Addenda to the Small-Scale Sculpture of Matthieu van Beveren of Antwerp

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Shortly after its acquisition, a boxwood Pietà in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art (Figure 1) was linked to the circle of Matthieu van Beveren (ca. 1630–90) of Antwerp, a sculptor in wood, stone, and ivory on whom I published a preliminary study in 1975, a study that has prompted a variety of responses. As it happens, no small works in wood by van Beveren have been identified heretofore aside from various crucifixes only tentatively attributed to him. The pieces on a small scale known to be his are all in ivory. Such is also the case, it may be remarked, with Pieter Scaemaeckers the Elder (1652–1714), who produced both large-scale and smaller works in Antwerp.

In its rather theatrical conception, its concentration on the front view alone—the back is flat, with only summary carving (Figure 2)—and its lively, pyramidal silhouette, the Pietà group is reminiscent of the marble tomb monument for Lamoral Claude-François, count of Thurn und Taxis, erected in the church of Notre-Dame-du-Sablon in Brussels in 1678. This latter work, for which the terracotta model also survives (Figure 3), shows the distinct influence of Gabriel Grupello (1644–1730). For further comparison, three other works might be mentioned: the small ivory memorial to King James II of England, which dates from the late 1680s and is preserved in the Royal Collections at Windsor Castle; the pillar monument for Jasper Boest in St. Jacobskerk in Antwerp of 1665 (see Figure 13), together with its reduction in ivory; and the companion piece to the latter, the statuette of the Resurrected Christ in Antwerp’s Begijnhofkirk.

It was James David Draper who attributed the New York Pietà (Figures 1, 2, 6) to the workshop of Matthieu van Beveren, and this finding is supported in part by comparison with other works definitely known to be from his circle. One of these is the altar dating to 1668 of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows and St. Barbara in the church of Onze-Lieve-Vrouw in Dendermonde. This work is adorned with wood figures and reliefs, some larger than life, that have been painted white to resemble stone. Various hands were almost certainly employed in the execution of the work. Its central panel, situated between a pair of twisted columns, contains a similar Pietà with two sorrowing putti (Figure 4). The composition is different, to be sure, for here the seated Virgin is turned toward the left. The dead Christ is seated at her feet, leaning against her with his right leg extended and his left foot resting on the ground. His right arm lies horizontally across Mary’s lap, supported at the wrist by one of the putti. For all of these variations, not to mention the fact that the one work is executed in small format with a polished boxwood surface, while the other is full scale and of painted wood, there are compelling similarities. Among them are the physiognomies of the respective figures, the disposition of the drapery, the balance of the Virgin’s pose, the active concern of the putti, the treatment of the bit of earth at the base, and specific details of the hair, hands, and feet, such as the gesture of the Virgin’s right hand. In type and style, for example, the putto supporting Christ’s wrist in the Dendermonde altar (Figure 5), with his expression of profound sorrow, could be brother to the one standing on the right in the smaller Pietà (Figure 6). The putto kneeling at the latter’s feet and looking upward (Figure 1) has something of the same concerned air and the rather too complicated crouching posture we find in the putto to the lower right on the altar panel, his gaze fixed on the sponge lying in the basin of vinegar. It is also instructive

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Metropolitan Museum Journal 23

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1. Matthieu van Beveren (workshop?), Pietà with Mourning Putti. Boxwood, H. 45.7 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Loretta Hines Howard, 1964, 64.164.242

2. Pietà with Mourning Putti, view of the back

RIGHT, ABOVE AND BELOW


4. Matthieu van Beveren (and workshop), Pietà with Mourning Putti, central relief of the altar to Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows. Onze-Lieve-Vrouw, Dendermonde (photo: A.C.L., Brussels)
to compare these putti with the wooden ones supporting the busts of Christ, the Virgin, and St. John on the pulpit in Onze-Lieve-Vrouw in Dendermonde, from 1681/84, or the numerous ones from the oak portal of the chapel of the Augustinian convent, now in the Stedelijk Museum, Tirlemont. A partial model in terracotta for this latter work may be seen in the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, the design for which, in turn, is Abraham van Diepenbeeck’s, and dates to sometime before 1675.

These works, closely related to architecture and tending somewhat toward the decorative (particularly in the area of the console), may be traced back to designs originating in the circle of Anthony van Dyck, for example, in works by Nicolaus van der Horst as well as by Abraham van Diepenbeeck. The same might well be said of compositions like the Dendermonde Pietà and the Thurn und Taxis monument. The New York Pietà, however, has antecedents of its own, one of them being the small marble group that bears the inscription QVESNOY—doubtless referring to Jérôme Duquesnoy—and resides in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.
This latter work may perhaps be dated to shortly before the middle of the seventeenth century, thanks to the existence of a reflection of it in wood, with certain deviations, on the tomb of Hadelin de Royer erected in 1640/45 in the church of Notre-Dame in Huy.

The tomb sculpture, now rather heavily overpainted, reveals, however, a wholly different relationship between the two main figures. The body of the dead Christ lies at a steeper angle, and appears to be almost clamped between the Virgin’s knees. His legs fall toward the front, and his left arm lies across his mother’s thigh, while she lifts her right hand in a gesture of lament. One of the possible prototypes for the Vienna group by Duquesnoy (Figure 7) is the painting by van Dyck in the same museum, though there—as in the boxwood version in New York (see Figure 1)—Christ’s face is turned forward and downward. Duquesnoy’s composition tends to isolate the Virgin from the more horizontal corpse of her son, for she sits somewhat straighter, her head inclined to the right, and does not support his arm with


her hand. With her right hand, however, which is hidden beneath the ample folds of her cloak, she attempts to brace his head. The small putto crouched in front and holding Christ’s right hand does nothing to mitigate the isolation of the two figures, the intense sorrow of the mother, and the pitiful lifelessness of her son.

A small-scale ivory Pietà without auxiliary figures constitutes the central group of a domestic altar that is much later in conception, now in the Musées Royaux d’Art et d’Histoire, Brussels (Figure 8). In my 1975 article, I chose to attribute the Pietà, with some reservations, to Matthieu van Beveren rather than to Jérôme Duquesnoy. It is certainly directly related to the boxwood group in New York (see Figure 1), whose detailing, specifically the hair, the beard, the drapery—odd, the mere wisp of drapery that serves to cover the Brus-
sels Christ’s nakedness—and overall modeling strike one as being somewhat less linear and crisp. This is true even in such minor details as the bottom edge of the Vir-
gin’s seat and the treatment of the toes and fingers of both figures. Assuming that the ivory work is not a di-
rect copy of the present group (or the reverse, which is scarcely plausible), their extreme similarity would sug-
gest, at least for the two central figures, a common pro-
totype other than the Duquesnoy composition in Vienna.

Unfortunately, the existence of the Brussels ivory does not help us in any way to determine the original context for our wooden Pietà with its attendant putti, whether it was part of a devotional image or a small domestic al-
tar. It is possible that at one time there were additional auxiliary figures to scale, as in the much later Brussels altar, but this is mere conjecture. We can assume, none-
theless, that as in the case of the altar relief from 1668 in Dendermonde (see Figure 4), a relatively wide cross once rose above the group, and that the whole was set within a more or less architectural frame. The wide groove visi-
ble in the back of the Virgin’s seat, the various holes, and the indentations along the lower edge of the base would suggest as much.

We know that the large ivory figure of the Madonna in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (Figure 9), the small memorial in Windsor Castle, the rapidly modeled bozzetto in terracotta for the Tirlemont portal, and the more painstaking terracotta model for the Thurn und Taxis monument in Notre-Dame-du-Sablon in Brussels are largely the work of Matthieu van Beveren’s own hand. Comparison with these works, together with the highly sensitive treatment of its surface, lends credence to the attribution of the boxwood group under discus-

tion to the van Beveren workshop. In execution, it is of at least as high quality as the ivory counterpart of the Boest monument in Antwerp (see Figure 14) or of the group of the Resurrected Christ in the Begijnhofkerk.

Two ivory statuettes, previously unpublished, in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, represent the sorrowing Virgin (Figures 10–12) and St. John (Figures 16–18). These relatively large figures had been in a private collection until their donation in 1955.

The back of the St. John is completely flat (Figure 17), while that of the Virgin is essentially flat, with only the most rudimentary carving (Figure 11). Each stands on a relatively small base that is slightly flared at the top. One is immediately struck by their unusually elongated proportions, most noticeable in their long necks. Both figures, but especially the quietly sorrowing Virgin, recall the sculptural style of Matthieu van Beveren, most notably in the softly billowing drapery and the elegant flourishes of the edges. One is reminded of the Amsterdam Madonna (Figure 9), for example, or of the formal idiom of the New York Pietà (Figure 1). Yet the Virgin and St. John fail to achieve the quality of the former; instead they would appear to be the work of a different hand.

The Virgin is a clearly a reduction, with altered proportions and numerous simplifications and deviations in specific details, of the Mourning Virgin in sandstone atop the tomb monument of Jasper Boest in St. Jacobskerk, Antwerp, of 1665 (Figure 13). To judge from one relatively minor detail, namely the base with its mere hint of a molding, one suspects that the work was modeled on the ivory reduction of the pillar figure, which survives in the Beguine convent in Antwerp (Figure 14). That reduction would appear to be the work of one of van Beveren’s closest associates. In its proportions, the ivory statuette is lighter and thinner than the full-scale sandstone figure. A chalk drawing of the composition, with brown wash highlighted with white, is in the Kupferstickkabinett, Berlin (Figure 15). This is surely not an original design either by van Beveren or one of the painters in his employ; more than likely, it is only a rendering, apparently Flemish, of some particular finished work. The form of the base and certain other details would suggest that it depicts the original monument of 1665 (Figure 13). The drawing reveals an overall simplification similar to that of the ivory statuette in Richmond (Figure 10), but in pointing this out I do not mean to imply that the two are intimately related. Moreover, the Richmond figure is the only version with the motif of a reverse fold beside and below the Virgin’s right foot, and here for the first time the tip of that foot is visible.

In conception and execution, the Richmond figure lacks the brilliance of the Thurn und Taxis monument (Figure 3) and the Amsterdam Madonna and Child (Figure 9) in ivory. One cannot help noting, for example, the instability of the Virgin’s pose, especially in the side view (Figure 12); the unconvincing disposition of the drapery, most clearly in the area of the right arm and leg; and an awkwardness in the play of folds over the left hip and thigh.

The same observations apply to the figure of St. John (Figures 16–18). Viewed from any angle, he strikes one as being unusually motionless, even stiff. The two were undoubtedly auxiliary figures for a Crucifixion. I am not aware of any representation of St. John by van Beveren that the carver of the present ivory might have used as a model. But this is not to say that he did not have a model, and in fact we need to look no further than the angel in the right-hand niche of the Dendermonde altar of 1668 (Figure 19). The ivory carver has left off the wings, of course, and altered, among other things, the face, the hair, and the position of the hands, but the essential similarity is striking. He has also provided his St. John with a long-sleeved garment. The pose as a whole, however—not surprisingly, given the restricted, somewhat hesitant contrapposto—remains rigid and lifeless. The virtuoso sweep of the angel’s cloak has been replaced by thoroughly routine drapery, even though the detail of fringe along its lower edge is preserved. The mediocrity of the drapery is particularly clear in the side views, and the face reveals an undeniably empty pathos.

The carver of these ivories has thus created a grieving Mary based on prototypes of the Mourning Virgin in Antwerp, and an altogether less convincing St. John out of the Dendermonde angel so profoundly affected by the event taking place in the central relief. Careful study of other figures by van Beveren that are similarly organized in terms of posture and drapery—the Evangelists John and Matthew on the organ loft in Onze-Lieve-Vrouw in Dendermonde of 1659/66, for example—would suggest that the Richmond figures were not necessarily created during the master’s lifetime. To my mind it seems quite possible, judging from the back and side views of the two figures, the carving of their drapery, and especially the execution of the hair and feet of


14. *Mourning Virgin*, reduction of the stone figure from the Jasper Boest monument (Figure 13). Ivory, H. 26 cm. Beguine Convent, Antwerp (photo: A.C.L., Brussels)

15. Drawing of the Jasper Boest monument (Figure 13), probably Flemish. 36.4 × 17.8 cm. Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin (photo: Jörg P. Anders)


17. *St. John*, view of the back (photo: Virginia Museum of Fine Arts)

the *St. John*, that these are relatively late reductions, with variations, of van Beveren’s full-scale works.

It is appropriate to mention here two additional ivory statuettes, once again a *Mourning Virgin* and a *St. John* that came up for sale in Munich in 1986 (Figures 20, 21). They were described as being early works by the later “Kammerbeinstecher” Matthias Steinl of Vienna (1644–1727). Clearly, however, they bear no resemblance at all to ivory statuettes by that sculptor that are displayed in Vienna’s Geistliche Schatzkammer. The weeping woman who serves as an auxiliary figure in the marble *Pietà* in the Kapuzinerkirche in Vienna, long thought to be a major work of Steinl’s, is actually the work of Paul Strudel.

Though I cannot point to works that are similar, I would argue that these two figures were created in Flanders. To judge from their proportions—especially those of the Virgin—their postures, and the treatment of their drapery, it is by no means certain that they belong together. They both probably do date from the seventeenth or early eighteenth century, however. Particularly striking, and without direct parallels, is the manner in which the Virgin’s cloak is drawn across the full length of her elongated figure and caught up in her right hand and in
which John’s cloak, tied in front of his chest, billows out from his left hand over his calf-length robe. In the form of the drapery and in his pose, this St. John is reminiscent of various sculptures—though more heavily proportioned ones—from the circle around Lucas Faydherbe (1617–97) and by Jérôme Duquesnoy (1602–54) and his followers, for example the pillar statues of the apostles in the cathedral and in the church of Notre-Dame de la Chapelle in Brussels. One is also reminded of such figures as the St. Bartholomew by Jan Cosyns (active in Brussels between 1659 and 1678). In any case, these ivory figures, whose backs reveal only perfunctorily carved drapery folds, have nothing to do with the style of Matthieu van Beveren.

An ivory group of the Madonna and Child on the crescent moon and with a winding serpent was published in 1985 by Ghislaine Derveaux-van Ussel as the work of Matthieu van Beveren. When compared to the terracotta Madonna by Lucas Faydherbe in the British Museum, however, it would appear to be the work of this latter sculptor. Saskia Durian-Ress, who was the first to attribute the Brussels group to Faydherbe—long before the publication just cited—will discuss it in detail in her forthcoming study of smaller Flemish sculpture.

Another statuette of the Madonna and Child on the crescent moon with serpent, this time in pearwood, appeared for sale in London in 1985 (Figure 22). One can say with confidence that it is not the work of van Beveren, or even of anyone belonging to his immediate circle. The Christ Child’s head has apparently been incorrectly reset. The slight awkwardness and brittleness that can be sensed in the posture and the drapery details are in contrast with van Beveren’s Madonna in Amsterdam, for example, and would seem to me to indicate that it is from a relatively late date, roughly the second quarter to second third of the eighteenth century. Contemporary and in part stylistic parallels occur in the works of Walter Pompe (1703–77), who frequently imitated earlier prototypes (notably Michiel van der Voort; see below). Examples of this are Pompe’s group of the Holy Family of 1730 in St. Martin in Kontich and his terracotta figure of 1728 in Uden, which is greatly indebted to van der Voort’s Madonna on the tomb of Archbishop Count Humbertus Guillelmus de Precipiano in Mechelen of 1709. As an aid to the dating of the pearwood group, one might also mention the figures created as confessional ornaments in the 1720s by Adrian and Egid Adrian (1683–1771) Nys.

This pearwood carving, like the paired ivory statuettes just discussed (Figures 10, 16; 20, 21), is clearly the product of a later artist working in imitation of a seventeenth-century style. At this point it might be useful to list some workshops and sculptors of the eighteenth and even the nineteenth century who continued in the Baroque and late Baroque tradition. For example, there were two sculptors active in Bruges, Hendrik Pulinx (1608–1781) and Pieter Pepers (1730–85). There was also Pierre-Denis Plumier (born 1688), who emigrated to England after 1715 and died there, quite young, in 1721. Then
there were Hendrik Frans Verbruggen (1654–1724), who became a professor at the Academy in Antwerp after 1691, and his pupil Laurent Delvaux (1696–1778). A **Madonna and Child** in wood in Brussels, a product of the latter’s workshop from around 1740, reveals the same approach to drapery found in the Munich **St. John** (Figure 21) as well as the pair of ivory figures in Richmond (Figures 10, 16). The works of Delvaux’s pupil Adrien-Joseph Anrion (1730–73) likewise reflect the earlier tradition, although they tend to imitate the style of Michiel van der Voort (1667–1737) more than van Beveren. Walter Pompe, mentioned earlier above, was another Delvaux pupil. His Virgin from the **Holy Family** of 1730, to which I referred in connection with the pearwood statuette in London (Figure 22), is worth citing again for its similarity to the **Mourning Virgin** in Richmond (Figure 10). Another work of his that might be compared to the Richmond statuette is the Virgin from a **Calvary**, dated 1740, auctioned in Brussels in 1969. We know that Walter Pompe restored two crucifixes by Michiel van der Voort. In addition, we learn that on October 22, 1756, he repaired a boxwood crucified Christ “van V. Beeveren.” A terracotta **Pietà** of his reproduces a lost alabaster group by Andries de Nole (1598–1638), and his **St. Sebastian** of 1729 in Hilvarenbeek is heavily indebted to a composition by Artus Quellinus the Younger. Another work reminiscent of the Antwerp tradition in general and that of Matthieu van Beveren in particular is a **Madonna**, with its original paint, in the Ackland Museum of Art in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Walter Pompe’s name has previously been mentioned in connection with this piece, but I should prefer an attribution to a contemporary of Delvaux’s in Brussels, Jean-Baptiste van der Haeghen (1688–1738/40), whose **St. Joseph with the Christ Child**, a painted wood group in Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours, Brussels, bears close kinship to this Mary, although utilizing a different contrapposto. A look at van der Haeghen’s **bozzetto** for the **St. Joseph**, which is preserved in the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, makes it clear that the Chapel Hill **Madonna** was conceived as an independent work, a fact that is already indicated by its format and its polychromy.

An even later artist in the same tradition was Jans Frans van Geel (1756–1830), who was trained by Pieter Valckx at the Academy in Mechelen, where he became first professor in 1783, then director in 1807. He took as his models the works of Pieter Verbruggen and Jérôme Duquesnoy, among others, and in 1809 he helped to install in the cathedral of St. Rombouts in Mechelen the famous pulpit by Michiel van der Voort from the Leliendael cloister. Among van Geel’s many works are two terracotta models of Mary Magdalene and the Prodigal Son, intended for confessionals in the church of Onze-Lieve-Vrouw in Alsemberg, Brabant. Now in a private collection in Antwerp, these date from the last third of the eighteenth century (Figures 23, 24). Their surfaces, relatively smooth despite various sharply delineated folds in the drapery, make them appear to have a greater resemblance to the several ivory statuettes in question than van Geel’s finished wood sculptures reveal, even his confessional figures of 1786/88 in the church of St. Nikolaus in Putte, near Mechelen. I do not mean to suggest that any of these works in ivory should be attributed to him, even though similarities in such details as the hair are striking, but van Geel’s works do hint at the span of time to which the ivories might belong. His marble memorial to Cardinal Thomas Philippe d’Alsace in St. Rombouts in Mechelen, using a **Madonna** design by Michiel van der Voort of 1719, was completed in 1813. His terracotta **Time, the Abductor of Youth** in the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, though signed, was long thought to be the work of Lucas Faydherbe, Gabriel Grupello, or some unidentified sculptor from the early eighteenth century. Many of van Geel’s works, especially his terracottas, are altogether retrospective in feeling. They help to give us some idea of the context in which ivory pieces like the statuettes in question (Figures 10, 16) may have been created. It remains true that aside from the considerable production of ivories in Dieppe in the waning years of the eighteenth century, this material only began again to be used for small-scale sculpture in any quantity in the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

Another work attributed to Matthieu van Beveren is the gilt alabaster statuette of the Immaculate Virgin in the Seattle Art Museum (Figure 25). It is more likely, however, to be a work of the second half of the nineteenth century. In style it is reminiscent of Artus Quellinus the Younger, but various motifs, such as the cherub next to the serpent, the pocket of drapery below the Virgin’s left arm, and the distinct linearity of the drapery raise suspicions. The base adorned with putti and rose blossoms may well have been created along with the statuette itself, which would indicate a very late date indeed. The same might be true of an ivory **Virgin** in the collections of the princes of Thurn und Taxis in Regensburg, which is clearly not the work of Lucas Fay-
One would have to examine it more closely in order to determine whether its uncommon richness of detail and ornamentation are the result of its having been executed at a late date or simply reflect the prevalent style in the country of its origin—Spain perhaps, or even more likely Portuguese Goa—in the later eighteenth century. Another example of the same type, simpler in execution, is preserved in a private collection in Santiago de Compostela.59

Inasmuch as no van Beveren crucifixes are actually signed by him or confirmed as his by contemporary documents, any attributions in this area are necessarily more or less hypothetical. A corpus in boxwood in the Getty Museum, Malibu (Figure 26),60 which in its facial type, beard, hair, and details of the loincloth bears distinct similarities to works attributed to the Antwerp master, is more apt to be French in origin as is the considerably later cross on which it hangs. One comparable work that may be by van Beveren is the boxwood crucifix in the Vleeshuis in Antwerp, the one restored by Walter Pompe in 1756 (Figure 27).61 This, like all the other corpora associated with van Beveren—with the exception of the ivory crocefisso vivo in the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp,62 which resembles the one in Malibu with its relatively wide-


spread arms—presents a narrower silhouette. It is less academic in its depiction of the nude, and is marked by a unifying sense of movement. The same can be said of the ivory corpus in St.-Jacques-sur-Coudenberg, Brussels, which is closer to van Beveren in style than to Englebert Pompe.63

In terms of form, one can trace the derivation of Flemish elements in the Malibu crucifix from the two crucifixes of 1736 and 1737, by Michiel van der Voort, later restored by Walter Pompe.64 The Flemish influence is evident in the face, for example, or the treatment of the hair. These traits persist, despite clear differences in expressive style. A second crucifix recently associated with van Beveren is the one in ivory sold in Munich in 1982 (Figure 28).65 This work ultimately derives from Peter Paul Rubens’s 1615 Crucified Christ in the Alte Pinakothek, Munich. In its physiognomy, especially, and in the treatment of its hair and beard it is quite similar to the corpus in the Vleeshuis in Antwerp. Apart from the more vertical stretching of the arms, other features, even the manner in which the loincloth is gathered at the front, resemble the ivory crucifix attributed to Gabriel Grupello in the Redemptorist monastery of St. Truiden (Figure 29), which may date from no later than 1720/25.66 This latter work, in turn, has much in common—except for the position of the head—with the one in the Vleeshuis (Figure 27). In fact, if one compares the St. Truiden work with other crucifixes associated with


28. Crucifix, Flemish(?). Ivory, H. 54.5 cm. Sold at auction in Munich, 1982

Grupello, one is tempted to ascribe it rather to the van Beveren circle, or to one of his followers. In any event, it is not by the same hand as the New York Pietà. And certainly it cannot have been executed by the artist who carved the dull, hard lines of the loincloth in the Munich corpus (Figure 28).

It happened frequently that particularly noteworthy crucifixes were imitated by contemporaries or slightly later artists, some of them introducing variations, some faithful down to the smallest details. This can be seen in some extraordinary works in ivory that have been associated with Jérôme Duquesnoy: 1) the corpus (H. 63 cm.) from the abbey of St. Michiel’s in Antwerp, which is now in the collection of P. Rigaux in that city; 2) the corpus (H. 64.7 cm.) in St. Antoniuskerk in Amsterdam; 3) the corpus (H. 53.3 cm.) sold in London in 1978, which has on the reverse of the ivory titulus the inscription (signature?) Jean Baptiste van Beveren and the date 1681, yet does not resemble the works of Matthieu van Beveren; and 4) the corpus (H. 70.5 cm.) sold at auction in London in 1987, which bears on an oddly flattened portion of the back of the loincloth the inscription—added later?—Duquesnoy in Latin letters. Directly related to this same prototype—perhaps by Jérôme Duquesnoy—is the ivory crucifix in the Sterckshof Museum in Deurne/Antwerp, which is there held to be the work of Matthieu van Beveren, but which differs markedly in its handschrift from both the composition in the Vleeshuis (Figure 27) and the one in the Koninklijk Museum, Antwerp. I have not seen the original of the Jean Baptiste van Beveren corpus, but I would consider that the “signature,” at least, is a very late addition.

From the end of the year 1670 up until October 1685, Matthieu van Beveren is listed as taillier des fers at the Antwerp mint, where he worked under Graveur Général Jean van Hattem (1672/73–75). The latter is known to have executed a medallion of King Charles II of Spain after a model by Gabriel Grupello in 1683/84. Theoretically, it is possible that van Beveren carved ivory medallions as well, as for example the one that surfaced in a private collection in London in 1986, bearing on the obverse the ink inscription M.v.B. (Figure 30). Its highly individualized profile and the treatment of its textures—notably the hair and the sleeve—compare quite favorably with the Minerva figures in the cartouche for the Thurn und Taxis monument and the carving of the model for that same work (Figure 3). A similarly fluid treatment of the surface can be seen in the figure of Pax (?) in the allegory for James II of England from before 1690. Nevertheless, we are prevented from attributing this charming medallion to van Beveren with certainty for want of conclusive evidence. It is no use comparing it to the portrait medallion of Anthony van Dyck in the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, for the van Dyck “iconography” only suggests a hypothetical attribution to van Beveren for that work as well. Moreover, we cannot know that the terracotta relief was not created later and possibly in England.

An ivory sculpture that we can assume without question to be the work of van Beveren himself is a group depicting Amor astride a lion (Figure 31). Once again, we are indebted to James David Draper for the attribution. The work is an allegory on the notion of strength and ferocity tamed by love: amor vincit omnia. Similarly proportioned putti may be seen in several of the sculptor’s larger works whose dates are known, for example, in the Dendermonde altar of 1668 (Figure 4), the pulpit in the same city dating from 1681/84—though here the resemblance is perhaps less striking—and especially the Thurn und Taxis monument in Brussels (Figure 3) of 1678. The relationship of these latter putti to Jan van Delen is deserving of further study. The motif of the
twisted and gracefully billowing wisp of drapery is likewise found in the marble Thurn und Taxis monument, especially in association with its chief figures. And as Draper has mentioned, the Amor, with his robust cheeks and flowing locks of hair, recalls the Christ Child in the Amsterdam Madonna (Figure 9). The freshness in the execution of the lion’s ample mane, in fact in the surface treatment of the whole work, including that of the body of the beast and the plot of earth below, distinguishes this delightful group from the small memorial to James II of 1688/90, and places it in terms of quality beside the above-mentioned Madonna.


As for the dating of the work, we have only the date of the Brussels tomb monument to go on, namely 1678. Let us say, then, that it was done around 1680. The base of the work is a different story. Comparing the forms of its decoration to those of the Boest monument in Antwerp of 1665 (Figure 13) and those on its ivory reduction (Figure 14), one can only conclude that the entire base is a product of the nineteenth century. Of course it remains possible that portions of the applied decor are somewhat older. There is a blandness about the floral garlands that is reminiscent of those in Windsor, and especially the ones that adorn the ivory Resurrected Christ in the Beguine convent in Antwerp.

A slightly larger version of the New York allegory, formerly in the collections of the Palatinate Electors in Düsseldorf, is now preserved in the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich (Figure 32). Here, as well, the

32. Allegorical group of Cupid on a lion. Ivory, H. 24.3 cm. Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich (photo: Bayerisches Nationalmuseum)
torch or staff that Amor once brandished in his left hand is missing. The modeling of the work and the treatment of the various surfaces, more draftsmanlike than sculptural, reveal a journeyman’s lack of imagination and show none of the subtlety of the van Beveren original. We have no idea who might have produced the work, nor can we date it with any certainty. The entry in the Mannheim inventory of the Düsseldorf collections for the year 1730 provides only a terminus ante quem.

I shall conclude these supplementary remarks on Matthieu van Beveren and the works of his Antwerp circle and followers with a discussion of two fruitwood sculptures acquired in 1964 by the Skulpturengalerie of the Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz.88 One is a lion, the other a wolf or bear. Dangling from the mouth of each beast is a flailing infant clad in a billowing, short-sleeved gown (Figures 33, 34). It has been suggested that they once formed part of a group depicting the wicked children of Bethel, who mocked the prophet Elisha—his figure would have formed the centerpiece—and were in turn cursed by him. The story is recounted in 2 Kings 2:23–24, where we read that it was “two she bears out of the wood” that carried forty-two of the children away.89 Numerous Netherlandish paintings of the subject exist, by Bartholomeus Breenbergh and Philips Wouwermann among others. An engraving by Nicolaes de Bruyn after a painting by Gillis van Coninxloo (1602) presents an isolated group of two children and a bear in front of the prophet in the left foreground, their poses quite like those of the sculptures in question.90 These fruitwood animals have been said to be mid-seventeenth-century South German works based on German Renaissance bronzes.91 I prefer to compare them instead with Flemish sculptures on similar themes from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Take the lion, for example. With his more compact proportions and clumsy-looking legs, he bears little resemblance to the slenderer, sinewy beast modeled in clay that supports a coat of arms in the Stedelijk Museum, Brussels, doubtless the work of someone from the circle of Jan van Delen (active ca. 1666–1703).92

He also differs from the figures on the double tomb monument for the d’Ennetières family in the cathedral in Brussels, which originated in the same workshop and dates from 1690.93 Both in temperament and in sculptural style, however, he is not unlike the three couchant lions in silver with balls (globes?) between their front paws that support the frequently mentioned memorial...
to James II at Windsor, created by Matthieu van Beveren sometime before 1690. Admittedly, we do not know who executed the models for these beasts. The lion in the New York Amor group (Figure 31) is also entirely different. One thinks rather of the four crouching gilt wood lions executed by Ludovicus Willemsens of Antwerp (1630–1702), later court sculptor to William III of England, as supporting figures for the silver shrine of St. Gummarus in the church of the same name in Lier. The shrine itself was the work of the Antwerp goldsmith Wierick Somers III, and was completed before 1682. Its lions appear less tame than the one in Berlin; their expressions are more dramatic and the modeling of such details as their manes shows a greater bravura. We are told that this same Wierick Somers III worked from models by various sculptors, among them Michiel van der Voort. In 1712, for example, the latter provided him with designs for the figures on a monstrance for St. Andries in Antwerp, and was paid a princely seventeen gulden for them. The goldsmith himself received some 1,533 gulden. It is not known whether van der Voort’s models were done in clay or in wood. This sculptor created numerous putti, notably those on the Leliendael pulpit of 1723, now in St. Rom-bouts in Mechelen, and others for the high altar in Sts. Sulpicius and Dionysius in Diest, of 1724–26. Many of these have features in common with the children dangling from the mouths of the lion and bear, though they are perhaps less robust. A review of van der Voort’s heads of children and putti, beginning with his various depictions of the Christ Child (based on the ideal of François Duquesnoy) and including the putto on his monument for Archbishop Humbertus Guillemus de Precipiano of 1709 in the cathedral of Mechelen, shows him to have worked squarely within the tradition of Antwerp sculpture from the second third of the seventeenth century, as exemplified by Pieter Verbruggen the Elder and Artus Quellinus the Elder. Indeed, the heads of the children in Berlin (Figures 33, 34) appear related to the putti on a confessional in St. Jacobskerk, Antwerp, which is variously attributed to Artus Quellinus the Elder (1664) or Michiel van der Voort. For the moment, however, it seems impossible to attribute the “children of Bethel” groups to any particular sculptor, so that we have to make do with the description “probably Antwerp, late 17th or early 18th century.”

Translated from the German by Russell Stockman

NOTES

1. Acc. no. 64.164.242. On the whole, the group, consisting of the lamenting Virgin, dead Christ, and three mourning putti, is well preserved. The putto on the left stands on his own carved base, attached with a peg and a screw; his right arm has been broken off and reset. The central group has only minimal cracks in back. Its base is covered with chisel marks, while the figures themselves have been carefully polished. The Virgin’s nose was broken off in modern times; the tips of several fingers of her right hand are also missing. A portion of the drapery on her left side has been carved from a separate block. The two putti on the right have also been separately carved. The base of the standing one reveals a second hole at the front. His right wing has been broken off and reset, while his left one is missing. Both wings are missing from the seated putto, who may once have occupied a different position, possibly the arm of a cross.

In turn, the figures have been mounted, doubtless at a relatively recent date, on an ebony base with elaborate moldings and tortoishell panels across the front. The tortoishell panels are outlined in ivory.


3. See my notes in the catalogue of the sculptures in the collection of Dr. Rau, Marseilles, to be published in 1989 by the Département des Sculptures du Musée du Louvre: “Wooden Group of the Virgin with the Infants Jesus and John, after Artus Quellinus the Elder or Erasmus Quellinus.”


9. I am indebted to Mr. Draper for his generous assistance and for suggesting that I compile these "Addenda."

10. Theuerkauff, 1975, pp. 26, 30–33, figs. 7, 11, with bibliography and list of illustrations.


17. Emil Schaeffer, Van Dyck: Des Meisters Gemälde, Klassiker der Kunst, XXX (Stuttgart/Leipzig, 1909) fig. 447.

18. Theuerkauff, 1975, pp. 30–34, fig. 12; La Sculpture au siècle de Rubens, 1977, pp. 198–199, cat. no. 160, ill. The altar was only acquired by the museum in 1868.


20. Inv. no. 55.17.9a.b. The gift of Mr. Arthur G. Glasgow. I would like to thank Joseph R. Bliss, of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, for his continuing kind assistance, and for permission to publish these figures and their possible connection to the work of van Beveren after I had first broached the subject in correspondence with Pinkney Near in 1985. I am also grateful to Richard H. Randall of Baltimore for his good offices.

21. The backs of both statuettes are deeply yellowed, almost brown. They are mounted on black wooden bases more recent in origin. A piece has been inserted into the Virgin’s neck, similarly, insets in both arms, portions of the drapery, and at the bottom of the back. The feet of the St. John have been broken and reglued. His back has a number of cracks and, like the Virgin, various larger and smaller holes (for bracing?), now closed with pegs.

It is possible that flat pieces of ivory were once attached here.

22. See note 7. A. C. L., Brussels, neg. no. 3109B.

23. Theuerkauff, 1975, pp. 35–36, fig. 16.

24. Inv. no. KdZ8173. II. Garnitur; 364 x 178 mm. The sheet, with the inscription van Dyck on the reverse, was classified under “Andreas Schlüter.”

25. Theuerkauff, 1975, pp. 26–29 n. 21, fig. 8.

26. I am indebted for the photographs to Consul R. Neumeister, Munich.

27. Leonore Pühringer-Zwanowetz, Matthias Steinl (Vienna/Munich, 1966) pp. 207–208, cat. no. 1, figs. 70–72, cf. fig. 69 and cat. no. 8, figs. 184–190.


33. Kindly related to me in October 1987. I also look forward to Michael Jaffe’s announced publication of an ivory Venus figure in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, which was on the market for a long time and was held to be the work of Francis van Bossuit.


38. Ibid., pp. 91–110, fig. xxv.


40. Most recently, for example, La Sculpture au siècle de Rubens, 1977, pp. 266–281, cat. nos. 254–252, ill.

41. Georges Willame, Laurent Delvaux, 1696–1778 (Brussels, 1914).

42. H. 110 cm.; Denis Cockelberghs, Trésors d’art, 1979, p. 178, cat. no. 133, ill.


44. Walter Pompe, 1979, p. 54, cat. no. 67, fig. 21.


46. Walter Pompe, 1979, p. 61, cat. no. 128 with additional bibliography.
47. Ibid., p. 77, cat. nos. 2, 3, figs. 42–43. For more on this see Marguerite Casteels, De Beeldhauwers de Note te Kamerijk, te Utrecht en te Antwerpen (Brussels, 1961) pp. 90–92, figs. 113–114.

48. Walter Pompe, 1979, p. 79, cat. no. 7, fig. 47.

49. Inv. no. 87.19; H. 65 cm. Sold Sotheby’s, London, April 3, 1984, lot 256, ill.

50. H. 165 cm.; Goblet, Trésors d’art, 1979, p. 176, cat. no. 132, ill.


60. Inv. no. 82.SD.138; H. of the corpus 48 cm. The cross and base, made of ebony, brass, and gilt bronze, are French, ca. 1766/70.

61. Theuerkauff, 1975, pp. 37–38, fig. 18, n. 46. The inscription on the reverse of the titulus reads: W. Pompe / ge re to seert / en in staet ge / stelt 1756 / 22/10 act / deze Cristus / van v. beveer.


63. La Sculpture au siècle de Rubens, 1977, p. 336, cat. no. 316, ill.

64. Tralbaut, Onbekende archaïsia... Voort, 1946, figs. 15–17; see also idem, Van der Voort, 1950, figs. 61, 64–65, pp. 171–182, cat. no. 17, relief of the Raising of the Cross, 1720.


68. La Sculpture au siècle de Rubens, 1977, pp. 333–334, cat. no. 311, ill. (with reference to a crucifix, now lost, in the Rockox House, Antwerp).

69. Inv. no. 167. The wooden cross is later (Theuerkauff, 1975, p. 42 n. 53).


71. W. of the arms 27.5 cm.; Sotheby Parke Bernet & Co., London, October 1987: The problem of the divergence in style between the Mechelen crucifix with the inscription D. J. [Duquesnoy: Jérôme?] me fecit (La Sculpture au siècle de Rubens, 1977, pp. 325–326, cat. no. 295, ill.) and the works created by his circle awaits further investigation.


73. Theuerkauff, 1975, p. 27 n. 16; Grupello und seine Zeit, 1971, p. 101, cat. no. 1, fig. 142.

74. I am indebted to Charles F. Avery for the loan of a photograph.

75. Theuerkauff, 1975, figs. 6, 4–5.

76. Theuerkauff, 1975, figs. 25, 23.

77. La Sculpture au siècle de Rubens, 1977, p. 203, cat. no. 164, ill.

78. Acc. no. 1980.220; base, including bottom plate, 11 × 18.9 × 14.5 cm. J. D. Draper, in Notable Acquisitions, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 1980/81 (1981) pp. 35–36, ill. The base is made of walnut, cherry, and other woods covered with an ebony veneer and resting on a bottom plate stained to look like ebony. The applied ivory decorations, except perhaps for certain portions on the front (the torches, and so forth) and the right side, are likewise from the (later?) nineteenth century, according to Draper and John Canonico of the Objects Conservation Department.

79. See note 5.

80. See note 9.


82. Inv. nos. 12, 13/64. The wood is very hard and heavy, possibly pear. A layer of dark brown varnish, in places shading to red and probably not original—in imitation of bronze, perhaps—has been largely removed. The surface of the wood is not altogether in its original condition, but rather heavily rubbed and polished. The only damage is to the hands and feet of the
children. On the underside of each piece there is a dumbbell-shaped cavity (for attaching it to a base?). See Peter Metz, Bildwerke der Christlichen Epochen von der Spätantike bis zum Klassizismus, Aus den Beständen der Skulpturenabteilung . . . Berlin (Munich, 1966) p. 137, cat. nos. 831, 832.

83. Suggested by the late Heinrich Brauer, Berlin; see Lexikon der Christlichen Kunst I (1968) cols. 613–618, VI (1974) col. 141. According to the zoologists at the Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt, as Fritz Fischer kindly informs me, the animal in question could well be a wolf, only the muzzle is too short. It is impossible to guess in just what sort of scenic context the figures may have served.


86. Neg. no. 43502B in the A. C. L., Brussels. For other depictions of lions by Jan van Delen, see Grupello und seine Zeit, 1971, p. 279, under cat. nos. 216–218. Most recently, Anne Verbrugge, “Het Kerkelijk Meubilair van de Brusselse Beeldsnijder Jan van Delen ca. 1644–1703” (Ph.D. diss., Louvain, 1986), which I could not use any more.

87. Durian-Ress, 1974, pp. 298–300, fig. 56.
88. Theuerkauff, 1975, pp. 50–52, figs. 23–24.

90. Tralbaut, Van der Voort, 1950, pp. 113–116, cat. no. 7, figs. 43–45.
92. Mark E. Tralbaut, De Amors en putti, serafijnen en cherubijnen van Michiel van der Voort den Oude (Antwerp, 1946) p. 54, fig. 53; idem, Van der Voort, 1950, p. 203, cat. no. 22.
93. Tralbaut, Amors en putti, 1946, figs. 34, 36–38, 41, 43, 45–47.
94. Durian-Ress, 1974, fig. 16; Tralbaut, Van der Voort, 1950, pp. 57–70, cat. no. 3, fig. 20.