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# THE BRUEGEL SUCCESS STORY

Papers Presented at Symposium XXI for the  
Study of Underdrawing and Technology in Painting,  
Brussels, 12–14 September 2018

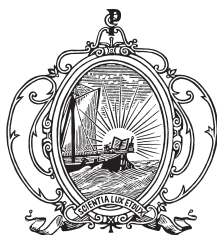
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in collaboration with

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and Dominique Vanwijnsberghe



PEETERS

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**Fig. 3.1** Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Dulle Griet*, 1563, oil on panel, 116.4 × 162.1 cm, Antwerp, Museum Mayer van den Bergh (inv. 788) (a)

After Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Dulle Griet*, undated, pen and ink and gouache on paper, 394 × 535 mm, Düsseldorf, Kunstpalast, collection of the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (NRW) (inv. KA (FP) 4838) (b)

# The Coloured Drawing of the *Dulle Griet* in the Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf: New Findings on its Status and Dating

Christina Currie, Dominique Allart, Sonja Brink and Steven Saverwyns

ABSTRACT: The Düsseldorf coloured drawing of the *Dulle Griet* was examined at the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA) in Brussels in collaboration with the Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, using infrared reflectography, infrared photography, transmitted light photography, macro-XRF and micro-Raman spectroscopy. The study of the paper revealed the watermark of Niklaus Heusler, a Basel paper manufacturer, giving 1578 as the earliest possible execution date for the drawing, and thus confirming its status as a copy. Examination and analysis of the colours suggest that they are most likely original. Various hypotheses are proposed as to the drawing's original function, attribution and context, taking into account the early history of Bruegel's *Dulle Griet*. Thanks to its early dating, the drawing is a key witness to the appearance of the *Dulle Griet* painting at an early stage in its history, and as such it provided fundamental help during the conservation campaign. Certain colours and motifs that have altered over time in the painting remain more legible in the drawing.

—o—

## Introduction

The *Dulle Griet* drawing<sup>1</sup> is on permanent loan to the Kunstpalast Düsseldorf from the collection of the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (fig. 3.1b).<sup>2</sup> Its earliest provenance is unknown, but it is likely to have been part of the collection of Prince Johann Wilhelm von Pfalz, Elector Palatine, who started collecting art, especially Flemish and Dutch painting, around 1684. Most of the prince's collection

was transferred to Munich, but some pieces remained in Düsseldorf and became part of the collections of the Kunstakademie. The *Dulle Griet* drawing could have been one of the works of art that stayed in Düsseldorf. Another possible provenance is the collection of painter and art collector Wilhelm Lambert Krahe (1712–1790). His collection was acquired in 1778 by the Duchy of Berg for use at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, of which Krahe was the first director. The drawing is listed in an 1883 inventory of the Kunstakademie, where it is given to Pieter Brueghel the Younger.<sup>2</sup> Since 1932 the Krahe collection, which forms the nucleus of the collections of the Kunstakademie, has been on permanent loan to the Kunstpalast in Düsseldorf.

The Düsseldorf sheet has suffered years of neglect by art historians. Georges Marlier mentioned it in his book on Pieter Brueghel the Younger as a 'dessin intéressant, mais d'attribution difficile' (interesting drawing, but difficult attribution).<sup>3</sup> The only authors to have discussed it in any detail are Lutz Malke in 1975, Alexander Wied in 1997 and Margaret Sullivan in 2004. Malke saw it as a copy after Bruegel's (Museum Mayer van den Bergh) painting of the *Dulle Griet*, while Wied considered the drawing of excellent quality but did not see any characteristic features of the Brueghel

sons. Indeed, he felt that, on stylistic grounds, the sheet might be older than the sons' copies after their father. He considered that an artist in Emperor Rudolf II's circle capable of imitating Bruegel's drawings might be responsible, such as Roelandt Savery.<sup>4</sup> Sullivan instead favoured an attribution to Pieter Bruegel the Elder himself. She identified small differences in motif between the drawing and the painting and interpreted them as creative changes by Bruegel the Elder, concluding that the drawing must be a preparatory study for the painting (fig. 3.1a).<sup>5</sup> In 2002, Nils Büttner suggested that the drawing was a coloured model for future copies of the *Dulle Griet*.<sup>6</sup> Most recently, in 2012, Christina Currie and Dominique Allart reassessed Sullivan's arguments and concluded that the drawing was unlikely to be by Bruegel's hand.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, the present authors always intended to examine the drawing in the flesh at some point, as it had never been subject to an in-depth stylistic-technical analysis. The 2017–18 conservation treatment of the *Dulle Griet* painting at the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA) was the spur to this research, and it turned out to be more useful for the restoration than could possibly have been imagined.

The questions we had at the outset were sequential. We wanted to find out whether the drawing could be a coloured model for the *Dulle Griet* by Bruegel himself, or whether it was a copy after the painting. If it was not a preparatory drawing, we wanted to investigate the possibility of it being a record copy by Bruegel himself, and if not by him, then consider other possible candidates. The dating and place of production of the paper and the identification of the pigments were thus key to the investigation. We were uncertain as to whether the colours were original or added later, which was crucial as this would determine the nature of the relationship of the drawing to the original colour scheme of the *Dulle Griet* painting.

To answer these questions, the KIK-IRPA initiated a study of the drawing in October 2017 with the full collaboration of the Kunstpalast in Düsseldorf.

### Paper Support

The large coloured drawing of the *Dulle Griet* (39.4 × 53.5 cm), which is about a ninth of the size of Bruegel's panel painting (116.4 × 162.1 cm), is made on a single sheet of laid paper, with horizontal laid lines and vertical chain lines. There are some horizontal losses, perhaps due to rolling. Raking light also reveals considerable cockling and signs that it was attached to something at the reverse along all four edges. This probably corresponds with the fact that the drawing was glued to a wooden support at some point before 1930.<sup>8</sup> This support was removed by 1934, according to an inventory of the Kunstakademie's collections.<sup>9</sup>

In transmitted light, a large laid watermark can be made out in the centre left, measuring 14 cm from top to bottom, which had never been noticed before. It was difficult to read in its entirety due to the presence of the painted image. The mystery was resolved by taking an infrared photograph of the reverse side, which revealed the mark without interference (fig. 3.2b).

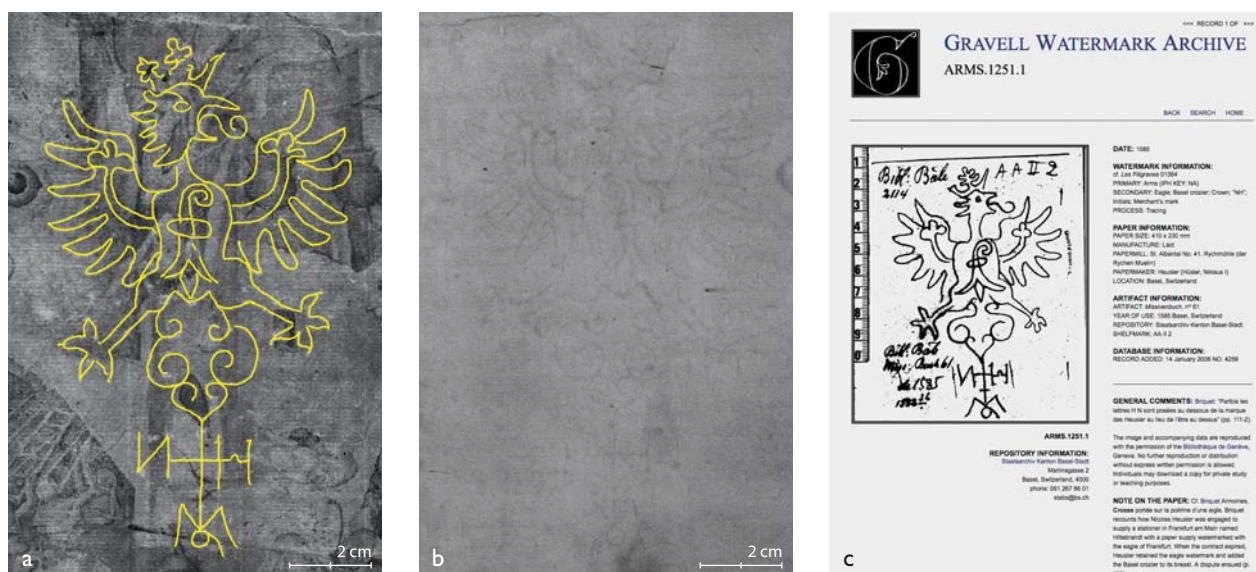
The watermark shows a crowned eagle with the Basel crozier in its breast. The 'NH' initials and mark at the bottom clearly point to the papermaker Niklaus I Heusler. He used this mark from the time he took over the Zunziger papermill (St Albantal no. 39) at Basel in 1578, which gives a *terminus post quem* for the production of the paper.<sup>10</sup> The most frequent recorded occurrences of this watermark are in the 1580s, as in an example from a 1585 *Missivenbuch* (fig. 3.2c),<sup>11</sup> but it is likely that the mark was used up until the death of Niklaus Heusler's son, also named Niklaus, in 1626.

This *terminus post quem* for the paper already answered two of our questions. The drawing is not a preparatory drawing by Bruegel the Elder for the painting, dated 1563, nor could it have been a record drawing by his hand, as he died in 1569.

### Transfer, Drawing and Painting Techniques

In infrared, and faintly visible with the naked eye, there are traces of squaring-up behind the paint layer. Since these lines are quite widely spaced it



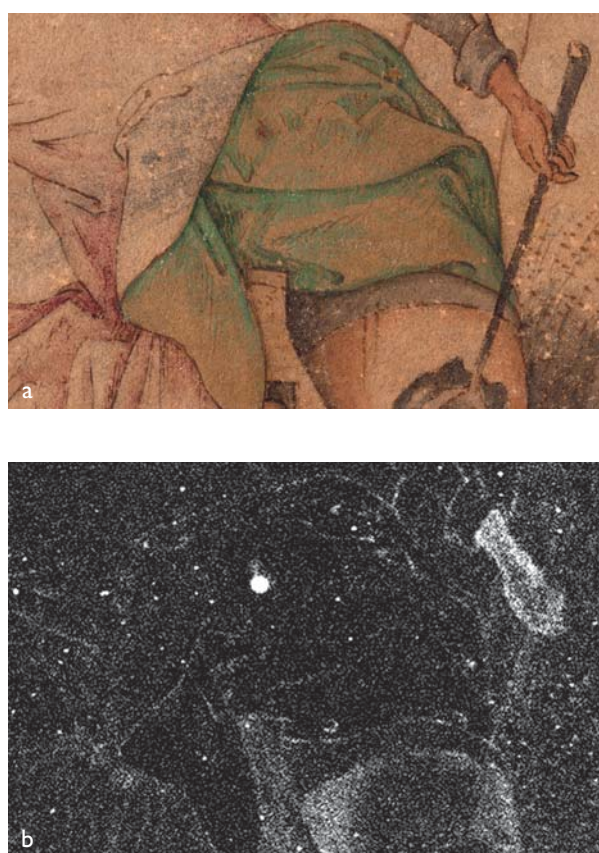


**Fig. 3.2** Diagram of watermark on transmitted light image (a); infrared detail of reverse, inverted (b); page from online Gravell Watermark Archive <[gravell.org/record.php?RECID=4259](http://gravell.org/record.php?RECID=4259)>, showing diagram of Niklaus I Heusler's watermark on a 1585 *Missivenbuch* (c)

seems likely that they were made in relation to a corresponding grid placed over Bruegel's original painting. They are not to be confused with the vertical chain lines of the paper, which fall in different places. The material seems to be some sort of dry black medium, probably charcoal or black chalk, and the grid was no doubt deliberately erased after drawing and prior to colouring.

The drawing of the design is in pen and brown ink. In places the line appears to be split into two, suggesting a pen rather than a brush. The lines are slightly stippled in places. Parts of the drawing line appear darker than others, suggesting two stages of application. Both stages could be pen and ink, but it is possible that the darker lines could be remnants of a black chalk underdrawing. These would have been partially effaced after the ink drawing stage along with the squaring grid.

A high-resolution macro-X-ray fluorescence (MA-XRF) scan of the green mantle of the giant on the roof indicates the presence of iron in the ink of the drawing lines, suggesting the use of an iron gall ink as drawing medium (fig. 3.3b).<sup>12</sup> In places there are longer and somewhat wider-spaced brown hatching strokes, probably also iron gall ink. These



**Fig. 3.3** Detail. Giant on roof, showing iron gall ink outlines (a); MA-XRF mapping of iron (b)

strokes are completely invisible in infrared photography and reflectography, suggesting that they are part of the second drawing stage, during which the artist added indications of tone.

The colouring stage consists of a straightforward application of flat planes of colour in a water-based medium, with occasional hatching strokes in grey paint, as seen in Dulle Griet's helmet (fig. 3.4a). Delicate touches of pink and orange mark flesh tones. Further outlining and final details are applied in dilute brown paint applied with a brush.

The black border was examined with the binocular microscope. In many areas it appears to be reinforced. Indeed, it is much blacker and lacking the wear and tear of black areas in the body of the drawing. In the lower left and at the bottom left, there seems to be grey paint instead of black paint. The border may therefore be a later addition.

### Closeness to the Model

The drawing precisely follows the motifs in Bruegel the Elder's *Dulle Griet* painting. Close comparison of certain motifs demonstrates that the drawing is a copy of the painting rather than being copied after a lost preparatory drawing by Bruegel. Where Bruegel modified his painting slightly during execution, the drawing follows the final appearance of the form: for example, the feeding bowl of the Bosch-like bodiless creature in front of the entrance to Hell, which in Bruegel's underdrawing is wider, less tilted and with something inside it (fig. 3.5). Another example is the flag in the upper right of the scene, where the Düsseldorf drawing imitates Bruegel's painted solution rather than the flag's underdrawing. Clearly, the aim was to make as faithful a reproduction as possible, but on a smaller scale.

### Pigment Analysis

We carried out scientific analysis of the pigments to verify where the colours could have been applied at the same time as the pen and ink drawing lines. Sampling of the drawing was not possible, so only non-invasive analyses were carried out. The

complete drawing was scanned with macro X-ray fluorescence (MA-XRF),<sup>13</sup> providing elemental information on the pigments' composition. In the limited time available only a few spots were further characterized with micro-Raman spectroscopy (MRS), delivering molecular information and confirming or refining MA-XRF results.<sup>14</sup>

A selection of the main MA-XRF results are summarized as element distribution maps in fig. 3.6. The higher the signal intensity of the element under consideration, the whiter the colour in the map.

Lead can be detected in many places throughout the drawing. It is present as lead white ( $2\text{PbCO}_3 \cdot \text{Pb(OH)}_2$ ) in some bright white highlights: for example, in the nightcap of the creature sitting on the wall next to Hell and in the border of the cauldron of creatures and soldiers near the tavern on the right. However, the off-white colour is generally obtained by leaving the paper unpainted. In most cases, lead is found mixed with other colours, to influence their final tonality. Lead might also originate from other sources. Red lead ( $\text{Pb}_3\text{O}_4$ ) might have been used in parts of the glowing sky or in fires, where the lead concentration is high, although a mixture of a red pigment with lead white is also possible. As MA-XRF is an elemental technique, a distinction between lead white and red lead cannot be made. MRS measurements were not performed in the orange-red areas. A final source of the lead signal is lead-tin yellow ( $\text{Pb}_2\text{SnO}_4$ ). Although weak, signals for tin could be detected and MRS analysis further refined the results and identified the pigment as lead-tin yellow type I rather than type II ( $\text{Pb(Sn,Si)O}_3$ ). The yellow colour is very pale and hardly distinguishable from the yellowish background of the paper. It is used in the metal decoration on the small box underneath the left arm of Dulle Griet, the drapery on the trumpet held by a flying insect monster, parts of the eyes of Hell, the round window of the tavern, the sky near the upper right corner, the laundry in a basket, the sleeve of a woman to the right of the laundry basket, the



**Fig. 3.4** Detail. Dulle Griet in Düsseldorf drawing, under normal light (a) and UV illumination (b). The pale pink flesh tones produce a strong fluorescence under ultraviolet light



**Fig. 3.5** Bosch-like creature in Bruegel's *Dulle Griet*, with IRR insert showing original position of bowl and dropped motif inside it (a); and in Düsseldorf drawing, imitating original's paint layer (b)

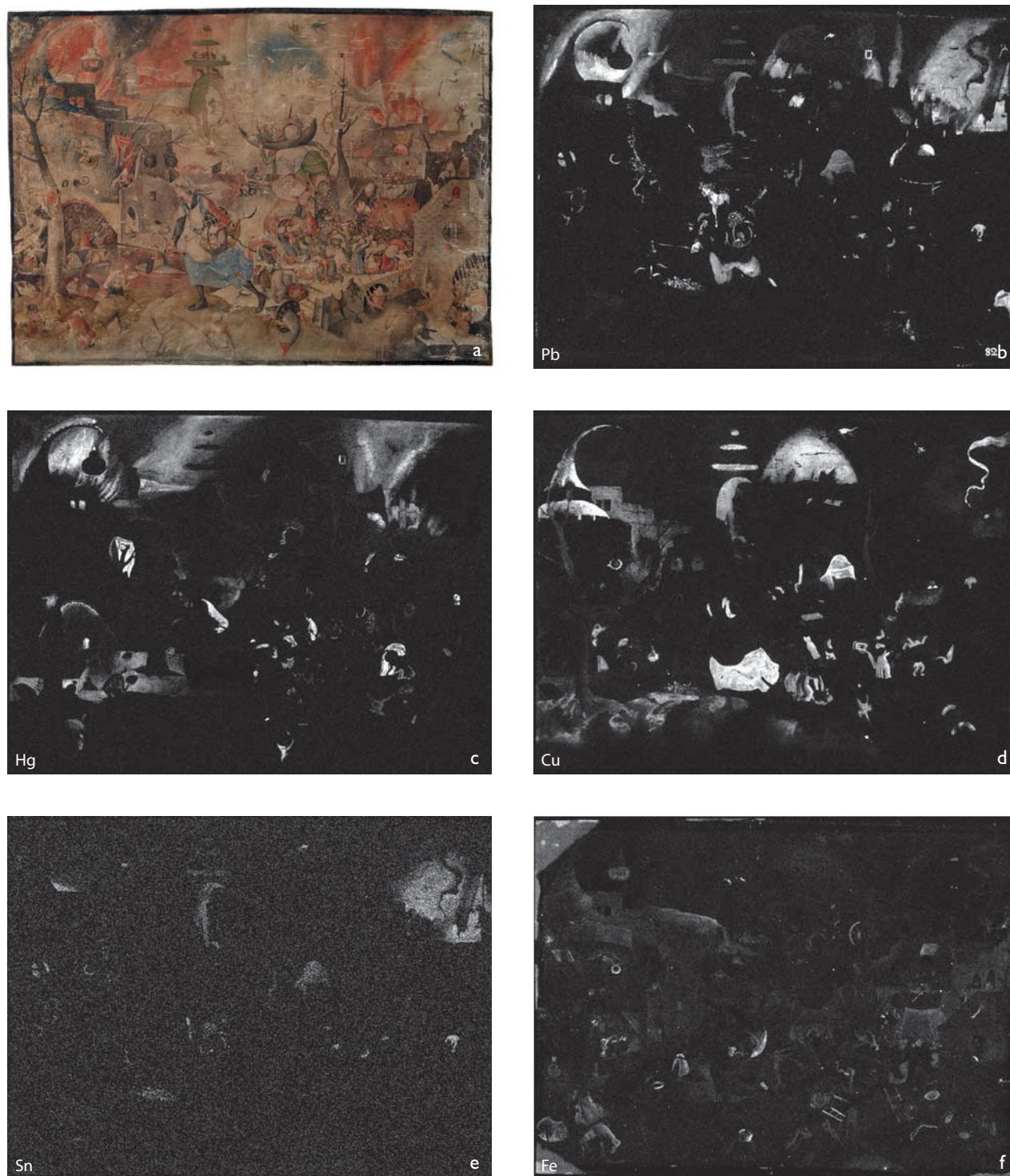


Fig. 3.6 XRF maps for lead (b), mercury (c), copper (d), tin (e) and iron (f)

content of two pots left and right above the laundry basket, a small part of the sky to the right of Hell's cap, the outlines of the toad on the tree and some small patches next to the left eye of Hell. In the original *Dulle Griet* painting (fig. 3.1a) these zones are indeed all yellow, with the exception of the toad, where it is hard to see possible yellow outlines.

The use of lead-tin yellow is not only limited to light yellow zones. It is also found in green colours, mixed with a pigment rich in copper. This might be azurite blue ( $\text{Cu}_3(\text{CO}_3)_2(\text{OH})_2$ ) mixed with lead-tin yellow to produce a green tone, or a true copper-green pigment, mixed with lead-tin yellow to influence its tonality. Unfortunately, the drawing could not be studied by digital microscopy, which could have allowed the visualization of pigment grains in the green colour, determining whether azurite is present or not. Green paint with lead-tin yellow has been found around the egg and the construction with the three circular levels above, in the green mantle of the giant, in the green border of the left eye of Hell, in the green frog in the red river and in the vegetation painted on the red river next to the right foot of Dulle Griet. Interestingly the green around the egg and the construction with the three circular levels above is coloured using the same pigment mixture, giving a very similar colour for both parts, while in Bruegel's original *Dulle Griet* painting the colour of the green around the egg and the circular levels above is clearly different. This implies that colour changes in the oil painting took place after the artist of the drawing saw the painting.

Different green hues can be observed in the drawing. The green around the egg is rather dull, while some parts of the mantle of the giant are vivid green. A higher level of copper in the vivid green parts seems to be the reason for this difference. The green of the basket with laundry and the sleeves of the women left and right of the basket contain copper with no lead-tin yellow, suggesting a true green copper-based pigment. However, as MA-XRF is an elemental technique,

no further information on its exact composition can be obtained. Under the set conditions, MRS gave no further clues on this green pigment either. In some brown-greenish parts of the drawing, copper is detected in lower intensity, again without lead-tin yellow, such as in the vegetation around the roots of the tree on the left, the dress of the woman next to the left foot of Dulle Griet and the creature with a helmet hanging on the bridge. Could this be the same green as in the laundry basket, but more thinly applied or degraded? Close observation of these zones shows predominantly green-brownish areas, with some greener patches, which could point to the degradation of an originally green pigment.

Blue parts are rich in copper, indicating the use of azurite, the presence of which was confirmed by MRS analyses. No smalt is detected in the drawing. Azurite is also noted in the sky, in the right part of Hell's cap, in the blue dress of Dulle Griet and in the dresses of some women in the background.

The use of vermilion ( $\text{HgS}$ ) was proven through the detection of mercury in most red parts of the drawing. In the vivid red colours it is present as pure whereas in some darker tones (such as the darker parts of the red river) it is mixed with an iron-rich pigment, a red ochre. In some red parts of the painting, such as for the 'barrel man', the dress of the woman with the axe on the bridge, and the red small tower next to the tavern, the red paint only contains red ochre, with no vermilion. By adding red ochre to vermilion, or by using these pigments in their pure form, the artist created different shades of red.

The highest concentration of iron is detected in brown colours, such as in the basket on Dulle Griet's arm, the left eye of Hell, the beehive, the bowl in the hand of the creature with the spoon in his anus and the man next to the beehive. In these cases, a brown ochre was used.

Calcium is detected throughout the drawing, no doubt mostly coming from the paper itself. In some spots the concentration of calcium is notably higher, such as in the bell, in the laundry in the

green basket, and in the raised arm of a woman to the right of the basket. This calcium likely originates from chalk (although the use of gypsum cannot be excluded). The chalk does not seem to be used as white pigment, as the colour of the paper itself is used for white colours, and sporadically some lead white. The chalk could therefore be present as substrate for a yellow lake.<sup>15</sup> In Bruegel's original *Dulle Griet* painting, the laundry and the raised arm (and perhaps also parts of the bell) are indeed yellow. These parts in the drawing contain lead-tin yellow as well. During the period, yellow lakes were often used in mixtures to produce greens or to give life to a duller yellow pigment. They have also been reported in combination with lead-tin yellow.<sup>16</sup> In the clothing of the woman on the bridge to the far right, grabbing a pack, in the drawing no lead-tin yellow is detected, but higher calcium levels can be noted; in the *Dulle Griet* painting the clothes of this woman are yellowish in colour. It is possible that the sleeve in the drawing was originally yellow, but that the dye faded over time. The presence of a yellow lake, however, can only be confirmed by destructive analysis of a sample, and sampling was not feasible in the case of the drawing.

Degradation of other pigments is likely as well. The leaves of the tree before Hell are brownish in the painting (and believed to be originally green), whereas in the drawing the trees seem to be bare. Only under close observation do some traces of leaves become visible. No copper was detected in these leaves, leading to the assumption that an unstable green organic colourant was used.

Finally, under ultraviolet illumination, there are signs of the presence of a red lake. We noted an orange fluorescence in different reddish colours in the drawing. This is especially pronounced in the flesh tones of *Dulle Griet*, corresponding with a pale pink colour in normal light (fig. 3.4). Madder lake, a red lake pigment that derives its colour from the roots of the madder plant (*Rubia Tinctorum* L.), is known to produce an orange hue under ultraviolet light.<sup>17</sup> Orange fluorescence indicates where madder was used, although in some cases it seems

to have faded as well, such as in the reflection in the sphere in the boat. Here, only a white colour is observed in visible light, while a faint orange fluorescence is noted under ultraviolet illumination. There is also orange fluorescence in the glow caused by fires, suggesting the use of madder lake and implying that the original tinge was initially redder. Unfortunately, only a destructive analysis of a sample can prove the presence of madder lake.

The key pigment present in the drawing that proves an early date for the application of the colours is lead-tin yellow, a pigment popular in western painting since at least the fourteenth century. It was hardly ever used after the beginning of the eighteenth century and disappeared from the artist's palette around 1750, only to be rediscovered in 1941.<sup>18</sup> Also relevant, however, is the fact that we detected none of the synthetic inorganic pigments introduced since the early eighteenth century. The painting palette therefore corresponds with the manufacturing period of the paper support.

### Origin and Function

Attribution is difficult due to the wear and tear of the sheet and because the copyist aimed at reproducing his model as faithfully as possible rather than affirming his own personal style.

Nonetheless, the drawing is of high quality and shows considerable vivacity and expressivity, despite the constraints of working within a grid. The draughtsman seems to have a certain familiarity with Bruegel's graphic style and mimics some of its features. Similarities with Bruegel's drawings include short stippled lines and dots, especially in the far distance, and in the rendering of materials such as furs (fig. 3.7). The portrayal of eyes is also comparable. However, the Düsseldorf drawing does not have the same level of subtlety, finish and rich graphic effects as Bruegel's drawings, most of which are preparatory sheets for prints, intended to give precise guidance to engravers. It was planned from the outset as a tinted drawing, in which colour was an integral part.



**Fig. 3.7** Detail from Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Luxuria*, pen and grey-brown ink on paper, 1557, Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium, KBR (inv. S.II 132 816) (a)  
 Detail from Düsseldorf drawing (b)  
 Detail from Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Justicia*, pen and grey-brown ink on paper, 1559, Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium, KBR (inv. S.II 133 707) (c)  
 Detail from Düsseldorf drawing (d)



As we have seen, its dating rests largely on the watermark of Niklaus Heusler, also used by his son, which gives a possible period of execution between 1578 and 1626, although the paper could have been stored and used a little later. This does not provide us with any information on the place where the drawing was made, since Basel papermakers exported their goods all over Europe. The answer should therefore be sought via the provenance of the original painting and thus where it could have been copied.

The earliest mention of the painting is in a letter to Rudolf II from Count Simon VI of Lippe, which states that in 1600 the *Dulle Griet* passed into the hands of merchants from Emden, Lower Saxony. These merchants made a gift of the painting to the emperor shortly afterwards.<sup>19</sup> The *Dulle Griet* was most likely the painting described by Karel van Mander in Rudolf II's collection in Prague as 'een Dulle Griet, die een roof voor de Helle doet, die seer verbijsteert siet, en vreet op zijn schots toeghemaect is: ick acht dees en ander stucken oock in s'Keysers Hof zijn' (a Dolle Griet carrying away plunder in the face of Hell, who looks quite crazy and is weirdly kitted-out in a higgledy-piggledy way. I believe this, as well as some other pieces, to be in the emperor's palace too).<sup>20</sup> It is thought that the painting was looted from the imperial palace in Prague in 1648 by the troops of Queen Christina of Sweden and taken to Sweden. It was purchased by Fritz Mayer van den Bergh at the Lempertz auction house in Cologne in 1894, having been previously in the collection of Christian Hammer, a Swedish jeweller based in Stockholm.<sup>21</sup>

Unfortunately, prior to 1600, it is not known where the painting was or who commissioned it. The painting could have remained in the Bruegel family after the death of Pieter the Elder in 1569, or it could have been in a collection accessible to the family. In both these possible situations, the drawing could have been made by Mayken Verhulst, widow of Pieter Coecke van Aelst and an artist herself, notably in watercolour. She

would have played an important role in transferring what remained of Bruegel's studio materials to his sons. Pieter the Younger and Jan Brueghel are evidently also potential candidates, after coming of age. But the drawing is unlikely to be by either of them, as there is no known copy by their hands, nor echoes of motifs from the *Dulle Griet* in their works. Pieter Brueghel the Younger in particular would have seized any opportunity to work directly after an original painting by his father and produce copies.

Therefore, it is unlikely that between 1563, the date of the *Dulle Griet* painting, and 1600, the year of its entry into the imperial collection, the painting was accessible to the Bruegel family. It could have passed from collector to collector, in which case the drawing could have been carried out in the context of a commercial transaction. It might have been produced as a reproduction to entice a potential buyer of the painting, or as a substitute for the costly painting itself.

The large format of the drawing, as well as the possibility that it was originally attached to a wooden support, may suggest that it was intended to be viewed as a finished work of art in its own right. If this is the case, the northern provinces merit particular attention. In Amsterdam, for example, a possible artist is Jacob Savery, a talented draughtsman working in the Bruegel tradition. Savery produced drawings in the style and spirit of Bruegel, such as *Village Kermis*, recently acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum (fig. 3.8). It is also a pen and ink coloured drawing on paper and its large format is very close to that of the Düsseldorf copy.<sup>22</sup> Savery understood perfectly Bruegel the Elder's graphic technique. He is well known for having imitated Bruegel's style to perfection, using the great master's characteristic small dots. A series of drawings previously considered to be works by Bruegel the Elder himself, with 'Bruegel' signatures and dates corresponding to his lifetime, are probably forgeries by Savery.<sup>23</sup>

As suggested by Alexander Wied, the other likely context for the making of the Düsseldorf copy is the



**Fig. 3.8** Jacob Savery, *Village Kermis*, 1598 (signed and dated in gold ink), pen and grey ink, with watercolour and some gold on paper, 371 × 535 mm, London, Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. DYCE.513

imperial court at Prague, where the original painting ended up around 1600 and probably remained until 1648.<sup>24</sup> Copying after old masters was a common activity at that court. Rudolf II loved Bruegel's paintings, and surrounded himself with artists working in the Bruegelian tradition – such as Pieter Stevens II, Joris Hoefnagel and Roelandt Savery, brother of Jacob and author of the notorious '*naer het leven*' drawings and perhaps also of the famous *Alpine Views*.<sup>25</sup> The Düsseldorf drawing could have been carried out there by one of the emperor's artists or by a visitor to the imperial collection.

#### **The Düsseldorf Drawing: Clues to the Original Appearance of the Painting**

Quite apart from the question of the attribution and function of the drawing, its early dating makes it a key witness to the original appearance of the

painting prior to the latter's colour alterations, increased translucency and localized damages.

Although the drawing itself has suffered wear and tear and some fading, certain colours are in fact much better preserved than in the painting, which is due to the different pigments used and the water-based medium. This is the case for the blues in *Dulle Griet's* skirt and shoulders, which have a much bluer hue in the drawing, and also for her white veil, which has become completely transparent in the oil painting. Hell's hat is clearly blue in the drawing, whereas it is pale with a dark shadow in the original painting. Certain dresses in the female army are also blue in the drawing and faded in the painting. The drawing therefore represents a glimpse of how the *Dulle Griet's* colours would have looked at the outset and during its time in Rudolf II's court.



**Fig. 3.9** 'Barrel man' in Düsseldorf drawing (a); in painting before cleaning, IRR (b); in painting before cleaning (c); in painting after treatment (d)

Some of the original colours in the painting were hidden behind later overpaint, but visible in the Düsseldorf drawing. The sky, for example, was uniformly red in the painting, but red punctuated by a central patch of cool blue in the drawing. Livia Depuydt-Elbaum, who restored the painting, was able to uncover the concealed original hues of the sky in the light of the appearance of the drawing and MA-XRF imagery of the painting.

The same discovery applied to the toad in the lower left of the composition, which is predominantly red in the drawing. Before cleaning the painting, the corresponding toad was dark brown.

After removal of the overpaint, it recovered its original appearance, which is red for the most part, edged with green.<sup>26</sup> In the drawing, the likely green parts have faded completely, probably due to the use of an unstable organic green pigment.

Many motifs are also clearer to read in the drawing. Again, the juxtaposition of drawing and painting facilitated the restoration process where there were losses or ambiguity in the painting. The most interesting example of this is the 'barrel man' (fig. 3.9). In the painting, he had been given a sad face by a former restorer who was not able to understand the motif, due to paint damage along a crack

in the panel. In the infrared image prior to treatment, something different is clearly visible in the mouth of the creature, but it is the drawing that tells us that this is a two-part spigot. A similar motif is seen in Bruegel's earlier *Flemish Proverbs* (1559), where a pig is seen biting the spigot of a barrel in order to release the liquid inside.

Other motifs in the drawing clarifying those in the painting include the Bosch-like creature with a head, legs and a long cap just below Hell's ear. In the drawing, he has a distinct face and sits on a globe, both of which are impossible to make out in the painting due to the fact that the creature was added late on during execution, on top of the dark background paint and without a reserve. There is a creature at the edge of the river in front of Hell with a small cup (suction device?) on his helmet in the drawing that is an indistinguishable dark swirl in the painting. Two additional figures sit in the boat held aloft by the giant in the centre in the drawing; these are only faintly visible in the infrared image of the painting.

Certain better-preserved details in the drawing enable us to better identify motifs in the painting. For example, the small black treasure or money chest carried by the woman following Dulle Griet is shown in the drawing with reinforcement slats, whereas in the painting it is now plain black. In the upper right, the anchor of the boat is clearly delineated against the background in the drawing, whereas in the painting the anchor merges imperceptibly into the dark wall behind.

In places, losses in the original painting could be retouched with the knowledge of what was originally there in the drawing: for example, the leg of a flying frog in the sky, which was mostly missing, and a woman's sleeve in the lower right crowd, only traces of which remained. In the cauldron of creatures and soldiers, the dark-haired creature with a long snout to the far right appeared in the painting to be looking forward towards the viewer, whereas in the drawing he faces right in three-quarters view. Depuydt-Elbaum discovered during cleaning that his incongruous eye was in fact a later retouching and that the original profile corresponds to that in the drawing.

Finally, the original appearance of the small flag at the top of a mast of a ship in the upper right is revealed through the Düsseldorf drawing. In the drawing, the flag shows a coat of arms with a fer-de-moline (millrind) and a white-spotted red border, whereas in the painting the motif has been repainted during a former restoration to show five black shields on a white background with a red border and no spots (fig. 3.10). Our efforts to identify the original coat of arms proved fruitless and it is likely that the design is fictive and simply decorative, as with the other flags in the painting that depict a cooking pot and a horn.<sup>27</sup>

Another intriguing motif is Dulle Griet's tongue (see fig. 3.4). Maximiliaan Martens pointed out that Bruegel originally planned to paint her tongue hanging out but changed his mind during painting.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, there is a form that appears to be a

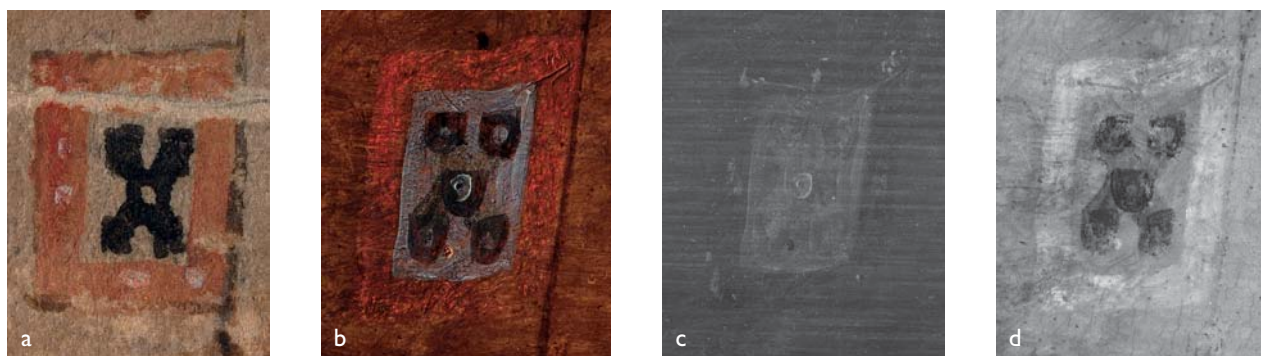


Fig. 3.10 Flag in Düsseldorf drawing (a); in painting (b); in painting, X-radiograph (c); in painting, IRR (d)

tongue in the infrared and X-ray images. In the drawing, there is a pink stroke corresponding to a barely visible stroke in the painting, which indicates the far side of her mouth, but not the tongue. Therefore, the tongue may indeed be part of a preliminary stage in the painting, dropped by Bruegel during painting, and therefore not present in the Düsseldorf copy.

### Conclusion

The Düsseldorf drawing cannot be by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, since he was already dead by the time the paper was made. The presence of the watermark of Niklaus Heusler, a Basel paper manufacturer, gives 1578 as the earliest possible execution date. It is nonetheless a beautiful and high-quality drawing in its own right. Pigment analysis and close visual examination of the paint layer suggest that the colours are most likely original.

Although clearly an accurate copy, made with the help of squaring up, the attribution and original

function of the drawing remain a mystery. The fact that it is coloured excludes it as a model for an engraving. It could have been a record drawing by a Bruegel family member, a reproduction to entice an early buyer of the painting, a copy commissioned by an early owner of the painting or a copy made by a Bruegel imitator for their own purposes. Possible authors include Jacob Savery, an artist working in the Bruegel tradition in Amsterdam, or one of Rudolf II's numerous court artists or visitors to the imperial collection in Prague.

The drawing represents a unique record of the appearance of Pieter Bruegel's *Dulle Griet* at some point during its early history. Many of its colours and motifs remain fresher and more legible than they are today in the painting. The drawing is therefore a key witness for interpreting the painting and understanding its original colour scheme and motifs and as such was of fundamental help during the 2017–18 conservation campaign.

### NOTES

We would like to thank the Kunstpalast Düsseldorf for allowing the KIK-IRPA to examine and analyse the drawing. The week of intense research carried out on the drawing at the KIK-IRPA with Dr Sonja Brink was a truly collaborative venture. For help investigating the Heusler family of papermakers, we would like to thank Dr Erwin Frauenknecht of the Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Stuttgart, and Martin Kluge of the Swiss Museum for Paper, Writing and Printing, Basel. For discussions on Bruegel's *Dulle Griet* painting and its alterations in relation to the Düsseldorf drawing, we thank Livia Depuydt-Elbaum, Head of Painting Conservation at the KIK-IRPA, who was in charge of the conservation treatment of the painting. We would also like to thank Jean-Luc Elias and Sophie De Potter (KIK-IRPA) for the high-quality technical imagery.

1 After Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Dulle Griet*, undated, pen and ink and gouache on paper, 394 × 535 mm, Düsseldorf, Kunstpalast, collection of the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (NRW), inv. KA (FP) 4838.

2 Levin 1883, p. 41.

3 Marlier/Folie 1969, p. 449.

4 Malke 1975, cat. no. 88; Wied 1997.

5 Sullivan 2004, p. 62–65, and Sullivan 2009, pp. 109 and 112–13. Alexander Wied also cites B. Claessens and J. Rousseau as supporting an attribution to Bruegel himself (B. Claessens and J. Rousseau, *Unser Bruegel*, Antwerp, 1969, cat. no. 24, cited in Wied 1997, p. 18).

6 Büttner 2002.

7 Currie and Allart 2012, vol. 1, p. 316, note 79.

8 Budde 1930, cat. no. 808.

9 The collections of the Kunstakademie have been integrated into specific museum departments. The *Dulle Griet* became part of the Department of Prints and Drawings, where it appears in the handwritten inventory of 1934.

10 Tschudin 1958, pp. 23 and 41.

11 Gravell Watermark Archive (online), ARMS. 1251.1 <gravell.org/record.

php?RECID=4259>. (Watermark from St Albantal papermill no. 41, Rychmühle [der Rychen Muelin]. Papermaker: Niklaus Heusler. Staatsarchiv Kanton Basel-Stadt, AA II 2.)

12 High-resolution MA-XRF scan conditions: spot size 150 µm, pixel size 125 µm, dwell time 25ms.

13 MA-XRF, Bruker M6 Jetstream, Rh-tube, 50kV acceleration voltage, spot size 400 µm, pixel size 400 µm, dwell time 15 ms.

14 We used a Renishaw inVia instrument, coupled to an optical probe, and the analysis was carried out directly on the drawing. Conditions for Raman spectroscopy: 785 nm laser excitation, reduced laser power to avoid any damage to the drawing, measuring time variable in order to obtain an adequate signal-to-noise ratio.

15 Spring and Keith 2009.

16 David Pegg, 'Fading of Yellow and Red Lake Pigments', National Gallery, London, 2013 <nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/research/meaning-of-making/

vermeer-and-technique/fading-of-yellow-and-red-lake-pigments>.

17 See De la Rie 1982 and Costentino 2014.

18 Kühn 1993.

19 We thank Lorne Campbell and Alice Hoppe-Harnoncourt for drawing our attention to this first mention of the painting (see Fusenig 2002, p. 119; Fusenig 2012, p. 98; and Kaschek 2007).

20 From 'The Life of Pieter Bruegel' in Karel van Mander's *Schilder-boeck*, 1604 (transcription and translation from Miedema 1994–9, vol. 1, pp. 192–3).

21 Antwerp 2012, p. 7. The Lempertz auction house in Cologne was known as J. M. Heberle prior to 1845. On the provenance of the *Dulle Griet*, see also De Coo 1960.

22 Jacob Savery, *Village Kermis*, signed 'JAQUE/SAVERY' and dated 1598, pen and grey ink, with watercolour and some gold on paper, 371 × 535 mm, London, Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. DYCE.513.

23 On Jacob Savery's fake Bruegel drawings, see Mielke 1996, A21-44, pp. 210–21, and Rotterdam/New York 2001, pp. 276–7.

24 Wied 1997, p. 18.

25 On Roelandt Savery's possible authorship of the *Alpine Views*, see Mielke 1996, A1-20, pp. 200–09, and Rotterdam/New York 2001, pp. 266–7.

26 In the painting, this green pigment is copper resinate, whose green hue has partially survived.

27 We thank Guy van Wassenhove, of the Baillet Latour Foundation, for pointing out the difference between the flag in the

drawing and the flag in the painting, and suggesting this avenue of research in the hope of identifying the original patron. We also thank Dr Dominique Vanwijnsberghe, of the KIK-IRPA, for his identification of the fer-de-moline motif; Dr Christiane Van den Bergen-Pantens, of the Centre International de Codicologie, for researching the possible coat of arms; and Guus van Breugel, of the CBG Centrum voor familiegeschiedenis, for his opinion that the banner is meant to be decorative.

28 Martens 2012a, p. 43 and ill. 21.