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**«A Fool Goes to a Wedding»: The Social, Visual, and Performative Functions of the Wedding Banquet in Early Modern Antwerp**

*This essay explores interactions among objects, texts, and audiences brought together by the temporal moment of the wedding banquet and the space of the early modern dining room in Antwerp. I pay special attention to contemporary accounts of wedding banquets from the correspondence of some of Antwerp's leading citizens, to objects such as knives that were given as wedding gifts and often display themes of love and commitment, and to tafelspelen, or table-plays, which offer an ephemeral and satirical take on the weddings of the urban elite. In the temporary moment of the wedding banquet theatrical texts, merchant class audiences, and luxury objects came together and interacted with one another, creating a liminal and unique space for the breaking down of social barriers and the forging of new alliances, which include – but were not limited to – the newly married couple for whom the banquet was held.*

Though weddings in early modern Antwerp were an important signifier of the bond between families and an acknowledgment of status, the brief moment of the wedding banquet was a temporary, festive, and socially charged event. The host – usually the father of the bride – was responsible for creating an atmosphere of levity through the decoration of the banquet space and the inclusion of theatrical entertainment, food, and drink. Guests, who usually included a mix of family members, business associates, and the politically well-connected, played the part of the entertained while using their time to discuss the affairs of the city, to gossip, and to let their hair down, at least figuratively. As one 1560 invitation to Antwerp notary Jan Gillis puts it, at the wedding « we shall all get to know each other better »<sup>1</sup>.

The objects of the wedding banquet and the activities which often accompanied the meal – particularly comic theatrical performances in the form of *tafelspelen*, or table-plays – told different but converging stories about marriage and weddings. Given as wedding gifts and possibly used at the banquet itself, *huwelijkmessen*, or marriage knives, are the objects which survive in the greatest numbers. As luxury objects which would remain with the newly married couple throughout their years together and become part of the family's material wealth, their decorated handles highlight the ideals of marriage and love. Table-plays, on the other hand, were a temporary happening, written to entertain and intended as ephemera.

They offer a more comical and cynical take on the institution of marriage, and the wedding banquet itself, through the trope of the fool and mockery of the merchant classes and nobility. Performed by an actor in costume who was likely a member of Antwerp's Rhetorician's Guild, table-plays mocked the trappings of the urban, upper-class wedding in the service of reinforcing their sense of superiority<sup>2</sup>.

In this essay, I will examine the wedding banquet in late sixteenth-century Antwerp as a social, visual, and performative event. I will begin by looking at letters – including wedding invitations – to and from Antwerp notary Jan Gillis, with a particular focus on his invitation to the wedding of the daughter of a Mr. van den Staghen in February, 1566. I will pay equal attention to *tafelspelen* through one representative example entitled « A Fool Goes to a Wedding », and to a selection of marriage knives whose decorated handles display themes of love, commitment, and the diversions of the upper classes. Table-plays are particularly significant in that an entire subset was written to be performed at wedding banquets. In that temporary moment theatrical texts, merchant class audiences, and luxury objects came together and interacted with one another, creating a liminal and unique space for the reinforcing of social bonds and the forging of new alliances, including – but not limited to – the newly married couple for whom the banquet was held.

### 1. « Busy with weddings »<sup>3</sup>

In January and February of 1566 (1565 old style), Antwerp notary Jan Gillis was occupied with weddings. His niece was getting married, and he was invited to at least two other wedding banquets, all taking place within the following few weeks<sup>4</sup>.

A handful of letters exchanged between Gillis and city magistrate (and thirteen-time mayor of the city) Lancelot van Ursel discuss who had been or was going to be in attendance at these events, the demeanor of the brides, and the appropriateness of various gifts. Though it is perhaps surprising to see such an emphasis on social events and gift-giving between two powerful men in Antwerp, it is in fact perfectly in keeping with the function of the wedding banquet in 1560s Antwerp society. For van Ursel and Gillis, these events were viewed as part business meeting, part party, and in all ways an extension of their prominent roles in the social fabric of the city. If we can judge based on the following few letters – admittedly an impossibly small sample – weddings and their banquets appear to have taken place both at midday and in the evening, and usually during the week.

On January 18, 1566, Lancelot van Ursel wrote to Gillis that everyone in that period was « daily busy with weddings »<sup>5</sup>. At one, he writes, the bride slept until

noon, meaning that they did not go to the table – clearly the central event – until two<sup>6</sup>. At that time, Gillis also appears to have been helping to plan or finance the wedding of his niece, which was to take place in the following weeks. It occupied him so, according to his friend van Ursel, « that you forget about me »<sup>7</sup>. Gillis responded two days later to tell van Ursel that he had been away at the house of the Registrar Blijleven, where « everyone was at the table », including a « councillor Oudaert, van der Stegen and van der Borcht with their wives »<sup>8</sup>. A councillor and another town clerk were in attendance as well, and they discussed business, including the activities of the Council of Brabant<sup>9</sup>. Though this particular gathering was not a wedding, it offers yet another indication that gatherings around the table were times for professionals and politicians to discuss the matters of the day.

Around the time of his niece's nuptials, Gillis received an invitation to another wedding from a Mr. vanden Staghen, « where all of our good friends shall gather together for a feast »<sup>10</sup>. The invitation, currently at the Stadsarchief in Antwerp, is dated February 4, 1566 (delivery date, written in a different hand, was February 7), and invites Gillis to the wedding of his daughter Lynken, which will take place « eight days from Monday ». Interestingly, the banquet was to take place « in the house of Gaspar Ducci », an Italian merchant with a substantial palace in Antwerp that was available for rent for events such as these. We find another mention of the same wedding a few days later, on February 9, in a letter from van Ursel to Gillis, who was thinking of coming to Brussels but whose traveling companion was attending the Staghen wedding. Van Ursel hoped that perhaps Gillis would travel with them afterward, so that they could all « jump from one wedding party to the other »<sup>11</sup>.

The vanden Staghen wedding was surely, as weddings at this level of Antwerp society all must have been, an elaborate one. The physical spaces in which Antwerp wedding celebrations took place are for the most part no longer extant, however the dining space belonging to Gaspar Ducci still exists, in reconstructed form, at the Sterckshof Museum in Deurne. It is therefore possible to imagine at least the broad outlines of the vanden Staghen wedding. We do not know if theatrical performance was an element of this particular celebration, but it is certain that table-plays dealing with weddings were meant for just this kind of event.

Ducci's palatial residence on the Huidevetterstraat was purchased in 1547 and substantially renovated in 1556<sup>12</sup>. As Petra Maclot and Stefaan Grieten have shown, the residence was constructed and renovated in a style reminiscent of Italian Renaissance palaces<sup>13</sup>, perhaps as a way of pronouncing Ducci's identity and origins in a foreign city. Among Antwerp's substantial Italian population<sup>14</sup>, Ducci stood out as one of its best-known figures, though his financial speculations

took a hit after the crises of the late 1550s and early 1560s<sup>15</sup>. Subsequently, and quite unusually, Ducci began making his home available as a banquet hall and luxury accommodation for visiting dignitaries. That the vanden Staghen event was a wedding feast underscores the utility of Ducci's palace specifically as a space for banquets, and the layout and decoration of the *grote* and *kleine zalen* underscore this festive function<sup>16</sup>.

Ducci's *grote zaal* was a highly decorated space. At the end of a long gallery constructed as part of the 1556 expansion<sup>17</sup>, it featured an elaborate ceiling inlaid with twelve painted roundels, as well as a painted and carved hearth and mantel, with a large wallpainting of *The Martyrdom of Saint Lawrence* above it. Included among the ceiling roundels are images of Jupiter, Prometheus (possibly a disguised portrait of King Francis I), Pope Clement VII, Sultan Suleyman I, and John Frederick of Saxony, all depicted in vaguely mythological settings and postures<sup>18</sup> (fig. 1). The emblem and motto of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V appear as well<sup>19</sup>. The ceiling and wall decorations were augmented by a painted mantel depicting the months of the year framed by figures carrying attributes of the seasons. Six of the twelve months are represented on the mantel in the large parlor; the other six appear on the mantel of the small parlor, or *kleine zaal*<sup>20</sup>.

These images provide a fascinating backdrop for a wedding banquet attended by so many of Antwerp's politically powerful, who would likely have recognized and discussed the figures depicted in the ceiling roundels. With the exception of Prometheus and Jupiter, these were not characters from ancient mythology or rulers from antiquity, but powerful men who had all been defeated by Emperor Charles V<sup>21</sup>. Indeed, the iconography of the ceiling roundels closely mirrors that of Maarten van Heemskerck's print series done in the same years, entitled *The Victories of Charles V*. It is not a surprising homage to the former ruler, who abdicated in the same the year that the renovations were completed. The Emperor's crest adorned various buildings at Antwerp's Mint as well<sup>22</sup>. The appearance of such ideologically slanted imagery in Ducci's main parlor announces his allegiance to anyone who enters the palace. We cannot know if vanden Staghen felt the same, though it seems likely that he did. Either way, the imagery on Ducci's ceiling surely provided fodder for conversation at the wedding of his daughter, and formed the perfect backdrop for discussion among men such as Jan Gillis and Lancelot van Ursel: political and engaged, and elegantly Italianate in style.

## 2. Wedding gifts

Gifts were not only an expected facet of the wedding but were an important means of cementing social relationships. As Martha Howell writes, the giving of gifts involved more than a monetary transfer (though that was crucially important as well), « it involved the addition of sociocultural value to economic »<sup>23</sup>. It is perhaps for this reason that in another letter to Jan Gillis from late January 1566, van Ursel tells him what he and some associates – including two other former mayors Antoon van Stralen and Nicholas Rockox – plan to give the bride, and asks for his response : « This morning Stralen, Rockox, me and the treasurer have together decided to give your niece, the bride, a chain worth 400 guilders. Will you tell me privately what you think ? »<sup>24</sup>.

One of many possible kinds of wedding gifts, *huwelijksmessen* or « marriage knives » survive in relatively large numbers and were probably given as a set. The household inventory of Michiel van der Heyden (d. 1552) lists such a set as « a leather knife case with six knives for eating »<sup>25</sup>. The Vleeshuis Museum in Antwerp owns a number of these knives, many now reduced to knife handles. Examining their materials and the level of detail in their imagery gives a sense of the costliness of their production ; that is, their economic value. Their sociocultural value is evident in their iconography.

Though in the modern world there are superstitions about giving knives as wedding gifts<sup>26</sup>, they appear to have been a frequent choice in the sixteenth century. Surviving handles at the Vleeshuis all display imagery related to love and to the pastimes of the upper classes and landed nobility they sought to emulate, particularly hunting. Several handles are even able to sustain small narratives, always about love<sup>27</sup>.

The first knife (fig. 2-3) depicts a couple on either side of the square-edged handle. On one side the couple appear to sit facing each other, though the handle is too worn to make details of their actions legible. On the other side, the figures are locked in an embrace. The decorative area below them includes a heart. The images are worn, presumably from use, but the image of the embracing couple is clearly an intimate one, and both figures appear to be nude. Though the images vary, the themes of love – including physical love – predominate on these handles and reinforce the ideals of marriage.

A second, elaborate knife handle in gilded copper forms the torso of a nude female, with one hand on her abdomen and another holding a bunch of grapes over her rear (fig. 4- 5). An inscription runs along both sides of the lower half of the handle, part of which is inscribed into a hand and heart<sup>28</sup>. It reads, in translation,

« Although my opinion is seldom correct, everything I find is for him who knows that what is taken by the hand is loved (by the heart) »<sup>29</sup>. The inscription can be read two ways : as a statement that the food its user chooses is that which is loved and enjoyed, and as a commentary on the wedded couple and marriage itself : what we take by the hand (our spouse) we love with the heart. An inscribed knife handle invites its user to hold it up, read it, and look closely at its imagery, something which is possible with an object meant to be held in one's hand. The decoration of the knife handle initiates an exchange between object and user, animating tableware and involving it in the experience of dining, but also commenting on the knife's original purpose as wedding gift.

Using the top of the knife handle and its front and back, a brass marriage knife from the Vleeshuis tells the story of a gentleman finding love (fig. 6-7). On one side, the gentleman stands alone, holding a flower. At the top, he appears on horse-back, and on the reverse, he stands in the same position with a flower, but this time an elegantly-dressed woman stands holding it with him : love sought has become love found.

All three examples highlight the seeking, finding, and consummating of marital love using elegant figures and expensive materials from pewter to gilded bronze. Their function at the wedding banquet was both as purely utilitarian object and as a physical reminder – for all of the years that these objects were owned by the family – of the social and economic importance of marriage, fidelity, and love.

### 3. Weddings as Theater

If the table-play entitled « A Fool Goes to a Wedding » can be used as a measure, plays performed at wedding banquets in the last quarter of the century told a completely different story about marriage, sending up what the marriage knives present as sacrosanct : that marital love is serious business. P. Pikhaus, author of the definitive *Het Tafelspel bij de Rederijkers* (1988), quotes perhaps the table-play's simplest definition : « a performance at the table for the enjoyment of guests »<sup>30</sup>. Written and often performed by members of Antwerp's Rhetorician's Guild, they address a wide range of topics, from Carnival and Lent (*Vasten en de Vastenavond*) to the folly of youth (*Onbedochte Jonckheijt*)<sup>31</sup>, with an overt tendency toward the comical. As such, they were handy entertainment at wedding feasts and other formal banquets, as well as at less formal dinner parties. The mere existence of *tafelspelen* as a rhetorical category, and the fact that a number of these plays deal directly with weddings and marriage, points to the significance of the wedding banquet as social event to which great attention was paid, and money spent, in

latter half of the century.

Richard Schechner, founder of the discipline of performance theory, characterizes performance as « the whole event, including audience and performers [...]». It is hard to define 'performance' because the boundaries separating it on the one side from the theatre and on the other from everyday life are arbitrary »<sup>32</sup>. Perhaps more than any other ritual, weddings are performances, with all present taking on roles at various moments of performer and audience. The bride and groom perform prescribed roles, but so does the host and so do the guests, who become an audience to the event but are also under observation themselves. Their presence, particularly if they are influential members of Antwerp society like Jan Gillis and Lancelot van Ursel, elevates the entire event and solidifies the standing of the families whose children are marrying.

The ritual of the wedding banquet, with or without the meta-theater of the table-play, encompasses some of the most central purposes of performance and of the theatrical. A banquet space in use, with the concomitant presence of serving dishes, plates, and spoons ; aromas, sounds of laughter, sounds of dishes meeting utensils and drinks being poured, creates its own unique and temporary environment. Since the moment passes, it is liminal ; it is a space and time that exists outside the realm of normal life even as it purports to be a « normal » event. Schechner notes that a set of actions that changes one's environment, and thus one's responses, is theatrical and separate from everyday existence :

By using masks, costumes, and physical actions arranged in a set way or improvised according to known rules ; by performing following a script, scenario, or set of rules ; by performing in special places or places made special by performing in them ; by performing on holidays or at times set aside 'after work' [...] by all these means, and more, theatrical reality is marked 'nonordinary – for special use only'<sup>33</sup>.

I would make the same argument about the wedding banquet. When people gather together for a wedding, they place themselves on stage in front of their peers and they play the best version of themselves, and when actors are involved, the performer/audience relationship is complicated a second time. Many, if not most, *tafelspelen* involve the audience by having the players speak directly to them, breaking that all-important « fourth wall » that separates the actor from the audience, and the stage from the seats<sup>34</sup>. In Antwerp's dining rooms and banquet spaces – often the same thing – there was no such distinction, and *tafelspelen* are written in such a way that actors utilize their close proximity to the audience, and to the table.

The only character in « A Fool Goes to a Wedding » is the fool who has just arrived



at the actual wedding and speaks directly to the assembled guests<sup>35</sup>. He enters telling jokes (« Do you know why I have just arrived ? Because I wasn't here ! ») and then explains that the Duke of Silly has married off his son to the Countess of Foolishness, and that all of their very important extended family will be at the wedding. There will be 300,000 in attendance – all fools – and « you should come too, or you'll be in trouble »<sup>36</sup>. The bridegroom is the innkeeper of folly and lord of Madtown, and he will take care of the guests ; he is also admiral of the Ship of Folly ; thus the bride and groom are both of high rank. The monologue continues in this vein, with the fool announcing that the Prince of Clumsycastle will serve at the table, along with the Lord of Jest, and fools from many different countries will attend. There will be no quarrels, there will be no strangers, and some will have long hair, others shaved heads. There will be joy, produced by the removal of the Stone of Folly ; and there will be beautiful guests riding horses with bells. During the wedding night, he announces, many female fools will weep over the bride. There will also be many at the wedding who show off their great wisdom, even though they have none. That, he says, is exactly the kind of guest this feast needs.

In its mockery of the kinds of people who attend the very weddings where a play like this was meant to be performed, « A Fool Goes to a Wedding » tells us a good deal about how the upper classes thought of themselves, and wished to be perceived. The purpose of the monologue is first and foremost to incite laughter, but it is a laughter which cuts to the heart of the event itself : that weddings among the upper classes and politically powerful were about titles, about the number of guests in attendance and the distance they had traveled to be there, about taking good care of the guests, and about showing one's intelligence through witty and erudite conversation. The Fool speaks truth to power ; he is able to say all that the guests cannot say to – or about – one another. Guests are expected to laugh at him, but the lines he speaks mock the urban upper classes he addresses, who aspire to nobility but are themselves non-noble (thus the repeated references to Lords, Dukes, and Countesses). At the same time, the luxury of a private wedding feast in an elaborate space with expensive tableware and abundant food and drink reinforced the aura of privilege that must have surrounded these events. And the fact that an actor was brought in for a private performance – all for the enjoyment of the those assembled – only adds to the sense of exclusivity and social power that these families possessed.

Weddings and wedding banquets were a cultural staple for Antwerp's businessmen and political elite in the second half of the sixteenth century. Tableware was designed for them, theatrical performances were written for them, and palaces were available for rent as reception halls. From Lancelot van Ursel's description of

the wedding banquet – one of many he attended during the winter of 1566 – the event itself mixed business and pleasure just as it contrasted the permanence and gravity of marriage with the temporary posturing of the wedding. Objects, paintings, and texts written for such events emphasize starkly different aspects of weddings and marriage, yet they all combined, overlapped, and were sometimes lost in the flow of conversation during the brief, liminal moment of the wedding banquet.

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- 1 Though I received some help with translations from Stefaan Grieten, all translation errors are my own. Stadsarchief Antwerpen (hereafter SAA), PK477, V, Prive-briefwisseling (1560-1601), 6 : « en[de] sauden wey alsdan allen de vriden met malckanderen seynde breeder kennisse maecken ».
- 2 For more on the meaning and performative function of table-plays, see Chapter Three of my book : C. GOLDSTEIN, *Pieter Bruegel and the Culture of the Early Modern Dinner Party*, Farnham 2013, pp. 75-85.
- 3 Letter from Lancelot van Ursel to Jan Gillis, 18 January 1566 (1565 old style), in *De Briefwisseling tusschen Antwerpsch Magistraat en Gedeputeerden uit den tijd van Margarita van Parma en voornamelijk uit de jaren 1565-1566*, « Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis », 16, no. 3/6, 1925, pp. 459-460. Since all dates under discussion take place in January and February, they will be given as 1566 even though they are written as 1565.
- 4 *Ibid.*, pp. 403-515.
- 5 *Ibid.*, pp. 459-60.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 *Ibid.*, letter from February 2, 1566, p. 474.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 476.
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 SAA, PK477, V, Prive-briefwisseling (1560-1601), 158 : « Ersame en[de] geminde cosyne ic gebiede my hertel[yc] zeere ... gesien hebben[de] uwen brieffe bevynde dat ic my hebbe geabuseert van[den] dach dat myn dochter Lynken trouwen sal Soo eyst dat ic u vrvriendel[yc] bidde op alle vrintscap eyst eenichssins veuchlyck u te willen vinden den xiijen dach van deser tegewordiger maent dwelck is van maensdaghe over acht daghen savons ten huuse van Jasp[ar] Douche aldaer alle de goede vrienden hen by een vinden sullen ter feesten Soe bidde ic u noch u noch u bidde compaignie te vinden als mede en[de] naeste bloet van[den] zyde van myns dochter Maghe sult sult my grote eere doen gelyck uwer liefde dat beter weet en[de] [ver]staet dan ic u soude connen gescryven, en[de] hope aen uwen [i]eden dat by u daer af egheen faulte zyn en sal dat [be]kent godde heer dien ic u hiermede bilich met haesten desen iij<sup>em</sup> febr a[nn]o] v xvc lxxv voir paesschen met haesten wt antwerpen Doalutten hertwilligen Vander Staghen ».

- 11 *De Briefwisseling*, pp. 478-9.
- 12 P. MACLOT and S. GRIETEN, *Het renaissance-interieur van Palazzo Ducci : flirt van een Italiaans bankier met Keizer Karel*, in *Vreemd Gebouwd. Westerse en niet-Westerse elementen in onze architectuur*, ed. by S. Grieten, Antwerp 2002, p. 61-91.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 63.
- 14 P. SUBACCHI, *Italians in Antwerp in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*, in *Minderheden in West-europese steden : (16de-20ste eeuw) = Minorities in Western European cities : (sixteenth-twentieth centuries)*, ed. by H. Soly and Alfons K. L. Thijs, Bruxelles 1995, pp. 73-90 ; P. SUBACCHI, *The Italian Community in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Antwerp, in Majolica and glass from Italy to Antwerp and beyond : the transfer of technology in the 16th-early 17th century*, ed. by J. Veeckman, S. Jennings et al., Antwerpen 2002, pp. 23-35.
- 15 MACLOT/ GRIETEN, *Het renaissance-interieur van Palazzo Duccii* p. 62.
- 16 For a reconstruction of the Ducci palace plan, cf. MACLOT/ GRIETEN, *Het renaissance-interieur van Palazzo Ducci*, p. 63.
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 76.
- 19 The recurring depiction of Charles V's motto in Antwerp's public and private spaces is a subject worthy of further research. Cf. MACLOT/ GRIETEN, *Het renaissance-interieur van Palazzo Ducci*, for further discussion in relation to Ducci's palace ; see also P. VANAISE, *Een XVIe-eeuwse beschilderde paneelzoldering uit het voormalige huis Ducci te Antwerpen*, « Bulletin van het Koninklijk Instituut voor het Kunstpatrimonium », 4, 1961, pp. 130-141.
- 20 The two rooms were physically connected through their hearths, which were back to back, as well as through iconography, which finishes in the small parlor what was begun in the large. Though vanden Staghen's wedding invitation does not specify the room in which the Ducci banquet will take place, it is likely that any large event would have been held in the *grote zaal*. For a longer discussion of the seasons imagery in Ducci's *kleine zaal*, see GOLDSTEIN, *Pieter Bruegel*, pp. 126-131.
- 21 I thank Diane H. Bodart for bringing this to my attention. Cf. B. ROSIER, *The Victories of Charles V : a series of prints by Maarten van Heemskerck, 1555-56*, « Simiolus : Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art », 20.1, 1990-1991, pp. 24-38.
- 22 Archives Générales du Royaume, Brussels, 17884 (*Rekeninghen der Meesteren particulieren vander Munten van Brabant*), fol. 485.
- 23 M. HOWELL, *The Marriage Exchange : Property, Social Place, and Gender in Cities of the Low Countries, 1300-1550*, in *Women in Culture and Society*, ed. by C. R. Stimpson, Chicago/ London 1998, p. 137.
- 24 *De Briefwisseling*, p. 473.
- 25 SAA, Inventory for Michiel van der Heyden, 24 June 1552 (SAA, GF50), fol. 27 : « Eenen leren messcoker met sesse messen om te eten ».
- 26 The most common of these is the belief that a knife as a wedding gift will sever the ties of marriage. This is usually assuaged by asking the newly wed couple to "buy back" the knife by attaching a penny to the gift.
- 27 For a discussion of this issue in Italy, see F. DENNIS, *Unlocking the gates of chastity : music and the erotic in the domestic sphere in 15th- and 16th-century Italy*, in *Erotic Cultures of Renaissance Italy*, ed. by S. F. Matthews-Grieco, Farnham 2010, p. 223-246.

- 28 The inscription reads, « SELDEN-WIS-IS-MIN-A-WYS-ALVAT-ICK-VIN-TIS-VOER-DIE-VEET-DIE-IET-IS-DAT ».
- 29 My thanks to Stefaan Grieten for help with this translation.
- 30 P. PIKHAUS, *Het Tafelspel bij de Rederijkers*, 2 vols., Ghent 1988-1989, p. 87.
- 31 For complete texts of table-plays, cf. the *Digitale bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse letteren*, <<http://www.dbnl.org>> (last viewed June 2013).
- 32 R. SCHECHNER, *Essays on Performance Theory, 1970-76*, New York 1977, p. 44.
- 33 R. SCHECHNER, *Between Theater and Anthropology*, foreword by V. Turner, Philadelphia 1985, p. 117.
- 34 Quoted in PIKHAUS, *Het Tafelspel*, p. 32 : « Het tafelspel in de XVIde eeuw is een dramatisch rederijkersgenre, dat voor een prive-gezelschap bij een of andere feestelijke gelegenheid rondom een tafel tijdens de maaltijd werd opgevoerd door maximaal vier spelers, meestal twee of drie, die met elkaar of met het publiek (in het geval van monologen) in discussie gewikkeld zijn over een of ander punt (de prioriteitsvraag, het aan te bieden, meestal symbolisch te verklaren geschenk, bekering of inzicht, anekdotes) waarbij dit soms gepaard gaat met lijfelijk contact en actie en waarbij rechtstreekse apostrofen en allusies op het feestgezelschap wijzen op het doorbreken van die 'vierde wand' ».
- 35 Anonymous, *Een marot noodt ter Bruijloft*, 16<sup>th</sup> century ; *Digitale bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse letteren*, <<http://www.dbnl.org>> (last viewed July 2013).
- 36 *Ibid.*



fig. 1: Twelve Roundels from the ceiling of Palazzo Ducci, ca 1556, reconstructed at the Sterckshof Museum, Deurne



fig. 2: *Marriage Knife with Naked Figures*, front, copper with silver leaf, 7 cm, Antwerp, Museum Vleeshuis



fig. 3: *Marriage Knife with Naked Figures*, back, copper with silver leaf, 7 cm, Antwerp, Museum Vleeshuis



fig. 4: *Marriage Knife with Inscription*, front, gilded copper, 7,5 cm, Antwerp, Museum Vleeshuis



fig. 5: *Marriage Knife with Inscription*, back, gilded copper, 7,5 cm, Antwerp, Museum Vleeshuis



fig. 6: *Marriage Knife with Courtly Figures*, front, brass, 8,5 cm, Antwerp, Museum Vleeshuis



fig. 7: *Marriage Knife with Courtly Figures*, back, brass, 8,5 cm, Antwerp, Museum Vleeshuis