**CHAPTER I: EXHORTATION, OR LECTURE, TO RISING YOUNG PAINTERS**

1. O Hebe's offspring, Genius's students,[[1]](#endnote-1)

who instead of writing,

blotted all over your paper and filled it

with little People, Ships, and various animals

so that you scarcely left a space empty:[[2]](#endnote-2)

It seems that Nature wished to drive you

to become a painter, such that your Parents

assume the burden of bringing you there.

Parents easily say that they want to make their children Painters, but it is neither their task, nor within their power.

2. By general judgment you were chosen

to be a Painter. The word is easy to speak,

but look: between Painter and Painter

lies a great mountain, rising so high

that many must leave the journey stalled.

This does not concern months or weeks;

rather, you will need whole years

before you taste any benefit.

Between painter and painter lies a great mountain.

3. It would not be good if one pushed you to this.

This Art is itself attractive enough at the start,

easy to grasp, at everyone's command.

But let each make sure to avoid the fate of

the foolish gnat, who, delighting in the shine

of the gleaming candlelight, goes to his ruin

foolishly inclined to fly into it;

for many deceive themselves in this way.

The art of painting is alluring, but difficult to learn.

4. Be warned, then, for the throat of Art

sweetly mimics the voices of the Sirens

and pleasantly lures each one to the performance;

but in order to reach her one must attempt

many paths and swim through waters;

then there is a mountain to climb,

so high that you do not reach the top, early or late,

unless you have the benefit of nature.

Without nature, one cannot become a painter.

5. Because nature has on many heights

a gallery or passage, in which lie

all instruments of art and craft.

All young children go through here

even before they suckle at their Mother's breast,

and here, generous nature hands

each one a particular instrument

in order to earn his bread in the countries of the World.

Nature inclines every child to something particular.

6. Various and precious are her gifts:

here she gives ploughs, there hammers, there axes,

here trowels, there books, over there brushes,

but often the unknowing parents

distribute the natural characters

and so, alas, sometimes it arises

that a born painter walks behind the plow,

and farmers devote themselves to the brush.

Parents ought to pay careful attention to the inclinations of their children, according to Plato, writing in the third dialogue of his *Republic*.[[3]](#endnote-3)

7. If nature does not offer you the brush,

then you must in time turn back

and let your fruitless desires die,

and so save time and money,

not ruining yourself like the gnat mentioned above.

The bridge will be too long and narrow for you;

There is less shame in stopping at the beginning

than in falling at the end.

8. If nature is friendly toward you,

people will quickly judge the character of your mind;

for everyone, from the cradle,

must begin to strangle snakes, [and] later overcome

the lions of Nemea and monsters of Crete

or many-headed hydras of Lerna, with perilous bites,

Cacuses, Cerberuses and cruel Centaurs,

to have their heads crowned with green laurels.[[4]](#endnote-4)

It is evident early if someone will become a good painter.

9. Plants which we call thistles or nettles

sting and burn early when they newly grow;

likewise, wood that shall eventually be a hook

must begin to bend right away.

Thus, in short, the youths called to the art of painting[[5]](#endnote-5)

who later wish to fly over the common limits

must rise up early

and begin to overtake the others.

10. Though if nature drives you to such paths that you,

with a skilled and aspiring mind,

have received such a part of her hand

that you feel countless ideas

coming alive in your spirit, sense and inclination,

I will not dissuade you from competing for the prize,

because, through the adventure,

you might succeed in the end.

11. But let nothing distress you;

he who persists may hope for victory.

After the effort comes enjoyment.

Here sits a Popinjay

which scarcely one in a hundred can hit; [[6]](#endnote-6)

So it is that Art is always exalted, like an Ethiopian

Eastern pearl of very great worth.

Out of a hundred, scarcely one will reach perfection.

12. Nature sometimes gives her gifts of painting

where there is neither the time nor means for learning,

but where the need pushes one to earn a living,

so that such a noble spirit must remain buried

like a hidden treasure; that is a shame.

Yet when the·gift and the means combine

with practice, inclination and enduring industry,

then the work brings about pleasant profit.

13. Now then, you young Painterly souls,

let go of all useless childish presumptions;

if you wish to enter the precincts of this Art,

you must have a devoted and steadfast love for her,

because she is jealous and must be very well served.

Do not cling to your featherbed;

you must shun sleepy idleness

as well as the bottle of Bacchus and the arrows of Cupid.

Art is jealous; thus one should avoid whatever is contrary to her.

14. Always choose fellow-pupils

from among those who exert themselves with eager diligence,

however fine the weather is, if it thaws or freezes;

who try never to lose time with easygoing fair-weather friends.

Suffer for a little in order not to suffer forever.

Offer time your time, do not squander time’s time;

deny time your time, and time will steal your time.

15. Coornhert, a poet, industrious in his way of life,

had a widely-used saying he often spoke

to those who did nothing

but waste their time excessively:

"They have too much of what I have too little,

yet we actually have the same amount,"

by which he apparently meant the time that he, active in many areas,

tried to win with diligence,so that he was always short of time.

Proverb by Coornhert.

16. There are certainly more of the time-poor sort,

who want to split each interval into three,

practicing making time out of no time.

But one also finds those who always have a great deal of time,

however recklessly they spend it;

so they carelessly throw it away

on Pots, Cups, Golfingand Ball-playing

because they care nothing for its worth.

This was once portrayed ingeniously by Goltzius.

Nevertheless (alas) what shall we lack more,

finally, than precious time,

when we must leave this earthly nest?

The present time is now at hand,

but yesterday is forever past

and tomorrow uncertain: no one can say

he knows if he will reach tomorrow.

In sum, time surpasses all riches.

How precious time is.

18. But people find it less significant

to while away time with song, lutes and harps,

taking walks for the digestion,

or what is called sharpening the senses,

than to let go of gold or silver,

which really are worth less than time

and its favorable opportunity

which, once it has once flown by, we can never get back.

Time and occasion, or the favorable point in time, once gone, can never be retrieved.

19. Thus the loss of time is a great damage,

repaired with neither goods nor money.

So, children, be more frugal with time than with gold

and drive away laziness, which is

the mother of all evil and the nurse of poverty;

then further, every evil brings its own rod

for just punishment, and is not afraid

to strike at its instigator or master.

Idleness, the mother of all evil and the nurse of poverty.

Every evil brings its own punishment.

20. The drunkard falls in the muddy gutter

And, being needy, must endure much discomfort.

And what proceeds from drunkenness

but all shameful and dreadful actions

which are to be regretted in a sober condition;

in particular the irreparable act of murder,

when man's hands grip and break

the work of God, which no one can repair.

On the sin of drunkenness and the evils it causes.

21. See what this barley beer can cause;

how often it reduces men to pigs

as we read of Ulysses ' companions.

But how much worse is fighting,

and how very common it is,

to arouse the praise of the foolish world,

which in this regard calls the volatile ones valiant heroes

and, astonishingly, can blame the gentle ones.

Fighting, while praised by fools, is still a great shame.

22. Nevertheless (according to the words of the Wise)

he who fully masters his own heart

is much stronger and more praiseworthy than one who kills another.

The word “murderer” makes everyone shudder;

the name “thief” is in many shameful ways distasteful.

To defend the thief I appeal to views that prevail in the law:

the thief can return what is stolen,

but the murderer cannot wake the dead to life.

23. Thus drunkenness, with all its evil fruits

which would be too long and useless to relate,

O curious minds, you must flee without regret,

so that these false rumors about Artists

like "a painter is a lunatic"

can sink to the bottom of the Styx,

and the popular proverb: "the more one is a painter, the more one is wild"

can change to "the more one is a painter, the more one is serene."

That young Painters must avoid drunkenness. The proverb "the more one is a painter, the more one is wild" must go.

24. However, it seems that some artists think

That art is enriched when the public says, "it is a pity

that this fine Mind, aside from his studies,

is such a drunken, wild, and brutal

hothead and turns angry so easily.”

Yet thiswill cool many an ardent art-lover,

and make some admirers less eager

to teach their children the rules of art.

The foolish ambition of some Artists to be known for a wicked way of life.

25. Do not be discouraged, noble young painters,

that some vines put forth bad fruit;

to our sorrow, we hear tell

that the greatest Artists are the least virtuous,

for sometimes we can thank a single person

for tarnishing an entire tribe,

when he defies the noble Nature

of the quiet, pure study of Painting.

False view that the greatest artists are the greatest scoundrels: since it is contrary to the nature of the art of painting

26. He is not worthy of being considered an "artist"

who wastes Her noble spirit,

like a savage, uncivilized, rude barbarian;

for the reputation of Painters

has always been singled out by Prators,

Senators, Philosophers, Poets,

Princes, and highly-placed Monarchs.

Those who lead an unruly life are not worthy of the name of artist. Painters have always been beloved by princes and scholars.

27. He who with his skilled work can so sweetly seduce

People’s eyes so that their spirits, from dwelling

in their hearts, attach themselves to it,

would also deserve to win the friendship of everyone

by being virtuous and honorable, which is an Art

above all other Arts, in order to obtain good favor,

grace and friendship, according to his heart's desire,

from God and all People.

Just as the artful painter, with his work, lures People to look,

he should live honorably with art, attracting each one to friendship.

28. Among all who bear the name of Painter,

noble courtesy should prevail,

which can often move

the hearts of Peasants and touch them

with its decent and winning ways.

In short, all ordered and kind

modesty must be especially included

in the name or the word painterly.

All modesty included in the word Painterly*.*

29. Thus painters, being Painterly,

should therefore discard, flatten and drive out

all envy, dispute and discord

with gentle, wise, sensible words

and not with fighting, evil words and quarrelling,

like Fishwives at the Market,

who often rob one another’s reputations

and throw baskets at one another’s heads.

Painters should not fight or quarrel but settle all disputes with wisdom.

30. Nor should one follow the example of the Wagoners,

with whom courtesy is seldom encountered

and who hurt one another with fists and knives in their quarrels,

for ignorance is the mother of discord;

but the true nature of Art causes

those who have risen in the Arts

to possess the greatest courtesy.

Ignorance is the mother of discord.

31. Since the Greeks’ and Romans’ Dedication

to *Pictura* spread with such fire

that they forbade, with strict orders,

anyone other than

nobly-born children to be taught painting,

it is fitting that, to honor Art,

all virtue and courtesy should accompany

those who follow the Noble Brush.

Read about the life of the Macedonian painter Pamphilus. Plutarch also says that Emilius Paulus, among other noble artists, taught his sons how to paint and sculpt.

32. *Jove's* daughters, the three *Graces*,

were depicted with one seeming about to walk away

with her back turned to you; and then

there were two frontally depicted, at some distance.

This signifies that for a single act of friendship

we receive two: hence courtesy

should never slacken but be ever bolder,

to serve more profit everywhere.

33. There is no doubt that *Apelles*, the Prince of Painters,

was modest and courteous,

being able to charm *Alexander* so

that he came daily to see him at work.

Also worth noting is his courtesy toward

*Protogenes*, for whose Person and work

he brought great respect among the *Rhodians,*

as will follow, though not in rhyme.

Example of the civility of Apelles.

34. *Raphael*, too, Foremost painter of his time:

many good masters earned their wages

gladly in his company,

working together free from envy,

and none was unfriendly to another.

The gracious *Raphael* seemed

to dispel vigorously

all ignoble, vile thoughts from his spirit.

Read of this in the life of Raphael.

35. So henceforth “the more one is a painter, the more one is serene.",”

not "the more one is a painter, the more one is wild;"

those dark mists must be driven from the eyes and vanish,

being so clearly and brightly illuminated

by two such renowned, noble artists.

So now, young Pictorialists,

let each accustom himself so much to virtue

that he will understand the true nature of Art.

36. Two of the most important names,

from antiquity and modern times,

serve as Examples of how Art and courtesy

should always belong together for Artists

if you wish to cross the threshold

of the temple of immortal Fame;

otherwise you run great danger

of drowning in the river of Lethe.

The fable is taken from Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso,* cantos 34-35.

37. For, if the Poets are mistaken,

there is an old Man who cannot help going

in and out of the house of the three Fates

swiftly and ceaselessly, carrying

the names of all those whose lives they have cut short;

and he runs withan armful (wie het mag benijden)

to dropwith a great splash into the cold river *Lethe*

where they sink or are washed away.

A tale from Ariosto, taken from *Il furioso*, Cantos 34 & 35.

38. It seems that deer cannot trot as quickly

as this old greybeard, back and forth.

And along the water that receives his gifts

screeching Vultures and Ravens are flying

with other birds of various plumage;

they fetch from the water, when they descend near it,

a few among all the names,

but quickly let them fall back in again.

This old Man you must understand to be Time.

39. Out of many thousands of these plentiful names,

sometimes one is found worthy

and does not sink but remains on the bank,

lying on the sand. This seems too bad to the Man,

who wants to spare none from the river;

but against his wishes, two white swans fly and swim there

and take it away with them

to where there is a hill to climb.

From many thousands, one will become famous through Art.

40. On this mountain, with its beautiful buildings,

stands a temple, like that of a Goddess.

from which emerges a *Nymph* or lovely Maiden

to take these names from the two faithful,

sweet-singing swans, joyous of spirit.

She brings these names into the Temple,

where they are inscribed for eternity

on the Pillar bearing the exalted image.

On the Temple of Fame.

41. This fable means that death, common to all,

is like being forgotten, that is, *Lethe*,

where we will inherit a place in due course,

since the old runner will miss nobody.

But swans – that is to say, Historians and Poets –

Joyfully know how to bring some spirits

to the *Nymph* of immortality

in the temple of noble *Fame*.

Meaning of this Fable.

42. Flatterers,tale-tellers, and sycophants

have chosen at times to elevate

some of them in order to line their pockets,

like the Ravens and Vultures, with their rotten ways,

yet these shall stay lost in *Lethe*:

namely, Men who seem born only to eat and drink,

since they leave no other memorial of their lives.

43. Tortoises will sooner creep from their shells

than these will stray from their old, bad intentions,

or curb their immoderate desire

to help themselves to good gained from the World,

or what their Parents have gathered

with sweat, trouble, or guile,

until they and their households

are beset with constant shame and sorrow.

It is not good Practice to squander one’s achievement.

44. Many thousands have gone this way,

losing their time as something futile and worthless;

there remains in the world no more fame

than as if they had never been,

because their names remain always with the dead,

sunk heavy as lead to the depths

of the troubled, foul waters of Lethe,

from which no knowledge dreams.

45. Artists, Scholars, Monarchs and Commanders,

in brief, have ascended to fame and esteem

by suppressing laziness,

and hard effort and glorious acts.

We should not get far in the world

without the sound practice of work,

the fruits of which provide utility, repose and joy.

The usefulness of diligence and labor.

46. Hearing this, O Youths, follow the road

of work as swiftly as possible, for the end is sweet.

Paint, draw, scribble, freely blot any sheet

of Paper as if it waits for it.

Steal arms, legs, bodies, hands, feet –

nothing is forbidden here. Those who want to

must play the role of Rapiamus well.

Well-cooked turnips make good soup.

47. Try to escape the Poetic art of Rhetoric,

with its charming ways, however desirable and sweet.

I myself have not done a great deal to avoid it,

but it has often deterred me

from the path of Painting, which is to be feared.

It is indeed a lovely flower; if it bore fruit

and provided flour ready for the Kitchen,

then the urge to use it would come.

Rhetoric, a lovely flower without fruit, is discouraged because of the jealousy of painting.

48. In the Workshop with other apprentices,

honor a Contract never to quarrel;

even if you are the best, help the worse ones

maintain the tools in the Workshop.

Pay attention to the Master’s Palette and Brushes,

to cleaning and preparing canvases and panels,

to grinding pigments finely, to keeping them clean,

and not to temper ashes and smalts too much.

49. Begin suckling at the pure breasts

of the ingenious maiden who bears weapons

and came from Jupiter 's brain, as the Poets say,

then bow willingly to general opinion.

In this regard,keep company with *Apelles*,

for you will often acquire something

–when you lend a patient ear–

which was unknown to you before.

One should also pay attention to the opinion of ordinary folk.

50. Do not bother with the Heralds of *Midas*,

poor judgments which ring falsely,

but guard yourself against the weakness of *Momus.*

Even if you think there are clear mistakes

In the Master’s work, do not speak of it;

for nothing good can come of it

except mockery and defamation: your reward

will be secret resentment at the very least.

Do not bother with the bad judgment of the ignorant.

Do not call anyone's attention to the errors of the Master.

51. You can certainly criticize afellow student,

but I must always insist on civility:

it will taste better to him if he is hungry.

But do not be a flatterer or hypocrite,

Singing sweet *Placebo* to his face

While forcing your and then behind his back

force your throat into ugly cadences and wrong notes:

that is, praising in his presence and insulting in his absence.

Point out mistakes to your peers with courtesy.

52. Turn away from the spirit of arrogance,

which could easily blind you to contentment

and swell the pride in your heart,

so that from now on, satisfied with learning,

you will rest without plowing ahead:

because he who adds contentment

to his possession, is wonderfully happy:

and he who is content (they say) is rich.

One should avoid arrogance.

53. Yet in our profession one must be careful

if one wants to excel in Arts,

and always strive to go farther.

Do not blithely despise someone’s work,

For often nothing is so bad

that one cannot find in it something

with a quality worthy of praise. As regards the rest:

what shall we say? Each does his best.

Nothing so bad that there is not sometimes good in it.

54. Further, one should neither praise nor scorn

oneself nor one’s own handiwork,

since praise will bring your foolishness to light

and scorn smacks of ambition;

so these paths both lead to shame.

Let good, knowledgeable people judge,

because to praise oneself is folly,

and to despise oneself is ridiculous.

One must neither praise nor despise oneself.

55. Many who are apt to stand at the market

hawking one or another quack remedy

are accustomed to boasting this way,

praising themselves and their blather

and despising others among their Peers.

But all who shelter in the tents of *Helicon*

must avoid this, take heed, and resolve

not to suffer the punishment of the *Pierides*.

56. Whoever refreshes himself at the *Hippocrene* spring

must take care not to go to his ruin

with taunts and Magpie’s chatter

like the boasting *Satyr* who was flayed;

lest he receive the punishment of *Arachne*

who dared to compete against *Minerva*.

Thus as you make your name in art,

Guard against complacency and ambition.

57. Even if you ran along Art’s course like a Hart,

and others crawled gently like Snails,

and if alone were assured of the Prize,

seeing few or one alongside you

but the many following despondently behind–

do not then be so thoughtless

as to boast about the gifts of God,

like Pages who sit upon their Lord’s Horses.

Whoever is inclined to Art should not boast of his gift.

58. Do not be proud or haughty about what is lent to you

but humbly thank the one who procures it for you

to provide for your needs, all your life,

Because it is only to earn your living:

Art or Artist, all must perish,

However lively,however witty.

Death, making no distinctions,

pulls them with the force of his bridle

down to the depths of his dark prison.

One should thank God for His gifts.

59. Although Art isnot, like Wealth,

subject to the course of Fortune,

do not be too conceited about it,

for nothing lasts in this earthly vale of tears.

Your sight, now clear, may be obscured by darkness,

and something may afflict your Body,

which will suffer from head to toe;

then the practice of Art is worth nothing.

What is given to us by God can be taken away.

60. So I advise, however rich you become from Art,

always stay humble and down-to-earth,

and do not do what people foolishly do:

If they have recently gained fleeting lucre

from some business or other,

there is often very little chance

they will deign to be interested

in poor acquaintances, friends or relatives.

Pride is discouraged.

61. Doing your honorable best is nothing to be scorned.[[7]](#endnote-7)

In order not to stay stuck in the mud

you should work hard at the proper exercise of the hand

from youth onward, and not be discouraged.

In order not to be a bungler all your life,

avoid the playful libertine *Cupid*,

the desire for lovemaking, whose purpose

is to keep Youth from the path to virtue.

Lovemaking too young is discouraged.

62. The senses scatter like hunting Dogs

who devoured the flesh of their Master for food,

because he had seen *Diana*, irreparable deed.

The ardor of Paris laid Troy, where so much

vitality could be found, to ashes.

Thus is many a good Spirit seduced in youth

by this blind god of Desire remains only a spark,

or drowns like a child before he knows of water.

Examples of Actaeon and Paris.

63. They judge like *Paris*, the most foolish of all.

The Painters’ Marriage is often of this sort:

beauty pleases their senses the most.

Rather, pay attention, and be less hasty.

Leave Bacchus’ son *Hymen* with the other Gods;

Think, it will not be so quickly forbidden.

To avoid Headaches it is good, they say,

to breakfast early and to marry late.

On the painter’s rash marriage.

64. To do things well - this cannot begin too early,

and doing badly cannot be put off too long.

If good comes without difficulties,

then it is precious beyond all treasures;

its most proper use is to combat sorrow.

But there is no need to set a time:

This can be found in *Piero Mexia’s*

second Book, Chapter Thirteen.

One cannot make a good marriage too early, or a bad one too late.

Praise for a good marriage.

65. There it states that the girl must be

about ten years younger than her Spouse,

as the mellifluous Poet *Ariosto*

also declares in his *Satires*;

but our Painter (if no pressing matter troubles him)

before he establishes himself well,

should for love of Art, visit the Lands

in every corner of the World.

A Girl should be ten years younger than her Spouse at the Wedding.

66. I would urge you wholeheartedly to travel,

if I did not fear that you might begin to stray.

For *Rome* is the city which, more than other places,

is the destination of many Painters.

It is the principal school of *Pictura*,

but it is also above all the place

where wastrels and prodigal Sons spend their fortunes;

one shrinks from allowing one’s Child to go there.

Travel to Rome is discouraged, since there is much opportunity to spend money uselessly and nothing good to earn.

67. One also comes to know this from experience,

since many come from there penniless.

For it is a place where error is fed,

indeed, a nest of treachery, where all evils

that spread over the world today are hatched.

So says *Petrarch*, and what he says further

about it that is worse, too long to recount here,

is difficult to refute from truth.

68. Yet one should fall in love with the Country’s charm,

and *Italus*’ people, descended from *Janus*,

who have always greatly exalted our art,

are generally neither Traitors nor Thieves,

but cultivated and overflowing with courtesy,

though with open mouth and closed fist;

for there is almost no Nation under the Sun

without particular faults and graces.

The nature of the Italians.

69. But if you do travel, do not let it happen

without your desire and your Parents’ consent.

Avoid small Inns and bad company,

take care not to be seen with much money,

and keep quiet about being on a long journey.

Be honorable and polite, make no disturbance,

always have good money, but think twice

before lending much to your cunning Countrymen.

Instructions for young painters to put into practice while traveling.

70. Learn Peoples' customs everywhere

to follow the good and avoid the bad.

Set forth early and also, find lodgings early,

and to avoid diseases and vermin,

carefully examine the beds and sheets.

But especially, never engage with

loose Women, for apart from the sin,

you would be defiled for your whole life.

There is much ruin from loose Women.

71.Coming to Italy, you should sometimes,

like the Falcon, cover your eyes

before the beautiful *Circe*, with all her trickery.

As for the work, it is making frescoes

Of landscapes with *Grotesques*,

because the Italians always suppose us

to be good at this, and themselves, good at figures.

I hope that we can steal their share.

72. Indeed, I trust that here I cherish no idle hope;

they themselves see enough proof

in canvas, stone, and copper plates.

So, Youths, take courage

although there is so far to go;

do your best, so we can reach our goal:

that they will no longer say, in their language,

“The Flemish cannot make figures.”

Recommended to do one’s best, so the Italians will take back their Proverb.

73. On the way back you must not be negligent;

rather, visit *Germany* or another country

where there is more Money than Art,

and (since conditions are not bad

in the French lands) Provence, Brittany,

all of France, Burgundy, and Spain:

everywhere one can earn

fine Indian gold and white metal.

On the way back from Italy one should visit other countries, to come home having earned much money; then one is welcome.

74. To bring home a large quantity of coins

from such alloys will sound good enough

to gladden your Parents and friends.

And when you smarten yourself up nicely and respectably,

then your arrival will be unwelcome to none;

eople will welcome and greet you.

Then off with the shoes, traveling is over;

one will quickly be bound to one’s Sweetheart.

75. Finally, remember not to return

without having profited from going away:

bring back from *Rome* the correct manner of drawing,

and good painting from the city of *Venice*,

which I had to pass by for lack of time.

For I too have travelled some paths,

which (now I’ll stop my warnings)

I shall briefly recount to you.

In Rome one learns drawing, and in Venice, painting.

76. Because of *Pictura* I arrived there,

where with desire, the balm of sorrow,

I climbed over the terrifyingly high,

snow-covered *Alps* in *Helvetia,*

and also over the hostile *Apennines*,

in whose mist and dark, bad weather

the great general *Hannibal*

could not succeed in crossing.

Helvetia is Switzerland.

77. I went so far that I saw, and lived in,

the longed-for City which was (as one may read)

begun by two Foster children of a She-wolf

as a small town on the *Palatine Hill*,

and whose fame has spread throughout the World.

Ruined buildings educated me

And asserted, with a solid argument,

how splendid Rome was in antiquity.

78. Sometimes I traveled outside the city

with the Italians to practice Art.

There I saw *Cicero's* *Villa Tusculana*,

the old country of *Latium* and *Alba Longa*.

Also *Monte Circeo*, the lofty height

where *Ulysses'* men were driven into the Pigsty

(according to the Poets’ verses)

and the *Via Appia*, with still more monuments.

79. I have urged myself to see, for the sake of Art,

Various Waters, worthy of mention;

I have travelled, with uncommon discomfort,

over the salt waves of the *Tyrrhenian* sea.

I also saw the wine-rich *Tiber*,

a troubled torrent, and the *Po*, proud

to have won a noble reputation

through an unlucky Charioteer of the Sun.

80. I observed the unsettled *Arno* too,

sometimes dry, sometimes overflowing its banks;

but it cost *Hannibal* his eye,

seemingly from revenge, since he had tormented

the *Etruscan* Lands with war.

I saw the water of *Trebbia,*

where *Sempronius* repented, too late, of his pride,

with great damage to the Roman army.

81. I have further sailed on two beautiful Rivers.

There are no others like them

For they are the most important to adorn *Europe.*

The first is the *Danube*, called *Ister*

in other regions, which (as some say)

pours so powerfully into the *Black Sea*

that the salt waves must part before him

and let him sweeten the salt water for forty miles.

Herodotus in *Melpomene*,Book 4, considers the Danube the greatest of all rivers.

82. Next I consider the grand and useful River *Rhine*,

graciously flowing through our Netherlands,

the most worthy of praise;

I have visited these Waters

and many honorable Cities

to understand, with better insight, the Art

whom I now intend to depict

with a pen, as I know her.

83. Since in my youth I covered so much ground

to please her, for what it is worth,

she must, in recompense,

allow me to reveal her essential elements

and various Laws and customs,

to be of some service to the intention

of Aspiring and eager Minds.

84. I hope to do this according to my ability,

and not blindly, for in order to avoid mistakes

I have suckled at various breasts,

invented a little, and borrowed much

from old as well as modern writers.

For I notice that this usually the case:

that even excellent Writers

must have fished in other Ponds.

End of the Exhortation.

1. Hebe, the Greek goddess of youth; her “offspring” would be children who had reached puberty, around 12 to 15 years old - the standard age for starting an apprenticeship. Genius is allegorized in the Renaissance as the force of human struggle and ambition; see Miedema 355. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. The trope of drawing small figures at a very young age, as a sign of an emerging painter, was used by Vasari in his description of Cimabue. I, 83. Van Mander in turn described several artists this way in his *Lives.* [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Plato *Republic*, III, 412 D-E. 413 C-D [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. These tasks refer to the exploits of Heracles, the Greek hero known for his remarkable strength, who strangled snakes as an infant and later, as an adult, engaged in the Twelve Labors to expiate the sin of murdering his wife and children. **Add to Note** [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Van Mander uses the term “Graphidis” to refer to painting. See Miedema 361 on a possible reference to Vitriuvius: “scientia graphidos” *De Architectura,* I, i. 4. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Literally “Here falls a parrot to be shot.” *Papegaai* (parrot) refers to the medieval and Renaissance sport of Popinjay, which involved a contest of shooting at a stuffed and painted bird (popinjay/papegaai/papegault) fixed atop or hanging from a long pole, tree, or tower. The game was played by archers and crossbowmen, and later, by musketeers, and considered training for warfare. The winner would be crowned “King” and awarded a “Pearl.” He had the right to lead the brotherhood in the next year’s competition; he would also be granted a tax exemption. Van Mander’s association of parrot and pearl in this stanza is interesting since it links painting to a context of competition and skill, with a valuable reward bestowing honor and social status. Miedema, 362-3, has commented on the allegorical associations of the pearl (virtue) vs. the gaudy parrot (visual splendor, especially in color). It is possible that Van Mander may have had both ideas about artistic ambition and achievement in mind. Example of a popinjay: Charles E. Grayson, Mary French, Michael J. O'Brien, Traditional Archery from Six Continents: The Charles E. Grayson Collection,University of Missouri Press, 2007, 228. J. Vandenberg, “Papegaai.” <a href="http://lietraloe.com/article/papegaai-2" title="Papegaai">Papegaai</a> Accessed July 14 2017 [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Literally, “sneezed at.” [↑](#endnote-ref-7)