Sumptuous Memories, Studies in seventeenth-century Dutch tomb sculpture
Scholten, F.

Citation for published version (APA):

General rights
It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations
If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: http://uba.uva.nl/en/contact, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.
The apotheosis of an admiral: Bartholomeus Eggers and the tomb for Jacob van Wassenaer Obdam

Jacob van Wassenaer Obdam (1610-1665) was a reluctant admiral of the fleet. He was appointed in 1653 after the death of Maarten Tromp for want of a more suitable candidate. He had no seafaring experience and commanded no respect in the navy. He was chosen in part because he was loyal to the States-General rather than to the Prince of Orange, and was a member of one of the country's leading aristocratic families. The role he played as Vice Admiral during the blockade of the river Tagus in 1656 and at the Battle of the Sound against the Swedes two years later did nothing to enhance his reputation back home. Nevertheless, Van Wassenaer was made “First Person, Commander in Chief” of the navy when Charles II of England declared war on the Republic in March 1665, launching the Second Anglo-Dutch War. The largest fleet that the country had ever seen sailed out under his command in May 1665 with orders to sweep the English from the seas. The Battle of Lowestoft off the English coast on 13 June of that year was an unmitigated disaster for the Dutch. Van Wassenaer’s flagship blew up at the height of the engagement, and the Dutch fleet was trounced in the confusion that followed. Van Wassenaer perished, along with Lieutenant-Admirals Cortenaer and Stellingwerf (fig. 134).
England was of course jubilant, and Samuel Pepys noted in his diary: “A great victory, never known in the world.” On the June 16 he indignantly wrote that the Dutch were claiming the victory as theirs and had even lit bonfires at Dunkirk in celebration. In reality, the Republic had been thrown into utter confusion by the defeat, particularly because expectations had been running so high. The fleet was the brainchild of Pensionary Johan de Witt, and its loss dealt a severe blow to the prestige of the country, the government and the navy. Questions were raised almost immediately about the role of the various commanders, and one of them, Tjerk Hiddes, wrote an open letter to his superiors in Harlingen in which he laid the blame squarely at Van Wassenaer’s door: “In the first place, God Almighty took away our Commander in Chief’s [Obdam] judgement, assuming he ever gave him any.” Such harsh and public criticism of the fallen Van Wassenaer was not without foundation. He was accused of not giving his captains any battle orders or signalling codes, and of failing to take advantage of a favourable wind which would have given the Dutch a good chance of victory, waiting instead for two days before launching his attack. The council of war and the States-General made no public comment about Van Wassenaer’s actions. At most one can see the official standpoint reflected in the apologetic tone of the report on the events written by the chronicler Lieuwe van Aitzema in 1670: “He assuredly did his best, being in the middle thick of the mêlée. The ship was then blown apart by its own powder.” Finally, disappointment at the defeat was voiced in fierce criticism of the government, Orangist
riots, and even rumours that there had been Orangist saboteurs in the fleet. Compared to the emotional outpourings that had greeted the heroic deaths of Van Wassenaer’s predecessors from Van Heemskerk on as part of the young nation’s cult of heroes, the few positive comments about his conduct are distinctly muted. This makes it all the more surprising that the States-General soon decided to erect a public monument to a Commander in Chief whose heroism was in question (fig. 133).

The commission

The States-General’s decision to erect a tomb for Van Wassenaer Obdam clearly cannot be seen in isolation from the political and moral confusion reigning at the time. The resolutions of the States-General, copies of which are preserved in the domestic archives of Twickel Castle, enable the decision-making process to be followed step by step. The States-General’s first official reaction, coinciding with that of the State assembly of Holland and West Friesland on 16 June, three days after the battle, was to send a letter of condolence to Van Wassenaer Obdam’s children, followed the next day by a personal visit from De Witt and three other deputies to the admiral’s daughters and sister. At a meeting on 18 June the States-General discussed the idea of erecting monuments for Van Wassenaer and Lieutenant-Admiral Egbert Cortenaer. It was decided to examine the papers relating to earlier tombs for naval heroes (“Tromp and other admirals of the fleet who had merited much from the state”). Acting on the proposal of the deputy from Rotterdam, Cortenaer was given a state funeral with the same honours that had been accorded to Witte de With in 1658. He was to be buried in his native Rotterdam.

On 22 July, more than a month later, another motion was tabled, this time by deputy Johan van Gent, who also presided over the session, asking “whether some memorial should not be erected for the Lord of Wassenaer, in life Lieutenant-Admiral of Holland and West Friesland, having lost his life as commander of the fleet in the recent battle against the English, following the example set in former times with respect to commanders in chief in charge of the naval forces of this state who lost their lives in action.” It is likely that Van Gent tabled this motion on behalf of the dead admiral’s family, given the blood ties between him and Emilia, Van Wassenaer Obdam’s sister.
The States-General then appointed two of its members to discover what had been done in comparable cases in the past so that justice could be done to Van Wassenaer. The two deputies reported back on 31 July. "Messrs. Huygens and Van der Horst, high and mighty deputies for maritime affairs, have reported that their Excellencies, in discharge of their High Mightinesses' resolution of the 22nd of this month, had examined the previous papers, and concerning the memorials formerly erected in honour of the supreme commanders of the nation's fleets who lost their lives in action, in order to consider them with regard to what should be done to honour the late Lord of Wassenaer, in life Lieutenant-Admiral of Holland and West Friesland, having lost his life as commander of the fleet in the recent battle against the English. Having deliberated, it is hereby approved and agreed to authorise the aforesaid deputies to communicate and deliberate with the heirs of the aforesaid Lord of Wassenaer in order to have a design for a tomb for the same Lord of Wassenaer set down on paper."17

Needless to say, the minutes of this meeting only record the essence of what was said. Lying behind the brief, standard formulation "Having deliberated" were undoubtedly lengthy discussions about the merits and form of the tomb for Van Wassenaer in relation to the earlier ones for Tromp (1658) and Van Galen (1656), and about the amount of money that could be spent. Given Van Wassenaer's noble birth, the States-General would also have taken into account the family's desire for a monument. Finally, political considerations played an major role, especially for Pensionary De Witt. The erection of a tomb would in a sense mark a posthumous rehabilitation of Van Wassenaer after the severe criticism of his conduct, which implicitly was also criticism of the government of the Republic. The tomb transformed Van Wassenaer the anti-hero into a hero of the people, and it could also go some way towards masking the loss of prestige for the state and the States-General.

Less than a month later, the decision to build a monument for Van Wassenaer had a rather unexpected sequel. Although the minutes of the meeting of 31 July could not be clearer, the deputies were again asked at the meeting of 27 August "to have one or more designs made for the tomb of the late Lord of Wassenaer."19 Suddenly there is talk of not one but of several designs. Two days later, the Hague sculptor Rombout Verhulst submitted a design for adjudication, probably having been approached after the meeting of 31 July.20 It is not clear what form the model took, for the Dutch word *model* can refer to both
a drawn design and a *modello* in wax, clay or wood. Before approving this model, however, the meeting decided to have a second design made by another sculptor. It is not clear from the resolutions what prompted this unexpected decision. Verhulst's design had been submitted but not yet formally approved, so that could not have been the reason for the decision. One gets the distinct impression that machinations were going on behind the scenes, particularly because of the seemingly unnecessary, renewed proposal of 27 August to have "one or more" models made at the very last minute, only two days before the presentation of Verhulst's.

A second design, by the sculptor Bartholomeus Eggers, was presented to the States-General soon afterwards, and the models by both artists were compared at a meeting on 19 September. The final choice was left to the admiral's family, with the proviso that they had to inform the States-General if they wanted to make any alterations to the selected design. The total sum available for the tomb was estimated at 12,000 guilders.\(^2\) Although that was the highest sum ever reserved for such a project, it amounted to little more than 10% of building and equipping a warship, so it could not be called an irresponsible drain on the funds required for the upkeep of the fleet.\(^2\)

The commission was awarded to Eggers, who submitted a very grand design in the form of a 'pavilion' or canopied tomb, which is probably what persuaded the family to choose Eggers. It was a surprising choice, nonetheless, for the young Amsterdam sculptor had never undertaken such a large project and had only set up as an independent master two years previously. Indeed, one can rightly wonder whether at this stage he even had a studio and assistants that would enable him to carry out the commission within the time stipulated. The rejected design by the more experienced Verhulst has not survived, although the suggestion that he used it for Cortenaer's tomb seems plausible (fig. 135).\(^2\)

**The Eggers lobby**

There are repeated suggestions in the literature on the Van Wassenaer tomb that the competition between Verhulst and Eggers was free, fair and above-board.\(^4\) The train of events reconstructed above, however, paints another picture, as if the competitive element was only added as an afterthought in order to give Eggers a chance. He had evidently found backers for his bid among the members of the States-General.

The evidence for the existence of such a 'lobby' is provided by two
notarised documents published by Bredius concerning the role played by the Hague painter Cornelis Moninx (1623-1667) in the preparations for the tomb. They are depositions made in 1667 by the painters Pieter Michelet and Everhard Verbeeck at the request of Machtheld Moninx, guardian of the children of Cornelis Moninx, who had died in the interim. The statements were intended to show that Moninx had a considerable share in the design of the tomb. Although the purpose of this legal action is never spelled out, one obvious possibility is that it was to claim part of Eggers’s fee.
Pieter Michelet declared that Eggers had often stayed with Moninx in 1665 and 1666 (“without wishing to be held to a specific time”), “where the said Moninx, both in the presence and absence of the said Eggers, made many drawings and models of the tomb for the Lord of Wassenaer, in life Lieutenant-Admiral in the service of the United Netherlands, both in pencil and red chalk. The said Moninx also perfectly finished various drawings in red chalk for the composition of the aforesaid work, also that he knows that the said Eggers, not having the aforementioned Moninx in his house, visited him in divers places, both in and outside The Hague, in order to complete the aforesaid planned work. And that he, the deponent, was present at [illegible], when he heard and saw the aforementioned Eggers say to the aforesaid Moninx that it was important to him, Eggers, and that he, Eggers, strongly urged the said Moninx to finish the drawings for the aforesaid work, and finally [that] the said Moninx, together with the aforementioned Eggers, had made many pressing requests and exerted their best efforts, both with the Lady of Merode and others, that the said Eggers might complete the aforesaid tomb.”

This deposition tells us two things. The first passage is designed to show that Moninx had made sketches and designs (“drawings and models”) for the tomb in 1665 and 1666, including detailed designs (“concerning the composition”). Moreover, it emerges from the last sentence that Eggers and Moninx jointly put pressure on the Lady of Merode (Emilia van Wassenaer Obdam, Van Wassenaer Obdam’s sister, who was married to Jan de Merode, Lord of Rummen) and on others – probably deputies to the States-General.

A second deposition made ten days later by the painter Everhard Verbeeck went even further. After telling much the same story as that in Michelet’s earlier deposition, Verbeeck asserted that “the late Moninx, painter, not only made many sketches and drawings for the aforesaid models of the tomb, but one morning even set down four different drawings of it in red chalk; that the deponent also knows that when the said Eggers was fashioning the model at Prince Maurits’s house, the aforesaid Moninx, now lately departed, removed several pieces of clay from some figures and placed them on others and fashioned them in the presence of the aforesaid Eggers, expressly telling him, the deponent, and others that the same had not been made in accordance with the model or drawing that Moninx had supplied.”

This statement expands the first by adding that Moninx had intervened physically while Eggers was making the model (in the studio which he had set up in the garden of the Mauritshuis), because
the latter had evidently not followed Moninx's designs. In summary, both depositions sketch a picture of an intense collaboration between Eggers and Moninx on this major project. The question is how closely these notarised documents correspond to the truth.

To begin with, Eggers had good reason to seek the assistance of an intermediary in The Hague to help him with his lobbying, and one who knew how to go about securing a commission of this kind. He was still based in Amsterdam, and had only just started working independently. He had no experience in obtaining such a commission, and his only serious rival, Rombout Verhulst, had moved to The Hague in 1664, which might indicate that he was expecting more and more commissions from court and government circles. It is unclear why Eggers selected Moninx. The latter's slight reputation as an artist was overshadowed barely six months before the Van Wassenaer commission by serious accusations of counterfeiting, and he was often in financial difficulties. In short, he was anything but a reliable partner in a project like the Van Wassenaer tomb, which he probably saw as a way of paying off his debts. However, he died in November 1666 without being able to claim any share in the profits.

What is more important than Eggers's choice of Moninx as a commercial partner is the question of the latter's artistic contribution to the tomb. Neurdenburg follows Bredius in assuming that the notarised documents are faithful accounts of the chain of events, and that Moninx should therefore be regarded as the tomb's auctor intellectualis. Here, though, we should be on our guard. In the first place, both depositions were made by pupils or friends of the late Moninx at his sister's request, so they are not impartial witnesses. The statement in the second document that Moninx corrected Eggers's work is highly unlikely and must be rejected. It seems inconceivable that a second-rate painter whose few signed drawings display a shaky grasp of proportion and little feel for classical figures could have had any serious influence on the design of the tomb.

Secondly, there is no mention of any formal agreement between Moninx and Eggers which would have entitled the former to a share of the profits or any other material benefit. This in itself is remarkable, because Moninx did have contracts drawn up for other collaborative ventures (with his brother Pieter, his brother-in-law Paulus Dinant, and with three Hague colleagues for paintings for Honselaarsdijk Palace). Moreover, Moninx's name does not appear anywhere in either the extensive documentation of the States-General or in the specifications for the tomb submitted by Eggers himself. Finally, one
can rightly wonder whether a painter of Moninx's kind was able to
design such a prestigious monument. Eggers, on the other hand, who
had trained in Quellinus's workshop in Amsterdam, must certainly be
considered capable of conceiving such a sculptural and architectural
ensemble.

Is the entire affair not reduced to its proper proportions by seeing
Moninx's role as that of the draftsman of the presentation drawings
which Eggers submitted to the States-General? If that was the case,
those posthumous claims to authorship of the tomb were totally
misplaced.

The execution

The design that Eggers submitted, which served as the basis for the
tomb built in The Hague's Grote Kerk, demonstrates that the sculptor
tried to win over the States-General and the Van Wassenaer family
with a very ambitious scheme. Its form, iconography and cost set it
apart from any of the tombs previously erected in the Netherlands,
with the exception of that of William the Silent. Its size and shape
also bear clear traces of inspiration from abroad.

Eggers's design, which was made between 27 August and 19
September, survives in two slightly different handwritten versions: an
"Eys en calculas i va n  de koste" ("Specification and calculation of the
costs"), and the specifications as accepted by the States-General. In
the first document, Eggers calculated that the tomb would cost 16,800
guilders, but he gave his patrons the option of cutting this by 3,000
guilders by omitting or replacing certain elements. The less expensive
version would lose a relief of a naval battle, a 'stage' (an extra level) and
details like all the tritons, dolphins and putti on top of the canopy, a
slave and the touchstone inscription tablets. The States-General chose
the more restrained variant.

That version, for which the specifications survive, consists of a large,
square canopy on four composite columns with the naval hero
standing beneath it flanked by a page carrying a helmet and a shield-
bearer with laurel branch, and with a mourning putto with skull and
torch at his feet. Behind this group is an eagle on a terrestrial globe
bearing a trumpeting Fame aloft. Each corner of the tomb has a
personified virtue, and between the bases of the columns are three
reliefs of Van Wassenaer's sea battles.

A painting by Hendrick van Vliet of the tomb shortly after its
completion in 1667 (fig. 136) shows that the work was largely carried out in accordance with the simplified design, and that all the extras were omitted. There are only minor differences between the painting and the tomb as it is today. The main one is the element crowning the canopy, which is now a vase carved of wood, but around 1667 consisted of a trophy in the form of a suit of armour with lances and flags. The armour may have replaced the slave as the tropaeum. There are also slight discrepancies in the colour scheme, the railings and the attribute of Prudentia/Pallas Athena, which was originally a lance and is now a mirror. Prints in Bizot’s Nederlands helden-toneel of 1690 and in De Cretser’s Beschryvinge van ’s Gravenhage correspond to Van Vliet’s painting, demonstrating that these changes were made in the eighteenth century or later (fig. 137).
Form

Eggers’s conception, certainly in its original, ornate version, betrays his ambition to emulate the most important funerary monument in the Republic – De Keyser’s tomb of William the Silent in Delft. Both are free-standing canopied tombs and have several motifs in common, in addition to being the same type of tomb (one rarely found in the Netherlands). In the first place there is the hero depicted alive as a military man in ceremonial armour (seated in Delft, erect in The
Hague), the winged figure of Fame guaranteeing the deceased’s unfading renown, the four personified virtues at the corners, and two elements now missing in The Hague: the extra level scrapped from Eggers’s initial design, and the trophy at the top, of which there were originally two on all the corner tympana in Delft. These similarities, though, do not mean that Eggers was a slavish copyist. His design may share some elements with William’s tomb, but apart from that it is broadly based on another tradition for which he must have sought
inspiration from abroad. The free-standing canopy or catafalque, the most eye-catching feature of the tomb and also the most salient similarity to the tomb in Delft, had been used on numerous occasions in European funerary art since the sixteenth century. The word canopy is the more general term for such a superstructure, but the word preferred in the more recent literature is catafalque, indicating a more specific canopied type with classical connotations which can be regarded as the successor to the Gothic *chapelle ardente* or the *castrum doloris.* The precise origin of the catafalque as a distinct funerary genre is still the subject of debate, but the latest theory places it in Spain in the second quarter of the sixteenth century. Habsburg patronage was responsible for the wide spread and use of the theme in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. On the death of Emperor Charles V in 1558, symbolic funeral ceremonies known as exequies were held throughout the Habsburg empire in which catafalques featured prominently in churches draped in mourning. Exequies were held thereafter for all Habsburg rulers and their families, and remained common in Spanish court ceremonial until the late eighteenth century. The Habsburg exequies tradition, with Charles’s catafalques as the prototype, led to the extensive use of catafalques for the funeral ceremonies of princes and noblemen in other European countries. Although they were all ephemeral structures, usually made of wood with paintings on canvas, and were only built to last a few weeks at most, their appearance in the seventeenth century has been recorded in loose engravings and in descriptions of funeral rituals.

---

139 Pieter de Jode after Lucas Fayd'herbe, *The catafalque for Philip IV at the St Rombout Cathedral in Mechelen*, 1666, engraving, Stadsarchief, Mechelen
illustrated and otherwise.\textsuperscript{49} Examples are the catafalques for Rudolf II of 1612 in Prague, Henry IV of France (Florence, 1610), James I of England (1625, designed by Inigo Jones), Isabella de Bourbon (Madrid, 1645), Philip IV of Spain (Madrid and Mechelen, 1666) (figs. 138, 139), and the lengthy, illustrated descriptions of the exequies of Henry IV and Philip II (Florence, 1598). All these ephemeral pieces of architecture served the same purpose: to evoke majesty and instil awe of the deceased and his dynasty. The most important catafalque erected in the seventeenth century was of course Bernini’s majestic structure in St Peter’s in Rome, built over the apostle’s tomb, the Baldacchino of 1624-1633, which was the inspiration for many Baroque canopy designs erected in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{50} Depictions of it are known to have been circulating in the Netherlands, as shown by a print from the Atlas of Michiel Hinloopen (fig. 140). A modest Classicist baldacchino can be added to the series of

\textsuperscript{140} Bernini’s Baldacchino, 2nd half 17th century, engraving from Michiel Hinloopen’s Atlas of Rome, liber I, f. 73. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

\textsuperscript{141} Arch of Hermathena, engraving from Joannes Bochius’ Historia Narratio profectionis et inaugurationis serenissimorum Belgii Principum Alberti et Isabellae [...] Antwerp 1602
magnificent foreign ones. It is attributed to Jacob van Campen and was erected around 1655 over the sixteenth-century tomb of Reinout van Brederode (Vianen, Dutch Reformed Church). It was undoubtedly intended to give the tomb added grandeur and dignity, befitting the Van Brederodes’ status as one of the pre-eminent aristocratic families in the province of Holland.39

By electing for a Baroque canopied tomb to rival De Keyser’s for William the Silent, Eggers was following this rich European tradition, which had largely evolved outside the Protestant countries. Although there is no immediate model, the design he submitted in 1665 contains almost all the elements of the catafalque tradition outlined above with the exception of the lavish use of candles favoured by the Catholic Church. The architecture of the Van Wassenaer tomb, with its columnar design and the almost free-standing, protruding entablature recalls Bernini’s Baldacchino. The structure of the canopy is remarkable. The cornices take the form of semicircular arches springing from the tops of the columns, almost concealing the actual covering of the tomb, which is a cross vault. The shape of this rather unattractive roof was dictated by the epitaphs hanging below the arches, for which no really satisfactory position could be found. The original touchstone tablets, wherever they would have been placed, had been eliminated in order to cut costs.39 It is a solution which the sculptor may have borrowed from an earlier, southern Netherlandish model, namely the ephemeral Arch of Hermathena erected in Antwerp in 1599 for the Joyous Entry of Archdukes Albert and Isabella, which Eggers could have known from an engraving (fig. 141).39

The choice of such a grandiose, Baroque piece of architecture inspired by the royal funeral ceremonies of the Habsburgs is evidence of the ambition of the patron, the States-General, to present itself to the outside world as a mature sovereign power. The ‘princely’ nature of the tomb in The Hague
Monument of Count Herman Frederik van den Bergh, c. 1670, St Servatiuskerk, Maastricht
and its counterpart in Delft was indeed noted. The German architect, Leonhard Christoph Sturm, saw it in 1719 and considered it to be the finest in the land. He proved that those were no idle words a year later by publishing a design for a “Grabmahl eines Fürsten” which was undeniably inspired by the two Dutch canopied tombs in The Hague and Delft. Sturm’s design is also a raised, canopied tomb with broken, arched pediments. At the top is a flying Fame amidst putti very reminiscent of those on the tomb of William the Silent (fig. 142).

Iconography

The iconography of the tomb, as manifested in the sculptural work, partly follows the international tradition of heroes’ tombs. It consists of a number of stock components, such as the architectural support, the portrait of the deceased, the funerary inscriptions, narrative (that is to say biographical) and allegorical scenes, ornament and heraldry. The presence of four personified virtues is not at all exceptional in the western funerary tradition. Panofsky regarded the simultaneous rise of programmes of virtues and biographical motifs as a fourteenth-century Italian contribution to secular funerary art. It had assumed such proportions by the sixteenth century that he even spoke of “an international rage,” although the use of virtues was reserved for the nobility, which was considered to have an innate virtus.

One could certainly not speak of a craze in the Netherlands, where only five tombs with prominent virtues were built in the seventeenth century. In addition to Van Wassenaer’s, they are those of William the Silent in Delft (fig. 68), Willem Lodewijk of Nassau in Leeuwarden (fig. 86), Count Herman Frederik van den Bergh in Maastricht (fig. 143) and Michiel de Ruyter in Amsterdam (fig. 157). The Delft tomb would have been Eggers’s main source of inspiration, even if he did place the virtues standing beside the base outside the catafalque in a way that strongly recalls sixteenth-century French and English examples. At the front are Fortitudo (fig. 144) and Prudentia (fig. 145), and at the back Vigilantia (fig. 146) and Fidelitas (fig. 147). Their presence is mainly a commentary on Van Wassenaer Obdam’s public role as admiral of the fleet and not on his private life, which indicates that the combination of virtues was decided on by the States-General, possibly after consultation with the family and the sculptor.

The prominent positions of Fortitudo and Prudentia were dictated by the traditional hierarchy. They are two of the four cardinal virtues, and
are standard features of the tombs of rulers, military leaders and statesmen. Prudentia, incidentally, appears in the guise of the goddess Pallas Athena – a contamination which is found elsewhere in the iconography of military commanders. Writings on the virtues accorded the goddess of wisdom a special role as the tutor of the nobility, so this detail is probably an allusion to Van Wassenaer’s noble birth and his innate virtus. The statue of Fortitudo, which remarkably enough was not given any attributes, is a symbol of physical and mental strength, and as such, of course, refers to Van Wassenaer’s military career. She also accompanies Prudentia on the lost tomb of Willem Lodewijk of Nassau. Fidelitas’s small dog recalls the one at William the Silent’s feet, and has the same connotation, namely loyalty to the fatherland unto death. The last virtue, Vigilantia, is rarely found in funerary sculpture, but her significance is self-evident in the context of the Anglo-Dutch Wars. It seems that eighteenth-century visitors to the church no longer recognised the virtues from their appearance or

144
Bartholomeus Eggers,
*Monument of Jacob van Wassenaer Obdam, detail showing Fortitudo*, 1667, white Carrara marble, Grote Kerk, The Hague

145
Bartholomeus Eggers,
*Monument of Jacob van Wassenaer Obdam, detail showing Prudentia*, 1667, white Carrara marble, Grote Kerk, The Hague
attributes, which is probably why their names were carved onto their plinths and why Athena-Prudentia’s lance was replaced with a mirror.\(^6\)

The four virtues alternating with the three biographical, relief carvings of sea battles form the basis for the presentation of the naval hero, both in the structure and content of the tomb. The crowning of Van Wassenaer with a laurel wreath (the symbol of honour) held by trumpeting Fame represents the eternal renown he had earned with his virtuous life in the service of the state. Honour and Fame flowed directly from Van Wassenaer’s *virtus*. Saavedra Fajardo described this aspect in his popular mirror of princes, the Dutch translation of which appeared in 1662: “A good name is established by those who have fought justly to the end. If it is not found rich in fame then it immediately falls and is buried in oblivion. [...] For Fame is the last spirit of the deeds, from which they draw their light and lustre. But Fame, freed from those passions [flattery and envy] after death, pronounces true and just sentences, which the court of posterity
confirms.” Ultimately though, according to Saavedra, it was only a
person’s virtues that made him and his family immortal, for everything
in nature, all art as well, is transitory.⁶⁴

The standing admiral

One very notable departure from the Dutch funerary tradition is the
omission of a gisant, the recumbent effigy of the deceased. The vice
admiral is shown upright in a commander’s pose (fig. 148). One
reason for this was given by Cornelis van Alkemade in the early

Bartholomeus Eggers,
Monument of Jacob van
Wassenaer Obdam, detail
showing statue of the deceased,
1667, white Carrara marble,
Grote Kerk, The Hague
eighteenth century. All the other tombs of naval heroes invariably displayed “the life-sized recumbent effigy of the naval commander clad in armour,” but Van Wassenaer’s was the great exception. He is shown standing because, as an *‘alter Hercules’* he had beaten a path through the flames to reach heaven, as stated in the inscription on the tomb. He is shown upright because he is not actually buried here, so strictly speaking the monument is a cenotaph, not a tomb. De Riemer, the eighteenth-century chronicler of The Hague, calls the upright statue “the sole specimen to be found in Holland,” thus underlining the tomb’s importance. His assertion was a little too sweeping, for the statue of Van Wassenaer Obdam is just one in an international series of commanders’ portraits, several of which are indeed located in the Netherlands. Its use in a funerary context, however, was still fairly unusual at the time. The first examples of such erect, sculpted portraits of military commanders date from the sixteenth century, but only few of them were tomb sculptures. This type of statuary lived on in the seventeenth century in a number of English and Italian works: Hubert le Sueur’s statues of William, Earl of Pembroke (1630), King Charles I of England (1633) or Admiral Richard Leveson (1637), and finally the tomb of Alvise Mocenigo (1663) in Venice. However, the most important series of erect commanders was in The Hague until 1727. They are the four statues of the stadholders William the Silent, Maurits, Frederik Hendrik and Willem II which Dieussart supplied in 1646-1647 for the main hall of Huis Ten Bosch, which Amalia van Solms furnished as a mausoleum for the House of Orange. Eggers must have known this major series, which was close at hand, and he certainly made use of it (fig. 149). Another possible source of inspiration was painted portraiture, where the “standing general in full armour” had long been an established type. Van Honthorst’s large, full-length of Jacob van Wassenaer Obdam, which hangs in Twickel Castle, immediately suggests itself as a model. Eggers may have used it for the pose, but the face and accessories in his sculpted version are far more up-to-date, and are more likely to have been taken from a bust-length by Hanneman, also at
Twickel, or from a related composition by Abraham Westervelt (fig. 150). In addition, there is an engraving after Hanneman’s painting by Theodoor Matham.²⁰

The decision to portray Van Wassenaer in an erect, commander’s pose on his tomb may have been a logical one, given the lack of a physical body to bury, but primarily it should be seen as the heroisation of the deceased in a classical sense, for his characterisation as an ‘alter Hercules’ in the funerary inscription could only gain true form if he was portrayed as an upright, classical heros under a canopy. This classicising allegory is elaborated in the iconography of the central
group with the eagle and Fame (fig. 151). These stamp this as an apotheosis in the imperial Roman tradition. Eggers could have got the idea for this from a recent publication, Joachim Oudaan’s Roomse mogentheid of 1664, in which the eagle is described as a standard element in the apotheosis (consecratio) of Roman emperors on the evidence of illustrations on coins and medals. The iconographic similarities between those illustrations and the bird of prey on the tomb are striking (fig. 152). Not only is there an eagle on a globe, but Oudaan also depicts several with lightning bolts in their talons – a motif which Eggers incorporated in his sculpture. There is only one

151 Bartholomeus Eggers, Monument of Jacob van Wassenaer Obdam, detail showing Fama on the eagle, 1667, white Carrara marble, Grote Kerk, The Hague
Depictions of Consecratio on Roman coins, 1664, etching from J. Oudaan's Roomse Mogentheid

Roman imperial funeral, 1574, etching from Thomaso Porcacchi's Funerale antichi, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague
earlier example of such a heroising theme in funerary sculpture, namely the catafalque built for the funeral rites of Emperor Charles V in Bologna in 1559, where the emulation of the imperial Roman *ritus consecrationis* was an effective and logical way of glorifying the Habsburg dynasty. Here too, moreover, there was a combination of a catafalque and the apotheosis iconography, which was also employed in sixteenth-century reconstructions of Roman *consecratio* rites (fig. 153). An engraving of 1612 of the apotheosis of Rudolf II, another Habsburg emperor, shows how the deceased was borne aloft to the gods by two eagles and a lion, there to be greeted by a Hercules in his own likeness. As in The Hague, a connection is made between apotheosis and Hercules.

The presence of the Roman eagle gives the Van Wassenaer tomb an apotheosis iconography which was extremely rare in a funerary context, and one that also places it in a classicising, princely tradition. By electing for this allegorical presentation of Van Wassenaer as a hero beneath a large canopy, a funerary architectural form rooted in the Habsburg exequies tradition, the States-General was acting as a patron with pretensions to a foreign, princely grandeur. The tomb thus provided the States-General with a way of stressing its position as the sovereign power in the Republic, and gave expression to the glory and honour of the state, which far outweighed the glorification of an individual naval hero. Its form and iconography make Van Wassenaer's cenotaph one of the earliest of a type of tomb, other good examples of which are found in France and England.

Awareness of the significance of the eagle on the tomb probably faded quite quickly. Only Van Alkemade's book of 1713 still contains a reference to the bird of prey as a token of Van Wassenaer's apotheosis. The form of the tomb as a whole seems to have inspired Romeyn de Hooghe's engraving of a Roman funeral ceremony in the second edition of Kirchmann's *De funeribus Romanorum* of 1672. The parallels with the Hague tomb are striking: a figure standing on a raised platform beneath a canopy, and an eagle on a globe adorning a corner of the sarcophagus (fig. 154).

Pantheon of heroes

Van Wassenaer's monument was erected at a time when the state had already established a modest tradition of heroes' tombs, naval and otherwise, beginning with the epitaph for Jacob van Heemskerck in
The origin of the tradition must be seen in the light of the foundation of the young Republic and its need for a pantheon of heroes. There was a cult of naval heroes that had such a wide appeal as to turn them into secular saints who embodied the *virtus* of the nation. It has not been noticed, though, that the cult reached a pitch in the mid-seventeenth century, chiefly as a result of the altered political alignments within the Republic’s and the threat of war with England. In 1650, after an armed stand-off between Stadholder Willem II and the city of Amsterdam, followed by the sudden death of the young stadholder on 21 November, the States-General found itself in the exceptional position of being the absolute power in the land under the leadership of the States of Holland and its Pensionary, Johan de Witt, in what became known as the First Stadholderless Period. At the same time, the Republic’s main source of income, overseas trade, was under serious threat from England. In the space of a little over 20 years there were three maritime wars between the English and the Dutch. It is notable, but not coincidental, that this period saw the erection at public expense of both the largest number and the most important tombs for naval heroes.

The States-General and its subsidiary bodies, such as the boards of

---

154. Romeyn de Hooghe, *Roman funeral*, 1672, etching from J. Kirchmann’s *De funeribus Romanorum*, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague
Rombout Verhulst and Willem de Keyser after a design by Artus I Quellinus, *Monument of Jan van Galen*, 1654, white Carrara marble, touchstone, Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam

Rombout Verhulst and Willem de Keyser, *Monument of Maarten Harpertsz Tromp*, 1654-58, white Carrara marble, red Belgian marble and touchstone, Oude Kerk, Delft

admiralty, had discovered the monumental tomb as a vehicle for political propaganda, and exploited it to legitimise their republican politics. This development may have been prompted by the sharply increased popularity of the tomb of William the Silent among Orangists, which came to symbolise the stadholders' dynasty, despite its original republican connotations.

The relationship between the States-General and the stadholders' court has been described as a sort of symbiosis in a recent study of the Dutch court culture in the seventeenth century. According to seventeenth-century political theory, and practice, the States-General represented the concept of sovereignty, and the House of Orange the concepts of dignity, authority, glory and honour. Together, this system of values constituted the political culture of the Republic. Moreover, for broad sectors of the population at least, the prince of Orange was the embodiment of the nation. The concepts "glory and honour of the state," which were evidently regarded as substantive components of the form of government, were above all expressed in
the pomp and circumstance of the stadholders' court in The Hague. That courtly culture provided the Republic with a way of consolidating its position on the international political stage, which was dominated by monarchies. The loss of the stadholder in 1650 obviously upset this interplay of forces completely.

The existing cult of naval heroes must have helped compensate for the lack of a stadholder to embody the nation. These men served as exempla virtutis, which had been a topos in the justification of all state tombs since Van Heemskerck's. The spectacle surrounding their burials at public expense, and the tombs accorded them, were splendid manifestations of the might of both the Republic and the States-General. The display of pomp was an extension of that which had surrounded the stadholders, who had been the bearers of the
state’s “glory and honour” prior to 1650.9 As the traditional prerogative of the nobility and princes, such monumental tombs added a useful ‘courtly’ component to the States-General’s image and its repertoire of propaganda devices. Throughout the seventeenth century it was the States-General that conducted the Republic’s maritime warfare, while the stadholders played the leading military role on land. The importance that it attached to the cult of naval heroes is underscored by the display of their coats of arms on the tombs and by the publication of engravings of their funeral processions.94

The need for a cult of heroes was particularly pressing in the period 1650-1672 due to the growing threat to the country’s freedom from abroad. The hesitant tradition took on real form with the tombs of Van

157
Artus de Wit, Monument of Abraham van der Hulst, 1666, white Carrara marble and touchstone, Oude Kerk, Amsterdam
Pieterr, Monument of Witte de With, 1668, white Carrara marble, red Belgian marble and touchstone, Grote Kerk, Rotterdam

Galen (1656, fig. 155) and, above all, Maarten Tromp (1654-1658, fig. 156), and the States-General acted for the first time overtly and formally as the patron. Tromp’s tomb and funeral accordingly served as a yardstick for those that followed, and this emerges explicitly in the call for tenders for Van Wassenaer’s tomb. The States-General decided in a resolution of 4 March 1667 “to have the foundations with their appurtenances made, finally as noted, provided the country is not charged more than the cost of the burial of the late Lieutenant-Admiral Tromp, exclusive of the cost of his tomb.”\textsuperscript{95} The monumental tombs of Van Galen and Tromp established the representational form that served as the model for later ones: a wall tomb with grave, with the deceased laid out on top in military dress, combined with a sea battle, a funerary inscription and numerous details like putti, trophies and maritime symbols.\textsuperscript{96}
Both the chronological and topographical distribution of Dutch tombs displays striking concentrations, with seven in Amsterdam (figs. 155, 157, 158), five in Rotterdam (figs. 135, 159), three in Delft (fig. 156), and one each in Middelburg (fig. 37), Leeuwarden, The Hague, Utrecht (fig. 189) and Hoorn (fig. 46). The location was generally chosen by applying two criteria: the birthplace (or residence) of the deceased, and the seat of the Board of Admiralty or commissioning body. The presence of the tomb of a national hero was of great importance to a town, particularly if it was for one of its own sons. It could add considerably to civic prestige, as can be seen above all in various seventeenth and eighteenth-century city descriptions, in which the tombs are always described at length.\(^{97}\) It is also illustrated by the fact that both Rotterdam and Amsterdam vied to become the last resting-place of Michiel de Ruyter (fig. 160).\(^{98}\)

Tombs also drew many visitors from home and abroad (figs. 161, 162). Visiting those of the famous, and in particular reading, translating and transcribing their funerary inscriptions, had become an international, intellectual pursuit,\(^{99}\) and it is partly for that reason that the graves of heroes are mentioned so frequently in the diaries of travellers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A town like Delft was often included in itineraries because of its tombs, and only in the second place because of its ceramics industry and other curiosities.\(^{100}\) Foreign approval of the tombs for naval heroes was
pithily expressed by Joseph Addison in 1711. After criticising an admiral’s monument in Westminster Abbey, he praised Dutch tombs as examples to be imitated. “The Dutch, whom we are apt to despise for want of genius, show an infinitely greater taste of antiquity and politeness in their buildings and works of this nature, than we meet with in those of our own country. The monuments of their admirals, which have been erected at the public expense, represent them like themselves; and are adorned with rostral crowns and naval ornaments, with beautiful festoons of seaweed, shells, and coral.”

The decision to erect a cenotaph for Van Wassenaer must be seen in the context of this still young tradition of heroes. With its explicitly
princely form and iconography, which depart sharply from the traditional graves of naval heroes, it radiates something of the glory and honour of the States-General in the person of the admiral of the fleet. At the same time, by presenting Van Wassenaer Obdam as a hero of the state in such a grandiose fashion, it conceals the reality of his failure and the resulting damage done to the prestige of the States-General. The effect of this exercise in burnishing a tarnished image is made abundantly clear in a passage from the travel journal of, ironically, an English tourist of 1705. From being an anti-hero in 1665, Van Wassenaer Obdam had 40 years later become a precursor of the nineteenth-century popular hero Van Speyk: "And the honorary monument of the famous Admiral Obdam, who after a bloody engagement with the English fleet, commanded by the Duke of York, Brother to Charles II and having sadly shattered the ship this Prince was in, finding himself enclosed amidst several large men of war of the enemy, had the resolution to set fire to his Powder-Room, and blow himself up rather than surrender: this action is represented there on a bas-relief, his statue stands upon the monument crowned by Fame, with this Epitaph."