assiégés et le désespoir des victimes d'épidémies. Comme il le signale, il a "laissés tels quels dans le fil du récit des mots, des expressions, des structures qui peuvent paraître (malheureusement) archaïques, ou rustiques aujourd'hui." Un lexique placé à la fin de l'ouvrage, nous facilite la lecture de certains passages.

En intitulant la deuxième partie de son livre, "L'heure des brasiers," l'auteur donne le ton que prendra désormais le récit. Cette période qui atteint son point culminant avec le massacre de la Saint-Barthélémy (lequel nous est restitué tel que vécu par Ambroise), se caractérise par la lutte pour l'affermissement du pouvoir central en France. Suprématie politique certes, mais aussi religieuse. Guerre de partis (Guisé-Bourbons) et de religion, que domine la stature de Catherine de Médicis. L'affrontement débute sur un mode mineur, alors que plusieurs pages sont consacrées au voyage entrepris par la régente et sa suite afin d'asseoir son autorité en province et d'exhiber le futur Charles IX. La médecine occupe moins de place dans cette partie, bien que l'auteur nous réserve encore quelques pages pleines de réalisme. Ainsi, celles consacrées à l'épidémie de peste qui ravage Lyon. On y montre Ambroise, préoccupé du sort de ses homologues, en train de formuler un réquisitoire afin que l'on assure à celui qui a visité les pestiférés "de quoi vivre jusqu'à sa mort." Concernant les rapports entre la médecine et le Divin, notre héros reste fort humble malgré les honneurs que lui confèrent ses réussites et son titre de chirurgien du roi. Selon lui, "Dieu et Nature commandent aux chirurgiens" et "Nature n'est que volonté de Dieu incarnée dans les choses sensibles. Tout procède de lui."

Plus proche de la réalité historique qu'une simple biographie romancée, l'ouvrage suppose une familiarité de l'auteur avec son sujet. Celle-ci fut acquise grâce à la consultation de travaux historiques spécialisés dont une liste nous est présentée à la fin du volume. Ce livre se lit comme un roman, il m'a enthousiasmé et divertit. L'humour n'en est pas absent, témoin cette scène où la duchesse d'Etampes cache son amant dans la cheminée, derrière les fagots que le roi cocu, pris d'un urgent besoin, arrose innocemment! C'est donc avec beaucoup de chaleur que je recommande la lecture de ce "livre de vacances," tant aux spécialistes, qu'à ceux qui ne cherchent dans la lecture qu'un simple moyen d'évasion.

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Keith P.G. Moxey. *Pieter Aertsen, Joachim Beuckelaer, and the Rise of Secular Painting in the Context of the Reformation.* New York: Garland Publishing (Outstanding dissertations in the fine arts), 1977. Pp. 274.

To judge from extant works of art, one would be justified in acclaiming Pieter Aertsen (active Antwerp 1535-1557, Amsterdam 1557-1575) the virtual inventor of the peasant and his daily life as a worthy subject of the painter's art. The contribution to the elevation of this sphere of subject matter by Aertsen and his nephew and follower Joachim Beuckelaer (active Antwerp ca. 1560-1574) as a manifestation of the increasing secularization of painting in the sixteenth century with specific reference to the circumstances and conditions caused by the Reformation in the Netherlands is the focus of this 1974 dissertation. In introducing the new subjects explored by Aertsen and taken up by Beuckelaer, the author indicates his

two prime concerns: the historical circumstances which may have motivated their creation and, in addition, the intention of the artist in, or the contemporary understanding of, the juxtaposing of secular and religious subjects within the confines of a single picture, an approach which characterizes a significant portion of their oeuvre. The author has addressed himself more recently to some of the same material in an article "The 'Humanist' Market Scenes of Joachim Beuckelaer: Moralizing Exempla or 'Slices of Life'?" *Jaarboek kon. Mus. v. schone Kunsten Antwerpen* (1976) drawn from the dissertation but more tightly defined, and in a paper "The Image Debate in the Netherlands: Consequences for Artistic Practice" presented to the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference at St. Louis, October, 1980.

While Parts I and II consider the works of art by these two masters, Parts III and IV treat the background on the image debate in the Netherlands and the circumstances surrounding the actual destruction of images, especially in 1566. Oriented to the needs of an art historical discussion, the treatment is remarkably lucid and always to the point. Perhaps this important portion of the book, 120 pages, might have been more suitably placed at the beginning. Establishing first what aspects of secularization would be decried or condoned would have given more focus to a subsequent description of the innovative formulations of these artists and the evolution of themes within their respective oeuvres.

In addition to outlining the basic positions on images expressed by Erasmus, Luther, Zwingli and most importantly Calvin, among others, the author concentrates his attention on the varying forms – tracts, sermons, rederijker plays – of image criticism in the Netherlands, principally in the decades preceding the great outburst of destruction of images in 1566. Aside from the inherent blasphemy of devotional images, Calvin indicated that of the two kinds of images that can be legitimately represented, "the first consists of histories, and the second of trees, mountains, rivers and persons that one paints without any meaningful intention. The first find provides instruction, the second exists only to afford us pleasure" (*Institution* . . ., 1545). The author makes the assumption that the second category may be cited to characterize Aertsen's (and therefore Beuckelaer's) depictions of the phenomena of daily life, and that they are therefore simply slices of life." As will be discussed shortly, in the view of this reader, that assumption is untenable.

The actual clearing of the churches, viewed by the Calvinists as an act of "purification," is of less interest to the author than the attitudes motivating it, one vaguely depressing aspect of which being how apparently little concerned the Catholic community and even the clergy were to defend the churches and especially objects previously enjoying great veneration. Moxey implies that absolutely no defensive measures were taken at all. This is a little misleading in that efforts were made in some places to protect treasures; for example, it is known that the famous Ghent Altarpiece was taken down at this time and temporarily stored for safekeeping.

In his chapter on the publications of the Catholic Reaction, Moxey underlines the basic conservatism of these texts limited to a reassertion of the validity of devotional images, the need for orthodoxy, the necessity of decorum, and the absence of anything profane in the person and surroundings of holy figures. No new role or themes for art were proposed.

Although distinctly useful in themselves, these chapters present an historical "context" that is very one-sided, lacking as it does any significant consideration of the impact of Humanism (important for other emerging themes) or changing social patterns of the perception of the peasant. These considerations are not only acknowledged by the author in the 1980 lecture noted above but seen now as more fruitful avenues of investigation.

Aspects of these pivotal issues *have* been dealt with in the literature on Pieter Bruegel. The absence in Moxey's study of comment on the art of the Netherlands' most famous painter of peasant life, active in Antwerp at the very same time in 1551 to 1563 and then in Brussels until his death in 1569, is disconcerting. To speculate on the interest in the depiction of peasant life in Antwerp at mid century without discussing Bruegel or at least making clear why it is appropriate to exclude him is to deprive one's arguments of credibility on these points. Again, at no point is the general artistic environment of Antwerp or Amsterdam outlined; who was working in these cities and with what approach is critical to an understanding of how the apparent lack of orthodoxy of these works by Aertsen and Beuckelaer would have been perceived. Clues are certainly to be sought in the paintings of Frans Floris, Martin de Vos, or Jan Massys, to mention only a few of the more famous artists working contemporaneously in Antwerp.

In the chapter on Aertsen, to which we may limit ourselves, the author assumes that Aertsen's depictions of peasants, of which the first known version in Vienna dates from 1550, are "devoid of moralization" and that the incidents are represented "for their own sake." Moxey sees them as departures from "the existing character of Netherlandish genre painting," which is satiric or moralizing. Radical as these extremely realistic monumentally-scaled depictions are, they are not that radical. To the eye of this reader, sufficient numbers appear to be susceptible either in part or in whole to a moralizing interpretation, so that it is legitimate to ask whether all are not potentially so – one just does not know what to look for. If the settings of fifteenth-century Netherlandish paintings are commonly accepted as potentially imbued with "hidden" symbolism, and if the genre themes of seventeenth-century Holland, which grew more or less directly from works such as those by Aertsen, are demonstrably susceptible to emblematic decipherment (as in the broad investigations of E. de Jongh), and if some of the same patterns of association appear in these sixteenth-century works, the need for a solid study of the interpretive limits of these genre scenes seems self-evident. Intrinsic and extrinsic factors, intentionality and the conditions of reception need to be resolved to arrive at the possible multiple "meanings." While Moxey rejected as not relevant in this regard the earlier and admittedly limited work of Emmens (in *Album Amicorum J.G. van Gelder*, 1973), sufficient iconographical material was brought together by Alois Grosjean (*Konsthistorisk Tidskrift* 1974) to amply support the supposition that underlying Aertsen's depictions of peasants, whether alone or as an adjunct to a titular religious subject, is a broad fascination with the carnal life – often in a markedly profane vein. Though probably admired by cognoscenti, these paintings of religious subjects thus compromised may well have been anathema to those who would reform Christian art. It is worth noting that while one can only document the altarpieces by Aertsen that were destroyed in 1566, extant examples of these hybrids end abruptly in 1566, and, indeed, the

surviving examples of the “pure” peasant scenes of daily life taper off soon after to be replaced by religious scenes of the utmost orthodoxy.

There is as well no modern comprehensive study of Aertsen’s stylistic development (see Kreidl in *Jb. d. Ksth. Slgen in Wien*, 1973 for the religious works) so that iconographically pivotal works may even be attributed to other artists. A serious monograph on Aertsen would be a formidable contribution to sixteenth-century studies.

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Robert J. Clements and Lorna Levant, eds. *Renaissance Letters: Revelations of a World Reborn*. New York: New York University Press, 1976. xxvi, 468 pp. Illustrations. \$17.50.

This large sample of 200 letters written during the Renaissance is obviously directed towards a general audience. It is arranged topically into areas comprising much of the experience of the period: Humanism, the Gentleman-Scholar, Literature, Theatre, the Fine Arts, Music, Science, Superstition, Astronomy, Astrology, Medicine, Religion, the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, the New Bible, Censorship, the Inquisition, Government and Politics, Life at Court, the Nobility, Warfare, Travel, Exploration, Colonies, Foreign Peoples and Trade, Love Sacred and Profane, Marriage and the Family, the Status of Women, Daily Life, Domestic Concerns, Town vs. Country, Pastimes and Money. Some of the letters are very famous and some have been translated for the first time. A wide survey of the continent of Europe is encompassed, with examples of letters from Russia and Hungary as well as from more familiar Renaissance centres, and a small selection from such exotic places as Morocco and the New World.

The editors have chosen to define the Renaissance as the “world reborn after 1450” (3) and hence the earliest entries are from the second half of the fifteenth century, while the latest date from the 1630’s. This decision has resulted in the omission of the first generations of Italian humanists, even though some letters of Petrarch, Salutati or Bruni would have been interesting additions to the volume.

Also, the nature of the collection has produced a wide inconsistency in the scholarly apparatus. Some letters are heavily annotated, others hardly at all; some letters have the Latin quotations translated, others do not – discrepancies, I suspect, that can be attributed to their previous editors. The introductions to the various sections are generally very superficial, even simplistic, and too often written in a chatty style that might irritate the reader (e.g. Henri IV of France is described as a “male chauvinist” on page 386, and a reference is made on page 421 to Renaissance “job opportunities”). Finally, to identify a minor error in fact, the “temple dedicated to the Prince of the Apostles” described by Valdés to Pietro Martire d’Anghiera in letter V-6 (205n.) is certainly not the mausoleum of Julius II but the new St. Peter’s.

Altogether, however, Clements and Levant have made accessible for the first time in a single volume a wide selection of letters written during the Renaissance that should prove a useful addition to the popular works available to the non-specialist reader. The breadth of the sample provides a remarkably complete in-