

Lines of Friendship



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Art Historical Essays
Commemorating Robert-Jan te Rijdt (1955-2024)

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Preface

BY THE EDITORS

This publication, originally intended as a *Festschrift* or *Liber Amicorum* for Robert-Jan te Rijdt, was to be presented to him on his seventieth birthday on 11 August 2025. Unfortunately, the project took on a different character when, in October 2024, it became obvious that he would no longer make that birthday. Although the guiding principles for the *Festschrift* remained the same, namely to honour a great scholar, an art historian with an unrivalled knowledge of Dutch art of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and to thank him for his continued willingness to share his knowledge, it also became a book to commemorate Robert-Jan and to express how much he will be missed.

The book was meant to be a surprise, but having heard the terrible news of Robert-Jan's impending departure, we decided to inform him about our intentions. The fifteen articles that were already finished at that time were printed, bundled, and presented to him, along with a list of the names of all participants. Robert-Jan was delighted with the initiative, read the printed articles with eagerness and sometimes made (orally) corrections and additions to them.

In the end, no fewer than 57 authors from the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States have contributed. Their 55 essays (two essays are written by two persons) are in English and Dutch, in the latter case accompanied by an English summary. Altogether, it has become a wide ranging publication, covering subjects from the late sixteenth century to the present day, but with a strong focus on the eighteenth century, which Robert-Jan loved so much. Manifestations of all visual arts are represented: paintings, drawings, prints, sculpture, applied arts, and garden architecture. And although the emphasis is on Dutch art, other European movements are also present, with examples from the Flemish, German, French, Italian, and Norwegian schools. Many traditional subjects are covered: topographical representations, landscapes, church interiors, genre scenes, portraits, figure studies, animals, book illustrations, etc.

While several essays have been devoted to the three most important Dutch artists of the eighteenth century, Jacob de Wit (1695-1754), Cornelis Troost (1696-1750), and Aert Schouman (1710-1792), there are also contributions dealing with little known draughtsmen from that century, such as Jan Ruijter (1685-1744), Aaron Santcroos (1727/28-1795) and Henricus Antonius Baur (1736-1820). Also included are four small articles, so-called *Miscellanea*, written by Robert-Jan himself, which had not been published previously. Together with an extensive In Memoriam and a complete list of Robert-Jan's publications, this book is intended as a memento to our much appreciated friend. We trust that it will commemorate Robert-Jan with respect and dignity.

We would like to sincerely thank all authors for participating and for the enthusiasm with which they wrote their essays. A publication such as this would never have seen the light of day without the financial support of many institutions and individuals. Our thanks therefore go to all those who contributed financially: main sponsors, secondary sponsors, patrons, benefactors, donors, supporters, contributors, and subscribers. Finally, our thanks go to Evelyn de Regt, director of the Primavera Pers, and her staff who made this publication possible, kept it on track, and turned the manuscript into a beautifully designed book.



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A Pair of Fascinating Scenes of Witchcraft by a Mysterious French Eighteenth-Century Draughtsman

My peer Robert-Jan was a widely respected authority on Dutch drawings, especially those from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many of which he had under his care during his long tenure as curator at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (1991-2021). His most impressive publication, however, is the exhibition catalogue of 88 eighteenth-century French drawings from the Rijksmuseum (2002).¹ It therefore seems appropriate to devote at least one of the many essays in his honor to a French subject, even if it means venturing beyond my primary expertise in Netherlandish and Italian drawings. I have chosen an attribution problem for which I have still not found a solution after fifteen years of ongoing research and consulting various experts. Hopefully, one of the readers of this article can recognize the draughtsman's hand and shed a new light on this intriguing issue.

In late January 2010 two extraordinary red chalk drawings came up for auction at Sotheby's in New York, in successive lots and catalogued as anonymous French, mid-eighteenth century, with a common provenance – an unknown Italian private collection as I was told during the viewing days.² They are clearly meant as pendants, given the similar technique, drawing style, subject matter, identical dimensions, and collector's mounts. The two sheets were acquired by different buyers: one by Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam, as a special addition to its rich collection of French drawings; the other by a private collector. Although both buyers wanted to acquire the pair, they eventually got one each and the drawings were separated.

The intricate compositions and legibility, somewhat limited by the monochrome drawing technique, call for a detailed description of both drawings to start with. Depicted are different scenes from a witches' Sabbath, a macabre nocturnal meeting with the devil. One composition (fig. 1, reproduced with the mount) is dominated by two sorcerers, the left one standing near a brazier with a steaming flask on it, a walking lion (similar to Flaminio Vacca's *Medici Lion* from the 1590s, but without the ball under the raised paw), a snake, a human skull, a round tablet (probably a magic circle) and an open book lying on

the ground – kept open with the sorcerer's right shoe – from which he is probably reading the spells. He is holding a rod in his lowered left hand and what seems to be a stick in his elevated right hand. Draped over his shoulders is an animal's fur with the beak and a paw hanging down. The sorcerer on the right, centrally placed in the composition, stands in the flaming and flashing pool in the foreground and has no attributes except for a skeleton and an animal skull at his feet. He is wearing a trimmed conical hat. Seated on the ground behind him is a Medusa-like female demon, with snakes swirling around her waist, lower arms and in her hair, and her tongue protruding. A hellhound is right behind her, also with his tongue out, looking up to the second sorcerer. Both bearded sorcerers are gesticulating broadly as they perform spells in an occult ceremony. They are facing a bright light source situated on the left, outside the picture plane. In the background, a procession of six spectators arrives from the right, led by a man on a donkey holding a large lantern in his right hand, casting a strong beam of light to the left. He is followed by a striding man leaning on a pole, a woman embracing another hellhound and a big-bellied bearded man with bulging eyes and a goat and a boar on his side. Behind this group are two male figures wearing hats. In the centre background, partly covered by a smoke slurry, are two male nude figures while another, horned and with his hands on his back, stands by the hind legs of the donkey on the right.

The other drawing (fig. 2, reproduced without the mount) shows the Devil, in the shape of a human male figure with the head and lower body of a buck. He is squatting on a monumental sarcophagus (with indistinct scenes in bas-relief) and is being kissed on the anus by a standing figure who lets out a huge fart, which makes his clothes bulge at the back. A naughty little demon holds a burning torch for lighting the human gas for some extra effect. On either side of the tomb stand two slender naked human figures, genderless, one with a dog's or cat's head, the other with that of a goat, each reading from a large book, probably spells. At the feet of the left figure are an owl and a cat. In front of the Devil a large snake or dragon lies on the sarcophagus.



1. French eighteenth-century artist, *Scene of Witchcraft with Two Sorcerers Casting Spells* (mid-18th century), red chalk, red chalk washes, 270 x 440 mm, not signed, Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, inv. no. MB 2010/T 2 (PK).



2. French eighteenth-century artist, *Scene of Witchcraft with the Devil Crouching on a Sarcophagus* (mid-18th century), red chalk, red chalk washes, 270 x 440 mm, not signed, private collection.

The event takes place in a cave-like space with two fluted columns on a podium, on either side of the sarcophagus. It is obscured by clouds of smoke and mist, from which, on the right, two small flying dragons approach, one of

them fire-breathing, the other ridden by a busty female figure with elevated arms. At the bottom right a fist with a burning torch is visible at the edge of the leaf, as well as a couple of fleeing figures.



3. ANONYMOUS GERMAN *Witches' Sabbath* (1668), print, not signed, frontispiece in: Johannes Praetorius's *Blockes-Berges Verrichtung*, Leipzig 1668.

The composition of the first drawing seems to have been larger at the left and top, judging by the cut-off stick of the sorcerer and the head of the man with the lantern. The original sheet may have been trimmed to the same size as the pendant drawing, or rather both sheets were trimmed to this smaller size when they were mounted as a pair, because the latter also contains elements cut off at the bottom and on the right.

The occult imagery of witches' Sabbaths and sorcery goes back to an early German tradition, which found inspiration in the frequently reprinted witch-hunters handbook *Malleus Maleficarum* (The Witches' Hammer) by the German Dominican inquisitor Heinrich Kramer (c. 1430-1505) from 1486. Albrecht Dürer's (1471-1528) engraving *Witch Riding on a Goat* from around 1500 and the *chiaroscuro* woodcut *The Witches* by Hans Baldung Grien (1484-1545) from 1510 are well-known representations, which were widely distributed.³ While for our first drawing no comparable representation could be found that might have served as a visual source for any of the figures in it, in the second drawing the standing man kissing the anus of the Devil as a pledge of allegiance – the so-called *Osculum infame* (Kiss of Shame) marking the beginning of the Sabbath – goes back to a book illustration dating from 1668: the woodcut frontispiece (fig. 3) of

the *Blockes-Berges Verrichtung* by the Bohemian mathematician and astronomer Johannes Praetorius (aka Hans Schulze) (1630-1680).⁴ This book contains a description of the witches' Sabbath still celebrated annually on Walpurgis Night from 30 April to 1 May on the summit of the Brocken or Blocksberg, the highest point of the Harz mountains. However, further iconographical models are lacking and it seems that our draughtsman relied mainly on his own imagination and technical skill.⁵

The two drawings are both unsigned and each is attached to an identical old mount. They are '*dessins ajustés*': cropped and mounted with pale green washed and gilded borders, and possibly also once framed. This style of elaborate mounting was introduced in the mid-1740s by the Paris art dealer, auctioneer and commercial mounter Jean-Baptiste Glomy (1711-1786) and was popular among French collectors during the second half of the century. Although they are very similar to known Glomy mounts, those of our two drawings do not bear his blind stamp (GLOMY in full or just his initial G) in the lower right corner of the first border.⁶ Unfortunately, the mounts also lack annotations that could shed light on the draughtsman's identity. The fact that the sheets are completely glued to the mounts also makes it impossible to check the reverses for such annotations,⁷ and to establish the presence of a (fragment of a) watermark which might give us a clue about the provenance and approximate date of the handmade paper.

The drawings had an old attribution to Claude Gillot (1688-1722), which is not surprising given this artist's characteristic red chalk drawing technique and his designs of bacchanals, satyrs and witches' Sabbaths (fig. 4).⁸ Gillot, well-known both as teacher of Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684-1721) and as painter and printmaker with a predilection for *Commedia dell'Arte* and other theatrical scenes, designed two series of prints with bacchanals, first of all *Les Quatre Festes* (the festivals of Diana, Bacchus, Faun and Pan),⁹ and *Les Passions des Hommes exprimés par des Satyres*, which also consists of four prints.¹⁰ His print series *Les Sabbats*, on the other hand, is limited to only two, whereas one would have expected four as well.¹¹ These two prints were designed and etched by Gillot and finished with the burin after his death by Jean Audran (1667-1756). Unfortunately, the preliminary drawings do not survive, but we can compare our two drawings with the prints (fig. 4) as regards their composition and with the preparatory drawings for the other series for their execution (fig. 5).¹² Unlike our drawings, the engraved compositions are more spacious, crowded with figures, set in the open air and the figures are more slender. The drawing style of our drawings is similar but much freer and stronger, with a pronounced *clair obscur* enhancing the occult drama, and the poses and faces are more expressive and imaginative. Our drawings may also have been designs for prints, perhaps by a draughtsman from Gillot's circle, to make up for the



4. CLAUDE GILLOT *Witches' Sabbath* (1698-1722), etching, 240 x 322 mm (sheet), signed at lower left: 'Gillot inv. et sculp.', London, The British Museum, inv. no. 1866,0407.32.



5. CLAUDE GILLOT *The Passion for Gaming* (design for the print in the Satyrs series) (1688-1722), red chalk over traces of black chalk, 175 x 357 mm, not signed, London, The British Museum, inv. no. 1907,1118.36.

two missing scenes of his Sabbath series, which may have been incomplete because his death had ended the project prematurely. However, this remains speculative. All we can state with certainty is that our two drawings rely heavily on Gillot's models but seem to be by a later hand, not an amateur's but a skilled draughtsman's.¹³

Eunice Williams, an authority on Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806), considers both our drawings

to be the work of the little-known Antoine-François Saint-Aubert (1715-1788).¹⁴ However, this attribution (unpublished) is not convincing in view of the limited material available for comparison, including one painting with a witches' Sabbath and three with other diabolic representations.¹⁵ Her attribution obviously excludes Fragonard, a master in the red chalk drawing technique, whose oeuvre does not share sufficient stylistic simi-



6. JACQUES DE LAJOUE *Statue of Ceres on a Plinth in a Ruinous Hall* (1729), red chalk, 251 x 364 mm, signed or annotated at lower left (in pen and brown ink): 'Lajoue', dated at centre left on the wall (in red chalk, indistinct): 'Nov / 1729 4', present whereabouts unknown.

larities with our two drawings. The same holds for an attribution to François Boucher (1703-1770) or Edmé Bouchardon (1698-1762), which also crossed my mind.

The best candidate so far, who was summarily presented in my farewell exhibition at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in 2022,¹⁶ is the lesser-known Paris-based artist Jacques de Lajoue (1686-1761).¹⁷ This early Rococo artist is primarily known for his paintings of imaginative, decorative allegories with rural, architectural and sculptural elements, often framed in cartouches, including ornamental *dessus de portes* for Parisian palace interiors, some of which were converted into prints by Charles-Nicolas Cochin the Younger (1715-1790), among others.¹⁸ The bulk of his surviving graphic oeuvre of mainly ornamental designs shows little resemblance to our two drawings, either iconographically or stylistically. Only three red chalk drawings by Lajoue are known, all architectural scenes.¹⁹ A better comparison, however, is offered by a 'Lajoue' signed (or annotated) and '1729' dated red chalk drawing which recently resurfaced at an auction (fig. 6).²⁰ This depiction of a statue of the goddess Ceres seated on a reclining lion, placed on a pedestal in a ruined and overgrown tunnel-like gallery, is admittedly more static in execution and less imaginative, but in terms of line, lighting and the orange-red colour of the chalk it is stylistically close to the two Sabbath drawings. Moreover, the occult



7. SIMON FRANÇOIS RAVENET after JACQUES DE LAJOUE *Le Palais de Pluton* (1736), print, signed at lower left: 'Lajoüe Del.', at lower right: 'Ravenet sculp', illustration in: De Lajoue's *Livre Nouveau de Douze Morceaux de Fantaisie*, Paris [1736], plate 7.

imagery of the two drawings compares well with an etching by Simon-François Ravenet (1706-1774) after a design by Lajoue, *The Palace of Pluto* (fig. 7). The placement of the god of the underworld in an apocalyptic scene in a large rocaille grotto with the damned, fire and instruments of torture, is thematically and imaginatively in keeping with our two representations. Unfortunately, these arguments are not sufficient for a firm attribution to Lajoue. The identity of the mystery draughtsman thus remains unsolved for now.

1 R.J.A. te Rijdt, *Van Watteau tot Ingres. 18de-eeuwse Franse tekeningen uit het Rijksmuseum Amsterdam*, Amsterdam / Paris 2002 (the second venue, *De Watteau à Ingres. Dessins français du XVIIIe siècle du Rijksmuseum Amsterdam*, was on show in Paris in the Institut Néerlandais in 2003).

2 Sale New York (Sotheby's), 27 January 2010, lots 82 and 83. The former is now in Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, the latter is in a private collection.
3 Bartsch VII.82.67 (Dürer), VII.319.55 (Baldung). A similar drawing by Albrecht Altdorfer (pen and black ink, heightened with

white, on brown prepared paper) is now in Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des arts graphiques, inv. no. INV 18867.

4 J. Praetorius, *Blockes-Berges Verrichtung / Oder Ausfuhrlicher Geographischer Bericht von den hohen trefflich alt- und berühmten Blockes-Berge: ingeleichen von der Hexen-*

- fahrt / und Zauber-Sabbathe / so auff solchen Berge die Unholden aus ganz Teutßchland / Ja'hrlich den 1. Maij in Sanct-Walpurgis Nachte anstellen sollen*, Leipzig 1668. On p. 54 the large black bock is described and '[...] Vmb denselben müßten sie alle tantzen / und ein jeglicher eine brennende Fackel in der Hand haltend ihme den Hindern küssen'. There are earlier representations of the Kiss of Shame, including Johann Jakob Wick's coloured woodcut *Darstellung des Hexensabbats* (1570) and one in Francesco Maria Guazzo's *Compendium maleficarum* (Milan 1608), but there the Devil stands or stoops on the ground whereas in Praetorius' print it is seated on a stool, more like the 'elevated' Devil on the sarcophagus in our drawing.
- 5 The imagery also reminds of a drawing with Juno in Hades, surrounded by a three-headed hellhound, the Gorgons and tortured figures, by the Antwerp artist Godfried Maes the Younger (1649-1700), one of a series of 83 drawings (black chalk, pen and brown ink, brown and grey wash) illustrating Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (no. 45 in the sale of the Anton C.R. Dreesmann Collection, Amsterdam [Christie's], 11 April 2002, lots 661-670, esp. lot 670).
 - 6 Borders in pen and brown ink, gold leaf (not paint), black wash, pale green wash. C. James, 'Collectors and Mountings', in: C. James *et al.* (eds.), *Old Master Prints and Drawings. A Guide to Preservation and Conservation*, Amsterdam 1997, pp. 2-35, esp. pp. 22-24, fig. 14 and diagr. 14; F. Lugt, *Les marques de collections de dessins & d'estampes*, Amsterdam 1921 and the online version marquesdecollections.fr, L.1085 and L.1119. The borders of our mounts are almost identical to those of the mounts of several drawings by François Boucher in The Metropolitan Museum of Arts, New York, inv. no. 60.176.1, 60.176.2, 61.1.3, 1972.118.197, and 2000.519.1, of which only one actually has a Glomy mark (L. 1119), in the lower right corner of the gilded border, and its known provenance going back to the eighteenth century (inv. no. 61.1.3; sale Jean-Claude Gaspard de Sireul, Paris [Boileau], 3 December 1781 [Lugt 3329], lot 93). Boucher was Glomy's best client in the mid-1750s, as pointed out by C.B. Bailey, in: A. Wintermute *et al.*, *Watteau and His World. French Drawing from 1700 to 1750*, London/New York 1999, p. 78.
 - 7 Infra-red photography did not reveal annotations on the covered reverse of the Rotterdam sheet.
 - 8 According to the 2010 sale catalogue (note 2), which also does not exclude the possibility that the two drawings were made by a German artist, working in the tradition of Johann Heinrich Schönfeld (1609-1684) and his followers. In my opinion the drawings have nothing to do with this artist and are unmistakably French.
 - 9 B. Populus, *Claude Gillot (1673-1722). Catalogue de l'oeuvre gravé*, Paris 1930, pp. 23, 76-79, nos. 1-4, with preliminary drawings, in red chalk, in reverse, now in the Yale University Art Galleries, New Haven, inv. no. 1958.9.5a; sale London (Christie's), 2 July 1991, lot 154; sale Paris, 4 May 1843 (Lugt 17003 or 17004?), lot 115, now in a private collection; present whereabouts of the fourth unknown. Recent publications are the exhibition catalogues by J. Tonkovich, *Claude Gillot: Satire in the Age of Reason*, New York (The Metropolitan Museum of Art) 2023, and by H. Meyer & X. Salmon, *Claude Gillot. Comédies, fables & arabesques*, Paris (Musée du Louvre) 2024.
 - 10 Populus 1930 (note 9), p. 23, and pp. 79-82, nos. 5-8, with preliminary drawings, in red chalk, in reverse, now in The British Museum, London, inv. nos. 1907.1118.35 and 36; The Morgan Library & Museum, New York, inv. no. 2001.6; sale London (Sotheby's), 5 July 2000, lot 55.
 - 11 *Ibid.*, p. 23, and pp. 82-84, nos. 9 and 10. A set of these prints is kept in – among other print rooms – The British Museum, inv. nos. 1866.0407.31 and 32.
 - 12 Two diabolic scenes, both drawn with red chalk and heightened with white, individually mentioned in Paris sale catalogues from 1771 and 1887 (Populus 1930 [note 9], p. 84) might be the preparatory drawings for the two prints. The present whereabouts of these drawings are not known.
 - 13 Several searches on 'sabat', 'sabbat', 'sorcière' and other related keywords were conducted in Brill's *Art Sales Catalogues Online* (ASCO), to find the artist's name, but yielded no results. Charles Kang, co-editor of the present publication, wonders if the two drawings are really by the same hand (email d.d. 21 October 2024). He sees some differences: for example, the lack of hatching lines for modelling human forms in the other drawing, while he sees consistent use of them for bodies and draperies in the Boijmans sheet. Such differences, he believes, are not enough to deny the same hand, but they still leave some possibility open. To him, the Boijmans drawing also appears to be a kind of pastiche, possibly using sources from the earlier century(s). By comparison, the drawing now in the private collection looks much more coherent and truly eighteenth-century as a composition, in his opinion. For now, the present author contends that despite the noted differences, the two drawings are by the same hand, also because they were clearly intended as a pair.
 - 14 Verbal communication with Eunice Williams, New York, 27 January 2010; and her email d.d. 4 February 2010. This attribution was supported by the Paris art dealer Nicolas Schwed, who assisted the private collector buying the second drawing.
 - 15 Saint-Aubert was a 'petit maître' influenced in his early years in Paris by Gillot and Watteau. He left behind a small oeuvre including six paintings, four of which representing diabolic subjects, which are still in his hometown Cambrai (Musée des Beaux-Arts, inv. nos. unknown), two drawings in Lille (Palais des Baux-Arts, inv. nos. Pl. 1647 and Pl. 1648) and a sketch-book dated 12 October 1734 in Paris (École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, inv. no. 1302). See: T. Hébert, *Antoine François Saint-Aubert (1715-1788) – un artiste cambrésien au XVIII^e siècle*, Milan 2019.
 - 16 *Getekende herinneringen / Drawn Memories*, Rotterdam 2022, pp. 50-51.
 - 17 For this artist, see: M. Roland Michel, *Lajoüe et l'Art Rocaille*, Neuilly-sur-Seine 1984, p. 67. The spelling of the name is confusing, Roland Michel using 'Lajoüe' in the title of her monograph and oeuvre catalogue, but 'Lajoue' without the diaeresis throughout the book. See also: L.-A. Prat, *Le dessin français au XVIII^e siècle*, Paris 2007, pp. 60-62.
 - 18 For example, a drawing of a park with a hunting company, now in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, described by Robert-Jan te Rijdt in his exhibition catalogue of 2002 (note 1), no. 23. He mentions the print dealer and publisher Gabriel Huquier (1695-1772), who owned around 100 drawings by Lajoue, which were sold at auction with the greater part of his stock and private collection in Amsterdam (Yver), 14 September 1761 (Lugt 1172).
 - 19 New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 1975.508; Roland Michel 1984 (note 17), no. d. 263, fig. 272; M.L. Myers, exh. cat. *French Architecture and Ornament Drawings of the Eighteenth Century*, New York (The Metropolitan Museum of Art) 1991, no. 54, ill.; Berlin (Kunstbibliothek) and an unknown location; Roland Michel 1984 (note 17), nos. d. 248 and d. 239.
 - 20 Sale Monaco (Christie's), 3 July 1993, lot 64, ill. on p. 96; sale Paris (Christie's), 24 March 2021, lot 24 (unsold). This drawing is not included in Roland Michel 1984 (note 17), as it first emerged on the art market in 1993, but was accepted by her as autograph at that time, according to the entry in the 2021 sale catalogue. It is compositionally close to several drawings by Lajoue (Roland Michel 1984 [note 17], nos. d. 172, d. 174, d. 261, and d. 262), in particular a washed pen drawing in a Parisian private collection (no. d. 174, fig. 279). The drawing is on a similar collector's mount as the New York sheet, with pale green washed strips of paper and black border lines, somewhat similar to the frames of our two Sabbath drawings, but these differ in that they are coloured with pale green wash on the mounts themselves and lack the gilded border. The unknown collector's mark MP at the bottom of the sheet belongs to the collector Marcel Puech (1919-2001) of Avignon and awaits inclusion in the online version of F. Lugt, *Les marques de collections de dessins & d'estampes*, marquesdecollections.fr. (information by Rhea Sylvia Blok, 27 January 2025).

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