bruegel's paintings rarely sit squarely within established art-historical genres. When Bruegel pictured a mythological or Biblical event, he preferred to stage it in contemporary Flanders (the *Fall of Icarus*, the *Procession to Calvary*, the *Conversion of Paul*, and the *Massacre of the Innocents*). When Bruegel borrowed the iconography of the seasons from the tiny pages of illuminated manuscripts, he transported it onto vast oak panels (the *Months*). In other cases, such as with *Children's Games*, the *Battle Between Carnival and Lent* and *Netherlandish Proverbs*, Bruegel appears to have turned to prints for inspiration, or invented image-types with no real precursors.

With so little known about the creator of *Children's Games*, no obvious signs of patronage and no pre-existing tradition or genre in which to frame the work, scholars of *Children's Games* have faced a difficult task. Reviewing the historiography of the panel, we find

[50] Goldstein, 2000; Duverger, 1984, vol. I, p. 175.
[51] Van Mander, 1994-1999, vol I, p. 190.
[52] It should be noted that in addressing the issue of the reception of Bruegel's paintings my approach broadly follows that of Margaret Sullivan. However, the group of figures who make up Bruegel's known patrons is considerably more diverse than the circle of Christian Humanists proposed by Sullivan as Bruegel's audience. Sullivan, 1994, pp. 5-13.

that approaches to the work which can be broadly divided into three strands. The first two approaches represent attempts to pin down the panel's iconography in a narrow sense. The most basic of these iconographic approaches is characterised by an attempt to identify, label and explain every one of the details in the picture. This work has most often been undertaken by folklorists, ethnographers and historians of childhood, for whom Bruegel's panel represents an indispensable source in reconstructing the specifics of game playing. A second approach to the panel's iconography encompasses the 'thematic' interpretations. In undertaking these, scholars have tried to situate *Children's Games* within specific series or allegories traditional to art history – examples being the Ages of Man or the seasons of the year. Following a Panofskian model, scholars who move beyond the primary (pre-iconographical) and secondary (iconographical) modes of identifying and naming the games, and attempt to synthesise how the representations might be understood within Bruegel's own *milieu* can be described as the 'iconologists'.[54] Iconological readings of *Children's Games* have been undertaken almost exclusively by art historians, and have now become dominant in the historiography of the work. Thus far, probing *Children's Games* for its intrinsic, iconological meaning has produced uniformly damning results. Referencing seventeenth-century Dutch emblem literature, in which images of children at play were used to symbolise adult folly, scholars have suggested that *Children's Games* would have been recognised by Bruegel's contemporaries as a negative presentation of the futility of man's labour. The painting's compositional methods have been invoked in support of this notion. *Children's Games* is connected by its formal 'encyclopaedism' to other paintings by Bruegel which present catalogues of foolish humanity, including the errant villagers in *Netherlandish Proverbs* (Fig. 4) and the wild, celebratory masses in *Carnival and Lent* (Fig. 5). All three of these paintings present worlds which are to an extent upside-down or unstable and therefore potentially subversive. In addition to their controversial subject matter, the raised viewpoint and encyclopaedic format of each of these works appears to reference the

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[53] For discussions of these problems in relation to questions of class see Keith Moxey, 'Pieter Bruegel and Popular Culture' in Freedberg (ed.)., 1989, pp. 42-52, and Walter Gibson, 'Bruegel and the Peasants: A Problem of Interpretation' in Gibson, 1991, pp. 11-52.

[54] Panofsky himself termed this third level, which explores the intrinsic meaning or content of a work of art and is apprehended by ascertaining underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation,

notion of the *theatrum mundi* or 'theatre of the world', in which man's foolish actions were contemplated from above. It is my hope that this thesis will redress this imbalance by presenting an iconological reading of the painting which is both more historically accurate and less morally damning than previous interpretations.

Iconographic approaches to *Children's Games* have varied greatly, from glancing, vague references in wider surveys of childhood and game playing to painstakingly detailed enumerations of the panel's many motifs. The late nineteenth and early twentieth century witnessed increased scholarly interest in popular games and pastimes. Across Europe, folklorists engaged in recording the details of regional games, resulting in a range of publications including Alfons de Cock and Isidoor Teirlinck's eight-volume study of games in the Southern Netherlands, Henry René d'Allemagne's study of games and sports in France and Alice Gomme's research into the games of England, Scotland and Ireland.[55] The scholarly interest in the games and pastimes of British children was continued in the latter half of the twentieth century by Iona and Peter Opie, who charted a huge range of childhood ephemera, from toys and games to playground chants and nursery rhymes.[56]

For these scholars, *Children's Games* has been a useful iconographic source. The sheer scale of the work means that it frequently provides either the earliest known depiction of a game or an illustration of a game known otherwise only through written accounts. Furthermore, the detail evident in Bruegel's motifs greatly enhances our understanding of precisely *how* specific games were played. In addition to informing ethnographic studies of game playing, the panel inevitably features in historical surveys of childhood and its representation in the middle ages and early modern periods.[57] A number of scholars have approached the iconography of *Children's Games* specifically, numbering each of the games depicted and cataloguing their names and key characteristics. These include Gustav Glück, who presented a numbered diagram of the panel with

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period, class, religious or philosophical persuasion 'iconographical interpretation in a deeper sense'. Panfosky, 1972, 'Introductory', pp. 3-32.

[55] Cock and Teirlinck, 1902-8; D'Allemagne, 1903; Gomme, 1894 and 1898.

[56] Opie and Opie 1969, 1997 and 2001.

identifications of the games in Dutch in 1937, Victor de Meyere, who produced another numbered diagram and accompanying catalogue of Dutch game-definitions in 1941 and Jeanette Hills, who published a detailed study of each of Bruegel's games in German in 1957.[58]

In an important article on *Children's Games* published in 1981, Sandra Hindman synchronised these three earlier catalogues in a comparative appendix.[59] This appendix provides a useful means of surveying the variety evident in the iconographic interpretations of Bruegel's games. It also highlights the difficulties inherent in trying to classify the games conclusively. Basic differences in language and register and more complex differences in the rules and interpretations of the games mean that none of the game-catalogues concur. While in many cases the classification of a particular game is indisputable (all scholars, for example, agree on the depictions of leap-frog and hoop rolling) there are a significant number of games which evoke different responses from different viewers. Scholars cannot even agree on precisely which details are worthy of record and which are not, with Victor de Meyere's catalogue listing as many as ninety-one games and Jeanette Hills's as few as seventy-eight. Given the difficulties inherent in this approach, it is perhaps surprising that my thesis forwards yet another game appendix (Appendix I). However, my appendix (which is broadly based on Hindman's) sets aside the problem of identifying and naming the games and instead addresses *visual* correlations between Bruegel's games and a number of other game collections. These comparative sources are arranged in columns according to their type or geographical origin. Some sources, such as the illuminated manuscripts, pre-date *Children's Games*; other sources, such as the Dutch and French emblem collections, post-date Bruegel's panel. Although it is not my intention to dwell on these correlations, it is hoped that in ordering the visual material together Appendix I acts both as a useful adjunct to arguments made throughout the thesis and as a potential source for further scholarly investigation.

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[57] Recent examples include Durantini, 1983, Orme, 2001, and Langmuir, 2006.
[58] Glück, 1937; Meyere, 1941; Hills, 1957.

We have already encountered one thematic approach to *Children's Games* in Christian von Mechel's eighteenth-century hang of the work. For Mechel, *Children's Games* represented 'Spring'; presumably because of the youth of the playing figures. In 1935 Charles de Tolnay proposed an alternative seasonal interpretation; that *Children's Games* represented 'Summer' in an incomplete series of four paintings depicting seasonal amusements.[60] In Tolnay's series 'Spring' was represented by *Carnival and Lent*, while two designs for prints by Bruegel, the *Kermesse at Hoboken* and *Skating Before the Gate of St George in Antwerp*, represented 'Autumn' and 'Winter' respectively.[61] Although the latter two works only exist in print form, Tolnay's thematic interpretation is rather more convincing than Mechel's. All dated between 1558 and 1560, these four works share a similar compositional format, include comical characters, and depict amusements which resemble those found in manuscript calendars. However, while *Carnival and Lent* is clearly set in early spring, it is not so easy to assign summer to *Children's Games*. The patch of verdant ground in the upper left of the panel certainly suggests that the weather is warm – the trees are in full leaf and children are swimming in the river. But besides this area, there is little else in the panel to connote a specific season of the year.

This can be contrasted with the evocative landscapes in the series of the *Months*. Whether rippling with ripe gold corn in the *Harvesters,* blanketed with snow in the *Hunters in the Snow*, or bare and whipped by late winter winds in the *Gloomy Day,* the landscape in each of these works dominates; it is the primary narrative element. Human figures are by comparison relatively incidental. Although their actions help to develop the seasonal narratives - harvesting fruit and corn in the summer months, or hunting, smoking meat and pruning trees in the winter - they are secondary to the landscapes. By comparison, the landscape background in *Children's Games* is not decisively evocative of one particular season and the depictions of games and pastimes are equally diverse. Thus although the youthful population of *Children's Games* may connote 'Spring' and the

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[59] Hindman, 1981, Appendix I, pp. 469-472.

[60] Tolnay, 1935, pp. 25-26.

[61] A signed pen and ink drawing for *Ice Skating before the Gate of Saint George* is dated 1558. The engraving was made by Frans Huys. Bruegel's signed pen and ink drawing for the *Kermis at Hoboken* is held by the Courtauld Institute Galleries, London and is dated 1559. The etching was engraved by Frans Hogenberg and published by Bartolomeus de Mompere. See Orenstein (ed.), 2001, fig. 55 and no's 62, 63 and 80.

patch of verdant countryside suggest 'Summer' the specific details of the children's games and activities contradict these straightforward, seasonal interpretations.

In the 1930's Tietze-Conrat took a different thematic approach to *Children's Games*, arguing that the panel might represent the first painting, *Infantia*, in an incomplete series of the Ages of Man.[62] Referencing a number of print series from the second half of the sixteenth century which depict playing children, Tietze-Conrat drew particular attention to the visual resemblance between *Children's Games* and a print of children playing executed by Nicolas de Bruyn after a drawing by Maerten de Vos, the first of a series of ten engravings depicting the Ages of Man. De Bruyn's print includes many of the same games as *Children's Games* and, like Bruegel's panel, the games are set in an urban square.[63] Although undecided as to whether de Vos was directly influenced by Bruegel, Tietze-Conrat argued that Bruegel's contemporaries would have understood *Children's Games* in a similar vein, as a representation of the first Age of Man. While we cannot rule out this possibility completely, the notion that *Children's Games* was ever intended to form part of such a series seems far-fetched. Babies in cribs or walking with baby walkers were traditional iconographical staples in depictions of *Infantia* and no such figures are present in *Children's Games*. Furthermore, none of Bruegel's extant paintings or prints fit with the theme of the Ages of Man; the artist appears to have shown no interest in the subject. Added to this is the fact that *Children's Games* was one of the first large-scale panels that Bruegel produced, and it is highly unlikely that he would have left a large and ambitious series unfinished at such an early point in his career. While it is possible that all of the other works in the series were lost at some point, there is compelling evidence to suggest that the panel belonged to another, quite different series.

Children's Games most closely resembles two other paintings by Bruegel, *Netherlandish Proverbs* (Berlin, Gemäldegarie) and the *Battle Between Carnival and Lent* (Vienna, Kunsthistoriches Museum). Executed on panels of similar dimensions, these paintings

[62] Tietze-Conrat, 1933.
[63] Hindman draws attention to the game of Blindman's buff at the centre of the image, arguing that a sixteenth-century viewer would have understood the print to be an analogy of marriage. Hindman, 1981, p. 462.

are all signed and dated either 1559 or 1560.[64] Each addresses a theme drawn from popular culture in an unusual manner, by staging an abundance of motifs within a realistic environment. In *Netherlandish Proverbs* a village is overrun with figures acting out approximately eighty popular proverbs. In the *Battle Between Carnival and Lent* the population of a town similarly perform a multitude of rituals associated with the periods of Carnival and Lent. As a result of their thorough treatment of a given theme, these three panels have been dubbed Bruegel's 'encyclopaedic' works.[65] Although other multi-figure compositions by Bruegel are sometimes included within this group, such as the *Triumph of Death* (c. 1562-4, Madrid, Prado) and the *Suicide of Saul* (1562, Vienna, Kunsthistoriches Museum), the different subject matter of these works sets them somewhat apart.[66] With its armies of marauding skeletons, the *Triumph of Death* is closest to Bruegel's other fantastic works which appear to have been inspired by Hieronymous Bosch, such as *Dulle Griet* (c. 1562-4, Antwerp, Museum Mayer van den Bergh) and the *Fall of the Rebel Angels* (1562, Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts). The *Suicide of Saul* also differs from the other encyclopaedic paintings in that it presents a recognisable Biblical narrative rather than a catalogue of popular culture.[67] Thus within Bruegel's painted oeuvre, *Children's Games*, *Netherlandish Proverbs*, and the *Battle Between Carnival and Lent* form a distinct group, a suite of collections which have been described as an 'atlas of human culture'. [68]

Visual and chronological similarities between these three paintings certainly seem to have contributed to the negative interpretations that *Children's Games* attracted during the latter half of the twentieth century. At first glance, all three works appear to catalogue folly, an opinion which has been fed by the iconological trajectory of

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[64] Signed and dated 1559, *Netherlandish Proverbs* measures 117 x 163cm. *The Battle Between Carnival and Lent* is also signed and dated 1559, and measures 118 x 164.5cm.

[65] 'In the 'encyclopaedic' group of pictures of 1559/60, Bruegel shows an insatiable interest in the never-ending variety of shapes and forms offered by peasant life…', Demus in Seipel (ed.), 1999, p. 18; 'The encyclopaedic character of the *Netherlandish Proverbs* and the *Carnival and Lent* is also apparent in *Children's Games*…', Gibson, 1977, p. 85; 'it was not Bruegel's intention to present a kind of encyclopaedia of children's games…', Grossmann, 1973, p. 191.

[66] Gibson discusses these five works together under the heading of *Theatrum mundi*, or 'Theatre of the world', Gibson, 1977, pp. 65-89.

[67] The *Suicide of Saul* is also considerably smaller than the encyclopaedic works, measuring just 33.5 x 55cm.

scholarship in seventeenth-century Dutch art. From the mid-twentieth century onwards scholars working on seventeenth-century Dutch paintings began to explore the possibility that these visually ravishing works depicted more than simply unmediated reality.[69] Using a wide variety of contemporary sources, including prints, literature and emblems, Eddy de Jongh applied Panofsky's principles of 'disguised symbolism' to a number of Dutch paintings.[70] The results served to 'unlock' hidden, and often didactic, meanings within the paintings. While De Jongh acknowledged that these works were intended to delight the viewer, he also suggested that they might play an instructive role, indoctrinating viewers in moral lessons pertinent to life in the newly formed Dutch Republic. Chief among De Jongh's sources were emblem books, their combination of motto, image and explanatory text seeming to illuminate the similar, but uncaptioned, images in contemporary paintings. The notion of a painting imbued with a moral message was particularly pertinent in relation to representations of children, the future citizens of the Dutch Republic.

Seventeenth-century Dutch society exhibited a veritable obsession with the importance of childhood as a time to develop virtuous habits and learn valuable lessons.[71] This message was expressed particularly forcefully in emblem books, which used depictions of children's games and toys to moralise about the behaviour of both young and old alike. Jacob Cats's *Silenus Alcibiabes* (1618) and Pieter Roemer Visscher's *Sinnepoppen* (1614) are just two examples of emblem books which employed a combination of verse and image to explore children's games as metaphors for time spent well or ill.[72] Their sentiments are perfectly embodied in Cats's well-known poem *Kinderspel*:

Play, even if it appears without sense,
Contains a whole world therein;

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[68] Koerner, 2004, p. 240.
[69] For a summary of these approaches see Konrad Renger's essay 'On the History of Research Concerning the Interpretation of Dutch Painting', in Franits (ed.), 1997, pp. 9-14.
[70] Examples of De Jongh's approach include the 1967 work *Zinne- en minnebeelden in de schilderkunst van de zeventiende eeuw* ('Emblems of Virtue and Love in Seventeenth-Century Painting'); the essay 'Realism and Seeming Realism in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting', (1971), reprinted in Franits (ed.)., 1997, pp. 21-56, and the catalogue to the 1976 Rijksmuseum exhibition *Tot lering en vermaak* ('To Instruct and Delight').
[71] For more on this see chapter seven, 'In the Republic of Children', in Schama, 1987.
[72] Cats and Farlie, 1870; Visscher, 1949.

The world and its complete structure,
Is nothing but a children's game;
Thus, after the frost thaws
When you look at all that foolish youth does,
You will understand on the street
How the whole world goes;
You will find there, I know it well
Your own folly in children's games.[73]

As in other areas of Dutch art, these emblematic images seemed to 'explain' painted representations of children and their games and as a result they have been used to inform readings of a wide range of paintings of children from the seventeenth century.[74]

The idea that emblems can be used as keys to 'unlock' paintings is tantalizing, and as such it is not surprising that emblems have been employed by scholars to explain the meaning behind Bruegel's elusive *Children's Games*.[75] The earliest and most comprehensive of these approaches was that taken by Carl Gustav Stridbeck in 1956, and thus predates much of the work on Dutch genre paintings. Using examples drawn from Visscher's *Sinnepoppen* and Cats's *Silenus Alcibiabes*, Stridbeck analysed a number of Bruegel's motifs and concluded that *Children's Games* presented a negative vision of mankind's folly. [76] Seventeenth–century emblems were used by Stridbeck to demonstrate that the figures turning somersaults in *Children's Games* signify distorted vision, the boy swimming with a bladder signals mistrust, the game of 'bucca' stands for tyranny, and games with hoops represent the futility of life's endeavour. The influence of Stridbeck and De Jongh can be felt in Seymour Slive's discussion of the boy blowing a bubble in the lower left foreground of *Children's Games.* Slive reads this motif in relation to the maxim *homo bulla* or 'man the bubble' and the seventeenth-century *vanitas* tradition of

[73] Versions of this poem exist in slightly different forms, one prefacing Cats's emblem book, *Silenus Alcibiabes*, the other introducing a didactice treatise on marriage entitled *Houwelijk*. Translation taken from Hindman, 1981, p. 466.
[74] For examples see De Jongh (ed.), 1976 and Bedaux and Ekkart (ed.), 2000.
[75] The earliest of these was Otto Benesch, who cited Cats's *Silenus Alcibiabes* when describing the 'moral meaning' of Bruegel's children as 'images of the queerness of adults'. Benesch, 1947, p. 97.
[76] Stridbeck, 1956, pp. 184-191.

using bubble-blowing *putti* to symbolise the transience of life.[77] Emblem literature also coloured Sandra Hindman's interpretation of *Children's Games*. Focusing on two particular motifs – the 'mock' marriage procession and the 'mock' baptism – she concluded that the panel was a comment of the role of folly and chance in life's major events. According to Hindman, the proximity of games of chance (knucklebones, blindman's buff) to the mimicry of adult rituals (marriage, baptism) heralded the association between children's games and folly which was to become more prevalent in the seventeenth century.[78] The painting's summery weather served to support this argument; Hindman argued that the festive traditions of Midsummer included courtship games and rituals.

Emblems, with their neat combinations of image and explanation, do indeed appear to offer a tempting solution to Bruegel's complex panel. Certainly a number of *kinderspelen* prints found in emblem books which picture public squares filled with playing children seem to be directly inspired by *Children's Games* (Fig. 6a and b).[79] But it is important to

[77] Slive, 1962, pp. 490-1. The maxim *homo bulla* was revived in the sixteenth century in Erasmus's *Adagia* and became particularly popular in the second half of the sixteenth century. A painted image of a *putto* blowing bubbles first appeared in 1574 on the reverse of Cornelius Ketel's double-sided portrait *A Man of the Wachendorff Family* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum). A year later Hadrianus Junius's *Emblemata Adriani* linked children trying to catch bubbles with vain effort. The accompanying verse reads: 'The children who want to catch the bubbles / Floating in the air, strive hopelessly'. In 1594 Hendrick Goltzius paired a bubble-blowing *putto* with a skull in the engraving *Quis Evadet?* (Who will be spared) and Jacques de Gheyn's *Allegory of Death* (1599), similarly focused on a bubble-blowing *putto*. Seventeenth-century paintings followed these prints and used youths blowing bubbles to symbolise hopeless or pointless endeavour, worldly vanity or the brevity of life. For general outlines of the tradition in relation to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century art see Stechow, 1938; Brown, 1984, pp. 38-42; Schama, 1987, pp. 513-516; Langmuir, 2006, pp. 216-230. For more on the tradition of the bubble-blowing *putto* see Langmuir, 2006, pp. 215-230.

[78] Hindman, 1981, pp. 462-468.

[79] Three seventeenth-century *kinderspelen* images continue the pictorial traditions established by *Children's Games*. Two of these are attributed to the Middelburg artist Adriaen van de Venne and were produced to illustrate the writings of Jacob Cats, editions of which were published by Adriaen van de Venne's elder brother Jacques van de Venne. *Children Playing on the Abbey Square in Middleburg* illustrated Cats's poem *Kinderspel* and appeared in his first emblem book, *Silenus Alcibiabes* (1618). Van de Venne produced a second *kinderspelen* image for a later work by Jacob Cats, a didactic treatise on marriage entitled *Houwelyck* (1625). Divided into six books ('Maiden', 'Sweetheart', 'Bride', 'Wife', 'Mother' and 'Widow'), the illustration of children's games precedes the third book, *Bruyt*. For this Van de Venne produced an entirely new composition (Fig. 6a). Adopting a vertical format, twenty-one different games are staged on the tree-lined Voorhout in The Hague, as seen from the Kneuterdijk.[79] A third image, *Het Hof van Hollandt* (Fig. 6b) presents children's games before another view of The Hague. The background contains a view of the Binnenhof seen over the frozen lake of the Hofvijver. Attributed to Jan van de Velde II, this image is clearly related to the Van de Venne prints.[79] All three engravings include many of the same games. As demonstrated by the final column in Appendix I, these frequently reproduce games found in Bruegel's

recognise the methodological flaw in using seventeenth-century emblems to 'decode' a sixteenth-century painting. While the printing of emblem books in the Netherlands took off during the second half of the sixteenth century, the emblems so often cited in discussions of *Children's Games* postdate the panel by around sixty years. In fact only one emblem book appeared prior to *Children's Games*; Guillaumne La Perrière's *Théâtre des bons engins*.[80] Like the later emblem collections, La Perrière made use of games and sports in his collection of woodcuts. But it is significant that the games found in the *Théâtre des bons engins* are entirely different games to those included in Bruegel's compendium. The five games found in La Perrière's collection are tennis, racket ball, chess, backgammon and dicing. These are all adult games, and could not be more different from the selection pictured in *Children's Games.*

A second, no less major flaw in most of the iconological interpretations of *Children's Games* is their reliance on using only one or two motifs to 'unlock' the painting. Like the emblem books on which they rely, these interpretations treat each of the motifs in the panel in isolation, rather than addressing *Children's Games* as a complete collection. This is to deny the encyclopaedic nature of the panel, which is in itself an important aspect of the painting's iconology. Over the years, few scholars have engaged with the question of how the encyclopaedic character of *Children's Games* might relate to its meaning. Although present in the earliest scholarly catalogue raisonné of Bruegel's works, the idea that *Children's Games* represented a 'morally neutral' encyclopaedic compendium was quickly replaced by more complex, negative readings of the panel's encyclopaedism.[81] This is perhaps due to the inevitable comparisons with the *Battle Between Carnival and Lent* and *Netherlandish Proverbs* which arise out of any discussion of the encyclopaedic nature of *Children's Games*. Taken together, these three works appear to reference a range of contemporary notions with powerfully negative connotations. The crazed actions of the inhabitants in each scene are reminiscent of the reversals of

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panel. For more on these images see Bol, 1989; Landwehr, 1970, no's 80-125; Schama, 1987, p. 507-511 and Hollstein, vol. 35, p. 77.

[80] Originally issued in Paris as *Le Theatre des bons engines, auquel sont contenuz cent Emblemes moraulx* (1539 and 1544). Dutch version published in Antwerp titled *Tpalays der gheleerder ingienen oft der constiger gheesten* (1554). Second edition 1556, third edition 1564. Landwehr, 1970, nos. 317-319. Praz, 1964, pp. 394-395.

normality that occur in 'World Upside-down' imagery. Furthermore, the raised viewpoint and multitude of human foibles displayed in each panel reference the notion of the *Theatrum mundi*, or 'Theatre of the world'. However, in recent decades the encyclopaedism evident in both *Carnival and Lent* and *Netherlandish Proverbs* has undergone something of a reappraisal. Connecting these two paintings to sixteenth-century notions of abundance or *copia*, scholars have proposed new readings of the paintings which link Bruegel's compositional strategies to aspects of contemporary rhetorical practice. [82] It is worth exploring parallels between Bruegel's three encyclopaedic panels in a little more depth. *Netherlandish Proverbs* and *Carnival and Lent* provide an important context for *Children's Games* and the recent scholarship on them informs my own methodological approaches.

The three encyclopaedic panels are among the earliest surviving paintings of Bruegel's career, and form a seemingly natural conclusion to his earlier 'cataloguing' endeavours. These include a number of Alpine drawings which were later turned into a print series, the *Large Landscapes* (1555-1556), and designs for sets of engravings of the *Seven Deadly Sins* and the *Seven Virtues*. Many of Bruegel's original drawings for the *Large Landscapes* series have not survived, but his signed and dated designs for the *Seven Deadly Sins* and the *Seven Virtues* are all still intact. [83] Executed two years apart, the series of *Sins* (1556-1557) and *Virtues* (1559-1560) share a similar format, as well as significant differences.[84] While the *Sins* are all set in fantastic Boschian landscapes the *Virtues* are located within the sixteenth-century Netherlands. Both the *Sins* and the *Virtues* centre on human figures; in the *Sins* the human is often accompanied by an animal, while in the *Virtues*

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[81] Bastelaer and Hulin de Loo, 1907.

[82] Kavaler, 1999, pp. 111-148; Meadow, 2002.

[83] Only two drawings survive from the designs that Bruegel drew for the twelve etchings called the *Large Landscapes* and a thirteenth print known as *The Large Alpine Landscape*. The unsigned prints are recognised as the work of the Van Doetecum brothers, having previously been attributed to their publisher, Hieronymous Cock. The uniform size and format of the prints suggest that they were created as a group, although inconsistencies in titles and the lack of a numbered order suggest that the prints were available for purchase both singly and in groups. Orenstein (ed.), 2001, no's. 22-34, p. 120.

[84] Bruegel signed and dated all fourteen drawings, inscribing the Latin name of the personification at the centre of each composition. The Dutch verses that appear in the lower margins were added by a later hand, and bear little relation to the details in the drawings. Pieter Van der Heyden cut all seven plates of the series of *Sins*, and Philips Galle cut all of the *Virtues*; both were working for Hieronymous Cock's

the human figure is a female personification, depicted in flowing robes and holding fitting attributes. Surrounding these central figures are further motifs which develop the pictorial theme, from hybrid creatures vomiting or gorging themselves on food and drink in *Gula* (Gluttony) to a series of sacraments being performed inside a church in *Fides* (Faith). These additional motifs act as *exempla* which, following methods used by both Classical authors and medieval preachers, illustrate and expand upon the central moral points. While *exempla* were typically taken from fables, legends and folk tales, Bruegel preferred to use recognisable situations from daily life to make his moral points. Like the *Sins* and the *Virtues* engravings, the encyclopaedic pictures catalogue a range of *exempla*: unlike the prints, the *exempla* in the encyclopaedic paintings do not always support one moral consensus.

In addition to continuing the cataloguing trajectory present within Bruegel's own oeuvre, *Netherlandish Proverbs* and *Carnival and Lent* both borrow heavily from prints by the Malines artist Frans Hogenberg. Hogenberg's proverb print *Die Blau Huicke* ('The Blue Cloak'), made up of two sheets printed separately and joined together, was published by Bartholomeus de Mompere around 1558.[85] Although lacking the sophistication of *Netherlandish Proverbs*, Hogenberg's collection of forty-three labelled proverbs clearly inspired Bruegel's painting (Fig. 7).[86] *Netherlandish Proverbs* may also reference another print by an anonymous Flemish artist, *Peasant Village with Proverbs on Sloth* (c. 1550). Although this print includes far fewer proverbs than Hogenberg's print, it's staging of inn, river and distant landscape seem to anticipate Bruegel's painted composition.[87] *Carnival and Lent* also references an earlier print by Frans Hogenberg, published by Hieronymous Cock in 1558. As with the proverbs scene, Hogenberg's

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publishing house *Aux Quatre Vents*. Orenstein (ed.), 2001, p. 159. For more on the two sets see Freedberg, 1989; Serebrennikov, 1986; Gibson, 1977; Kline, 1963 and Tolnay, 1952.

[85] Although the print is not dated in 1558 several impressions of it were recorded in Christopher Plantin's possession. Gibson, 1977, p. 71. Plantin delivered *The Blue Cloak* to the Parisian booksellers Martin the Younger in 1558 and Barthélemy Jourdain in 1559. Mori, ''She hangs a Blue Cloak over her Husband' The World of Human Follies in Proverbial Art' in Mieder (ed.), 2004.

[86] The print's title, written in Roman capitals, draws an explicit link between proverbs and folly. It states: 'This is generally called *The Blue Cloak*, but it would be better named the World's follies.'

[87] For an image see Gibson, 1977, fig. 45. The print was issued in three states. The first carries the name Cornelis Massys but probably derives from an earlier invention of Hieronymus Bosch.

Battle Between Carnival and Lent includes far fewer examples than Bruegel's scene and includes explanatory texts on the surface of the print (Fig. 8).[88]

In both cases Bruegel significantly revised Hogenberg's images, presenting the subjects on a grand scale in oil on panel and approximately doubling the number of proverbs and carnival customs pictured. By removing the explanatory texts present in Hogenberg's prints Bruegel rendered the motifs more ambiguous, a development which served to expand their potential meanings even further. In addition to being depicted with greater virtuosity and extension, the motifs in Bruegel's scenes are integrated within the believable space of a local village or town. Like the *Virtues*, each of the encyclopaedic panels is set in contemporary Flanders, although, recalling the *Sins*, these worlds are not quite 'real' but more 'World's Upside-down'. The compositions of the *Virtues* engravings are made more relevant to the encyclopaedic pictures by the fact that the images were executed concurrently. The majority of designs for the *Virtues* series (*Fides*, *Caritas*, *Prudentia*, *Spes*, and *Justicia*) are dated 1559, as are *Netherlandish Proverbs* and *Carnival and Lent*, while *Children's Games* and the final two drawings in the series (*Fortitudo* and *Temperantia*) are all dated the following year. Compositional similarities between *Netherlandish Proverbs* and the drawing for the virtue of prudence, *Prudentia*, are particularly marked (Fig. 9). Similarities include the juxtaposition of a large, two-storey building on the left with a smaller, open-sided building on the right; in *Prudentia* a smoke-house and bed-chamber, in *Netherlandish Proverbs* a tavern and bakery. The perspective in *Netherlandish Proverbs* is more steeply raked than in *Prudentia*, but in both images a river appears from behind the buildings in the middle-ground and winds toward the upper right. Sail boats caught in the breeze bridge the horizon line in both cases. Both images also feature a thatched house hunched on the horizon and an even more distant church, which is almost invisible in *Netherlandish Proverbs*, and more prominent in *Prudentia*.[89]

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[88] Gibson, 1977, fig. 48. See also Kinser, 1990, pp. 48-52.

[89] The *Peasant village with Proverbs on Sloth*, c.1550, shares a similar composition. It should be noted that in this case it is the finished engraving which shares the compositional similarity with *Netherlandish Proverbs* (ie. tavern on the left, cottage on the right), whereas in *Prudentia* it is the drawing which is similar to *Netherlandish Proverbs*, while the finished engraving is reversed, and thus effectively mirrors this composition (tavern on the right, bedchamber on the left).

In contrast to their shared stages, the actions of the villagers in each scene could not be more different. In *Prudentia* the virtuous villagers are wisely preparing for the future. Supplies are laid aside, fires are dampened down, money is piled into a chest and buildings are repaired. In contrast, *Netherlandish Proverbs* features the exact opposite of many of these actions. In the painting, fire is not saved for later, but used inappropriately or squandered: in the middle distance a knight kneels to warm himself by the flames of another man's house, and in the left foreground a woman carries fire in the form of a glowing coal in one hand and a pail of water in the other. To the centre right of *Netherlandish Proverbs*, in a position analogous to the man pouring money into a chest in *Prudentia*, a well-dressed gentleman instead casts his coins into the river. Amidst the chaos, buildings are left to decay, and a sow and her piglets help themselves to the contents of a barrel.

Although *Netherlandish Proverbs* and *Carnival and Lent* are both signed and dated the same year the *Proverbs* feels the earlier of the two. The panoramic perspective which characterises the trio of encyclopaedic paintings is here in its infancy. Yet when compared with *Prudentia*, *Netherlandish Proverbs* represents a clear move towards a more 'encyclopaedic' vision. It is as if Bruegel has taken a step back from his *Prudentia* composition with *Netherlandish Proverbs*. While both images feature only a narrow band of sky, in *Netherlandish Proverbs* the perspective of the viewer is further elevated; we see more of the upper storey and roof of the building on the left, and a greater expanse of ground is included between the foreground and the horizon. The number of figures incorporated into this space is roughly tripled, from twenty-five in *Prudentia* to seventy-four in *Netherlandish Proverbs*, but the *Proverbs* is still the least populated of the three encyclopaedic panels. Compared with *Carnival and Lent* and *Children's Games* the composition of *Netherlandish Proverbs* is noticeably more awkward and experimental. The tarts which tile the roof of the tavern do not seem to have been reconciled with its steep perspective; they sit obstinately on the surface of the picture plane and refuse to recede with the building. Gradations in the scale of the figures in the middle ground of *Netherlandish Proverbs* are also confusing. The man leaning on his staff and 'watching the

bears dancing' appears overly large given the distance between the spit of land on which he is standing and the foreground.

Bruegel rejected the winding river device when setting out *Carnival and Lent*, situating the figures instead within the flattened space of a larger and noticeably more urban square. Neat streets lined with taverns and shops replace the ramshackle buildings found in the *Proverbs*; their step-gabled roofs disguise the horizon line and contribute to the painting's claustrophobic feel. Sky is only visible in small sections, its grey pallor confirming that the season is early spring. It is as though Bruegel has grown more confident in his vision. The sun is no longer included, and the teeming ground occupies the vast majority of the panel. The composition is divided in half down the centre, with Carnival activities extending on the left and Lenten activities occupying the right. Even the trees reflect this divide; those on the left are bare, signalling early spring, while those on the right are in leaf. The church, a distant motif in *Prudentia* and the *Proverbs,* dominates the right foreground of the panel. As in *Netherlandish Proverbs*, a large tavern occupies the left foreground, its sign declaring that *Dit is in d blau schut* ('This is the Inn of the Blue Boat'), a name synonymous with Carnival excess.[90] The antithetical architecture on either side of the square echoes the central joust which extends, frieze-like, across the foreground of the painting. Like the figures accompanying King Carnival, the tavern on the left is squat, homely and colourful. Its upper storey is clad in wood and its windows and doorway are crammed with faces; much like King Carnival's outfit, the tavern is bursting at the seams. The stone church, by contrast, is tall, austere and grey. Dark green leaves dot the ground around its arched entrance like the black bees around Lent's hive-hat. In *Netherlandish Proverbs* the buildings begin at the bottom of the panel, but in *Carnival and Lent* they start mid-way up. The foreground of the composition is thus stretched, allowing space for more figures, most particularly the combative parties of Carnival and Lent. Over two hundred distinct figures can be counted in this festive scene.

[90] *The Blau[we] Schu[i]t* was the name of a legendary mock guild whose members were devoted to and proficient in Carnivalesque excesses. Floats decorated with blue boats are documented in processions and the symbol became synonymous with Carnival excesses in late medieval literature, the most famous example of which is Sebastian Brandt's *Ship of Fools*. Pleij, 2001; Kavaler, 1999, pp. 121-125.

While its composite 'listing' nature is evident, *Carnival and Lent* is in many ways closer to reality than either of the other two encyclopaedic panels. Events of the kind pictured by Bruegel were regularly organised and performed in the streets by clubs and confraternities as a climax to the Carnival season. These included farcical plays (two such plays feature in Bruegel's panorama), processions of floats bearing people dressed in costumes, and mock performances or competitions, such as mock marriages, jousts and races.[91] The home-made quality of the combatants' costumes and the authentic instruments which their followers play further suggest that this was not one artist's dreamlike vision, but a regular event. This is not to deny the staged nature of Bruegel's composition; the theatricality of the image is evident, but the staging begins with the actions of the villagers, who self-consciously don homemade costumes, and not with the artistic representation of these customs. In Bruegel's retelling of events the roughness of the props and the amateur nature of the actors are revealed more intensely; by setting the parade down in paint Bruegel does not enhance its realism by glossing over what is make-believe but instead exposes with typical objectivity the man-made nature of the charade.[92] Although it charts Carnival excess, *Carnival and Lent* is not overly damning. Unlike in images by artists like Sebald and Barthel Beham and Pieter van der Borcht, which exaggerate the debauchery of Carnival time, Bruegel's revellers are relatively well-behaved.[93] Furthermore, Lent is hardly presented as a virtuous successor to Carnival. Personified by a mean-faced, haggard woman, the rituals of Lent seem just as ridiculous as those of Carnival.

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[91] During Carnival at Zittau in 1505 a battle was fought between a man wearing a herring costume and a man dressed as Hans Wurst. In Bologna in 1506 there was a tournament between 'Carnival' on a fat horse and 'Lent' on a thin one, each with a group of followers. Images of jousting on barrels mounted on sleds are included in manuscripts which document the Nürnberg *Schembartlauf* (Carnival procession) of 1515. In 1521 a combat is recorded between Lent draped in herring and Carnival, draped with sausages. On these see Kavaler, 1999, p. 130 and Burke, 1994, chapter 7. Earlier images of battles between Carnival and Lent include a Medici inventory of 1492, which lists an old Flemish panel showing Carnival mocked by revellers ['*uno panno fiandrescha piu fighure bachanarie intorno a una quaresima*'] (this work is untraced). Three pictures executed in a Boschian style and possibly produced after a lost original by Bosch feature a Lenten figure in a frieze of Carnival revelry (one now in the Noorbrabants Museum in 's-Hertogenbosch, one in the Mayer Van den Bergh Museum, Antwerp and one in Utrecht). Kavaler, 1999, p. 130.

[92] Koerner, 2004, p. 228.

[93] For examples see Moxey, 1989a, chapter 3 'Festive Peasants and Social Order'.

Compositionally, *Children's Games* marks the culmination of this series. The device of the winding river returns, and just as a river was used as a location for proverbs in *Prudentia* and *Netherlandish Proverbs*, here it is a site for specific types of play. As in the other two pictures the left foreground is occupied by a large two-storey building and once again the number of figures is increased; the long street alone contains over eighty playing figures, more than the entire population of *Netherlandish Proverbs*. The occasion for the children's play is not immediately apparent; conceptually we are caught somewhere between the folk festivities of *Carnival and Lent* and the artistic invention of *Netherlandish Proverbs*. Unlike the other two encyclopaedic paintings *Children's Games* has no precursors. While it is quite possible that, like the other two panels, a Hogenberg print was Bruegel's point of departure, no such image has come to light. Another possibility might be that the work grew organically out of the passage in *Carnival and Lent* in which children whip tops outside the church.

The unusual, list-like appearance of the encyclopaedic works has contributed to a number of negative or moralistic interpretations. One of the most damning readings of Bruegel's encyclopaedic style was put forward in the 1930's by the Viennese scholar, Hans Sedlmayr. [94] For Sedlmayr, the detached, list-like quality of all of Bruegel's paintings, and the three encyclopaedic panels in particular, was disturbing and significant. Attempting to express the formal qualities of Bruegel's encyclopaedism, Sedlmayr adopted the term *macchia*, or 'colour patch', to describe the way in which the paintings disintegrate into collage-like lists. Sedlymayr described the disquietening manner in which the formal qualities of the works distort our perceptions of their subject matter, making strange even those things that are most familiar:

'The first and classic product of this estranged vision turned into the everyday is *Children's Games*. If one disregards what children's games are, and what they mean for us and for children, then what children do when engaged in these games is as absurd, uncanny, and suspicious as the behaviour of a band of lunatics or other beings incomprehensible to us. There are monsters with ten legs and three heads. The blindfolded boy looking for a pot with a staff is reminiscent of an executioner, the stilt

[94] Sedlmayr, 'Bruegel's *Macchia*' (1934), published in Wood (ed.), 2000, pp. 323-378. Sedlmayr argued that *Children's Games* was one of the earliest works to express Bruegel's estranged vision, with the actions of the players, when taken out of the context of the playground, resembling the behaviour of lunatics.

walker of a cripple, the contortions produced by the games of epileptic seizures, the strange toys of magical apparatuses – the whole scene is one of 'indescribable mania.' [95]

For Sedlmayr, Bruegel's *macchia* resulted in a negative expressive register – the chaotic agglomeration of colour patches was symbolic of a disordered world and the detached 'estranged' motifs reflected man's inhumanity to man.

Sedlmayr's formalist reading of the encyclopaedic pictures is unique, but other scholars have similarly referenced *Netherlandish Proverbs* and *Carnival and Lent* in their discussions of *Children's Games* and developed a negative reading of all three encyclopaedic works. Two terms recur again and again in this strain scholarship: the 'World Upside-down' and the *theatrum mundi*. Although it has been used to describe all three works, the notion of the 'World Upside-down' has been most often invoked in relation to *Netherlandish Proverbs*, and the painting was even listed under this title in a seventeenth-century inventory.[96] The painting contains several inverted globes, including one which is prominently placed above the entrance to the tavern, like a sign (Fig. 10). [97] This motif glosses the entire work, which pictures villagers engaged in doing precisely what they are not supposed to do. Like many of the motifs in the *Proverbs*, 'World Upside-down' motifs traditionally turn proverbial truisms or familiar scenarios on their heads so that their meaning is reversed; the cart is put before the horse, the hunter is hunted by the hares.[98] Whilst this might initially appear to be threatening and

[95] Ibid., p. 341.
[96] References to the three paintings in relation to the 'World Upside Down' include Gibson, 1977; Kunzle, 1977; Slive, 1962; Stridbeck, 1956 and Tolnay, 1935. *Netherlandish Proverbs* was listed in Peeter Steevens inventory as *'Le Monde Renverseé, representé par plusiers Proverbes et Moralités.'* Briels, 1980.
[97] In the right foreground a large globe is tipped on its side, the cross running parallel to the ground. This globe is being entered by a cripple, whose awkward contortions are usually understood to represent the proverb 'he must bend to make his way through the world'. Beside the cripple, a nobleman balances a far smaller globe on his thumb. In this example the globe is the right way up, with the cross exactly on top. The pairing of these motifs is telling; the nobleman demonstrates that his mastery of the world is effortless, a point which is further underlined by the contorted cripple at his feet. A third globe, almost identical in size and positioning to that held by the nobleman is held in the lap of Christ, who is seated on a throne behind the nobleman. Here the globe is a traditional orb, and functions with the right hand raised in blessing and the gold halo as part of the stock iconography of the *Salvator Mundi*. Meadow, 2002, pp. 41-2.
[98] For a variety of World Upside-down motifs in misericords see Grössinger, 1997, pp. 85-95.

negative, the threat posed by such reversals was highly socially contingent.[99] The three encyclopaedic pictures do not include any of the overt reversals of the social order found in broadside prints of the reversible world. Instead, in all three panels aspects of the reversible world provide a license for what is reassuringly temporary misrule, which serves to both entertain and edify the viewer.

Acting out the paradoxical wisdom of proverbs creates a scene which is topsy-turvy but explicable; the inhabitants of *Netherlandish Proverbs* might be doing precisely what they are not supposed to, but their actions are to an extent justified by proverbial law. Crucially, the foolish proverbs are being performed for the viewer, who legitimises them by observing and learning from them. A similar kind of license can be applied to the chaos of *Carnival and Lent*.[100] The traditional village Carnival, when fools dressed as Kings and paraded through the streets was typically a time when the normal social order was reversed. Again, these social reversals, as well as all the eating, drinking and excess, were permitted; licensed by the Church, they were strictly delimited by the period of Carnival. Finally, children's play can be recognised as also being protected by a special kind of license. Although it might often be foreign and indecipherable to adults, childhood play draws upon and reframes everyday events and objects and represents a rehearsal for life's greater challenges. Ultimately, whatever takes place in *Children's Games* can be permitted because the protagonists are 'only children'; like the proverbial actors in *Netherlandish Proverbs*, their mistakes can be observed and learned from, both by themselves and by others. Like the Carnival revellers, the 'madness' of

[99] Concerned primarily with questions of class and economic conflict in the period, David Kunzle has considered *Netherlandish Proverbs* and concluded that given the high status of Bruegel's patrons the relationship between the painting and the 'World Upside-down' would have been loose and politically neutral. Rather then threatening a patron, Kunzle sees Bruegel's choice of village settings and peasant actors in *Netherlandish Proverbs* as 'putting the poor in their place' by reinforcing the characteristic of the lower classes as repositories for foolish behaviour. Kunzle, 1977, p. 202.

[100] The 'World Upside-down' play being staged in the lower left foreground of *Carnival and Lent* might be interpreted as a further, playful comment on this theme. The performance is of *De Vuile Bruid* ('the Dirty Bride'). During the sixteenth century this traditional Shrovetide play became conflated with the story of *Mopsus and Nisa* from Virgil's Eighth Eclogue. The wedding of Mopsus and Nisa was a reference to the world turned upside down – if Mopsus can marry Nisa then anything can happen. Cock issued a print of Bruegel's play detail in 1570 which is inscribed *MOPSO NISA DATVR, QVID NON SPEREMVS AMANTES* (Mopsus marries Nisa, what may not we lovers hope for). The phrase also appeared in contemporary proverb books. Orenstein (ed.), 2001, entries 111 and 112, and Sullivan, 1991, pp. 461-462.

Children's Games is temporally limited - just as the period of Carnival will end, one day the children will grow up. Thus in each of the encyclopaedic panels 'normal' regulations are suspended and unusual behaviour permitted. Although at first glance this may appear disturbing, it is unlikely that this behaviour would have been threatening to Bruegel's original audience. While it stands momentarily outside of real life, it both reflects upon it and is and licensed by it.

Another notion frequently used to produce a negative reading of the encyclopaedic panels is that of the *theatrum mundi* or 'Theatre of the world'. With antecedents in classical and medieval literature, the notion of the *theatrum mundi*, in which mankind played the lead role, a tragi-comic actor in the drama of life, was pervasive in sixteenth-century thought.[101] The elevated viewpoints, everyday scenarios and multitude of actors evident in Bruegel's panoramas have often invoked comparisons with this genre, and most, although not all, of the readings have focused on its negative aspects.[102] But other sixteenth-century applications of the term 'theatre' held more positive connotations which are relevant to a discussion of the encyclopaedic nature of Bruegel's work. One such was the *theatrum naturae*, in which the world represented a stage for God to display his skill as a creator to man, rather than man to display his folly to God.[103] Although humans and their vices were not the main focus, the *theatrum naturae* was always presented in human terms, with figures pictured within nature charting, navigating or

[101] The notion was referenced by Erasmus's Folly, who, looking down on the earth from the realm of the Gods, exclaimed 'Good God, what a theatre. How strange are the actions of fools.' Erasmus, *In Praise of Folly* (Paris, 1511). The idea was expressed again in 1564 in Pierre de Ronsard's epilogue 'the world is a theatre, men are the actors, fortune is the stage director… the heavens and fates are its spectators', and later in the century William Shakespeare was to repeat the idea that 'all the world's a stage.' Ronsard, Epilogue to the Fontainebleau carnival (1564). Shakespeare, *As You Like It* (1599), II, 7. In Aegiius Sadeler's *Theatrum morum* (1609) space was left on each page for the reader to add examples of his own choice, and a *Theatre des Animaux* (1644), designed especially for the edification of young people, used animal fables to present human morals. Christian, 1987.

[102] Grossman saw Bruegel's children as absorbed in their affairs with all the seriousness of adults, his description the children as 'puppets who do not act from their own volition' suggesting negative parallels with the *theatrum mundi*. Grossman, 1973, p. 191. Stechow similarly described Bruegel's figures as puppets, seeing the whole panel as 'a panorama of folly rather than of childhood.' Stechow, 1955, p. 60. Gibson also viewed Bruegel's three encyclopaedic panels in relation to the *theatrum mundi*. However, unlike previous scholars, Gibson's reference to the *theatrum mundi* was not overtly negative; he described Bruegel as a follower of Democritus (the laughing philosopher) rather than Heraclitus (the weeping philosopher). Gibson, 1977, p. 88.

[103] See Blair, 1997, chapter 5: 'Theatrical Metaphors'.

farming the landscapes.[104] Questions about the role of mankind in the world would seem to be embodied by these human figures, which are dwarfed by the grandeur of the landscape.[105] In other examples, figures are situated prominently at the edges of topographical images. Here they might face the viewer and sport a regional costume or tool emblematic of the place depicted, or they might turn away, and join the viewer in surveying the landscape vista. Various scholars have explored parallels between Bruegel's work and the stoic, contemplative habits of mind evidenced by contemporary cartographic images.[106] These readings have been more positive than those which reference the *theatrum mundi*. Like contemporary maps, Bruegel's paintings can be seen to harmoniously combine sweeping vistas with painstaking attention to the details of local colour and regional costumes.

No doubt Bruegel's friend Abraham Ortelius was drawing upon the notion of the *theatrum naturae* when he titled his great atlas, the *Theatrum orbis terrarum* ('Theatre of the World').[107] But in terms of its scope and structure Ortelius's *Theatrum* also embraced a third, proto-scientific aspect of the term 'theatre', which was frequently used in the sixteenth century as a title for a text or collection of images which attempted to present an encyclopaedic treatment of a topic.[108] Ortelius had begun his career as a map colourer

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[104] Referencing Bruegel's trip to Italy, Svetlana Alpers argues that the landscape encountered on the journey was just as important and formative as the art: 'Journeys undertaken for mapping, among other descriptive purposes (including the study of foreign flora and fauna and costumes), were as much an impetus to travel abroad for Northern artists in the sixteenth century as the desire to see Rome and to learn about antiquity.' Alpers, 1983, p. 128. Figures sketching were common within sixteenth-century town-mapping, and Bruegel's *Prospectus Tyburtinus (View of Tivoli)* includes a small figures sketching. These figures inform us that the view is surveyed by direct observation, and that it is filtered through special (artistic) eyes.

[105] It has been argued that this type of cartographic reasoning, the picturing of man in relation to nature, inspired the development of both 'self' and 'subject' in the imaginary literature of the period. Conley, 1996, p. 2.

[106] Kavaler, 1999, pp. 149-183; Gibson, 1989, p. 73; Alpers, 1983, pp. 144-145; Müller-Hofstede, 1979, pp. 73-142.

[107] In 1577 a smaller and cheaper version of Ortelius's *Theatrum* appeared. It was called the *Spieghel der Werelt* (Mirror of the World). It is significant that both of the terms *Speculum* (Mirror) and *Theatrum* (Theatre) explicitly connected knowledge with vision, and were suggestive of illusion, presenting the real world as transformed through reflection or play acting.

[108] Tabular or subject theatres frequently used illustrations for their basis, and included subjects as diverse as theatres of musical instruments, theatres of history, theatres of famous men, and botanical theatres. Examples include Michael Praetorius's *Theatrum instrumentorum seu sciagraphia* (Wolfenbüttel, 1620) and Jacques Besson's *Théâtre des instruments Mathématiques et Méchaniques* (Lyon, 1578), botanical collections like Daniel Rabel's *Theatrum florae* (Paris, 1622) and John Parkinson's *Theatrum botanicum* (London, 1640),

and trader rather than a cartographer, and the *Theatrum* is a testament to his enthusiasm for system and standardisation rather than originality. The atlas did not contain any new maps; Ortelius's achievement was assemble fifty-three of the best existing maps of the world and have them re-engraved according to a uniform format.[109] Despite it being a compilation of maps, Ortelius addressed his atlas to the 'Reader', and texts were to become an increasingly important element of the *Theatrum*. In addition to inscriptions, titles and place names on the surface of the maps and detailed accounts of the places depicted on the back of the maps, Ortelius developed a number of textual lists within the atlas. These included a list of all the geographers and artists who had contributed maps to the *Theatrum*, the *Catalogus Auctorum Tabularum Geographicarum*, and a collection of ancient geographical names, the *Synonymia Geographia*. At first these lists were organised into alphabetical appendices within the atlas, but as editions of the *Theatrum* developed, so the appendices grew. By 1579 the number of entries in the *Synonymia Geographia* had grown from 2,100 to over 10,000, and Ortelius was able to present the list to the printer Christopher Plantin as a work fit to be published in its own right.[110] The emphasis of the list had now shifted considerably; whereas in the original appendix modern names had been listed beside classical or ancient names, operating like a key, the 1579 edition included only Latin names, which Ortelius believed would be 'useful for the understanding not only of geographical work, but also of historical and poetical writings.' Over the next ten years the critical study of ancient geographical names remained part of Ortelius's activities. By 1587 the list had grown to over 30,000 entries, and was issued under the title of *Thesaurus Geographicus* ('Geographical Treasury').[111]

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and historical compendia such as Johann Abelinus's *Theatrum Europaeum* (Frankfurt, 1635). In his discussion of Theodore Zwinger the Elder's *Theatrum human vitae* Walter Ong mentions that he has accumulated a collection of several dozen such titles: theatres of botany, chemistry, celestial wisdom, universal nature, politics, poetry, etc., Ong, 'Commonplace rhapsody: Ravisius Textor, Zwinger and Shakespeare', in Bolgar (ed.), 1976, pp. 91-126.

[109] In a similar way Frans Hogenberg's workshop filtered and redrew many of the images of cities before their inclusion in the *Civitates*. Nuti, 1994.

[110] Meurer, Peter. '*Synonymia-Thesaurus-Nomenclator*: Ortelius's Dictionaries of Ancient Geographical Names', in Van den Broecke (ed.), 1998, pp. 331-346.

[111] Ibid. In the preface to this edition Ortelius set his endeavour in relation to others, with a critical list of all predecessors in the field of geographical dictionaries. This was followed by an exhaustive explanation of the methods and editorial principles that he had developed over two decades of work. His sources now included printed books, geographical maps, ancient inscriptions in stone, on coins, and even the unpublished work of his many friends and associates. The work had become increasingly scientific;

The diversity of applications of the term 'theatre' during the sixteenth century suggests that Bruegel's encyclopaedic panels deserve a less damning and more nuanced reading. The organic development of Ortelius's *Thesaurus Geographicus* can be seen as symptomatic of a wider sixteenth-century trend; a celebratory, 'abundant aesthetic' which revelled in exploring and charting the phenomena of the world. In recent years scholars have begun to situate Bruegel's abundant, encyclopaedic panels within the context of this tradition, resulting in a gradual shift towards more sensitive and positive interpretations of the paintings. Rejecting the seventeenth-century emblems and returning to the sixteenth century, we can find plenty of parallels for Bruegel's images. Admittedly, few of these are solely image-based; aside from Hogenberg's two prints, nothing else produced before 1560 looked quite like Bruegel's encyclopaedic panels. But a wealth of parallels existed within the wider aesthetic of the period. One of the most frequent comparisons made is to the writings of the Frenchman François Rabelais (c.1494-1553). The lists of games, proverbs, foodstuffs and customs which feature in Rabelais's books, are, like Bruegel's panels, long on detail, colloquial or popular in tone and set within 'realistic' narrative frameworks. Events in Rabelais's books frequently foreshadow subjects tackled in Bruegel's paintings: the *Battle Between Carnival and Lent* has been likened to the antagonism in Rabelais's *Quart Livre* (1552) between Quaresmeprenant, a monster with Lenten characteristics, and the Andouilles, or sausages.[112] A parallel with *Netherlandish Proverbs* can be found in chapter 21 of the *Cinq Livre*, which has the officers of the Queen Quintessence wildly acting out over twenty proverbs.[113] One of the most compelling parallels can be found between *Children's Games* and the long enumeration of over 200 games played by Rabelais's hero Gargantua during his childhood (*Gargantua*, 1534, chapter 22).

Although never explored in any detail, these parallels have not gone unnoticed by scholars. In an essay which focused on the iconography of each of Bruegel's games J.

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focused purely on correcting, decoding and explaining names, Ortelius rejected epithets and paraphrases, referring the reader instead to the works of Joannes Ravisius Textor.

[112] Kinser, 1990, pp. 47-51; Gibson, 1977, p. 79.

[113] Gibson, 1977, p. 71; Fraenger, 1999.

Vanden Branden made references to several areas of overlap with Rabelais's game-list.[114] More recently, Klaus Demus highlighted the role of language in interpreting *Children's Games* and again cited the game-lists of Rabelais and his German translator, Johann Fischart.[115] More commonly, Rabelais's name has been invoked in a broader sense, with the adjective 'Rabelaisian' being used to draw attention to aspects of Bruegel's pictorial tone. Nina Serebrennikov used Rabelais to draw attention to the multivalent quality of Bruegel's paintings, arguing that both men adopted the same rhetorical strategy of allowing the details on the surface of their works to proliferate, and concluding that this effectively complicated meaning by inviting different interpretations.[116] Most recently, Walter Gibson's book on humour in Bruegel's art made inevitable references to Rabelais in analysing the role of laughter in sixteenth-century life.[117] The unanimity of these responses suggested to me that Rabelaisian prose might offer a promising but unexplored source for *Children's Games*, as indeed it has. Chapter 2 presents a detailed examination of the relationship between *Children's Games* and Gargantua's Games, the results of which underpin the conclusions of this thesis.

Rabelais's prose is not the only facet of the sixteenth-century's 'abundant aesthetic' to provide a fitting parallel to *Children's Games*. Atlases, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, collections of physical objects and memory systems all also played a part in developing habits of mind which were accustomed to abundant displays of *exempla*. An awareness of the habits of looking engendered by these developments has fruitfully informed recent readings of Bruegel's encyclopaedic panels produced by Mark Meadow and Ethan Matt Kavaler. Meadow has explored how sixteenth-century rhetorical 'habits of mind' might inform our understanding of *Netherlandish Proverbs*.[118] Erasmus's ode to abundance and its uses in rhetoric, the *De copia,* was first published in Paris in 1512 and

[114] Vanden Branden, 1982. Other scholars to mention Rabelais in relation to Bruegel's encyclopaedic panels are Snow, who described Gargantua's game-list as a 'direct precursor' to *Children's Games*, Snow, 1997, p. 33; Meadow, who cited the work of Montaigne, Shakespeare and Rabelais when discussing the habits if mind engendered by Northern *copia*, Meadow, 2002, p 25. In his review of Meadow's book, Kavaler argued that even more attention should be paid to Rabelais in relation to this aspect of Bruegel's work. Kavaler, 2006.
[115] Demus in Seipel (ed.), 1999.
[116] Serebrennikov, 1993.
[117] Gibson, 2006.
[118] Meadow, 2002.

quickly became adopted as a textbook for rhetoric in schools across Europe.[119] Towards the end of this work Erasmus recommended a technique for mastering an abundance of material and transforming it into elegant rhetoric. Advising his reader to read the entirety of classical literature at least once, Erasmus then described how to develop a 'notebook' in which related or opposed precepts could be stored under headings or topics until they were needed in rhetoric. Erasmus was by no means the only scholar to advise such a method. The ancients had followed similar techniques and various notebook theories were expounded by a number of sixteenth-century humanists, including Guarino Guarini, Rudolf Agricola, Juan Luis Vives and Philip Melanchthon.[120] Meadow argued that in *Netherlandish Proverbs* Bruegel gathered together diverse but thematically related motifs in a manner which was analogous to a sixteenth-century notebook. Like a humanist notebook, the panel functions as a kind of storehouse, inviting viewers to build subjective readings and divergent arguments from the raw material of the proverbs.[121]

Although only developed over a few pages, Kavaler's interpretation of the *Battle Between Carnival and Lent* followed a similar trajectory.[122] Kavaler posits that in spite of its emotive subject matter (gluttony versus piety) *Carnival and Lent* deliberately resists didacticism. Instead, Bruegel gave the two antithetical states equal halves of the panel and in so doing quite deliberately placed the viewer in the position of choosing which path to take. The most recent work on *Children's Games* has been done by Edward Snow, who similarly explored how the painting stages antithetical motifs and arguments to elicit diverse responses from viewers.[123] Snow's 'slow reading' delights in the details of *Children's Games*, and does much to rehabilitate the human element of the panel.

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[119] The *De duplici copia verborum ac rerum commentarii duo* (On the Copiousness of Words and Matter) was first published in Paris as a textbook for John Colet at St Paul's school in London. As was his usual practice, Erasmus continued to emend and expand the text throughout his lifetime. The final authorised, and considerably enlarged, edition to appear during Erasmus' lifetime (Basel: Froben, 1534) is translated in Erasmus, 1978, vol. 24. For a discussion of where Bruegel's panels depart from Erasmian notions of *copia* see pp. 137-140

[120] For a summary of their approaches, see Meadow, 2002, pp. 85-93.

[121] Ibid. See especially chapter 1: 'Place, Knowledge and Order in Bruegel's *Netherlandish Proverbs*', pp. 29-53, and the conclusion, pp. 153-157.

[122] Kavaler, 1999, p. 148.

[123] Snow, 1997 and 1983.

Importantly, under Snow's careful gaze *Children's Games* remains a whole work – rather than being analysed individually, each of the game-motifs remains rooted within the internal syntax of the panel, and this serves to demonstrate the painting's multivalent qualities. However, the premise at the heart of Snow's highly subjective analysis is problematic. By arguing that sixteenth-century attitudes towards childhood were so diverse that they only serve to complicate *Children's Games*, Snow adopts a position which is misleading and overly defeatist. [124] My own research demonstrates a wealth of evidence to the contrary; that there was a unified period consciousness of childhood during the sixteenth century and that scholars and teachers broadly agreed on how children should conduct themselves when at work and at play.

[124] 'The historical context of *Children's Games* yields neither a unified period consciousness nor a stable set of sixteenth-century 'beliefs' … the net result of attempting to situate *Children's Games* in its historical context will more likely multiply the possibilities and indeterminacies to be negotiated *within* the circle of

Aesthetics of abundance and the 'period eye'

'The humanities are not faced by the task of arresting what otherwise would slip away, but enlivening what otherwise would remain dead.'[125]

Forwarding the concept of the 'period eye' Michael Baxandall argued that the forms and styles of paintings respond to social circumstances, and that paying attention to the social practices and conventions of a period would sharpen our perceptions of a work of art produced within it.[126] By relating the style of a painting to other contemporary experiences and activities we can begin to build a picture of how the painting's original audience attended to visual experience, and this informs our understanding of how the painting originally functioned. Such an approach is cyclical; just as the specifics of a society may inform a reading of a painting, so the forms and styles of paintings help us to understand the societies that produced them.[127] Thus far, this kind of period-led approach has been distinctly lacking in the scholarship of *Children's Games*. Edward Snow's outright rejection of the value of historical context as a controlling frame for interpretation is only the most recent example in a trajectory of scholarship on the panel that has been, for a variety of reasons, virtually ahistorical. Some scholars have attempted to fit *Children's Games* into vague, thematic categories, while others have tried to make sense of the painting's iconography using visual material drawn from later centuries. Bruegel's depictions of games have been raided by folklorists and ethnographers seeking to explain the evolution of modern games, and the panel as a whole has been eagerly appropriated by historians seeking to develop wider theses on the concept and history of childhood. All this has resulted in confusing array of opinions on the work, none of which is particularly grounded in the realities of sixteenth-century visual experience.

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interpretation.' Snow thus rejects historical context, and calls instead for viewers to use their intuition in interpreting the panel. Snow, 1983, p. 43.

[125] Panofsky, 'The History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline', cited in Holly, 1998, p. 468.

[126] Baxandall, 1972, pp. 29-108.

In an attempt to tackle this imbalance, my methodological approach will be to return to the century in which *Children's Games* was produced and to develop an analysis of the work which is grounded in sixteenth-century cultural mores and habits of looking. The lack of information on the conditions surrounding the creation of *Children's Games* makes it difficult to assess Bruegel's original intention in creating the work. However, in contrast to the dearth of evidence surrounding Bruegel's own life, a relatively large amount can be gleaned about the tastes and viewing habits of Bruegel's contemporaries, patrons and admirers. Even more evidence survives from the period which details the role that games played in daily life. It is my intention to use both of these sources of evidence to consider the original reception of *Children's Games*. In much the same way that Baxandall's Quattrocento viewers were equipped to decode the precise narratives of religious images and to pass complex judgements on aspects of their effectiveness, so Bruegel's audience in sixteenth-century Antwerp would have been equipped to deal in sophisticated ways with his encyclopaedic pictures and would have held their own culturally-specific opinions on game playing. We have established that Bruegel's interpretive community consisted of scholars and intellectuals, merchants and bankers, politicians and theologians. While it would be unwise to generalise about such a diverse group of people, we can be certain that the viewing practices of these worldly, educated individuals would have been informed by the period's 'abundant aesthetic'. This preoccupation with collecting, classifying and displaying the phenomena of the world was a cultural trend which ran like a seam through the sixteenth century and is evident in a number of other forms of material culture, including prints, books, physical collections and humanist learning systems. It is worth briefly considering where *Children's Games* sits in relation to this cultural trend, as paying attention to other manifestations of the period's abundant aesthetic helps to illuminate some of the most perplexing aspects of Bruegel's encyclopaedic paintings, including why the paintings look the way they do, and how their original audience might have interacted with them.

I have adopted the phrase 'abundant aesthetic' chiefly because it is suggestive of the uniquely visual nature of the engagement with profusion that occurred during the

[127] Ibid, p. 151.

course of the sixteenth century. [128] A number of factors influenced the development of strategies to cope with abundance at this time. Both the Renaissance revival of Greek and Roman wisdom and the expansion of the modern world through voyages of discovery contributed to a dramatic influx of new material during the course of the century. Seeking ways to master and order this wealth of material, scholars, scientists, collectors and rulers devised new forms of storage and display. Encyclopaedic texts played with new methods of arranging and storing information, and in some cases entirely new genres of text were invented, such as the atlas.[129] A great many of these texts were themselves infinitely reproducible, owing to the widespread use of the printing press. In addition to the texts, Humanist scholars devised ambitious 'memory systems', such as that outlined by Erasmus in the *De copia*, which indoctrinated a raft of students in how best to collect, classify, retrieve and appropriately reuse an abundance of material. These developments dealt primarily with words and knowledge. Alongside them we can chart the emergence and growth of diverse and idiosyncratic collections of physical objects in the new European *Kunst-und-Wunderkammern*.[130] Dividing up these various types of collection is in many ways a false endeavour. Often physical collections formed the basis for encyclopedic tomes, or memory systems were realised in three-

[128] Simon Schama uses the phrase 'collector's list fetish' to describe this sixteenth-century phenomenon. Schama, 1987, p. 497. Werner Hüllen prefers 'taxonomic paradigm'. Hüllen, 1990. In his seminal book on abundance in sixteenth-century French fiction Terence Cave uses 'cornupia', both because this was a term employed by writers during the period and because it neatly references Eramsian *copia*. Cave, 1985, pp.171-182. My use of the term abundance is analogous with Erasmian *copia*, meaning a rich store or stock of ideas, expressions or examples with which to create an argument. For sixteenth-century viewers, abundance implied a surfeit, which could be used creatively and selectively to fashion a range of arguments.

[129] The two major atlases of the sixteenth century were Abraham Ortelius's *Theatrum orbis terrarum*, or 'Theatre of the whole world', first published in Antwerp in 1570, and George Braun and Frans Hogenberg's *Civitas orbis terrarum*, or 'City Atlas', first published in Cologne in 1572. See Ortelius, 1584, and Braun and Hogenberg, 1965.

[130] The terms *Kunstkammer* (chamber of art) and *Wunderkammer* (chamber of wonder) were first used in conjunction with one another in 1565 in a small treatise on collecting by the Flemish doctor Samuel á Quiccheberg. His *Theatrum Amplissimum* was a guidebook to creating a 'universal theatre', a collection of encyclopaedic scope which represented every discipline and all of human endeavour. See Pearce and Arnold (ed.), 2000; Hüllen, 1990; Hajos 1958. The sixteenth-century zeal for collecting was differentiated from that of earlier centuries by the many innovative and eccentric collections compiled by scholars, merchants, medics and other members of the middle classes. MacGregor describes how by the end of the sixteenth century small, private museums were so popular among the Italian citizenry that there were some 250 *musei naturali* throughout Italy. MacGregor, 1983, p. 73.

dimensional theatres.[131] Whether through a list in an encyclopaedic text, a map in an atlas, a shelf in a *Wunderkammer* or a 'memory place' in a humanist notebook, sixteenth-century collections all relied to some extent on the spatial arrangement of knowledge; what Walter Ong has termed the 'visualist paradigm'.[132] The abundant, visual collections of the sixteenth century possessed a number of distinctive traits which have parallels with *Children's Games*. These included an ambitious new desire for limitless extension and a marked shift in the kinds of material considered worthy for collection. In addition to helping to explain why *Children's Games* looks the way it does, an understanding of the period's abundant aesthetic can also help us to speculate on the manner in which Bruegel's original audience might have interacted with the painting.

Encyclopaedias and encyclopaedic texts had long been concerned with achieving 'completeness'. The topic was first addressed by Pliny the Elder (AD 23-79) in his encyclopaedia, the thirty-seven volume *Historia Naturalis* ('Natural History').[133] Boldly declaring his subject to be 'the world of Nature, or, in other words, Life' Pliny encountered the paradox at the heart of any encyclopaedic endeavour. Although the *Historia Naturalis* claimed to be truly universal, in reality of course it was not: the encyclopaedic dream of surveying and recording all human knowledge was as impossible to achieve then as it is now.[134] The impossibility of the encyclopaedic endeavour means that at some level a negotiation (an acceptance of defeat) must always occurs between the encyclopaedist and their reader - a limitation implicitly acknowledged in modern times through the practice of continually publishing new,

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[131] An example of a metaphorical 'memory place' realised as a physical space was the wooden memory theatre of Guilio Camillo Delminio. The structure, first shown in Venice and then copied in Paris, reversed the traditional role of the spectator; the audience (of one) would stand where the stage should be, while all around him the seven tiers of the amphitheatre (representing the seven tiers of the universe) displayed images and texts. Despite its unorthodox technique, the purpose of the theatre, as described by a visitor in a letter to Erasmus, was a traditional one: to impart knowledge which would aid fluent rhetoric. Yates, 1966, pp. 135-137.

[132] Ong argues the development of commonplace theories in humanist rhetoric was part of an emergent Renaissance 'visualist' paradigm, which both incorporated and responded to developments in philosophy, theology, printing and art. Ong, 1962. Findlen similarly states: 'it was not coincidental that the revival of the ancient arts of memory and the appearance of collections appeared at the same time.' Findlen, 'The Modern Muses: Renaissance Collecting and the Cult of Remembrance', in Crane (ed.), 2000, p. 162.

[133] Whalley, 1982.

[134] While Cato, Varro and Celsus all aim to provide a complete and detailed account of certain subjects, in Pliny's preface he claims to detail the whole world. Carey, 2003, p. 18.

revised, and updated editions of encyclopaedic texts. Pliny was careful to present his omissions artfully. A balance between totality and exclusion was achieved by stressing the quality of his information; instead of listing endless bronze statues, for example, Pliny's summary of the finest and most remarkable promised to be more pleasurable.[135]

The challenge only increased for the humanist compilers of the sixteenth century, whose ambitions included detailing the modern world in addition to reviving the past. Chasing the impossible dream of completeness, sixteenth-century compilers experimented with new methods of ordering and expanding material, and constantly published updated editions. Erasmus was particularly concerned with the problem of producing a definitive compilation, and the growth of his proverb collection, the *Adagia,* can be seen as symptomatic of the new, uncompromising way in which scholars were working. At its first edition in 1500, the *Adagiorum Collectanea* listed 818 proverbs; just eight years later the text had almost quadrupled to include 3,260 proverbs, and was reissued as the *Adagiorum Chiliades*. Despite its many additions, Erasmus was clearly still concerned by the shortfalls in the collection; his introductory plea must have resonated with all scholars:

'I know there are people who measure a book not by its scholarship but by its size, and think it complete only when nothing can be added and much is superfluous…Who would be so unjust as to expect nothing to be left out in a work of this sort?'[136]

The *Adagia* was Erasmus's companion for thirty six years of his life, throughout which time he pursued, but never satisfactorily achieved, the encyclopaedic dream of completeness. The final edition of the *Adagia*, published in 1536 just three years before the scholar's death, listed 4,251 proverbs. Erasmus's methodology was essential to the organic growth of his collection. Ignoring the alphabetical ordering systems which were becoming fashionable, Erasmus instead retained the random order of the first edition of

[135] The quest for an 'appropriate' or 'useable' level of universality continued to occupy compilers of weighty, encyclopaedic tomes throughout the Middle Ages, with the emergence in the seventh century of Isidore of Seville's Latin *Etymologiae* ('Etymology') and in the thirteenth century of Bartholomaeus Anglicanus's nineteen-volume *De Proprietatibus Rerum* ('On the Properties of Things') and Vincent of Beauvais's three-volume *Speculum Maius* ('Great Mirror').
[136] Erasmus, 1964, p. 200.

the *Adagia* throughout all of its subsequent editions.[137] The resulting 'planned planlessness' enabled him to continue expanding the text; slipping more adages in with each edition without altering the structural arrangement. While he admitted that this system was retained chiefly for his own ease, Erasmus, like Pliny, also couched his editorial decision within the terms of concern for the reader's enjoyment, suggesting that the monotony resulting from anything more systematic would sicken the reader and make him say 'twice-cooked cabbage is poison.''[138]

Like their factual counterparts, Bruegel's paintings appear to experiment with different systems for organising their material. In *Carnival and Lent* antithetical motifs are arranged in two groups, and effectively posed as opposites. Loose thematic groupings have been identified among the motifs in *Netherlandish Proverbs*, with proverbs related to hunger collected around the bakery, and proverbs related to looking and knowing situated near the horizon line.[139] *Children's Games* employs no such discernible system. While the pastoral stream and urban street in the upper corners of the panel might suggest an oppositional ordering system, this theme is not advanced elsewhere in the picture.[140] The closest analogy to *Children's Games* is thus perhaps Erasmus's *Adagia*, in which order is actively resisted in the interests of liveliness. The way in which Bruegel's pictures negotiate the failure inherent in the encyclopaedic dream of completeness is also telling. All three compositions contain areas which seem to have been rendered deliberately ambiguous, such as the dark recesses of building interiors. These spaces are favoured sites for the placement of more *exempla*, despite the fact that the motifs themselves are barely legible.[141] In each of the compositions, motifs continue to be listed

[137]Alphabetical ordering systems had only been used within the second or third tier of categories during the Middle Ages. In *De Proprietatibius Rerum* the information was first arranged by books, then subheadings and finally alphabetically. By the sixteenth century encyclopaedias were increasingly being organised along wholly alphabetical lines.

[138] On reordering the collection he writes: 'Partly I was deterred by the immensity of work. Why conceal the fact? I saw that it could not be done without remaking the whole book from end to end.' Erasmus, 1964, p. 201.

[139] Meadow, 2002.

[140] Snow discusses this opposition between 'Nature' and 'Culture', arguing with little evidence that the children in the middle ground all flow towards the street on the upper right. Snow, 1997, pp. 83-91.

[141] A number of proverbs are tucked away in the dark recess of the tavern in *Netherlandish Proverbs*, including a man who has 'fallen between two stools' and a dog who is helping himself to food from his master's cupboard. The game being played inside the building on the left of *Children's Games* is similarly

until they become tiny dots at the edges of the deep recessional space. Trudging over the horizon line in *Netherlandish Proverbs* we can just make out a trio of blind men; in a moment they will be out of sight. This technique not only maximises the amount of motifs that can be listed; it also hints that the boundaries of the painting do not contain a complete inventory of all examples of folly. The implicit suggestion is that beyond the horizon the motifs continue, unabated; there are too many to be pictured, and the examples depicted in the village square are but a fraction of those occurring in the wider world. A similar technique is employed in *Carnival and Lent*. The town square is bounded by buildings, and the horizon is not visible, but instead the most distant section of ground is characterised by loose paint handling. In this work the criss-crossing streets around the bonfire and the dark arches of the church transept suggest that the liturgical activities are ongoing, and again make it impossible to accurately count all of the figures. Distant perspective and loose paint handling are also employed in the street on the upper right of *Children's Games* (Fig. 11). We might be certain that the figures are still playing games, but the details of these games are too faint or ambiguous to be fully understood. These painterly techniques enabled Bruegel to extend his encyclopaedic works in new ways. By cleverly shifting the emphasis from the compiler to the interpreter, any shortfalls or exclusions from the enumeration rest not with the collector, unable to find more material, but with the viewer, unable to see the full extension of the motifs. The *Adagia* had to be set down in black and white print, removing the possibility of similar kinds of extension through ambiguity. But Erasmus would surely have approved of the 'planned planlessness' evident in Bruegel's encyclopaedic pictures, and of the ambiguity which keeps them, in one sense, unfinished and alive.

A second aspect of sixteenth-century visual culture which needs to be revived when we consider the original responses to Bruegel's paintings is a new emphasis on observation from life and an interest in vernacular objects and regional customs. It was during the sixteenth century that direct, first-hand observation from life began to be seen as prerequisite for the foundation of credible collections. Observation from life by necessity

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ambiguous; two girls are playing with dolls, but the meaning of this game is complicated by the structure in the shadows. Decorated with objects and prints, this has been interpreted as a 'mock altar' (Hindman,

involved fieldtrips, and these were enthusiastically undertaken by both scientists and collectors alike. Guillaume Rondelet's encyclopaedias of fishes were facilitated by his role as physician to Cardinal de Touron, which granted Rondelet the opportunity to visit many regions of Europe and systematically record the appearance of a variety of fish from life.[142] In much the same way one of Rondelet's pupils, the botanist Charles de L'Escluse, produced new botanical encyclopaedias using plant specimens obtained during his travels throughout France and Spain.[143] The Italian naturalist and collector Ulisse Aldrovandi described how his own collection was built up though fieldwork and in conversation with local people:

'For the obtainment of my object, I was in the habit of going into the country for months during the summer and autumn, not for relaxation, like others; for at these times I employed all my influence, as well as money, to induce the country-people to bring me insects, whether winged or creeping, as they could procure in the fields or underground, and in the rivers or ponds. When any were brought to me, I made inquiries about its name, habit, locality, etc. I often, too, wandered over the marshes and mountains, accompanied by my draughtsman and amanuenses, he carrying his pencil and they their notebooks.'[144]

Although we have little evidence of Bruegel's working methods, particularly in relation to his paintings, the biography included in Van Mander's *Schilder-boeck* suggests that Bruegel's contemporaries recognized him to be an artist who was skilled in close observation from life. [145] In an anecdotal passage, Van Mander describes how Bruegel,

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1981, p. 452) and is perhaps the destination of the baptismal procession.

[142] Rondelet dedicated his compilation to the Cardinal, stating: 'All these objects I have attained through your means. For when I visited France, Upper Germany, and Italy in your company, receiving every aid from your liberality and kindness, I spent all my leisure time in collecting every thing relating to the work I had begun on Fishes…' Hamilton, 1843, p. 24.

[143] L'Escluse's works included original floras of Spain (1576), Hungary (1583) and his *Rariorum Plantarum Historia* (1601), which introduced one hundred new species. L'Escluse was a typically omnivorous collector; he did not limit his interests to the natural world, but also enthusiastically sought out objects d'art, coins and ancient inscriptions for his personal collection on his travels. It was perhaps through these antiquarian interests that he met Abraham Ortelius, who encouraged L'Escluse to contribute manuscript maps to his *Theatrum*. Karrow, 1993, pp. 159-161.

[144] Pearce & Arnold, 2000, p. 27.

[145] Mielke's catalogue raisonné of Bruegel's drawings lists sixty-one autograph sheets and six more known through copies. Mielke, 1996. None of these are preparatory sketches for paintings, although study of a number of paintings under infrared reflectography and the existence of accurate copies of paintings by Bruegel's sons suggest that workshop cartoons once existed. On this see essays by Dominique Allart, Rebecca Duckwitz and Christina Currie in Van den Brink (ed.), 2001. The 1970's saw the reattribution of a group of about eighty drawings of peasants in various attitudes traditionally thought to constitute

much like Aldrovandi, would leave his home city of Antwerp and travel to the countryside, where he would disguise himself in peasant clothes so as observe his subjects unnoticed:

'Bruegel often went out of town among the peasants with this Franckert, to fun-fairs and weddings, dressed in peasants' costume, and they gave presents just like the others, pretending to be family or acquaintances of the bride or bridegroom. Here Bruegel entertained himself observing the nature of the peasants - in eating, drinking, dancing, leaping, lovemaking and other amusements, which he then most animatedly and subtly imitated with paint, in watercolour as well as oil paints, for he was most outstanding in the handling of both techniques. He knew how to attire these men and women peasants very characteristically in Kempish or other costume, and how to express very naturally that simple, peasant appearance in their dancing, toing and froing and other activities. He was wonderfully sure in his poses and he had a very pure and subtle technique with the pen with which he drew many small views from life.' [146]

We cannot know whether this account was wholly accurate, but perhaps more important it the fact that Bruegel's images give the *impression* of being observed from life. The metaphor of close observation from life was used repeatedly by Van Mander in the *Schilder-boeck* as a trait which distinguished Northern artists from their Italian counterparts; indeed, the entire projection of Northern art criticism in the sixteenth century can be seen as rooted in the description of closely observed, vernacular details.[147] These are framed within the context of *beschrijven* (description), a term taken from geographical works, which emphasised the authors' interest in description over narration, and their passion for recording sites, customs and genealogy rather than historical deeds.[148] According to Van Mander, the Northern artists' observation from life

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Bruegel's sketches *naer het leven* (from life) to Roelandt Savery. This leaves us with only three drawings of peasants by Bruegel, *The Bagpipe Player*, *The Gozzard*, and a group of figures together on a single sheet in the Louvre. See Orenstein (ed.), 2001, p. 30 and pp. 282-288.

[146] Van Mander, 1994-1999, vol. I, p. 190.

[147] See Melion, 1991. Van Mander's other references to artists working from life include the landscapist Jan den Hollander (a painter whom, according to Van Mander, Bruegel imitated). Jan den Hollander: 'spent a lot of time leaning out of the window and looking at the sky, so as to make everything after life'. Van Mander, 1994-1999, vol. I, p. 118. Joachim Buecklaer is similarly described as being taught by his uncle Pieter Aertsen: 'the habit of painting everything after life: vegetables, fruit, meat, fowl, fish and suchlike things'. Ibid., p. 218. Abraham Bloemaert is also praised for observing from life the burlesque peasant houses, peasants' implements, trees and pieces of ground which were seen in great variety around Utrecht. Ibid., p. 450.

[148] Van Mander prefaces the *Schilder-boeck* with an acknowledgement of its humble, georgic mode: 'Even so, some, or many (I think) be surprised that such a book should be written, and that so much diligence and effort should be spent on it, because of the subject matter which perhaps, or rather certainly, could be

resulted in descriptive skills which rivalled nature.[149] In the life of Cornelius Engelbrechtsz, Van Mander contrasts the Italian use of antique sculpture with the Netherlander's natural 'artful without art' approach, thus Cornelius's figures were rendered skilfully not through study of sculpture but 'as if learned from Nature'.

Closely observed artistic images were granted a similarly high status within sixteenth-century collections of objects and artefacts. Paintings by Frans Francken II (1581-1642) provide evidence of the ways in which real objects and life-like representations of objects sat side-by-side in a *Wunderkammer*.[150] In Francken's *Kunstkammer* works of art are juxtaposed with a sea-horse and a fish on the back wall, and the table is piled high with curiously shaped shells (1620/25, Vienna, Kunsthistoriches Museum, Fig. 12). Within these collections, life-like images of *naturalia* (natural objects) were valued just as highly as the objects themselves and the term *naer het leven* ('from the life') was increasingly used to denote the documentary status of life-like images. [151] *Naer het leven* images played a valuable role in a curiosity cabinet. They could augment the collection by picturing a specimen which was otherwise rare or difficult to obtain, or preserve for eternity a curious natural object which might otherwise perish. Thus Rudolf II commissioned artist like Roelandt Savery and Georg Hoefnagel to record in life-like images a number of rare and wonderful things, including rainbows, waterfalls and rock formations.[152] In addition to their practical uses, life-like images in collections were to an extent twice-curious, often displaying in addition to their curious subject matter a

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judged by some to be too banal or too trivial because they believe that only those renowned in feats of arms were or are worthy of the biographer's pen [*beschrijfpen*]…' Van Mander, 1994-1999, vol. I, p. 50.

[149] Opening with Jan and Hubert Van Eyck, Van Mander praises the variety of emotions depicted in crowds of the Ghent Altarpiece: 'This accomplished painter was a great observer, and it would seem that with this work he wanted to expose the error of the celebrated writer Pliny when he wrote that painters painting a hundred or so faces always, or usually, paint some alike because they can not equal nature where from a thousand one can scarcely find two completely alike.' Ibid., p. 61.

[150] For examples see Härting, 1989, cat no. 441-448 (encyclopaedic still-lives) and cat no. 449-464 (gallery interiors).

[151] A visitor to Ulisse Aldrovandi's museum in 1571 described it as containing: 'Either the skeleton [of an animal] or at least a picture of it, made *al vivo* (from life) and imitated excellently in colours by one of his artists.' Here the spectator seems unsure (and ultimately unconcerned) whether the skeleton was in fact 'real' or not; it was enough simply that it was 'life-like'. For a discussion of this see Swan, 1995, pp. 332-352.

[152] Roelandt Savery was sent to Tyrol to search for wonders of nature such as waterfalls, rainbows and rock formations, and bring them back to Prague in the form of drawings. See Hendrix, 'Natural History Illustration at the Court of Rudolf II', in Fučkicová (ed.), 1997.

fascinating degree of artistic skill.[153] Van Mander argued with reference to Rudolf II's collection that in the *Kunstkammer* the threshold between human and natural artifice is tested.[154] In a similar vein Lucas De Heere argued that in creating their own imitations of nature, artists mimic God's original act of creation; he described painting as *de constichste conste der consten* 'the most artful of arts', a 'mirror' which truthfully reflected nature's wonder.[155] The relevance of this idea to Bruegel's work is evident in Ortelius's epitaph on the artist. Ortelius suggested that Nature may have snatched Bruegel away young because she feared that his genius for dexterous imitation would rival her own powers.[156]

As well as engaging with the contemporary vogue for close observation from life, Bruegel's images foreground aspects of the 'vernacular', a concept which was also beginning to colour other types of collection. The sixteenth century witnessed a dramatic rise in the number of texts being issued for the first time in vernacular languages.[157] In the Netherlands, over half of all publications were produced in the vernacular after 1540, and in 1550 the first guide to spelling in Dutch appeared.[158] Other types of texts engaged with the vernacular more obliquely, taking as their subject matter regional costumes or popular proverbs. These developments provide a context for Bruegel's distinctive artistic style and unusual choice of subject matter, both of which have been consistently

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[153] Wood, 1995.
[154] Ibid., p. 135.
[155] De Heere's *Hof en Boomgaerd der Poësiën* collection closes with a 'Refereyn', a ballad to the Violieren (the Antwerp rhetoricians) which feigns to paraphrase a speech delivered by Apollo to the Muses, and asserts the primacy of picturing over rhetoric. 'She [picturing] expresses the passions of men and women, as well as their natures, customs, animals, cities, habitations: Thus she must be compared to a mirror of nature: And she is therefore the most artful of arts.' Melion, 1991, p. 137.
[156] The sentiment of Nature being threatened by Bruegel's skills reappears in Lampsonius's *Effigies* and in a Latin inscription on the reverse of the *Cripples* panel. For a full discussion of these references see Meadow, 2002, pp. 108-117.
[157] Brunetto Latini's thirteenth-century *Li livres dou trésor* ('The Book of the Treasure') was the first encyclopaedia to be written in the vernacular; Latini's use of French, the common language of the Italian cultured classes, signalling that his audience were merchants and officials rather than theologians. By the sixteenth century vernacular dictionaries and encyclopaedic texts had become commonplace. Examples include Alfonso de la Torre's *Visión delectable de la philosophía y artes liberals, metaphísica y philosophía moral* (Seville, 1526), which was plagiarised and issued in Italian in Domanico Delfino's *Sommario di tutte le scientie* (Venice, 1556). The Spanish historian Pedro Mexia's encyclopaedic compilation was translated into French as *Les diverses leçons de Pierre Messie, contenanas de variables histories et autres choses mémorables* in 1550, and enjoyed enormous popularity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Collinson, 1966.
[158] Anderson, 1983.

understood as 'vernacular'. Within his own lifetime Bruegel was recognised as a canonical Netherlandish artist, a 'Second Bosch', working within native (vernacular) traditions.[159] Bruegel's debt to past masters and his focus on indigenous subject matter have been interpreted as signs of his engagement with the sixteenth-century debate on the virtues of Northern (Netherlandish) art versus Southern (Italianate) art.[160] His earthy colour palette, homely figures and fidelity to authentic garments and activities were particularly distinctive because of how they sat in relation to the Italianate style of artists such as Frans Floris.[161] Perhaps surprisingly, Bruegel's vernacular style won its highest praise from precisely those educated, urbane humanists who at first glance seem most removed from it. Abraham Ortelius's epitaph praised the way in which Bruegel adopted a simple style and resisted gratuitous ornamentation.[162] Fondly contrasting 'our Bruegel's' skilful and effective paintings with the stylistic excesses of other artists, Ortelius's epitaph places Bruegel's vernacular style firmly within the virtues admired by the humanist community.

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[159] Ludovico Guiccardini described Bruegel as the imitator of both the arts and the grotesques of Hieronymous Bosch 'for which reason he received the name of Second Bosch'. This sentiment was repeated in Lamsonius's *Effigies*, where the inscription accompanying Bruegel's portrait reads: 'Who is this new Hironymous Bosch, reborn into the world, who brings his master's ingenious flights of fancy to life once more so skilfully with brush and style that he even surpasses him? Honour to you, Pieter, as your work is honourable, since for the humorous inventions of your art, full of wit, in the manner of the old master, you are no less worthy of fame and praise than any other artist.' Meadow, 2002, pp. 104-108. During his own lifetime Bruegel's designs for prints such as *Big Fish Eat Little Fish* were marketed as Boschian compositions by the print-publisher Hieronymous Cock. For more on the relationship between Bosch and Bruegel's prints see Silver, 1999.

[160] Meadow, 1997.

[161] In 1565 Floris' pupil, the painter/poet Lucas de Heere published an invective against a 'certain painter'. The unnamed Northern painter attacked in the poem closely resembles Bruegel; he had been to Italy, but scorned Italianate style and continued to paint kermis dolls. The poem articulates the difference that contemporaries recognised between Northern and Southern art: 'The paintings of Floris, and his like, /You (stupid scoffer) have called sugar-images / Because they are so ornamented, becomingly and richly, / Not all over but where it belongs and is beseeming. / It is astonishing that you are not ashamed by this, / For you yourself are entirely unmannered, / Since you ornament your paintings like kermis dolls. / ….. That you have been to Rome, one cannot see / In your paintings, full of wretched, bad strokes /', Lucas de Heere, 'Invective against a certain painter who scoffed at the painters of Antwerp', *Den hof en boomgaerd der Poëien.* For a further discussion of this poem and the place of Bruegel's vernacular style with a sixteenth-century polemic see Meadow, 1997, and Freedberg, 1989.

[162] 'Painters who are painting handsome youths in their bloom and wish to add to the painting some ornament and charm of their own thereby destroy the whole character of the likeness, so that they fail to achieve the resemblance at which they aim, as well as true beauty. Of such a blemish our friend Bruegel was perfectly free.' For a detailed discussion of Ortelius's epitaph in relation to Bruegel's naturalism and vernacular style see Melion, 1991, chapter 12 'Ortelius and Van Mander on Viewing the Art of Pieter Bruegel', pp. 173-182 and Meadow, 2002, pp. 108-117.

Examining the contents of *Wunderkammern* provides further clues to the ways in which educated sixteenth-century audiences might have engaged with Bruegel's 'vernacular' works. Obviously Bruegel's panels are not directly analogous with *Wunderkammern*; they are static two-dimensional works rather than physical collections, and their motifs enumerate many aspects of a single popular theme rather than the huge and disparate variety of exotica displayed in a curiosity cabinet. Yet aspects of sixteenth-century *Wunderkammern* resonate with Bruegel's encyclopaedic pictures. Like the paintings, *Wunderkammern* contained objects drawn from daily life; popular treasures from the New World included ceremonial shoes, weapons, musical instruments and costumes. Detached from their original anthropological function, it was primarily the exotic origin and unusual appearance of these objects which justified their prized status.[163] Nevertheless, the influx of exotic *naturalia* and *artificialia* from afar can be seen to have stimulated the collecting and recording of local culture. Abraham Ortelius advised readers of his atlas that knowledge of other lands and their inhabitants led to knowledge of God's world, and ultimately of oneself.[164] Cosmographies detailed distant lands, but also included information on indigenous mores, and costume books pictured examples of Native European dress beside outlandish costumes from other parts of the world.[165] Peasants appeared alongside overseas people, giants and dwarfs in the plays and court festivities of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Netherlands.[166]

Just as collections of exotic objects were both scientifically edifying and entertaining, so too the interest in the vernacular at this time can be read as multi-faceted. It is worth

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[163] While Findlen asserts that 'no object was too trivial to be excluded from a Renaissance museum' there is little evidence of local objects being collected. Findlen, in Crane (ed.), 2000, p. 161. On the appeal of exotica see Mason, 1998.

[164] Kavaler, 1999; Carroll, 1987.

[165] Examples of costume and custom books published in Antwerp include Olaus Magnus's *History of the Northern Peoples* and Nicolas de Nicolay's *Navigations et peregrinations orientals*. While these texts detail foreign lands (Scandinavia and Turkey respectively) Lucas De Heere's *Théâtre de tous les peoples et nations de la terre avec leurs habits et ornaments divers*, a book of costume drawings preserved in Ghent University Library, and Abraham de Bruyn's costume collection of 1579 include representations of typical clothing worn by peasants in the Southern Netherlands. The Dutch translation of François Deserp's *Recueil des habits de toutes des gens du monde* was dedicated to Jacob van Hencxthoven, a friend of Niclaes and Jacques Jongelinck. On this Kavaler notes 'It is not surprising that those involved in overseas trade were interested in information about foreign lands and their peoples. And with patrons like Hencxthoven taking such an interest, painters in the city must have paid close attention to regional specifics of dress when they were relevant to the work.' Kavaler, 1999, pp. 171-183.

remembering that for Bruegel's learned, mercantile patrons the vernacular objects and customs displayed in his paintings were to an extent foreign or 'other'.[167] Colourful and outlandish, they belonged to another class, and were frequently used as a moral touchstone to differentiate the newly emergent urban classes.[168] This is not to say that the peasants were shunned. Evidence suggests that the urban merchant classes who made up Bruegel's audience took a voyeuristic pleasure in this world, regularly escaping city life by visiting the countryside to observe and even partake in regional festivities.[169] By the mid-century it had become fashionable within these circles to acquire a country estate and even to adopt the titles and paternalistic responsibilities associated with rural landownership.[170] Referred to in documents as *hof van plaisance* (pleasure house) or *speelhuys* (play house), these country estates clearly represented an enjoyable means of escape for Antwerp's urban elite. Depictions of rustic festivities by Bruegel, amongst many other artists from this period, often include sophisticated onlookers. Distinguished from the locals by their dress and deportment, they observe and occasionally partake in the dancing.[171] The appeal of these peasant customs clearly differed from the appeal of exotic objects from afar. Yet in some sense both betrayed an interest in exploring the

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[166] Verberckmoes, 2002.

[167] For essays on representations of the exotic (both vernacular and non-European) in the Low Countries see volume 53 of the *Nederlands Kunsthistoriches Jaarboek*, 2002, which is devoted to 'Picturing the Exotic 1550-1950: Peasants an outlandish peoples in Netherlandish Art'.

[168] Silver sees the new pictorial genres of peasant paintings and market scenes as visual parallels to Erasmus's writings. With the traditional aristocratic 'courtesy' replaced in the sixteenth century by Erasmian 'civility', these works explored and defined proper and improper conduct. Silver, 2006. Verberckmoes has similarly argued representing 'non-proper' people inversely promoted the self-image of the refined upper classes. Verberckmoes, 2002, p. 53. See also Mellinkoff, 1993, Introduction, pp. LI-LVII.

[169] See Gibson, 2006, especially chapters 4 and 5.

[170] Jacob van Hencxthoven, a master of the mint, became *heer* (lord) of Hemiksem and Antoon van Straelen, burgomaster of Antwerp and 'prince' of the Violerien, became *heer* of Merksem and Dambruigge. The three Schetz brothers Gaspar, Melchoir, and Balthazar were especially zealous, purchasing several villages each, including the village of Hoboken, a favourite place for visitors from Antwerp made famous by its three annual festivals. The print of the *Kermis at Hoboken*, after a drawing by Bruegel, was issued by Bartolomeus de Mompere in 1559, the same year that Melchoir Schetz purchased the manor of Hoboken. A year later he transferred Hoboken to his brother Balthazar, who swore to uphold the privileges and rights of the villagers. Van Mander describes a picture by Gillis Mostaert, no longer extant, which showed the Schetz brothers being received ceremoniously by the peasants of Hoboken. Kavaler, p. 165; Gibson, 2006, pp. 77-86.

[171] A well-known example of this is Bruegel's *Peasant Wedding Feast* (c.1567-8, Vienna, Kunsthistoriches Museum). The well-dressed burgher with the long beard seated at the right end of the table has been interpreted by some scholars as the seigneur of the territory and by others as Bruegel himself. Other examples of urbanites being welcomed into village festivities by artists such as Pieter Baltens, Jacob

outer limits of ethnography; in investigating what it was to be human.[172] Vernacular customs and exotic objects are also comparable in the way in which they engender relaxation through fantasy. It might be argued that visiting a peasant fair or owning a tribal artefact satisfied the same desire to engage with that which was other, whilst keeping it at a safe distance.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly from the perspective of developing a concept of the 'period eye', we can consider the types of people to which collecting appealed, and the habits of looking engendered by these visual collections. By the mid-sixteenth century Antwerp was a thriving centre for the production and trade of art and luxury goods. Under Habsburg rule, the Netherlands was part of a vast empire which included Spain, Germany, parts of Italy, as well as the West Indies, Mexico, Venezuela and Peru. Its central geographical position and deep-water harbor on the river Scheldt made Antwerp a natural trading hub, and by the late fifteenth century the city had overtaken Bruges as a centre for import and transport of goods, including spices brought from India and Africa by the Portuguese, English woolen cloth, silks from Italy, and metals and copper from Northern Europe. As well as being an important trading hub, Antwerp was also the financial centre of Europe, its wealth reflected in the art and architecture of the city. We have seen how, journeying through the Netherlands in the 1520's, Dürer was dazzled by the wealth of the city on the Scheldt, where there was 'money enough' for luxuries.[173] Karel van Mander also commented shrewdly that:

'The grand celebrated city of Antwerp, which prospers through commerce, has summoned from everywhere the most excellent in our art, who also frequently went there because art desires to be near wealth.'[174]

Antwerp's marriage between art and capital was cemented in the 1540's when the second floor of the stock exchange was set aside for over one hundred stalls selling

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Grimmer, Gillis Mostaert, Pieter Aertsen, Joachim Beuckelaer and Maerten van Cleve are detailed in Kavaler, 1999, pp. 164-168 and Gibson, 2006, pp. 77-105.

[172] Kavaler discusses how there was a renewed interest in local marriage customs in comparison to accounts of weddings witnessed in foreign lands. Kavaler, 1999, p. 170.

[173] See page 7.

[174] Van Mander, 1994-1999, vol. I, 'Life of Joachim Patenier', fol. 219r, p. 134.

paintings and sculpture.[175] Keen to put their new-found wealth to good use, the city's emergent middle class of merchants and bankers enjoyed frequenting these stalls and emulating the nobility by building up large collections of art and objects. In a survey of 291 estate inventories made in Antwerp in the sixteenth century, twenty-five had more than thirty paintings, and the largest contained sixty.[176]

The cosmopolitan nature of Antwerp's citizenry was reflected in the character of their collections. Describing Abraham Ortelius's collection of objects in 1601 his biographer, Frans Sweerts, listed statues, Roman and Greek coins, feathers of tropical birds, and cups and beakers made of unusual materials.[177] According to Sweerts, Ortelius's collection of exotic shells included one of a giant tortoise, which was large enough for a company of ten people to dine around. The geographer's library was described as 'highly esteemed by princes and scholars and containing all the best literature', and his house was compared to an Academy of Plato, frequented by humanist scholars and princes including the governor to the Netherlands Archduke Ernst and his successor Archduke Albrecht.[178] While Ortelius's collection might be an extreme example of a particularly scholarly individual, a pattern begins to emerge when we consider the types of worldly individuals who built up wondrous collections, poured over maps and atlases, and enjoyed looking at Bruegel's panels.

Scholars envisaging the original reception of Bruegel's paintings have repeatedly invoked the dinner party setting, in which, much as in a *Wunderkammer*, learned men gathered together to relax, observe and converse.[179] Returning to Francken's Vienna *Kunstkammer* we spy through the arched doorway on the right another room which contains yet more objects, statues and busts.[180] Beneath the laden shelves, two figures

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[175] Vermeylen, 2003.
[176] Stappaerts, 1987-8, 'Bijdrage to de studie van schilderijen in privé-bezit te Antwerpen in de zestiende eeuw', Licentiaat, Vrije Universiteit, Brussels, cited in Gibson, 2006.
[177] Sweerts, *Insignium huius aevi poetarum lacrymae, in obitum Cl. V. Abrahami Ortelii Antwerpiani* (Antwerp, J. Keerbergius, 1601), fol. 36r, printed in Büttner, 1998.
[178] Büttner, 1998. See also Van den Broecke, 1997 and on Ortelius's print collection Buchanan, 1982.
[179] See Gibson, 2006, pp. 106-123; Goldstein, 2000; Sullivan, 1994, pp. 29-36; Kavaler, 1991.
[180] In other works by Frans Francken II, beautiful collections of objects are contrasted with acts of iconoclasm in the background. An example is the London Royal Collection's *The Cabinet of a Collector*, signed and dated 1617, where beneath an archway to the right of the table figures with donkeys' heads

are engaged in earnest conversation over a print or book which has been brought to the desk at the window for inspection. Although only two men are visible, one in red, the other in black, their expansive gestures give the impression that the room contains more participants in the debate.[181] An engraving of Ferrante Imperato's *Museo* (1599) presents a similar scene (Fig. 13). Four smartly dressed men are pictured in a room crammed with books and objects, including Imperato's famous crocodile suspended from the ceiling. Two of the gentlemen point animatedly at the objects on display, while the other two appear lost in contemplation.[182] These images support the idea that *Wunderkammern* functioned as conversation pieces.[183] Random or public access to a collection was unheard of; its contents were always mediated through the presence of a guide, most often the owner, who would regale his visitors with stories and myths of the objects and their provenance.

This is similar to the way in which contemporary viewers would have encountered Bruegel's paintings. It has been plausibly suggested that Jonghelinck commissioned Bruegel's panels of the *Months* to decorate the dining room of his suburban villa *Ter Beke*.[184] This theory fits with the paintings' subject matter, which relates to the production and consumption of food, and also their scale, which dictates that they would have needed a relatively large room in which to be displayed. As the formal public space of a Flemish home, the dining room was the ideal location in which to convey a message of wealth and connoisseurship through works of art.[185] The inventory of Jean Noirot's collection similarly records that he displayed four of his Bruegel

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attack and smash traditional objects of learning, including musical instruments, sculptures, an artist's palette, a globe and a large painting. White, 2007, no. 32.

[181] This painting also contains a tribute to Abraham Ortelius – his portrait appears in a square frame on the far left of the table. Härting, 1989, Fig. 62, cat. no. 442.

[182] The double-page engraving appears after the title page in Ferrante Imperato's book on his collection of curiosities, the *Dell' Historia Naturale* (published Naples, 1599). Imperato, 1599.

[183] This was particularly true in their infancy, when many of the objects had been collected in person. As the vogue for collecting grew, it became increasingly common for grand collectors to employ agents to source their objects. The move towards a more 'museological' approach also led to the idea of letting the objects 'speak for themselves'.

[184] First proposed by Buchanan, 1990, p. 549, this idea was further developed by Goldstein in 2000 and Gibson in 2006.

[185] Goldstein, 2000, pp. 179-185.

paintings in a room described as *d'achter eetkamerken*, the 'small, back dining room.[186] This suggests several things: that the paintings could only have been enjoyed by invitation, and that the encounter between viewer and object most probably occurred within a social context, perhaps during a dinner party or visit. It follows that on such occasions the pictures would have performed a social function, with the complex and engaging iconography of Bruegel's scenes providing a topic for discussion amongst a group of like-minded individuals.[187] We can imagine that the experience of looking a Bruegel painting might have been mediated, as in a *Wunderkammer*, by the explanation of the proud owner, and that enthusiastic debate would then have sprung up among the viewers. Van Mander's anecdotes on Northern painting suggest that works by Netherlandish painters were appreciated as much for what they concealed as for what they revealed. He recounts how viewers would enjoy searching out the trademark motifs in paintings, such as a little owl in the works of Herri Met de Bles, or a 'little shitter' in the landscapes of Patinir.[188] These stories are wonderfully evocative of a culture in which looking was an active, and, for some, competitive sport.

Comparing the formal qualities of Bruegel's paintings with those of a *Wunderkammer* helps to pinpoint the panels' subjective, ludic qualities. Like a cabinet of curiosities, piled floor to ceiling with objects, Bruegel's encyclopaedic panels are stuffed to bursting with *exempla*. Initially this visual abundance is overwhelming; as with a physical collection of objects the viewer cannot possibly take everything in at once.[189] Time is required to negotiate Bruegel's iconography, and gradually the motifs within the picture begin to unfold. Like objects in a *Wunderkammer*, kept in carefully labelled drawers,

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[186] Smolderen, 1995, p. 38; Goldstein, 2000, p. 180; Gibson, 2006, pp. 67-69.

[187] It is difficult to generalise on whether the discussion was of a philosophical nature, as proposed by Sullivan, 1994, pp. 30-36, or more light-hearted, as suggested by Gibson, 2006, pp. 106-123. Much would surely have rested on the specifics of company and image.

[188] These searches are what define the artists for Van Mander. De Bles is thus 'the master of the owl who put into all his works a little owl, which is sometimes so hidden away that people allow each other a lot of time to look for it wagering that they will not find it anyway and thus pass their time, looking for the owl.' Patinir likewise 'had a custom of painting a little man doing his business in all his landscapes and he was therefore known as 'The Shitter'. Sometimes you had to search for this little shitter, as with the owl of Hendrick met de Bles.' Van Mander, 1994-1999, vol. I, pp. 134-137.

[189] Mauriès describes how on entering a *wunderkammer* the visitor would have been confronted with 'an accumulation of objects in such profusion that it was difficult to find one's way round it; there was no

arranged on shelves or suspended from the ceiling, Bruegel's motifs are rendered artificially legible by the steeply tilted ground and resulting elevated viewpoint. The motifs within the panels are further 'objectified' by their unnatural separation from each other. In a real playground we might expect figures to overlap or infringe upon each another; children would push and shove and squabble over toys and space. But in Bruegel's frozen scene each game is entirely distinct from its neighbour, and the children seem largely unaware of their fellow playmates. The detached motifs in *Children's Games* have a scientific quality. The careful hand of the arranger is clearly evident within this collection, and, as in physical collections of objects, the spaces between the motifs become as charged as the games themselves.[190] Like the physical collections, the compositional structure of the encyclopaedic paintings does not advocate one central narrative, but suggests many potential readings. Viewers are encouraged to 'play' among the motifs, drawing associations and building arguments at will.

By examining the 'abundant aesthetic' of the sixteenth century a picture has begun to form of a viewing public who would have enjoyed the kind of challenge posed by Bruegel's encyclopaedic panels. Interested in vernacular material, appreciative of the virtues of close observation from life, and accustomed to looking at maps, collections of objects and encyclopaedic texts which revelled in extension, Bruegel's original viewers would have been highly visually literate. Their visual skill set would have included a predilection for abundance and they would have been familiar with searching out contradictory arguments within dense collections of material. In one sense, characterising these sophisticated viewing habits does little to limit the potential interpretations of Bruegel's encyclopaedic pictures. The humanist aversion to one-sided dogmatism, combined with the value placed on the rhetorical skill of searching out and developing paradoxical arguments serves only to open the panels up to further debate. To further establish the nature of the kinds of debates that might have surrounded

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beginning and no end. But the visitor was then expected to open the cupboards and the drawers and to examine each object in detail.' Mauriès, 2002, p. 69.

[190] Jean de Berry laid his collection out in drawers and cabinets, 'even charging the gaps between the objects with aesthetic significance', Ibid., p. 25.

Children's Games at its inception it is necessary to turn to the wealth of sixteenth-century sources on games, play and childhood.

Methodology: Reconsidering *Children's Games*

Surveying the historiography of *Children's Games* and its sister works the *Battle Between Carnival and Lent* and *Netherlandish Proverbs* results in two important conclusions. Firstly, in recent years a shift has occurred in our understanding of the formal qualities of the encyclopaedic panels. Instead of attempting to enumerate all of the motifs depicted and slot them neatly into one interpretation, scholars now describe these images as multivalent. In place of a single explanation, the encyclopaedic pictures are beginning to be viewed as conversation pieces, possessed of formal qualities which keep debate open by inviting rather than discouraging subjective responses. For Kavaler, the equal compositional space given to the enumeration of aspects Carnival and Lent means that the 'battle' is left deliberately unresolved. For Snow, Bruegel's pairing of antithetical motifs in *Children's Games* similarly poses a series of questions about the world without offering conclusive answers. For Meadow, *Netherlandish Proverbs* is also a multivalent work, the outcome of which is ultimately determined by the subjective selections of a viewer, who would have been adept at building complex rhetorical arguments from collections of often contradictory material. While these three readings all address the paintings in a similar manner, only Mark Meadow attempts to situate the viewing strategies he proposes within any kind of specific historical framework. This brings us to a second important point: the lack of historically-grounded approaches to *Children's Games*.

Following the recent trajectory of scholarship on the encyclopaedic panels, I will consider the work as a whole and pay attention to the potential for divergent arguments within the panel. But importantly I am seeking to recover the kinds of historically-specific arguments that Bruegel's original audience might have made about the work. When we look closely at the sixteenth century, children and their games can be found in a number of places. Visual representations of playing children proliferated in the borders of illuminated manuscripts. Games also featured prominently in the fictional writing of François Rabelais and in numerous school colloquies and humanist treatises.

As yet, the development of an accurate history of childhood grounded in scholarly consensus and the assimilation of multiple sources remains in its infancy.[191] Perhaps because of this, none of these sixteenth-century sources have been brought to bear effectively on *Children's Games.* Although the sources present a diverse variety of approaches to children and their games, they can also be seen to agree on a number of key points. All of the sources indicate that play and games were amusing for both adults and children alike, and most suggest that play could teach children valuable lessons. Considering these sources in detail over the following chapters, I will develop an overview of those cultural notions of childhood that were relevant for sixteenth-century audiences. Recognising areas of agreement between these sources refutes Edward Snow's assertion that the historical context of *Children's Games* yields 'neither a unified period consciousness nor a stable set of sixteenth-century 'beliefs'.'[192] In fact, the extent to which sixteenth-century society engaged with childhood suggests the very opposite, and leads to a significant re-evaluation of the potential meanings of Bruegel's *Children's Games*.

In chapter 1 I explore the most consistent sources of images of children at play prior to *Children's Games*; illuminated manuscripts. In the pages of French and Ghent-Bruges manuscripts dating from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century children and their games were rendered in great detail. Usually appearing as decorative motifs in the borders of the calendar pages of Books of Hours, the children are clothed realistically, their games and toys are depicted in colour, and events are often set before believable landscape backgrounds. Despite the fact that these images represent compelling comparators to *Children's Games*, they have received little attention from previous scholars. Incorporating recent scholarship on these images, my discussion offers the most detailed analysis yet of the relationship between *Children's Games* and manuscript marginalia. In several cases images found in manuscript marginalia can help to decode some of Bruegel's more complex iconography, or provide further examples from the period of particularly unusual games. More fundamentally, comparing *Children's Games*

[191] For a recent discussion and further reading on the history of childhood in the medieval and early modern periods see Hanawalt, 2001.

to the rigid, seasonal presentation of games in manuscript marginalia serves to demonstrate the radical nature of Bruegel's composition in the context of sixteenth-century visual practice.

Another compelling comparator to Bruegel's panel, which has been mentioned by a host of scholars but never explored in any depth, is the list of over two hundred games played by Rabelais's eponymous hero Gargantua (*Gargantua*, 1534, chapter 22). Opening with an attempt to pin down the oft-cited kinship between Bruegel and Rabelais, I detail archival finds in Antwerp which demonstrate that Rabelais's books were circulating within Bruegel's milieu. The names of Bruegel and Rabelais were further linked in a collection of woodcuts known as *Les songes drolatiques de Pantagruel* (Paris, Richard Breton, 1565). Published after Rabelais's death but marketed using his name, the book made extensive use of figures taken from Bruegel's designs for the print series the *Seven Deadly Sins*. Having established the legitimacy of a Bruegel-Rabelais comparison for sixteenth-century audiences, I move on to consider *Children's Games* in relation to Gargantua's great game list. The length of Gargantua's game-list differed between editions, and was further elaborated upon in successive translations; these variations are detailed in Appendix II, where game-lists from a number of original editions of Rabelais's text are set beside modern critical editions and important translations. Gargantua's game-list includes some interesting parallels with *Children's Games*, and, like Bruegel's panel appears to both reference and satirize the contemporary vogue for collecting. But perhaps most intriguing is the wider context that Gargantua's game-list reveals. Gargantua's games occur within the context of his humanist education, and the various chapters detailing his play have been interpreted as a thinly-veiled endorsement of humanist pedagogical principles.

In my final chapter I argue that the pedagogical aspects of play revealed in *Gargantua* might similarly provide a framework for interpreting *Children's Games*. The sixteenth century witnessed an explosion of interest in children and their games as they became swept up in the tide of humanist educational reform. A wealth of evidence, from

[192] Snow, 1983, p. 43.

treatises and colloquies to school books and official statutes, suggests that during this period children's play was closely bound to methods of learning. This was particularly true in Antwerp, where the demands of a cosmopolitan population led to the establishment of a broad, varied and experimental curriculum. Although the sixteenth-century treatises and colloquies reintroduce a potential moral argument about children's play, ultimately they challenge the negative interpretations of the panel developed from looking at seventeenth-century emblems. Taken together, these sources provide a far more historically accurate way in which to measure the conduct of Bruegel's children and enable us to 'enliven' some of the original debates that might have surrounded *Children's Games.*

I Games in Illuminated Manuscripts

Manuscript marginalia played an important role in the artistic representation of popular culture in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Alongside colourful depictions of peasants baking bread, playing musical instruments, ploughing, fighting and dancing we find a great number of games being played. The roots of Bruegel's iconography may well lie within the pages of these books; certainly images of games in manuscripts provide visual precedents which help to explain some of the more esoteric details in *Children's Games*. The manuscript games also tell us something about the viewing habits of Bruegel's interpretive community. The detailed images of children playing which decorate illuminated manuscripts produced in the first half of the sixteenth century suggest a context in which popular games were being 'serialized' and consumed by elite audiences. We should not think of the tiny miniatures in these manuscripts as 'less' than Bruegel's grand panel paintings. If anything, the luxurious 'Ghent-Bruges' manuscripts which emanated from the workshops of Simon Bening in Bruges and Gerard Horenbout in Ghent during the sixteenth century were far more prestigious objects than Bruegel's paintings. Beautifully executed and incredibly expensive, the ownership of Ghent-Bruges manuscripts was largely limited to members of the great courts of Europe, most notably the Burgundian and Habsburg dynasties. We have seen how Bruegel's series of the *Months* referenced the visual style and iconography of manuscript calendars, and it has been suggested that this was for reasons of social prestige as well as artistic merit.[193] In commissioning the series for his villa the socially ambitious Jonghelinck was perhaps deliberately emulating iconography more typically associated with aristocratic culture.

Playful children appear in a range of guises in manuscript marginalia. Figures at play had long been part of the extensive repertoire of drollery motifs. In the borders of medieval manuscripts children playing games are interspersed apparently at random

[193] Moxey, 1989b, p. 50; Renger, 1971-72.

with other scenes and creatures including birds, apes and asses, fantastic hybrid animals, scatological figures and scenes of everyday life.[194] As a form of decoration these drolleries have been broadly understood as subversive; while their precise meaning and function are unclear, their appearance in the margins often seems to unravel, disturb or play with the central text.[195] Playing children also inevitably featured in the long tradition of the iconography of the Ages of Man. Here certain games or toys could be used to denote a stage in man's life; a baby walker and rattle 'infancy', a whip-top or hobby-horse 'youth'.[196] Increasingly as we move into the Renaissance, a third category of manuscript child emerges; the decorative, nude *putti*.[197] But it is a fourth category of manuscript child that is most relevant to considering both the iconography and the reception of *Children's Games* - the calendar child.[198]

As the opening section of a Book of Hours, the calendar had long been an important and favoured site for decoration. Functioning as the introduction to the manuscript, the calendar set the tone and needed to entice the reader to continue. The calendar was also the place where the sacred was married with the secular. Appropriate forms of decoration could thus include everything from images of Saints and Biblical events to

[194] An example of a manuscript which contains a diverse range of drollery motifs, including depictions of a number of games and sports, is the Bodleian Library's fourteenth-century *Romance of Alexander* (MS. Bodl. 264).

[195] An excellent example in which playing figures are interspersed with a range of other motifs is the fourteenth-century *Romance of Alexander* in the Bodleian Library (discussed on page 32). On the subversive quality of the margins of medieval art see Camille, 1992.

[196] For the representation of children in the Ages of Man see Burrow, 1988 and Sears, 1986.

[197] Initially representing a revival of the infants depicted on ancient Roman sarcophagi, the figure of the putto developed throughout the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and was deployed across a range of ornamental schemes and media, including manuscript borders, paintings, architecture, and furniture. Often pictured with masks, wings and musical instruments nude putti represented a new kind of pictorial motif, but in many ways their playful presence recalled the subversive quality of earlier sprites and drolleries. For a thorough discussion of the revival and development of the infant putto in Renaissance ornamentation see Dempsey, 2001.

[198] In his seminal study of representations of childhood Philippe Ariès devoted five pages to the arrival of the child in calendar miniatures, concluding that these were the first places in which the concept of 'the family' was represented. Ariès, 1962, pp. 342-345. In 1989 Anthony Burton commented that Ariès's remarks cried out for 'clarification and development', Burton, 1989, p. 211, but these early depictions of children have received little scholarly attention. Images of children in manuscripts have been used as evidence of aspects of children's lives and contemporary attitudes towards childhood by some scholars, such as Orme, 2001, especially chapter 6, pp. 305-341, and Langmuir, 2006, pp. 137-158. Bridget Ann Henisch's recent book on the medieval calendar year devoted a chapter to 'The Calendar Child', Henisch, 1999, pp. 135-165, and Annemarieke Willemsen has also analysed the development of representations of children and toys in manuscripts. Willemsen, 1998, chapter 4 and Willemsen, 2005.

zodiacal signs and seasonal tasks known as the labours of the months. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the iconography of the labours of the months became increasingly elaborate, and in addition to charting the everyday tasks and duties of the peasants many illuminated manuscripts began to include depictions of seasonal games, religious festivals and carnival revelries. This trend began in French manuscripts, most notably with the highly influential *Très Riches Heures* of Jean, duc de Berry, but it was with the Ghent-Bruges manuscripts of the sixteenth century that the trend for depicting 'game of the month' reached its apogee. [199] Here parallels with *Children's Games* are unmistakable, although the relationship between Bruegel's panel and manuscript marginalia has never received the scholarly attention it deserves.

Children's Games does not only reproduce the types of games found in illuminated manuscripts, it also mimics the life-like staging typical of Netherlandish manuscripts, with attention paid to the details of players clothes, props and facial expressions. Despite this, Sandra Hindman is the only scholar to have discussed the relevance of manuscript marginalia to the panel, producing an Appendix which listed parallels between the panel and depictions of games found in the pages of Ghent-Bruges illuminated manuscripts.[200] This is an important but understudied area; we know that Bruegel was exposed to the world of manuscript illumination early in his career and it is possible that the painter may even have been involved in producing miniatures.[201] Bruegel's mother-in-law, Mayken Verhulst (c.1520-1600) was, according to Guiccardini,

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[199] On the Ghent-Bruges school see Kren and McKendrick, 2003, parts 4 and 5; Dekeyzer, 2004 pp. 18-32; As-Vijvers, 1999, pp. 245-256; Smeyers and Van der Stock, 1996, pp. 9-47, and Dogaer, 1987, pp. 13-19.
[200] Hindman, 1981, Appendix II, pp. 473-475.
[201] During his stay in Rome in 1553 Bruegel met the Crotain illuminator Giulio Clovio (1498-1578). Clovio was a well respected miniature artist some thirty years Bruegel's senior, and appears to have held the painter in high regard. An inventory of Clovio's possessions, drawn up on his death in 1577, suggests that Clovio owned several works by Bruegel. The inventory lists a 'View of Lyons' in Gouache, a 'Tower of Babel' painted by Bruegel on ivory, two other landscapes, and a gouache study of trees. In addition to the works by Bruegel, the inventory also lists 'a small miniature painted half by himself and half by Pieter Bruegel', indicating that as early as the mid-1550's Bruegel was working on manuscript miniatures. Grossmann, 1973, p. 16. In the light of this evidence, Charles de Tolnay attributed to Bruegel miniatures in a number of manuscripts by Clovio, including the *Towneley Lectionary* (New York Public Library, MS. 91), a manuscript with a commentary on St Paul's Epistles by Marino Grimani (Sir John Soane Museum, London) and the *Farnese Hours* (Pierpont Morgan Museum, New York, MS. M. 69). Tolnay, 1965, 1978 and 1980. While the identification of Bruegel's hand in the *Towneley Lectionary* has been supported by some, most scholars have rejected the attributions, and it is more generally assumed that the collaborative

one of the four finest female painters in the Netherlands, and Genaille suggests that Verhulst may have introduced Bruegel to the Ghent-Bruges Breviaries produced in the workshop of Simon Bening.[202] Considering links between manuscript illumination and *Children's Games* helps to elucidate important aspects of the panel's reception. The number of manuscript illuminations included in Hindman's appendix testifies to the existence and proliferation of images of children's games in the half-century preceding Bruegel's panel and suggests an interest among wealthy patrons in enjoying sets or series of game images.[203] Since Hindman's conclusions in 1981, scholarship on Ghent-Bruges manuscripts in general and game-borders in particular has taken significant steps forward and it is important to update our analysis of *Children's Games* accordingly.[204] Differences between the panel and manuscript marginalia are just as informative. When viewed beside the established series of seasonal games found in manuscripts, *Children's Games* presents something of a contradiction. While the greenery on the trees and the clear sky suggest that panel is set in summer, the games included are drawn from almost every month of the year. Unlike the calendar borders, where activities are strictly delimited by time and season, *Children's Games* presents festive traditions associated with midsummer and midwinter side-by-side. This suggests that ultimately the panel was animated by new and different priorities to its manuscript precursors.

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miniature described in Clovio's inventory has not survived. See Royalton-Kisch in Orenstein (ed), 2001, p. 23, note 47, Alexander, 1994, p. 252 and Gibson, 1989, p. 63.

[202] Kren and McKendrick, 2003, p. 494; Genaille, 1988, p. 138. According to Van Mander after Bruegel's death Verhulst taught her grandson Jan to paint in watercolour. No works by Verhulst have been identified.

[203] Hindman, 1981, p. 457.

[204] In recent years exhibition catalogues and monographs have provided new insights into several of the Ghent-Bruges manuscripts discussed by Hindman, and research on the place of games in the iconography

Calendar Games in French Manuscripts

The tradition of using games or leisure activities in addition to labours to represent the changing seasons first emerged in fifteenth-century France, with the influential *Très riches heures* of Jean, duc de Berry (Chantilly, Musée Condé, MS. 65), which contains a particularly sumptuous calendar. Executed by the Limbourg brothers between 1408 and 1412, the calendar also presents a new development; personalising the traditional occupations of the month by picturing them from the perspective of the duke, on his land and often within sight of his properties. The monthly scenes offer an inventory of the duke's material wealth: a splendid banqueting hall is the backdrop for the January miniature (Fig. 14); in the miniature for July reaping and shearing takes place before Château du Clain in Poitiers, built by the Duke toward the end of the fourteenth century; in August the Château d'Etampes appears in the background.[205] As well as detailing the duke's considerable wealth and holdings, the *Très riches heures* calendar miniatures also inventory the duke's privileged lifestyle by relegating the traditional peasant labours to the background and foregrounding aristocratic leisure activities instead. In the January miniature the duke himself is pictured seated at a banqueting table, surrounded by his servants and pets, in May noblemen and ladies ride in the woods, and in August the aristocratic leisure activity of hawking takes place in the foreground while in the background peasants cut corn and swim in the river. The distinction made in the *Très riches heures* between aristocratic leisure and peasant labour served ultimately to underline the status of the duke, and the success of the strategy of picturing such 'divergent milieus' was confirmed by the fact that a number of scenes of aristocratic leisure introduced in the manuscript were to become standard

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of the calendar months has been published. See especially Kren and McKendrick, 2003; Dekeyzer, 2004; Willemsen, 2005.

[205] For reproductions of the calendar pages see Raymond Cazelles and Johannes Rathofer, *Illuminations of Heaven and Earth: The Glories of the Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* (New York, 1988). The Limbourg brothers did not complete the manuscript and several later hands have been identified in the calendar miniatures, including that of Jean Colombe and a so-called 'intermediate painter'. Debates about the precise dating of each of the calendar miniatures affect our understanding of details in the iconography, such as the identities of some of the noblemen and castles pictured.

fare in later calendar iconography.[206] The miniatures of the *Très riches heures* influenced a generation of Netherlandish artists, most notably the important group of illuminators behind the famous *Grimani Breviary* (Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana) who may have come across the French manuscript at the court of Margaret of Austria in Mechelen.[207]

A similar kind of division between labour and leisure can be found in the calendar of a manuscript known as the *Hours of Adélaïde de Savoie* (Musée Condé, Chantilly, MS. Lat. 1362). Dateable to around 1460, the original owner of the manuscript is unknown, and it takes it name from its seventeenth-century owner, Adélaïde, Duchess of Burgundy. With each month represented over two pages, this calendar includes illustrations of many of the typical seasonal labours – we find peasants harvesting hay and corn in June and July, preparing wine barrels in August, picking fruit in October and killing a pig in November. But, like the *Très Riches Heures*, these traditional agricultural tasks are interspersed with a number of more pleasurable pastimes, and a seasonal calendar of games begins to emerge. In February Valentine's Day lovers play a game of *petit papiers*, a courting game in which men and women choose slips of paper.[208] In May, figures are pictured dancing; in June they play an early form of tennis; in July a water joust is staged (Fig. 15) and in December the whole town participates in a snowball fight. The leisure pursuits which the calendar focuses on are those of the urban bourgeoisie, and it has been proposed that, like the *Très Riches Heures*, these might reflect the interests and milieu of the book's original owner. [209]

A little-known sixteenth-century Book of Hours in the Douce collection, Douce MS 135, features a calendar of seasonal games which closely corresponds to that of the

[206] For discussions on the social implications of the *Très riches heures* iconography see Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character,* 2 vols (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1964), p. 66 and J. J. G. Alexander, '*Labeur* and *Paresse*: Ideological Representations of Medieval Peasant Labour', *Art Bulletin*, 72 (1990), 443-452.
[207] Thomas Kren and Scott McKendrick, *Illuminating the Renaissance: The Triumph of Flemish Manuscript Painting in Europe* (Los Angeles, 2003), no. 126.
[208] On this and other courtly love games, tokens and symbols see Jones, 2002, pp. 201-225.
[209] Bouissounouse, 1925.

Hours of Adélaïde de Savoie.[210] The calendar in Douce 135 occupies just twelve pages, but is highly decorative. Its pages are divided up by gilded architectural columns, with each of the upper borders split in half to contain a small depiction of the relevant labour of the month in one half and an astrological sign in the other. Much larger are the lower borders, which contain seasonal games and pastimes (Fig. 16). Like the *Hours of Adélaïde de Savoie*, the pastimes depicted in Douce 135 are those of the upper-middle classes, and in several cases the manuscripts picture exactly the same pastime. In the February page of Douce 135 a group of men and women cook Shrove Tuesday pancakes, an activity which is pictured in the upper border of the February miniature in the *Hours of Adélaïde de Savoie*. In March, both manuscripts illustrate Ash Wednesday with a group of worshippers receiving ashes; in April both manuscripts show a group of pilgrims approaching a church and both also decorate the month of December with a snowball fight.

It seems likely that the overlaps with the *Hours of Adélaïde de Savoie* were coincidental rather than deliberate. The scenes which depict the same subjects are staged in completely different ways, and in many of the months the subjects differ, with the *Hours of Adélaïde de Savoie* favouring traditional harvest labours rather than games in the months of June, July, August and September. The relationship between PML 572 and Douce 135, however, appears to have been much more direct (Fig. 17a and 17b). There are several key differences between these two books which provide clues to their intended audiences. These include the use of colour in the hand-illuminated scenes versus the monochrome of the printed *Horae* and variations in the backgrounds and in the number of figures depicted.[211] With fewer figures in each scene the Douce manuscript borders are much clearer and more immediately legible than the crowded, monochrome borders of PML 572. The backdrops to the hand-illuminated borders include verdant countryside, cobbled courtyards and castle walls, all of which display

[210] The manuscript is usually dated to the second quarter of the sixteenth century. Henisch reproduces several folios from Douce 135. Henisch, 1999, fig. 4.9, 5.8, 6.14 and 7.4. See also Willemsen, 1995, p. 430, note 27; Hindman, 1981, p. 456, note 67; Pächt and Alexander, 1966, p. 66, no. 851; Willard, 1932, p. 35.
[211] In the month of February, for example, there are eight figures making pancakes in PML 572 and six in Douce 135, just as in September (illustrated) eight figures play games of *frappé main* in PML 572 and six play in Douce 135.

a convincing recession of space. By contrast, in the printed *Horae* most of the games are set against a townscape, where the roofs of the houses make the scenes seem flat and frieze-like. This also gives the printed scenes an urban feel and suggests that, like the *Hours of Adélaïde de Savoie,* the original audience of PML 572 would have been bourgeois. By contrast, the sections of castle wall evident in the background of scenes in Douce 135 indicate that the original owner of this manuscript may have belonged to the aristocracy.[212] These differences in patronage would also fit with the different media of the two books. The introduction of printing late in the fifteenth century meant that for a period the production of printed books and illuminated manuscripts overlapped. In order to distinguish themselves from the new print technologies, traditional manuscripts became increasingly lavish. While printed Books of Hours appealed to a wide market, hand-decorated manuscripts were only affordable for the elite. The relationship between Douce 135 and PML 572 thus demonstrates an interesting paradox, with a luxurious, hand-illuminated manuscript being produced after iconography found in a printed book.

Despite these correlations in the iconography of seasonal games and pastimes, it would be wrong to assume that all of the depictions of games in French manuscripts from the period adhered to a seasonal framework. In a number of other manuscripts playful figures were used more generally as decorative motifs, suggesting that the earlier drollery traditions persisted alongside the new calendar game iconography. Examples include a French manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale known as the *Livre d'heures de la famille Ango* (Bibl. Nat. nouv. acq. lat. 392), which contains depictions of over a hundred children's games in its lower borders (Fig. 18).[213] A second sixteenth-century manuscript in the Douce collection, Douce MS 276, provides a further example of the random, decorative use of children's games (Fig. 19).[214] As well as including a random

[212] These include the games of golf (fol. 2r), blindman's buff (fol. 5v), "piggy in the middle" (fol. 7r) and the snowball fight (fol. 7v).
[213] Many of these are illustrated in the index of Riché and Alexander-Bidon, 1994. Active in Rouen in the 1520's and 1530's, the Master of the *Ango Hours* appears to have enjoyed inserting mischievous, playful figures into the borders of his manuscripts. A manuscript attributed to him in the Pierpont Morgan Library is decorated with numerous playful *putti* (PML MS. M. 61). Plummer, 1982, p. 94.
[214] As with the *Ango Hours*, there does not appear to be any correlation between the iconography of the games and the main miniatures in Douce 276; the Gospel lessons are complemented in the borders by

selection of games, both of these manuscripts feature nude figures playing alongside clothed figures.[215] In this way they seem to blend the Italian revival of the antique *putto* with the Northern trend for using scenes of daily life as decorative motifs, demonstrating the diversity that existed in depictions of children during this period.

boys swimming and shooting arrows at a popinjay, the Hours of the Virgin include scenes of fencing and bowling, and the prayers for None are accompanied by stilt walkers, water games, and blindman's buff. Orme reproduces two folios in colour. Orme, 2001, fig. 65 and 70. See also Willemsen, 1995, p. 430, note 27; Hindman, 1981, p. 456, note 67; Pächt and Alexander, 1966, p. 64, no. 829; Willard, 1932, p. 37.

[215] In several of the folios in Douce 276 the nudity of the children makes them seem *putto*-like, and their games highly decorative; in other scenes, considerable care has been taken to render the children's clothes and belongings realistically, as in the group leaving a schoolroom in folio 10v. The differences in the children's appearance may be because the manuscript was illustrated by several different hands, but this does not explain why several folios include nude children playing alongside clothed children.

Calendar Games in Ghent-Bruges Manuscripts

While the French examples vary greatly in their depictions of playful children and seasonal games, within the Ghent-Bruges manuscripts the calendar of seasonal games was to become both more firmly established and more elaborate. At least seven Ghent-Bruges manuscripts contain calendars which are decorated with a uniform series of seasonal games. The relationship between these manuscripts is complex, and while scholarly disagreement exists on points of their authorship and ownership, all can be dated to the first half of the sixteenth century. Often seen as the 'final flourishing' of manuscript illumination, these books were produced in the last phase of manuscript production which saw the introduction of the printing press. As with Douce MS 135, the highly elaborate decoration of the Ghent-Bruges manuscripts can be seen as a response to the competition offered by new print technology. The intention throughout these manuscripts was to astound the viewer with illusionistic, highly decorative pages and the influence of Netherlandish panel painting can be felt in the refined miniatures, which pay attention to composition, recessional landscape, skin tone and individualised facial expressions. The borders of Ghent-Bruges manuscripts were important sites for further elaboration, and are filled with depictions of the kinds of luxury objects which would appeal to wealthy patrons, including jewels, flowers, shells and feathers. Illusionistic *trompe l'oeil* insects perch among the finery, and cinematic progressions from indoor to outdoor views between the main miniature and border further transform the page from something flat and decorative into three-dimensional narrative space.[216]

It was not only the depictions of luxurious or rare objects that appealed to the viewers of these books. Anecdotal subjects drawn from the daily life of the peasants also provoked comment from learned observers, and it is here that we begin to see some overlap between the manuscripts and Bruegel's oeuvre. Unlike earlier manuscript children, the calendar children found in sixteenth-century Ghent-Bruges manuscripts lack subversive elements. Whether pictured in the main miniatures assisting their parents in daily tasks

or playing seasonal games in the borders, these peasant children seem instead to underline cultural norms and contribute to a harmonious vision of society at one with the natural world.[217] In addition to their tranquility, these depictions of children are distinguished by a new kind of intense fidelity to life which was typical of the Ghent-Bruges style. An example of one such child occurs in the February miniature of the famous *Grimani Breviary* (Biblioteca Marciana, Venice, MS. Lat. I. 99). Here a full page is devoted to depicting a snow-muffled landscape, in which hills shelter a small settlement with a church and windmill. In the foreground is a peasant house and through its open door a couple are visible, warming themselves by the fire (Fig. 20).

The attention to detail in this scene is typical of the elaborate miniatures for which the Ghent-Bruges artists were renowned. While the tabby cat, farmyard animals and wild birds pecking at crumbs were all standard winter iconography, in the *Grimani Breviary* we are treated to an additional detail of a small boy. Standing in the doorway of the house and facing out toward the viewer, the boy raises his green tunic, exposes his genitalia, and urinates into the snow. The positioning of the boy in the foreground of the scene, the high colour of his tunic, his mischievous gesture and the way in which his pee turns the snow yellow all contribute to making this detail inescapably riveting. Evidence suggests that contemporary viewers found this real-life *puer mingens* just as enthralling. Commented upon by one of the Breviary's first viewers, Marcantonio Michiel, the boy served as an exemplar of the ideals of typically 'Northern' attention to detail and set a new standard in miniature illustration.[218] The impression that the peeing boy made on Michiel was, one suspects, only partly linked to the delicate way in which the artist

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[216] Marrow, 2005, pp. 9-27.

[217] The taste for *trompe l'œil* effects and luxurious objects in the borders of the Ghent-Bruges manuscripts rendered the subversive 'playful' aspect of the margins defunct. Instead, from the late fifteenth-century onwards, the borders of manuscripts became a site for reinforcing the wealth and status of the owner, reflecting the boom in trade and commerce in Northern France and the Netherlands. Camille, 1992, pp. 153-160.

[218] Michiel viewed the breviary in Cardinal Grimani's Venetian palace in 1521 and is the earliest known source to mention the work. He described how the most praised of the leaves 'are the twelve months, among them February, where a boy urinating in the snow turns it yellow and the surrounding countryside is frozen and covered in snow.' (*Lodansi in esso sopratutto li 12 mesi, et tralli altri il febbraro, ove uno fanciullo orinando nella neve, le fa gialla et il paese ivi è tutto nevoso et giacciato*). Salmi and Mellini, 1972, p. 253. Several decades later the scene was reproduced in reverse in a prayer book made for a member of the

rendered the boy's still-chubby upper thighs, or his breath, freezing into a cloud on contact with the cold air. What made the peeing boy special was not just the style in which he was rendered, but also his actions. What could be more everyday, more patently routine and bodily than the act of urinating?[219] To picture this non-event, a minor part of an even more minor person's life, in the foreground of the opening pages of an illustrious Breviary was an act of attention to detail so unusual, so fastidious, and so new that it raised comment.

The game-borders that appeared in many of these manuscripts can be seen to blend these two traditions – the decorative and the anecdotal. Adding to an already full page, the depictions of seasonal games found in the borders of the calendar pages belong to the drive to provide new levels of visual stimulation for the viewer. Additionally, the fun of decoding the games being played would have provided a heightened degree of anecdotal interest. The images of children that feature in the Ghent-Bruges manuscripts provide important artistic precedents for Bruegel's paintings. Like the manuscript artists, Bruegel used children and their antics to imbue his scenes of daily life with an authenticity which continues to enchant viewers today. Whether it is the carefree children indulging in winter games on a frozen river in the *Census at Bethlehem* (Fig. 21), or the smaller members of the thronging crowd in the *Procession to Calvary* lifting their tunics to avoid the puddles (Fig. 22), Bruegel used the self-absorption of children to powerful effect. In both of these paintings, and in many other works, the children's concerns set up counter-narratives which serve to ground the scenes and render them life-like. The life-like quality of Bruegel's scenes only served to make them more poignant; as Auden acknowledged, Bruegel was an artist uniquely able to convey the

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Portuguese royal family (Lisbon, Museu Nacional de Arte Antigua, MS 13) fol. 2v and the *Hennessy Hours* (Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, MS. II 159) fol. 2v.

[219] Henisch compared the Grimani boy to another little boy with a toy wagon who appears in the foreground of a farmyard scene in a French Book of Hours (Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, MS M1001, fol. 48). She describes the irrelevance of these children to the calendar iconography: 'once again, with art's caprice, star billing has been given to a bit player whose part is all show and no substance.' Henisch, 1999, p. 159.

'human position' of suffering, and this appears to have been something learned from the Ghent-Bruges artists.[220]

The phrase 'game of the month' has recently been coined to describe the systematic serialization of games that occurs in the pages of Ghent-Bruges manuscript calendars.[221] This phrase is fitting, for it accurately suggests parallels with the more established and familiar iconography of the 'labours of month'. While there is a strong degree of uniformity in the ways in which the seven manuscripts present their seasonal games, there is also, as with the labours of the month, considerable scope for variation. The British Library's *Golf Book*, named after the depiction of a game of *kolf* in the September border, might be seen as the apogee of the Ghent-Bruges game-calendars (Fig. 23).[222] Dated to the early 1540's, this manuscript is probably the latest and certainly most elaborate of the seven manuscripts. Set against realistic landscapes, figures in the *Golf Book*'s game-borders are just as illusionistic and enchanting as those figures in the larger labours of the months.

By contrast, a second manuscript which features a twenty-four-page calendar, the *Hours of Conde-Duque Olivares* demonstrates the greatest deviation from the Ghent-Bruges standard.[223] In this manuscript the game iconography differs significantly and the large, squarer shape of the borders means that the games are not spread out in a narrow strip but instead are given even greater emphasis than the labours of the months (Fig. 24). Parallels between the *Hours of Conde-Duque Olivares* and the *Grimani Breviary* have been made, and certainly the figures are shown in a similar amount of detail; in both cases,

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[220] In his poem *Musée des Beaux-Arts* (1940) W. H. Auden described how Bruegel's paintings conveyed the 'human position' of suffering, which takes place 'while someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along.' Auden devoted two lines to the role of children in depicting this, writing with reference to the *Census at Bethlehem*: 'For the miraculous birth, there must always be / Children who did not specially want it to happen, skaing / On a pond at the edge of the wood..'

[221] In considering these seven manuscripts Annemarieke Willemsen developed the notion, already evident from Sandra Hindman's appendix, that a seasonal 'game of the month' accompanied the labours of the months. See Willemsen, 2005 and Hindman, 1981, Appendix II.

[222] London, The British Library, Add. MS. 24098. The *Golf Book* currently contains the calendar pages, a few miniatures, and some pages with historiated initials, all cut from what would originally have been a lavish Book of Hours. The sheets were rebound and refoliated in 1928. See Kren and McKendrick, 2003, cat. no. 155.

for example, facial expressions can be easily read. Yet the figures in the *Olivares Hours* are stiffer than those of the *Grimani Breviary*, their poses robotic rather than naturalistic, so that ultimately this manuscript seems like sincere and innovative imitation of the Bening-Horenbout style by another hand rather than anything that would have come from the workshops.[224]

The realistic landscape evident in the *Golf Book* and the *Olivares Hours* is absent from the other five manuscripts with game-borders and the playing figures occupy a more obviously decorative role. Often confined to the upper border and executed in gold, silver, bronze, white or coloured *camaïeu*, the figures appear to have been carved into the shallow niche in which they play. Examples of these simpler game-borders feature in the *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary* (c.1500, Museum Mayer van den Bergh, Antwerp, Cod. 946), the *Eleanor of Portugal Breviary* (c.1510, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, MS M. 52) and the *Spinola Hours* (c.1515, Getty Institute, Los Angeles, MS. Ludwig IX 18).[225] All three of these manuscripts feature twelve-page calendars with the same mistake - a transposition of the zodiacal signs of Scorpio and Libra. This shared mistake has been seen as evidence that they originated in the same workshop.[226] Two more manuscripts with simple games in *camaïeu* spread across twenty-four page calendars include a prayer

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[223] *Hours of Conde-Duque de Olivares, c.* 1505, Real Colegio de Corpus Christi, Valencia. See Garin Ortiz de Taranco, 1951.

[224] According to Hindman and Willemsen, this book bears the closest resemblance to the so-called 'Prayerbook of Charles V', also called the 'Golf Book', a Southern-Netherlandish Book of Hours auctioned at Bernard Quaritch's in London, of which the present location is unknown. The scenes of play are described as being depicted in polychrome on a realistic background with figures that close resemble those of the Olivares manuscript. The games in this instance decorate later pages rather than the calendar, and include curling, archery and kolf at the laudes (fol. 45v and 46), whip-tops at the terts (71v), knucklebones and hoops at the nones (fol. 86v and 87) and blowing bubbles at the penitential psalms (fol. 120v).

[225] The *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary* is named after the collector, Fritz Mayer van den Bergh, who purchased it in 1898. For suggestions on the books original owner see Dekeyzer, 2004. The *Eleanor of Portugal Breviary* is so called because Eleanor of Portugal (1458-1525) is pictured kneeling in prayer on fol. 1v and her arms and device (a fishing net with true-lover's knots and tassels) have been added over those of the original owner on the *prie-dieu*. The *Spinola Hours* takes its name from its eighteenth-century owners, the Spinola family in Genoa.

[226] Willemsen, 1998. Willemsen dates the *Eleanor of Portugal Breviary* as the earliest of the three (at 1500-1510), but following Dekeyzer, 2004, I would suggest that the *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary* is the earliest. This is based principally on the positioning of the zodical sign. In the Meyer van den Bergh Breviary, it is positioned in the centre of the upper game border. In the other two manuscripts the game border in uninterrupted and the zodiacal sign is moved to the lower outer corner, suggesting that this innovation occurred in the *Eleanor of Portugal Breviary* and was then followed in the *Spinola Hours*.

book for a member of the Portuguese royal family (c.1530, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon, MS 13 Illum.) and in a manuscript known as the *Spielbuch* (c.1500, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, CLM 28346). [227] In both of these calendars the use of twenty-four rather than twelve pages allows space for more playing figures and a greater variety of games.

The presentation of play in the borders of these seven calendars provides an obvious correlation with *Children's Games.* Many of the same games are depicted in Bruegel's panel, and in each case the games are being played by realistically clothed figures, who make use of seasonal props such as sticks, stones, knucklebones and pigs' bladders in their play. The identification of the 'game of the month' as an artistic convention also impacts upon our understanding of Bruegel's panel. This tradition clearly had its basis in the actual opportunities for recreation afforded by the liturgical seasons and weather conditions - the winter months enabled games with snow and ice for example, whereas Carnival festivities encouraged different kinds of games. But the fact that this artistic convention developed above and beyond prosaic concerns and achieved a wide currency in the sixteenth century is evidenced by its use in all seven of the Ghent-Bruges game calendars. By tackling the games season by season, we can begin to see where *Children's Games* referenced this tradition, and where it deviated from it.

Winter

The manuscript calendars all begin in the depths of winter with the month of January. This is usually represented by a scene of warming or feasting in front of a fire, which is sometimes juxtaposed with an outdoor scene of labours in the snow. These scenes can be

[227] The Lisbon prayerbook is sometimes referred to as the Hours of D. Fernando or of D. Catarina of Portugal, but as the identity of its original owner remains uncertain I refer to it simply as the Lisbon prayerbook. For more on this manuscript see Willemsen, 2005; Kren, 2003, p. 8; Black, 1990, pp. 518-519; and Markl, 1983, pp. 19-20. The book's calendar is no longer complete – two folios, one with the calendar text for June and the labour illustration for July and one with the calendar text for November and labour for December were cut from the manuscript at some point. The June/July folio has been replaced with one showing the appropriate calendar text, with a decorated border of putti at play. The verso has been left blank; Willemsen suggests that this signifies that, despite their beauty, the text remained the most essential element of the calendar pages. Willemsen, 2005, p. 422. The 'Spielbuch' was christened by Willemsen, see Willemsen, 1998, p. 215.

staged in peasant shacks, as in the *Golf Book* and the Lisbon prayer book, or in grand manors as in the *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary*, the *Da Costa Hours*, the *Eleanor of Portugal Breviary*, and the *Spinola Hours*. When the dwelling is a peasant shack it is pictured from the outside, with the figures clustered around a fire visible through an open door. When the dwelling is a grander house we are usually invited inside. Both types of scene often include depictions of children. The January miniature in the *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary* includes both indoor and outdoor scenes, and is divided in half by the profile of the castle wall (Fig. 25). To the right we see the figure of the Lord walking through a courtyard. The outer ledges of the castle windows are thick with snow, and a servant is chopping wood. To the left is an indoor scene in the great hall of the castle, with servants setting food on the dining table and tending to the fire. Linking the activities of the servants on either side of the wall is the figure of a woman, who has entered the room through the doorway and is carrying some of the freshly cut wood. Indoors the Lord is again present, seated in a carved chair in front of the fire. The presence of the Lord on both sides of the wall suggests that the scenes are not occurring concurrently, but it is unclear whether the indoor scene on the left precedes or follows the outdoor scene on the right. Indoors, the Lord wears a fur-trimmed housecoat instead of the blue-grey cape, but his black fur hat and long black scarf are the same, and the clogs which he wears in the outdoor scene lie on the stone floor beside him. Also at his feet we find a cat, and small figure perched on a stool. The motif of a child accompanying the Lord by the fire occurs in several Ghent-Bruges manuscripts.[228] The sixteenth-century introduction of a child in the traditional scene of warming by the fire is perhaps indicative of the artists' desire to render everyday details in a life-like manner. Like the cat, the plates of food, and the just kicked-off shoes, the child is a charming detail of the domestic interior.[229]

[228] In the *Da Costa Hours* a child and a cat perch side-by-side at the feet of the lord (in the *Mayer van den Bergh* image the cat sits on the other side of the table). In the January scene of a Book of Hours in the Fitzwilliam Museum (MS 1058-1975) the child and man are joined by a woman seated at the table, and in a manuscript in Vienna, Österreiche Nationalbibliothek, cod. 2706, fol. 1v a small girl is pictured by the fire. Henisch, 1999, Hansen, 1984, no. 22

[229] Henisch, 1999, p. 145.

Children are also present in the winter interiors of peasant houses. The month of January in the *Golf Book* is illustrated with an outdoor scene of a peasant house. Through its open doorway we spy a woman seated before a fire nursing a baby (Fig. 26). In the snowy foreground another peasant couple chop and collect firewood. A similar scene occurs in the January miniature in the *Munich-Montserrat Hours*.[230] The image closely resembles the *Golf Book* page, with the same church and windmill in the background, the family before the fire, and even the same snow-covered dishes on the table outside. In this scene another little child is included, helping to collect the chopped wood.[231] Other activities performed by children in the calendar miniatures for colder months include helping to tend the vines (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. 1858, fol. 3r), walking hand-in-hand through the snow (Book of Hours, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, MS 1058-1975, December, fol. 12v) and shopping at street markets (Sammlung Paul Durrieu, Flemish Breviary 1, November and Bodleian Library, MS Gough Liturg. 7, December, fol. 112).[232] Outdoor games such as snowball fighting (January, *Munich-Montserrat Hours*, fol. 3r) and ice-skating (February, *Grimani Breviary*, fol. 2r) make their way into the occasional calendar miniature, although they usually occupy a 'secondary' position, extending the illustration to the opposing, recto page rather than occupying the first full verso page.[233]

The border-game for January, depicted in all seven Ghent-Bruges manuscripts and also in the *Grimani Breviary*, is a jousting tournament on barrel-sleds (Fig. 27). A group of players tug two barrels forward in a mock joust, and in many of the examples the seated rider wears a helmet and carries a shield and lance.[234] The steeds are most often barrels set on wooden sleds, but there is some variation. In the *Golf Book* the riders are seated on flat sleds, while in the *Grimani Breviary* pointed wooden hulls have been added to the

[230] Attributed to Simon Bening and dated to c. 1535-1540 this manscript is in several parts, with the majority in Montserrat Abbey, MS. 53, two leaves in the Getty Museum, Ms. 3 and the calendar miniatures in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS. Lat. 23638. Kren and McKendrick, 20003, cat. no. 154.
[231] For an image see Hansen, 1984, p. 17.
[232] For images see Henisch, 1999, pp. 143-144; Hansen, 1984, nos. 118 & 341.
[233] An exception to this is a Flemish Book of Hours in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, which pictures three children snowballing as the main miniature for December (MS W425, fol. 12). Henisch, 1999, p. 162.
[234] The exception being the *Golf Book*, where one rider carries a quoit and the other is empty handed.

front of the barrel-sleds. This joust was clearly a popular artistic motif, but it is unclear whether it derives from a real custom. The use of sleds for games and for transporting goods is attested to in many of images from the period, but the ritualistic and combative nature of the January border motifs suggests a more specific activity. It is not clear from the images whether snowy weather was essential for the tournament. The lower borders of the *Grimani Breviary* depict the most elaborate version of the joust, and the sleds are clearly being pulled on a frozen ground, but in the other examples the use of coloured *camaïeu* disguises the condition of the ground. The closest parallel to the motif outside of these manuscripts is Bruegel's *Battle Between Carnival and Lent*, which centers on a similarly staged combat between two riders. Snow is absent from this panorama; although King Carnival is pulled on a barrel sled just like those shown in the January borders, its runners have clearly cut grooves into the bare earth of the village square (Fig. 28). The mock-joust entered into by Bruegel's villagers is understood to be an accurate reflection of Carnival customs at the time, and it is therefore possible that the January joust in the manuscripts reflects a genuine but undocumented tournament which took place at this time of year.[235] The combative nature of the activity seems to be important; all of the examples, even those which only occupy one folio, picture two protagonists facing each other. This ritualistic game is absent from *Children's Games*, but echoes of it can be found in several of the motifs. The game of tug-of-war in the centre of the panel stages a tournament in which the players, seated on each others' backs, pull away from each other rather than advancing forward (37). Beside this is a barrel is being rocked like a see-saw by two male riders seated at either end (25), their actions again recalling the January joust of the game-borders.

Rolling hoops, the traditional activity for the month of February, appears to have been almost directly transposed from the calendar borders to the right foreground of *Children's Games*, where two figures roll hoops with sticks (Fig. 29). The figure on the left is an adolescent boy, while the figure on the right is a girl, identifiable by her white headscarf and the fact that she rolls a 'girls hoop' which is lined with wooden chocks

[235] See note 91.

(these were later replaced by bells).[236] Skipping through hoops decorated with chocks or bells is depicted as a Shrovetide ritual in a woodcut in Olaus Magnus's *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (1555) and games with hoops accompany the February labours of harrowing the ground and warming by the fire in all of the manuscripts except for the *Spinola Hours*.[237] A survey of depictions of games with hoops demonstrates a high level of originality and innovation on the part of the artists (Fig. 30). While individual pairs of figures bear some resemblances, in each of the borders the figures are arranged in slightly different configurations.[238] Through their varied iconography the manuscript illustrations hint at the variety of games which could be played with hoops. Whereas Bruegel only pictures trundling a hoop, the players holding the hoops horizontally in the manuscript borders suggest that a game of tug-of-war or acrobatics might be about to ensue. In several examples two large figures hold up a hoop for a smaller figure to jump through, and animal training with hoops is suggested by the presence of a dog in the *Spinola Hours* and the *Breviary of Eleanor of Portugal.* Skipping through a hoop predated skipping with a rope, which was not recorded until after the seventeenth century. [239] Combinations of rolling and skipping with hoops feature in a number of French game collections of the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Rabelais lists *au cercle* as a game played by Gargantua, Jacques Stella illustrates *le cercle* as a game of skipping through a hoop, and skipping with a hoop and rolling a hoop are illustrated side-by-side in the background of one of the engravings illustrating *Les Trente-Six Figures contenant tous les jeux* (Fig. 31).

[236] Meyere, 1941, p. 4.
[237] In the *Spinola Hours* the usual games for November and February appear to have been exchanged This anomaly may be a mistaken exchange resulting from the fact that these two pages are usually painted next to each other on one bifolio. Willemsen, 2005, p. 423. The theory of an accidental exchange is supported by the close resemblance between the February activities of the *Spinola Hours* – golf, follow-my-leader, stilts and piggy-back – and the November activities in the *Eleanor of Portugal Breviary*. For Olaus Magnus's woodcut see Opie, 1997, p. 162.
[238] The borders of the *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary*, the *Spielbuch* and the *Golf Book* all contain two figures holding up a hoop horizontally, with the figure on the left raising a stick in his right.
[239] The earliest depictions appear in Van de Venne's images for Jacob Cats's emblem collections (see chapter 4). Opie, 1997, p. 160.

Spring

The Ghent-Bruges manuscripts are divided in their representations of the calendar months of March, April and May. Some take their example from the *Très Riches Heures* and illustrate noble pastimes associated with the warmer months, such as courting, music-making, collecting spring flowers and hunting. Other manuscripts focus on the busy life of the farmyard, with fields being ploughed, cows milked, and sheep led to pasture. Children are found in several of the spring scenes which depict peasant life. The April scenes in the *Eleanor of Portugal Breviary* and the *Da Costa Hours* include a small boy leading livestock to pasture. The flock streams across the farmyard and out through a gate on the left. In both illustrations adults work alongside the children - men help the flock out of the barn, while women milk cows and churn butter (Fig. 32 and 33). This division of labour, with the small boys involved in straightforward tasks, probably reflects historical realties [240] The *Golf Book* is the only manuscript to include children in a springtime scene of noble courtship (Fig. 34). Here courting couples meet by a fountain, and a well-dressed girl and boy are pictured amongst them. The reason for the inclusion of children in this scene is not immediately clear. Facially, the children closely resemble the central adult couple. The girl, like the woman, has a high forehead and wears her hair in a centre parting; the boy, like the man, has wide-set eyes and a prominent nose. While the children may represent the family that the couple already have, it seems more likely that they function allegorically and symbolise the potential fruit of the couple's union.[241] Nesting and procreation is further alluded to by two storks in the background of the scene, who are building a nest on one of the castle chimneys.

The game-borders for the month of March all feature games with whip-tops or rattles, both games which are pictured towards the top of *Children's Games* (Fig. 35). It is unsurprising that these games are so common in the manuscript borders, given that the purpose of the calendar in a Book of Hours was to highlight Holy Days. Whip-tops and

[240] Nicolas Orme describes how from the age of about seven children were charged with tasks such as gathering fruit and nuts, bird-scaring, fishing, herding geese and finding firewood. Orme, 2001.

rattles both related specifically to Lent, and a further endorsement of their relation to the liturgical calendar can be found in Bruegel's *Battle Between Carnival and Lent*. In this painting almost all of Lent's followers hold rattles, and beside the church a group of children play with whip-tops and spinning tops (Fig. 36). Carnival began with Candlemas on the 2nd February and culminated with Shrove Tuesday. Ash Wednesday marked the beginning of Lent, when all excesses were banned for forty days until Easter, which usually fell in the middle of March. The links between rattles and the period of Lent are fairly clear: church bells were silenced from Maundy Thursday until Saturday morning mass, and during this period the bells would be replaced by rattles, which were played by both adults and children.[242] This was obviously undertaken enthusiastically – in 1520 the city council of York had to take measures against boys whose Easter rattles disturbed the peace.[243] A lone child plays with a rattle in *Children's Games* (56), but in *Carnival and Lent* and in the manuscript borders the rattles are clutched by both large and small figures alike, suggesting a communal cacophony of noise. In the game-borders the figures advance in a line, and the processional nature is even more explicit in *Carnival and Lent* as the players are following Lent's cart. Their link to Lent is made clear by the little girl who leads the group. Grasping her rattle in both hands, she looks up at the figure of Lent, and has a sooty cross painted on her forehead. Slight differences can be observed in the ways that the rattles are held in these depictions. Most of the figures in the manuscripts hold their rattles horizontally, with a hand on either side, whereas in Bruegel's depictions the rattles are held vertically and from underneath by some kind of handle. The rattles most commonly shown are wooden 'clappers' with rocking arms that would resound on the wooden base when shaken. Similar rattles with double rocking arms are depicted in Douce MS 276 (Fig. 37). In this manuscript the liturgical aspect of rattle-playing is again underlined by the fact that the figures are entering a church. This image also details a second type of rattle, in evidence in the Ghent-Bruges borders but

[241] Henisch comments on this image, drawing links between the courting couple and Gemini, which was occasionally represented as young lovers. She too sees the children as symbolic of new life in the context of courtship. Henisch, 1999, p. 157.
[242] Rozler, 1936; Drost, 1914, p. 129.
[243] Orme, 2001, p. 186.

not in Bruegel's work. This appears to be a type of clacker, the ridged end of which would be whirled around to create a noise.[244]

The whip-top also had a long association with Shrovetide and the month of March, although the reasons behind this are less clear. In the early sixteenth century Alexander Barclay described the seasonal activities of children in rhymed verse, writing:

'Each time and season hath his delights and joys,
Look in the streets behold the little boys,
How in fruit season for joy they sing and hop,
In lent is each one full busy with his top.'[245]

It is possible that the public holidays associated with the religious festivals of Shrove Tuesday and Good Friday might have stimulated game playing, although this does not explain the predominance of the whip-top in particular. Another reason for the occurrence of the game in the March calendars may have been the weather. The spring sunshine and increased daylight would have encouraged children out to play, but in March it would still have been fairly cold. In such conditions the activity of whipping a top provided a way of keeping warm. In his *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children* (London, 1581) Richard Mulcaster recommended the activity of whipping a top for young and old alike as a means to warm the body in cold weather and boost the metabolism.[246] Citing Plato, Mulcaster advised against excessive stooping, and encouraged players to develop their upper body strength by whipping the top with both their right and left arms. In 1600 Samuel Rowlands similarly recommended 'toppe and scourge to make him hot', and the fact that whip-tops continued to be played with in springtime even into the twentieth century confirms this wisdom. [247] The positioning of

[244] Drost, 1914, pp. 129-130.
[245] White, 1928.
[246] 'Of this type of Top, that we use now a dayes, both for young and olde people, to warme them in cold weather…enlarge and stirre the naturall heat either to provoke appetite, or to expel superfluities. The more room the Top hath to spinne in, the better for the legges and feete and the bigger it is, the better for the armes and handes. The uprighter one scourgeth, the better for all partes…' Mulcaster, *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children*, Chapter 19, 'Of the Top and scourge', in Barker (ed.), 1994, pp. 87-88.
[247] Samuel Rowlands, The *Letting of Humour's Blood in the Head-vaine* (1600), cited in Opie and Opie, 1997, p. 309.

the boys whipping tops beneath an arched loggia in *Children's Games* entirely fits with the advice of humanist educators. In his *De Tradendis Disciplinis* (The Transmission of Areas of Knowledge), published in Antwerp in 1531, Juan Luis Vives recommended that boys be provided with porches or wide halls in which to recreate themselves in rainy weather.[248] When discussing the whip-top Mulcaster also points out that it was an activity which could be practised at home under cover in bad weather.[249]

Beyond the calendar, many sixteenth-century manuscripts include children playing with whip-tops beside exterior views of churches.[250] This suggests that, in addition to seasonal practicalities, the game may have held specific religious associations. Scholars have noted that the activity of whipping a top echoes the flagellation of Christ, which occurred on Maundy Thursday.[251] The whip-top's link to ecclesiastical architecture appears to be continued in Bruegel's *Carnival and Lent*, where the top players are positioned beside the church, and, to a lesser extent, by the ecclesiastical archways of the loggia in *Children's Games*. However, we should be wary of reading too much into this iconography. Children playing with whip-tops also appear in several of Bruegel's winter scenes and in these instances they are devoid of any liturgical significance.

In *The Hunters in the Snow* children whipping tops joins the adults curling and skating on the ice (Fig. 38). *The Census at Bethlehem* and the *Winter Landscape with Skaters and Bird Trap* also include children whipping tops on the ice, and it would be far-fetched to argue that these are disguised references to Christ's fate. Instead in these examples the whip-top functions like the skate and the sled as a generic attribute of winter play. One can imagine that a frozen river would have provided an ideally smooth surface on which to

[248] Watson, 1913.
[249] Barker, 1994.
[250] Children whipping tops appear in the Rothschild Prayer Book, beneath a depiction of 'St Anthony of Padua'; in the Stockholm-Kassel Book of Hours beneath an image of 'St John on Patmos'; beneath the 'Visitation' in a manuscript in Lisbon, Museum Nacional de Arte Antigua, Ms. 13 Illum.; and beneath the 'Vera Icon' in the Imhof Prayer Book. The motif appears twice in the Book of Hours of James IV of Scotland (fol. 18 and fol. 190). Willemsen proposes that one reason for this may be because it was an attractive way to fill a bottom and side margin with one continuous scene; with a beautiful architectural façade stretching up the outer margin and the anecdotal game detail adding interest to the lower margin. Willemsen, 2005, p. 427.
[251] Snow, 1997, pp. 115-116 and Orme, pp. 186-187.

turn a top. Certainly archaeological evidence suggests that whip-tops were as popular with children as they were with artists.[252] As we have seen, the physicality of whipping a top was recognised as a sensible way to stay warm in the winter months. In addition, the whip-top, like the hobbyhorse and the windmill, had long been used by artists and writers as a generic symbol of childhood or childish behaviour. In the iconography of the Ages of Man, picturing a small figure whipping a top, holding a windmill or riding a hobby-horse was an effective way of denoting childhood, as these three toys were all easily rendered and instantly recognisable.[253] The two components of wooden top and the handled whip made the whip-top particularly distinctive, whether as a simple line-drawn drollery in a manuscript or as a distant silhouette in a wintry landscape.

An unusual game found on the right of *Children's Games* has been described as 'blind hood' because a boy stands with his cap pulled down over his eyes.[254] With arms raised above his head, the boy holds aloft an object which resembles a fishing rod; a weight suspended from the end dangles behind his back. Around this central player six playmates scatter and run. The game-borders suggest that this curious game was relatively widespread in the sixteenth century (Appendix I, no. 48). The game occurs in the March border of the *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary* and the Munich *Spielbuch,* and the February border in the *Hours of Conde-Duque de Olivares* (Fig. 39). In these depictions the game has often been incorrectly identified as whip-top, perhaps because the rod resembles a whip.[255] In fact, it might be better described as 'blind slipper' or 'blind shoe.'[256] The game is also depicted in a *millefleurs* tapestry in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, dated to between 1500 and 1525 and probably made in the Southern Netherlands. In this image the object on the end of the rod is clearly identifiable as a shoe.[257] Visual

[252] The large number of medieval wooden whip-tops and spinning tops excavated from sites throughout Holland and Flanders indicate that they were popular children's toys. Willemsen, 1997, pp. 406-107.
[253] Examples of whip-top in the Ages of Man iconography include BNF MS. Fr. 9141, fol. 98r (first of six ages of man in Bartolomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum*); BNF MS. Lat. 8846, fol. 161r (first seven ages of man illustrating Psalm 89) and Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm. 19414, fol. 180r (second of five ages of man). All images reproduced in Sears, 1986.
[254] Hindman, 1981.
[255] Dekeyzer, 2004; Willemsen, 2005.
[256] Meyere lists it as 'blindenhoedje met slofkentrek'. Meyere, 1941, no. 47.
[257] Cavallo, 1993, no. 31, 'Five Youths Playing Blindman's Buff', pp. 453-457. Above the players in the tapestry floats a banderol inscribed 'Selon / le temps'. This motto has been identified as that of the

evidence suggests that the popularity of this game, like so many in Bruegel's panel, extended beyond the Netherlands. A carved depiction of the game appears on the face of an ivory diptych sundial made in Nuremberg in the early sixteenth century.[258] That the game reached France is suggested by its appearance in Douce MS 276 (Fig. 40). Despite this wealth of iconographical sources it is difficult to ascertain the precise objective of the game. It would seem that the idea was either for the blindfolded player to strike his playmates with the shoe, or to try and prevent them from catching hold of it. In all of the depictions some of the players reach out their hands, but it is unclear whether they are teasing the blindman while attempting to avoid the shoe, or reaching out to grab it. In the sundial carving and the Bodleian illustration the blindfolded figure is seated and in the tapestry fragment he stands with his back to a tree. This suggests that in some versions of the game there were rules which specified that the central player remain in the same spot. Bruegel's image is the most confusing with regard to this – the players run helter-skelter, with two reaching towards the shoe and three running away from it. To the extreme right a tangle of legs indicate that two of the players have fallen over in the mêlée. The physical nature of the reactions of the players in Bruegel's depiction and the ages of the players in the other examples suggest that this was a rough and tumble game enjoyed by young adolescent males.

The game most commonly depicted in the April borders is 'trap-ball' or 'knur-and-spell'. The element which distinguished this game from other games with balls was that the ball, or knur, was raised in a hollowed out trap, or spell. The batter would begin by striking the arm of the spell, which would fling the ball up in the air and enable it to be struck some distance. This game continued to be played into the twentieth century, when the trap developed into an elaborately sprung machine, but in earlier centuries illustrations suggest that the trap was a simple t-shaped construction consisting of a

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Bouesseau family of Burgundy, an identification which tallies with the 'NG' cipher at the base of the tapestry. The relation between the motto and the image, however, is less clear. It is possible that the association is between games and fair weather, with selon le temps meaning 'according to the season / weather'. It is also possible that the association is between youthful games in the context of the Ages of Man, with selon le temps meaning 'according to time'. As no other tapestries from this series have been found, and so it is impossible to discount either of these theories.

[258] Boehm, 1988, p. 21.

hinged arm with a hollow end in which the ball could be fitted.[259] This game is pictured in many of the manuscript game-borders, where 'fielders' stand poised to catch the ball in their caps or aprons, but it is absent from *Children's Games*. However, blowing bubbles, another game common to the April borders, is pictured by Bruegel. In both the *Golf Book* and in *Children's Games* bubble-blowing is undertaken by a solitary figure, tucked away at the left edge of the main scene and easily missed by the casual observer (Fig. 41). Other examples can be found in the *Spielbuch*, the Lisbon prayer book, and the *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary,* where several players are entertained by blowing and chasing bubbles which float through the air in a way which mimics the ball in the game of knur-and-spell opposite. In the French *Ango Hours* a group of children similarly engage joyfully in blowing and then trying to capture bubbles (Fig. 42). As outlined in my introduction, Bruegel's bubble-blowing boy has been connected to the Latin maxim *homo bulla* or 'man the bubble' - an expression which conveyed the brevity and fragility of life.[260] But the relationship between this moralistic message and Bruegel's motif remains ambiguous. Although evidence suggests that later in the century children blowing bubbles developed into a vanitas motif, the manuscript traditions which immediately preceded *Children's Games* demonstrate that negative meanings were not always attached to the action of blowing bubbles. Refuting the moralistic interpretation, I would suggest that the large numbers of bubble-blowing children in the French and Ghent-Bruges game-borders indicate the strength of an alternative tradition, in which bubble-blowing was innocent of any darker associations.

Summer

The depictions of calendar labours for the high summer months of June, July and August rarely include children, perhaps because the intensively physical labour and

[259] Opies. Strutt describes how 'boys and the common herd of rustics, who cannot readily procure a trap, content themselves with making a round hole in the ground, and, by way of a lever, use the brisket bone of an ox, or a flat piece of wood of like size and shape, which is placed in a slanting position, one half in the hole with the ball upon it, and the other half out of it: the elevated end being struck smartly with the bludgeon occasions the ball to rise a considerable height, and all the purposes of a trap are thus answered…' Strutt, 1896, p. 177.

[260] For a discussion of this see page 21, note 77.

heavy tools that the harvest demanded were deemed unsuitable for children.[261] The manuscript borders suggest that these were the months in which children were allowed to run free. The summer borders are filled with games of bowls and jousting on hobbyhorses, as well as outdoor activities in which children engage with the natural world, such as bird-snaring, insect-catching and swimming. Presumably the long hours of daylight, abundant food and warmer temperatures allowed for a more carefree existence for both adults and children alike, for this is also the time when the largest number of adult games is depicted. Adult pastimes include knightly jousts and noble archery competitions and the peasant games of cock-throwing and shooting at the popinjay. It is tempting to see the children jousting on hobbyhorses and catching butterflies in the game-borders in relation to the adults jousting and hunting in the main miniatures. Yet a closer look at the 'game of the month' tradition reveals that the tournament iconography of the game-borders predates that of the main miniatures. In manuscripts dating from the very beginning of the sixteenth century, such as the *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary*, the *Spielbuch* and the *Eleanor of Portugal Breviary*, the June game of jousting on hobbyhorses was already established, and accompanied a main miniature of sheep-shearing (Fig. 43,), while in July, the activity of catching butterflies accompanied the labours of mowing hay, raking it into bundles, and loading the bundles on to carts (Fig. 44). It is only in the later Ghent-Bruges manuscripts that the aristocratic pursuits of hunting and jousting are fore-grounded.[262] In both the *Golf Book* and the *Hennessy Hours* a knightly joust occupies the main miniature in June, with sheep-shearing relegated to the facing border. The July scenes of these manuscripts are dominated by a hawking party in the foreground, while the traditional haymaking labours are detailed in the background and the wagon in the facing border. These changes to the central activity in the main miniature set up dialogues between miniature and border in the *Golf Book* which, though unintentional, are both fortuitous and amusing. In the month of June it appears that the little jousters in the border mimic the serious tournament being fought

[261] An exception can be found in a page depicting an apple harvest attributed to Simon Bening. The August scene shows an orchard, with a woman pausing in her work to offer a child an apple from her overflowing apron. Manuscript fragment, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 23638, fol. 10r, reproduced in Henisch, 2002, p. 202, fig. 8-3.

[262] Kren sees the incorporation of elements of urban prosperity into the traditional calendar iconography in the work of Simon Bening as 'a multifaceted portrait of Flemish society'. Kren, 1988, pp. 203-233.

with swords and lances above them, while in July the actions of the children who attempt to capture butterflies also mimic those of the hawking party above (Fig. 45).

Children's Games includes many of the typical summer border-games. Behind the loggia, two figures are bowling. Just in front of them, the windmill joust on hobbyhorses has been altered to a windmill joust on foot. Bruegel adds another unusual element – his protagonists are girls rather than boys. They stand and face each other solemnly, windmill lances outstretched. Although it is not ridden by these jousters, the hobbyhorse was too vital a childhood prop to be entirely excluded from *Children's Games*. One is pictured in the foreground of the panel, ridden by a little boy who whips it with a twig (17). Chasing butterflies is absent from Bruegel's panorama, but games with insects are included. On the far right of the panel a little boy is shuffling belly-first along a log and reaching his net out at a group of insects (33). The insects that Bruegel's boy has disturbed have been identified as Cockchafers or May bugs, large, noisy brown bugs which were common throughout Europe until the early twentieth century.[263]

In several of the game-borders the butterfly chasers are interspersed with figures playing with rushes (Fig. 46). The identification of these objects as rushes is particularly explicit in the *Mayer Van den Bergh Breviary*, where large brown-headed clumps of bulrushes dot the landscape behind the players. In his list of games played by Gargantua, Rabelais includes *aux jonchées*, which is translated as 'at the rush bundles'. It is unclear what this game consisted of, but we can imagine that there were many uses which the ingenious child could find for these tough, summer grasses. In both the *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary* and the *Spinola Hours* the children appear to be blowing the grasses like musical instruments. On the far right of the *Spinola Hours* border a seated figure cradles a reed in his lap, as though carving or shaping it, while to the left two figures with open mouths hold the reeds before them like recorders, and appear poised to blow into them. *Children's Games* also includes rushes. Three lie on the bench in the left foreground, and two more are held by the little girl in front of the bench. The two

[263] Emerging in April or May, the bugs only lived for a few weeks, and were thus known colloquially as May bugs or June bugs. Vanden Branden, 1982, p. 511.

boys behind the bench (one playing with a bird and the other blowing bubbles) both wear a type of hat made of rushes, known as a *biezenhood* (Fig. 41). The boy playing with a bird wears his rush hat over his everyday hat, while the head of the bubble-blowing boy is bare beneath his rush hat. Children in the manuscript borders also wear similar hats made of rushes. The June borders of both the *Spielbuch* and the Lisbon prayer book include a boy riding a hobby horse, holding a windmill lance, and wearing a conical rush hat (Fig. 46). In the lower border of a mid fifteenth-century manuscript, the Hours of Catherine of Cleves, a boy riding a hobbyhorse also wears a rush hat and a collar.[264] Of all the summer games, only the water joust, typically found in the August game-borders, is absent from *Children's Games*. This game would have been seasonally appropriate to Bruegel's panel, and could have been easily inserted on the river in the left. Instead, Bruegel's river is a site for less regulated play. In place of the organized tournament children stand casually in the water, sit on the bank and dangle their legs in, and practice swimming with inflated bladders as water-wings.

Autumn

The final months of the year - September, October, November and December - provided plenty of work for adults. Within the scenes of labour in the manuscripts we find children observing this work; watching rather than doing. Complex tasks such as negotiating the sale of cattle, baking bread, and quartering and singeing a pig demanded close study before being attempted. But in all of these depictions we have the sense that the children's play has been interrupted only momentarily by the concerns of the adult world (Fig. 47). In the October miniature of the *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary* a small boy is still clutching his *kolf* club as he watches the adults exchange money for the ox. In the miniature for the following month, a little girl holding a spoon tugs at her mother's skirt, perhaps impatient for a more exciting task than feeding pigs. In the December border of the *Grimani Breviary* a child opportunistically warms its hands at a bread oven. Bruegel used this technique of inserting a rapt or impatient young observer to add depth and

[264] The figure appears on folio 125, beneath a depiction of the Martyrdom of Saint Erasmus. Plummer, 1966.

interest to his scenes of peasant labour. Like the manuscript miniatures, the scenes of pig-slaughter in the *Hunters in the Snow* and the *Census at Bethlehem* capture the sense of children temporarily caught-up in observing the adult world. The task of slaughtering a pig would normally take place in November or December, after the first frost but before Christmas. Cured pork could then be stored and used as valuable food throughout the harsh winter months.[265]

Pig-slaughtering is depicted in many of the Ghent-Bruges manuscripts, where it most commonly illustrates the month of December. The images picture the ritual in a variety of stages, from the initial slaughter and bleeding of the pig to singeing the bristles off, quartering the joints, and storing them in baskets filled with straw (Fig. 48). In Bruegel's *Census at Bethlehem*, as in manuscript precursors, a pig is bled to death by a woman and a man, both wrapped in white aprons (Fig. 49). The man is bent, pinning the pig to the ground with his full body weight, while the woman extends a long-handled pan to catch the pig's blood. Beside them lie an axe, a cauldron and straw for the singeing. An expert pig-killer would prepare the straw in advance, so that the pig collapsed onto it and could be immediately set alight. Bruegel's *Hunters in the Snow* depicts the pig slaughter at a later stage, when the straw has been lit. Here the pig is not visible, having been temporarily subsumed by the flames. A man standing behind the fire demonstrates how bundles of straw could be lit like torches and used to singe the areas of the animal that the fire did not reach. As the fire died, the carcass would then be 'floused down' with buckets of water (a large black cauldron, probably for this purpose, is visible beside the fire), and the bristles scraped off with knives. In both of Bruegel's images the ritual of pig-killing is closely observed by children. Other images of pig slaughter from the period also include children watching.[266] This detail can be supported by accounts of pig-killing from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which describe it as an important event, which always drew crowds of local children.[267] In the *Hunters in the*

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[265] Malcolmson and Mastoris, 1998.

[266] See images of *The Pig-Slaughter* by Pieter Brueghel the Younger and *The Blind Musician* by David Vinckboons and Pieter Brueghel the Younger, Ertz, 1998/2000, cat. 648-664 and cat. 1026-1041.

[267] By the nineteenth century pig-killing was an event that parents tried to avoid exposing their children to, killing the pig while the children were at school to avoid them hearing the screams. But eye witness accounts of pig-killing in English villages all mention the ritual's appeal to the local children. Flora Thomson describes how 'men, women and children would gather round to see the sight', Edwin Grey describes how the noise of the pigs' squeals attracted the neighbours' children who would 'stand looking

Snow the child-observer is contemplative, standing with her back to us she is close to the action, gazing into the flames. A similarly wrapt observer is included in the *Census* group, but beside her another child, taller and therefore perhaps more experienced in the ritual, is already inflating his reward – the pig's bladder.

The slaughter of animals and harvesting of crops in the autumn months did not only provide food stores for the winter. It also provided a host of new toys for local children. This is attested to within the game-borders, where we find games with pigs' bladders, animal bones and fruit pips. In addition to an influx of new playthings to add variety to the games, there were relatively few fixed festivals and events during the autumnal months. This means that the borders of the final months of the year display the greatest variety of games. Bird-snaring, cock-throwing, stilt walking, marbles, and golf are all depicted in the September borders. Of these games, only stilts and marbles are included in *Children's Games*. By the corner of the civic building, two boys walk on stilts (Fig. 50). Both seem tense and uncertain, their poses hunched and very different to the boy on stilts in the lower margin of the *Golf Book*, who is comfortable enough to lean over and observe the game of marbles from his great height. The dangers of stilts are illustrated in the October border in the *Hours of Conde-Duque de Olivares*. Here one of the four adolescents walking on stilts has fallen down on the cobbles. The trepidation of one of Bruegel's stilt walkers is quite understandable given the height of his stilts, which raise him high above his playmates. There are no precursors for these circus-like stilts among the Ghent-Bruges manuscripts; they more closely resemble the stilts in drolleries found in manuscripts from earlier centuries.[268]

Another game common to the September borders is marbles. Bruegel also pictures several groups of children clustered around games with small round objects, although

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wonderingly at the operation' and Sid Tyrell describes how 'the boys would come from every direction to see the gory spectacle.' Ibid., pp. 90-92. If the spectacle drew this much attention in the nineteenth century, then we can only imagine the kind of excitement that would have surrounded it in the sixteenth century.

[268] The *Romance of Alexander* (MS Bodl. 264) has several examples of humans and monkeys walking on low stilts (fol. 43v, 65r, and 123r). A Bishop on very high stilts in the border of a Northern French manuscript in the Walters Art Gallery dating from the first quarter of the fourteenth century (MS. 90, f.153) and a man on high stilts in a Franco-Flemish manuscript from the mid fourteenth century (Glazier MS. 24, now on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, f.64). Randall, 1966.

there are some differences between his illustrations and the games shown in the manuscripts borders. The game-borders do not include any depictions of the game of 'span-counter', a version of which appears in Bruegel's the receding street (Fig. 51). In this game the first player cast a counter which served as a marker which the next player would try to hit by bouncing his counter off of the wall. If the second counter over-shot the marker then the first player won it, but if it fell within a hand-span of the original counter, then the second player was victorious. The role of the wall in the game is evident in both its Dutch name *muurtje-botsen* (bounce against the wall) and its French name *le claque mur aux jettons* (bang the wall with counters).[269] The game is illustrated in several French game collections. These include a series of woodcuts of figures playing games entitled *Les trente-six figures contenant tous les jeux,* which was published by several different engravers during the 1580's,[270] and Jacques Stella's seventeenth-century collection of fifty-two engraved plates of playful *putti* entitled *Les jeux et plaisris d'enfance* (Fig. 52). [271] In all of the depictions, including Bruegel's, one player touches the wall and another bends to measure the distance between the counters on the ground. In *Les trente-six figures* the measurement is made with a hand span, whereas the *putto* in Stella's image uses a stick. The boy in Bruegel's image stretches his left hand out as a measurement, but also holds a small stick in his right fist. Behind him a third boy holds a longer stick, perhaps intended for measuring wider distances. This boy, obviously bored by the slow pace of the game, amuses himself by twirling his cap on the stick. That coins were often used as counters in this game is suggested by its alternative names

[269] The game is also known as 'bang-ups', 'Chuck-farthing', 'Hit and Span', 'Boss and Span' and 'Boss Out'. Opies, 1997, p. 118. In Antwerp the game was called 'Bommens', Meyere, 1941.

[270] Series now in the Bibliothèque Nationale [Cabinet des estampes, Ea. 79 Rés.]. The series was published by Guillaumne Le Bé in 1587 under the title *'Les Trente-Six Figures contenant tous les jeux qui ne se peuvent jamais inventer et représenter par les enfants… depuis le berceau jusques en l'age viril, avec les significations desdites figures mises au pied de chacune d'icelles en vers François; le tout nouvellement mis en lumière et dirigé par ordre.'* Part of the series is titled *'Jeux d'Enfants. A Paris Chez la veusve Jean le Clerc, rue sainct Jean de Latran, à la Salemandre Royale'.* This suggests that the series was first published by Leclerc's widow following his death in c.1585, and that subsequently the plates were sold to Le Bé. Adhémar, 1938, pp. 355-356 (Le Bé); pp. 359-361 (Leclerc). For images from the series see Mehl, 1990; D'Allemagne, 1903. For images after the series see *Le Magasin Pittoresque*, 1847, vol. 15, 67-70.

[271] Designed by Jacques Stella, this series consisted of fifty-two engraved plates of *putti* playing games with accompanying verses and was engraved and published posthumously by Stella's niece in 1657. The original spelling of this series is often corrected in secondary literature to 'Jeux et plaisirs d'enfance', but Mulherron sees the original spelling as a deliberate pun on the relationship between play and laughter (*ris*), which signifies the punning content of the verses. Mulherron, 2006, p. 31. For a facsimile with

of 'pitching pennies' and 'chuck-farthing', and it was played with metal buttons in London before the First World War.[272] Bruegel's children appear to be playing with flat white counters with some kind of mark in the centre. The counters used by Stella's *putti* have tiny crosses in the centre, as do those in *Les trente-six figures*.

La fossette or 'nine holes' is another type of ball game pictured by Bruegel and present in both the Ghent-Bruges game-borders and the French collections (Fig. 53). This involved a line of holes in the ground, the object being to bowl a ball or marble by regular succession into all of the holes.[273] In Stella's image the nine holes are designed in a neat grid pattern; in *Les trente-six figures* the grid consists of only five holes, and in Bruegel's depiction there appear to be only four holes. Despite these variances, all of the images include a similar group of observers who cluster around, watching, waiting and giving advice; this was a game of concentration and skill. Another version of this game, *La fossette aux noyaux*, or 'cherry-pit', is common to the Autumnal manuscript borders. The object of the game of cherry-pit was to stand and attempt to cast small marbles or cherry-stones into a single hole dug in the ground. This game was played by Gargantua and is also pictured by Jacques Stella. In *Vulgaria* (1519), a book of sentences for the use of schoolboys, William Horman, vice-provost of Eton, declared that 'Playenge at cheriston is good for children', but men as well as children played this game.[274] Bruegel's depiction of revelry in the *Peasant Kermis* (Fig. 54) includes in the foreground a deserted hole filled with the debris of walnut shells, suggesting that the game was played at fairs and festivals. Doubtless the popularity of cherry-pit was partly down to its versatility. The pips could be dropped from a standing height or rolled along the ground (both versions are depicted in the *Golf Book*). The game could be played anywhere, and with a wide range of objects. While pebbles, marbles, buttons and counters could all be used, the verses that accompany Stella's image support the idea that the game-pieces were usually pips or seeds of some sort. Stella describes the children as 'sowing their seeds in

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English translations of the verses see Applebaum, 1969. Dabbs argues that Stella drew his inspiration from the earlier Leclerc / Le Bé series. Dabbs, 1991, pp. 26-30 and Dabbs 1995, p. 304.

[272] Opies, 1997.

[273] Strutt describes how there were four, five or six holes, and sometimes more. Strutt, 1876, p. 491.

[274] Opies, 1997, pp. 110-115. Luttrell Psalter (BM Add. MS 42130, fol. 193v) a man aims a handful of small objects at a hole in the ground.

barren soil', and certainly seeds, pips, acorns and conkers would have been particularly abundant in September.[275]

In almost all of the game-borders for the month of October the children play games with knucklebones. 'Kuncklebones' were the tarsal joints of cloven-hoofed animals. They had been used for gaming since ancient times, when they were frequently played with by women.[276] The ancient origins of the game of knucklebones are discussed by two male students in Erasmus's colloquy 'Knucklebones, or the game of Tali', published in 1529.[277] After deciding on which rules to follow, the students lay stakes on the game, the outcome of which rests, like dice, on which way up the bones land. The various games that could be played with a set of knucklebones mean that it was not always a game of chance. Sometimes games played with knucklebones relied more on skill than on chance, for example when feats has to be performed while the bones are in the air.[278] Rabelais lists the game twice, under two different names, *Aux martres* (62) and *Aux pingres* (63), perhaps indicating these varieties. The illustrations in the game-borders suggest that in the sixteenth century knucklebones were played with in at least two different ways (Fig. 55, see also Appendix I, no's 1 and 68). The first of these was a version of 'skittles' in which the bones were lined up and then bowled down. This game is pictured in the upper right of Bruegel's panel and in the borders of the *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary*, the *Eleanor of Portugal Breviary*, the *Spinola Hours*, the *Spielbuch* and the *Golf Book*. In Bruegel's depiction the bones are marshaled into a line along the receding wall of a civic building, whereas in the manuscripts the line of bones appears to be freestanding. The players raised arms in all of depictions suggest that the bones were thrown with considerable force. Details common to the depictions include several

[275] *'Quoy qu'ilz estiment ces Noyaux autant que de riches Joyaux, ce Cadet qui d'espoir se faltte les jette en terre asseurement, mais j'apprehende aucunemnet qu'il ne les seme en terre ingratte.'*
[276] The Opies cite several examples of women or girls playing knucklebones. Pollux's *Onomasticon* describes a version of the game where the bones were thrown up, then the back of the hand outstretched in the hope that they would land on it, it states 'the game is rather for women'. A painting from Pompeii by Alexander Athens, copied from an original of the 5th century BC in the National Museum of Naples shows the game being played by two goddesses. Chardin's *Les Osselets* (1734) shows a teenage girl seated at a table playing knucklebones with four bones and a pottery ball. Opies, 1997, p. 56.
[277] *CWE*, vol. 40, *Colloquies*, 'Kuncklebones *or* The Game of Tali', pp. 891-904.
[278] Opie, 1997, pp. 56 - 72.

players looking on or re-arranging the bones, and the empty cloth bag in which the knucklebones were stored.

A second type of game played with knucklebones resembled dice. In this version the knucklebones were tossed in the air, to land facing a variety of ways. The two girls who play this game in the left foreground of *Children's Games* were central to Hindman's analysis of the panel (Fig. 56). The prominence of this game in Bruegel's painting, and its absence in manuscript marginalia, were for Hindman evidence that *Children's Games* was a presentation of foolish behavior, and more specifically a negative comment on the role of chance in love and marriage.[279] It is true that the game-borders do not contain examples of seated players throwing knucklebones up in the air in quite the same way as Bruegel's girls. But there are examples of another game being played with knucklebones, which may or may not correspond to Bruegel's game. On the left of the October borders in the *Eleanor of Portugal Breviary*, the *Spinola Hours* and the *Golf Book* two players stand facing each other and cast their knucklebones on the ground. This game could be a game of chance, where the ways in which the bones land represent something. It is possible that the game is a simpler version of that depicted by Bruegel, a two bone play-off, where one could beat the other instantly. In the *Golf Book* border one player raises his right hand above his shoulder, suggesting that he is casting the bone with some force. Perhaps this is not a game of chance but a game of skill, with the object being to bounce or disrupt those bones already on the ground. In short, it is difficult to ascertain the precise rules of these games from images alone. The detailed illustrations in the manuscripts suggest that a wide variety of games were played with knucklebones. They show that Bruegel's motif was not unique, and invite a broader interpretation than that offered by Hindman.

The month of November**,** like September, was decorated with a great variety of border games. Willemsen identifies *kolf* and bowls as the 'games of the month', but follow-my-

[279] 'As the capriciousness of chance determines the outcome of knucklebones, other games, like blindman's buff, have similarly unpredictable conclusions. Human reason cannot control the course of play. Bruegel's children, who willingly engage and take pleasure in games, dispense with reason and submit to chance. In so doing, they manifest foolish behaviour.' Hindman, 1981, p. 455.

leader, stilts, brick on a string, fighting and piggy-back are also played in the November borders. Nowadays the most recognisable of the November games is *kolf*, an early precursor of golf. Interestingly, this game is not represented in *Children's Games*, while many of the more obscure ones are. The games of piggy-back and follow-my-leader in the *Spinola Hours* closely resemble those in *Children's Games* (Fig. 57). In Bruegel's receding street the figures playing follow-my-leader hold on to each others' coat-tails just as they do in the *Spinola Hours*. On either side of the follow-my-leader chain in the *Spinola Hours* two sets of piggy-backer riders face each other, as though ready to charge.[280] The way in which the figures grasp their playmates by the shoulders while lying flat along their backs is similar to the couple directly in front of the central building in *Children's Games*, although the genders appear to have been reversed. In Bruegel's depiction a female lifts a male, while in the manuscripts it is the other way around. To the far right of the November border in the *Spinola Hours* a strange figure appears to be dragging a large square stone attached to a length of string.[281] Whether this relates to a particular game or represents an imaginary pet or child is not clear. The presence of this object in the game borders helps to suggest that the curious brick, which is apparently tethered to the bench in the left foreground of *Children's Games* (13) has some precursors.

[280] A similar game in which two couples face each other is depicted by Jacques Stella as 'La jouste'. The accompanying verse reads: *'Of these brave jousters in the fray / One pair must lose, one win the day / You can't avoid this consequence / Those odds are equal for both sides / But which one has more common sense / The horseman or the horse he rides?'* Stella, 1969, no. 35.

[281] In the same month in the *Eleanor of Portugal Breviary* the brick and string are rendered as a *kolf* stick and ball, and a second *kolf* player is added to the left.

Children's Culture Collected

To summarise, there are more iconographic similarities between *Children's Games* and the game-borders in French and Ghent-Bruges manuscripts than have previously been noted. Manuscript game-borders supply visual precedents for the majority of toys which are found in Bruegel's panorama, including: hoops, whip-tops, rattles, hobbyhorses, windmills, marbles, bowls, stilts, knucklebones, and pigs' bladders. In several instances the borders suggest how some of Bruegel's more unusual games might have been played, including: blind-slipper, games with rushes, brick on a lead, follow-my-leader, acrobatics and piggy-backs. Furthermore, the way in which these illustrious Books of Hours and Breviaries serialized children's play is suggestive of a context in which elite audiences enjoyed looking at representations of games. It is equally instructive to note the areas of divergence between Bruegel's panel and the manuscript borders. Unlike the borders, *Children's Games* includes no adult games and pays little heed to the artistic convention of the 'game of the month'. Adult games common to the manuscript borders but excluded from *Children's Games* include the December barrel-joust, the spring games of knur-and-spell, and the summer activities of archery, shooting at a popinjay, water quintain, bird-snaring and cock-throwing.

We know that Bruegel was aware of these pastimes as several of them feature in his other prints and paintings. A game of cock-throwing occurs on the swathe of green grass in the background of *The Harvesters* (Fig. 58a and 58b).[282] The group cock-throwing in this image includes men, women and children, but it is the men and women who are armed with sticks and ready to take aim while the children seem to be merely observing

[282] The essence of this game involved throwing a stick at a bird to stun it. Finally outlawed in the nineteenth century, evidence from manuscripts suggests that this game was played as early as the thirteenth century. A single figure is playing the game in a French manuscript which dates from the late thirteenth century in the Bibliothèque Nationale (Robert de Borron, *L'Histoire du grail*, MS. Fr. 95), two apes take aim at a bird in a fourteenth-century manuscript from the Walters Gallery (MS. 82), and two men take aim in a manuscript in the Brussels Bibliothèque Royale (Bruno Latini's *Trésor des Sciences*, MS 10228). Randall, 1966. The game is clearly being played in the August border of the *Golf Book*, and is possibly depicted in some of the other game-borders in September. Buchanan, 1990, p. 546. On the rules and popularity of the game see Strutt, 1876, book 3, chapter 7, no. 21 and Malcolmson, 1973, pp. 119-122.

the game; one small figure runs excitedly between the throwers and the bird, and others huddle around the players.[283] A second panel from the *Months* series, *Haymaking*, includes in the background a large group of archers shooting at a popinjay, another adult game which was common to the manuscript borders but is absent from *Children's Games* (Fig. 59a and 59b).[284] The inclusion of these adult games in the background of panels which depict the labours of the months mimic the presentation found in the Ghent-Bruges calendar pages. As in the calendar pages, the depictions of games in Bruegel's *Months* play a secondary or decorative role to the labours, as anecdotal details which amuse the viewer and enhance the seasonal narratives. These details provide concrete evidence that Bruegel was aware of the representational conventions which applied to seasonal games. Recognising this suggests that Bruegel's rejection of the 'game of the month' ordering in *Children's Games* was deliberate.

While there are occasions in *Children's Games* where seasonal games appear side-by-side, this would appear to be by chance rather than design, for there are as many examples of seasonal games being split up and depicted on opposite sides of the panel.[285] Despite the summer weather, February hoops, March whip-tops and rattles and autumnal games with pigs' bladders and knucklebones all feature in Bruegel's panorama. Winter games such as skating and snowball fights are the only ones to be excluded, probably because they relied on snow and ice to be played, factors which would have been impossible to plausibly integrate them into the summer landscape. The notion that Bruegel deliberately sought to display an encyclopaedic range of seasonal games is supported by the fact that in addition to picturing games from throughout the calendar year, *Children's Games* also contains objects drawn from a variety of different festivals. We have seen

[283] Children play a similar role in a drawing depicting cock-throwing by the Master of the Small Landscapes. *Landscape with Figures throwing Clubs at a Goose*, c. 1555-1560, Chatsworth. Reproduced in Orenstein (ed.), 2001, no. 139.

[284] Further evidence of the adult appeal of archery is found in the depiction of a longbow tournament in the foreground of Bruegel's print the *Kermis at Hoboken*, in which all of the participants are clearly adult males.

[285] Examples where seasonal games appear together include the boy wearing a rush hat and blowing bubbles (both activities associated in the game-borders with the month of June) and the proximity of the boys whipping-tops to the girl with the rattle (both activities associated with March). Seasonal games which are separated include the games with knucklebones and the pigs' bladder and the windmill joust and hobbyhorse).

how both Charles de Tolnay and Sandra Hindman based their readings of *Children's Games* on the premise that the painting was set in midsummer, but festive details found in the panel would seem to challenge this assumption. [286]

The evidence usually marshaled to demonstrate that the painting depicts midsummer includes references to the festival of St John's Day, which occurred near the summer solstice on June 23 and 24, and the related Feast of Saints Peter and Paul on June 29. The bonfire just visible in the street on the right of the panel was a traditional staple of these celebrations. The children going from house to house near the bonfire have been interpreted as asking for logs for the fire, another ritual associated with St John's Day festivities.[287] Near to them, the procession of four children carry aloft forked sticks with paper attached; a ritual which corresponds to recorded celebrations for the Feasts of Peter and Paul.[288] Finally, the children playing in the river may be a further reference to St John the Baptist, or *Sint jan de wasscher*, as he was called in Flanders.[289] Despite containing these details, *Children's Games* does not depict either of the summer festivals unequivocally. Unlike the *Battle Between Carnival and Lent*, in which various liturgical traditions are pictured unmistakably, I would argue that the festive details in *Children's Games* might be easily overlooked. Most of the festive motifs are positioned in the distant street. This means that they are not the focal points of the composition; indeed doubt remains as to exactly what these figures are doing and it is difficult to decipher the iconography of several of the groups. Furthermore, key details traditionally associated with the midsummer festivals are absent from the panel. Accounts of the St. John's Day bonfire often describe the ritual of young men jumping over the fire.[290] Fire-leaping is illustrated in Stella's *Jeux et plaisris d'enfance*, where it is specifically linked to

[286] Hindman, 1981; Tolnay, 1935, pp. 25-26.
[287] Hindman, 1981, p. 453; Reinsberg-Düringsfeld, 1891, vol. I, p. 417.
[288] Ibid., p. 439.
[289] Ibid., pp. 420-21..
[290] 'On the Vigil of Saint John the Baptist, commonly called Midsummer Eve, it was usual in most country places, and also in towns and cities, for the inhabitants, both old and young, and of both sexes, to meet together, and make merry by the side of a large fire made in the middle of the street, or in some open and convenient place, by way the young men frequently leaped by way of frolic, and also exercised themselves with various sports and pastimes, more especially with running, wrestling and dancing. Strutt, 1876, p. 462. Reinsburg-Düringsfeld states that young and old alike leapt over or danced around

midsummer, but it is absent from Bruegel's depiction.[291] Absent also is the dancing, feasting and garlands of flowers which are traditionally included in accounts of midsummer festivities.

The season in which *Children's Games* is set is made more ambiguous by the inclusion of details from a number of winter festivals which related specifically to children. Three children in the panel wear the paper crowns which were traditionally associated with the winter festivals of Carnival and Epiphany (Fig. 60). These crude crowns were made from lengths of hand-painted or printed paper wrapped around the front of the wearers head, and were sold door-to-door by children on Twelfth Night (January 5) and Epiphany (January 6).[292] The crowns appear in other works by Bruegel which reference Carnival time, including *Carnival and Lent* and the *Gloomy Day* (Fig. 61a and 61b). Although these are often thought to be the earliest depictions of paper crowns, they are predated by a boy wearing a paper crown in Pieter Aertsen's *Peasant Company by the Fireside* (1556, Antwerp, Mayer van den Bergh Museum).[293] Again in this painting the paper crown signifies winter, rather than summer festivities.

One of the crown-wearers in *Children's Games* holds another object which does not fit with the midsummer theme - a *duivekater* loaf. These currant loaves were baked for a variety of special occasions, and were especially common during the winter holiday season, which began with the Feast of Saint Nicholas on December 6 and ended with Epiphany.[294] A similar child wearing a Twelfth-Night paper crown and carrying a large *duivekater* loaf appears in Sebastian Vranckx's *Winter*.[295] A *duivekater* loaf is also pictured prominently in the foreground of a number of Jan Steen paintings, including the *Feast of*

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the midsummer bonfire to purify and protect themselves from illness. Reinsburg-Düringsfeld, 1861, vol. I, p. 414.

[291] Stella's verse reads: *'To them it seems a wondrous treat, Right in the heart of summer's heat, To leap across a brushwood fire; But if the pleasure of this game, Should last no longer than their flame, It will soon gutter and expire.'* Stella, 1969, no. 11.

[292] For examples of seventeenth-century printed woodblock Epiphany crowns and depictions of the crowns in paintings see Royalton Kisch, 1984. See also Reinsberg-Düringsfeld, 1860, p. 24ff.

[293] Kavaler, 1999, p. 116.

[294] A huge *duivekater* appears on the counter in Job Berckheyde's *Bakery Shop*, c.1680. Barnes and Rose, 1984, no. 4.

[295] Belgium, private collection. Reproduced in Wagenberg-ter Hoeven, 1994, fig. 23.

Saint Nicholas in the Rijksmuseum. This painting depicts many of the rituals associated with the festival of Saint Nicholas (Fig. 62).[296] On Saint Nicholas Eve children would leave out their shoes. If they had been good then they would find their shoes filled with sweets and toys; while bad children would receive only a dry switch. Several of the children in Steen's painting hold new toys, but on the left of the painting we see the tearful reaction of a boy whose shoe has been filled with twigs.[297] The two baskets hanging from the right hand window above the loggia in *Children's Games* might be understood in relation to these Saint Nicholas Day traditions.[298] Their contents certainly recall those depicted in Steen's painting; the basket on the right is filled with objects, including a pair of shoes, while a dry bundle of twigs protrudes from the basket on the left. Unsurprisingly, the boy at the window is reaching for the full basket.

Finally, the marriage procession near the centre of Bruegel's panel resembles a festive tradition common to yet another time of the year - the springtime custom of choosing and crowning a Whitsun queen (Fig. 63).[299] Whitsun or Pentecost fell fifty days after Easter Sunday, usually in the month of May. The ritual of selecting a May Queen or Whitsun-bride is depicted in almost all of the Ghent-Bruges borders in the month of May, where processions form around crowned figures holding branches (Fig. 64). Whitsun processions were also painted by Pieter Brueghel the Younger and David Vinckboons, and looking at these helps to illuminate how Bruegel's procession relates to the standard iconography.[300] A painting of *The Whitsun Bride* by Pieter Brueghel the Younger in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, shows a procession of children, led by a little girl with long hair and a crown (Fig. 65). Similarities between the New York painting and the wedding procession in *Children's Games* include the bride's loose hair

[296] A *duivekater* loaf also appears in Steen's *Feast of Saint Nicholas*, c. 1667-68 (Rotterdam, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen) and in the still-life display of bread in *The Leiden Baker Arend Oostwaert*, c.1658 (Amsterdam, Riksmuseum).
[297] Perry Chapman et al., 1996, no. 30.
[298] Hindman identifies these as 'St. John's Baskets', in which women placed herbs to bring good fortune on St. John's Day, however the contents of the baskets do not resemble herbs. Hindman, 1981, p. 53.
[299] Hills and Hindman argue that the missing elements of May Day flower garlands and a white dress mean that the bridal procession does not belong within this tradition. Hindman relates the procession instead to depictions of adult weddings in Bruegel's oeuvre. Hills, 1957, pp. 29-30 and Hindman, 1981, p. 452.
[300] For details of these images see Ertz, 1998/2000, cat. no's 1042-1053.

and crown, a tradition in the Netherlands dating back to at least the fifteenth century.[301] Other similar details include the attentive adults who chaperone each of the processions, and the solemn children, many of whom have flipped their skirts over their heads to form make-shift headdresses.[302] There are also some differences between the New York painting and Bruegel's motif. In later depictions of Whitsun-brides the Whitsun flowers - or *Pinksterbloem* - play a large role, being incorporated into headdresses and bouquets. By contrast, the flowers in Bruegel's image are limited to two baskets which are carried by attendants at the front of the procession. Absent from Bruegel's depiction are the fiddle player and drummer who lead the party in the New York painting. Another difference is the dress worn by Bruegel's child-bride, which is black, the colour of Flemish wedding dresses, rather than the traditional Whitsun white.[303] Despite these differences, the frequency of May Queen processions in the manuscript borders and the depictions of Whitsun-brides by later artists suggests that Bruegel's motif could be interpreted in relation to festive, springtime traditions, rather than the moralistic mimicry of adult actions to which it is usually ascribed.

While we can be certain that Bruegel would have looked at illuminated manuscripts, it is hard to establish with any precision the kinds of links that might have existed between his working practices and those of the Ghent-Bruges workshops. More important in terms of developing the concept of a 'period eye' is the fact that Bruegel's original audience would have recognized the manner in which *Children's Games* echoes Ghent-Bruges manuscript marginalia. This suggests several things. The Ghent-Bruges calendars have been interpreted as offering their viewers bucolic idylls, in which the rhythms of nature are echoed by the cycle of human life.[304] Within this nostalgic tradition, we can imagine that depictions of children observing customs such as pig-killing and learning skills such as shepherding would have offered reassurance to the

[301] Gibson, 1965, pp. 196-197.
[302] Salinger views this painting in the light of the group in *Children's Games*, stating: 'A troupe of children following a crowned queen, similar to the one in oir picture, appears in the background in a picture in Vienna, *Children's Games*, which Pieter the Elder painted in 1560. Aside from this small part in the many-figured composition, however, no procession like ours occurs in known woks by the Elder Bruegel, and it appears probable that Pieter the Younger is here composing independently…', Salinger, 1939, p. 89.
[303] Hindman, 1981, p. 452, n. 31.
[304] Kren , 1998.

viewer that established orders would continue. It seems logical to conclude that the way in which *Children's Games* references these images would have been similarly soothing, rather than alarming, for Bruegel's elite viewers. It is also likely that the references to Ghent-Bruges manuscripts in the panel conferred a degree of prestige to *Children's Games*. Associated primarily with aristocratic court culture, the iconography of the Ghent-Bruges manuscripts evoked a degree of status which Bruegel's patrons would surely have sought to emulate. However, *Children's Games* is not slavish in its references to manuscript precursors. Embodying all the positive aspects of the status affirming, amusing and luxurious Ghent-Bruges manuscript iconography, the painting also presents significant innovations. Spanning the calendar, from spring to Epiphany, the painting includes a vast range of seasonal games and festive traditions. The only thing which all of these games and festive traditions have in common is their specific relationship to the culture of children. The absence of certain adult games which were common to the manuscript calendars provides further evidence that in *Children's Games* Bruegel sought to picture only those games and traditions which related specifically to childhood. We can thus conclude that *Children's Games* was conceived primarily as an atlas or encyclopaedia of children's culture. Although the painting references earlier manuscript traditions, it's exhaustive and relatively unstructured style demonstrates that *Children's Games* was clearly conceived in the context of the new, 'abundant aesthetic' of the sixteenth century.

II Bruegel and Rabelais

'Gargantua, from the age of three to five years, was brought up and taught in every appropriate branch of learning by his father's order, and spent the time like the little children of the region: to wit, drinking, eating, and sleeping; eating, sleeping, and drinking; eating, sleeping, and drinking; sleeping, drinking, and eating. '[305]

Scholars have frequently drawn attention to the parallels between Bruegel's paintings and the writings of François Rabelais.[306] Particularly relevant in relation to *Children's Games* is the manner in which Rabelais's stories reflect the cultural understanding of childhood and play in the mid-sixteenth century. A significant proportion of both *Pantagruel* (1532) and *Gargantua* (1534) are devoted to detailing the trials of their hero's birth, infancy, childhood and youth. Taken together, these fictional accounts cover a number of issues which are relevant to our understanding of Bruegel's panel, including aspects of children's manners and deportment, the broad role of play in learning and the details of specific games that were popular during the period. Like Bruegel's panel, Rabelais's stories are fictional works which engage enthusiastically with the abundant aesthetic of the sixteenth century. The sections of *Gargantua* which detail the hero's childhood contain word-lists of epic proportions: chapter 22 features a list of over two hundred popular childhood games, a total which far surpasses the number of motifs pictured in *Children's Games*.

My aim in this section is to analyse the relationship between Rabelais and Bruegel in more detail than has previously been attempted. Continuing to develop the notion of the 'period eye' I propose that Rabelais's writing can be used to inform our understanding of contemporary responses to *Children's Games*. Evidence suggests that, much like modern scholars, sixteenth-century audiences recognised parities between the work of

[305] François Rabelais, *Gargantua* (1534), Chapter XI.
[306] For a review of previous scholarly approaches which connect Bruegel and Rabelais see page 42 of my introduction.

Bruegel and Rabelais, and my first section details these. The second section offers a comparison between *Children's Games* and Gargantua's games, focusing in detail on areas of similarity and difference between the two game-lists. The final section considers the broader tone of Bruegel's three encyclopaedic paintings in relation to Rabelais's textual lists, and explores how these fictional lists might relate to their factual counterparts.

Comparing Bruegel and Rabelais

The chronological proximity of *Gargantua*, first published in 1534, and *Children's Games*, dated 1560, suggests that Bruegel's patrons might also have enjoyed Rabelais's books. The question of whether Rabelais's books were available in the Netherlands has been somewhat neglected, and has never been answered conclusively.[307] However, evidence contained in archives in Antwerp confirms that Rabelais's books were circulating in Bruegel's home city by the middle of the sixteenth century. That the popular works should have made their way to Antwerp is hardly surprising given that the city was the hub of the European printing trade. Antwerp's trading position nourished the development of the city's book trade, and growth was further supported by the fact that the city's officials permitted a degree of freedom not allowed elsewhere in Europe.[308] In a report made for Philip II in 1558 Antwerp City Council identified sixty book dealers working in Antwerp; in fact the figure was dramatically played down by the authorities and was probably closer to two hundred.[309] The most famous of Antwerp's printer-publishers was Christopher Plantin, a Frenchman who settled in Antwerp around 1549. Once in Antwerp, Plantin quickly rose through the ranks from bookseller to bookbinder and then to publisher, establishing *De Gulden Passer* ('The Golden Compasses') publishing house in 1555.[310] In 1576 Plantin settled in premises on the Vrijdagmarkt in Antwerp. Uniquely, these premises, along with Plantin's printing presses, library,

[307] At the beginning of the twentieth century Henri Pirenne discovered a letter written to Cardinal Granvelle in 1567 which mentioned a copy of *Pantagruel*. Rabelais's influence can also be detected in the work of the Flemish stateman and writer Filips van Marnix, lord of Sint-Aldegonde, and a copy of *Pantagruel* was indeed listed in his library. Pirenne, 1906; Greve, 1955.

[308] Van der Stock is quick to point out that their pragmatic tolerance was based not on any humanist principles but rather on a desire to preserve the wealth of the city: 'Harsh repression was avoided, for fear that it might provoke serious public commotion, and hence the flight of foreign capital. Similarly, censorship was directed mainly against those groups who were of less economic importance to the city, such as the Anabaptists.' Van der Stock, 1998, p. 53.

[309] It is not clear how the council performed its calculation, but it may be inferred from the language of edicts at the time that the term 'book dealers' encompassed the entire book sector, including book printers, bookbinders, the printers of images, engravers, type-setters, type-founders etc. Van der Stock, 1998, p. 40.

[310] On 21 March 1550 Plantin became a *poorter* or burgess of the city, and was described as a *boeckbindere*. When he joined the Guild of St Luke a year later in 1551 he was inscribed in the register as a *drucker*, or printer. For more on the history of the Plantin Press see Voet, 1969.

business records and personal correspondence have been preserved. Handed over to the city of Antwerp in 1876, today they form the Plantin-Moretus Museum.

For Christopher Plantin, Antwerp offered not only greater freedom than elsewhere, but also a unique combination of conditions favourable to success. These included an intellectual climate, a reservoir of artistic talent, a supply of credit, and a market organisation not available in any other trading centre. In addition to Antwerp's favourable trading position, the city also possessed an active reading public with a thirst for multilingual texts. Guiccardini remarked that the people of Antwerp were in general extremely learned; all could read and write and it was common for both sexes to know several languages and some:

'They all have some smackering of their Grammar, and every one, yea every husbandman can read and write. An infinite number yea of those that never were out of the Countreye, besides their owne language, speake French, and manye Allemaine, Italian, English, Spanish.' [311]

French was second only to Flemish as the most used language, creating a market for French vernacular books in the Netherlands.[312] The archives of the Plantin-Moretus Museum detail Plantin's varied output. The printer had links with both official and unofficial elements of Antwerp life: official typographer to King Philip II and publisher of the *Index* of prohibited books in 1570, in 1562 Plantin was forced to flee Antwerp for Paris for a short time under allegations of heresy.

Following his move to Antwerp, Plantin retained close business relations with France, even establishing a branch of his firm in Paris in the late 1560's.[313] Throughout Plantin's lifetime the number of texts he published in French almost equalled those published in Dutch, and both dramatically outstripped the other European vernaculars.[314] In the late 1550's and early 1560's many of the texts coming from Plantin's presses were French

[311] Guiccardini, 1976.
[312] Murray, 1970, p. 96.
[313] In 1566 Plantin established a branch on Rue Saint Jacques, which ran successfully for ten years until in 1577 Plantin sold it to his Parisian associate Michel Sonnius. Saunders, 2003, p. 1000.

literary texts or dictionaries and colloquies concerned with the French and Dutch languages, aimed at markets in both Paris and the Netherlands.[315] While France was a key export market for Plantin, records suggest that he also relied on French imports for an income. In 1566 Plantin's total purchases accounted for 6,109 florins, of which almost half, 2,603 florins, came from France.[316] Plantin's French origins and business connections make him a logical link to Rabelais's books - it has even been suggested that Plantin may have encountered the French writer during his youth in Lyon.[317] While the published bibliographies of the output of the Plantin Press don't list Rabelais among those authors published in the Netherlands, several of Plantin's journals include references to works by Rabelais, suggesting that they were among the French books that Plantin imported from his Parisian associates.[318]

Plantin took most of his journals with him when he fled to Paris in 1562, and thus few early records of his trading survive. One exception is a journal kept between the years 1558 and 1561. In this journal hand-written entries record books that passed through Plantin's Antwerp shop. The titles are accompanied in the left hand margin by the names of other booksellers and dealers active in the Netherlands, presumably Plantin's

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[314] Dutch: 319; French: 308; Spanish: 39; German: 15; English: 5. Figures taken from Voet, 1980-83, I, 2521-2556.

[315] These included Gabriel Meurier's *Grammaire françoise* (1557), two editions of Meurier's *Colloques* in French with Dutch translations (1557, reprinted with minor changes 1558), as well as his *Vocabulaire francois flaming* (1557). Voet, 1980-3, vol. IV, no's. 1665, 1666, 1668 and 1669. In 1558 Plantin also published an *Almanac* in French and Dutch Voet, 1980-3, vol. I, no. 41. French literary works which were printed in Antwerp and sent to booksellers in Paris included editions of Ronsard's *Amours*, Boaistuau's *Theatre du monde* and the popular romance *Amadis*. Saunders, 1993, p. 1011-1012. Clair describes how many of Plantin's early publications were books that 'enjoyed a certain vogue in France, and since he had maintained relations with a number of Paris booksellers he could count on disposing of a good many copies in the market.' Clair, 1960, p. 20.

[316] Saunders, 2003, p. 1002.

[317] It is possible that in Lyon, where he spent his youth, Plantin read, or even knew, Rabelais. Even if Plantin did not come across Rabelais in Lyon, he would surely have known of the notorious French writer by the end of his ten year apprenticeship with bookbinders and sellers in Caen and Paris. Clair, 1960. Plantin is not the only Antwerp publisher who can be linked with Rabelais. Willem Vorsterman, a contemporary of Plantin's who worked in the *Kammerstraat* in Antwerp, was active as a publisher as early as 1500, and printed at the *Gulden Eenhorn* from 1518 to 1543 is listed in the *New Rabelais Bibliography* as the printer of a 1537 edition of one of Rabelais' spurious books, the *Croniques* (*NRB* 125, Worth Library, Dublin). While no later editions bearing Vorsterman's imprint have been found, it seems logical that if Vorsterman printed this work then he might have gone on to print, or at least to import and sell, Rabelais's genuine and more successful later works, many of which may now be lost or untraced.

[318] Nijoff and Kronenberg, 1923-71; Voet, 1980-3.

clients.[319] Among the many titles listed, the words 'Rabelais' and 'Pantagruel' feature several times.[320] The name of the Brussels-based bookseller and editor Pierre de la Tombe appears beside the name 'Rabelais' on four separate folios.[321] On other folios the names of the Liège booksellers Vincent de la Vacquerie and Jourdain Gravioule appear beside the Rabelais entries.[322] Another name associated with the Rabelais entries is that of the *veuve* (widow) Pissart, who was active in Ath in the 1560's.[323] These entries suggest that while Plantin was not printing Rabelais's books on his own presses, he was importing them from France and then selling them on to other booksellers throughout the Netherlands.[324]

A later journal from 1566 again includes the names 'Rabelais' and 'Pantagruel', suggesting that Plantin continued this trade for some time.[325] While no records survive of Plantin's buying habits from this period, it is likely that Rabelais's printers would have been among Plantin's large network of Parisian contacts. One potential supplier could have been Plantin's early associate, the Parisian printer Arnoul L'Angelier. Plantin was working closely with L'Angelier in 1557. The two men shared an edition of a French work, for which Plantin did the printing, producing for the proportion that were to be sold in Paris a title-page bearing L'Angelier's imprint.[326] L'Angelier printed Rabelais's works, and it has been suggested that an edition of Rabelais's *Oeuvres* now in the

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[319] Plantin Archive, Franç., n° 35.

[320] Plantin Archive, Franç., n° 35. Folios 1r, 29r, 42v, 43r, 55r, and 56r ('Rabelais'); folios 34r, 68r, 73r, 77v ('Pantagruel'); folio 82r '1 Rabelais pantagruel'.

[321] Folios 29r, 42v, 43r and 56r. Active in Brussels from 1558 (dedans la Coeur du Palais) and from 1584 until 1595 Op de Keesmerckt, in den gulden Bijbel, commercial relations between Plantin and Pierre de la Tombe are recorded from February 1558 until October 1565. Rouzet, 1975, p. 119; Lefèvre, 1963, p. 19.

[322] Folios 1r and 34r, and 82r respectively. For brief biographies of both see Rouzet, 1975, p. 120 and p. 81. She suggests that Gravioule can be identified as the bookseller Jourdain de Granville, who had relations with Plantin between October 1555 and June 1559. See also Lefèvre, 1963, pp. 25-27.

[323] Folios 73r and 77v. Rouzet lists two '*veuve Pissart*'. The first, a widow of the printer and editor Antoine Pissart, was active in Mons, but as Antoine did not die until 1570 the Plantin reference cannot be to her. An Inquistion trial on 10 April 1569 listed books printed by a second 'veuve Pissart' that were found in Ath. Rouzet suggests that this woman may have been the mother of Jeanne Pissart, who married the Ath printer Joannes Masius. Rouzet, 1975, p. 177; Lefèvre, 1963, p. 36.

[324] I am grateful to Dirk Imhof, keeper of archives and rare books at the Plantin-Moretus Museum, for his help.

[325] Plantin Archive, Franç., n° 44, folios 2r, 7v and 90v.

[326] Saunders, 2003, p. 1004. The *Divers propos memorables* by Gilles Corrozet was based on an edition recently published in Paris. After L'Angelier's death in 1557 his widow continued the partnership. She remarried to another publisher, Lucas Breyer, who also kept up the connection with Plantin. For more on Angelier and Martin le Jeune see Voet 1980-83, vol. II, pp. 742-743.

Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels (II 42.554 A), came from the L'Angelier press.[327] Another potential conduit between Plantin and Rabelais's texts was the Marnef family. We know that during his stay in Paris in September 1563 Plantin bought a newly revised Hebrew dictionary from Jérôme Marnef, and the Marnef family were associated with several of Rabelais's extant books.[328] A further indication of the influence of Rabelais on Netherlandish writers and translators is the appearance of Rabelais's anagrammatic pseudonym Alcofribas Nasier in an edition of *Reynard the Fox* published by Plantin in 1564.[329] The many occurrences of Rabelais's name and works on Philip II's 1570 *Index* of prohibited books, also published by Plantin, further suggests that the writer's notoriety extended to the Netherlands by this time.[330]

Identifying Christopher Plantin as a supplier of Rabelais's books places the French texts in the midst of the network of humanist scholars, printers and artists so often associated with Bruegel. In 1558 the links between Antwerp's printers, book dealers, and artists were strengthened when they were all officially incorporated into the artists' guild of St. Luke.[331] We know that Plantin enjoyed a fruitful business relationship with Bruegel's

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[327] Plan suggested that the elegant typography of this edition was reminiscent of that of the L'Angeliers firm (Plan 92, *NRB* 58). Plan, 1904, pp. 186-188.

[328] Clair, 1960, p. 61. The Marnef family was associated with several of Rabelais extant books, including Enguildert de Marnef (*NRB* 3), Jean de Marnef (*NRB* 3) and Jeanne de Marnef (*NRB* 135 and 136).

[329] Reynaert de Vos, een seer ghenuechliike ende vermackeliicke Historie, met haer Moralisatien ende corte wtlegghingen, 1564, Antwerp, Plantin Press. In this edition, the name of the magician, 'Abrioen de Trèves', is changed to 'Alcofribras', which, aside from the addition letter r, was Rabelais's established moniker. Later, on page 83, 'le Meester Rabbicolio' is also encountered. Greve concludes that the author of the adaptation must have read the books of Maistre Alcofribas. Greve, 1955, pp. 171-172.

[330] Composed of three parts, the *Index* was destined only for use in the Netherlands. The first section, detailing prohibited Latin Books, listed *Franciscus Rabletius* as a banned author. The second section, detailing French books, listed Rabelais no less than four times. Under 'F' is listed *François Rabelais en son Gargantua*; under 'G' *Gargantua et Pantagruel*; under 'P' *Pantagruel et Gargantua* ; and under 'R' *Rabelais touchant les mesonges qu'il a escriptiz en François de son Pantagruel*. The third section detailed prohibited Flemish books, and included a *Prognosticatie van Pantagruel*, published in 1554 by Jan Cauweel (the *NRB* contains no record of this edition). Ibid.

[331] The original impetus for this merger arose from the desire to regulate the output of the print-publishers; however it also reflected the close ties that had long existed between the different trades. Prior to 1558 those working in the book and print trade had only been obliged to enrol if they used paintbrushes and/or oil paint, but many had joined voluntarily. Some, like Hieronymous Cock, were admitted as painters and went into the printing business at a later date. Willem Vorsterman originally joined the guild in 1512 to evade military service, but was still active in the guild in 1543. An ordinance issued in May 1558 detailed the merger, with the guild restructured into four principal classes; painters, sculptors, engravers and printers. For a full discussion of this process and the contemporary debates that surrounded it see Van der Stock, 1998, pp. 27-57.

print-publisher, Hieronymous Cock.[332] The business relationship obviously developed into a friendship, as Cock was one of the twenty eight guests invited to the wedding of Plantin's daughter in 1565.[333] Plantin was also friendly with Abraham Ortelius. His name features in Ortelius's *Album amicorum*, and it was the Plantin Press that Ortelius approached to publish his *Theatrum orbis terrarum*.[334]

In addition to these social connections, a collection of sixteenth-century woodcuts link the names of Rabelais and Bruegel more concretely and provide further evidence that the two men's work should be considered side-by-side. Produced independently of both men, but uniting characteristic elements of their work, *Les songes drolatiques de Pantagruel* ('The Droll Dreams of Pantagruel') were published in 1565 by the Parisian printer Richard Breton. The title page claims the collection to be '*de l'invention de maistre Francois Rabelais*' (Fig. 66). In fact, Rabelais had died twelve years previously, in 1553, and although Breton writes of his '*grand familiarité*' with the late writer it is likely that his famous name was invoked purely to appeal to the reading public. In spite of their associations with Rabelais, the woodcuts include little text; following a three-page preface the collection consists of one hundred and twenty illustrations of strange, hybrid creatures, printed one to a page.[335] With fish-heads, bellows for legs and long forked tails, the creatures closely resemble the hybrid figures that populate the art of Bosch and Bruegel. The designer of the *Songes* appears to have drawn freely from Bruegel's *Seven Deadly Sins* series in particular. These borrowings were originally identified in 1870 by Champfleury, and since then have been referred to by scholars of both Bruegel and Rabelais.[336] The images are interesting and worthy of further exploration; several more borrowings can be added to the original account. Furthermore, the use of Rabelais's

[332] Plantin's records first detail a purchase from Cock in 1558, although his earliest associations with Cock can be found in prints sent to the Parisian bookseller Martin Le Jeune in 1556. In 1559 the two men collaborated on *The Funeral Procession of Charles V*. Plantin's purchased from Cock continued after Cock's death until at least 1589, and business also flowed the other way, with Plantin supplying Cock with prints, books, paper and maps imported from France. Riggs, 1977, p. 64.
[333] Ibid., p. 64.
[334] Puraye, 1969, fol. 73.
[335] The most recent facsimile and commentary on this work is Jeanneret, 2004.
[336] The link between Bruegel's prints and the *songes* was originally recognised made in 1870 by Champfleury, who identified borrowings from *Invidia* and *Avarita*. Champfleury, 1870, pp. 246-60. These

name to market this Bruegelian collection provides compelling evidence that a kinship between the two figures existed in the minds of their contemporaries.

It has been suggested that the anonymous artist of the *Songes drolatiques* illustrations might have been François Desperez, a designer of purses, embroidered objects and costume books.[337] In the introduction the anonymous author, probably Breton himself, suggests that the *Songes* could be used as a handbook for costumers '*pour establir mascarades*'. Certainly the presentation of each figure on a single page follows the format of contemporary costume books, and there is evidence that the *Songes drolatiques* did inspire seventeenth-century theatrical costumes.[338] But Breton also declared that the collection was 'for the recreation of witty minds'. The term 'droll' links the *Songes* to earlier manuscript drolleries, and the role of humour in this collection should not be overlooked. An interest in the phantasms associated with dreams and nightmares was developing at this time, and the playful representations of these creatures are likely to have been inspired by the Renaissance revival of grotesques and hybrids found in Roman wall paintings.[339] Walter Gibson recently used the *Songes* as evidence of a culture which equated the strange and the wonderful with laughter and amusement, a context which is important to bear in mind when looking at Bruegel's didactic prints.[340]

All seven of Bruegel's preparatory drawings for the *Seven Deadly Sins* survive. Executed in pen and ink, and dated 1556 or 1557, they were engraved by Peter van der Heyden and published by Hieronymous Cock in 1558.[341] Previous scholars have identified a number of correlations between the *Songes* illustrations and the Bruegel's print series.

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were expanded upon by in Plan in 1904, pp. 243-245, Bastelaer and Huilin de Loo, 1907, pp. 122-123, and were listed again in Porcher, 1959.

[337] Desprez was associated with the *Recueil de la diversité des habits*, which was published by Breton in 1562 and showed the dress of various classes and nations. Several of the figures included in this work resemble those in the *Songes drolatiques*. Jeanneret, 2004; Mortimer, 1964.

[338] The *Songes* inspired four costumes designed by Inigo Jones in an English allegorical political drama of 1640. Prescott, 1984, pp. 157-159.

[339] Jeanneret, 2004.

[340] Gibson, 2006, p. 28-38. See also Gibson, 1992.

[341] Of the preparatory drawings *Avarice* is the only one to be dated 1556 (London, British Museum). All others are dated 1557, and are located in a number of collections: *Envy* (Basel, R. von Hirsch collection); *Lust* (Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique); *Ira* (Florence, Uffizi); *Gula* and *Superbia* (both Paris, Lugt Collection); *Sloth* (Vienna, Albertina). Orenstein, 2001.

The hooded archer seen from the back in illustration 57 of the *Songes* seems to have been taken from one of the archers who aim at the money bag in Bruegel's *Avaritia* (Greed) (Fig. 67). A hybrid creature, made up of a set of bellows and a wide-brimmed hat which is sliced in half by a knife, represents another borrowing from *Avarita* which reappears in the *Songes* (Fig. 68). The influence of a crouching, amphibious figure from Bruegel's *Superbia* (Pride) has been detected in several of the *Songes* illustrations (Fig. 69).[342] Illustration 16 in the *Songes* depicts a similarly monstrous figure pulling at the corners of his mouth; like Bruegel's creature, his amphibious legs end in three-toed feet, and his genitals are replaced by a metal spike. Although the Bruegel monster wears a jacket rather than a cape, and his wide-brimmed hat is more conventional than the hive-like structure worn by the *Songes* figure, both have wide, empty eyes and are engaged in the same action of pulling at the corners of their mouths. The figure found in the *Songes* illustration 10, with its wide-brimmed hat and gaping mouth, also resembles Bruegel's amphibious creature. Although this figure stands upright and is fully clothed, its hunched back, rolled sleeves and bizarre codpiece are all suggestive of details found in Bruegel's image.

Details from Bruegel's *Invidia* (Envy) have also been recognised within the *Songes* imagery. These include illustration number 19, which pictures a creature with a bell-shaped body and a trumpet-beak elongated by a spit on which birds perch (Fig. 70). Despite the overall resemblance of the two bird-men, differences can be found between them. Bruegel's bird-man is less decorative than the *Songes* figure, being more clearly an assemblage of everyday objects. Its hood is a simple scarf, its body made from a beehive, and its beak is formed from a handled jug. The *Songes* bird-man, like most of the figures in the collection, has legs and feet which place him on a grassy patch of ground, whereas Bruegel's bird-man is part scarecrow, rising on a pole from a wooden fence which spans the water below. The pole appears to continue through the figure's body, and emerges from the bird-man's hood, where it is topped with an inverted funnel. The *Songes* bird-

[342] The figure is one of several monsters found in the lower left corner of the print. With wide mouths and distorted bodies, these creatures have been interpreted as symbols of noisy, boastful pride. A man seated amongst them wears a dunce-like cap and covers his ears with his hands, as though deafened by their noise. Kline, 1963, p. 189.

man also sports a hood which sprouts four long feathers. On the opposite side of *Invidia* a bizarrely disembodied pair of legs is under attack. The right leg nearest the viewer sports a long boot with spurs and is being pierced by an arrow, while the left leg, clothed only in hose, has been lassoed. The inverted, booted leg appears again in the *Songes* imagery, where it forms the hat of the figure in illustration 5 (Fig. 71). In this illustration, the arrow is absent and a further flourish is added to the toe of the boot, which curls up. The appearance of the legs under attack in Bruegel's *Invidia* is part of a wider shoe theme which characterises the print. In the lower right customers queue outside a shoe shop, and in the lower left a weeping figure sits in a basket of shoes. Scholars have drawn attention to the links between shoes and social standing in the Netherlands, and the number of incidences in which shoes appear in this print support the idea that they were proverbial props which were appropriate to a representation of the vice of envy.[343] It is difficult to determine whether the use of the booted leg as a hat in the *Songes* figure denotes the same vice. The absence of the arrow and the extension of decorative detail on the boot perhaps indicate that the borrowing lacks any iconographic significance, and is grounded instead in purely visual fancy.

Several additions can be made to these established borrowings. As well as the bird-man and the inverted boot, *Invidia* also contains a shoe-eating monster in the lower left corner which is analogous with the *Songes* illustration number 28 (Fig. 72). Consisting only of a head, arms and wings, Bruegel's creature has an arrow piercing its nose, and holds a shoe up to its gaping mouth. While the *Songes* figure stands at full height, it too has an arrow piercing its nose and appears to be about to consume a shoe. Both creatures have amphibious faces, deep-set eyes, and tufts of hair which stand on end. The cape which covers the upper arms of the *Songes* figure is also visually reminiscent of the spread wings of Bruegel's monster. Another borrowing can be found in the beaked demon which reaches around the wheeled shield in Bruegel's *Ira* (Anger). The demon's rolled hood, its armoured knee, and the arrow held in its beak are all shared by the creature in the *Songes* illustration 38 (Fig. 73), although this figure is armed with a bow and arrow rather than the

[343] Kline, 1963, p. 193.

pike adopted by Bruegel's figure.[344] Although the borrowing is less precise, the hooded figure greedily drinking in *Songes* illustration 68 resembles several figures found in Bruegel's *Gula* (Gluttony, Fig. 74). Finally, illustration 93 in the *Songes* presents another Bruegelian idea which is found in several prints issued by Cock, including *Gula, The Last Judgement* (1558) and *Big Fish Eat Little Fish* (1557). The clearest articulation of this is found at the centre of *Big Fish Eat Little Fish,* where a huge fish lies beached (Fig. 75). The fishes distended belly is being slit open with a giant serrated knife, and fish spill from within. The *songes* illustration presents a similarly amphibious creature, which slits its own belly with a serrated knife held in its left hand (Fig. 76). As with the other borrowings, the *Songes* creature is rendered more human by the addition of legs. It also sports the attributes of a hat, codpiece and collar. Nonetheless, its head - thrown back, open-mouthed, and glassy-eyed - is that of a fish. Like Bruegel's beached fish, we can see inside its mouth, from which more fish issue from each others' mouths in a continuous organic pattern.

These visual correlations suggest that the designer of the *Songes drolatiques* had access to Bruegel's *Seven Deadly Sins* series. Prints would have been available to a far wider audience than drawings, and it is likely that Cock's prints, rather than Bruegel's original drawings, were the inspiration for the *Songes*. While the orientation of the figures in the *Songes* consistently follows that of Bruegel's drawings, being in effect a reversal of the prints, this would be logical if we imagine that the figures were copied from prints and then reproduced as woodcuts. The absence of any direct borrowings from the final two images in the *Sins* series, *Luxuria* and *Desidia,* have led some scholars to assume that the designer of the woodcuts did not have access to the entire set of the *Sins*.[345] However, I would suggest that this is unlikely. By the mid-sixteenth century it was becoming increasingly common to issue prints as entire suites or sets, with many artists deliberately choosing certain subjects precisely because they could be fitted into this format. Almost one third of Cock's publications were sets of three or more plates, and the fact that the *Sins* prints were issued by a publisher who favoured sets suggests that

[344] This was remarked upon by Bastealaer and Huilin de Loo. In Bruegel's original drawing the banner which flies above the demonic forces behind the shield bears an emblem of worldy power - an orb surmounted by a cross. This appears to be pitted against the emblem of the key of St. Peter (papal power), which adorns the flag in the crippled knight's hat. In Cock's print the orb, which effectively equated the demons with secular authority, was omitted. Kline, 1963, p. 198.

the prints were driven from their inception by their marketability as a complete set.[346] While no evidence of Cock's trade survives, records indicate that Plantin was trading in complete sets of Bruegel's *Sins*; he sent four sets to the Parisian dealer Martin Le Jeune in 1558.[347] As the *Songes* emerged from a Parisian press just seven years later, it is even possible that one of these very sets that provided inspiration for the designer.

Both the overall tenor of the images and small details found within them further suggest that the designer was aware of Bruegel's entire series of *Sins*. In both the *Songes drolatiques* and the *Sins* the organic is merged with the inorganic; barrels become bodies and limbs sprout weapons. The illustrations exhibit a Bruegelian tendency towards substitution, particularly in relation to faces, which are often concealed or represented by something else; a helmet, hood, hat, mask, satchel or pot. Details in the figures' outfits also show a debt to Bruegel's iconography. Symbols of folly which are common to Bruegel's oeuvre, such as shears, knives and distaffs, feature throughout the *Songes* illustrations. Bruegel's interest in bodily functions is also present in the *Songes*. The figures eat, carry implements for eating, or become jugs, bowls, or pies themselves; liquids flow through them or issue from them. Furthermore, while most of the central figures have two arms and two legs, the creatures that surround them resemble the hybrid beasts that populate Bruegel's *Sins*. The upside-down coprophagous bird, for example, found in both *Avarita* and *Luxuria*, reappears beside the figure in illustration 16 (Fig. 77). Thus the designer of the *Songes drolatiques* appears to have drawn freely from the imagery of all seven of Bruegel's *Sins*, and been inspired by it to create hybrids of his own invention.

That these Bruegelian images were marketed as Rabelaisian inventions confirms the notion that sixteenth-century audiences recognised the parity between Bruegel and Rabelais, and provides compelling evidence that the work of both men should be

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[345] Serebrennikov, 1993, p. 179, n. 29. In their discussion of the series, Bastelaer and Huilin de Loo drew attention similarities between figures in *Luxuria* and *Songes* illustration 12, footnote, pp. 122-23.
[346] Riggs, 1977, p. 194.
[347] Transaction detailed in Plantin Archive no. 26 and 28 and published in Delen, 1932.

considered side-by-side.[348] A copy of the *Songes drolatiques* now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Douce R517), supplies a further insight into the habits of mind of sixteenth-century audiences. A note on the fly-leaf records that an early owner of the work was Etienne Tabourot, Seigneur des Accords (1547-1590).[349] Poet and advocate of the Dijon Parliament, Tabourot's nephew was a cartographer who contributed maps of France and Burgundy to Ortelius's *Theatrum*.[350] Tabourot senior appears to have enjoyed customising his copy of the *Songes drolatiques*, for below each figure he has added fantastic names in Burgundian dialect. Tabourot's book confirms the idea that viewers of Bruegelian images felt inspired to connect images (and words) in a highly subjective, ludic manner. This practice was similarly facilitated by Rabelais's written style, which can also be seen as encouraging readers to play among the great lists of invented, fantastic or farcical words.

[348] An incomplete edition of the *Songes drolatiques* now housed in the Bodleian Library (Douce R578) even has an image of Bruegel's *Temptation of Saint Anthony* pasted inside the back cover. The image was probably added by the book's nineteenth-century owner, Francis Douce, who also owned Bruegel's original drawing of the subject. Parker, 1938, vol. 1, no. 30.

[349] '…This is a very perfect and singular copy. It belonged to the well-known Etienne Tambourot, seigneur des Accords, author of the Bigarrures, and who, in his own hand, has given droll names to the characters in the Burgundian dialect.' For more on both of these editions see *NRB*, no. 113.

[350] Tabourot's nephew was also called Etienne Tabourot, but was known variously as Stephanus Tabourotius and Stefano Francese. Banfi, 1954.

Children's Games and Gargantua's Games

Exploring Rabelais's treatment of games contributes much to our understanding of childhood and play in the sixteenth century. Like *Children's Games*, the games in Rabelais's stories are simultaneously set within a believable narrative structure (the childhood and maturation of Gargantua) but estranged from reality by their list-like format. Rabelais's most emphatic exposition of games comes in chapter 22 of *Gargantua*. The tone is clear. As yet unenlightened by his Humanist tutors, the eponymous young hero Gargantua begins his day by rising late, eating and drinking copiously, crapping, pissing, belching, sneezing, spitting, coughing and throwing up.[351] Gargantua then prepares himself for play by washing his hands in fresh wine and cleaning his teeth with a pig's trotter, before laying out the green gaming cloth and commencing with the enumeration of games. While this long list of popular games will be the focus of my comparison with *Children's Games*, it is important to note that this is not the only enumeration of games and pastimes to occupy Gargantua's youth. Having observed Gargantua's loose mode of living for a few days, his Humanist tutor Ponocrates instigates a new regime. Chapter 23 details this more virtuous existence, where Gargantua rises at four in the morning and studies conscientiously throughout the day. In chapter 23 educational concerns are paramount, but play is far from excluded. Gargantua and Ponocrates take a mid-morning break and head into the fields to play organised sports, while in the afternoon a variety of chivalric pastimes and exercises are described in depth. In chapter 24 bad weather forces Gargantua indoors, but this gives rise to a further enumeration of wet-weather pastimes.

The first and most striking element that Rabelais and Bruegel's game-lists share is their scale. While, as we have seen, series of seasonal games had appeared in manuscript calendars, Bruegel's panel was by far the largest pictorial compilation of games to

[351] With such a reliance on natural daylight rising late was particularly frowned upon in the early modern period. Erasmus devoted a colloquy to the subject, in which Nephalius declares: 'In studies, I've found, one morning hour is worth more than three afternoon ones…' *CWE*, vol. 40, *Colloquies*, 'Early to Rise', p. 916.

emerge during the sixteenth century. At over a meter and a half wide and a meter high, *Children's Games* makes a physical appeal to the viewer. Games are presented here not as amusing asides or drolleries, but as central and vital motifs, worthy of recording in the medium of paint on panel, and subject to considerable extension. While it should be noted that not all of the inclusions are 'games' in the traditional sense, my catalogue of the panel in Appendix I charts no less than eighty-seven different motifs. Rabelais's list goes even further; spanning four pages it includes between 202 and 217 games, depending on the edition consulted (Fig. 78). In an effort to record the variations in this list, my second appendix presents versions of the game-list from original editions alongside standard translations. The shortest version of the list that I have found, with 201 games, occurs in an edition of *Gargantua* published by Etienne Dolet in 1542 (Appendix II, edition B). François Juste's version of the same year is longer, listing 217 games (Appendix II, edition A). For reference purposes my numbering of Gargantua's games is based on the list found in an edition of Rabelais's *Oeuvres* currently in the British Library (BL C.66.a.7., Appendix II, edition C). This version of the complete *Oeuvres* was published by Arnoul L'Anglier in 1553, and is the same edition as the Parisian imprint *Oeuvres* now in the Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels (II 42. 554 A). I have used edition C as my 'master' primarily because I believe it to be one of the most likely versions to have found its way to the Netherlands in the later 1550's.[352] In addition to its connections to the Netherlands and Christopher Plantin, edition C has the advantage of listing the maximum amount of games.

The variations that occur among the early editions detailed in Appendix II are not uncommon in early printed texts. More intriguing is the way in which, over subsequent centuries, the game-list has been an area where Rabelais's translators have felt free to 'play'. A number of translators have enjoyed adding to and extending Gargantua's games. Johann Fischart, Rabelais's first German translator, expanded the game-list to include over three hundred mainly German games in his 1575 version of *Gargantua*

[352] The provenance of the text in the Bibliothèque Royale is unknown, and its binding does not reveal any information as it dates from the eighteenth century. However I would argue that Plantin's connections with L'Angelier (see page 7) make it possible that this was one of the 'Rabelais' texts listed as being

entitled *Geschichklitterung*.[353] Fischart's work followed much of Rabelais's original narrative, but dramatically inflated the frequent listing sections of the text through alliteration and association, rendering the lists difficult and frequently meaningless.[354] The first Dutch edition of *Gargantua* did not appear until 1682, and again the translator Claudio Gallitalo expanded the game-list. The Dutch version initiated research in the field of children's games, resulting in Cock and Teirlinck's six-volume study of children's games and amusements in the Netherlands.[355] Sir Thomas Urquhart, who made an English translation of *Gargantua* in 1653, was also known for elaborating upon Rabelais's lists with his own distinctive prose. While he approached the game-list creatively, finding and seemingly inventing a number of colloquial and obscure English equivalents to Gargantua's games, Urquhart did not actually expand the length of the list, which comes in at the standard maximum of 217 games.[356]

Given their vast proportions, it is perhaps unsurprising that Bruegel's panel and Rabelais's text feature many of the same games. In several cases Bruegel offers a detailed illustration of a game played by Gargantua. These overlaps can be verified using French game collections which combined words and images, including the series of sixteenth-century woodcuts titled *Les trente-six figures contenant tous les jeux* and Jacques Stella's seventeenth-century *Jeux et plaisirs d'enfance* (both detailed in Appendix I, column five). Although these printed collections post-date Bruegel and Rabelais's game-lists, their pairing of images with French verse make them useful sources for matching the names of games listed by Rabelais with Bruegel's iconography. Other useful sources for contextualizing Bruegel's panel are a painting of *Children's Games* attributed to Maerten Van Cleve (Fig. 79) and a print of Monkey Games by Pieter Van der Borcht (Fig. 80). Usually dated to the 1560's, there are several versions of Van Cleve's panel, which is clearly informed by *Children's Games*.[357] Although Van Cleve's painting is strongly

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imported in Plantin's journal in the years 1558-1561. Both the Brussels text and the London text are listed under *NRB* 58.

[353] The text was reprinted and further expanded in 1582 and 1590. Rausch, 1908.

[354] Weinberg, 1986.

[355] Bakhtin, 1984, p. 232. Cock and Teirlinck, 1902-1906.

[356] For Urquhart's list see Appendix II.

[357] Faggin estimated that the original composition was no longer conserved, and reproduced a copy from the Vittorio Duca collection in Milan, c. 1575. Faggin, 1965, pp. 38-45, fig. 12. George

derivative of Bruegel's panel it includes a slightly different selection of games, and therefore helps to expand upon our understanding of sixteenth-century game playing. Pieter Van der Borcht's print was published in the 1580's and again seems to derive from *Children's Games*, although it also presents a slightly different selection of games.[358] The areas of overlap between all of these sources suggests that often games were unaffected by chronology and national boundaries. There are twenty one clear overlaps between the games played by Gargantua and those enjoyed by Bruegel's children, and potentially many more. Yet there are also some significant differences which are worthy of comment. Remarkably, Bruegel includes a number of games which are not listed in any of the other collections, and by exploring these we can begin to establish what would have distinguished *Children's Games* for contemporary viewers.

Many of the commonalities between Rabelais and Bruegel's game-lists are playground staples which are still popular today. These include blindman's buff, tug-of-war, riding on a swing, games with bowls and odds and evens.[359] Other, more archaic games which are common to both lists include knucklebones, games with hoops, games with tops, nine-holes, span-counter and mark-knife.[360] Various games involving windmills are listed by Rabelais and illustrated in the collections of Bruegel and Stella. These include the traditional windmill on the end of a stick, where running into the wind turned the

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Marlier listed several comparable works, including a panel from the collection Heinz Kisters at Kreulingen, Switzerland, now in the museum of Stuttgart, inv. No. 1085, attributed to Pieter Balten, and a panel in the Isaac Delgado Museum of Art in New Orleans. Marlier, 1969, pp. 350-351, fig. 216. I have examined a version of the composition in the Ducastel collection, Musée Municipal, Paris, Saint Germain-en-Laye.

[358] Published by Philips Galle early in the 1580's, the print shows a landscape in which monkeys play over twenty different outdoor games, many of which ape those found in *Children's Games.* The *Monkey Games* is one of a series of eighteen plates in which monkeys ape human activities. Two plates (*The Sleeping Peddlar Robbed by Monkeys* and *School of Monkeys*) were published separately, probably at first by Johannes Baptista Vrints. The other sixteen were published as a series by Philips Galle. No complete set of the first series, which had blank margins underneath, is known. The second series has satricial verses in Latin, French and Dutch in the lower margins. A complete set is held in Paris, and reproduced in The New Hollstein, 2004, compiled by Hans and Ursula Mielke and ed. by Ger Luijten, no. 182-199.

[359] Bruegel (15), Rabelais *A colin maillard* (168); Bruegel (36), Rabelais *A crocqueteste* (211); Bruegel (37), Rabelais *A tirelitantine* (68); Bruegel (7), Rabelais *A la brandelle* (155); Bruegel (66), Rabelais *A la boulle plate* (116), *A la court boulle* (121), *Au boleau* (158); Bruegel (16), Rabelais *A pair ou non* (60).

sails and the more complex *molinet a noix*. This was the name given to a toy windmill formed out of an empty nut shell. Hidden in the nut was a pivot, and the sails of the windmill could be made to spin mechanically by pulling on a cord. A three-tiered *molinet a noix* is illustrated in the left foreground of Bruegel's panel. A simpler version of the toy, with only one tier of sails, is played with by one of Stella's putti in *Le jeu des espingles*. Beside the putti playing with pins, two more run into the wind with four and two spoke windmills on sticks (Fig. 81). Rabelais lists three games which might be compared to these depictions, *A la pyrouete* (126) *Au pireuollet* (129) and *Au molinet* (185). The term *pirouette* could apply to stick windmills, but could also be used more generically to describe the action of turning like a windmill.[361] Perhaps in listing the two games so close together Rabelais wanted to imply both versions. References to *molinet* in the literature of the period suggest that it was a popular game. *Molinet a noix* is mentioned by Froissart, while a generic *molinet* is described by Noël du Fail in the *Propos rustiques* of 1547.[362] Cotgrave also lists the term *ventail* to describe a windmill on the end of a stick.[363] This most basic of windmills was a young child's toy. Chapter 11 of *Gargantua* describes the giant's childhood from the ages of three to five years, and the final line describes how Gargantua's nurses made him a windmill out of the sails of a windmill at Mirebalais.

The bowling game 'castles' or *la rangette* is illustrated by Bruegel and Stella and *A la rengée* is also played by Gargantua (136). The object of this ancient game was to take aim and attempt to knock over your opponent's towers of stones or marbles, with the winner taking the spoils (Fig. 82). 'Castles' or 'pyramids' was played with nuts in Rome c. AD 10, and references throughout the following centuries attest to the game's international appeal.[364] No doubt part of the popularity of castles was due to its simplicity; it could be

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[360] Bruegel (1) and (68), Rabelais *Au martres* (62); Bruegel (22) and (23), Rabelais *Au cercle* (106); Bruegel (54), Rabelais *A la ronflart* (138), *A la trompe* (139) and *Au moyne* (140); Bruegel (70), Rabelais *A la foussette* (137); Bruegel (74), Rabelais *Au franc du carreau* (59); Bruegel (30), Rabelais *Au pié du couteau* (57).
[361] Psichari, 1908, p. 332.
[362] Psichari, 1909, p. 54.
[363] '*Ventail: A childish toy of a card cut acrosse, like the sayles of a wind-mill, and put with a pinne into th'end of a sticke, and so held in the wind, which makes it to twirle verie fast about'*. Cotgrave, 1968.
[364] Opies, 1997, p. 19-23. They describe how Boys in Salford in the 1970s were still knocking down piles of marbles in the same way.

played with large stones or small marbles. Sir Walter Scott described used cherry pips in a pyramid tower; nuts were also used, and one scholar has suggested that Bruegel's children are playing with towers of potatoes.[365]

A more violent game, listed by Rabelais as *Au cassepot* (124) and translated variously as 'at the break-pots' and 'smash crock' is illustrated by Bruegel and Stella, among others (Fig. 83). Depictions of the game from the sixteenth and seventeenth century vary slightly, although all involve a blindfolded player armed with a stick, and a pot.[366] In *Children's Games* the player is blindfolded by his cap, and left to stumble around near the centre of the panel. His backward tilt suggests that he is uncertain on his feet and that the stick he is wielding is heavy. The pot is an upturned blackened cooking cauldron and a clue to its whereabouts is given by another player, who crouches and strikes the pot with a small knife. The appeal is to the senses – the blindfolded player must rely only on his hearing – and the potential for injuring a fellow playmate with the large stick no doubt added to the excitement of this game. Smash crock is also pictured in the left foreground of Maerten Van Cleve's *Children's Games.* Here we see three figures; one holds a large stick and is being blindfolded by a second player, while a third makes ready for the game by positioning a pot upside-down on the ground. The pot in Van Cleve's picture is clearly earthenware, and the cracked remnants scattered on the ground behind the players suggests that this is not the first pot to be struck. In Bruegel's image it is less clear whether the pot is actually going to be smashed. The fact that it is being tapped by a knife suggests that the target is made from a tough and resonant material, such as metal, and this also fits with the pot's black colour. The absence of any remnants from previously cracked pots also suggests that the purpose of Bruegel's game was not for the blindfolded player to break the pot, but simply for him to strike it successfully. Jacques Stella's illustration of '*La course du pot*' presents another variation of the game. Here the pot is suspended from a tree branch high above the four players' heads. Only the lead player is blindfolded, but several hold sticks and form a group behind him, indicating that turns will be taken. The pot in this example is filled with

[365] Mayere, 1941, p. 8.

liquid, which spills ominously over the side. The accompanying verse suggests the bravery that is needed to smash this pot; an action which would soak the unlucky player, and, worse, could crack his head. Games of catch with pots also feature in Bruegel's *Battle Between Carnival and Lent* and in Douce manuscript 276 (Fig. 84). In these examples the players throw the pot between them; it's potential to smash when dropped adding an extra element of tension to the game.

Some of the games listed by Rabelais and illustrated in the French collections highlight the fact that although Bruegel's list is extensive, it is not exhaustive. A game common to most of the game collections but absent from Bruegel's panorama is see-saw. Stella illustrates putti playing on a rudimentary see-saw in *La Balançoire*, with the rise and fall of the see-saw providing the impetus for a verse on the fickle nature of fortune. That the game was played in the Netherlands in the sixteenth century is evidenced by the inclusion of an uncomfortable looking see-saw fashioned from a stray plank of wood in Maerten Van Cleve's painting. This see-saw was clearly made from everyday objects; a snapped plank beside the beam demonstrates the see-saw's lack of durability. The game would surely have been suitable for Bruegel's children; a beam, similar to that used for the see-saw in Van Cleve's image even lies in the right foreground of the panel. Yet for some reason the game is not included. The counting out game 'nine-hands' and the tug-of-war game 'stick tug' were also common pastimes in the sixteenth century which, again, are absent from Bruegel's compendium. Rabelais lists *A neuf mains* (162) and a similar kind of counting-out game is included in the far right of Van Cleve's panel, but not in Bruegel's *Children's Games*. The object of 'stick-tug' or *Le court baston* was to pull the other player up into a standing position. It features among Gargantua's games (128), is illustrated in Stella's collection, and appears in Douce manuscript 276. The age of this game is demonstrated by its appearance in the margins of the fourteenth-century Romance of Alexander in the Douce collection.[367] Like see-saw, *le court baston* could be

[366] Vanden Branden suggests that the game had a festive element, being played by adults with eggs on Sundays and at *kermissen*. Vanden Branden, 1982, p. 513.
[367] The Opies cite these examples and many more contemporary ones, and list the game as 'lifting' because the weaker player would eventually get lifted off the ground. Opie and Opie, 1969, pp. 213-214.

easily played using everyday objects, and therefore would have held universal appeal. Nonetheless, it is absent from *Children's Games*.

When comparing the types of games played in Bruegel and Rabelais's lists, one of the most marked differences is the absence of gambling games in *Children's Games*. Gargantua's games commence with a long enumeration of card games (1-35), followed by a further listing of table games (37-55). Occupying over a quarter of Rabelais's total list, this significant area of play is completely unrepresented in Bruegel's panel. Playing cards, dice and backgammon do feature in a number of Bruegel's other paintings, including the encyclopaedic works, where they are played with by adults and associated with loose-living. In the *Battle Between Carnival and Lent*, on the side of Carnival and next to images of gluttony and excess, a baker rolls dice to gambles his wares. To the right, the ground beside King Carnival's barrel is littered with debris, which includes bones, egg shells and playing cards (Fig. 85). *Netherlandish Proverbs* also features playing cards. Perched on the tavern windowsill, a fool in a part-coloured hat is scattering a deck of playing cards. In the right foreground of Bruegel's *Triumph of Death* (1562) a backgammon board, playing cards and coins are abandoned by a noble company as they attempt to escape the army of marauding skeletons (Fig. 86).

In each of these details cards and dice are linked to foolishness and the bodily actions of eating, drinking, defecating and fornicating. While he scatters the playing cards, the fool in the window of *Netherlandish Proverbs* is also engaged in 'shitting on the whole world'. The presentation of the upside-down globe as a kind of tavern sign makes this *impossibilia* possible, and the playing cards might relate to the fool's action; i.e. 'When the card is dealt, I shit on the whole world'.[368] A similar figure in a parti-coloured hat pushes Carnival's barrel-sled, decorated with foodstuffs, past scattered playing cards and food scraps.[369] The table in the *Triumph of Death* also houses food and wine glasses beside the games. The link to foolishness is again made by a jester, who kneels on the

[368] Dundes and Stibbe, 1981, p. 29.
[369] Both figures sport diagonal chains of circular disks. These are worn by several fools the *Festival of Fools* print, produced after a lost Bruegel design and usually dated to after 1570. The circular disk-chains are perhaps a pun on *bol*, meaning head or ball, taken from *sottebol*, meaning fool.

floor among the scattered game-pieces and tries to crawl under the table. Lust is also suggested by the music-making couple in the far corner, who are oblivious to the skeleton behind them.

In contrast to these depictions, dice, cards and gaming boards are conspicuously absent from *Children's Games*. The closest thing to a gambling game is the game of knucklebones played by the girls in the left foreground, but as discussed in chapter 1 it is impossible to tell whether the knucklebones are being used here in a game of chance or a game of skill. Behind the girls playing with knucklebones a younger girl clutches an object associated with another type of gambling game (Fig. 87). This object has often been interpreted as a rattle, but close inspection reveals it to be a type of teetotum. A teetotum was a four-sided die embedded on a spindle which was used to decide who would win the money in gambling games. The game to which the tool relates is listed by Rabelais as *Pille, nade, jocque, fore* (22) a reference to the four different sides, or fates, which could befall the player once the top was spun.[370] While it is possible that the girl in Bruegel's painting is intending to spin the top on the bench, she looks far too young to have either the co-ordination or funds for such a game. It is as though she has snatched up the mature toy and appropriated it for her own childish amusements: waving the trophy above her head, she attempts to catch the interest of the older boys playing on the other side of the bench, and is seemingly oblivious to the spindle's proper use. The little girl's innocent treatment of this adult object, combined with the lack of any other gambling games in *Children's Games,* challenge the moralistic interpretations of this work. When viewed in the light of Gargantua's extensive card-playing the games depicted in *Children's Games* seem to be deliberately innocent.

In addition to excluding gambling games from *Children's Games*, Bruegel also avoided including the overtly vulgar and scatological games which feature in other sixteenth-century collections. Rabelais lists the game *A pet en guelle,* which has been translated into

[370] 'P' (French *piller*, "plunder", Italian *pigliar*, 'to take') or 'A' (Latin *accipe*, "receive") - the player takes only the initial amount he or she put into the pot. 'N' (Spanish *nada*, "nothing") or 'R' (French *rien*) - the player gets nothing from the pot. 'J' (Middle French *jocque*, "game", or, in Italian 'G' for *Giuoco*) - the player puts

English variously as 'living wheels', 'bum to bus', 'nose in breech' and 'fart in throat' (154). The prevalence of this game in illustrated collections of the period suggests that it was popular; an illustration of it can be found in the right foreground of Maerten Van Cleve's *Children's Games*, in Stella's *Jeux d'enfance*, and in the margins of two folios in Douce manuscript 276 (Fig. 88).[371] The object of the game was for one player to be inverted, while the other grasped him around the waist. The pair would then form a kind of living wheel, rolling over the backs of two more players. Stella's accompanying verse eloquently outlines the dangers of the game, which called for one player's face to be pressed into another's behind:

A pastime innocent and tame!
In playing this diverting game
Each couple up and over goes.
But since they squeeze each other tight,
Through malice or through oversight,
Ill winds may well assail the nose.[372]

Bruegel clearly knew of this game; he pictured four adult peasants playing it in the foreground of the print *Kermis at St. George* which was published in 1559, but the game is absent from *Children's Games*.

Scatological humour was clearly popular in the sixteenth century. A number of games involving excrement have been identified among Gargantua's games.[373] The *Ango Hours* also revels in a number of scatological games, and includes two folios on which putti aim their urine across a distance and into pots (fol. 28v and 70v). The actions of the putti here are blatant and mischievous, and directly comparable to those of the *puer mingens* in the February miniature of the *Grimani Breviary*. No such obvious scatological humour appears in *Children's Games*. Only one of the children in Bruegel's panel is urinating: by the wall behind the loggia a small girl is pictured crouching down to urinate. In contrast

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additional funds into the pot which is equal to his or her initial amount. 'F' (French *fors*, "out", Italian *Fuora* 'all is over') - the player wins the entire pot and ends the game.

[371] Two inverted figures also appear carved into a sixteenth-century fountain at Forcalquier. Gaignebet and Lajoux, 1985, p. 212.

[372] Stella, 1969, no. 34.

[373] Psichari, 1908 and 1909.

to the *puer mingens* found in manuscripts, the actions of Bruegel's girl are private and would go unnoticed by all but the most scrupulous viewer.

Beyond the games discussed, it is difficult to assign with any certainty where overlaps between Bruegel's games and Gargantua's games occur. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, the colloquial and regional variations found within play frequently make it difficult to recapture the specifics of a game from its name or an image alone. Several potential overlaps between Rabelais and Bruegel's lists must remain speculative. One such example is the game occurring in the middle of Bruegel's receding street (Fig. 89). Here a boy is tied to a chair, armed with a stick, and surrounded by playmates running in all directions. This game has been interpreted as 'Bait the Bear', in which the other players taunt the trussed-up 'victim' while trying to avoid being swiped by his stick.[374] A game in which one figure is tied up by his playmates also appears in Stella's collection ('*La Poire*', no. 30). Stella's verse alludes to the boy's status as a victim; Rabelais also lists *Aux faulx villain* (98), a game which might well be analogous to this. The game of 'blind slipper' pictured in Bruegel's panel may also be listed among those played by Gargantua.[375] Rabelais's *Au savatier* (65) has been translated variously as 'Bob and hit' and 'Hunt the slipper', both names which conjure up the action of ducking, diving and chasing a shoe, but again it is difficult to establish a correlation with certainty.[376] The wedding procession in *Children's Games* may also have a precursor among Gargantua's games. *Au mariaige* is listed by Rabelais, however as this occurs near the beginning of the game-list it is thus more likely to refer to the popular card game in which the principle was to reunite a King and Queen of the same set.[377] A later game in Gargantua's list, *Au responsailles*, might provide a more fitting parallel to Bruegel's motif. Translated by both

[374] Hindman, 1981, Appendix I, no.73; Opie and Opie, 1969, p. 122.
[375] For a discussion of the rules of this game and representations of it in manuscripts, tapestries and scupture see Chapter 1, pp. 90-91
[376] A third example of this kind of ambiguous correlation is the three girls beside the river in *Children's Games* who appear to be playing a game with their dresses. Two have sunk to the floor, their skirts spread in a circle around them, while a third is still standing and spinning her skirt. Again, this may be analogous to a game listed by Rabelais *A je m'assis* [79] (I sit down), but the generic nature of the phrase makes this impossible to determine.
[377] Psichari, 1908, p. 124.

Urquhart and Smith as 'at the re-wedding', *Au responsailles* has been interpreted by some commentators as a game in which marriage was simulated.[378]

Much of the ambiguity found in these comparisons is to an extent present in play itself. Who decides when a game begins and what precisely the rules are? While one child may marshal others into playing an established game, there is no guarantee that all the participants are fully committed or are even engaged in precisely the same game. In the playground children dip in and out of games, inventing new variations, bending the rules to suit their own ends, and using their imaginations. Bruegel's painting is intriguing precisely because it seems to captures the unknowable, imaginative quality of play. While my numbering draws attention to eighty-seven details in *Children's Games*, these are by no means all games. Numbering the motifs in the panel in this way merely provides a method in which to refer to them accurately. In fact only about a quarter of the numbers refer to definitive 'games' (such leap-frog, tug-of-war, nine-holes, blindman's buff, bucca and knucklebones). Added to these examples of games which rely on several players are the children playing with recognisable toys (including a hobby-horse, whip-tops, hoops, windmills, stilts and dolls). Many of the children play imaginative games which make use of the architecture, or found objects (such as smash-crock, hang from a beam and rocking a barrel). Other games seem to involve acting, chanting words or performing feats, the details of which are difficult to recapture (these include the figures running up and down the hill on the left, the children going from door to door in the distant street and the boys gathered around a central player on the right).[379] These creative, imitative or verbal games are particularly difficult to identify, and this limits our conclusions on precisely where Bruegel and Rabelais's lists overlap.

[378] Psichari cites Godefroy, who believed it to be a game in which marriage was simulated. Other scholars see the game as a version of hide-and-seek, a hypothesis which Psichari endorses, exclaiming *'Et quelle espèce de jeu pourrait-ce être que celui qui consisterait à simuler un remarriage?'* Psichari, 1908, p. 176.

Bruegel's Rabelaisian Lists

A comparison of details found in the game-lists of Bruegel and Rabelais is instructive, but viewing the lists side-by-side offers more than information on their individual games. In a number of different ways, Gargantua's game-list highlights the broader context in which *Children's Games* might be understood. The first aspect of this concerns the 'tone' of Bruegel's panel, which, like Rabelais's work, presents popular culture in a learned, listing format. We have seen how the period's 'abundant aesthetic' affected the appearance of a diverse range of factual compilations, including encyclopaedias, *Wunderkammern*, atlases and mnemonic techniques. Looking at Rabelaisian lists helps us to pinpoint exactly where *Children's Games* sits within this sixteenth-century tradition. Both Bruegel and Rabelais's lists diverge from the factual collections of the period in several distinctive ways. These include the extent to which they engage with the coarser aspects of popular culture and the ways in which they revel in *copia* without regard for its companion - brevity.

In the preface to his massive *Biblioteca universalis* of 1545 Conrad Gesner complained that the 'confusing abundance of books' was a problem that scholars needed to solve. [380] Many of the factual texts, collections and notebook systems of the period were developed in response to this desire to control and make useable the perceived abundance of the sixteenth-century world. Somewhat paradoxically, the ultimate goal of most abundant collections was brevity. In the *De copia* Erasmus actively warned against the indiscriminate piling up of examples in a 'meaningless heap of words' which would 'belabour the ears' of the audience.[381] For most humanist scholars, the object of collecting a multitude of examples was rather to create a useable collection which would aid sparse, measured and elegant rhetoric. Although much of *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel*

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[379] This game is most often identified as 'hair-pulling', but, as Snow discusses, it is more ambiguous than this. Snow, 1997, pp. 105-110.
[380] Blair, 2003, p. 11.
[381] 'We find that a good many mortal men who make great efforts to achieve this godlike power of speech [abundance] fall instead into mere glibness, which is both silly and offensive. They pile up a meaningless heap of words and expressions without any discrimination, and thus obscure the subject they are talking about, as well as belabouring the ears of their unfortunate audience.' *CWE*, vol. 24, *De Copia*, 'Foundations of the Abundant Style', p. 295.

exhibit a refined use of Erasmian *copia,* with learned references woven into the bawdy tales, in his long lists Rabelais parodies Erasmian principles. Rabelaisian lists frequently feel more like exhaustive accounts which 'belabour the ears' than rich store houses. They interrupt the central narrative, and delight in 'trivial pursuit' which both embodies and parodies the Renaissance emphasis on *copia*.[382] Sometimes the listing tendency lasts for a few short lines; on other occasions, as with Gargantua's games, it can occupy a whole chapter.

Like Bruegel's panels, Rabelais's extensive lists make a visual appeal to the reader. His books were among the first to be issued in the new medium of print. While their predecessors, the *Grand Chroniques* belonged primarily to oral culture, the printed pages of *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* were intended for private contemplation.[383] Returning to early editions of *Gargantua,* we find that the game-list is announced by white space, with the games listed in columns of one or two per page. The surrounding blankness both differentiates the games from the rest of the text and denotes the separation of each game from its neighbour. The words are thus objectified. Released from conventional sequential relationships with one another, they obtain an autonomous existence on the physical space of the page. Although useful for the historian of popular culture, Gargantua's game-list is somewhat arduous for the reader, who is unsure how to treat it.[384] Faced with eight pages of game names connected only by the repetition of the prepositional phrases '*a la'* and '*au'*, it is difficult to resist skipping ahead, or lingering on those games with interesting names or resonances. *Children's Games* is similarly overwhelming in its presentation of a multitude of motifs. Much like Rabelais's printed page, the raised viewpoint in all three of the encyclopaedic paintings enables all of the motifs to be surveyed at once and encourages the viewer to contemplate the whole before the details.

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[382] Barbara Bowen used the phrase 'trivial pursuit' to describe the listing digressions that pepper the writing of Guillaumne Bude's *De asse* (1514) and Rabelais's books. Bowen, 1995, p. 746.
[383] Gray, 1986; Wasserman, 1975; Kline, 1963.
[384] On the list detailing the genealogy of Pantagruel (*Pantagruel*, I) Wasserman writes: 'Such systematic repetition produces a 'saturation' effect. After a point, even though we are aware of a closural principle in the list that guarantees its coming to an end, we find it difficult to sustain interest in the individual steps leading to the end. As we become bored with the banality of repetition, our impulse is to seek variation in the activity of reading, to play with the words themselves.' Wasserman, 1975, p. 134.

Gargantua's game-list is a particularly good example of the way in which Rabelais abuses the principles of Erasmian *copia,* revelling as it does in meaningless abundance and extension. Beginning with familiar card games, board games, and games of skill, Rabelais then devotes the second part of his list to the more outlandish and colloquial games played by Gargantua. Like the list of fifty-one games played in Froissart's fourteenth-century *L'Espinette amoureuse*, many of Gargantua's games are today unidentifiable. [385] As in many of Rabelais's other lists, the game-names become a kind of play in themselves, with alliteration, assonance, rhyme and free association augmenting the list. Gargantua's games are expanded through the repetition of certain games with slight variations in spelling, such as *A la blanche* (42) and *A la blanque* (132). In other examples, the same game is listed under several different regional names.[386] Further evidence of gratuitous expansion can be found in the way in which proverbs, festive traditions and expressions that were said aloud during the course of play are listed with a prefix as though they were games themselves.[387] In some cases, expansion is subject-based. Three different kinds of spinning top are listed consecutively (138, 139 and 140) and the entry *Au hybou* (the owl) begins a succession of games with names which evoke animals. In other places, the order of the games is determined by word-play alone; *chevau fondu* (leap-frog) follows *chesne forchu* (head stands). As Gargantua's games become increasingly outlandish, the modern scholar is at a loss to know whether these games really were played in the streets of sixteenth-century France, or whether they number among Rabelais's many invented words.

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[385] The largest study of Gargantua's games was undertaken by Michel Psichari, who acknowledged the impossibility of identifying many of the games with any certainty. Psichari, 1908 and 1909. For Froissart's games see Mehl, 1990, pp. 491-492.

[386] Examples of consecutive listing of the same or very similar games include *A pair, ou non* [60] and *A croix, ou pile* [61]; *Aux martres* [62] and *Aux pingres* [63]; *Au chastelet* [135], *A la rengée* [136] and *A la fossette* [137].
Examples of regional names for the same game include *picandeau* [210], *griesche* [122], and *cocquantin* [167]. The regional names most frequently come from the West and Central regions of France. Mehl, 1990, p. 495.

[387] Examples of expressions that were probably said aloud include *A compere, prestez moy vostre sac* [84], *A sainct trouve* [101] and *Defendo* [187]. Mehl describes how the term *boeuf viloé* [72], which is translated as 'the Shrovetide ox' corresponds to a costume worn during festive ceremonies. Mehl, 1990, p. 495. *A figues de Marseilles* [87] is an example of a proverbial expression transformed into a game.

Although they do not depart from reality in the way that Gargantua's games do, the arrangement of motifs in *Children's Games* betray a similar preference for randomness and abundance over the humanist goals of brevity and order. Rabelais's treatment of the dry, factual encyclopaedic texts of the period has been recognised as satirical and we can imagine that Bruegel's original viewers might also have recognised the tension between the formal qualities of his encyclopaedic pictures and their everyday subject matter to be somewhat satirical and humorous.[388] Karel Van Mander famously described Bruegel as 'Pieter the Droll', and pointing to the fact that there were few works that the observer 'can contemplate seriously and without laughing, and however straight-faced and stately he may be, he has at least to twitch his mouth or smile.'[389] In this the reactions of Bruegel's audience might have been aligned with those of Rabelais's readers.

[388] This is particularly evident in the list of books in the library of the Abbey of Theleme, the titles of which mock scholarly pretension.

[389] Van Mander, 1994-1999, vol. I, p. 190. For a recent discussion of the role of laughter in Bruegel's art, which makes surprisingly few references to Rabelais, see Gibson, 2006.

III Play and Learning

'I'm not sure anything is learned better than what is learned as a game…'[390]

Having considered the manner in which Rabelais's writing informs our understanding of Bruegel's pictorial tone and explored the specific similarities and differences between *Children's Games* and Gargantua's games it is now time to turn to what is possibly the most exciting aspect of the comparison in relation to *Children's Games*: the connection made in *Gargantua* between play and learning. Rabelais's approach to game playing and the way in which play is woven into almost every stage of Gargantua's development is indicative of the wider attitudes of the period, which witnessed an explosion of interest in children's play.[391] Numerous sixteenth-century treatises revive Classical notions about the value of games for developing children's bodies and characters. Popular playground games also received a large amount of attention in the many school colloquies which were published during the period. Penned by humanist scholars and tutors, these educational texts used scenes from the daily life of schoolchildren to teach language, grammar and morals, and in so doing documented children's leisure activities as never before. This body of literature represents a rich source of contemporary beliefs about childhood and play, and has been recognised as the basis for Rabelais's fictional account of Gargantua's childhood. The texts have hitherto been ignored by Bruegel scholars, but they can also be used to further our understanding of *Children's Games*.[392]

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[390] *CWE*, vol. 40, *Colloquies*, 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*', p. 1098.

[391] It has been argued that the chapters detailing Gargantua's playful education sum up the whole of Renaissance education at its peak . Rita Guerlac has explored the influence of Vives' educational writing on Rabelais, arguing that Rabelais compressed the twelve books of Vives's *De disciplinis* into ten pages, both reflecting and setting his seal of approval on the Spanish humanist's educational program. She suggests that Rabelais was probably also familiar with Vives' *Adversus pseudodialecticos* and his *Introductio ad sapientiam*, published in Louvain in 1524. Guerlac, 1974.

[392] In describing the 'verbal context' of Bruegel's *Children's Games* Hindman mentions the work of Vives and Erasmus. She sees the humanists' understanding of play, with its divisions between sport and games, and discussions of gender- and age-appropriate play as sophisticated. Yet despite describing Bruegel's

I have already detailed the ways in which seventeenth-century emblems have been used as sources by art historians looking at *Children's Games*, and drawn attention to the problematic nature of this comparison.[393] The emblem books most often cited in relation to Bruegel's panel were produced some sixty years after *Children's Games* is dated and in the radically different climate of the Calvinist Dutch Republic.[394] Returning to the sixteenth century, we find that a very different attitude to the relationship between play and learning prevailed. This chapter forwards a new reading of *Children's Games* which is grounded in an investigation of what the concepts of 'play' and 'learning' might have meant to Bruegel's original interpretive community. Sixteenth-century attitudes to play can be broadly grasped by surveying the treatment of games in the major pedagogical texts, including treatises and best-selling colloquies by authors such as Erasmus, Vives and Maturin Cordier. The humanist literature on games is not only chronologically well-matched to *Children's Games*, it is also culturally relevant to Bruegel's interpretive community. Evidence suggests that many of the treatises and colloquies found their way to Antwerp by the middle of the century, where they directly influenced the city's educational system. In several cases, colloquies were being penned by members of Bruegel's circle of patrons and associates.

The priorities, laws and ideas which emerge from these sources suggest that *Children's Games* should be reconsidered. When we recover the connection that sixteenth-century viewers made between games and learning, and begin to ask questions about when and where games were considered appropriate, what to play, and how to play Bruegel's painting starts to look very different. A range of sixteenth-century images which present

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panel as their 'conceptual analogue', Hindman does not actually consider humanist theories in relation to Bruegel's work. Hindman, 1981, p. 459.

[393] Stridbeck, 1951, pp. 185-191; Hindman, 1981, pp. 462-469. See my Introduction, pp. 25-29.

[394] Snow illustrates the problematic nature of the comparison with emblems using Stridbeck's example of a boy swimming with water wings, a motif from *Children's Games* which also features in Visscher's *Sinnepoppen*. Stridbeck (1956) interpreted this shared iconography in a straightforward manner, assuming that Bruegel's motif conveys a similar moral message to Visscher's (namely that one should not rely on external means of support). Snow (2000), however, highlights the differences in the staging of these two examples, and concludes that the mood in Bruegel's image is virtually antithetical to that in Visscher's. Snow, 1997, pp. 27-29.

'ideal' and 'non-ideal' children can be used to further develop the visual aspect of these arguments in relation to *Children's Games*.

Children and games in sixteenth-century pedagogical texts

During the course of the sixteenth century humanist scholars published dozens of pedagogical texts, covering everything from specific aspects of children's education to the broader issues of children's manners, deportment and leisure time. Within this body of literature games are presented as a vital component of childhood. The humanist educators wanted to encourage children to love learning, and knew that this would not be achieved if students were compelled to fill every hour of the day with study. Recreational breaks to refresh the mind were thus recognised as a necessity, and games represented the ideal form of respite.[395] As well as offering children respite from more serious studies, play and games built physical strength. Classical authors had stressed the role of sports and games in developing a young warrior's strength and dexterity, and these recommendations were duly adopted by the humanist pedagogues.[396] In addition to providing fitting respite from academic studies and promoting physical vitality, play was also valued for the wider lessons it taught about life. As Erasmus stated, 'boys' characters are nowhere more apparent than in a game', and it was widely felt that lessons on compromise, moderation and the vicissitudes of fortune could all be learned through play.[397] For these reasons there are many examples of sixteenth-century texts which discuss games in intimate detail.

One of the century's earliest pedagogical treatises was Erasmus's *De ratione studii* (Upon the right method of Study'). [398] First published in 1511, this work opened up many themes which were to become commonplace by the mid-century. Advancing a new humanist curriculum through an emphasis on rhetoric and classical literature, the *De*

[395] 'Man is constituted for serious affairs, not for frivolity and recreation. But we are to resort to games for the refreshing of our minds from serious pursuits.' Watson, 1908, Dialogue 22, 'The Laws of Play', p. 206.
[396] In *The Gouernour* Thomas Elyot presented a dire warning on what might happen to the body without exercise: 'it is to be considered that continual study without some manner of exercise shortly exhausteth the spirits vital and hindreth natural decoction and digestion, whereby man's body is the sooner corrupted and brought into divers sickness, and finally the life is thereby made shorter'. Lehmberg, 1962, p. 69.
[397] Erasmus, 1978, vol. 25, *De civilitate*, p. 288.
[398] For English translations and information on the publication history of Erasmus's educational works, see Erasmus, 1978, vol. 24, *De copia*, *De ratione studii*; vol. 25, *De civilitate* and vols. 39 and 40, *Colloquies*.

rationii studii also addressed more everyday themes, including the importance of childhood as a time to develop virtuous habits and the duties of parents and schoolmasters to be gentle but firm. In the *De ratione studii* Erasmus recommended a sufficient amount of physical exercise to ensure a child's health, but did not go into details about specific sports and games. However, the scholar was to become increasingly interested in the conduct and recreational habits of children, publishing towards the end of his career what was generally regarded as the definitive guide on good manners for boys, the *De civilitate morum puerilium* ('On Good Manners for Boys').[399] This manual laid down the ideals for children's behaviour, dress, and conduct in a variety of situations, including when they were at play, and was immediately popular in schools, where it was read both for its useful advice on decorum and for its elegant grammatical style.[400] Evidence demonstrates that the *De civilitate* inspired teachers in a variety of ways, with some breaking the text down and devising rhymes or using small sections for rote learning through question and answer sessions.[401]

The writings of the humanist educator Juan Luis Vives (1492-1536) were similarly influential. Vives first attacked the methods of the theologians and announced his commitment to progressive, humanistic teaching methods with his *Adversus pseudodialectricos* ('Against the Pseudodialecticians', 1519).[402] This brought him acclaim from older humanists, particularly Erasmus, who exchanged letters with Thomas More on the potential of the young Vives. Methodologically, Erasmus and Vives were to grow apart, but they continued to share moral and philosophical views about the purpose of education and, like Erasmus, Vives published extensively on these throughout the first half of the sixteenth century.[403] Dedicated to the young Mary Tudor, Vives's treatise *De Institutione Feminae Christinae* ('The Education of a Christian Woman', 1523) represented the first systematic outline of education for women. Produced in the same year, his *De*

[399] Published in 1530 in Basel by Johann Froben, this work represented an expanded version of the 1522 colloquy *Monitoria paedogogica*.
[400] Decorum, broadly meaning the appropriateness of style to subject or of an action to a situation is here addressed in the social sense. Erasmus links decorum to etiquette and manners by setting down appropriate social behaviour and propriety in a range of everyday situations.
[401] Bierlaire, 1978.
[402] Guerlac, 1979.

ratione studii puerilis pioneered the notebook method. A small handbook, the *Introductio ad sapientiam* ('Introduction to Wisdom', 1542, Louvain) was filled with maxims on how to live correctly. By far Vives's largest work was the twenty-book *De Tradendis Disciplinis* ('On the Transmission of Knowledge', 1531, Antwerp, Michael Hillenius).[404] As with Erasmus, games played an important part in Vives's educational philosophy. The *De Tradendis* described game playing as an important respite from study, while the *Introductio ad sapientiam* suggested playing games after supper.[405]

Lists of 'appropriate' games can be found in several other treatises published in the early 1530's. The Genevan schoolmaster Maturin Cordier produced a treatise on the reform of Latin teaching, the *De corrupti sermonis emendatione* ('A Little Book for the Amendment of Corrupt Phrases in Our Speech', 1530, Paris), which presented phrases for schoolboys in French and Latin, with additional quotations from Ancient authors.[406] Acting as a French and Latin dictionary, the book grouped phrases in chapters according to their usage, and included a chapter devoted to phrases used in playing games. Cordier was a passionate teacher of the lower forms, and his work was grounded in classroom practice, but other texts drew on the manners and mores of Royal courts. A number of treatises were produced as gentlemen's handbooks and thus blended medieval chivalric traditions with the new sixteenth-century interest in raising civilised youths. These included Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* ('The Courtier', 1528, Venice, Aldus Manutius) and Thomas Elyot's *Boke named the Gouernour* (1531, London, Thomas Marsh). The first substantial prose work in modern English, *The Gouernour* combined the author's own experience as a governor with political advice and included several chapters on the virtue of exercise and types of pastimes considered appropriate for a noble youth.[407]

Just fifteen years later, Roger Ascham's *Toxophilus* (1545, London, Edward Whitechurch) presented a spirited defence of sport (archery) in the face of learning. The two-volume

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[403] For Vives's educational writings see Watson 1908 (*Dialogues*) and 1913 (*De Tradendis*) and Woodward, 1906.
[404] Watson, 1913.
[405] Watson, 1913, Book 3, 'Language Teaching', pp. 121-123.
[406] Watson, 1904, pp. 284-298.
[407] Lehmberg, 1962, pp. 60-64.

treatise took the form of a dialogue between Philologus 'lover of learning' and Toxophilus 'lover of the longbow'. Defending archery as a pastime beneficial to the individual and the nation, Toxophilus recommended archery most particularly to scholars, who should take it as an antidote to their sedentary lifestyles. Tutor to both royalty and ordinary schoolboys, Ascham's other great treatise, *The Scholemaster* (London, John Day, 1570), was published just after his death.[408] Like *The Gouernour*, the treatise encouraged young scholars to indulge in 'courtly exercises and gentlemanlike pastimes', including riding, tilting, weaponry, vaulting, running, leaping, wrestling, swimming, dancing, singing, playing instruments, hawking, hunting and playing tennis.[409] Later still, the educationalist Richard Mulcaster undertook one of the longest discussions of games, devoting chapters six to thirty-five of his *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children* (1581, London, Thomas Vautrollier) to appropriate exercises and games.[410]

In these formal treatises games can be understood as occupying a supporting role to academic endeavours by rounding out the programme of study. But in the colloquies and dialogues produced by the same authors, games took centre stage. Primarily designed as an aid to learning Latin, the Renaissance school colloquy represented the practical application of the humanists' pedagogy. Virtually the only works of contemporary authorship to be admitted into the heavily classical curriculum of sixteenth-century grammar schools, the texts took the form of imaginary dialogues between Masters and pupils or between two students. In an attempt to engage young minds, the conversations focused on everyday subjects which would have been familiar to schoolboys. Colloquies had been used in schools in Ancient Greece and Rome, and continued to be used throughout the Middle Ages, but it was with the scholars and teachers of the Renaissance that the school colloquy saw its greatest flowering. Erasmus's eighty-page *Familiarum colloquiorm formulae* (1518) was originally produced as a private tutoring aid, but once published quickly became a famous and much imitated

[408] It is thought that Ascham worked on drafts of the treatise between 1563 and 1568.
[409] Ryan, 1963, pp. 62-63.
[410] De Molen, 1991.

example of the genre.[411] In the same year the *Paedologia* of Petrus Mosellanus (Peter Schade) were published in Leipzig.[412] The model was replicated by Vives in his *Linguae latina exercitatio* or 'School Dialogues', published at Breda in 1538 and Paris in 1539.[413] Later in the century, Maturin Cordier published his *Colloquiorum scholasticorum libri quatuor*, a collection of over two hundred colloquies that represented the fruit of nearly thirty years' teaching experience.[414] Each published in over one hundred editions, the *colloquia* of Erasmus, Vives and Cordier were the best-known examples of the genre, but numerous other similar texts emerged throughout the course of the sixteenth century.[415]

It is the school colloquies that reveal most about the relationship between high-minded Renaissance humanists and children's games. Although concerned with the minutiae of school life, these were far from minor works. Erasmus's vigorous defence 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*', appended to all editions of the work published from June 1526 onwards, reveals the fundamental role played by colloquies in the broader humanist agenda. Responding to criticisms that the colloquies were obscene and heretical, Erasmus described how the lively conversations were intended to lure the young like bait, stealing into their minds and then stealthily developing their manners.[416] Comparing himself first to a physician who makes allowances for a patient's cravings, and then to a grammar master who coaxes youngsters with cake, Erasmus openly declared his lack of concern for his own dignity and championed the philosophy that

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[411] First printed in Basle by Froben the book was reprinted throughout Europe at least thirty times over the next three years, and in 1522 a fully authorised and extended edition of Erasmus's colloquies was published. The emergence of both authorised and unauthorised versions of the *Colloquies* is discussed in the introduction to them Erasmus, 1978, vol. 39, *Colloquies*, p. 20.

[412] Schade, 1518 / 1927.

[413] Watson, 1908.

[414] Lyon and Geneva, 1564. An edition was published in the Low Countries by the Plantin Press in 1577. Hudson, 1978, p. 60.

[415] Other examples include: Andreas Huendern, *Latinum idioma* (1501); Laurentius Corvinus, *Latinum idioma* (1503); *Collocutiones duorim puerorum de rebus puerilibus as invicem loquentium* (c.1503); Christophorus Hegendorffinus, *Dialogi pueriles* (1520); Hadrianus Barlandus, *Dialogi ad profligandam e scholis barbariem utilissimi* (1524); Hermannus Schottenius, *Confabulationes tironum litterariorum* (1525); Sebaldus Heyden, *Formulae puerilium colloquiorum* (1528); Jonas Philologus, *Dialogi* (1529); Jacobus Zovitius, *Colloquia* (date unknown); Sebastien Castellion, *Dialogi sacri* (1543); Nicolaus Winmannus, *Dialogi* (1544); Martinus Duncanus, *Praetextata latine loquendi ratio* (1552). Seybolt, 1927.

[416] In May 1526 sixty-nine passages of Erasmus's *Colloquia* were censured by the faculty of theology at Paris, and these were not printed until 1531. It was rare for the colloquies on games to offend. The discussion of methods for religious acts such as confession and the hearing of mass in 'The Whole Duty of Youth' was the only section to have attracted criticism. *CWE*, vol. 40, p. 1195.

'nothing is learned better than what is learned as a game'.[417] Erasmus believed that learning should be fun, and the Renaissance school colloquy certainly articulated the lighter side of educational reform. Characters walk to school together, argue about which games to play at mid-morning break, request extra play time from their tutors, and then return home to play more games. Some colloquies describe a day in the life of a student, including when and where games might be appropriate.[418] Others undertake detailed discussions of the origins, rules, benefits and pitfalls of specific games, or anticipate forthcoming fairs, festivals and holidays.[419] The familiarity of these situations was intended not only to appeal to young minds, but also to help to mould them. Like popular proverbs, the colloquies wove moralising experiences into everyday life in the hope of inculcating the young with high moral standards as well as a proficiency in Latin.

Translated into a variety of languages and reprinted many times, evidence suggests that school colloquies were widely used in classrooms throughout Europe. Although a proportion of the texts began life as private tutoring aids and were dedicated to noble pupils, the lessons and methods that they encapsulated were applicable to all.[420] Bookseller records confirm the popularity of Erasmus's *Colloquies*, and the scholar's letters register his surprise at this unexpected success.[421] Published at least fifty times during the course of the sixteenth century, the preface of a 1582 edition of Vives's *School Dialogues* tells us that the work was read 'in well nigh every school', and this is

[417] The reference to a grammar master with cake is taken from Horace's *Satires* 1.1.24-6. Erasmus writes: 'Now if someone protests that it is undignified for an old man to play in this childish fashion, my answer is: 'I don't care how childish, if only it's useful…Moreover, I'm not sure anything is learned better than what is learned as a game To confer a benefit through a trick is surely deception of the most innocent sort.' *CWE*, vol. 40, *Colloquies*, 'The Usefulness of the Colloquies', p. 1098.
[418] Examples include Erasmus's 'A Lesson in Manners', 'The Whole Duty of Youth' and 'Sport', *CWE*, vol. 39, *Colloquies*.
[419] Examples include Erasmus's 'Knucklebones or the Game of Tali' and Vives's Dialogues 21 and 22.
[420] Erasmus dedicated the *Colloquies* to his godson Erasmius Froben and the *De Civilitate* to Henry of Burgundy; Vives dedicated the *School Dialogues* to the young prince Philip (later Philip II of Spain). In the dedication of the *De civilitate* Erasmus explained to Henry of Burgundy: 'You, of course, are not in any great need of these rules, having been, in the first place, brought up from infancy at court…My purpose is rather to encourage all boys to learn these rules more willingly because they have been dedicated to a boy of such momentous destiny and of such outstanding promise.' *CWE*, vol. 25, *De civilitate*, p. 273. In a similar way, Elyot invoked the nobleman as exemplar in *The Gouernor*: 'And hereat I conclude to write to exercise, which appertaineth as well to princes and noblemen as to all other by their example, which determine to pass forth their lives in virtue and honesty..' Lehman, 1962, p. 94.

supported by records from schools in Germany and England.[422] Cordier's collection of over two hundred and eighteen dialogues represented the largest collection of colloquies. Published simultaneously in Geneva and Lyon in 1564, its popularity soon eclipsed that of all previous collections.[423] Outside the schoolroom, the colloquies were also enjoyed by adults seeking entertainment. An awareness of this audience is suggested by the fact that Vives frequently introduced famous figures into his dialogues, including himself, Guillaume Budé, Albrecht Dürer, Prince Philip, Pliny and Vitruvius.[424] In creating dialogues which satirised contemporary life Vives was following the example of Erasmus, whose colloquies frequently presented biting comment on the adult subjects of abuses of faith, courtship, love and marriage.[425]

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[421] *CWE*, vol. 39, *Colloquies*, Introduction.
[422] The dialogues were required reading in at least ten grammar schools in Germany (1564-1661), and in England were required to be read at Eton college (1561), Shrewsbury school (1562-68), Rivington Grammar school (1564) and Westminster school (1621). Watson, 1908, p. xxxiv.
[423] Hudson, 1978, p. 58.
[424] Watson, 1908.
[425] Examples include: *Courtship*; *The Girl with No Interest in Marriage*; *The Repentant Girl*; *The Young Man and the Harlot*; *The Abbot and the Learned Lady*; *The New Mother*; *A Marriage in Name Only*; *The Council of Women.*

The situation in Antwerp

Antwerp's inhabitants were uniquely placed to witness the latest pedagogical developments. As the centre of the printing trade during the first half of the sixteenth century Antwerp's presses were engaged in printing many of Europe's most influential educational texts. Antwerp saw the first publication of Vives's huge *De tradendis disciplinis*, and, in 1552, the publication of an expanded edition of Vives's *School Dialogues*, which included a commentary on the Greek expressions by Peter Motta and an alphabetical index in French, Spanish and German. [426] Erasmus's works were also widely available in the Netherlands in the decade prior to the creation of *Children's Games*. The *De civilitate* was translated into almost every major European language, including *nederlandsch* in 1559.[427] Antwerp's strong economic position and reliance on trade gave rise to a unique and progressive schooling system. Furthermore, learning was not the sole preserve of schoolchildren in Antwerp, as colloquies were eagerly sought out by merchants keen to improve their language skills. In sixteenth-century Antwerp we therefore find a greater degree of overlap between the theory and practice of teaching, and a far wider range of educational options, than anywhere else in Europe. It follows that Bruegel's original audience would have brought a sophisticated understanding of the pedagogical aspects of children's play to their interpretation of *Children's Games*. I should state here that my understanding of Antwerp's education system relies primarily on the secondary, published material that is available. This includes a number of eyewitness accounts, archival information on the Schoolmaster's Guild, and information gleaned from more general histories of education in the Netherlands. Doubtless the analogies that I make with *Children's Games* would benefit from further detailed archival research into the specifics of the Antwerp education system in the sixteenth century. Unfortunately this falls beyond the sphere of this particular project, but it presents a promising avenue for future research.

[426] Watson, 1908.
[427] Erasmus, 1978, vol. 25, *De civilitate*.

The Italian merchant and historian Ludovico Guiccardini travelled through the Netherlands and settled in Antwerp in 1542. His famous account of the Netherlands, the *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi, altrimenti detti Germania inferiore (*'Description of the Low Countries, otherwise called Lower Germany'), written in Italian and first published in 1567, includes an illuminating passage on Antwerp's distinctive educational system:

'Here [in Antwerp] there are many schools with learned masters to instruct youth in all kinds of skill in letters…But in this city and in the whole country it is a common custom, once the children have made a good beginning, and it is desired to let them continue their studies, to send them to France, Germany and Italy. In this city, as in many other cities of the country, there are also several schools where both girls and boys learn the French language…and moreover there are masters here who teach Spanish and Italian, from which it appears in all ways that this city is the common fatherland of all Christian nations and will remain so, if it does not alter its form and essence.'[428]

Guiccardini's account highlights what made Antwerp's educational system unique. Although Antwerp lacked a university, it was not short of options for secondary education, which was available in the city from a number of 'learned masters'.[429] Like all towns in the Netherlands, Antwerp possessed a number of official church schools where Latin was taught.[430] In theory these institutions should have had the monopoly on secondary education, but in practice Antwerp's large middle class of merchants and tradesmen often placed their children in privately-run vernacular schools, known variously as 'free' schools, French schools, *Duytsche* (Dutch) schools and *bijscholen*.[431]

As the free schools were forbidden to teach any Latin beyond the prayers, creed and penitential psalms, lessons were taught in the vernacular. A free school could be opened by any citizen of either sex and of good reputation and their curriculum naturally

[428] Guiccardini, cited in Marnef, 1996, p. 33.
[429] The major universities in the Netherlands during the sixteenth century were Louvain (founded 1425) and Leiden (founded 1575). Other options further afield included Paris, Toulouse, Orleans, Angers, Montpellier, Salamanca, Cologne, Frankfurt, Basle, Freiburg, Heidelburg, Padua, Florence, Bologna and Naples.
[430] The chapter of Our Lady's church was responsible for running the *papenschool* or 'priests school' which was located behind the cathedral on Milk Street. In 1521 three new church schools were set up, attached to the parishes of St. Walburg's, St. Joris and St. Jacob respectively. In 1529 a fifth school was added, connected to the new parish church of St. Andries.
[431] These vernacular schools are termed *bijscholen* by Boekholt and de Booy, 1987; 'private' schools by Marnef, 1996.

reflected the personal skills and abilities of the teacher, making them far more idiosyncratic and experimental than the traditional church schools. In a commercial metropolis like Antwerp the emphasis inevitably fell on developing skills which would be useful for the aspiring merchant.[432] These included languages such as French, German, Italian, English, Latin and Greek, and the formal instruction of bookkeeping, a skill which was particularly associated with the commercial centers of Bruges and Antwerp.[433] Surviving records from the Schoolmaster's Guild of St. Ambrose provide a further insight into this unique system.

The Guild of St. Ambrose was founded in 1530 at the request of Antwerp's free schoolmasters, who wished to protect themselves from the competition of teachers from other towns and from parents who tried to avoid paying fees.[434] An understanding of the organization and membership of the guild can be obtained from privileges and documents issued by the City government and from a two-volume *Rekenboeck* (account book) kept by the guild between 1530 and 1634.[435] All free teachers were required to join the guild and members had to be citizens of Antwerp. Membership of the guild was controlled by a Scholaster and two superintendents. The guild offered schoolmasters protection from exploitation by their pupils' parents, established rates of pay, and funded a chapel and altar in Our Lady's church where schoolmasters could worship. Entrance fees paid by new members covered the running costs of the guild, which included the maintenance of the altar and the costs associated with masses, processions and banquets on the three Feast days which guild members celebrated.[436] The guild's *Rekenboeck* records a rapid expansion in the number of free schoolmasters working in Antwerp in the mid-sixteenth century. Between 1530 and 1562 the number of

[432] Bourland, 1951, p. 2; Murray, p. 98; Voet, 1973, p. 400.
[433] Formal bookkeeping was well established in parts of Italy and in the wealthy cities of the Sourthern Netherlands in the first half of the sixteenth century, but only reached the Northern Netherlands with the mass emigration of Antwerp's merchants and schoolmasters in the 1580's. Davids, 2004.
[434] Antwerp's schoolmasters petitioned the City fathers and proposing that a guild be created and on 19th May 1530 the Schoolmaster's Guild of St. Ambrose was duly founded. Bourland, 1951, p. 7.
[435] The *Rekenboeck van Sinte Ambrosius Ende der Schoilmeesters' Gulde* is preserved in the City Archives at Antwerp. Volume I contains financial statements for the years 1529-1570 and material relating to the formation of the guild. Volume II contains the records for the years 1570-1634. See Bourland, 1951, p. 14.

schoolmasters in Antwerp more than doubled as the network of private schools grew.[437] This growth is recorded in increasing detail in the *Rekenboeck*, with entries listing teachers' names, places of residence and subjects taught.[438]

A significant proportion of Antwerp's schoolmasters were involved in translating, authoring and issuing pedagogical texts. The Antwerp schoolmaster Peeter Heyns translated the *Colloquies* and *Adages* of Erasmus into French and Netherlandish. Another schoolmaster, Josse Verrebroeck, translated works by Erasmus and dialogues from Peter Schade's *Paedologia* to help his students learn Greek.[439] In addition to utilizing and translating the major European texts, we know that Antwerp's printers and schoolmasters produced many new and original pedagogical texts. The precise numbers involved are difficult to capture: schoolbooks and teaching manuals belong to an ephemeral category of works, and many more examples would have been produced than can be traced nowadays. However, a number of surviving texts attributable to Antwerp's schoolmasters help to develop our understanding of this genre, and probably represent a fraction of what would once have been a thriving industry.

The importance of languages in cosmopolitan Antwerp meant that colloquies and dictionaries were particularly popular models for texts.[440] Many of these texts were aimed at merchants as well as schoolchildren, and as a result conversations in the Antwerp colloquies often focus on mercantile subjects (trade, the marketplace, obtaining credit and collecting debts) rather than on childish activities. Examples of such texts

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[436] The guild celebrated the Saints days of St. Ambrose (4th April), St Thomas of Canterbury (29th December) and St Martha (24th July). Other costs included the salary of the *knape*, who was employed as an errand and boy and general helper to the guild.

[437] Marnef, 1996, pp. 33-37.

[438] The guild covered both elementary and secondary teachers, but as no distinction was made between the two in the registers it is difficult to estimate with any accuracy what the precise division was. It is likely that those schoolmasters recorded as having very specific skills, such as commercial mathematics or bookkeeping, would have taught older children. Voet suggests that the teachers who are listed as specialising in skills such as commercial mathematics and bookkeeping, such as Valentin Mennher, Pierre Savonne and Michiel Coignet, would have taught older children. Voet, 1973, p. 400.

[439] The Antwerp schoolmaster Josse Verrebroeck translated Erasmus's works from Greek into Latin. To help his students study Greek he translated 37 dialogues from the *Paedologia* of Petrus Massallanus. Murray, 1970, p. 101.

[440] For a detailed bibliography of works published by Antwerp's schoolmasters in the sixteenth century see Groote, 1967, pp. 14-32.

include the 1527 Franco-Flemish *Vocabulare*, a small quarto volume of 42 folios produced by the Antwerp schoolmaster Noel van Berlaimont (d. 1531).[441] The subject matter of Berlaimont's *Vocabulare* is diverse; it includes a glossary of words in common use, lists of numbers and days of the week, model letters and business documents, a section containing the *Pater noster*, *Ave Maria*, Articles of faith and Commandments, a treatise on the pronunciation of French and three dialogues.[442] Although children only feature in the first dialogue, which takes place in a Flemish interior, in later editions more dialogues were added.[443] Altogether 150 editions of the work appeared between 1527 and 1759, with more languages were incorporated until it contained no less than ten.[444]

A number of important educational texts were also produced by the language teacher Gabriel Meurier (c.1520- c.1587). Born in Avesnes in Hainaut, Meurier spent most of his life teaching in Antwerp and played a high-profile role in the city's schooling system. In 1548 Meurier was admitted to the Guild of St. Ambrose, where the register listed him as a teacher of Spanish, Italian, French, book-keeping and numbers.[445] Meurier served as Dean of the Guild of St. Ambrose three times during his lifetime, for the years 1564, 1572 and 1575, but was expelled from the guild in 1579 for disruptive behaviour.[446] Meurier authored a large number of texts concerned with language teaching which were aimed at both children and adults alike, including Franco-Flemish dictionaries, colloquies and collections of sentences and proverbs.[447] Documents indicate that Meurier obtained a

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[441] The earliest extant edition of this work is Vorsterman's 1536 Antwerp edition.
[442] Bourland, 1933.
[443] In the 1616 edition printed by Frans Fickaert in Antwerp in seven languages four new conversations are added, including one between two students over a meal. Claes, 2000.
[444] These were Latin, Spanish, Italian, German, English, Portuguese, Czech, Hungarian and Polish.
[445] '*Gabriel Meurier, poorter* [citizen], *geboren te Avennes, leerende spaens, italiaens, francois, rekenen ende cyferen.*' De Vreese, p. 702.
[446] Meurier's resistance to the advance of Calvinism in the guild resulted in a number of quarrels. For accounts of Meurier's life and work see Demaizière, 1983, pp. 9-17; De Vreese, 1897, pp. 700-763.
[447] Meurier's works included *Vocabulaire françois-flameng* (Antwerp, C. Plantin, 1557); *La grammaire François-flameng* (Antwerp, C. Plantin, 1557) ; *Formulaire de missives, obligations, quittances, lettres de change..*, (Antwerp, J. Waesberghe, 1558); *Colloques ou nouvelle invention de propos familiers* (Antwerp, C. Plantin, 1557 and 1558); *Conjugasions, règles et instructions mout propres et nécessairement requises, pour ceux qui désirent apprendre françois, italien, espagnol et flamen* (Antwerp, J. Waesberghe, 1558); *Recueil de sentences notables, dicts et dictons communs, adages, proverbs et refrains* (Antwerp, J. Waesberghe); *Le bouquet de philosophie morale* (Antwerp, J. Waesberghe 1568) ; *Propos puérils, ordinairement usez es escoles françoises par le moyen desquels sera plus aisé que par le passé aux maistres d'enseigner et aux enfans d'apprendre françoys et flamen* (Antwerp, ed. pr. 1561) ; *La Guirlande des jeunes filles / Het Cransken der jonghe dochters* (Antwerp, ed. pr. 1564). For a complete list of Meurier's publications see de Vreese, 1897.

privilege for the publication of a book of French and Flemish *Colloques*, editions of which were published by the Plantin Press between 1556 and 1558.[448] Christopher Plantin continued to deal in Meurier's colloquies, grammar books and dictionaries throughout the 1560's and 1570's, and it has been suggested that the success of these works forced Plantin to abandon the production of his own Franco-Flemish dictionary for twenty years.[449] Although Meurier's colloquies do not feature games in the same manner as the colloquies of Erasmus and Vives, they do feature long, Rabelaisian word lists. These were no doubt borne of the very real need to provide readers with an extensive vocabulary for a diverse range of everyday situations and conversations, including the marketplace, the banqueting table, going to war, and calling in debts.

A number of Meurier's other works specifically addressed matters of children's conduct and behavior, including *La Guirlande des jeunes filles* / *Het Cransken der jonghe dochters* (Antwerp, ed. pr. 1564), which was inspired by Meurier's own teaching experience. Unlike the more famous educational manuals of Erasmus, Vives and Castiglione, Meurier's *Guirlande des jeunes filles* focused specifically on girls and dealt with the popular classes rather than the elite scholar. Its pages are divided into two columns, with French and Flemish texts describing the daily life of young girls attending a school based in a bourgeois house. Dialogues between girls and their schoolmistress take place in the garden and the house as the girls learn how the run a home, entertain and correspond with their families.[450] The students generally hail from modest backgrounds, they are the daughters of merchants and artisans, and only one pupil has a parent with a grand lineage.[451] The dialogues, which were intended to impart language skills and moral guidance in equal measure, are colourful, full of details and characters, humorous

[448] Shaw, 1999; Noël, 1986; Van Selm, 1973.
[449] Clair, 1560, p. 119.
[450] The earliest edition of this work, dated 1564, can be found bound with four other works by Meurier in a single volume printed by Jan van Waesberghe in Antwerp, and is now in the Stadtbibliothek Vadiana St. Gallen. Van Selm, 1973. A handful of European libraries hold later single editions of the *Guirlande*, also published by Van Waesberghe, see De Vreese, 1897 and Berriot-Salvadore, 1982. Unfortunately the only extant copy of the *Guirlande* I was able to trace in UK was a later and seemingly much shorter edition held by the British Library entitled *La Nouvelle Guirlande des jeunes filles* and printed in Delft in 1644. Heyns, 1644. As a result my understanding of this text relies heavily on the description found in Berriot-Salvadore's article of 1982.

and didactic. In this sense they are directly comparable to Bruegel's detailed scenes of sixteenth-century life.[452] The relevance of the *Guirlande* to *Children's Games* is made even more explicit by the fact that the manual was given central place in the curriculum at Antwerp's most progressive schools, *De Lauwerboom*, an all-girls school which was attended by the daughter's of many of Bruegel's friends and associates.[453]

An examination of *De Lauwerboom* school and its founder, Peeter Heyns (1537-1598) completes our exploration of the Antwerp education system and reveals just how close the ties were between Antwerp's educated, influential schoolmasters and Bruegel's interpretive community. Ranked by Guiccardini among the learned inhabitants of Antwerp, Peeter Heyns was an important and controversial figure in Antwerp's intellectual life.[454] Although his Calvinist sympathies forced Heyn's to flee the city several times, first to Cologne (1567-1570) and then to Frankfurt am Main and Haarlem (1585-1598), Heyns also played a role in civic administration. [455] Involved in the city's Chambers of Rhetoric, Heyns was eloquent in both French and Flemish and authored numerous poems, plays and educational texts in both languages. But it is for his role as founder of one of the city's most progressive schools, *De Lauwerboom* or 'The Laurel Tree', that Heyns is best known.

Peeter Heyns came from a family of teachers. His father, Jacob was a schoolmaster in Antwerp; his sister, Martine was married to schoolmaster Jan Borrekens, and four of Heyns' six children were to become teachers. First registered with the Guild of St. Ambrose in 1555 aged just 19, Heyns was to serve as Dean of the Guild three times during his lifetime (in 1574, 1579 and 1584). In 1558 Heyns married Anna Smits and

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[451] Dedications to merchants in a number of Meurier's other publications demonstrate a similar loyalty to Antwerp's middle class. See de Vreese, 1897, pp. 719-720.
[452] Berriot-Salvadore makes a comparison to Bruegel's paintings in her discussion of the levels of detail attended to in Meurier's text, see Berriot-Salvadore, 1982, p. 544.
[453] Meurier's text appears most frequently in Heyn's account book. Two poems at the end of *La Guirlande*, one for '*Pierre Heyns, amateur et digne professeur du François*' and the other '*Au college des nymphes du Laurier*', suggest that Meurier wrote the text especially for Heyn's school. Sabbe, 1934, p. 49.
[454] Guiccardini, cited in Meeus, 2000, p. 301.
[455] Peeter Heyns was a supporter of William of Orange and showed sympathy for Calvinism. In 1580 he took an oath as '*wijkmeester*' (head of a ward) of the Antwerp militia, and in 1581 Heyns was appointed as clerk to the heads of the wards. Ibid., p. 306.

shortly before 1562 they moved to the *Korte Augustijnenstraat* and established *De Lauwerboom* school in their home, a rented house called *De Roode Leeuw* (the Red Lion). The school was devoted exclusively to the education of girls, who were not admitted to Antwerp's Latin schools.[456] While traditionally the education of women had come second to that of men, in a commercial metropolis like Antwerp it was important that wives were equipped to help their husbands in business, and the curriculum at the *Lauwerboom* thus emphasized geography, vernacular languages and arithmetic. Two books preserved in the Plantin-Moretus Museum detail the school's finances and register of pupils for the years 1576-1584.[457] They reveal that the school was attended by the daughters of many of Antwerp's leading politicians, artists, tradesmen and merchants: precisely those people who made up Bruegel's circle of patrons and associates. Pupils listed include one '*Anneken Jonghelings*' daughter of the sculptor and medallist Jacques Jonghelinck who was brother to Bruegel's greatest patron Niclaes Jonghelinck. The register also lists '*Josyne ende Maeyken Galle*', daughters of the engraver Philips Galle, who had worked with Hieronymous Cock to produce numerous prints after Bruegel's designs, including the engravings for the series of the *Virtues*.[458] Other notable pupils at the *Lauwerboom* included the daughters of the merchant Gillis Hooftman and the printer Willem Silvius.

Evidence suggests that during the sixteenth century schoolmasters in the Netherlands held a respected and influential position within society, among the upper strata of the urban bourgeoisie.[459] This is certainly true of Peeter Heyns, who belonged to the intellectual circle around the Plantin Press which is so often associated with Bruegel. Plantin and Heyns co-operated in producing a number of schoolbooks and Peeter's son Zacharius Heyns was apprenticed to Jan Moretus at the Plantin Press. Plantin dedicated his French edition of Vives's *L'Institution de la femme chrestienne* to Peeter Heyns and Sebastiaan Cuypers, '*prudens et bien exercités maistres d'escoles de jeunes filles en la ville*

[456] Groote, 1967; Sabbe, 1934.
[457] Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp, Manuscript M 394 and M 240. See Sabbe, 1934, pp. 20-21.
[458] During Bruegel's lifetime Galle was resident in Haarlem, but in 1570 he moved to Antwerp.
[459] Ad Tervoort has considered the wills of two Leiden schoolmasters, Engelbert IJsbrandsz Schut and Jan Gherytsz, who were active in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. Both were materially well off,

d'Anvers'.[460] Heyns and his family also enjoyed a close friendship with Abraham Ortelius, as demonstrated by entries in Ortelius's *Album Amicorum*.[461] The friendship led to collaboration. Heyns supplied an introductory poem to the Dutch editions of Ortelius' *Theatrum* produced after 1571, and also worked with Philips Galle to create a pocket atlas version of Ortelius's atlas known as the *Spiegel der Werelt*.[462] The success of this work stimulated the authors to produce a French version of the pocket atlas, the *Miroir du Monde*, with the text again provided by Heyns.[463] The friendship between Ortelius and Heyns was an enduring one; even when in 1586 Ortelius's association with Heyns led to the geographer being suspected of heresy Ortelius continued to correspond with Heyns, and in 1593 even established himself in *De Roode Leeuw*, Peeter's former house.[464]

Heyns was a keen playwright: active as *factor* (author) of Dutch plays for the Berchem Chamber of Rhetoricians *De Bloeyende Wijngaert* (The Flowering Vineyard), he also authored didactic plays in French for his young students. Much like colloquies, these schooldramas were a fun way in which to teach language flair and fluency while simultaneously imparting moral guidance. Based loosely on Biblical episodes and featuring a cast of allegorical characters, three of these schooldramas were published in the 1590's; *Le Miroir des Mesnageres* (Amsterdam, 1595), *Le Miroir des Vesves* (Amsterdam, 1596) and *Jokebed. Miroir des vrays meres. Tragi-Comedie de l'enfance de Moyse* (Amsterdam, 1597).[465] In addition to writing plays, Heyns also produced a number of more traditional schoolroom texts in both French and Dutch. These included works on arithmetic and the casting of accounts such as *Tot profyte van die willen leeren lustich Rekenen met penninghen oft Penne..* (J. Waesberghe, 1561) and *Instruction de la lecture Françoise et du Fondement de*

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with libraries, houses, and land. Tervoort notes that the schoolmasters were key figure in the 'intellectual heart' of the city. Tervoort, 2004.

[460] Meeus, 2000, p. 303.

[461] Heyns put his device of Daphne changing into a laurel tree and a poem on the verso of the book's title page (f. 4v) and on 15 January 1574 drew a pyramid to congratulate Ortelius on being appointed Royal Geographer to Philip II of Spain (f. 7r). Heyn's daughter Catharina and his son Zacharias also contributed to the album (folios 117v, 104v and 105r. Meeus, 1998, p. 154 and Ortelius, 1969.

[462] Heyns supplied sixteen-verse captions for each of the 72 maps included in the abridged edition. Meeus, 2000, p. 304.

[463] Meeus, 1998, pp. 152-179.

[464] Meeus, 2000, p. 305.

[465] With the printing of *Jokebed* an overall title pages *Les Comedies et Tragedies du Laurier* was added, so that the three plays could be bound together. Ibid., p. 297.

l'Arithmetique (C. Plantin, 1584); morals farces such as the *Esbatiment Moral des Animaux* (P. Galle, c.1587); works on language such as the *Cort onderwijs van acht deelen der Fransoischer talen, tot nut ende voorderinghe der Nederlandscher Joncheyt* ('Short Instruction in Eight Parts of the French Language for the Improvement and Profit of Dutch Young Ladies', C. Plantin, 1571) and *ABC* books in both French and Dutch.[466] Heyns was clearly aware of new trends in French literature; in the dedicatory poem of a Dutch *ABC* book published by Plantin in 1568 and dedicated to '*Alle verstandighe Brabantsche Rhetorisien*' (all the clever Brabantine Rhetoricians) Heyns pleads for the '*Franse maat*' (French verse).[467] The humanistic connection between pleasure and learning is suggested by the title page of this book, which is decorated with images of tiny *putti* who gather garlands of flowers, joust with windmills on hobbyhorses, pull each other in carts, dance, wrestle and defecate (Fig. 90).

[466] Meeus, 2000; Dibbets, 2000; Murray, 1970, p. 101; Clair, 1955; Sabbe, 1934.
[467] Meeus, 2000, p. 298.

Children's Games: An educational context

Children's Games has most often been understood within the context of festive or world upside-down traditions, as a negative, or, at best, ambivalent vision of humanity. In the light of the sixteenth-century humanists' interest in games, I would like to suggest that an educational context may provide access to an alternative, more positive interpretation of the work. This context is particularly appropriate to an investigation into the painting's reception. While it is difficult to ascertain Bruegel's motives in creating *Children's Games*, we can be fairly certain that the circle of patrons and admirers who first saw the painting would have viewed the children's games within the broader context of learning. The latest educational developments would have been firmly embedded in the minds of Bruegel's mercantile buyers, who educated their children in the new humanistic free schools and may well have relied on colloquies and dictionaries to carry out their daily business. This notion is further supported by the fact that *Children's Games* is set in Antwerp - a city where educational theory was closely allied to teaching practice and where a great number of pedagogical texts were being printed.

Erasmus's writings on children's manners and the discussions of games found in sixteenth-century treatises and school colloquies are all suggestive of a climate in which there was very much a right way - and a wrong way - to play. Rabelais's fictional account of Gargantua's youth and maturation neatly summarises these debates. Chapters 6 to 12 of *Gargantua* detail the hero's birth and childhood, with descriptions of his livery and toys. In chapter 13 Gargantua's base promise is demonstrated by his ingenious enumeration of arse-wipes, and the educators are duly called in. Gargantua's education begins under a variety of unremarkable tutors, with the young prince learning little except how to write in the outmoded, Gothic style. Chapter 15 marks a turning point, with Gargantua's father, Grandgousier, meeting the model pupil Eudémon. Impressed by Eudémon's manner and learning, Grandgousier decides to send Gargantua to Paris, where he receives a humanist education from Eudémon's tutor, Ponocrates. Ponocrates begins by inviting Gargantua to demonstrate his old ways, and

Gargantua obliges by playing the huge list of games (chapter 22). In chapters 23 and 24, Ponocrates takes charge. Purging Gargantua with herbal medicaments, Ponocrates prescribes a new regime in which no hour of the day is wasted. Under this new humanistic regime Gargantua grows wise and strong.

Rabelais's presentation of these two antithetical educational methods, and the eventual triumph of the humanistic approach, indicates that he was well aware of contemporary pedagogical debates. What is particularly interesting about Gargantua's childhood in relation to Bruegel's panel is the value placed on games *throughout* Gargantua's education. While the largest exposition of games falls in chapter 22, when the young giant is 'wasting' his time and following old methods, games are in no way excluded from the virtuous, humanist education which Gargantua undertakes in subsequent chapters. In chapter 22 playing games to excess, like eating and drinking to excess, reflects Gargantua's unbalanced approach to life and distracts him from serious study. In chapters 23 and 24 this imbalance is remedied; the amount of time allotted to play is curtailed and games only occur as a reward for study. The types of games played also changes in chapters 23 and 24. Gargantua's time is now filled with chivalric pastimes rather than tavern favourites, and Ponocrates plays alongside Gargantua, describing how each activity will play its part in the giant's development. Inspite of their improving nature, the games in chapters 23 and 24 are undertaken with no less glee than those in chapter 22.[468]

From Rabelais's account we learn that game-playing was not automatically viewed as negative in the sixteenth century. If undertaken in the correct manner, play had much to recommend it. The pedagogical texts elaborate upon this and suggest a number of ways in which *Children's Games* might be measured according to contemporary standards. Within the texts discussions on play fall into three distinct categories, namely: the appropriate time and place for games; the type of games children should play; and the manner or style in which children should play. My analysis of *Children's Games* will broadly follow these trajectories. Depictions of schoolchildren are relatively rare in the

sixteenth century. However, a small number of paintings and prints from the period, including two of Bruegel's own print designs, *The Ass in School* (1556) and *Temperantia* (1560) do picture students and a teacher, and these can be used in conjunction with the texts to develop a visual understanding of the period's ideals.

The first important point to note is that the games in the treatises and colloquies all take place within the context of organised learning, usually a school. Quintilian's advice that boys should not be driven too hard to study, but allowed some respite 'lest they should begin to hate work before they begin to love it' loomed large in the minds of the humanist educators, and games were woven into the school curriculum to both allure children to learn and to provide respite from serious studies.[469] This advice was adopted wholeheartedly by Ponocrates when prescribing Gargantua's humanistic regime. After purging the young giant with medicaments to scour out 'all of the perverse habits of his brain', Ponocrates puts Gargantua on a regime which ensures that he spends all of his time 'in letters and honourable learning', wasting not a single hour of the day.[470] Rising at four in the morning, the young pupil is read passages from Scripture whilst he performs his ablutions and must recite lessons learned the day before whilst dressing. Mealtimes provide an opportunity to discuss ancient philosophy, and even bedtime is used to contemplate the positions of the stars. Despite this packed schedule, time is allotted for games at several points throughout the day. After studying for three hours in the morning, ball games are played for a mid-morning break, wherein the company are described as 'gallantly exercising their bodies as they had their minds.'[471] Following three further hours of afternoon study, Gargantua concentrates on mastering the arts of

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[468] Mehl, 1990, p. 336.

[469] Quintillian, *Institutio oratoria*, 1.1.20. Both Erasmus and Ascham argued forcefully that it was the duty of parents and schoolmasters to 'allure' rather than compel children to learn. *CWE*, vol. 40, *Colloquies*, 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*'. In *The Scholemaster* Ascham quotes Plato: 'No learning ought to be learned with bondage, for bodily labours wrought by compulsion hurt not the body, but any learning learned by compulsion tarrieth not long in the mind' and Socrates: 'Bring not up your children in learning by compulsion and fear, but by playing and pleasure.' Ryan, 1967, p. 32. Quintilian's advice was adopted more prosaically by Vives and Elyot, who stressed the importance of regular respite from study. See Watson, 1913, p. 121 and Lehmberg, 1962, p. 59.

[470] Rabelais / Frame, 1991, p. 55.

[471] Ibid., p. 56.

chivalry. After supper, Gargantua is encouraged to undertake a range of playful activities, which include singing, playing musical instruments, performing tricks with cards, dice and goblets, and socialising. The careful balance of Gargantua's daily regime reflects the concern that games should not obstruct more serious studies.

In Erasmus's colloquy 'The Whole Duty of Youth' a model student, Gaspar, describes a similarly virtuous daily routine.[472] Rising early, the sixteen-year-old student works diligently, is respectful of his elders and faithful to Christ. But even Gaspar affords himself some time off after lunch for games before settling down to afternoon lessons:

'After grace is said, I relax, if I have nothing else to do, by playing some wholesome game with companions until it's time to return from play to school.'[473]

Gaspar's caveat 'if I have nothing else to do' is important here, as it illustrates a common emphasis in the period that the time for play was *only* when the mind or body had become wearied from more serious tasks. Just as Gargantua and Gaspar's games follow their studies, Cordier's colloquies repeatedly stage encounters between masters and pupils where children seek permission to play and are made to recite lessons or complete tasks before it is granted.[474] This attitude is reflected in school documents. A formulation for the Collège de la Trinité in Lyon, written around 1540 by Barthélémy Aneau, set aside three hours for games every Thursday afternoon.[475] The humanistic curriculum was all about balance: body and soul both needed to be nurtured, but one should not eclipse the other.

At first glance, *Children's Games* appears to fail in striking the recommended balance between labour and leisure. As countless commentators have noted, the square is 'over-run' with playing children and there is very little evidence of more studious tasks being undertaken. However, it is worth taking some time to examine the architecture of Bruegel's space more closely before dismissing the painting as entirely

[472] *CWE*, vol. 39, *Colloquies*, 'The Whole Duty of Youth', pp. 88-99.
[473] Ibid., p. 87.
[474] Corderius, 1636. Examples from Book I include dialogues 8, 54, 55, 57 and 58.
[475] Mehl, 1990, p. 337.

lacking an educational context. As outlined in my introduction, a number of details in *Children's Games* connote the city of Antwerp, but the exact square in which the children play is not a recognisable geographical space.[476] The square is bordered by two distinctive buildings, both of which are unique in Bruegel's painted oeuvre. At the back of the square looms a grand building of yellow stone with large windows, a loggia, a castellated roof and a wooden entrance porch. A second building occupies the lower left foreground of the painting and is of more domestic proportions. This building is built of red brick and is two storeys high, with wide timber-clad apertures in place of windows and a grassed area to the rear bordered by a red fence. Neither of these buildings can be found in Antwerp today, and previous commentators have been unable to attribute a definitive purpose to either structure. This is not helped by the fact that in both cases the architecture of the buildings extends beyond the boundaries of the panel, making it difficult to get a sense of what the whole structures would have looked like. The building in the left foreground has been called a 'house' and a 'disused shed'.[477] The larger building at the back of the square has most often been described as an 'official' or 'civic' building on account of its scale, its central position and its architectural details, which resemble those found on town halls and guild houses throughout the Netherlands.[478]

There is an alternative to these interpretations; one or even both of the buildings might be schools. It is important to acknowledge from the outset the limits of demonstrating this theory. As already noted, there are very few visual representations of schoolchildren surviving from the sixteenth century, and virtually no images of schoolhouses.[479] Bruegel's design for the print *Temperantia* (Temperance) from the *Seven Virtues* series is dated the same year as *Children's Games* and features a schoolmaster and a group of

[476] For a discussion of the Antwerp landmarks in the painting see pages 6-8.
[477] Portmann describes the building as 'not an ordinary human habitation but a disused shed', Portmann, 1964. Stechow describes it as a house. Stechow, 1955.
[478] Hindman, 1981, p. 454. Bruegel's building is similar to the original Antwerp town hall as it appeared in a painting by Gillis Mostaert before its modernization in 1561 by Cornelius Floris (Mostaert, *Passion Play in the Antwerp Town Square*, Antwerp, Museum voor Schonen Kunsten. For an image see Hindman, fig. 8). Very similar windows appear on the town hall in the Grande-Place, Brussels.
[479] Surveys of architecture in the Netherlands such as Obreen et Van der Linden, 1912; Leurs, 1946; Laurent, 1928 and Vlieghe, 1998 include no images of schoolhouses or places of higher learning among the civic buildings.

exemplary pupils in the foreground (Fig. 91).[480] This part of the image represents Grammar and includes a number of pedagogical details – the pupils all study their books, the text of an *ABC* can be clearly read, one of the pupils sits on a low stool and the schoolmaster has a ferule in his hand and a quill, ink-pot and switch attached to his belt. But the lesson takes place in an abstract, open space and therefore does not inform us about schoolroom architecture. Other sixteenth-century images of schoolrooms tend to picture events from the inside, with the master and pupils at work, rather than from the outside. Early sixteenth-century examples include a scene in the Hours of Marie Chantault (Fig. 92). Here two schoolmasters are pictured; one checks the pupils' work and the other wields a switch. The schoolroom appears to be a grand space with a tiled floor, arched window, stone pillars and a vaulted ceiling (Fig. 91). The two sides of the *Signboard for a Schoolmaster* present the inside of another early sixteenth-century schoolroom. One side, painted by Hans Holbein the Younger, shows adult pupils being taught to write (Fig. 93a) while on the other side Ambrosius Holbein has painted younger pupils at work with a schoolmaster and schoolmistress (Fig. 93b). On both sides the lessons take place in large rooms wooden floors and paned windows.

In contrast to these depictions, the buildings in *Children's Games* are pictured from the outside. From this perspective there is little which immediately links either building to learning – no discarded schoolbooks can be seen amid the debris on the floor and no watchful schoolmaster is present. Although the purpose of the buildings in *Children's Games* is somewhat ambiguous, they could be interpreted as representing two extremes of a range of schooling options which were available to children in Antwerp at the time.

The rough, barn-like structure in the lower left foreground resembles the peasant schoolrooms which were pictured by a number of seventeenth-century artists including Adriaen van Ostade, Jan Steen and Adriaen Brouwer. Satirical 'unruly schoolroom' scenes developed into a genre in their own right during the seventeenth century and

[480] Engraved by Philips Galle and published by Hieronymous Cock, the original pen and ink design for *Temperantia* is signed at lower left *BRVEGEL* and dated on the board at lower right *1560*. It is now in the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Rotterdam MB 331. Orenstein, 2001, cat. no's 76 and 77.

scholars recognise that these later paintings are indebted to Bruegel's sixteenth-century print *The Ass in School* (Fig. 94). Engraved by Pieter van der Heyden in 1557 and issued by Hieronymous Cock, Bruegel's original pen and ink drawing for *The Ass in School* still survives.[481] We are left in no doubt of the pedagogical nature of this image. An ass is just one of the pupils at a school in which the schoolmaster relies on corporal punishment to maintain his hold on the unruly class. The inscription in the lower margin, present in both the original drawing and the engraving, indicates that this curious image is primarily a satire on those with pretensions to learning. It states:

'Although the ass goes to school in order to learn, if it is an ass, it will not return a horse'.[482]

In Bruegel's design for this print the master and his pupils are seated outside a barn-like building. An ass appears at a wide window to the right, and through the doorway on the left we spy the rough interior of the building, with a high shelf, baskets hung on hooks and an earthenware jug. The style of this building closely resembles that of the building in the lower left of *Children's Games*.

Like the building in *The Ass in School*, the doorway of the barn-like building in *Children's Games* is wide and framed by a rough beam. The window at which the ass appears is bare of glass or shutters and thus resembles the one found on the upper storey of the building in *Children's Games*. This rudimentary architecture in continued in the unruly schoolrooms of the seventeenth century, such as Adriaen Van Ostade's *School* (Fig. 95).[483] Once again, these schoolrooms are exclusively depicted from the inside, but it is not difficult to get an impression of the kinds of buildings in which the lessons take place. In

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[481] Drawing signed and dated lower left '*bruegehl.1.556*'. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett KdZ II 641. Orenstein, 2001, cat. no's 40 and 41.

[482] *Al reyst den esele ter scholen om leeren – Ist eenen esele. Hy en sal gheen peert weder keeren.* Ibid., cat. no. 40. The message is repeated in both Flemish and Latin in the lower margin of the engraving. The wording of the Latin inscription represents a slight variation by mentioning Paris, a centre of learning that would have been familiar to European humanists: *PARISIOS STOLIDVM SI QVIS TRANSMITTAT ASELLVM. SI HIC EST ASINVS NON ERIT ILLIC EQVVS. / If you send a stupid ass to Paris, if it is an ass here, it will not be a horse there.*

[483] *School* (1662), Louvre, Cliché des Musees Nationaux, Paris. Durantini, 1983, pp. 134-135. Van Ostade produced at least fifteen school scenes, and the majority are in private collections. Hofstede de Groot,

almost all of the examples the schoolrooms are half-timbered and barn-like and the wild, unruly pupils are equated with farmyard beasts. Van Ostade's schoolrooms clearly have an upper level, like the building in the lower left of *Children's Games*: in the Louvre's version of Van Ostade's *School* a boy descends the stairs with a basket on his back, while in the *School* now in Warsaw a boy is pictured climbing a ladder to an upper level.[484] The interiors are all furnished in a similarly rudimentary manner. School interiors now attributed to followers of Adriaen Brouwer depict children and their teachers seated on low wooden benches which resemble the one visible in the 'altargame' seen through the doorway in *Children's Games*.[485] In Jan Steen's large painting *A School for Boys and Girls* (Fig. 96) several of the details mimic aspects of *Children's Games*. Like the ground in Bruegel's panel the cracked floortiles of Steen's schoolroom are strewn with debris; crumpled sheets of paper, half-eaten vegetables, quill shavings and earthenware pots and jugs. Continuing the humble tone everyday objects are appropriated for classroom furniture; one boy sits on a barrel.

These crowded, satirical classroom scenes had a strong basis in reality. Education was an important priority in the newly-formed Dutch Republic of the seventeenth century and Dutch children were the most literate in Europe. Figures from Amsterdam in 1650 suggest that around 70% of men and 50% of women could write – an unprecedented number for the period.[486] By the middle of the seventeenth century there was a school offering primary education within walking distance of every child in the Dutch Republic, but often these schools were very basic. The ages of the children in Steen's picture and the poor state of their clothing suggest that this is a vernacular primary school of the most basic kind. The number of pupils Steen depicts is not exaggerated - class sizes in these types of schools were often upwards of a hundred pupils, with a wide range of ages and a mixture of both boys and girls. The large class sizes necessitated self-study. Children would work independently, learning to read from horn books (a printed page containing the alphabet, numbers and the Lord's prayer, which

1907-28. Other artists to depict this subject included Barent Molenaer, Egbert van Heemskerck and Isaac van Ostade. Durantini 1983, chapter 2.

[484] Adriaen Van Ostade, *School*, Warsaw, Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie.

[485] For images see Durantini, 1983, pp. 131-132.

was pasted to wood, covered with a transparent sheet of horn to keep it clean, and then attached to the child's waist) and then move on to learning to write by copying simple prayers or passages from the Bible. When a pupil had finished their exercises, they would go up individually to the master's desk and present or recite their lessons. Given the large number of pupils in his care, the schoolmaster was as much a disciplinarian as a teacher, and hence is frequently pictured with a rod or ferule as a means of maintaining order.[487]

At age twelve (or sooner if the pupil was bright) a child could either leave school to enter the workplace (perhaps to be apprenticed under a guild), continue their education in a Latin school with the prospect of continuing to university, or take advanced lessons in languages and arithmetic at a free school.[488] This stage of education may be represented in *Children's Games* by the grand building at the back of the square. Large, airy and Italianate, the architecture of this building embodies the ideals of the humanist educators. Even the loggia to the left of the building corresponds to Vives's advice on the construction of a porch or wide hall for boys to 'recreate' themselves in rainy weather.[489] By the middle of the sixteenth century Antwerp possessed five Latin schools. The first of Antwerp's Latin schools was the *papenschool*, attached to the Church of Our Lady. Run by Rumoldus Verdonck (1541-1620), this was highly successful; its pupils included Peter Paul Rubens and Balthasar Moretus. In 1521 three new Latin schools were set up attached to the parish churches of St Walburgis, St Joris and St Jacobs (at 73 Lange Nieuwstraat). A fifth was added in 1529, connected to the new parish church of St Andries. [490] I have been unable to find any images which document the architectural style of these buildings. However, the Latin school at Nijmegen was contructed in 1544-5 and is still standing today (97). Although the architecture of the school is not precisely analogous with that of the building at

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[486] Frijoff and Spies, 1999 / 2004, vol. I.

[487] In 1682 Dutch corporal punishment was regulated and teachers instructed to exchange physical punishment for other methods, such as keeping children after hours. Schoolteachers were badly paid and had to work long hours (sometimes from 6am -7pm in the summer months). While obviously there were some dedicated teachers, the profession often attracted undesirable candidates, and contemporary documents suggest that schoolmasters were often accused of everything from failing to offer religious instruction to drinking and visiting brothels.

[488] Frijhoff and Spies. 1999 / 2004, p. 238.

[489] Vives / Watson, 1913, p. 122.

[490] Marnef, 1996; Voet, 1973, p. 400.

the back of the square in *Children's Games* both structures convey a sense of civic grandeur which befits the purpose of a Latin school.

A second detail in the painting which is suggestive of a satirical, educational context is the owl perched by the doorway of the building in the lower left (Fig. 98). Owls had been associated with learning since ancient times, when the owl was the attribute of the Greek goddess of wisdom, Athena, and her Roman counterpart, Minerva. Although this symbolism declined during the medieval period, evidence suggests that it was revived during the Renaissance. Sources contemporaneous to *Children's Games* which associate owls with wisdom include Andrea Alciati's *Emblematum liber* (1550) where a wise owl illustrates the motto 'Prudent rather than Loquacious' and is accompanied by the verse:

"The owl presides over Cecrops' Athens,
Wise owl, distinguished among the birds,
Rightly dedicated to the armour-bearing Minerva,
Which place the garrulous crow yielded it."[491]

Gabriel Rollenhagen's emblem 'Through Study and Vigilance', in his *Nucleus Emblematum Selectissimorum* (Arnhem, 1611) showed an owl on a book of music accompanied by the verse 'One eager zealously to learn the writings of wisdom / Will deservedly acquire the title of learned', suggesting that the association between owls and wisdom continued into the first decades of the seventeenth century.[492] However, this was not the only way in which owls were used. At times the owl's wisdom was presented ironically, by pairing, for example, an owl with a fool.[493] In other examples, owls held more straightforwardly negative associations. The nocturnal habits of the owl, and its inability to see during the day, led to the bird being associated with everything from drunkenness and debauchery to stupidity, spiritual blindness and witchcraft.[494]

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[491] *'The owl presides over Cecrops' Athens, Wise owl, distinguished among the birds, Rightly dedicated to the armour-bearing Minerva, Which place the garrulous crow yielded it.'* Alciati, *Emblemata liber*, no. 19, *PRUDENS MAGIS QUAM LOQUAX*.

[492] Paszkiewicz, 1982, pp. 57-58.

[493] In Bartolomaeus Maton's *A Fool with an Owl* (private collection, Stuttgart) an owl perches on the shoulder of a grimacing man who holds a piece of paper inscribed with the verse: *Wijse lui siet tot / dats raer / Eeen geck een uuyl / een klughtich paer / Wise people, look, this is rare / A fool, an owl, a ridiculous pair.* Slive, 1963, fig. 13.

[494] The birds in Bosch's drawing *Owls in a Tree* are commonly interpreted as symbols of sin. Rosenberg, 1961. Valeriano's *Hieroglypia* (1556) listed foolishness among the ideas the owl can signify, and La

Bruegel's oeuvre offers a typically diverse range of owl symbolism, which frequently seems to be related to antecedents in images by Bosch. Owls appear above lustful couples in Bruegel's *Desidia* (Sloth) and *Patientia* (Patience); here the artist may be following Bosch, who placed an owl above love-making couples in *The Hay Wagon*, *The Wanderer* and the *Lover's Dream*. [495] An owl is an attribute of one of the fools in the foreground of Bruegel's *Feast of Fools* print, and an owl is again associated with folly through its presence in the left of a print by Pieter van der Heyden after Bruegel of *The Stone Operation*. Again, Bruegel may be following Bosch's earlier depiction of the theme, which also included a watchful owl. In other prints by Bruegel owls seem to be associated with sin and gluttony. In *Gula* (Gluttony) an owl is perched atop a windmill, and in the *Last Judgement* a hybrid owl with a nest of smaller owls on its back is one of several other-worldly creatures who walk the earth.

While the owl in *Children's Games* could refer to any one of these aspects, the facet of owl symbolism most pertinent to ascribing an educational context to the painting is the link made between owls and schoolrooms in seventeenth-century images. Perched in the upper left corner of Pieter de Bloot's *Raucous School* we find an owl (Fig. 99). A schoolmaster enters the schoolroom by the door, but the scene suggests that in his absence chaos has ensued. A large boy wields a broom threateningly at the other pupils, who rush to hide under an upturned bench. Books, food and a switch lie discarded on the floor, and, as in *Children's Games,* a potty is prominently placed in the foreground. In a version of Adriaen Van Ostade's *School* now in Warsaw an owl again presides over the unruly schoolroom. Perched on the back of the schoolmaster's chair, the bird's presence may best be understood as ironic. A schoolmaster was supposed to espouse wisdom and

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Perrière's *Morosophie* (1553) identifies the owl's poor eyesight with the weakness of human spirit. The owl on the arm of the old woman in Frans Hals' *Malle Babbe* may symbolise drunkenness, stupidity, witchcraft, or several vices at once. Slive, 1963. The idea that an owl would stumble about when caught in the daylight is thought to be the basis of the Dutch proverb '*Hij is zoo beschonken al seen uil / he is as drunk as an owl*' and in images such as Jan Steen's *After the Drinking Bout* and Frans van Mieris' *Wine is a Mocker*. The complexity of owl symbolism may be summed up by the treatment of owls in César Ripa's *Iconologia*. On one page an owl and a book are the attributes of wise counsel (*Consiglio)*; on another the owl is an attribute of the vulgar and common people (*Vulgo, overo ignobilita*), and in Boudouin's French edition of the *Iconologie* (1644) the owl is also associated with superstition. Ripa, 1976, p. 170.

[495] In *Sloth* and *Patience* owls are positioned above love-making couples.

authority, but in this image the master's slumped posture suggest that he is failing to do so. A similarly ironic presentation of an owl and schoolmaster can be found in Jan Steen's *A School for Boys and Girls* (Fig. 96). In the right foreground of the painting an owl is perched beside a lamp. The owl's position in Steen's painting is similar to that of the owl in *Children's Games*. Both birds are in the foreground but also in shadow and therefore visible only to the careful viewer (in Steen's painting the shadow is cast by a cupboard, in Bruegel's the shadow is the result of a wooden porch).

In *A School for Boys and Girls* a boy stands below the owl and reaches up to it with a pair of glasses. The trio that Steen presents of owl, lamp, and spectacles have been understood as representing the popular Dutch proverb 'What use are glasses or a light if the owl refuses to see?'[496] The proverb befits the entire image, providing an appropriate gloss on a scene in which few children concentrate on their books. In this proverb the owl becomes the subject of mockery; ridiculed for its inability to see in the daylight despite the attributes of candle and glasses. No doubt the irony that the beast mocked was a 'wise owl' contributed to the effectiveness of this proverb in the context of an unruly schoolroom. In the Steen painting the owl is linked to the distracted schoolmaster through the fact that both wear or are being offered glasses – the suggestion being that even with these aids both will be 'short-sighted'. This is very similar to the message peddled by Bruegel in *The Ass in School*, the caption of which states that although the ass goes to school to learn, it will not return a horse. In contrast to Steen's painting, which uses a wise owl to impart the ironic message, the ass in Bruegel's print is a proverbial animal long associated with stupidity and folly.

Standing on its hind legs, with its front legs hooked over the window ledge, the pose of Bruegel's ass resembles depictions of the beast found in earlier French images (Fig. 100 and 101). These images, which may originally have been intended for wider circulation, can now be found in two luxurious manuscripts which illustrate the moralising verses of

[496] An early representation of the owl with candle and glasses is Erhard Schön's woodcut of 1540. Here the legend underneath the woodcut links the owl's blindness with evil: *Who does evil / hates light / and never seeks light / must be prepared for punishment*. Paszkiewicz, 1982. The proverb occurs in the background of

the poet Henri Baude.[497] In both examples an ass stands at an open window and addresses a group of beasts. The event is observed from outside by a fox, whose positioning might be compared to the mysterious figure of a woman who looks through the second window at the back of Bruegel's print. The presence of Baude's text in the French images goes some way towards explaining their meaning. The emblematic illustrations are generally understood to present satirical warnings on the pitfalls of courtly life. In these two examples, ignorant subjects (the beasts) are duped by a ridiculous sovereign (the ass). The text suggests that the fox plays the role of wise commentator; restaging the central action he has caught a stupid goose.[498] While Bruegel's print imparts a slightly different message, its composition may have been influenced by the way in which these earlier images stage foolish asses and humble subjects. By positioning the ass at the window, as in the Baude images, Bruegel ensures that he does not escape the viewer's attention. The way in which the ass stands on its hind legs also suggests pretensions to greatness which are applicable to both scenarios. The pretensions of Bruegel's ass are confirmed by its attributes of a sheet of music, eye-glasses and a candle. Just as in Steen's *School for Boys and Girls*, the inclusion of these objects is ironic: even with their help the ass will be unable to utter anything but its characteristic braying sound. The metaphor of an 'unteachable' student is extended by beastly children who surround the schoolmaster. Armed with hornbooks and *ABC*'s, these children are miniature adults with tonsured heads. Pulling faces, exposing and contorting themselves and hiding under hats, their actions recall a variety of contemporary proverbs with negative associations.[499]

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several other works by Steen, including *Twelfth Night* (Royal Collection) and *The Drunken Couple* (Rijksmuseum).

[497] Of eight manuscripts which feature Baude's verses, three are illustrated. The depictions of the asses can be found in Musée Condé de Chantilly, ms. 509, folio 2; Bibliothèque Nationale ms.fr.22461, folio 45 and Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal ms. 5066, f. 45. That the figures were intended for wider circulation is suggested by the title of Baude's verses - *Dictz Moraulx pour faire tapisserie* - and by the fact that wall paintings illustrating some of the figures have been found in the château de Busset. Regond, 1979; Lemaitre, 1988; Scoumanne, 1959.

[498] Vandenbroeck, 1988.

[499] Like Bruegel's *Big Fish Eat Little Fish*, *The Ass in School* takes a common proverb as an over-arching theme, but weaves many other related proverbs into its the illustration. The two figures trapped by another under a large hat may represent the proverb 'a meek fool is easily caught under a large hat', Barnouw, 1947. The peacock feather in the hat may indicate pride or envy. Kline, 1963. The numerous empty baskets, pots and dried twigs have been seen as symbols of fruitlessness or worthlessness. The

The architecture of the buildings in *Children's Games* suggests that the children's play may deserve to be understood within the context of contemporary debates about education. While *Children's Games* does not present an obvious unruly schoolroom in manner of *The Ass in School* and the paintings by Steen and Van Ostade, it is possible that Bruegel's contemporaries would have recognised the two main buildings in the painting as representative of different kinds of schoolhouse, perhaps even of antithetical educational methods. The placement of the owl in the foreground of the painting further supports this idea. Looking through the window on the wall to the right of the owl, we note that the unsuspecting bird is being preyed upon by a boy with a pop-gun. The boy hides on the other side of the wall and takes aim at the owl, making him visible to the viewer but not to the bird. The inclusion of the owl in the foreground is evidence that *Children's Games* should be understood in relation to contemporary debates about learning. Whether contemporary viewers would have understood the owl metaphorically, as an emblem of learning, or satirically, as in the Steen painting is difficult to determine. However, the boy with the pop-gun seems deliberately posed to caution against taking the appearance of the bird (and perhaps the painting as a whole) too seriously.

If the children in Bruegel's panel have just spilled out from the schoolhouses, then further details in the staging of the games suggest that their play would have been acceptable to sixteenth-century audiences. In chapter 1 I concluded that the variety of popular festive traditions referenced in *Children's Games* indicate that the work presents an amalgamation of a number of different festivals. It is likely that, like *Carnival and Lent*, these events would have been marked by public holidays - days when the normal routine and hierarchies of society were suspended, and play and games were permitted for all. During the later Middle Ages the most popular day of the week for games was Sunday; half days and holidays provided a similar opportunity for play.[500] In addition to these events, the school colloquies are filled with examples of children requesting extra

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beehive, usually a symbol of industry, has in this image been inverted – perhaps indicating that it should be interpreted paradoxically.

time off to play. Fine weather is frequently used as a justification by the children, reflecting the conditions depicted in *Children's Games*. While games were encouraged all year round, physical play peaked during the summer months. This was no doubt due to a combination of a greater number of feast days and holidays and more inclement weather. Erasmus's colloquy *De lusu* opens with a boy declaring that: 'Inclination, the weather, and the season have long been inviting us to play,' and the boys quickly hatch a plan to convince the Master to let them.[501] A fifteenth-century school book suggests that in England (and surely in France and the Netherlands too) people were as anxious to 'make the most' of fine weather as they are today:

'The Maister shulde do us all a great pleasur today yf he wolde gyve us leve to go make merry this afternone while the weder is so fair, for it is doutefull yf hereafter the wolde be so great a temperatnes of weder.'[502]

The weather in Bruegel's panel is certainly the sort that would call children to play. The trees are in full leaf and the sky is light, suggesting that it is summer. The actions of those children nearest the stream indicate that it is a warm day. A child swims with water wings in the stream while another eagerly disrobes on the bank. Two more linger half in and half out of the water and appear to be lost in conversation. One is almost hidden, standing up to his shoulders in the water. The other sits naked on the bank, dangling his legs in. The comfortable poses of both boys suggest that the day is hot, and that the river is a cool and pleasant place to chat.

When fine weather ensued, the humanists recommended outdoor play, and the best location for this was considered to be the suburbs or countryside adjacent to the city. In *The Gouernour* Elyot describes how the Romans set aside a large field outside of the city where the youth could exercise. Called the *Campus Martinus*, the field adjoined the river Tiber, where men and children could refresh themselves after their labours and also learn to swim. A suburban location for games was also recommended by Mulcaster. In his *Positions* (1581) he suggested that men of wealth should be encouraged to relocate

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[500] Mehl, 1990, pp. 236-240.
[501] *CWE*, vol. 39, *Colloquies*, 'Sport'.

grammar schools to the suburbs so that boys would have fresh air and safe places to play.[503] Gargantua's humanist education takes place within his lodgings in the city of Paris, where he can hear public lectures and observe all the tradesmen at work. But once a month Ponocrates selects a 'bright serene day' and they head out of town and into the countryside. Time in the countryside offers a chance to relax, and is spent:

'having the most fun they could think of, mocking, jesting, drinking their fill, playing, singing, dancing, rolling about in some lovely meadow, robbing sparrows' nests, fishing for frogs or crayfish.'[504]

We have seen how during the sixteenth century affluent urbanites retreated to the countryside surrounding the city on Sundays and holidays, and within this social framework it is hardly surprising that it was also seen as a desirable place for children to visit. Although the majority of figures in *Children's Games* are located in and around the central square and receding street, the proximity of the stream and meadow beyond recall Elyot's description of the *Campus Martinus*. It is significant that this quarter of idyllic countryside is included in the image. The patch of green influences our interpretation of the whole panel; it demonstrates that the children are not trapped or contained but are free to wander and explore a variety of different environments, and surely this staging would have been met with approval by the humanists.

Supervision was another aspect of children's play tackled in the colloquies. The schoolmaster in *De lusu* permits the boys to play only if they are together, in the fields, and return before sunset. The necessity for children to stay together during playtime occurs again in the re-foundation of Canterbury Cathedral and Grammar School, dating from 1541.[505] The view that *Children's Games* presents a town 'made over to children' has become virtually canonical, although it is quite incorrect.[506] Close inspection reveals that

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[502] Ibid., p. 83.
[503] Mulcaster / De Molen, 1991.
[504] Rabelais / Frame, 1991, pp. 60-61.
[505] Printed in Leach, 1911, p. 469. 'When leave to play is given they shall play and sport together, lest, wandering about here and there, they incur some loss of character, and wanting to do other things their minds gradually become estranged from learning…'
[506] Friedländer described how 'This is a town of children. No grown-up is to be seen, not a single teacher or educator.' Friedländer, 1976, vol. 14, p. 22.

adults are indeed present in Bruegel's scene, and in several examples they play an important part in supervising or facilitating the games. Dress can give us some clues to the presence of adults. Up until the age of about five or six, children of both sexes wore long dresses. Younger children also often wore aprons with lead strings attached. After this girls typically adopted the dresses with collars of adults, while boys were 'breeched' and adopted their adult costume of a short jacket with trousers. [507] Bruegel's children wear a variety of clothing, suggesting that they range in age from toddlers to adolescents. The youngest figures can be identified by their small physiques and their costume of long dresses, aprons and lead strings. They include the girl calling into a barrel (24) and the girl being lifted (19). At the other end of the spectrum we find a significant number of larger players who wear adult clothes. The boys playing leap-frog (36), bucca (28) and mumblety-peg (30) all wear the clothes of men and the girls playing knucklebones are attired as young women. But the fact that these figures partake fully in play suggests that they are not yet adults.

The adults in Bruegel's composition are best identified not by their clothes or their size, but by the role that they play in the games. At least six figures in the panorama wear adult clothes and play 'supporting' roles in the games. These include the woman who shepherds the bridal party forward (44), the woman who throws a blue cloak over the group of children by the loggia (55), the man and woman who 'swing' the little girl in the foreground (19), the woman who throws water on the fighting boys (73) and the man who carries a child on his shoulders in the street to the right (80). Aside from their clothing, the adult status of these figures is convincingly conveyed by the fact that they do not partake in the games directly but play nurturing, facilitating or chastising roles.[508] Of course it is possible that some of the figures are older siblings, but the gentleness of their expressions and gestures, particularly in the case of the pair swinging the little girl, intimate that they are parents. The woman shepherding the bridal party may even be a grandparent, as her face looks lined and grey wisps of hair peep from under her bonnet (Fig. 63).

[507] See Saskia Kuus's essay on children's costumes in Bedaux and Ekkart (ed.), 2000 and Hindman, 1981, p. 449.

We have established that the staging of Bruegel's panel, with its summery weather, outdoor setting and adult involvement, reflects ideals espoused in the school colloquies. It is now time to turn to the games themselves and consider what and how the children play. The value that the humanist educators attached to play extended beyond the notion that games provided a fitting respite from more serious studies. Games were encouraged because they developed children's bodies, and more broadly, play and leisure time were recognised as providing a host of new learning experiences. The humanistic interest in the physical benefits of games and sport drew on both the chivalric traditions of the Middle Ages and on the wisdom of the Ancient philosophers. These traditions were to an extent united in Elyot's *The Governor*, where the activities recommended closely resemble the chivalric training undertaken by Gargantua. Both Elyot and Rabelais endorse their programmes of exercise with examples drawn from Classical antiquity. Elyot describes how Achilles trained his warriors in running and gained the name swift-foot Achilles, how Julius Caesar's ability to swim saved his life at the battle of Alexandria, and how Alexander's horsemanship was his greatest weapon.[509] Gargantua's chivalric training is similarly framed; he swims across the Seine holding a book high without wetting it, 'like Julius Caesar used to', climbs trees 'like another Milo' and 'shoots the popinjay like the Parthians.'[510] A similar list of chivalric pastimes appears in Robert Crowley's *Voice of the Last Trumpet* (London, 1550).[511] According to 'The Scholars Lesson', fishing, fowling, hunting, hawking, music making, archery, bowling, casting the bar, tennis and other field sports 'hurt thy study nought at al', providing they are practised in moderation.

Bruegel's children engage in many of the physical activities described in these texts, including swimming (62), tree climbing (61), running up slopes (59 and 72) and wrestling (73). However, these are hardly realised with the mastery of classical warriors. As if to demonstrate his child-like ineptitude, the boy swimming in the river is clearly

[508] Several of these parental figures are discussed in Snow, 2001, pp. 141-151.
[509] Lehmberg, 1962, Book I, 17, pp. 60-64.
[510] Rabelais / Frame, 1991, pp. 55-60.
[511] Cowper, 1872, p. 73.

wearing two bladders as water wings, and the boy climbing the tree does not 'swing from its branches like another Milo', but clings on for dear life, his feet barely off the ground. While the manner in which the children undertake their activities is far removed from the exaggerated giant-strength of Gargantua or the classical warriors cited by Elyot, Bruegel's children still use play to test and stretch themselves physically. The centre of the panel is virtually given over to the most physical kinds of play. Faces flushed with exertion, boys engage in a tug-of-war (37), leapfrog (36), climbing on barrels (25) and 'running the gauntlet' (38). Elsewhere children play chivalric games of their own invention: the boys riding a barrel (25), the couple joust with windmills (57) and the girl balancing a broom on her hand (51) all offer prosaic versions of chivalric activities. These types of games are no doubt ethnographically accurate. Nicholas Orme has highlighted how children's social rank did not necessarily limit their culture. [512] While there is less evidence of the games played by poorer children, their repertoire of games was not necessarily narrower. Children in the lower ranks of society benefited from greater freedom to roam, and had access to the resources of the streets and workshops. These factors are suggested by Bruegel's image. The children roam freely, apparently unbound by rules or regulations. None of their toys are elaborate, but their games are highly inventive. They make toys or games out of their clothes, parts of buildings, or from the everyday objects and debris which are lying around. Examples include the girl balancing a broom on her hand (51), the boys hanging from a beam in front of her (50), the two boys rocking an empty barrel (25), the little girl stirring a pile of excrement with a stick (20), the girls twirling around and landing with their skirts inflated (60) and the boy running up a cellar door (72). The children's imaginative use of everyday objects stands as testament to the universality of the will to play, regardless of social status.

In addition to building physical strength, games were recognised as a useful ally by humanist tutors seeking to maximise the learning process. Play represented an opportunity for positive learning, whatever the age of the student. For this reason it was rarely allowed to be empty or mindless, and the playground was viewed as a legitimate

[512] Orme, 1995, p. 87.

extension of the classroom. Thus Ponocrates brings Gargantua dice and cards every day after lunch not to play, but to learn a thousand little tricks and novel inventions, which come out of arithmetic.[513] Vives stated in the *De causis* that 'The mind knows not how to rest' and playground games provided an ideal opportunity for pupils to practice their Latin or Greek.[514] Arguing that boys would speak Latin more willingly and freely when they were playing, Vives recommended incorporating Latin into the scoring of a game by penalising any boy who speaks in his native tongue.[515] Evidence that these ideas permeated schools is suggested by the re-foundation of Canterbury Cathedral and Grammar School, which states:

'whatever they are doing in earnest or in play they shall never use any language but Latin or Greek'.[516]

Bruegel's painting is of course mute, but despite this it is hard to believe that the children are reciting Latin as they tussle. The emphasis on an ethnographically accurate depiction of regional games is far more suggestive of the kinds of vernacular, regional traditions expressed in Gargantua's first game-list. Yet in a broader sense, the figures in *Children's Games* follow the advice of the humanist educators and the actions of Gargantua in subsequent chapters by observing, exploring and mimicking the world around them. When it is raining Gargantua and Ponocrates tour the town and visit tradesmen; they see how metals are drawn and artillery cast; watch goldsmiths, alchemists and coin minters at work; or visit the workshops of weavers, velvet-makers, printers and dyers.[517] These activities find their equal in the little girl 'playing' at making paint pigment in the extreme right of *Children's Games* - the motif has been recognised as presenting a play on both Bruegel's own artistry and on the industry of Antwerp.[518] Elsewhere, children mimic Gargantua's quasi-scientific exploration of the wider world. While Gargantua heads outdoors to grassy places to botanise and perform experiments such as separating water from diluted wine, the children in Bruegel's panorama examine

[513] Rabelais / Frame, 1991, p. 56.
[514] Vives / Watson, 1913.
[515] Ibid., p. 121.
[516] Leach, 1911, p. 469.
[517] Rabelais / Frame, 1991, p. 60.

birds (11) and attempt to catch May bugs (33). In the middle foreground a lone girl calls curiously into the bung hole of a barrel (24), apparently testing the depth and properties of the barrel in relation to the sound of her own voice.[519] Even the few scatological elements of the panel are framed in a scientific manner. As we have seen, Bruegel's peeing girl is removed from the male *puer mingens* who mischievously urinate in manuscript marginalia. Bruegel's girl is engaged in a private act – her head is bent down as she observes her own bodily function.[520] In the foreground, a more blatant scatological experiment is taking place. Beside the potty a little girl is stirring a pile of excrement with a stick (20).[521] While this activity might be gross, the girl's concentrated manner means that the scatological aspect is almost completely lost. She stirs the excrement with all the careful and laborious absorption of a baker making a cake.

A final aspect of the humanist pedagogical literature relevant to Bruegel's panel is the guidelines that it provides on children's manners and deportment. Games were seen as a vital element in developing children's personalities. Requiring co-operation, determination, conflict and compromise, playground games tested boys' characters and prepared them for the greater game of life. While this was keenly expressed in Erasmus's colloquies, his definitive work on the subject was the *De Civilitate Morum Puerilium Libellus* ('On Good Manners for Boys'). This work featured detailed descriptions of how children should present themselves in a variety of social situations, and included a section on the ideal behaviour and comportment of boys when at play.[522] It is unlikely that Bruegel's children quite measured up to Erasmian ideals in the eyes of sixteenth-century viewers. But they are perhaps not so far removed from the period's ideals as previously thought. Two virtually antithetical images of children from the sixteenth century can serve as reference points when discussing the physiognomy and appearance of Bruegel's children in relation to Erasmian ideals. The 1531 portrait of a *Twelve-Year-Old Boy*, usually attributed to Maerten van Heemskerck, provides an image

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[518] See my Introduction, p. 6.
[519] Snow compares the girl's tentative reaction to the barrel with that of the boys' beside her, who have noisily tipped over a barrel and are rocking it back and forth. Snow, 1997, p. 16.
[520] For a discussion of this see pp. 133-134.
[521] Some commentators have her stirring a mud-pie, but the proximity of the potty indicates that the substance is not mud. See Hindman, Appendix I, no. 21.

of an idealised, Erasmian schoolboy (Fig. 102).[523] Poised with a quill pen in his right hand and paper in his left, the boy is presented as a young scholar. Inscriptions found within the image provide a direct link to Erasmian philosophy. The Latin hexameter printed on the parapet at the bottom of the image comes from the *Opuscula aliquot*, a collection of ancient sayings produced for schoolchildren by Erasmus and published in Louvain in 1514. The sense of this verse is further endorsed by a sentence which the boy has apparently written on the piece of paper in his hand.[524] Taken together, the lines express a Christian moral which perfectly befits the pious, exemplary schoolboy.

The children depicted the print *The Cobbler and His Wife as a Teacher* present a dramatically different vision of childhood (Fig. 103).[525] Published by Bartholomeus de Mompere in 1559 and usually attributed to Pieter van der Borcht, the print resembles Bruegel's design for *The Ass in School*. Both images are crowded with children who are conspicuously misbehaving, while in the centre adults vainly attempt to maintain order. In Van der Borcht's print the cobbler frantically sews a sole onto a shoe. Beside him his wife has her hands full as she spins, holds a switch, and teaches a young boy to read. An inscription below the print in French and Flemish voices the adult's struggles:

'I mend, I sew, I stitch many a seam, but whatever I do I get nowhere / It is bitter to earn a living because these children give me a headache and no profit.'[526]

Like the *The Ass in School*, *The Cobbler and His Wife* derives its satire from enhancing the poor behaviour and the physical failings of children. In the seventeenth century a reversed copy of the *Cobbler and His Wife* was published by Pieter Bailleu and titled *Allemode School*, indicating that the image fitted with the contemporary vogue for

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[522] *CWE*, vol. 25, *De civilitate*.
[523] Bedaux and Ekkart, 2001, cat. no. 4.
[524] The text read 'Quis dives? Qui nil cupit. Quis pauper? Avarus' (He is rich that covets nought. Who is poor? The miser.) This text reads 'Omnia dat Dominus, non habet ergo minus.' (The Lord gives all and has none the less for it). Ibid.
[525] New Hollstein, 2004, *Peeter van der Borcht*, no. 178; Gibson, 1978, p. 677; Van Bastelaer and Huilin de Loo, 1907. Impressions in Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale and Vienna, Albertina. It has been suggested that the preliminary drawing for this etching and several other images of satirical peasant themes also etched by Van der Borcht might be attributed to the as-yet-unidentified monogrammist WL. New Hollstein, 2004, p. xx.
[526] Translation taken from Gibson, 1978, p. 677.

exaggerated unruly schoolroom scenes.[527] Considering at the population of *Children's Games* in the context of these images provides some surprising results.

Erasmus devoted a considerable part of the *De civilitate* to describing the ideal physical appearance and comportment of children. According to this work, a child's face is the strongest manifestation of his mind and so should be calm. The eyes should be steady:

'not darting and rolling, a feature of insanity; nor furtive, like those of suspects and plotters of treachery; nor gaping like those of idiots.'[528]

These ideals are personified by the even gaze of Van Heemskerck's *Twelve-Year-Old Boy* and Rabelais's description of another exemplary twelve-year-old, Ponocrates's protégé Eudémon. Brought in to convince Grandgousier that Gargantua should be educated in the new style, Eudémon praises Gargantua in rich and eloquent Latin, with appropriate gestures and distinct pronunciation, all the while with

'cap in hand, open face, red mouth, eyes steadfast, and his gaze fixed on Gargantua in youthful modesty.'[529]

It is difficult to find comparable examples of calm comportment among the figures in *Children's Games*. The eyes of the boy riding the barrel are characteristically Bruegelian; dark holes surrounded by the outline of eye sockets, suggesting wide-eyed surprise rather than calm modesty. Erasmus's advice that the mouth should be 'neither tight-set… nor gaping open like an idiot's' is perfectly embodied by the red lipped *Twelve-Year-Old Boy*, but again is frequently flouted by the children in *Children's Games*. Many of the children in the panel have open mouths, denoting everything from noisy glee to anguish. Yet the lack of reserve expressed by the figures in *Children's Games* is one of the elements that make the players so convincingly child-like. When set beside prints like *The Ass in School* and *The Cobbler and His Wife* the youthful glee displayed by the Bruegel's children is charming. Although the players in *Children's Games* have been

[527] In this version the composition is attributed to Pieter Bruegel.
[528] *CWE*, vol. 25, *De civilitate*, p. 274.
[529] Rabelais / Frame, 1991, p. 39.

described as 'miniature adults', the faces of the young pupils in *The Ass in School* are far more adult. At least four of the exposed heads in the main cluster of figures in *The Ass in School* are tonsured, balding or bald, and the bodies of the figures do not display the chubby roundedness of the children in *Children's Games*. Many of the figures sit hunched with spiky knees drawn up, a pose which is strikingly different to the realistic limbs of the boy contorting himself into a ball in the playground of *Children's Games* (39).

While in the facial expressions the players in *Children's Games* may lack decorum, the children are at least attired appropriately. Their clothes appear to be clean, and are neither conspicuously shabby nor obviously flashy, both extremes which Erasmus warned against.[530] The younger children of both sexes wear dresses, and their aprons and bibs are neatly tied and blemish free. All of the girls wear their hair tucked away in bonnets. Though often slightly more unkempt, the boys' hair is hardly that of savages. Most, with the exception of the boy rolling the hoop in the foreground (22) and one of the boys involved in lifting (27), seem to follow Erasmus's advice that hair should 'neither flow down the shoulders nor cover the brow'. Hats are commonly worn by the boys, although on occasion they have been removed and incorporated in to the games as make-shift blindfolds (45) or staging posts (35). Erasmus counselled against exposing, save for natural reasons, 'the parts of the body which nature has invested with modesty' and again, this is largely adhered to in *Children's Games*.[531] The tunics of the older boys are all fastened tightly with belts or string. Apart from one urinating girl (67) none of the children are exposing themselves. The way in which the urinating girl is tucked away by the back wall, hidden from both her fellow players and from the casual viewer's gaze, echoes Erasmus's advice that relieving oneself should be done in private.

The children in *The Ass in School* and *The Cobbler and His Wife* show considerably less decorum in both their attire and behaviour. In contrast to the tightly belted tunics of the children in *Children's Games*, a foreground figure in *The Ass in School* sits with his tunic gaping open and his genitalia revealed. Above this figure, the child across the

[530] Erasmus warned against clothes that were 'conspicuous by the shabbiness' or 'indicative of opulence, loose living, or arrogance.' *CWE*, vol. 25, *De civilitate*, p. 277.

schoolmaster's knee is exposing his behind for reasons of punishment – he is about to be beaten. This action is parodied by two children in the foreground of *The Cobbler and His Wife*. Kneeling on all fours, one exposes his bare backside to the viewer while the other crouches ready to beat it with a wooden spoon or ferule. The deliberate way in which the children in these satirical prints display their private parts resembles the deliberately bare backsides of the fools in the tower in *Netherlandish Proverbs* who enact the proverb 'two shit through the same hole'. Here, as in the prints, the action is wilful and seems designed to shock or amuse the viewer. In at least once instance in *Children's Games* this kind of exposure seems to have been deliberately avoided. In the playground a young boy is attempting to perform a forward roll or a headstand (41). Caught midway through the act of upending himself, the boy's tunic has fallen forward, revealing his breeches, but his modesty is preserved by a white undershirt which hangs down and covers his behind.

Behaviourally, the children in *Children's Games* conform to Erasmian guidance. Although they do not hold books or quill pens like the *Twelve Year Old Boy*, neither do they conspicuously misbehave like the children in the two satirical prints. Erasmus cautioned that children should not yawn, spit, or poke their tongues out. This advice is deliberately flouted by the children in the prints, who poke out their tongues and pull leering faces, but is adhered to by the population of *Children's Games*. As well as behaving themselves individually, the children in Bruegel's panel co-operate and play harmoniously together, and in so doing fit ideals espoused by the humanist educators. Erasmus stated in the *De civilitate* that:

'He who yields in a contest achieves a nobler victory than he who grasps victory at any cost'[532]

The importance of this proverbial lesson is indicated by the amount of times it is re-staged and discussed in the colloquies.[533] To encourage good sportsmanship children

[531] *CWE*, vol. 25, *De civilitate*, p. 277.
[532] *CWE*, vol. 25, *De civilitate*, p. 288.
[533] The schoolboys in *De lusu* discuss play proverbially, with one asking of a game of tennis: 'Does Fortune prevail even in this?' to which the other replies: 'She rules everywhere.' The boy's later comment that

were advised to play in a light-hearted mood, and only with those known to them.[534] A game should be 'accompanied by jests, wit and agreeableness' and fighting was to be avoided. In contrast, the children in the two satirical prints squabble over everything. In the right foreground of *The Cobbler and His Wife* a group of children pull each others' hair and hit each other with baskets. On the opposite side of the print, a child wearing an adult mask frightens several of his playmates, who try to scramble away.[535] The general mood of havoc is further underlined in this image by the children who escape unnoticed through the doorway, while others help themselves to food and drink and play games with dice. Although *Children's Games* includes some games which have been interpreted as examples of malicious play, these are often ambiguous and it remains unclear whether the 'victims' are suffering or relishing their central roles.[536] Far more prevalent are the incidences in which the children follow pedagogical advice and cooperate in games for the mutual benefit of one another. The group playing at running the gauntlet (38), those playing variation of blindman's buff (15, 35 and 73), and the leap-froggers (36) are all examples of this (Fig. 104). In running the gauntlet the thrill of participating in a group game is evident not only in the faces of the two gauntlet runners, but also in the faces of the four children who sit with their backs to the fence and gleefully kick their legs up.

'luck is as fickle in sport as in war' perfectly articulates the humanists' belief that play represented the 'game of life', and that lessons learned therein would serve a boy well. *CWE*, vol. 39, *Colloquies*, 'Sport'.

[534] Vives describes how 'companions should be agreeable, festive, and with whom there is no danger of quarrelling or fighting or saying anything disgraceful or unbecoming.' Vives / Watson, 1908, Dialogue 22, *Leges Ludi*, p. 207.

[535] A child with a similar adult mask appears at the window of the schoolhouse in *Children's Games*, but does not frighten any of the other children. Appedix I, no. 6.

[536] These include the boy being swung over the beam (27) and the group playing 'hair pulling' (32). Snow argues convincingly that these two games could represent positive experiences for the central figures, who are being 'given' exhilarating experiences by their playmates. Snow, 1997, pp. 105-113.

Conclusion

In considering how Bruegel's contemporaries might have responded to *Children's Games* I have rejected the confusing variety of arbitrary opinions and responses forwarded by previous scholars. Instead I have sought to systematically 'enliven' a wide range of sixteenth-century sources which discuss, picture and pontificate upon play. Taken together, these sources provide a historically appropriate context for interpreting Bruegel's panel, and present period-specific answers to some of the most pressing questions that the painting raises, including why it looks the way it does, who it might have been painted for, and what it might have meant.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the painting is its encyclopaedic appearance. This can be explored in relation to its companion panels *Netherlandish Proverbs* and *Carnival and Lent*, and needs to be understood within the context of the 'abundant aesthetic' of the period. All three of Bruegel's encyclopaedic paintings exhibit traits found in these other types of collection, including an interest in vernacular material and observation from life and a delight in detailing every aspect of a given topic exhaustively. The effects of these visual traits have been explored in relation to *Netherlandish Proverbs* by Mark Meadow and in relation to *Carnival and Lent* by Matt Kavaler. Following these approaches, we can begin to appreciate how *Children's Games* also parallels other types of sixteenth-century collection in the manner in which it present a world in microcosm and encourages the viewer to stand back, contemplate, and draw subjective conclusions. While the dearth of documentary evidence makes it difficult to ascertain precisely who *Children's Games* was created for, it is not hard to recreate in more general terms the tastes and enthusiasms of Bruegel's circle of patrons and admirers. In the absence of a known individual patron for *Children's Games*, I have focused my attention on developing a reception-theory for the painting which is grounded in what is known about Bruegel's audience; namely that they were predominantly based in Antwerp, educated, worldly and wealthy. The Ghent-Bruges manuscripts outlined in chapter 1

indicate that depictions of popular games were enjoyed by wealthy elites in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and establish a precedent for Bruegel's panorama of play. It seems likely that the original audience of *Children's Games* would have been aware of these pictorial precendents. We can even speculate that, as with the series of the *Months*, the painting was conceived with the intention of deliberately invoking luxury manuscripts.

The links between the motifs in *Children's Games* and the marginal games found in Ghent-Bruges illuminated manuscripts have been mentioned by previous scholars, most notably Sandra Hindman, whose work is revisted and significantly expanded upon in Chapter 1. In establishing the visual tradition of the 'game of the month' I have traced the iconography further back, to its French roots, and drawn on the latest scholarship on Ghent-Bruges manuscripts to develop a conclusion which is quite different to Hindman's. Tracking representations of popular games in manuscripts on a month-by-month basis and comparing these to Bruegel's panel has enabled me to reveal more comprehensively than before where *Children's Games* makes important innovations. With *Children's Games* Bruegel transformed the manuscript games, taking them from a marginal position where they glossed daily activities and making them the sole narrative element. As well as shifting the games from the margins to the centre, Bruegel also employed the medium of paint on panel. Unlike the manuscripts, which reveal their games only at the turn of the page, *Children's Games* presents all of its games at once. Integrated within the believable space of an urban square and rendered on a grand scale in oil paint on panel, the players in *Children's Games* make a far bolder statement than the tiny figures in the manuscript borders, whose actions can only be decoded after careful scrutiny. Rejecting Hindman's argument that the painting is set in summer, I have demonstrated how Bruegel chose to ignore the ordering principles common to the manuscript borders, instead picking games and customs from throughout the year and presenting them without any discernible order. Thus the winter traditions of St Nicolas baskets, *duivekater* loaves and paper Carnival crowns are interspersed with spring games of whip-tops and rattles; while summer activities such as swimming and building bonfires occur beside autumnal games with animal bones and bladders. *Children's Games*

can therefore be seen as compendium which is only loosely based on the Ghent-Bruges iconography, with motifs selected purely on their relevance to the culture of children.

A second sixteeth-century source which has been used allusively but never systematically in relation to *Children's Games* is the list of popular games found in Rabelais's *Gargantua* (1534). Addressing the specifics of this list and more general parallels between the work of Bruegel and Rabelais in Chapter 2 provides a wealth of new insights. Where the factual collections of the sixteenth century sought to order information by categorising it, Bruegel's panels closely resemble Rabelaisian lists, which parodied serious collections and presented the phenomena of the world in a disordered, trivial or whimsical manner. All three of Bruegel's encyclopaedic paintings present enumerations of popular culture which, like Rabelaisian lists, are initially overwhelming in their magnitude. Each of the panels employ similar ordering principles, setting their motifs in vernacular environments and organising them along strong axes; yet the lists still swim before our eyes. The figures remain detached, physically distanced both from each other and from their background environments. The encyclopaedic, list-like quality of the images is further enhanced by the lack a single uniting narrative: we are given instead a variety of narrative events, and no one motif has precedence over another. Although Rabelaisian lists are often more digressive and nonsensical than Bruegel's panels, both invite their interpreters to take a 'playful' approach by ordering motifs subjectively, according to random combinations of rhythm, rhyme, and repetition. The *Songes drolatiques de Pantagruel* provides evidence that contemporaries recognised the parity between the work of Bruegel and Rabelais. Having explored this, and established that Rabelais's books were circulating in Antwerp in the 1550's, it would not be too far-fetched to conclude that Rabelaisian lists may have inspired Bruegel's encyclopaedic paintings.

Rabelaisian lists are particularly relevant to *Children's Games*, as chapter 22 of *Gargantua* contains a list of popular games which surpasses Bruegel's panel in its extension. Many of Gargantua's games can be compared to examples depicted by Bruegel. More fundamentally, the educational context in which Gargantua's game-playing occurs leads

us towards a hitherto unexplored aspect of *Children's Games*. The treatises and colloquies which have long been recognised as informing Gargantua's fictional education provide a rich source of information on contemporary attitudes towards games and their place in learning. This wealth of previously untapped factual material can help us to determine the responses of Bruegel's original audience to *Children's Games*. It is likely that Bruegel's interpretive community would have held sophisticated views on childhood and game-playing. Bruegel and the vast majority of his patrons lived in Antwerp, a city which witnessed the development of progressive pedagogical methods during the course of the sixteenth century. Home to a number of prominent humanist thinkers and an important centre for the printing of pedagogical texts, Antwerp's educational climate was also fed by its cosmopolitan population, which sustained a large number of vernacular schools. Within these institutions tutors enjoyed a great degree of freedom and were able to combine experimental teaching methods with publishing their own colloquies and treatises.

A number of Antwerp's schoolmasters had close ties with Bruegel's known associates. In publishing their educational texts the schoolmasters Gabriel Meurier and Peeter Heyns worked closely with Bruegel's print-publishers, Christopher Plantin and Philips Galle. Galle's daughters attended Heyn's school, *De Lauwerboom*, as did the niece of Bruegel's most famous patron, Niclaes Jonghelinck. Finally, Peeter Heyns and his family are known to have enjoyed a long and enduring friendship with Abraham Ortelius, who was also a friend and admirer of Bruegel. Details found in *Children's Games* further suggest that Antwerp and its education system might provide an important contextual frame for Bruegel's painting. Distant views of the river Scheldt and the distinctive spires of St. Michael's Abbey and *Onze-Lieve Vrouw* Cathedral provide a backdrop to the children's games, suggesting that the painting is staged in Antwerp. It is even possible that one or both of the buildings which are prominent in the painting represent contemporary schoolhouses.

Recognising the subjectivity inherent in the encyclopaedic style of *Children's Games* should not preclude attempts to answer questions about what the painting might have

meant to its original audience. The sixteenth-century treatises and school colloquies that I have unearthed provide a body of contemporary theory which is far more relevant to *Children's Games* than the seventeenth-century emblems used by previous scholars, but, like the emblems, the pedagogical texts reintroduce a moral dimension to game playing. The texts clearly articulate the fact that there was a wrong and a right way for children to conduct themselves, and their argments are supported by a number of images, including satirical prints such as *The Cobbler and His Wife* and images of model pupils such as Van Heemskerck's *Twelve-Year Old Boy*. Assessing these moral arguments in relation to *Children's Games* is complex. There is little to obviously link Bruegel's children to education. The painting contains few signs that the children have been studying prior to their games; no books or quills have been discarded and no schoolmaster is present. Although it is possible that one or both of the buildings in the painting represent sixteenth-century schoolhouses, if this is the case then their relationship to each other and to the playing children is somewhat ambiguous.

It would be a mistake to equate the figures that populate *Children's Games* with the model pupils epitomised by characters like Erasmus's Gaspar, Rabelais's Eudémon and Van Heemskerck's *Twelve-Year Old Boy*. With gaping mouths and bulging eyes, the population of *Children's Games* give themselves unreservedly to play. Yet despite their wild games, the children are not savages and in several important respects the painting conforms to the ideals set down in pedagogical texts. Unlike the distorted, Boschian creatures found in *The Ass in School* and the satirical, naughty progeny of *The Cobbler and His Wife,* the population of *Children's Games* resemble real children. They have believably child-like faces and soft, rounded bodies which are utilised with glee for physical play. In accordance with the guidelines set down in Erasmus's *De civilitate*, all of Bruegel's children are well-behaved and neatly attired. They are clean and well-dressed, with their hair covered and their tunics fastened. Although their games are boisterous, the children do not actively misbehave by pulling faces, spitting, scowling or crying. The way in which the children's games are staged at the edge of the city, out of doors and on a fine summer day reflects conditions found repeatedly in the school colloquies. Although

there is no schoolmaster supervising the games in several instances adult figures appear to be supporting and facilitating specific games.

In contrast to earlier readings of the panel based on seventeenth-century emblems, the majority of the games depicted in Bruegel's panel can be interpreted by sixteenth-century standards as constructive play. The children participate in a diverse range of games which have parallels both with Gargantua's childish, mindless games and with the improving pastimes undertaken in the course of his humanist education. Significantly, Bruegel excludes all references to gambling games and includes very few scatological references, making *Children's Games* far less bawdy than those played by Gargantua in his first game-list. Even more important than *what* the children play is *how* they play. On close inspection we note that the population of *Children's Games* demonstrate curiosity about the world around them and play inventively with a range of found objects drawn from it. Furthermore, in pursuing their games so intently the children demonstrate many positive attributes, including; co-operation, patience, tenderness, physical agility and bravery. Thus while the sixteenth-century's humanist educators might not have wholeheartedly endorsed Bruegel's panorama, we can conclude that the work would have raised a wry smile amongst those familiar with Antwerp's youth.

The references that *Children's Games* makes to manuscript marginalia suggest a conscious desire on the part of Bruegel or his patron to evoke iconography associated with the luxurious Ghent-Bruges manuscripts. In *Children's Games* this iconography is reconfigured along new lines, in keeping with the period's 'abundant aesthetic'. Returning the panel to the century in which it was produced reveals a new and unexplored dimension to the painting. In the sixteenth century games had an important place in education, as attested by numerous pedagogical treatises and school colloquies, as well as by the fictional writings of François Rabelais. While we cannot know whether Bruegel intended to provide a visual analogy to this pedagogical literature, we can be fairly sure that the original audience of *Children's Games* would have viewed the work in the light of the century's latest educational ideas. We can imagine that upon

encountering *Children's Games* sixteenth-century viewers would quickly have fallen to discussing the attitudes of the children, debating the precise definitions of the games, and reflecting upon the merits of play. Assessing the painting according to these criteria we find that *Children's Games* celebrates the boundless enthusiasm of children and provides much to nurture a belief in the value of play.

Illustrations

Dimensions of works are given in centimetres, height preceding width

Fig. 1 *Children's Games*, signed and dated 1560, panel 118 x 161. Vienna, Kunsthistoriches Museum.

Fig. 2 Cathedral of Our Lady, Antwerp.

Fig. 3 Albrecht Dürer, Sketch of the Abbey of St. Michael, Antwerp.

Fig. 4 *Netherlandish Proverbs*, signed and dated 1559, panel 117 x 163. Berlin, Gemäldegalerie.

Fig. 5 *The Battle Between Carnival and Lent*, signed and dated 1559, panel 118 x 164.5. Vienna, Kunsthistoriches Museum.

Fig. 6a Adriaen van de Venne, *Children Playing on the Voorhout in The Hague*. First published in Jacob Cats's *Houwelyck*, 1625.

Fig. 6b Jan van de Velde II, *Het Hof van Hollandt.*

Fig. 7 Frans Hogenberg, *The Blue Cloak*, c. 1558, engraving. Impression in Brussels, Bibliothèque Royal.

Fig. 8 Frans Hogenberg, *The Battle Between Carnival and Lent,* 1558, etching 32.7 x 51.8.

Fig. 9 *Prudentia* (Prudence), signed and dated 1559, drawing in pen and brown ink, 22.5 x 29.8, Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique. Inscribed by another hand in red-brown ink in lower margin: *Si prudens esse cupis in futurum prospectum in ostende et quae possunt contingere animo tuo cuncta propone* (If you wish to be prudent, think always of the future and keep everything in the forefront of your mind).

Fig. 10 Upside-down globe detail, *Netherlandish Proverbs.*

Fig. 11 Street detail, *Children's Games.*

Fig. 12 Frans Francken II, *Kunstkammer*, 1636, 74 x 78. Vienna, Kunsthistoriches Museum.

Fig. 13 Ferrante Imperato's *Museo.* Title page to Imperato's *Dell' Historia Naturale*, Naples, 1599.

Fig. 14 January, feasting. *Très Riches Heures*, Musée Condé, Chantilly, MS 65, fol. 1v.

Fig. 15 July, water Joust. *Hours of Adélaïde de Savoie*, Musée Condé, Chantilly, MS. Lat. 1362, fol. 7r.

Fig. 16 December, snowball fight. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Douce MS. 135, fol. 7v.

Fig. 17a September-October. Douce MS. 135, fols. 6r-6v.

Fig. 17b September-October. Pierpont Morgan Library, 572, fols. a6v-a7r.

Fig. 18 Blindman's Buff. *Livre d'heures de la famille Ango*, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS. NAL 392, fol. 140.

Fig. 19 Blindman's Buff. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Douce MS. 276, fol. 49v.

Fig. 20 February, warming by the fire. *Grimani Breviary*, Biblioteca Marciana, Venice, MS. Lat. I. 99, fol. 4v.

Fig. 21 Games on frozen pond. Detail from *Census of Bethlehem*, signed and dated 1566, panel 116 x 164.5. Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts.

Fig. 22 Children crossing a steam and grieving figures, *The Procession to Calvary*, signed and dated 1564, panel 124 x 170. Vienna, Kunsthistoriches Museum.

Fig. 23 September, harrowing and games of marbles and *kolf*. *Golf Book*, British Library, London, Add. MS. 24098, fols. 26v & 27r.

Fig. 24 September. *Hours of Conde-Duque de Olivares*, Real Colegio de Corpus Christi, Valencia, fols. 11v & 12r.

Fig. 25 January, warming by the fire. *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary*, Mayer van den Bergh Museum, Antwerp, Cod. 946, fol. 1v.

Fig. 26 January. *Golf Book*, British Library, London, Add. MS. 24098, fol. 18v.

Fig. 27 January game-borders.

Fig. 28 King Carnival detail, *Battle Between Carnival and Lent.*

Fig. 29 Hoop rolling detail, *Children's Games.*

Fig. 30 Hoop rolling in game-borders.

Fig. 31 'Sauter dans le cerceau, & autres jeux', *Les Trente Six Figures Contenant Tous les Jeux*.

Fig. 32 April. *Spinola Hours*, fol. 3r.

Fig. 33 April. *Eleanor of Portugal Breviary*, fol. 3v.

Fig. 34 April, courting couples. *Golf Book*, fol. 21v.

Fig. 35 Whip-tops and rattles in game-borders.

Fig. 36 Whip-tops and rattles detail, *Carnival and Lent.*

Fig. 37 Rattles, MS. Douce 276, fol. 83r.

Fig. 38 Whip-tops detail, *The Hunters in the Snow,* signed and dated 1565, panel 117 x 162. Vienna, Kunsthistoriches Museum.

Fig. 39 Games of 'Blind Slipper'.

Fig. 40 Games of 'Blind Slipper'.

Fig. 41 Blowing bubbles and rush hats detail, *Children's Games.*

Fig. 42 Games of blowing bubbles.

Fig. 43 June. *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary*, fol. 4.

Fig. 44 July. *Spielbuch*, *Breviary of Eleanor of Portugal* and *Spinola Hours.*

Fig. 45 June and July, *Golf Book*.

Fig. 46 Games with rushes.

Fig. 47 Children observe autumn labours.

Fig. 48 Pig slaughtering. December, *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary*, fol. 7 and December, *Grimani Breviary*, fol. 13r.

Fig. 49 Details of slaughtering a pig from *The Census at Bethlehem* and *The Hunters in the Snow.*

Fig. 50 Stilt walking.

Fig. 51 Span-counter detail, *Children's Games*

Fig. 52 Stella, *La patte aux jettons*

Fig. 53 Stella, *La Fossette*

Fig. 54 *Peasant Kermis*, c. 1567-8, panel 114 x 164. Vienna, Kunsthistoriches Museum.

Fig. 55 Skittles with knucklebones.

Fig. 56 Knucklebones detail, *Children's Games.*

Fig. 57 Piggy-back, Brick on a lead and Follow-my-leader details, *Children's Games.*

Fig. 58a *The Harvesters*, c.1565, panel 118 x 160.7. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Fig. 58b Detail of cock-throwing.

Fig. 59a *Haymaking,* c.1565, panel 117 x 161. Prague, National Museum.

Fig. 59b Detail of popinjay tournament.

Fig. 60 Festive details, *Children's Games.*

Fig. 61a Paper crown detail, *The Gloomy Day*

Fig. 61b Paper crown detail, *The Battle Between Carnival and Lent*

Fig. 62 Jan Steen, *The Feast of Saint Nicholas*, c. 1665-1668. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

Fig. 63 Bridal procession detail, *Children's Games*

Fig. 64 May Queen processions in manuscripts

Fig. 65 Pieter Brueghel the Younger, *The Whitsun Bride*. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Fig. 66 François Desprez, *Les Songes drolatiques de Pantagruel, ou sont contenues plusieurs figures de l'invention de maistre François Rabelais: &*

derniere oeuvre d'iceluy, pour la recreation des bons esprits, Paris, Richard Breton, 1565. Bibliothèque Municipale de Tours, Res 3540.

Fig. 67 *Songes drolatiques* no. 57 and detail from *Avaritia.*

Fig. 68 *Songes drolatiques* no. 110 and detail from *Avarita.*

Fig. 69 *Songes drolatiques* nos. 16 and 10 and detail from *Superbia.*

Fig. 70 *Songes drolatiques* no. 19 and detail from *Invidia.*

Fig. 71 *Songes drolatiques* no. 5 and detail from *Invidia.*

Fig. 72 *Songes drolatiques* no. 28 and detail from *Invidia.*

Fig. 73 *Songes drolatiques* no. 38 and detail from *Ira.*

Fig. 74 *Songes drolatiques* no. 68 and details from *Gula.*

Fig. 75 Bruegel, *Big Fish Eat Little Fish,* 1557, engraving by Pieter van der Heyden after a pen and ink drawing signed and dated by Bruegel 1556, published by Hieronymous Cock. Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna.

Fig. 76 *Songes drolatiques* no. 93 and detail from *Gula.*

Fig. 77 *Songes drolatiques* no. 16 and bird detail from *Avarita* and *Luxuria.*

Fig. 78 François Rabelais, '*Les jeux de Gargantua*', chapter 22, *La plaisante et ioyeuse histoyre du grand Geant Gargantua*, Lyon, Etienne Dolet, 1542, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, 37284442.

Fig. 79 Maerten van Cleve, *Children's Games,* 1560's, panel, Ducastel collection, Saint Germain-en-Laye, Musée Municipal.

Fig. 80 Pieter van der Borcht, *Monkey Games*, c. 1580, part of a series of sixteen etchings published by Philips Galle.

Fig. 81 Stella, *Le jeu des espingles* and details of windmills from *Children's Games.*

Fig. 82 Stella, *La Rangette* and detail of castles from *Children's Games.*

Fig. 83 Stella *La course du pot* and detail of smash-crock from *Children's Games.*

Fig. 84 Games of catch with pots in *Carnival and Lent* and Douce manuscript 276, fol. 8.

Fig. 85 Gambling detail from *Carnival and Lent*.

Fig. 86 *The Triumph of Death*, c. 1562-4, panel 117-162. Madrid, Prado.

Fig. 87 Teetotum detail, *Children's Games*

Fig. 88 Stella, *Le jeu de pet-en-guelle* and Douce MS 276 fol 118r and 35r.

Fig. 89 Stella, *Au poire* and 'baste the bear' detail from *Children's Games*

Fig. 90 Frontispiece, Peter Heyn's *ABC*, Antwerp, Plantin Press, 1568.

Fig. 91 Bruegel, *Temperentia* (Temperance), ca. 1560. Engraving attributed to Philips Galle after a drawing signed and dated by Bruegel in 1560 in Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. Published by Hieronymous Cock.

Fig. 92 *Livre d'heures de Marie Chantault*, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS. Smith-Lesouëf 39, fol. 3v. Early sixteenth century.

Fig. 93a Hans Holbein the Younger, *Signboard for a Schoolmaster*, Pine panel, 55.5 x 65.7 cm, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung, Basle.

Fig. 93b Ambrosius Holbein, *Signboard for a Schoolmaster* (reverse), Pine panel, 55.5 x 65.7 cm, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung, Basle.

Fig. 94 *The Ass in School*, 1557. Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden after a drawing signed and dated by Bruegel in 1556 in Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett KdZ II 641.

Fig. 95 Adriaen Van Ostade, *School*. Paris, Louvre.

Fig. 96 Jan Steen, *A School for Boys and Girls*, c. 1670, canvas, 81.7 x 108.6. Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland.

Fig. 97 Latin School, Nijmegen

Fig. 98 Owl detail, *Children's Games.*

Fig. 99 Pieter de Bloot, *Raucous School*, Mainz, Mittelrheinisches Landesmuseum.

Fig. 100 Henri Baude, *Dictz moraulx pour faire tapisserie*. Chantilly, Musée Condé, MS. 509, fol. 2.

Fig. 101 Henri Baude, *Dictz moraulx pour faire tapisserie*. Dit 21, 'Un asne, qui chasse un tas de bestes d'un parc qui joinct à un palais'. Paris Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. Fr. 24461, fol. 45.

Fig. 102 Maerten van Heemskerck, *Twelve-Year-Old Boy*, 1531. Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam.

Fig. 103 Pieter van der Borcht, *The Cobbler and His Wife As a Teacher*, 1559. Published by Bartholomaeus de Mompere.

Fig. 104 Running the gauntlet detail, *Children's Games*

Fig 105 *Children's Games* numbered according to Appendix I

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Appendix I Bruegel's games in relation to other game collections

During the course of my research I encountered a number of different game collections, many of which presented correlations with *Children's Games*. This appendix emerged from a desire to note these correlations. Although not all of the collections are discussed above, the appendix provides support for a number of arguments made in the thesis and may serve to stimulate further research into this fascinating field. The first column details correlations between *Children's Games* and Gargantua's games and the second column details relevant games found in a number of illuminated manuscripts. The third column includes examples drawn from two Netherlandish images produced after *Children's Games.* In the fourth column correlations between *Children's Games* and a number of Italian game collections are detailed. These include nine surviving canvases of putti playing games which have been attributed to a follower of Titian or his workshop,[537] a series of related engravings attributed to Agostino Caracci,[538] and a series of engravings attributed to Giacinto Gimignani and titled *Scherzi e giuochi diversi de putti*.[539] Column five details parallels between Bruegel's games and those found in a

[537] Dated to between 1550 and 1569, it has been suggested that the canvases originally formed a continuous frieze around the main hall of Titian's house, at San Canciano in Venice. There were originally ten canvases: one is currently in the Chrysler Collection in New York, another in the Brickmann Collection in Munich was destroyed in World War II, and the remaining eight canvases were acquired by the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Chambery in 1883, where they are currently on display. Although few scholars mention these works, Wethey dates the canvases to c.1550 and suggests that they were carried out by Titian's assistants using sketches by the Master. He argues that the cavases were cut into pieces, removed from the house and sold in 1830, when Titian's house was inherited by Francesco Breve. Wethey, 1975, vol. 3, p. 172. Suida Manning dates the canvasses to between 1560 and 1569, and believes them to be of Titian's late period. She suggests that some portions of the canvases were removed prior to Breve's ownership. Suida Manning, 1962, pp. 49-60. The Sala del Consiglio dei Dieci in the Ducal Palace at Venice is decorated with a similar frieze of playing putti by Giambattist Zelotti, which also dates from the middle of the sixteenth century.

[538] Four of the engravings were reproduced in D'Allemagne, 1904, who attributes them either to an Italian engraver of the seventeenth-century or 'after Caracci' (*Le jeu de la bague à pied*, p. 107, *Le cheval fondu*, p. 323; *Le jeux des couteaux*, p. 280; *Le jeux des palets percés*, p. 139. It may be equally possible that the designs for these engravings predate the canvasses, especially if the paintings were executed by a later follower of Titian.

[539] Dated 1647. Etchings from the first state of the series in London, British Museum, 1872.10.12.3779-3790 and in Rome, Gabinetto Nazionale dei Disegni e delle Stampe. The entire

number of French game collections, including a series of woodcuts of figures playing games entitled *Les trente-six figures contenant tous les jeux…* which was published by several different engravers during the 1580's [540] and Jacque's Stella's seventeenth-century series, titled *Les jeux et plaisris d'enfance*. [541] Finally, column six details instances where games found in Bruegel's panel feature in later Dutch collections.

series is reproduced in its second state in the Illustrated Bartsch, vol. 45, Italian Masters of the Seventeenth Century.

[540] Series now in the Bibliothèque Nationale [Cabinet des estampes, Ea. 79 Rés.]. The series was published by Guillaumne Le Bé in 1587 under the title *'Les Trente-Six Figures contenant tous les jeux qui ne se peuvent jamais inventer et représenter par les enfants… depuis le berceau jusques en l'age viril, avec les significations desdites figures mises au pied de chacune d'icelles en vers François; le tout nouvellement mis en lumière et dirigé par ordre.'* Part of the series is titled *'Jeux d'Enfants. A Paris Chez la veusve Jean le Clerc, rue sainct Jean de Latran, à la Salemandre Royale'*. This suggests that the series was first published by Leclerc's widow following his death in c.1585, and that subsequently the plates were sold to Le Bé. Adhémar, 1938, pp. 355-356 (Le Bé); pp. 359-361 (Leclerc). For images from the series see Mehl, 1990; D'Allemagne, 1903. For images after the series see *Le Magasin Pittoresque*, 1847, vol. 15, 67-70.

[541] Designed by Jacques Stella, this series consisted of fifty-two engraved plates of putti playing games with accompanying verses and was engraved and published posthumously by Stella's niece in 1657. The original spelling of this series is often corrected in secondary literature to 'Jeux et plaisirs d'enfance', but Mulherron sees the original spelling as a deliberate pun on the relationship between play and laughter (*ris*), which signifies the punning content of the verses. Mulherron, 2006, p. 31. For a facsimile with English translations of the verses see Applebaum, 1969. Dabbs argues that Stella drew his inspiration from the earlier Leclerc / Le Bé series. Dabbs, 1991, pp. 26-30 and Dabbs 1995, p. 304.

Bruegel's *Children's Games*

Refer to numbered image, Fig. 105

Gargantua's Games

Taken from edition C in Appendix II

Manuscripts

Romance of Alexander, Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. Bod. 264, c.

Livre d'heures de la famille Ango, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS. NAL 392

Bodleian Library, Oxford, Douce MS. 276, c. 1550

Bodleian Library, Oxford, Douce MS. 135, c. 1550

Mayer van den Bergh Breviary, Antwerp, Museum Mayer van den Bergh, Cod. 946, c. 1500

Eleanor of Portugal Breviary, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 52, c. 1500-1510

Hours of Conde-Duque de Olivares, Real Colegio de Corpus Christi, Valencia, 1505

Spielbuch, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, CLM. 28346, 1500-1510

Spinola Hours, Getty Insitute, MS. Ludwig IX 18, c. 1510-1520

Grimani Breviary, Biblioteca Marciana, Venice, MS. Lat. I. 99, c. 1510-1520

Lisbon prayerbook, Lisbon, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, MS 13 illum, c.1530

Golf Book, British Library, London, Add. MS. 24098, 1540's

Netherlandish collections

Maerten Van Cleve, *Children's Games*, 1560's, Ducastel collection, Saint Germain-en-Laye, Musée Municipal (Fig. 79)

Pieter Van der Borcht, *Monkey Games*, c. 1580 (Fig. 80)

Italian Collections

Titian (?), Playing putti canvases, c. 1550-1569, Chambéry, Musée des Beaux-Arts (Fig. 106)

Agostino Carracci, Engravings of putti playing games, date unknown (Fig. 107)

Giacinto Gimignani, *Scherzi e giuochi diversi de putti*, 1647 (Fig. 108)

French printed collections

Le Clerc / Guillaume Le Bé, *Les Trente Six Figures Contenant Tous les Jeux*, Paris, c. 1587 (Fig. 32)

Jacques Stella, *Jeux d'enfants*, Paris, 1657 (Fig. 81)

Emblematic images

Kinderspelen engraving A: Adriaen van de Venne, *Children Playing on the Abbey Square in Middleburg*, Middleburg, 1618.

Kinderspelen engraving B: Adriaen van de Venne, *Children Playing on the Voorhout in The Hague*, 1625 (Fig. 6a).

Kinderspelen engraving C: Jan van de Velde II, *Het Hof van Hollandt* (Fig. 6b).

Roemer Visscher, *Sinnepoppen*, 1614

Conrad Meyer and Johann Heinrich Amman, *Kinder Lustspeile durch Sinn- und Lehrbilder geleitet*, Zurich, 1657

Bruegel's games	Gargantua's games	Manuscripts	Netherlandish collections	Italian collections	French printed collections	Emblem collections
1. Tossing up knucklebones Bikkelen / Les Osselets	Aux martres [62]	Spielbuch 14r Golf Book 27v				Meyer [10]
2. Playing with dolls Met poppen spelen / Les Poupées					Stella 'Le Dada' [2]	Kinderspelen engravings A, B and C Meyer [2]
3. Toy altar Het altaarspel / La Messe						
4. Owl on a perch Uil en uilenkot / Hibou	Au hybou [66]					
5. Pop-Gun De spuitebuis / Pistolet	Au Petarrdes [206]				Stella 'Les petits canons' [25]	
6. Masking Het masker / Le Fantôme			Van der Borcht - Monkey with mask and switch rides a hobbyhorse and scares his playmates		Stella 'Le masque' [5]	Meyer [19]
7. Swinging Schommelen / L'escarpolette	A la brandelle [155]	Ango Hours 151 Lisbon prayerbook 8v			Stella 'L'escaropolette' [9]	
8. Nut windmill Nootmolentje / Moulinet a noix	Au molinet [185]				Le Bé [3] Stella 'Le jeu des espingles' [6]	
9. Blowing Bubbles Bellenblazen / Les bulles de savon		Mayer van den Bergh Breviary 3r Spielbuch 8r Lisbon prayerbook 6v Ango Hours 138v	Van Cleve [5] Van der Borcht - Two monkeys blow bubbles		Le Bé [3] Stella 'Les bouteilles de savon' [8]	Kinderspelen engravings A and B Meyer [5]

10. Cap of rushes Biezenhoed / Chapeau en jonc	Au jonchées [127]	Playing with rushes: Mayer van den Bergh Breviary 4v Spinola Hours 4v Cap of rushes: Spielbuch 10v Lisbon prayerbook 6v				
11. Play with a bird Met een vogel spelen		Trapping birds and bird on a string: Olivares Hours 9r Spinola Hours 4v Golf Book 26r Eleanor of Portugal Breviary 6r Spielbuch 11r and 13r			Stella 'Le dada' [2]	Kinderspelen engraving A, B and C Meyer [13] and [15]
12. Teetotum Rammelaart / Hochet	Pille, Nade, Jocque, Fore [22]					
13. Brick on a lead 'Steentje, steentje om het been' / Animal tenu en laisse		Spinola Hours 2r				
14. Baptismal procession Doopstoet / Le cortège de Baptême						
15. Blindman's buff Blindemannetje / Colin Maillard	A Colin Maillard [168]	Douce 135 5v Douce 276 49v Ango Hours 163 Bodl. MS 276 130r & 135r		Gimignani [3]	Stella 'Le Colin Maillard' [12]	Kinderspelen engraving B Meyer [1]
16. Odds or evens Even of oneven / Pair et impair	A pair, ou non [60] A croix, ou pile [61]					
17. Hobbyhorse Het stokpaardje / Le Dada	Some English translations suggest horse-related games: Gidap, Neddy [78], The cock-horse [145]	Riding hobbyhorses and jousting with windmills: Mayer van den Bergh Breviary 4r Olivares Hours 11r Breviary of Eleanor of Portugal 4v Spielbuch 9v-10r Spinola Hours 4r Lisbon prayerbook 6v Golf Book 23v Douce 276 124v Ango Hours 137	Van der Borcht - Monkey wearing mask rides a hobbyhorse		Le Bé [3] Stella 'Le dada' [2]	Hobbyhorse in Kinderspelen engraving A and C Stick horse in Kinderspelen engraving B Meyer [6]
18. Potty De pot / pot						
19. Hand seat La chaise			Van Cleve [14]			

20. Playing drum and flute Trommel en fluit spelen / Flute et tambour	A la corne [71]	Douce 276 18v & 31v	Drum discarded on floor in lower right corner			
21. Stirring a shit Een stokje in een drol steken / Jeu du batonnet	A Guillemin baille my ma lance [155] A rouchmerde [119]					
22. Rolling a hoop Hoepelen / Les cerceaux	Au cercle [106]	Mayer van den Bergh Breviary 2r Eleanor of Portugal Breviary 2v Olivares Hours 6r Spielbuch 5v-6r Spinola Hours 6v Lisbon prayerbook 2v Golf Book 19v-20r	Van der Borcht - Male monkey rolls a hoop		Leclerc [12] Stella 'Le brelan' [31] & 'Le cercle' [39]	Kinderspelen engraving A and B Visscher, Sinnepoppen, CXXI 'beter stil ghestaen' Meyer [14]
23. Girl's hoop						
24. Calling into a barrel In een ton roepen / Le tonneau						
25. Rocking a barrel Wippen op een ton / Monter à un tonneau	Au tenebry [141]	Ango Hours 136				
26. Inflating a pig's bladder Met een varkensblaas opblazen / La vessie		Hitting each other with pigs' bladders: Mayer van den Bergh Breviary 6r Olivares Hours 12r Spielbuch 14r Douce 276 83r			Leclerc [1]	Kinderspelen engraving B Meyer [3]
27. Lift Jonassen / soulever						
28. Bucca / **How many horns does the goat have** Hoeveel horens / Combien de cornes a le bouc			Van Cleve [4] Van der Borcht - right corner	Titian putti canvas, Chambéry Caracci, 'Le jeu du cheval fondu' Gimignani [4]	Stella 'Le cheval fondu' [23] and 'Le frappe main' [28]	Visscher, Sinnepoppen, XXXVIII, 'Stamus hoc Danai loco'

29. Making pigment from bricks	Aux mestiers [176]					
30. Mark-knife / **Mublety-peg** Mes steek / Lancement du couteau	Au pié du couteau [57]			Titian putti canvas, Chambéry Caracci 'Le jeu des couteux'		
31. Brick wall Een muur bouwen / Jeu de construction						
32. Pulling hair Aan haartrekken / Tirer le cheveux						
33. Catching cockchafers (May bugs) Meikevers vangen / Les Hannetons	A escarbot lebrun [147] A la mousque [88]	Catching Butterflies: Eleanor of Portugal Breviary 5r Spinola Hours 4v Spielbuch 11r Golf Book 24v Douce 135 23v			Le Bé [2] Stella 'La chasse au papillon' [1]	
34. Running with a *duivetkater* Met een vollaard lopen						
35. Cockstride 't blindemannetje ronddragen / Jeu des bonnets						
36. Leap frog Haasje over / Saute-mouton	A croqueteste [211]		Van der Borcht - Six monkeys play leap-frog		Leclerc [6] Stella 'La Poste' [38]	Kinderspelen engraving B Meyer [8]
37. Tug-of-war Touwtje trekken / Combat équestre	A la tirelitantine [68]	Golf Book 29v (tug of war on sleds)				
38. Running the gauntlet Spitsroeden lopen / Le croc en jambe	Au piquet [131] spur away		Van Cleve [20]			
39. Roll up in a ball In een balletje oprollen / La roue						
40. Headstands Le poirier / La chandelle	Au poirier [103] Au chesne forchu [151]		Van Cleve [27]	Gimignani [2]		Kinderspelen engraving A, B and C Meyer [18]
41. Turning somersaults Kopje duikelen					Stella 'La culebute' [24]	

42. Climb over the fence Over het hek klauteren / Grimper par-dessus une clôture						
43. Ride the fence Paardje rijden op het hek / A cheval						
44. Whitsun wedding procession Bruid en bruidegom spelen / La Noche	Au mariage [23] Aux responsailles [95]	May Queen Processions: Mayer van den Bergh Breviary 3v Eleanor of Portugal Breviary 4r Spielbuch 8v Spinola Hours 3v Lisbon prayerbook 5v				
45. Smash crock Blindepot / Le casse pot	Au cassepot [124]	Bodl. MS 264 44r Spielbuch 6v Ango Hours 145	Van Cleve [6]		Leclerc [4] (water tilting) Stella 'La course du pot' [10]	
46. Walk on low stilts Op kleine stelten lopen / Les échasses		Olivares Hours 13r Spielbuch 14v Spinola Hours 2r Golf Book 26v Lisbon prayerbook 11v Douce 276 48r	Van Cleve [2] Van der Borcht - One monkey on medium height stilts			Kinderspelen engraving B and C Visscher, Sinnepoppen, XV Standing on a ball on stilts, 'Wie deyts / soo geyts' Meyer [11]
47. Walk on high stilts Op hooge stelten staan / Les grandes échasses						Kinderspelen engraving A
48. Blind slipper Blindemannetje met een slof / Au savatier	Au savatier [65]	Mayer van den Bergh Breviary 2v Olivares Hours 5r Spielbuch 6v Douce 276 59v				
49. Castles Hoopje werpen / Les noix	A la rengée [136]	Ango Hours 148v			Stella 'La rangette' [15]	
50. Hang from a beam Aan een balk hangen / La barre-fixe / la roue		Bodl. MS 264 108v (two youths hold a pole, a third hangs from the pole by his knees)				

51. Balance a broom Een bezem in evenwicht houden / La balai		Bod. MS 264 40r (boy balancing a sword on his chin) and 78v (boy balancing a sword on his had while another balances a wheel on his shoulder)				
52. Piggyback Paardjerijden / Sur le dos		Spinola Hours 2r	Van Cleve [11]	Gimignani [8]		
53. Spinning tops Tollen / La toupie	A la ronflart [138]			Titian putti canvas, Chrysler collection	Stella 'La toupie' [22]	Visscher, Sinnepoppen, XX 'Elcke zijn tijdt'
54. Whip tops De drijftol / La toupie	A la trompe [139] Au moyne [140]	Spinola Hours 2v Olivares Hours 6r Lisbon prayerbook 3v Bodl. 264 64r	Van Cleve [26] Van der Borcht - One monkey in centre	Titian putti canvas, Chambéry. Caracci 'La Toupie'	Stella 'Le sabot' [3]	Kinderspelen engraving A, B and C Visscher, Sinnepoppen, XLIII 'Soo lang de Roe wanckt' Meyer [4]
55. "Who shall I choose?" Wie zal ik kiezen / Qui vais-je choisir			Van Cleve [16]			
56. Rattle De ratel / La crécelle		Mayer van den Bergh Breviary 2v Olivares Hours 7r Breviary of Eleanor of Portugal 3r Spielburch 7r Spinola Hours 2v Lisbon prayerbook 4v Golf Book 20v Douce 276 83v and 116r			Le Bé [3]	
57. Jousting with windmills Tornooien met molentjes / Tournoi	Au molinet [185] Gargantua has a windmill made from the sails of a windmill of Mirebalais so that he can play with the children hereabouts (I, 11)	Mayer van den Bergh Breviary 4r Olivares Hours 11r Breviary of Eleanor of Portugal 4v Spielbuch 9v-10r Spinola Hours 4r Golf Book 23v Ango Hours 76v (jousting with brooms)		Gimignani [6]	Stella 'Le jeu des espingles' [6]	Windmill held in the air in kinderspelen engraving B Meyer [16]
58. Playing in the sand Kuiltje graven / Jeu dans le sable						

59. King of the castle De berg is van mij / Le roi détrôné	A monte mõre l'eschelette [193]		Van Cleve [18]		Stella 'L'assut du chasteau' [29]	
60. Twirling around Rondraaien / Jeux de robe	A je m'assis [79]					
61. Climbing trees Boompje beklimmen / Grimper sur un arbe			Van der Borcht - Right corner, monkeys are climbing trees and shaking apples down			
62. Swimming with a bladder Zwemmen met een varkenblaas / La nage		Swimming in a river and jousting between two boats: Mayer van den Bergh Breviary 5r Spinola Hours 5r Eleanor of Portugal Breviary 5v Spielbuch 11v-12r Douce 276 4r and 49r				Visscher, Sinnepoppen, XVIII Swimming with bladders: 'Quaet toeverlaet' and XXV Swimming in a river 'Wie wat weet / die komt het te pas Meyer [20]
63. Bathing one's feet Pootjebaden						
64. Standing in the water In het water staan					Stella 'Le bain' [32]	
65. Before or after the swim Na het bad						
66. Bowling Kaatsen / Boules	A la boulle plate [116] A la court boulle [121] Au boleau [158]	Mayer van den Bergh Breviary 4v Golf Book 28v Douce 276 12r (feather bowls); 37r (bowling alley) Bodl. MS 264 63r	Bowling at ring of skittles			
67. Urinating 't pissertje / Le pipi		Golf Book 20r Grimani Breviary 2v Hennessy Hours (MS. II 158, Brussels, Bibliotheque Royale, 1530's) 1v Ango Hours 28v and 70v				
68. Skittles with knucklebones Kegelen / Les quilles	Aux martres [62]	Mayer van den Bergh Breviary 6r Breviary of Eleanor of Portugal 6v Spielbuch 13v-14r Spinola Hours 6r Lisbon prayerbook 10v Golf Book 27v	Van der Borcht - Played in upper right		Stella 'Les Quilles' [20]	Kinderspelen engraving B and C

69. Game with sticks Met stokken spleen / Le petit baton						
70. Nine Holes Negen kuilen / La fossette	A la foussette [137] Au cailleteaux [99]	Aiming balls into holes: Mayer van den Bergh Breviary 5v Spielbuch 12v Golf Book 26v	Games with marbles and hole played in upper right		Leclerc [5] and [8] Le Bé [5] and [8] Stella 'La fossette' [14]	
71. Bait the bear / Bind the devil with a cord Katje, katje koningstoeltje? / Duivel aan een koord / Le diable enchaîné	Aux faulx villain [98]				Stella 'La Poire' [30]	Meyer [24]
72. Running up a cellar door Op het kelderluik lopen / Le saut						
73. Fighting / wrestling Vechten / Lutte		Mayer van den Bergh Breviary 6v Spielbuch 14v Douce 276 48r Bodl. MS 264 91r (four boys mounted on each others shoulders wrestle).		Gimignani [6] and [12]	Stella 'Le bouteilles de savon' [8]	
74. Span-counter Spanbotten / La patte aux jettons	Au franc du carreau [59]	Ango Hours 162v		Titian putti canvas, Chrysler Collection.	Leclerc [10] Le Bé [10] Stella 'La patte aux jettons' [19]	
75. Procession game Processie spleen / La procession						
76. Follow my leader Zwaan, kleef aan		Spinola Hours 2r	Van Cleve [23]			
77. Go on a visit Op bezoek gaan						
78. First one there Na-apertje / Cachette courir						
79. Push someone off a bench Van de bank duwen / Se pousser						

80. Shoulder carry Op de schouders dragen / A cheval sur les epaules				Gimignani [4]		
81. Performing a play or acting out a trade Toneel spleen / Jeu des métiers						
82. Horse Bayard and the four *Heemskinderen* Ros Beiaard en de vier Heemskinderen / Le cheval Bayard						
83. Bonfire / St John's fire Sint Jans-vuur / Feu de la Saint Jean			Van der Borcht - Monkeys gathered around a fire on the horizon		Stella 'Les petis feux' [11]	
84. Singing at doors Zingen aan de deur						
85. Wandering Wandelen						
86. Pennant / streamer De wimpel uithangen / Le ruban						
87. Saint Nicholas Baskets Sint Niklaas korven						

Appendix II Editions of Gargantua's games

Defaux, Gérard, 1994. *Gargantua*, Édition critique sur le texte de l'édition publiée en 1535 à Lyon par François Juste (Paris: Librairie Général Française).
Edition A Glasgow University Library, Hunterian Collection Cm .3.9. *La vie très horrificque du grand Gargantua… Francoys Juste*, Lyon, 1542. *NRB* 23.
Edition B Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale 37284442. *La plaisante et ioyeuse histoyre du grand Geant Gargantua*, Etienne Dolet, Lyon, 1542. *NRB* 24.
Edition C London, British Library C.66.a.7. *Les Oeuvres de M. Francois Rabelais…* Arnoul Angliers, Paris (?) 1553. *NRB* 58.
Edition D Glasgow University Library, Hunterian Collection Da.3.2. *Les Oeuvres*, Jean Martin, Lyon, 1596. *NRB* 78.
Urquhart, Sir Thomas and Peter le Motteux. 1653. *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (London: Everyman, 1900).
Smith, W. F. 1893. *Rabelais: The Five Books and Minor Writings together with letters and documents illustrating his life* (London).
Frame, Donald. 1991. *The Complete Works of Francois Rabelais* (Berkeley: University of California Press).

	DEFAUX	**EDITION A**	**EDITION B**	**EDITION C**	**EDITION D**	**URQUHART**	**SMITH**	**FRAME**
	207 games.	One column of games. 217 games.	One column of games. 202 games.	Two columns of games. 217 games.	Two columns of games, read down one then the other. 215 games.	Two columns of games, read down one and then the other. 217 games.	Two columns of games, read down one and then down the other. 215 games.	Two columns of games, read across in pairs line by line. 216 games.
1	Là jouait au flux	Au flux	Là jouyoit au Flux	**Au flux**	La Jouoit… Au Flux	At Flusse	Flusse	Flush
2	A la prime	A la prime	A la prime	**A la prime**	A la prime	At Primero	Primero	Primiera
3	A la vole	A la vole	A la vole	**A la vole**	A la vole	At the beast	Palm	Grand slam
4	A la pille	A la pille	A la pille	**A la pille**	A la pille	At the rifle	Robber	Robber
5	A la triumphe	A la triumphe	A la triumphe	**A la triumphe**	A la triomphe	At trump	Triumph	Trump
6	à la Picardie	A la picardie	A la picardie	**A la picardie**	A la picardie	At the prick and spare not	Prick and spare not	Prick and spare not
7	au cent	Au cent	Au cent	**Au cent**	Au cent	At the hundred	The Hundred	One hundred
8	à l'espinay	A l'espinay	A l'espinay	**A l'espinay**	A l'espinay	At the peenie	The Spinet	The spinet
9	à trente & un	A la malheureuse	A trent, & ung	**A la malheureuse**	A la malheureuse	At the unfortunate woman	Poor Moll	Poor Moll

10	à pair & sequence	Au fourby	A pair, & sequence	**Au fourby**	Au fourby	At the fib	The Fib	The fib
11	à trois cents	A passe di(x/y)	A troys cents	**A passe dix**	A passe dix	At the passe ten	Pass Ten	Pass ten
12	au malheureux	A trente & ung	Au maleureux	**A trent & un**	A trente & un	At one and thirtie	Trente et quarante	Trente et un
13	à la condemnade	A pair & sequence	A la condemnade	**A pair & sequence**	Au pair & sequence	At post and paire, or even and sequence	Pair and sequence	Pair and sequence
14	à la carte virade	A troys cens	A la charte uirade	**A trois cens**	A trois cens	At three hundred	Three hundred	Three hundred
15	au maucontent	Au malheureux	Au malcontent	**Au malheureux**	Au malheureux	At the unluckie man	Beggar my Neighbour	Beggar my neighbour
16	au cocu	A la condemnade	Au coqu	**A la condemnade**	A la condemnade	At the last couple in hell	Odd Man Out	Odd man out
17	à qui si parle	A la charte virade	A qui a, fi parle	**A la chrate virade**	A la charte virade	At the hock	The turned card	The turned card
18	à pille	Au maucontent	A pille nade, jocque, fore	**Au maucontent**	Au malcontent	At the surlie	Take Miss	Take miss
19	nade	Au lansquenet	A mariage	**Au lansquenet**	Au lansquenet	At the lanskenet	Hère	Lansquenet
20	jocque	Au cocu	Au gay	**Au cocu**	Au cocu	At the cukoe	Lansquenet	Cuckow
21	fore	A qui a si parle	A l'opinion	**A qui ha si parle**	A quia, fi parle	At puffe, or let him speak that hath it	Cuckow	Let him speak that hath it
22	à mariage	A pille, nade, jocque, fore	A qui faict l'ung faict l'aultre	**A pile, nade, jocq, fore**	A pile, nade, iocque, fore	At take nothing and throw out	Let him speak that hath it	Teetotum
23	au gay	A mariaige	A la sequence	**Au mariage**	Au mariage	At the marriage	Teetotum	Marriage
24	à l'opinion	Au gay	Au luettes	**Au gay**	Au gay	At the frolick or jack daw	Marriage	I have it
25	à qui fait l'un fait l'autre	A l'opinion	Au tarau	**A lopinion**	A l'opinion	At the opinion	I have it	Opinion
26	à la sequence	A qui faict lung faict laultre	A coquimbert, qui gaigne perd	**A qui faict l'un faict l'autre**	A qui fait l'un fait l'autre	At who doth the one, doth the other	Opinion	Who does one thing does the other
27	aux luettes	A la sequence	Au beline	**A la sequence**	A la seqence	At the sequences	Who doth one doth the other	Sequences
28	au tarau	Au luettes	Au tourment	**Aux luettes**	Aux luettes	At the ivory bundles	Sequences	Cockall
29	à coquinbert qui gagne perd	Au tarau	A la ronfle	**Au tarau**	Au tarau	At the tarots	Cockall	Tarots
30	au beliné	A coquinbert qui gaigne perd	Au glic	**A coquimbert, qui gaigne perd**	A coquimbert qui gaigne perd	At losing load him	Taroc	Losing Lodam
31	au torment	Au beline	Au honneurs	**Au beliné**	Au beliné	At he's gulled and *esto*	Loser wins	Gulls
32	à la ronfle	Au torment	A la morre	**Au torment**	Au torment	At the torture	Gulls	Torture
33	au glic	A la ronfle	Aux eschetz	**A la ronfle**	A la ronfle	At the handruf	Torture	Snorer
34	aux honneurs	Au glic	Au renard	**Au glic**	Au glic	At the click	Snorer	Gleek
35	à la mourre	Aux honneurs	Aux marelles	**Aux honneurs**	Aux honneurs	At honours	Gleek	Honors

36	aux échetz	A la mourre	Aux vaches	**A la mourre**	A la mourre	At love (jouer à l'amour)	Honours	Morra
37	au renard	Aux eschetz	A la blanche	**Aux eschetz**	Aux eschets	At the chesse	Morra	Chess
38	Aux marrelles	Au renard	A la chance	**Au renard**	Au renard	At Reynold the fox	Chess	Fox and Geese
39	Aux vaches	Au marelles	A troys detz	**Aux marelles**	Aux marelles	At the squares	Fox and Geese	The men's morris
40	A la blanche	Au vasches	Aux tables	**Aux vasches**	Aux vasches	At the cowes	Morris	Black and white
41	A la chance	A la blanche	A la nicnocque	**A la blanche**	A la blanche	At the lottery	Pick-a-back	Raffles
42	A trois dés	A la chance	Au lourche	**A la chance**	A la chance	At the chance or mumchance	Blank draw	Mumchance
43	Aux tales	A trois dez	A la renette	**A trois dez**	A trois dez	At three dice or maniest bleaks	Mumchance	Three dice
44	à la nicnocque	Au tables	Au barignin	**Aux tables**	Aux tables	At the tables	Three dice	Tables
45	Au lourche	A la nicnocque	Au trictrac	**A la nicnocque**	A la nicnocque	At nivinivinack	Draughts	Nick nock
46	à la renette	Au lourche	A toutes tables	**Au lourche**	Au lourche	At the lurch	Nick-nock	Lurch
47	au barignin	A la renette	Aux tables rabatues	**A la renette**	A la renette	At doublets or queensgame	Lurch	Queen's game
48	au trictrac	Au barignin	Au reniguebieu	**Au barignin**	Au barignin	At the failie	Queen's Game	Sbaraglino
49	à toutes tables	Au trictrac	Au forçat	**Au trictrac**	Au trictrac	At the French tictac	Sbaraligno	Backgammon
50	Au[x] tables rabattues	A toutes tables	Aux dames	**A toutes tables**	A toutes tables	At the long tables or ferkeering	Backgammon	All tables
51	Au reniguebieu	Au tables rabatues	A la babou	**Aux tables rabatues**	Aux tables rabatues	At feltdown	Long Tables	Fell down
52	Au forcé	Au reniguebieu	A primus secundus	**A reniguebieu**	A reniguebieu	At Tods body	Fell down	Copsbody
53	aux dames	Au force	Au pied du cousteau	**Au force**	Au forcé	At needs must	Hang it all	Needs must
54	A la babou	Au dames	Aux clefz	**Aux dames**	Aux dames	At the dames or draughts	Needs must	Draughts
55	à primus secundus	A la babou	Au franc du carreau	**A la babou**	A la baboué	At bob and mow	Draughts	Mop and mow
56	au pied du couteau	A primus secundus	A pair, ou non	**A primus secundus**	A primus secundus	At primus secundus	Mop and mow	Primus, secundus
57	Aux clefs	Au pied du cousteau	A croix, ou pille	**Au pié du couteau**	Au pied du cousteau	At mark-knife	Primus Secundus	Shuffleboard
58	au franc du carreau	Au clefz	Aux pingres	**Aux clefz**	Aux clefs	At the keyes	Mark-knife	Keys
59	A pair ou sou	Au franc du carreau	A la bille	**Au franc du carreau**	Au franc du carreau	At span-counter	The Keys	Hopscotch
60	à croix ou pile	A pair ou non	Au s/fauatier	**A pair, ou non**	A pair, ou non	At even or odd	Hop-Scotch	Odds or evens

61	aux pingres	A croiy ou pille	Au hybou	**A croix, ou pile**	A croix, ou pille	At crosse or pile	Odd or Even	Heads or tails
62	à la bille	Au martres	Au dorelot du lievre	**Aux martres**	Aux martres	At bal and huckle-bones	Heads or Tails	Huckle-bones
63	au savatier	Au pingres	A la tirelitantaine	**Aux pingres**	Aux pingres	At ivory balls	Huckle-bones	Spillikins / jackstraw
64	au hibou	A la bille	Au cochonnet va devant	**A la bille**	A la bille	At the billiards	Toss-pin	Lawn billiards
65	Au dorelot du lièvre	Au sauatier	Aux pies	**Au savatier**	Au sauatier	At bob and hit	Billiards	Hunt the slipper
66	à la tirelitantaine	Au hybou	A la corne	**Au hybou**	Au hybou	At the owle	Hunt-the-slipper	The moping owl
67	à cochonnet va devant	Au dorelot du lievre	Au boeuf violé	**A dorelot du lievre**	Au dorelot du lievre	At the charming of the hare	The Owl	Coddling the hare
68	au pies	A la tirelitantaine	A la cheveche	**A la tirelitantine**	A la tirelitantine	At pull yet a little	Coddling the Hare	Tug of war
69	à la corne	A cochonnet va devant	A je-te-pinse sans rire	**A cochonnet va dev[ant]**	Au cochonnet va devant	At trudgepig	Yet one tug	Trudge-pig
70	au boeuf violé	Au pies	A picoter	**Aux pies**	Aux pies	At the magatapies	Trudge-pig	Magpies
71	à la cheveche	A la corne	A deferrer l'asne	**A la corne**	A la corne	At the horne	Magpies	The horn
72	au propos	Au beuf viole	A la jaultru	**Au beuf violé**	Au boeuf violé	At the flower'd or shrovetide oxe	The Horn	The Shrovetide ox
73	à je te pince sans rire	A la cheveche	Au bourry bourry zou	**A la cheveche**	A la cheveche	At the madge-owlet	The shrove-tide Ox	The madge-owlet
74	à picoter	A je te pinse sans rire	A je m'assis	**A je te pinse sans rire**	A je te pinse sans rire	At pinch without laughing	The Madge-owlet	Hinch pinch and laugh not
75	à déferrer l'âne	A picoter	A la barbe d'oribus	**A picoter**	A picoter	At prickle me and tickle me	Pinch-without-laughing	Pinpricks
76	à la Jautru	A deferrer l' asne	A la bousquine	**A deferrer l'asne**	A deferrer l'asne	At the unshoing of the Asse	Pricking	Unshoeing the ass
77	au bourry bourry zou	A la jautru	A tire la broche	**A la jautru**	A la jautru	At the cocksesse	Unshoeing the Ass	Sheep to market
78	à je m'assis	Au bourry bourry zou	A la boutte foyre	**Au bourry bourry zou**	Au bourry bourry zou	At hari hohi	The Cocksess (Urq)	Giddap, Neddy
79	à la barbe d'oribus	A je massis	A compere prestez moy vostre sac	**A je m'assis**	A je m'assis	At I set me down	I spy, hie!	I sit down
80	à la bousquine	A la barbe doribus	A la couille de belier	**A la barbe doribus**	A la barbe d'oribus	At earle beardie	I sit down	Gold-beard
81	à tire la broche	A la bousquine	A boutte hors	**A la bousquine**	A la bousquine	At the old mode	Gold-beard	Buskins
82	à la boutte foire	A tire la broche	A figues de Marseille	**A tire la broche**	A tire la broche	At draw the spit	Buskins	Draw the spit
83	à compère prêtez-moi votre sac	A la boutte foyre	A la mousque	**A la boutte foyre**	A la bouttefoire	At put out	Draw the Spit	Chucker-out
84	à la coille de bélier	A compere prestez moy vostre sac	A l'archer tru	**A cõpere prestez moy vostre sac**	A copere prestez moy votre sac	At gossip and lend me your sack	Put out	Gossip, lend me your sack
85	à boutte hors	A la couille de belier	A la ramasse	**A la couille de belier**	A la couille de belier	At the ramcod ball	Gossip, lend me your sack	Hamstool

86	à figues de Marseille	A boute hors	Au croc Madame	**A boute hors**	A boutehors	At thrust out the harlot	Ramscod Ball	Thrust out
87	à la mousque	A figues de Marseille	A vendre l'avoyne	**A figures de Marseille**	A figues de Marseille	At Marseil figs	Thrust out	Marseilles figs
88	à l'archer tru	A la mousque	A souffler le charbon	**A la mousque**	A la mousque	At nicknamrie	Marseilles Figs	The fly
89	à la ramasse	A larcher tru	Aux responsailles	**A larcher tru**	A larchetru	At stick and hole	At the Fly	Bowman shot
90	au croc madame	A escorcher le renard	A juge vif, & juge mort	**A escorche le renard**	A escorche le renard	At boke him, or flaying the fox	Bowman Shot	Flay the fox
91	à vendre l'avoine	A la ramasse	A tirer les fers du four	**A la ramasse**	A la ramasse	At the branching it	Flay the Fox	Tobogganning
92	à souffler le charbon	Au croc madame	Au faulx villain	**A croc madame**	A croc madame	At trill madam, or grapple my Lady	Pick me up	Hold the pass
93	aux responsailles	A vendre louoine	Au caillleteau	**A vendre l'avoine**	A vendre l'avoine	At the cat selling	Nine-holes	Selling oats
94	au juge vif, juge mort	A souffler le charbon	Au boussu aulican	**A souffler le charbon**	A souffler le charbon	At blow the coale	Oat-selling	Blow the coal
95	à tirer les fers du four	Au responsailles	A sainct trouvé	**Aux responsailles**	Aux responsailles	At the rewedding	Blow the Coal	Hide and seek
96	au faux vilain	Au juge vif, a juge mort	A pinse morille	**Au jug vif, & juge mort**	A jugé vif, & juge mort	At the quick and the dead judge	Re-wedding	Quick and dead judge
97	aux cailleteaux	A tirer les fers du four	Au poyrier	**A tirer les fers du four**	A tirer les fers du four	At unoven the iron	Quick and dead Judge	Irons out of the fire
98	au bossu aulican	Au fault villain	A pimpompet	**Aux faulx villain**	Aux faux villain	At the false clown	Unoven the Iron	The false clown
99	à saint trouvé	Au cailleteaux	Au tryori	**Aux cailleteaux**	Aux cailleteaux	At the flints, or at the nine stones	The false Clown	Nine-stones
100	à pince morille	Au bossu aulican	Au cercle	**A boussu aulican**	Au bossu alican	At to the crutch hulch back	Nine-stones	The hunchback courtier
101	au poirier	A sainct trouve	A la truye	**A sainct trouvé**	A saint trouvé	At the Sanct is found	The hunchback Courtier	The finding of the saint
102	à pimponnet	A pinse morille	A ventre contre ventre	**A pinse morille**	A pinse morille	At hinch, pinch and laugh not	The Finding of the Saint	Hinch-pinch
103	Au triori	Au poirier	Aux combes	**Au Poirier**	Au porier	At the leek	Hinch-pinch	Pear tree
104	Au cercle	A pimpompet	A la vergette	**A pimpompet**	A pimpompet	At bumdockdouse	Pear-tree	Bumbasting
105	A la truye	Au triori	Au palet	**Au triori**	Au triory	At the loose gig	Queen o' the May	The Breton jig
106	à ventre contre ventre	Au cercle	A j'en suys	**Au cercle**	Au cercle	At the hoop	The Breton Jig	Barlibreak
107	aux combes	A la truye	Au foucquet	**A la truie**	A la truye	At the sow	The Whirligig	The sow

108	à la vergette	A ventre contre ventre	Aux quilles	**A ventre contre ventre**	A ventre contre ventre	At belly to belly	The Sow	Belly to belly
109	au pallet	Aux combes	Au rapeau	**Aux combes**	Aux combes	At the dales or straths	Belly to Belly	Cubes
110	au j'en suis	A la vergette	A la boule plate	**A la vergette**	A la vergette	At the twigs	Gables	Pushpin
111	à foucquet	Au palet	Au vireton	**Au palet**	Au palet	At the quoits	Pushpin	Quoits
112	Aux quilles	Au jen suis	A la courte boule	**Au j'en suis**	Au j'en suis	At I'm for that	Quoits	The ball is mine
113	au rampeau	A foucquet	A la griesche	**Au foucquet**	Au fouquet	At tilt at weekie	I'm in it	Fouquet
114	à la boule plate	Au quilles	A la recocquillete	**Aux quilles**	Aux quilles	At nine pins	Fouquet	Nine-pins
115	au pallet	Au rapeau	Au cassepot	**Au rapeau**	Au rapeau	At the cock quintin	Nine-pins	The return course
116	à la courte boule	A la boulle plate	A montalant	**A la boulle plate**	A la boule plate	At tip and hurle	The return Course (Cot)	Flat bowl
117	à la griesche	Au vireton	A la pirouete	**A vireton**	Au vireton	At the flat bowles	Flat Bowl	The dart
118	à la recoquilette	Au picquarome	Aux jonchées	**Au picquarome**	Au picquarome	At the veere and tourn	Whirligig	Pick-a-back to Rome
119	Au cassepot	A rouchemerde	Au court baston	**A rouchmerde**	A rouchmerde	At rogue and ruffian	Pick-a-back to Rome	Chaw-turd
120	A montalent	A angenart	Au pireuollet	**A angenart**	A angenart	At bumbatch touch	Touch-clod	Sly Jack
121	à la pyrouette	A la coute boulle	A cline musette	**A la court boulle**	A courte boulle	At the mysterious trough	Sly Jack	Short bowls
122	aux jonchées	A la griesche	Au picquet	**A la griesche**	A la griesche	At the short bowles	Short Bowls	Shuttlecock
123	au court bâton	A la recoquillette	A la blancque	**A la requoquillette**	A la requoquillette	At the daple gray	Shuttlecock	Dogs' ears
124	au pyreuollet	Au cassepot	Au furon	**Au cassepot**	Au cassepot	At cock and crank it	Dogs' ears	Smash crock
125	à cline musette	A montalent	A la seguette	**A montalent**	A montalant	At break-pot	Smash Crock	My desire
126	au picquet	A la pyrouete	Au chastelet	**A la pyrouete**	A la pirouette	At my desire	My Desire	Whirlygig
127	à la blancque	Au jonchees	A la rengée	**Aux jonchées**	Aux jonchees	At twirlie whirlietrill	Twirlywhirly	Rush bundles
128	au furon	Au court baston	A la foussette	**Au court baston**	Au court baston	At the rush bundles	Rush bundles	Short staff
129	à la seguette	Au pyreuollet	Au ronflart	**Au pireuollet**	Au pireuollet	At the short staffe	Short Staff	Hodman blind
130	au chastelet	A chine muzete	A la trompe	**A cline mucete**	A clinemucette	At the whirlygig gigge	The flying Dart	Spur away

131	à la rangée	Au picquet	Au moyne	**Au piquet**	Au picquet	At hide and seek, or are you all hid	Are you all hid?	Sweepstakes
132	à la foussete	A la blancque	Au tenebry	**A la blanque**	A la blanche	At the picket	Spur away	The ferret
133	au romflart	Au furon	A l'esbahy	**Au furon**	Au furon	At the blank	Blanks	The pursuit
134	à la trompe	A la seguette	A la soulle	**A la seguette**	A la seguette	At the pilfrers	Hunt about	Cob-nut
135	au moine	Au chastelet	A la navette	**Au chastelet**	Au chastelet	At the caveson	The iron Mask	In a row
136	au tenebry	A la rengee	A fessart	**A la rengée**	A la rengee	At prison barres	Pyramids	The cherry pit
137	à l'esbahy	A la foussete	Au ballay	**A la foussette**	A la foussette	At have the nuts	All in a Row	The humming-top
138	à la soulle	Au ronflart	A sainct Cosme je te viens adorer	**Au ronflart**	Au ronflart	At cherrie-pit	The cherry Pit	The whip-top
139	à la navette	A la trompe	Au chesne forchu	**A la trompe**	A la trompe	At rub and rice	The Humming-top	The peg-top
140	à fessart	Au moyne	Au chevau fondu	**Au moyne**	Au moine	At whip-top	The Whip-top	The hobgoblin
141	au ballay	Au tenebry	A la queue au loup	**Au tenebry**	Au tenebri	At the casting top	The Peg-top	Scarred face
142	à saint Cosme je te viens adorer	A lesbahy	A pet en gueulle	**A l'esbay**	A l'esbahy	At the hobgoblins	The Hobgoblin	Pushball
143	au chêne fourchu	A la soulle	A Guillemin baille my ma lance	**A la soulle**	A la soulle	At the O wonderful	Scared face	Fast and loose
144	au chevau fondu	A la navette	A la brandelle	**A la navette**	A la navette	At the soilie smutchie	Catch-ball	Fatass
145	à la queue au loup	A fessart	Au treseau	**A fessart**	A fessart	At fast and loose	Fast and loose *(Cotg.)*	The cock-horse
146	à pet en guele	Au ballay	Au bouleau	**Au ballay**	Au ballay	At scutchbreech	Fat-rump	Saint Cosma, I come to worship you
147	à Guillemin baille my ma lance	A sainct Cosme je te viens adorer	A la mousche	**A sainct Cosme je te viens adorer**	A sainct Cosme je te viens adorer	At the broom-beesome	Cock-horse	The brown beetle
148	à la brandelle	A escharbot le brun	A la migne migne boeuf	**A escarbot lebrun**	A escarbat le brun	At St. Cosme, I come to adore thee	St. Côsme, I come to worship	I catch you napping
149	au trezeau	A je vous prens sans verd	Aux propos	**A je vous prens sans verd**	A je vous prens sans verd	At the lustie brown boy	The brown Beetle	Fair and gay Lent goes away
150	au bouleau	A bien a beau sen va quaresme	A neuf mains	**A bein & beau s'en va quaresme**	A bien & beau s'en van quaresme	At I take you napping	I catch you napping	The forked oak
151	à la mouche	Au chesne forchu	Au chapifol	**A chesne forchu**	A chesne fourchu	At fair and softly passeth lent	Fair and gay goes Lent away	Leap-frog
152	à la migne migne boeuf	Au chevau fondu	Au pontz cheuz	**Au chevau fondu**	A chevau fondu	At the forked oak	The forked Oak	The Wolf's tail
153	au propos	A la queue au loup	A Colin bridé	**A la queue au loup**	A la queuë au loup	At trusse	Leap-frog	Fart-in-throat

154	à neuf mains	A pet en gueulle	A la grolle	**A pet en gueulle**	A pet en gueulle	At the wolfes taile	The Wolf's Tail	Billy boy, give me my lance
155	au chapifou	A Guillemin baille my ma lance	Au cocquantin	**A Guillemin baille my ma lance**	A Guillaume baille my ma lance	At bum to busse, or nose in breech	Nose in breech	The swing
156	aux ponts cheus	A la brandelle	A Colin Maillard	**A la brandelle**	A la brandelle	At Geordie give me my lance	William, give me my Lance	The shock of wheat
157	à colin bridé	Au treseau	A myrelimousle	**Au treseau**	Au treseau	At swaggie, waggie or shogieshou	See-saw	The small bowl
158	à la grolle	Au bouleau	Au mouschart	**Au boleau**	Au bouleau	At stook and rook, sheare, and threave	Shocks of Corn	Baste the Bear
159	au cocquantin	A la mousche	Au crapault	**A la mousche**	A la mousche	At the birch	The small Bowl	Tic-tac-toe, my first go
160	à Colin maillard	A la migne migne beuf	A la crosse	**A la migne migne beuf**	A la migne migne boeuf	At the musse	Faly away, Jack	Cross questions and crooked answers
161	à myrelimoufle	Au propous	Au piston	**Au propous**	Au propos	At the dilli dilli darling	Tit, tat, toe, my first go	Nine hands
162	à mouschart	A neuf mains	Au bille boucquet	**A neuf mains**	A neuf mains	At oxe moudie	A propos	Harry-racket
163	au crapaud	Au chapifou	Aux roynes	**Au chapifou**	Au chapifou	At purpose in purpose	Nine Hands	The fallen bridges
164	à la crosse	Au pontz cheuz	Aux mestiers	**Au pontz cheuz**	Aux ponts cheux	At nine lesse	Harry-racket	Bridled Nick
165	au piston	A colin bride	A teste a teste bechevel	**A colin bride**	A colin bridé	At blinde-man-buffe	The fallen Bridges	Bull's-eye
166	au billeboucquet	A la grolle	A laver le coiffe ma Dame	**A la grolle**	A la grolle	At the fallen bridges	Bridled Nick	Battledore and shuttlecock
167	aux roynes	Au cocquantinz	Au belusteau	**Au cocquantin**	Au coquantin	At bridled nick	The Bull's Eye	Blindman's bluff
168	aux métiers	A Colin maillard	A semer l'auoyne	**A Colin maillard**	A colin maillard	At the white at buts	Battledore	Bob-cherry
169	à tête à tête bechevel	A myrelimosle	A brissault	**A miremosle**	A mirelimouste	At thwack swinge him	Blindman's Buff	Spy
170	à laver la coiffe ma dame	A mouschart	Au molinet	**A mouschart**	A mouschart	At apple, peare, plum	Bob-cherry	Frogs and toads
171	au belusteau	Au crapaul[t]	A defendo	**Au crapault**	Au crapaut	At mumgi	Frogs and Toads	Cricket
172	à semer l'avoine	A la crosse	A la virevouste	**A la crosse**	A la crosse	At the toad	Cricket	Pestle and mortar
173	à briffault	Au piston	A la bacule	**Au piston**	Au piston	At cricket	Pestle and Mortar	Cup and ball
174	au molinet	Au bille boucquet	Au laboureur	**Au bille boucquet**	Au billeboquer	At the pounding stick	Cup and Ball	The queens

175	à defendo	Au roynes	A la cheveche	**Aux roynes**	Aux roynes	At jack and the box	The Queens	The trades
176	à la virevoustre	Au mestiers	Aux escoublettes enragées	**Aux mestiers**	Aux mestiers	At the queens	The Trades	Heads and points
177	à la baculle	A teste a teste becheuel	A la beste morte	**A teste à teste bechevel**	A reste à teste bechuet	At the trades	Heads and Points	Dot and go one
178	au laboureur	Au pinot	A montemonte l'eschellete	**Au pinot**	Au pinot	At heads and points	Dot and go one	Wicked death
179	à la cheveche	A male mort	Au pourceau mory	**A malle mort**	A malle mort	At the vine-tree hug	Wicked Death	Fillips
180	aux escoublettes enragées	Aux croquinolles	A cul salé	**Aux croquinolles**	Aux croquinolles lave la coiffe madame	At black be thy fall	Fillips	Lady, I wash your cap
181	à la beste morte	A laver la coiffe ma dame	Au pigonnet	**A laver la coiffe madame**	Au belusteau	At ho the distaffe	Lady, I wash your Cap	The bolting cloth
182	à monte monte l'échelette	Au belusteau	Au tiers	**Au belusteau**	A sermet l'avoine	At Joane Thomson	The boulting Cloth	Sowing oats
183	au pourceau mory	A semer lauoyne	A la bourrée	**A semer lavoyne**	A brifaut	At the boulting cloth	Oat-sowing	The greedy glutton
184	à cul sallé	A briffault	Au sault du buysson	**A brifaut**	Au molimet	At the oats seed	Greedy Glutton	Windmills
185	au pigeonnet	Au molinet	A croyser	**Au molimet**	A defendo	At greedie glutton	Windmills	Defendo
186	au tiers	A defendo	A la cutte cache	**A defend**	A la vireuouste	At the morish dance	Defendo	Pirouetting
187	à la bourrée	A la vireouste		**A la vireuouste**	A la bacule	At feebie	Pirouetting	Bascule
188	au sant du buisson	A la bacule	A nid de la bondrée	**A la bacule**	Au laboureur	At the whole frisk and gambole	Butting Rams	Hind the plowman
189	à croiser	Au labourer	Au passauant	**Au laboureur**	Aux escoublettes enragees	At batabum, or riding of the wild mare	Bascule	The madge-owlet
190	à la cutte cache	A la cheveche	A la figue	**A la cheveche**	A la beste mort	At Hinde the Plowman	Hind the Plough-man	Butting rams
191	à la maille bourse en cul	Au escoublettes enraigées	Aux petarrades	**Aux escoublettes enraigées**	A monte monte l.. chelette	At the good mawkin	The dead Beast	The dead beast
192	au nic de la bondrée	A la beste morte	A pillemous-tarde	**A la beste mort**	Au pourceau mori	At the dead beast	Climb the Ladder	Climb the ladder
193	au passavant	A montemonte les chesette	A cambos	**A monte mõre l'eschelette**	Au cul sallé	At climbe the ladder Billie	The dead Pig	The dead pig
194	à la figue	Au pourceau mory	A la recheute	**Au pourceau mory**	Au pigeonnet	At the dying hog	The salt Doup	The salt rump
195	aux pétarrades	A cul salle	Au picandeau	**Au cul sallé**	Au tiers	At the salt doup	The Pigeon has flown	The pigeon has flown

196	à pillemoutarde	Au pigonnet	A crocqueteste	**Au pigeonnet**	A la bourree	At the pretty pigeon	Barley-Break *(Cotg.)*	Twos and threes
197	à cambos	Au tiers	A la grolle	**Au tiers**	Au sant du buisson	At the barley break	Faggots	Fagots
198	à la rechute	A la bouree	A la grue	**A la bourrée**	A croiser	At the bavine	The bush Jump	Jump in the bush
199	au picandeau	Au sault du buisson	A taillecoup	**Au sault du buisson**	A la cutte cache	At the bush leap	Crossing	Crossing
200	à croqueteste	A croyzer	Aux nasardes	**A croyser**	A la maille bourse en cul	At crossing	Hide and seek	Hide and seek
201	à la grolle	A la cutte cache	Aux allouettes	**A la cutte cache**	Au nid de la boudree	At bo-peep	Coin in the Tail-pocket	Coin in the tail-pocket
202	à la grue	A la maille bourse en cul	Aux chinque-naudes	**A la maille bourseen cul**	Au passavant	At the hardit arse-pursie	The Hawk's Nest	The buzzard's nest
203	à taillecoup	Au nid de la bondree		**Au nid de la boudrée**	A la figue	At the harrowers nest	Hark forward	Hark forward
204	aux nazardes	Au passavant		**Au passavant**	Aux petarrades	At forward hey	Figs	The fig
205	aux alouettes	A la figue		**A la figue**	A pille moustarde	At the fig	Gunshot Crack	Gunshot crack
206	aux chinequnaudes	Au petarrades		**Aux petarrades**	A cambos	At gunshot crack	Mustard-Pounder	Mustard-pounder
207		A pillemoustarde		**A pille moustarde**	A la recheute	At mustard peel	Out of School	Out of school
208		A cambos		**A cambos**	Au picandeau	At the gome	The Relapse	The relapse
209		A la recheute		**A la recheute**	A la croqueteste	At the relapse	The feathered Dart	The feathered dart
210		Au picandeau		**Au picandeau**	A la grolle	At jog breech, or prick him forward	Duck your Head	Duck your head
211		A crocqueteste		**A croqueteste**	A la gruë	At knockpate	Crane-dance	The bull's eye
212		A la grolle		**A la grolle**	A taillecoup	At the Cornish cough	Slash and cut	Crane-dance
213		A la grue		**A la grue**	Aux nazardes	At the crane-dance	Flirts on the Nose	Slash and cut
214		A taillecoup		**A taillecoup**	Aux aolloüettes	At slash and cut	Larks	Flirts on the nose
215		Au nazardes		**Aux nazardes**	Aux chinquenaud es	At bobbing, or the flirt n the nose	Filliping	Larks
216		Aux allouettes		**Aux allouettes**		At the larks		Flicks
217		Au chinquenaudes		**Aux chinquenau des**		At flipping		



Fig. 1 *Children's Games*, signed and dated 1560, panel 118 x 161, Vienna, Kunsthistoriches Museum



Fig. 2 Cathedral of Our Lady, Antwerp



Fig. 3 Albrecht Dürer, Sketch of the Abbey of St. Michael, Antwerp



Fig. 4 *Netherlandish Proverbs*, signed and dated 1559, panel 117 x 163. Berlin, Gemäldegalerie



Fig. 5 *The Battle Between Carnival and Lent*, signed and dated 1559, panel 118 x 164.5. Vienna, Kunsthistoriches Museum



Fig. 6a Adriaen Van de Venne, *Children Playing on the Voorhout in The Hague*. First published in Jacob Cats's *Houwelyck,* 1625

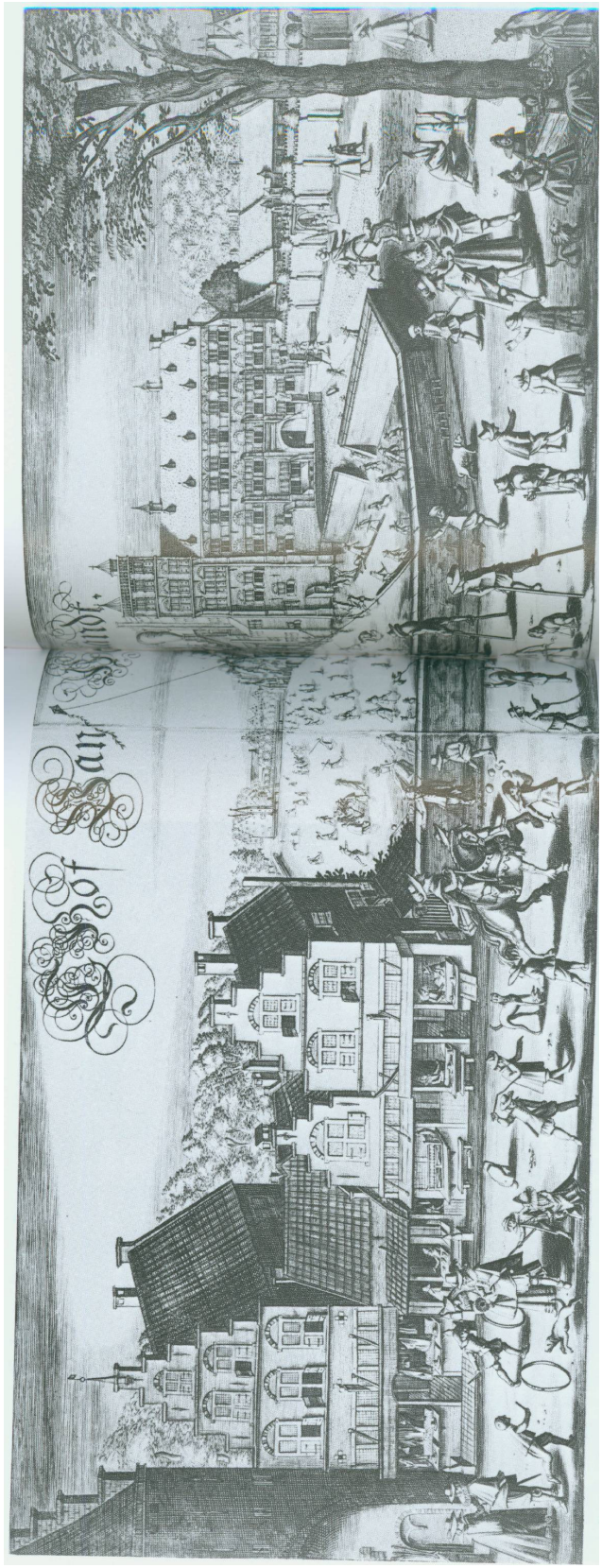


Fig. 6b Jan van de Velde II, *Het Hof van Hollandt*

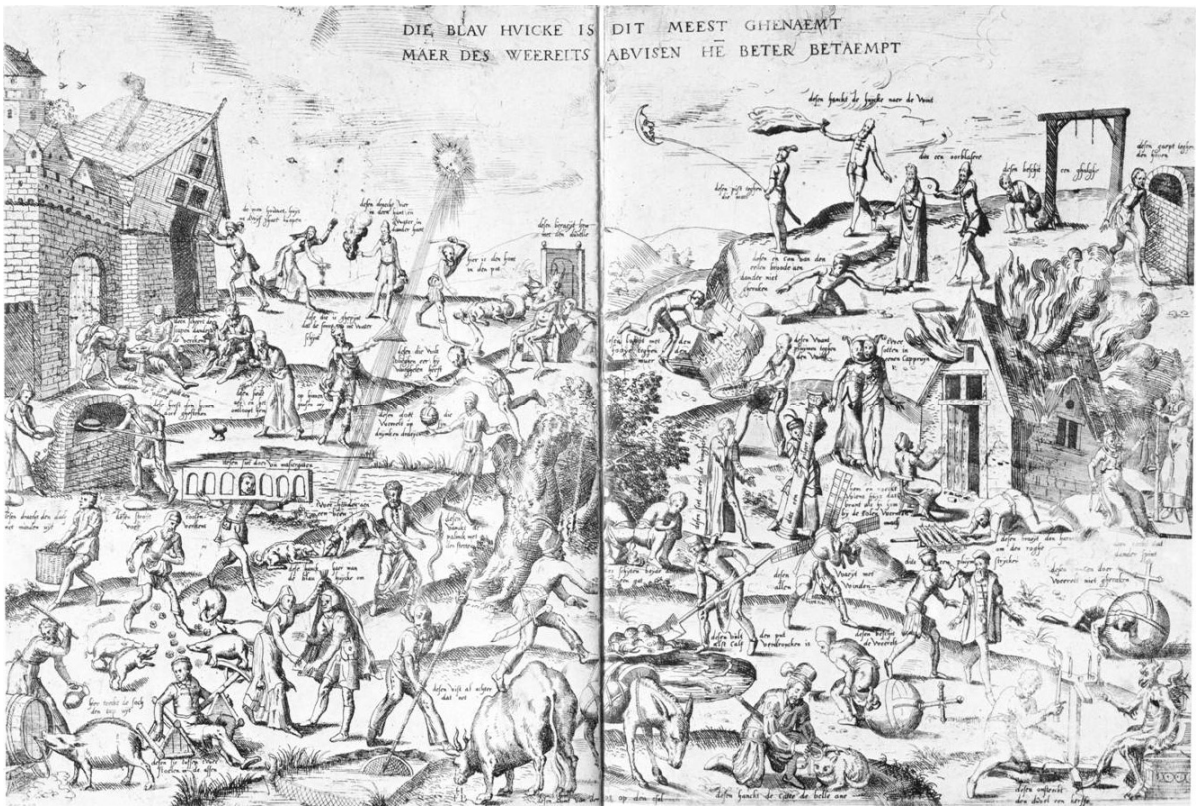


Fig. 7 Frans Hogenberg, *The Blue Cloak*, c. 1558, engraving. Impression in Brussels, Bibliothèque Royal

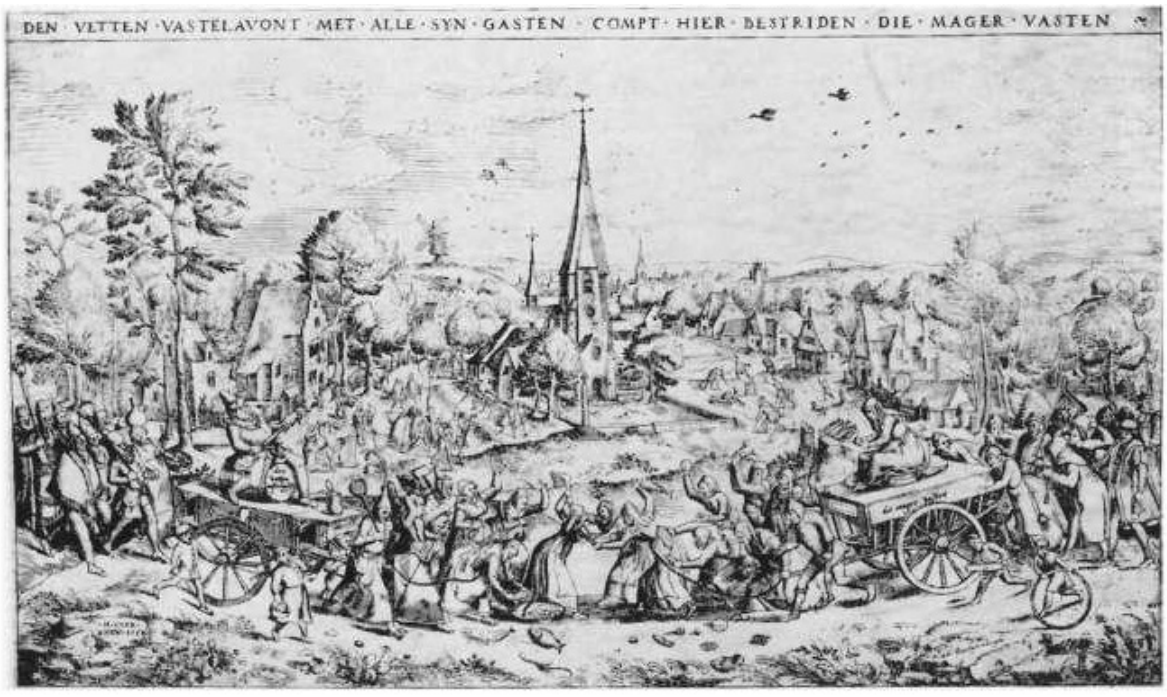


Fig. 8 Frans Hogenberg, *The Battle Between Carnival and Lent,* dated 1558, etching 32.7 x 51



Fig. 9 *Prudentia* (Prudence), signed and dated 1559, drawing in pen and brown ink, 22.5 x 29.8, Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique. Inscribed by another hand in red-brown ink in lower margin: *Si prudens esse cupis in futurum prospectum in ostende et quae possunt contingere animo tuo cuncta propone* (If you wish to be prudent, think always of the future and keep everything in the forefront of your mind)



Fig. 10 Upside-down globe detail, *Netherlandish Proverbs*



Fig. 11 Street detail, *Children's Games*



Fig. 12 Frans Francken II, *Kunstkammer*, 1636, 74 x 78. Vienna, Kunsthistoriches Museum



Fig. 13 Ferrante Imperato's *Museo*. Title page to Imperato's *Dell' Historia Naturale*, Naples, 1599



Fig. 14 January, feasting. *Très Riches Heures*, Musée Condé, Chantilly, MS 65, fol. 1v



Fig. 15 July, water jousting. *Hours of Adélaïde de Savoie*, Musée Condé, Chantilly, MS. Lat. 1362, fol. 7r

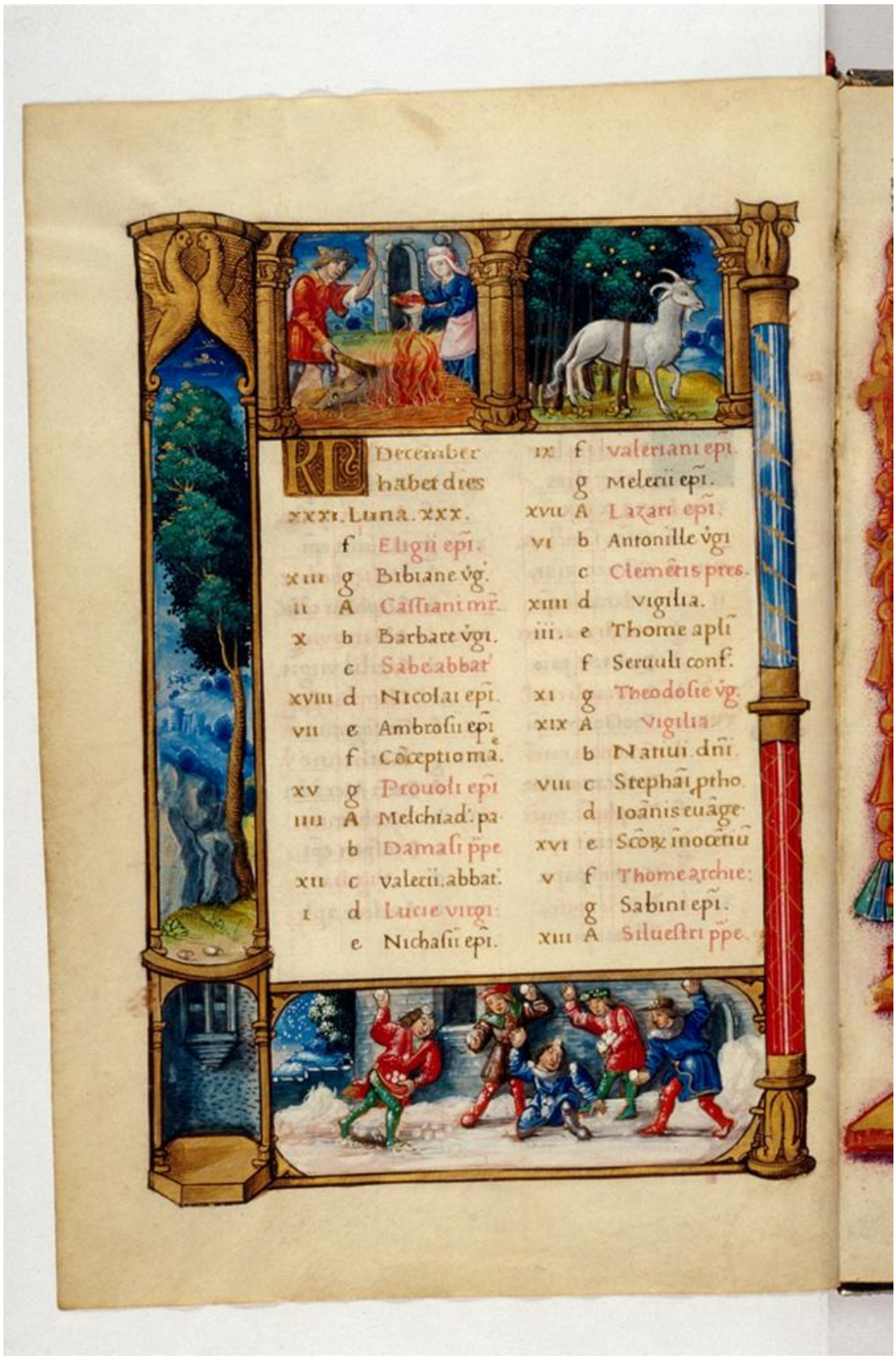


Fig. 16 December, snowball fight. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Douce MS. 135, fol. 7v



Fig. 17a September-October. Douce MS. 135, fols. 6r-6v

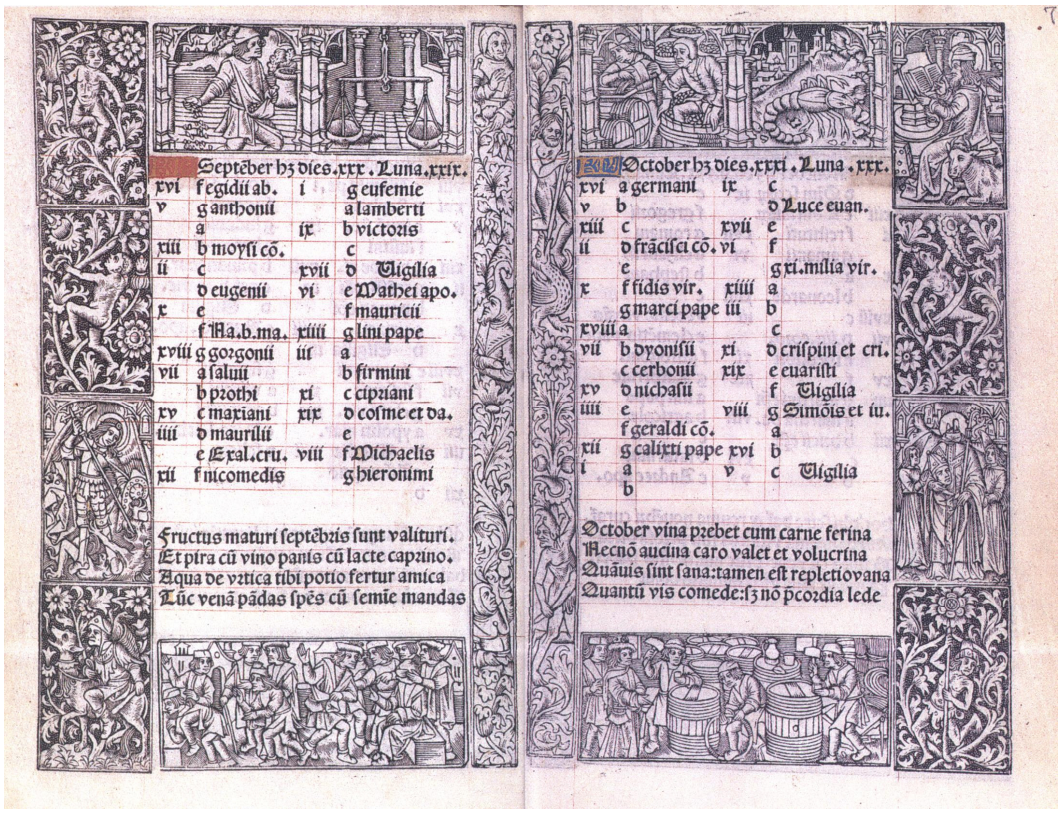


Fig. 17b September-October. Pierpont Morgan Library, 572, fols. a6v-a7r



Fig. 18 Blindman's Buff. *Livre d'heures de la famille Ango*, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS. NAL 392, fol. 140



Fig. 19 Blindman's Buff. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Douce MS. 276, fol. 49v



Fig. 20 February, warming by the fire, *Grimani Breviary*, Biblioteca Marciana, Venice, MS. Lat. I. 99, fol. 4v



Fig. 21 Games on frozen pond. Detail from *Census of Bethlehem*, signed and dated 1566, panel 116 x 164.5. Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts



Fig. 22 Children crossing a stream and grieving Biblical figures, detail from *The Procession to Calvary*, signed and dated 1564, panel 124 x 170. Vienna, Kunsthistoriches Museum



Fig. 23 September, ploughing, sowing crops and beating trees for acorns. Games of marbles, stilts and *kolf* in lower borders. *Golf Book*, British Library, London, Add. MS. 24098, fols. 26v & 27r

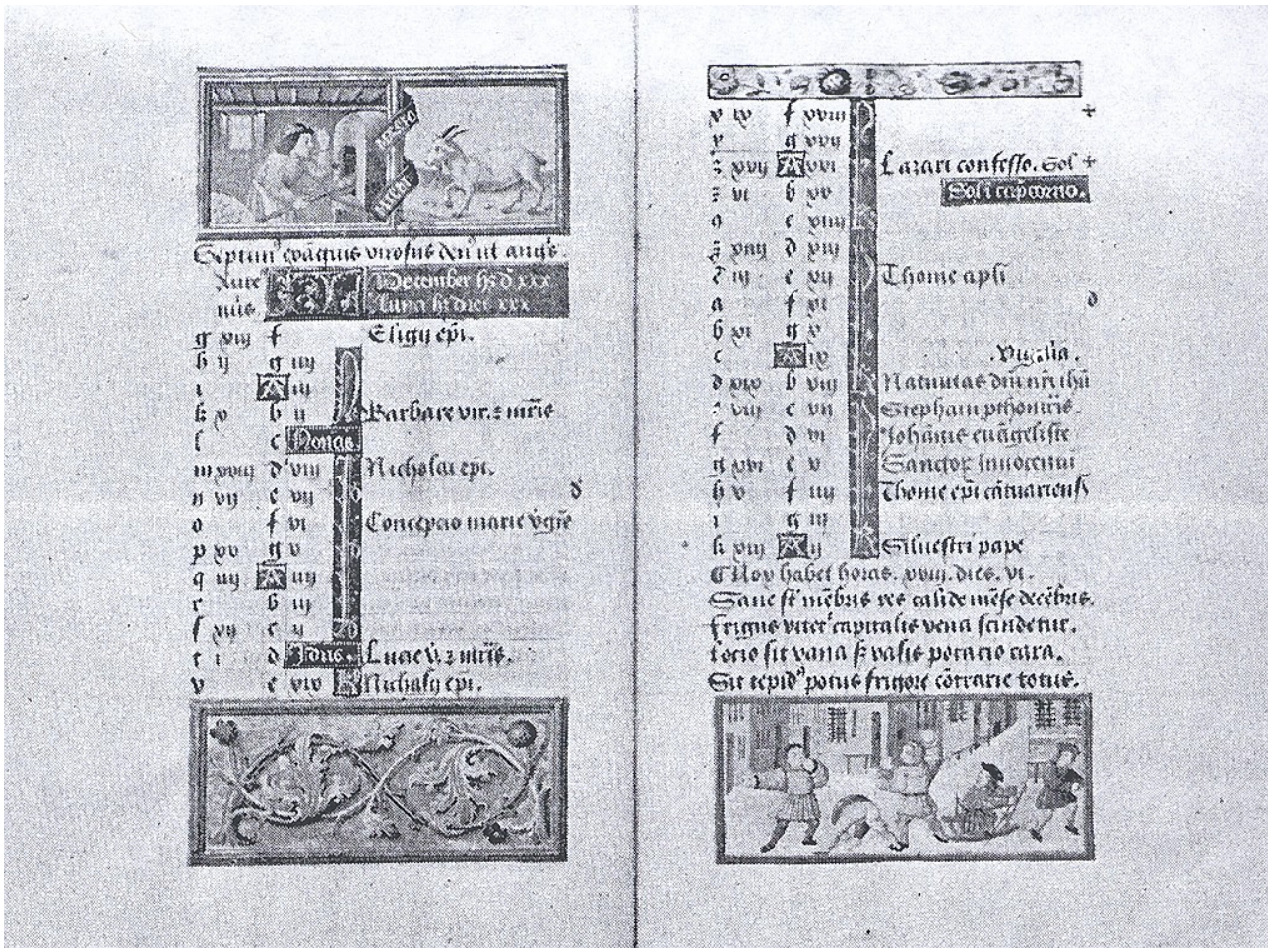


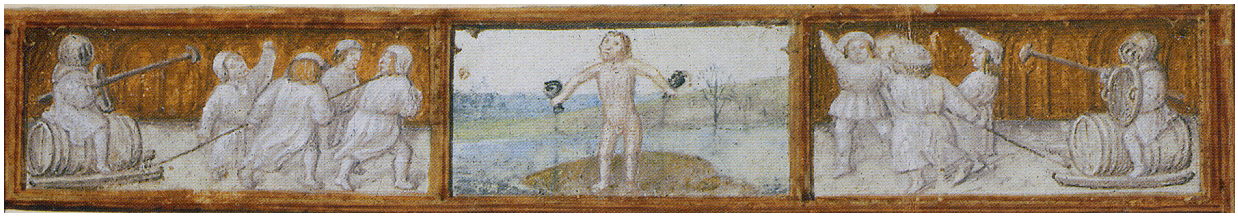
Fig. 24 December, baking and games in the snow. *Hours of Conde-Duque de Olivares*, Real Colegio de Corpus Christi, Valencia, fols. 14v & 15r



Fig. 25 January, warming by the fire. *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary*, Mayer van den Bergh Museum, Antwerp, Cod. 946, fol. 1v



Fig. 26 January. *Golf Book*, British Library, London, Add. MS. 24098, fol. 18v



Mayer van den Bergh Breviary, fol. 1v



Breviary of Eleanor of Portugal, fol. 2r



Spinola Hours, fol. 1v



Golf Book, fols. 18v and 19r



Grimani Breviary, fol. 2r

Fig. 27 January game-borders



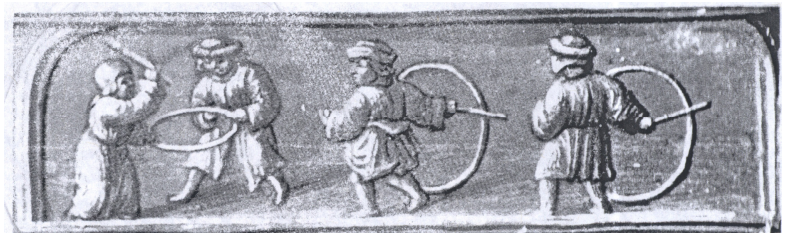
Fig. 28 King Carnival detail, *The Battle Between Carnival and Lent*



Fig. 29 Hoop rolling detail, *Children's Games*



Mayer van den Bergh Breviary, fol. 2r



Spielbuch, fol.5v & 6r



Hours of Conde-Duque Olivares, fol. 6r



Breviary of Eleanor of Portugal, fol. 2v



Spinola Hours, fol. 6v



Golf Book, fol. 19v

Fig. 30 Hoop rolling in game borders



Fig. 31 Sauter dans le cerceau, & autres jeux, *Les Trente Six Figures Contenant Tous les Jeux…*



Fig. 32 April, *Spinola Hours*, fol. 3r



Fig. 33 April, *Breviary of Eleanor of Portugal*, fol.3v



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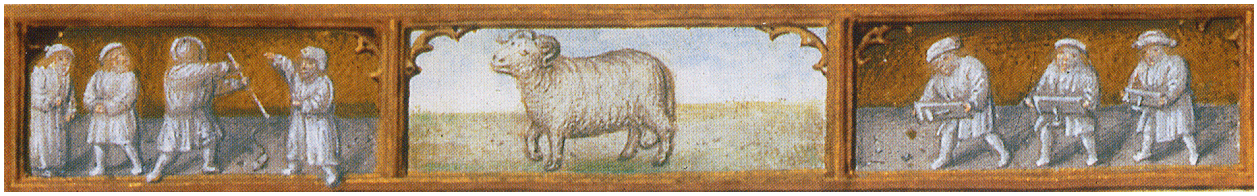
Fig. 34 April, courting couples. *Golf Book*, fol. 21v



Mayer van den Bergh Breviary, fol.2v



Spielbuch, fol. 7r



Spinola Hours, fol. 2v



Golf Book, fol. 20v

Fig. 35 Whip-tops and rattles in game-borders





Fig. 36 Whip-tops and rattles detail, *Carnival and Lent*



Fig. 37 Rattles. MS. Douce 276, fol. 83r



Fig. 38 Whip-tops detail, *The Hunters in the Snow,* signed and dated 1565, panel 117 x 162. Vienna, Kunsthistoriches Museum





Mayer van den Bergh Breviary, fol. 2v



Spielbuch, fol. 6



Olivares Hours, fol. 5r

Fig. 39 Games of ‘Blind Slipper’



Douce MS. 276, fol. 59v



Millefleurs Tapestry, 1500-1525, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Fig. 40 Games of 'Blind Slipper'



Fig. 41 Blowing bubbles and rush hats detail, *Children's Games*



June, Lisbon prayerbook, fol. 6v



April, *Spielbuch*, fol. 8r



April, *Golf Book*, fol. 21v



Ango Hours, fol. 138

Fig. 42 Games of blowing bubble

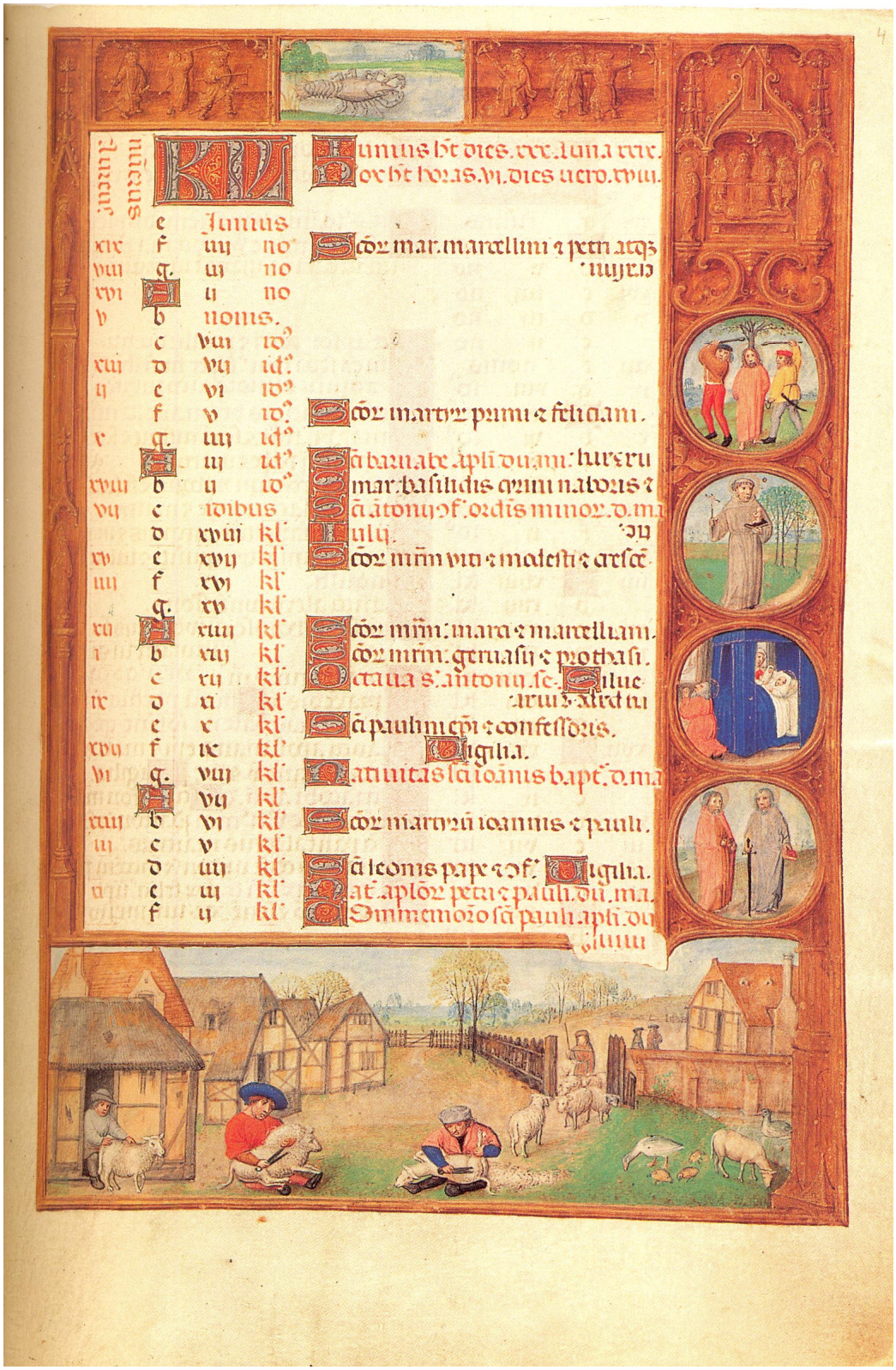
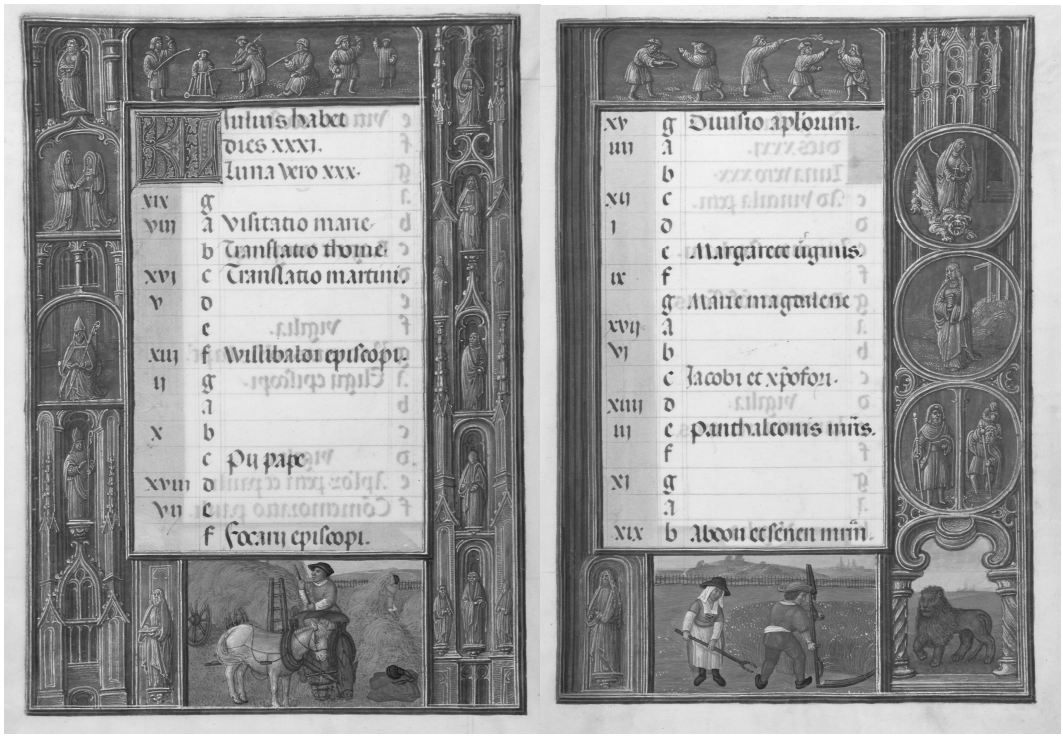
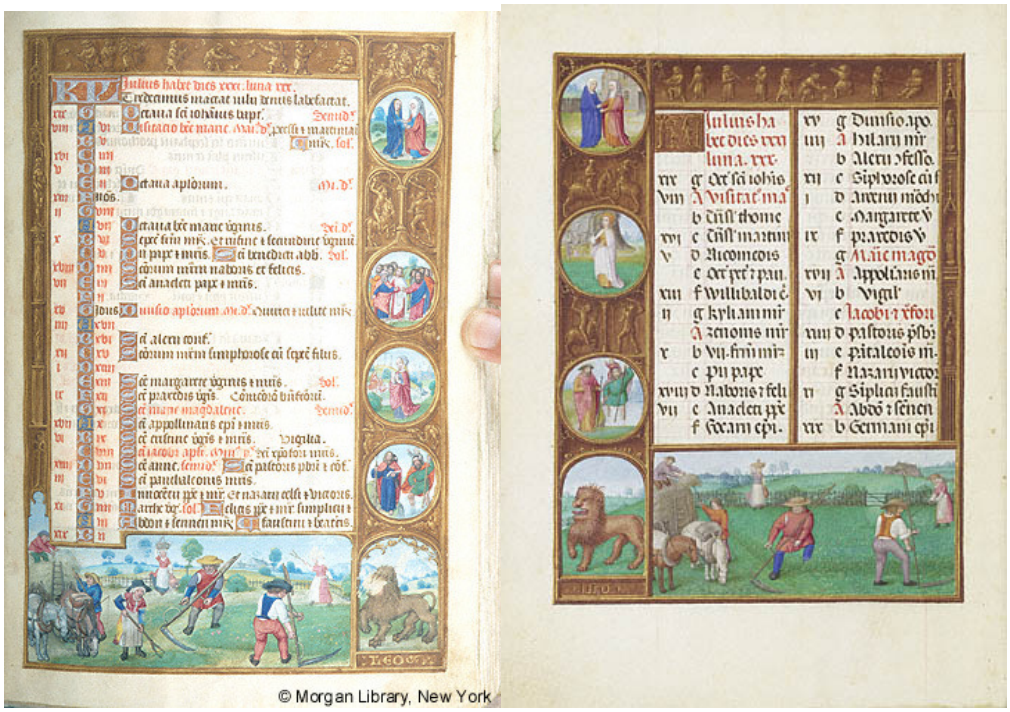


Fig. 43 June, *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary*, fol. 4



July, *Spielbuch*, fols. 10v and 11r



July, *Breviary of Eleanor of Portugal*, fol. 5r

July, *Spinola Hours*, fol. 4v

Fig. 44



Fig. 45 June and July, *Golf Book*, fols. 23v, 24r, 24v and 25r



July, *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary*, fol. 4v



July, *Spielbuch*, fol. 10v



July, *Spinola Hours*, fol. 4v

Fig. 46 Games with rushes



October, *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary*, fol. 6r



November, *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary*, fol. 6v



December, *Grimani Breviary*, fol. 3r

Fig. 47 Children observe autumn labours

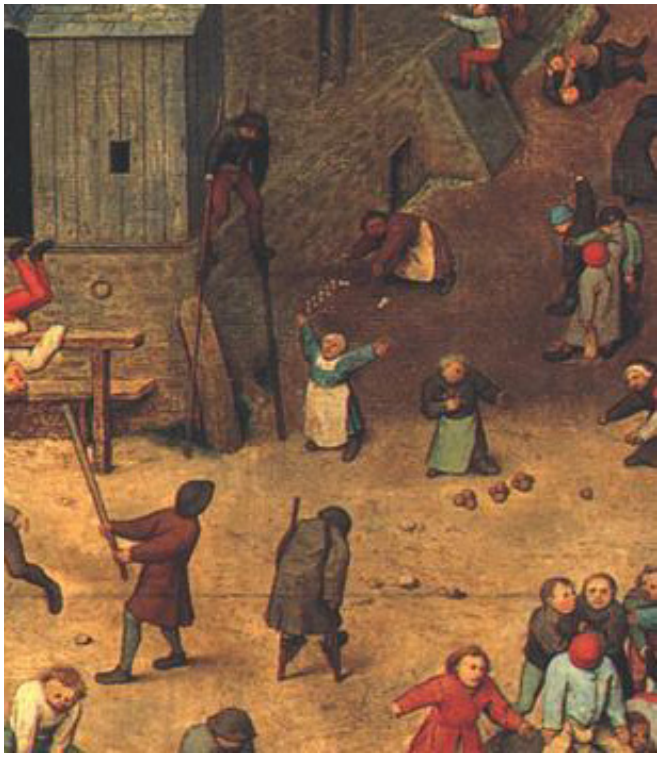


Fig. 48 Pig slaughtering. December, *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary*, fol. 7 and December, *Grimani Breviary*, fol. 13r





Fig. 49 Details of slaughtering a pig from *The Census at Bethlehem* and *The Hunters in the Snow*



Stilt walkers detail, *Children's Games*



September, *Golf Book*, fol. 26v



October, *Olivares Hours*, fol. 13r

Fig. 50 Stilt walking



Fig. 51 Span-counter detail, *Children's Games*



Fig. 52 Stella, *La Patte aux Jettons*



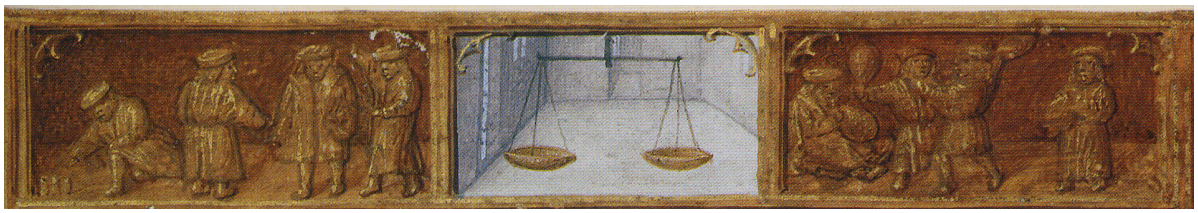
Fig. 53 Stella, *La Fossette*



Fig. 54 *Peasant Kermis*, c. 1567-8, panel 114 x 164. Vienna, Kunsthistoriches Museum



Skittles with knucklebones detail, *Children's Games*



September, *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary*, fol. 6r



September, *Spinola Hours*, fol. 6r



September, *Golf Book*, fol. 27v

Fig. 55 Skittles with knucklebones



Fig. 56 Knucklebones detail, *Children's Games*



February, *Spinola Hours*, fol. 2r

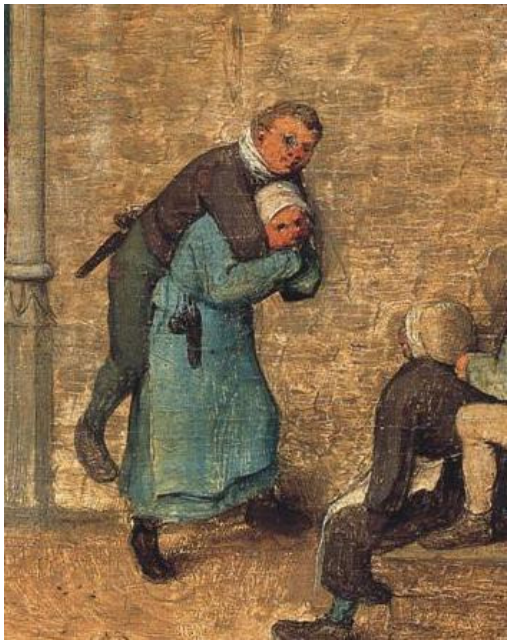






Fig. 57 Piggy-back, Brick on a lead and Follow-my-leader details, *Children's Games*



Fig. 58a *The Harvesters*, c.1565, panel 118 x 160.7. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art



Fig. 58b Detail of cock-throwing



Fig. 59a *Haymaking,* c.1565, panel 117 x 161. Prague, National Museum



Fig. 59b Detail of popinjay tournament



Fig. 60 Festive details, *Children's Games*



Fig. 61a Paper crown detail, *The Gloomy Day*



Fig. 61b Paper crown detail, *The Battle Between Carnival and Lent*



Fig. 62 Jan Steen, *The Feast of Saint Nicholas*, c. 1665-1668. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



Fig. 63 Bridal procession detail, *Children's Games*



May, *Mayer van den Bergh Breviary*, fol. 3v



May, *Spinola Hours*, fol. 3v

Fig. 64 May Queen processions in manuscript borders



Fig. 65 Pieter Brueghel the Younger, *The Whitsun Bride*, panel 50.8 x 77.8, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Estate of George Quackenbush, 1939

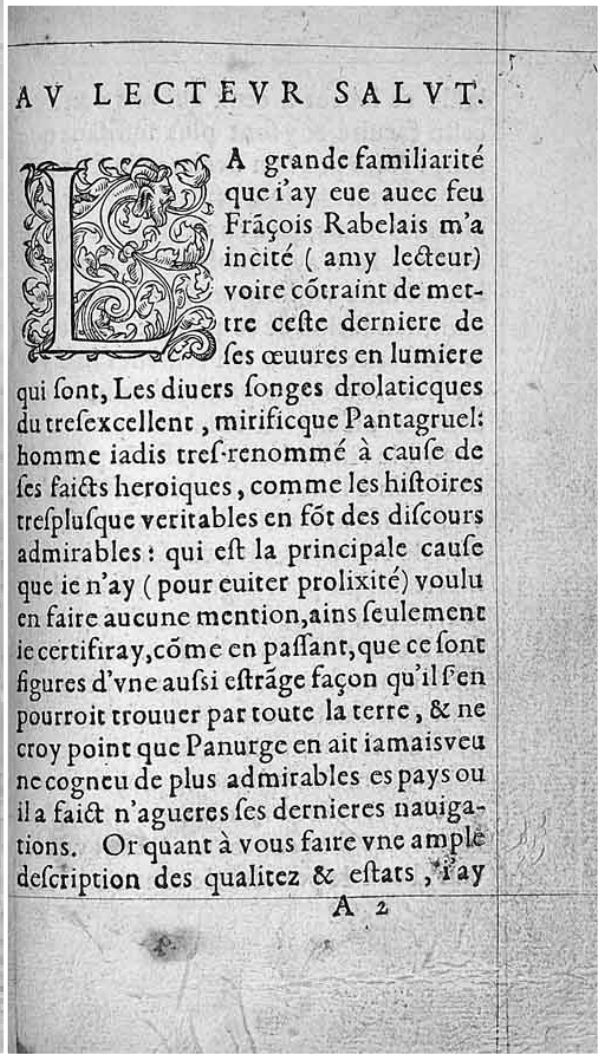


LES
SONGES DROLA-
TIQVES DE PANTAGRVEL,
ou ſont contenues pluſieurs figures
de l'inuention de maiſtre Fran-
çois Rabelais: & derniere
re œuure d'iceluy,
pour la recreation
des bons
eſprits.

A PARIS,

Par Richard Breton, Rue S. Iaques,
à l'Eſcreuiſſe d'argent.

M. D. LXV.



AV LECTEVR SALVT.

LA grande familiarité que i'ay eue auec feu Frãçois Rabelais m'a incité (amy lecteur) voire cõtraint de mettre ceſte derniere de ſes œuures en lumiere qui ſont, Les diuers ſonges drolaticques du treſexcellent, mirificque Pantagruel: homme iadis treſ-renommé à cauſe de ſes faicts heroiques, comme les hiſtoires treſpluſque veritables en fõt des diſcours admirables: qui eſt la principale cauſe que ie n'ay (pour euiter prolixité) voulu en faire aucune mention, ains ſeulement ie certifiray, cõme en paſſant, que ce ſont figures d'vne auſsi eſtrãge façon qu'il ſ'en pourroit trouuer par toute la terre, & ne croy point que Panurge en ait iamais veu ne cogneu de plus admirables es pays ou il a faict n'agueres ſes dernieres nauigations. Or quant à vous faire vne ample deſcription des qualitez & eſtats, i'ay

A 2

Fig. 66 François Desprez, *Les Songes drolatiques de Pantagruel, ou sont contenues plusieurs figures de l'invention de maistre François Rabelais: & derniere oeuvre d'iceluy, pour la recreation des bons esprits*, Paris, Richard Breton, 1565. Bibliothèque Municipale de Tours, Res 3540

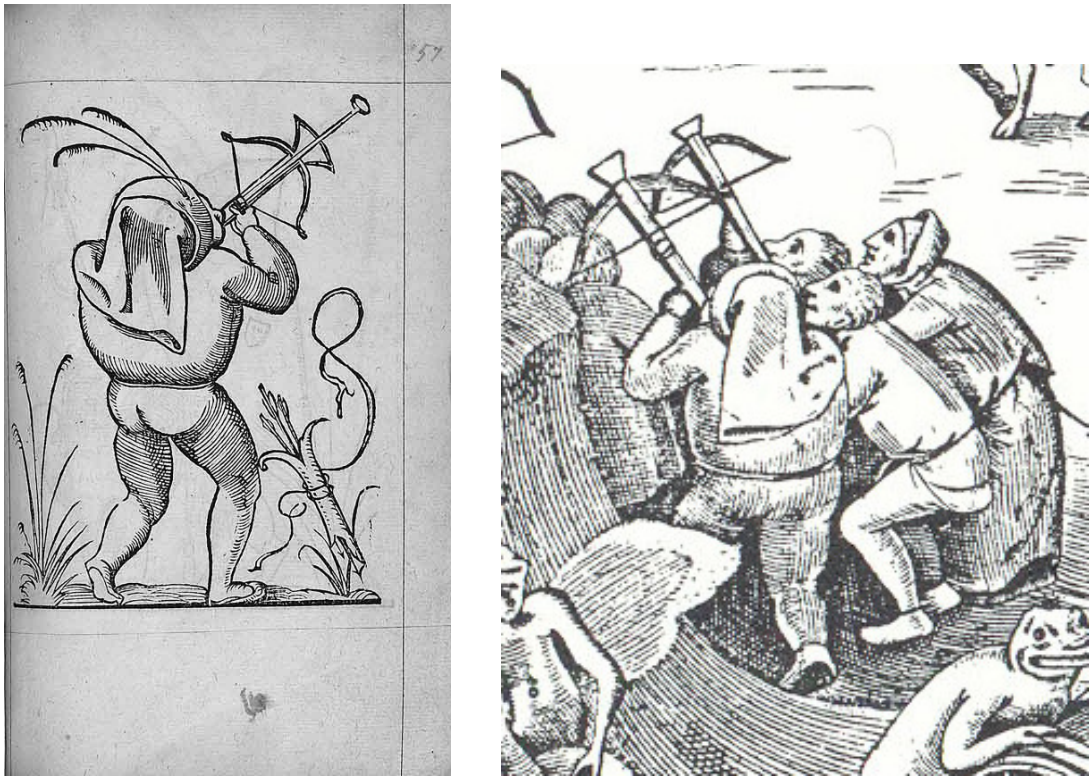


Fig. 67 *Songes drolatiques*, no. 57 and detail from *Avaritia*



Fig. 68 *Songes drolatiques,* no. 110 and detail from *Avarita*

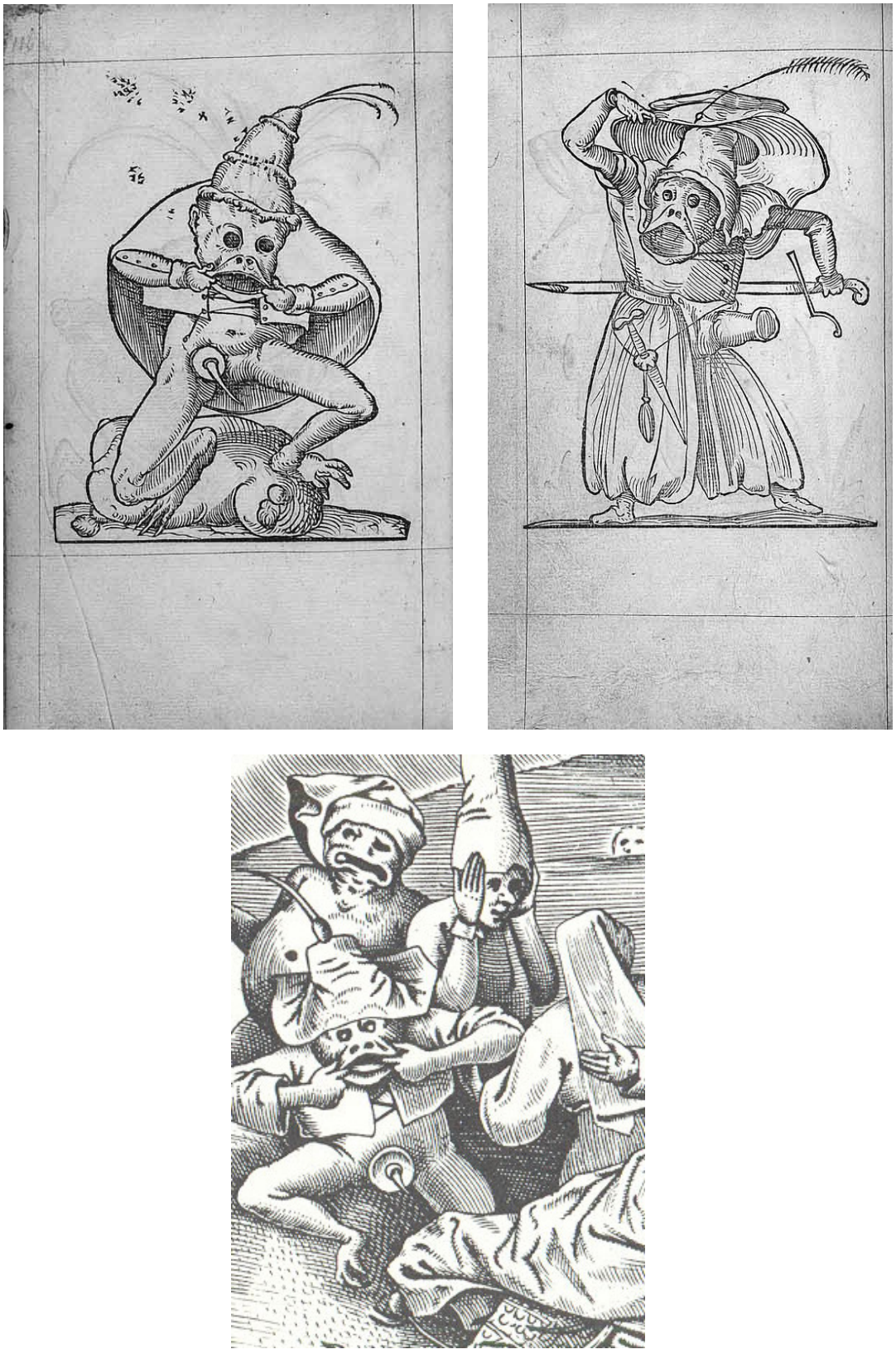


Fig. 69 *Songes drolatiques*, nos. 16 and 10 and detail from *Superbia*





Fig. 70 *Songes drolatiques*, no. 19 and detail from *Invidia*



Fig. 71 *Songes drolatiques* no. 5 and detail from *Invidia*



Fig. 72 *Songes drolatiques*, no. 28 and detail from *Invidia*



Fig. 73 *Songes drolatiques,* no. 38 and detail from *Ira*

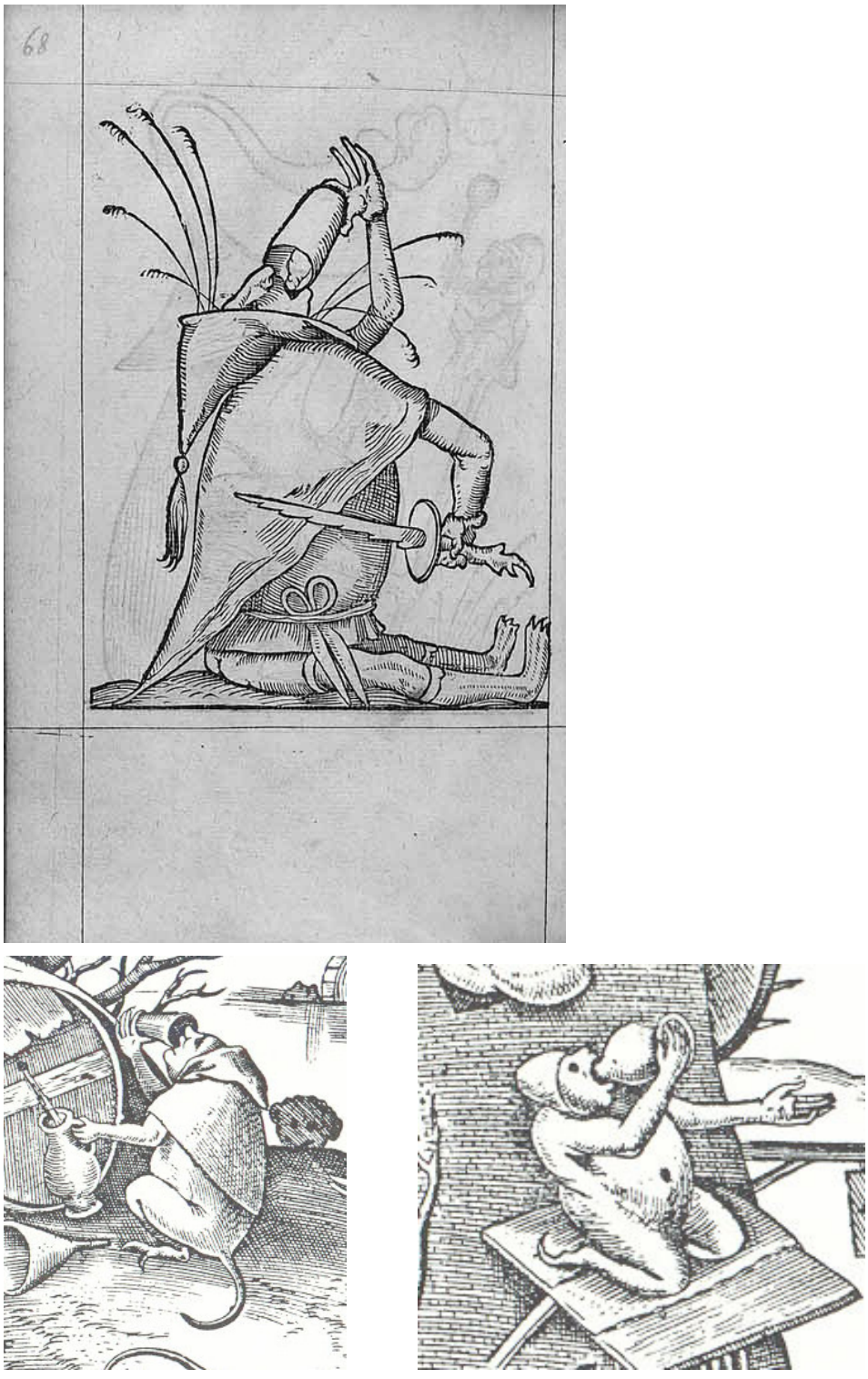


Fig. 74 *Songes drolatiques* no. 68 and details from *Gula*

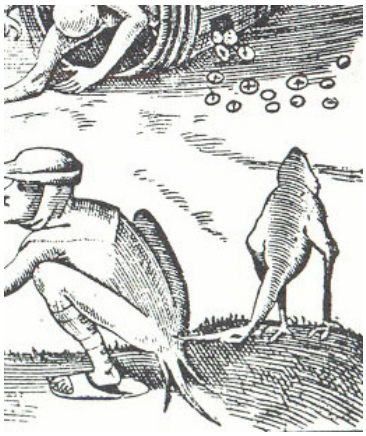


Fig. 75 *Big Fish Eat Little Fish,* 1557, engraving by Pieter van der Heyden after a pen and ink drawing signed and dated by Bruegel 1556, published by Hieronymous Cock. Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna



Fig. 76 *Songes drolatiques* no. 93 and detail from *Gula*





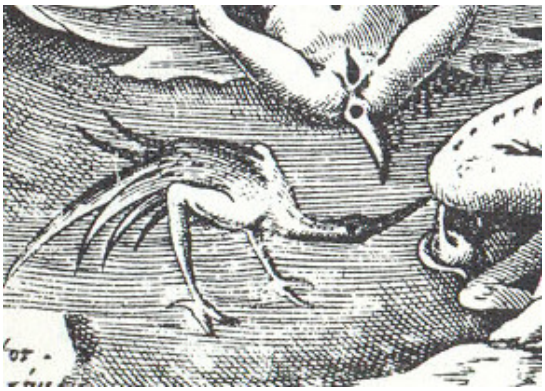
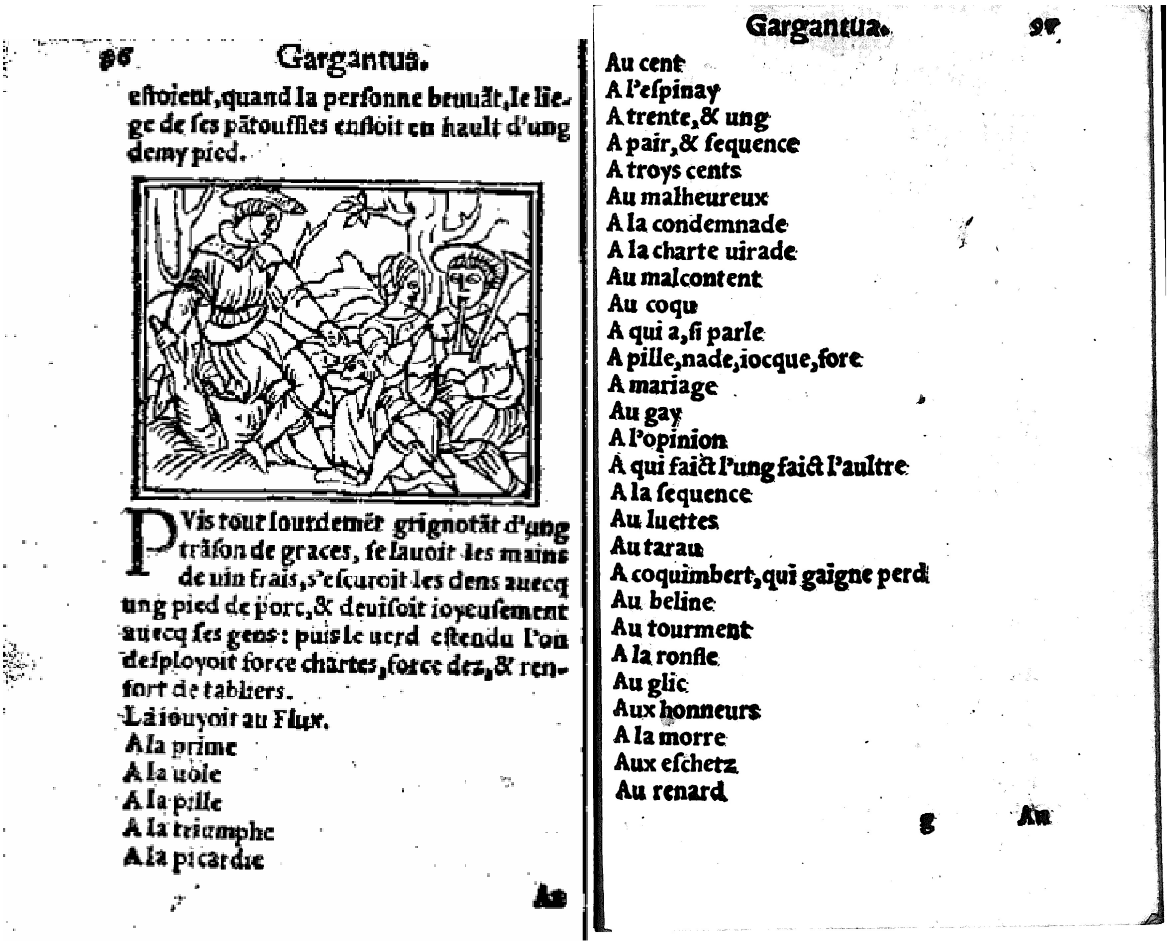


Fig. 77 *Songes drolatiques* no. 16 and bird detail from *Avarita* and *Luxuria*



96 Gargantua.

eſtoient, quand la perſonne bruuāt, le liege de ſes pātouffles enflоit en hault d'ung demy pied.

Puis tout lourdemēt grignotāt d'ung trāſon de graces, ſe lauoit les mains de uin frais, ſ'eſcuroit les dens auecq ung pied de porc, & deuiſoit ioyeuſement auecq ſes gens: puis le uerd eſtendu l'on deſployoit force chartes, force dez, & renfort de tabliers.

Là iouyoit au Flux.

A la prime
A la uole
A la pille
A la triumphe
A la picardie

Au

Gargantua. 97

Au cent
A l'eſpinay
A trente, & ung
A pair, & ſequence
A troys cents
Au malheureux
A la condemnade
A la charte uirade
Au malcontent
Au coqu
A qui a, ſi parle
A pille, nade, iocque, fore
A mariage
Au gay
A l'opinion
A qui faict l'ung faict l'aultre
A la ſequence
Au luettes
Au tarau
A coquimbert, qui gaigne perd
Au beline
Au tourment
A la ronfle
Au glic
Aux honneurs
A la morre
Aux eſchetz
Au renard

g An

Fig. 78 François Rabelais, '*Les jeux de Gargantua*', chapter 22, *La plaisante et ioyeuse histoyre du grand Geant Gargantua*, Lyon, Etienne Dolet, 1542. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, 37284442

Aux marrelles
Aux uaſches
A la blanche
A la chance
A troys detz
Aux tables
A la nicnocque
Au lourche
A la renette
Au barignin
Au triƈtrac
A toutes tables
Aux tables rabatues
Au reniguebieu
Au forçat
Aux dames
A la babou
A primus ſecundus
Au pied du couſteau
Aux clefz
Au franc du carreau
A pair, ou non
A croix, ou pille
Aux pingres
A la bille
Au ſauatier
Au hybou
Au dorelot du lieure

A la tirelitantaine
Au cochonnet ua deuant
Aux pies
A la corne
Au bœuf uiolé
A la cheueche
A ie te pinſe ſans rire
A picoter
A deferrer l'aſne
A la iaultru
Au bourry bourry zou
A ie m'aſsis
A la barbe d'oribus
A la bouſquine
A tire la broche
A la boutte foyre
A compere preſtez moy uoſtre ſac
A la couille de belier
A bourte hors
A figues de Marſeille
A la mouſque
A l'archer tru
A la ramaſſe
Au croc Madame
A uendre l'auoyne
A ſouffler le charbon
Aux reſponſailles
Au iuge uif, & iuge mort

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A tirer les fers du four
Au faulx uillain
Au caillleteau
Au boſſu aulican
A ſainct trouué
A pinſe morille
Au poyrier
A pimpompet
Au tryori
Au cercle
A la truye
A uentre contre uentre
Aux combes
A la uergette
Au palet
Au i'en ſuys
Au foucquet
Aux quilles
Au rapeau
A la boule plate
Au uireton
A la courte boule
A la grieſche
A la recocquillete
Au caſſepot
A montalant
A la pirouete
Aux ionchées

Au court baſton
Au pireuollet
A cline muſette
Au picquet.
A la blancque
Au furon
A la ſeguette
Au chaſtelet
A la rengée
A la fouſſette
Au ronflart
A la trompe
Au moyne
Au tenebry
A l'esbahy
A la ſoulle
A la nauette
A feſſart
Au ballay
A ſainct Coſme ie te uiens adorer
Au cheſne forchu
Au cheuau fondu
A la queue au loup
A pet en gueulle
A Guillemin baille my ma lance
A la brandelle
Au treſeau
Au bouleau

A la mouſche
A la migne migne bœuf
Aux propos
A neuf mains
Au chapifol
Au pontz cheuz
A Colin bridé
A la grolle
Au cocquantin
A Colin Maillard
A myrelimouſle
Au mouſchart
Au crapault
A la croſſe
Au piſton
Au bille boucquet
Aux roynes
Aux meſtiers
A teſte a teſte becheuel
A lauer la coiffe ma Dame
Au belusteau
A ſemer l'auoyne
A briffault
Au molinet
A defendo
A la uireuouſte
A la bacule
Au laboureur

A la

A la cheueche
Aux eſcoublettes enragées
A la beſte morte
A montemonte l'eſchellete
Au pourceau mory
A cul ſalé
Au pigonnet
Au tiers
A la bourrée
Au ſault du buyſſon
A croyſer
A la cutte cache
A la maille bourſe en cul
Au nid de la bondrée
Au paſſauant
A la figue
Aux petarrades
A pillemouſtarde
A cambos
A la recheute
Au picandeau
A crocqueteſte
A la grolle
A la grue
A taillecoup
Aux naſardes
Aux allouettes
Aux chinquenaudes

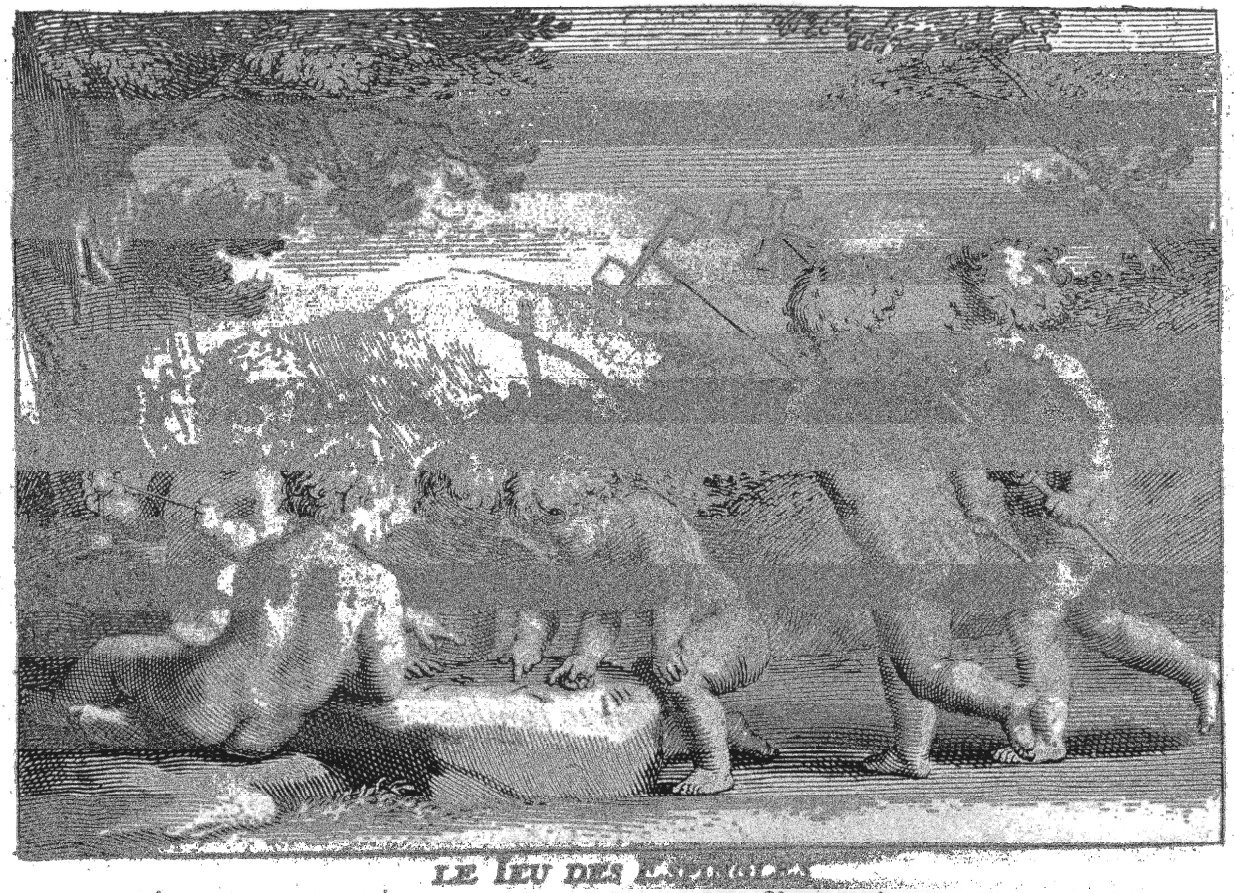
g 4 Apres



Fig. 79 Maerten van Cleve, *Children's Games,* 1560's panel, Ducastel collection, Saint Germain-en-Laye, Musée Municipal



Fig. 80 Pieter van der Borcht, *Monkey Games,* c. 1580, published as part of a series of sixteen etchings by Philips Galle



LE IEU DES ESPINGLES

Cependant que ces mignonets
mettent au vent leurs moulinets;
d'autres assis sur l'herbe verte
ne s'animent pas pour vn peu,
prétendans, apres quelque perte,
tirer leurs espingles du Ieu. 6



Fig. 81 Stella, *Le jeu des espingles* and details of windmills from *Children's Games*





Fig. 82 Stella, *La Rangette* and detail of castles from *Children's Games*

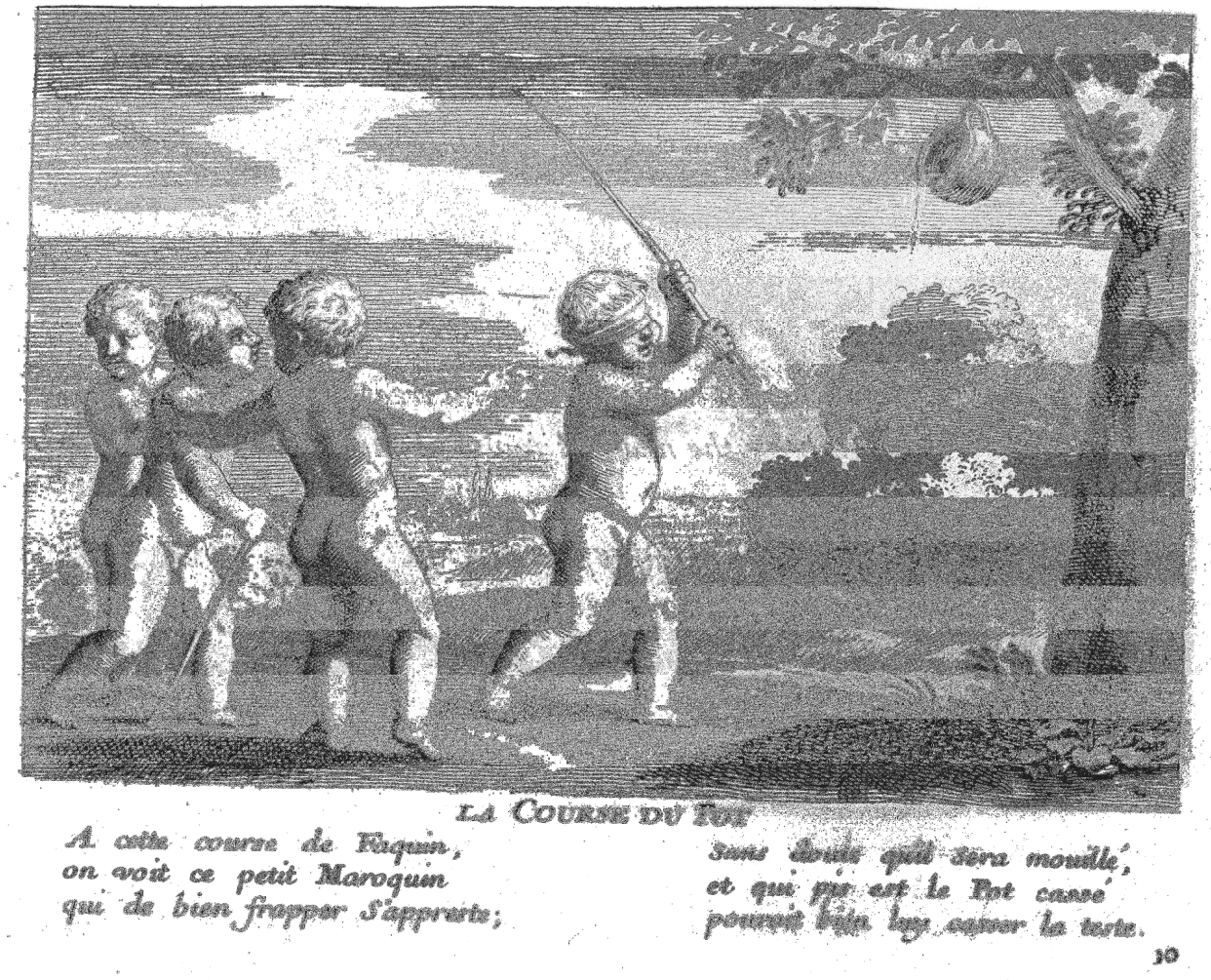




Fig. 83 Stella, *La course du pot* and detail of smash-crock from *Children's Games*





Fig. 84 Games of catch with pots in *Carnival and Lent* and Douce manuscript 276, fol. 8



Fig. 85 Gambling detail, *Carnival and Lent*



Fig. 86 *The Triumph of Death*, c. 1562-4, panel, 117 x 162, Madrid, Prado



Fig. 87 Teetotum detail, *Children's Games*





Fig. 88 Stella, *Le jeu de pet-en-guelle* and Douce MS 276, fol. 118r and 35r

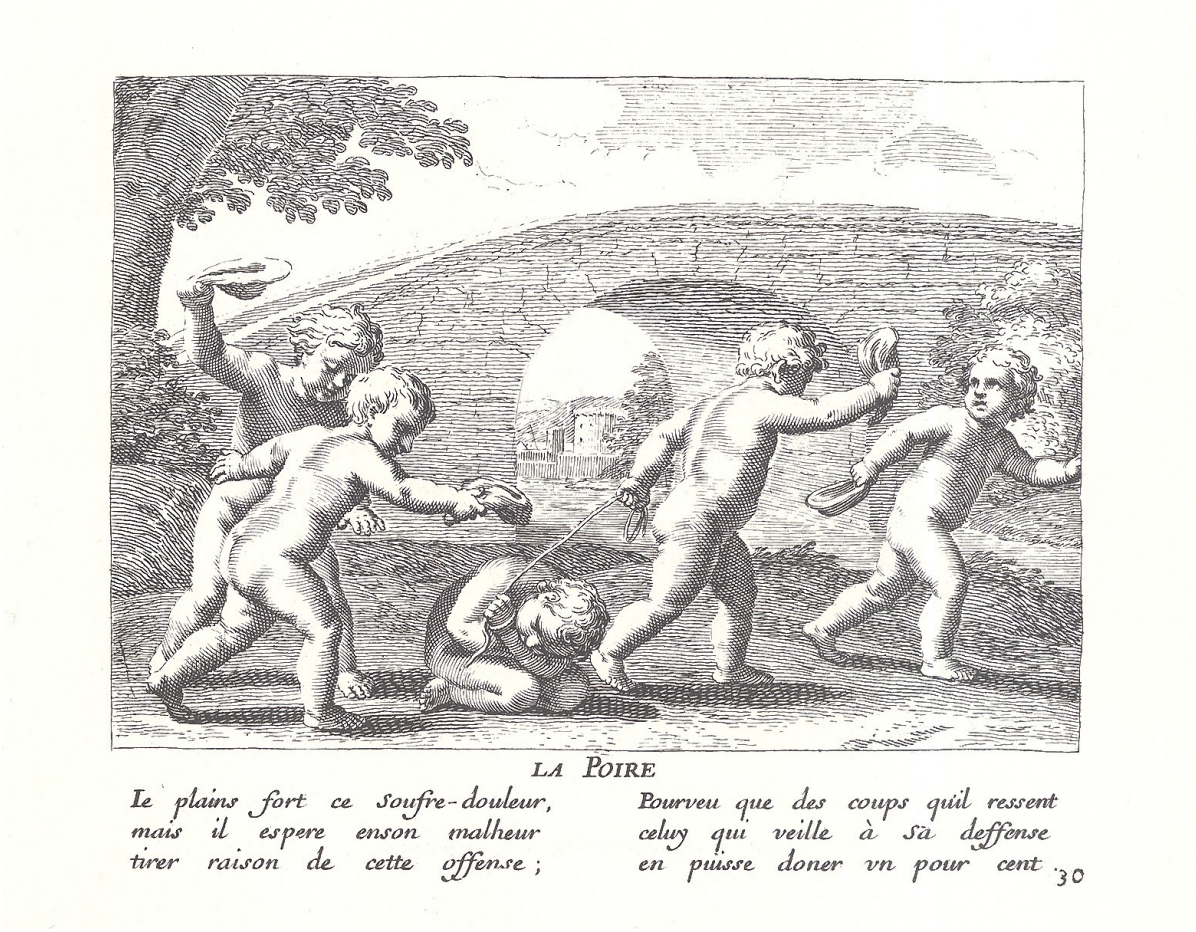




Fig. 89 Stella, *La Poire* and 'bait the bear' detail from *Children's Games*

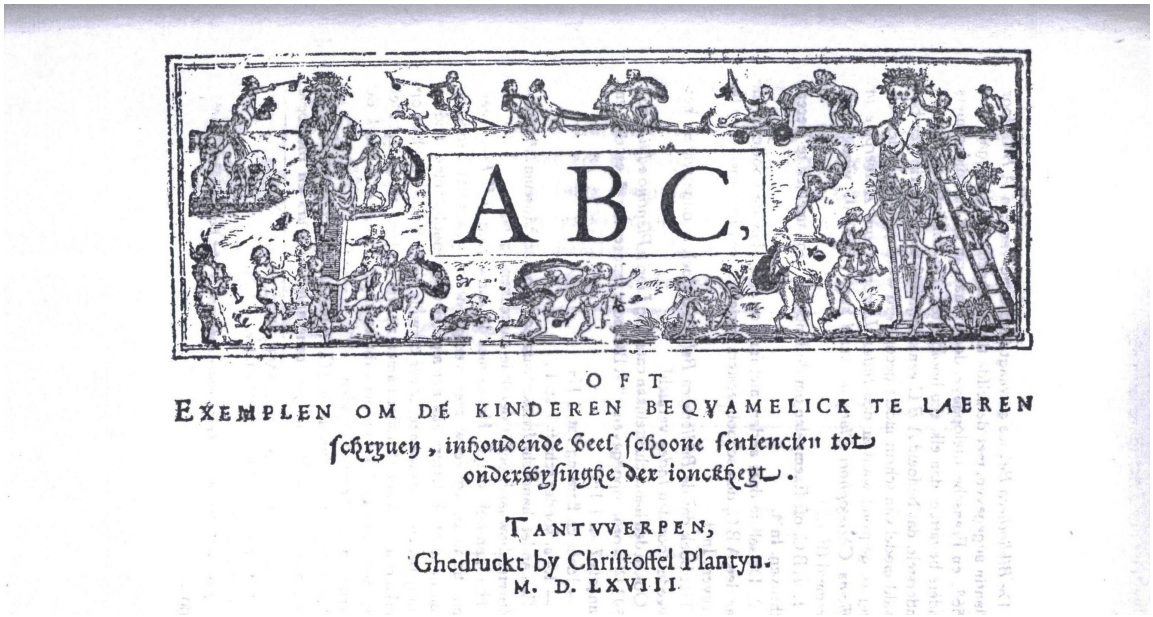


Fig. 90 Frontispiece, Peter Heyn's *ABC*, Antwerp, Plantin Press, 1568



Fig. 91 *Temperentia* (Temperance), ca. 1560. Engraving attributed to Philips Galle after a drawing signed and dated by Bruegel in 1560 in Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. Published by Hieronymous Cock



Fig. 92 *Livre d'heures de Marie Chantault*, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS. Smith-Lesouëf 39, fol. 3v. Early sixteenth century

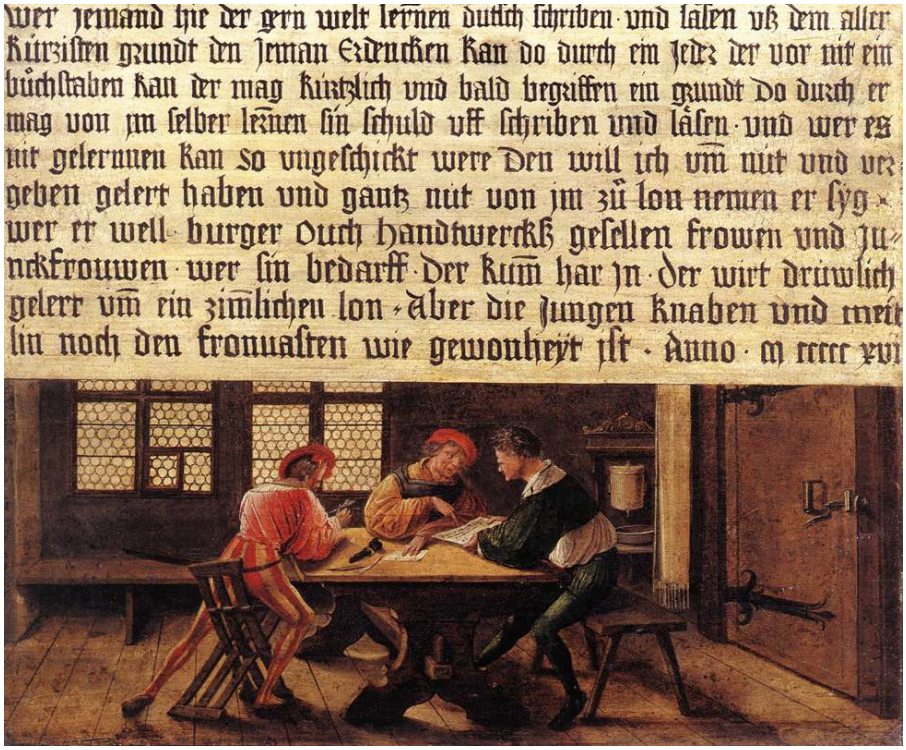


Fig. 93a Hans Holbein the Younger, *Signboard for a Schoolmaster*, Pine panel, 55.5 x 65.7 cm, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung, Basle

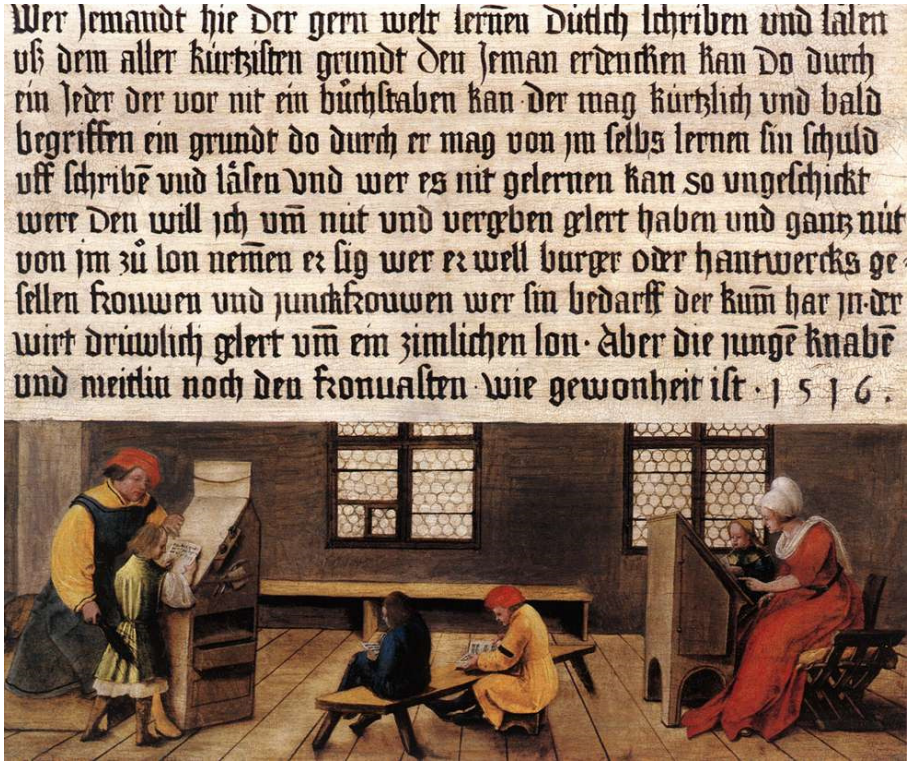


Fig. 93b Ambrosius Holbein, *Signboard for a Schoolmaster* (reverse), Pine panel, 55.5 x 65.7 cm, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung, Basle



Fig. 94 *The Ass in School*, 1557. Engraving by Pieter van der Heyden after a drawing signed and dated by Bruegel in 1556 in Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett KdZ II 641



Fig. 95 Adriaen Van Ostade, *School*. Paris, Louvre



Fig. 96 Jan Steen, *A School for Boys and Girls*, c. 1670, canvas, 81.7 x 108.6. Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland



Fig. 97 Latin School, Nijmegen



Fig. 98 Owl detail, *Children's Games*



Fig. 99 Pieter de Bloot, *Raucous School*, Mainz, Mittelrheinisches Landesmuseum

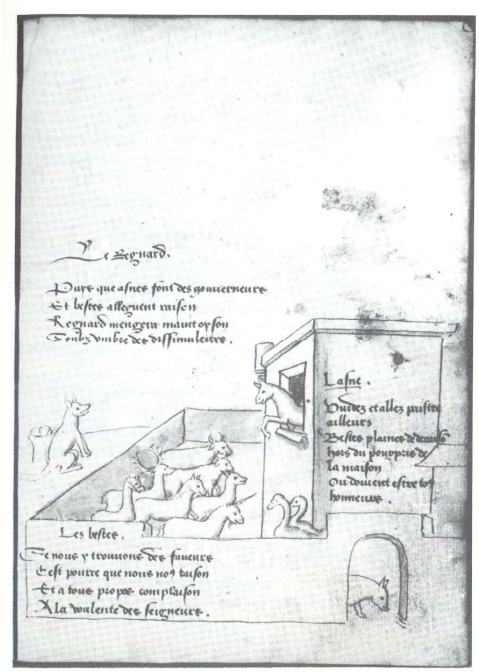


Fig. 100 Henri Baude, *Dictz moraulx pour faire tapisserie*. Chantilly, Musée Condé, MS. 509, fol. 2

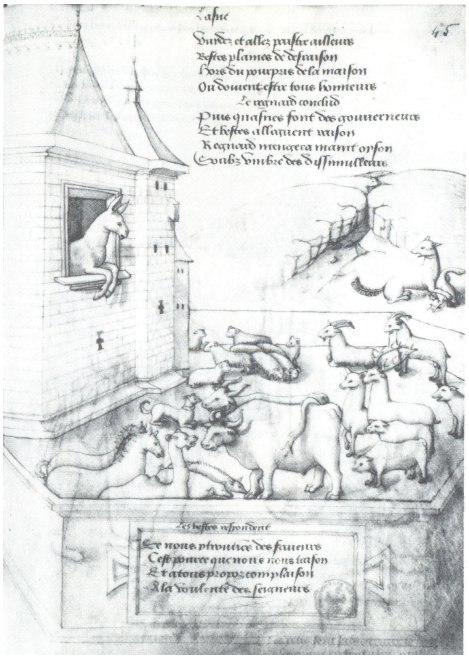


Fig. 101 Henri Baude, *Dictz moraulx pour faire tapisserie*. Dit 21, 'Un asne, qui chasse un tas de bestes d'un parc qui joinct à un palais'. Paris Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. Fr. 24461, fol. 45



Fig. 102 Maerten van Heemskerck, *Twelve-Year-Old Boy*, 1531, panel, 46.5 x 35. Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen



Fig. 103 Pieter van der Borcht, *The Cobbler and His Wife As a Teacher*, 1559. Published by Bartholomaeus de Mompere



Fig. 104 Running the gauntlet detail, *Children's Games*

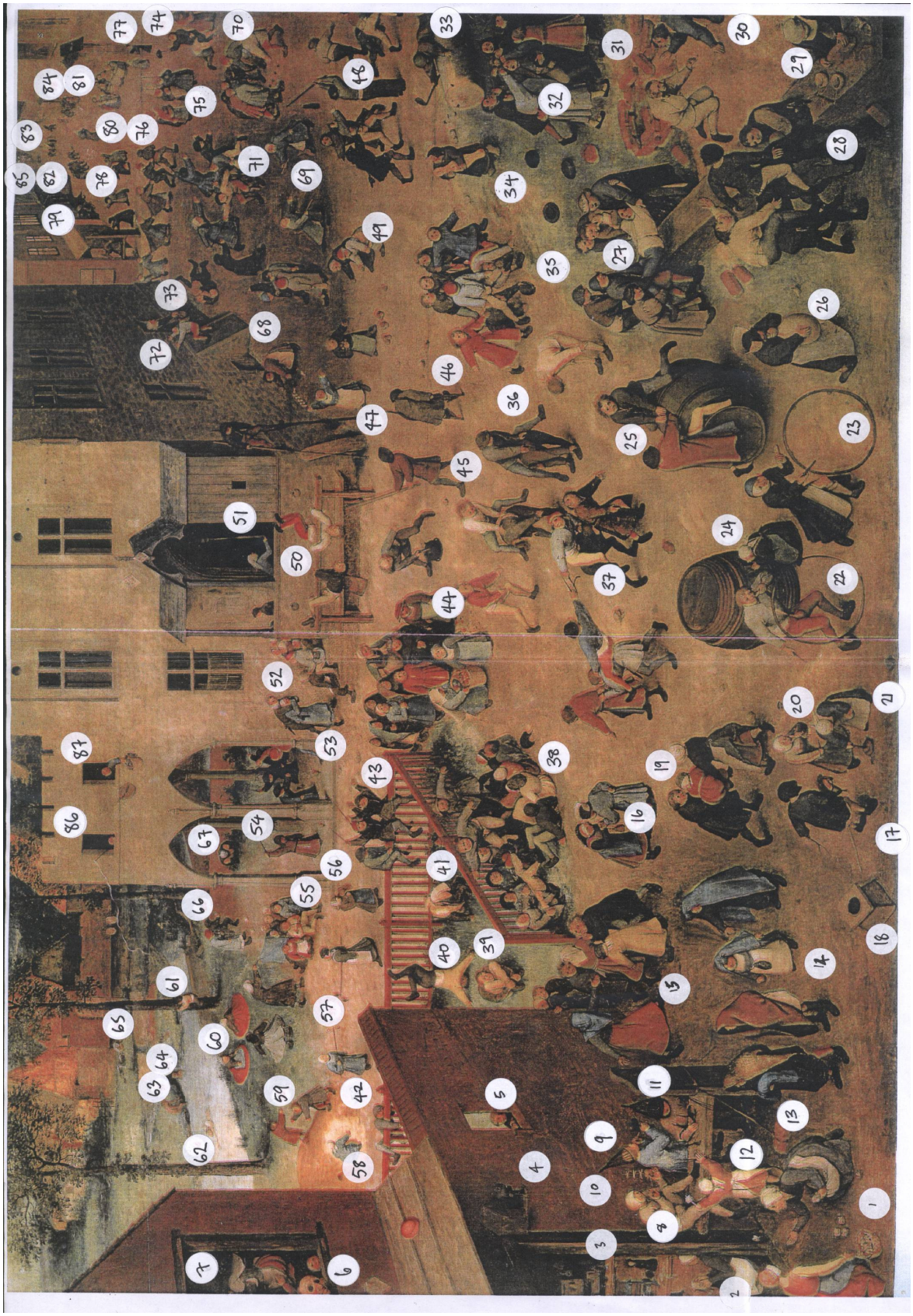


Fig. 105 *Children's Games* numbered according to Appendix I