

# Humour in Dutch Culture of the Golden Age

*Also by Rudolf M. Dekker*

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# Humour in Dutch Culture of the Golden Age

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Jacket illustration: This is said to be Pieter van der Morsch (1543–1628), a jester in the Leiden chamber of rhetoric, painted by Cornelis van Haarlem (1562–1638) (Netherlands Theatre Institute, Amsterdam).

1. Portrait of Aernout van Overbeke by Jan Maurits Quinkhard, copy after an unknown original (1688–1772) (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam).

2. Portrait of Aernout van Overbeke from *De Rijn-wercken van ... Aernout van Overbeke* (1678) (Universiteitsbibliotheek, Amsterdam).

3. The player Jan Meerhuysen, alias Jan Tamboer; engraving after a painting by Barend Graat, ca. 1655 (Rijksprenten Kabinet, Amsterdam).

4. An all-male English merry company, illustration from *The City Jester* (Universiteitsbibliotheek, Amsterdam).

5. Telling a joke in company, frontispiece from *De snaaksche Clément Marot* (ca. 1750) (Universiteitsbibliotheek, Leiden).

6. A Dutch merry company, illustration from *Koddige en ernstige opschriften* (1698) (Universiteitsbibliotheek, Amsterdam).

7 and 8. Fine editions of jestbooks from the seventeenth century were replaced by cheap editions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as can be seen in the frontispieces of two editions of *De geest van Jan Tamboer* (1671 and 1824) (Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague).

9 and 10. The same development can be seen in the editions of *Het leven en bedrijf van Clément Marot* (frontispieces of the edition of 1655 and the edition of 1762) (Universiteitsbibliotheek, Leiden and Universiteitsbibliotheek, Amsterdam).

11 and 12. Some jestbooks were associated with traditional feasts, as can be seen in *St. Niklaesgift* (1647) and *De gaven van de milde St.*

*Marten* (1656) (Universiteitsbibliotheek, Leiden, and Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague).

13. The famous Amsterdam player Frans Schuyling better known as Frans de Geck (Frans the Fool) gave his name to *Den kluchtigen bancket-kramer* (1657) (Universiteitsbibliotheek, Leiden).

14. The jester on the frontispiece from *Arlequiniana* (1711) wears clothing with a pattern that was not only comic, but also was a sign of dishonour (Universiteitsbibliotheek, Amsterdam).

15. Comedians sold jestbooks in markets, as can be seen on the frontispiece from *De gocheltas van Momus* (1716) (Universiteitsbibliotheek, Amsterdam).

16. In the frontispiece from Paul Scarron, *De doorluchtige comedianten* (1662) a stage performance is depicted as they were held in fairs and markets (Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague).

17. One of the illustrations of the collection of jests and comic poetry *Nugae venales* (1648) is a copy of a famous painting, 'Pekelharing', by Frans Hals (Universiteitsbibliotheek, Amsterdam).

18. The frontispiece from *Den schimpigen bolwormspiegel* (1671) depicts a dementing scholar, while the globe and the word 'kajjweerelt' refer to the folly of the world (the word *kei* means fool) (Universiteitsbibliotheek, Amsterdam).

19. The jester in Samuel Ampzing's *Spigel* (1633) is both comic and demonic (Universiteitsbibliotheek, Amsterdam).

20. Satyrs, like devils, are prominent in the frontispiece of *Toneel der snaaken* (Universiteitsbibliotheek, Leiden).

21. A witch making a comical gesture, drawn by Jacob de Gheyn (I.Q. van Regteren Altena, *Jacques de Gheyn – Three Generations* [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1983]).

22. A man condemned to hang climbs the ladder to the scaffold backwards, a custom about which Aernout van Overbeke had a good joke. (Illustration from: *De academie voor vrolyke heeren en dames* [1806] Universiteitsbibliotheek, Amsterdam).

23. A comedian by Pieter Quast (1636) (Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam).