

Elizabeth den Hartog, John Veerman, Edward Grasman and Dirk Jan de Vries (eds), *De Pieterskerk in Leiden. Bouwgeschiedenis, inrichting en gedenktekens* (WBooks 2011), 528 pp., numerous diagrams, plans, b/w and colour illustrations throughout, ISBN 978-90-400-78187, €59.50 (hb).

Publication of this massive tome on the Pieterskerk in Leiden follows a year after that of the four-volume set on the floor slabs in the cathedral church of St John in 's-Hertogenbosch by Jan van Oudheusden and Harry Tummers (2010). However, the scope of the Leiden volume is much wider, as the title indicates: thirty chapters in three separate sections discuss the architectural history of the church, its interior and furnishings, and the memorials; three more chapters in the epilogue discuss the vicissitudes of the church during World War II, its change from a functioning church to a secular foundation in 1974, and its most recent restoration from 2001.

Elizabeth den Hartog and John Veerman outline the history of burial and commemoration in the church in her introduction to the third section of the book. The Pieterskerk was founded in 1121 and was used for intramural burial of the Leiden elite until 1825. As elsewhere, the majority of burials was extramural. By the end of the fourteenth century the original churchyard had to make way for a new and expanded choir. This meant that additional land had to be bought and houses demolished to accommodate a new cemetery, for which permission had to be sought from Albrecht of Bavaria as sovereign lord. The area adjoining the north, east and west sides of the church is still known as *Pieterskerkhof* today. After the foundation of Leiden University in 1575 a host of academic worthies came to be buried and commemorated inside the church, such as the humanist Josephus Justus Scaliger, botanist Carolus Clusius, and physician Herman Boerhaave, leading the authors to describe the church as an academic mausoleum.

There is a reasonable amount of information on burial in the Pieterskerk from the fifteenth century on, e.g. from the town's *keurboeken* (by-laws) published by H.G. Hamaker in 1873. An interesting piece of evidence cited by the authors are the stipulations in the early fifteenth century that graves should be covered with slabs or with tiles within fourteen days of burial and that those within the new choir and ambulatory (*i.e.* the most prestigious locations) should be covered with blue slabs or 'otherwise artfully made' within a month to the satisfaction of the churchwarden. Archaeological research carried out in 1979-1981 has revealed that brick graves under the floor measured 2 x 1 m and double graves approx. 2 x 1.80 m, although such masonry was rare in the medieval period and did not become the norm until the seventeenth century. Graves were often re-used; earlier remains were sometimes preserved in the same grave in a box (*schudkistje*) or removed to an ossuary, which was situated against the façade of the south aisle of

the south transept. Another written source is the sixteenth-century memorial register (The Hague, National Archive 73 E 41), which shows that the church floor consisted of graves and slabs of varying sizes. It also lists only thirty-two 'blue' slabs, *i.e.* Belgian hardstone, alongside slabs of other materials such as slate (*blauen ley*), red, white and grey stone and flagstone. All in all a colourful ensemble, and it is hardly surprising to find in a document of 1611 that the town council granted permission to the churchwardens to clear all white stone in favour of blue slabs, which is what we still see today.

The clearance of slabs in variant colours may help explain why the church is now not particularly rich in medieval monuments. The most important are the double *transi* or cadaver slab of Floris Boschuyzen (d. 1474) and his wife Hillegonde Spruyt van Kriekenbuck (Kriekenbeek), which is one of the oldest still extant but now badly worn; the broken slab of Adriaan van Poelgeest and Machteld van der Does (both d. 1507); and the large and intricate Renaissance slab of Claes Alewijn Claesz. (d. 1561) and his wife Anna Cornelisdr. van der Hooch (d. 1558) with its heraldry, putti and allegorical figures. At least one priest's slab survives, still recognisable by a worn medallion with a chalice and ampullae in the centre, while restoration work in the choir in 1860 revealed three burial cysts decorated inside with painted red crosses on white plaster. Yet this is still only a meagre collection of medieval monuments for a church with such a venerable history.

Relevant to memoria researchers is not just the third section of the book, however. In her introduction to the second section on the (lost) interior of the church Den Hartog mentions the foundation of 2100 memorial services in the church for the period 1350-1500 and also illustrates the surviving silver-gilt chalice donated in 1510 by Ijsbrand Claesz. Houtcop and his wife Maritjen Simondsdochter, as recorded in the memorial inscription on the base (*ijsbrant claeszn houtcop en maritien simonds dochter syn wiif uit godz danc hebbe ny dit ghegheve god verlee ons syn ewighe levent 1510*). Other documents record the foundation of altars and donations of no longer extant stained-glass windows (described by the Utrecht antiquary Buchelius around 1630) and other objects, further testimony to the previously colourful appearance of the interior of the church. One surviving medieval mural painting of the early fifteenth century on a column in the sanctuary is described by Godelieve Huijskens (chapter 3). It shows eight male saints in two registers, but while the subject itself may not be commemorative in character the inclusion of the Van Boschuyzen arms indicates that the patron(s) wished the family to be remembered as benefactors of the church.

Equally relevant, if speculative because of a dearth of information, is the study by Edward Grasman (chapter 4) of Lucas van Leyden's *Last Judgement* triptych and other altarpieces. The

essay opens with a discussion of another well-known Leiden painter, Cornelis Engebrechtszn, to whom Carel van Mander attributed an altarpiece formerly in the Lokhorst chapel within the Pieterskerk, of which Museum de Lakenhal still shows the wings with the arms and portraits of members of the Van der Does and Van Poelgeest families; the lost central panel featured a subject from Revelation. Another altarpiece by an unknown artist, which was acquired by the Museum in 2005, features Willem van Boschuyzen with his wife and offspring alongside the Resurrection of Christ, but it is impossible to establish whether this was ever located above an altar in the Pieterskerk, especially as it would have duplicated a known stained-glass window (described by Buchelius) of the same subject and with the same family in the church. It is likewise tempting to propose an original location in the Pieterskerk for the extant wings of an altarpiece in Lille by Aertgen van Leyden(?) for Claes Alewijn Claesz. and his wife Anna, especially in view of their elaborate tomb slab still situated in the church, but there is no description of the lost central panel.

The most important part of Grasman's chapter is probably his analysis of Lucas van Leyden's most important work, its history and historiography. Van Mander described the painting in 1604 as publicly on display in the townhall, but he did not mention where it came from nor its original function. Two years earlier Emperor Rudolph II had unsuccessfully tried to acquire this work by Lucas. Grasman persuasively queries the traditional identification of Lucas's *Last Judgement* in two documents of 1577, the first (of 12 July) referring to a claim by Claes Dirczn van Swieten's heirs to an 'altarpiece or memorial painting' by Lucas paid by their ancestor in 1526 and formerly placed near the font in the Pieterskerk before being moved to the Jacopsgasthuis and then to the Catharinagasthuis, and the second (of 11 September) relating to the transport of 'the picture of the Judgement' (*het tavereel van toordeel*) from the Catharinagasthuis to the burgomasters' chamber. He also points out that memorial paintings without 'donor' portraits are rare in the Northern Netherlands, whereas Lucas's large *Last Judgement* features no such portraits, nor any heraldry or inscription through which the patron(s) may be identified, whereas it is also exceptionally large for a memorial piece in this region at this time. Furthermore, he argues that the sum of 35 Flemish pounds said to have been paid in 1526 to Lucas by Claes Dirczn is too small for such a large altarpiece and that a location in the baptismal chapel is highly unlikely. Ultimately, if the unspecified painting of 1526 referred to in the first document of 1577 is not the *Last Judgement* by Lucas now on display in de Lakenhal, this conclusion has major consequences not only for presumed memorial character of the painting but also for the reconstruction of Lucas's oeuvre and of his life.

The book contains an extensive bibliography and an index. It is beautifully produced and richly illustrated, the majority of illustrations being in colour with some (aerial) photographs taken specially by the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed (RCE). The impressive result of a collaboration between the editors and a range of additional experts, this publication is a proud monument to a (former) church steeped in history.

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