

Pieter Claesz

ca. 1597 - 1660 Haarlem

A 'Banketje' with a Silver Gilt Cup, an Over-Turned Silver Tazza, a Bellied Pewter Jug, Glasses, a Ham, a Roll and a Peeled Lemon

Oil on canvas
94 x 99 cm (37 by 39 in.)

Signed with a monogram and dated: PC 16.. (the last two figures of the date remain illegible)

Provenance:

Newhouse Galleries, New York 1956

Exhibitions:

LA NATURA IN POSA,
Galleria Lorenzelli, Bergamo 1971, pl.23
SIMPOSIO,
Galleria Lorenzelli, Bergamo 1983, pl.VIII

Literature:

Exh. cat., Bergamo 1971, color pl.23, dated 1643
Vroom (1980) I, p.187, pl.225; II, no.432 as by
Adriaen Kraen
Exh.cat., Bergamo 1983, color pl. VIII, dated 1646
Veca (1984) p.112
Brunner-Bulst (expected for 1995/96)

Exhibited in Bergamo in 1971 the painting carried a false signature and date to the right of the measuring glass: PC 1643. Before the second exhibition in Bergamo, the painting was cleaned and the original signature and date were discovered: the linked monogram reads PC but of the date, the two last figures remain illegible. Composition, details and stylistic elements (painterly style) indicate a date of ca. 1648.

With its large size, this 'banketje' belongs to a small group of canvases which Pieter Claesz executed in the late 40s.¹ Although Claesz usually painted on panel, some larger works of his later period were painted on canvas and two earlier exceptions are known: a monumental early work from 1623 now in the Louvre² and a sumptuous 'banketje' from 1639.³

On a table with a dark green table cloth, more than half covered by another white tablecloth, precious objects, food, glasses filled with wine and beer are spread out. The pale ochre background becomes slightly shaded to the left and right corners. The light appears to arrive diagonally from the above left, hence brightening the foreground.

- 1) a) *A 'Banketje' with a Salmon, a Silver Tazza, a Roemer, and a Flute Glass*, oil on canvas 82,5 x 114,2 cm priv. coll. U.S.A., compare: exh. cat. of Galerie Heim, Paris, *Le Choix de l'Amateur*, 1974, no.27
b) *A 'Banketje' with Drinking Vessels, a Pastry and Fruits* (the fruits being painted by Roelof Koets) oil on canvas 117 x 175,5cm, Bode Museum, Berlin, cat.no.948 A
compare: Vroom (1980) I, p.142, pl.190 (as by C.Cruys)
c) *A Large 'Banketje' with a Silver Gilt Cup, an Over-Turned Jug and a Plate of Wild Pigeons* oil on canvas 136 x 206 cm, signed with a monogram PC, priv. coll.; compare: Segal (1988), Addendum pl. 4
- 2) oil on canvas 69 x 122 cm, signed: A PC 1623, Inv.no. RF 1939-11; compare: Vroom (1980), I, p.18, pl.8 (as C. Peeters or P.Claesz).



cat. no. VI

In the centre of the table, in front of a ham and a roll on a pewter plate, is a lemon with two of its slices. The peel of the lemon dangles over the edge of the protruding plate. The plate with the lemon and napkin together form a group of objects. As if being hastily folded the napkin billows out in two wads over the table's edge and forces the plate to slant. The knife leads the view of the beholder to the food. The top part of the sheath dangles as a third trompe-l'oeil element protruding out of the picture's plane in front of the pleated table cloth.

On the bright left hand corner of the table, three conical roemers called 'berkemeyers', rest on a silver tray. Only half-filled with white wine the olive-green glass glimmers in golden tones. In sharp contrast to this group, the cool pink color of the red wine breaks through the silverish glass of a goblet à la façon-de-Venise. Even though it stands isolated, the intersection with the ham links the glass to the central group. To the right of the ham is a mustard pot, its brown glazes harmonizing with the ham's skin. The same can be said about the slices of bread almost falling towards the ham. The loaf of bread and its slices create the background for the precious metal objects, which attract the view of the beholder to the right part of the painting.

Light enters the base of the over-turned silver tazza and highlights the ornament in a graded way so as to accentuate the third dimension. The way Pieter Claesz creates the illusion of a third dimension rendering this precious object is yet another prove of his experienced versatility. While the stems of the tazza and the gilt cup link the two vessels by crossing each other, the warm golden tonality of the gilt cup contradicts the cool shine of the silver tazza. The gilded cup's bellied body with its cast figure of a knight on the lid towers over all the other objects.

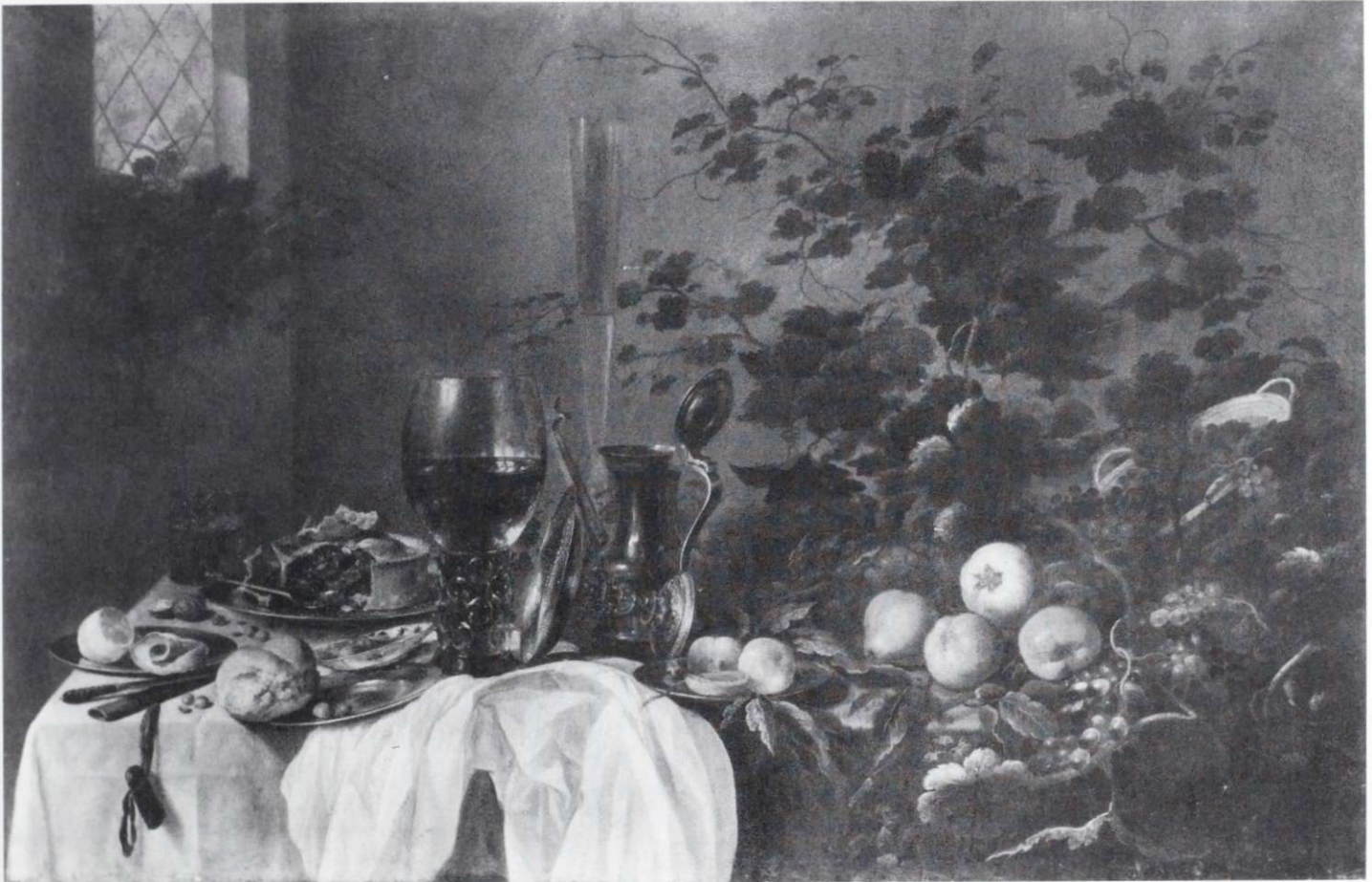
Immediately to the right of the gilded cup a massive pewter jug is overturned. Its open lid protrudes over the table top. The view into the dark body of the jug creates a dramatic finish. A tall, slim polygonal glass with horizontal grooves (possibly a measuring glass) is added to this massive vessel. Only brightened by a few lights its color resembles that of pewter. It is filled with beer. The dull reddish-brown color of the liquid recedes. The glass creates a contrast with its severe, rectangular shape to the bellied bows of the jug. With its vertical axis running parallel to the picture's edge, it consolidates the composition.

With this imagined 'banketje', Pieter Claesz produces a contemporary reflection of his society's more refined taste and stronger desire for luxury, as well as an excellent document of his mastership.

Martina Brunner-Bulst

(Translation from
the German by EL)

3) 85,5 x 116,5 cm, sale Palais d'Orsay, Paris, 4/4/1978, no.11, then dated: 1635 or 1639



Pl.1 Pieter Claesz, *A Banquet with Drinking Vessels, a Pastry and Fruits* (the fruits being painted by Roelof Koets), oil on canvas 117 x 175,5 cm
Bode Museum, Berlin