

Kom hid min faders Velsignedt Sand,
Ieg vil dig leske med liffens Vand,
Ver hos mig oc arffue det Rige,
Dig er beredt aff Ewig tide. Math. 23

En dag, Herre, i din Forgaar,
Du est min Soel oc rette Skiold,
Nu Kommer ieg o Iesu Bold. Ps. 84.

Far vel Verden, med Mand oc Bæst,
Ieg har nu fundt en Skat saa Skøn,
Som røst oc møll ey kand fortælle,
Deder Iesus min Brudgom kjer. Math. 6

Døden gjør Skilsmie oc ende paa alting.



Dark Moon, Eternal Sunshine

Visualizing Grief in a Seventeenth-Century Funeral Sermon

The following contribution focuses on an engraving by Hans Andreas Greys. We have little biographical information about Greys, who occasionally spelled his last name Greyss, Greÿs, or Grechs. One source suggests that his birthname may have been Hans Andersen (Marquard 1920, 108), but we have no records of when and where he was born. Greys accepted the position of *Formschneider* of the University of Copenhagen on 21 December 1640. His work seems, abruptly, to end in the late 1650s, which could indicate that he died around this time. Indeed, the allocated funding for his position at the University was removed in 1658, the professors repurposing funds that had previously supported him and his work. The engraving by Greys that I want to consider was produced as a frontispiece to a funeral sermon (Brochmand 1646a). In this image [1], the negativity of death is affirmed, displaced, and negated; the program invites us to see death as evoking emotions of grief and joy. A night of sorrow eclipses our outlook, while a sun of happiness shines forth and brings light to our eyes. It is this composite emotional response to the negativity of death that I want to elucidate in Greys's frontispiece.

Printed sermons were popular in seventeenth-century Denmark. Their readers spanned from members of the closest family, who financed the production of these commemorative prints, to members of the broader society, who consumed such books as devotional literature. Several surviving sermons contain frontispieces, and my aim is to highlight the specific features of one pictorial program that directly addresses the sorrow of the departed. This feature stands in somewhat contrast to most grave monuments in the Lutheran churches of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Here little or no expres-

[1] Detail of Hans Andersen Greys: *Frontispiece in the Funeral Sermon for Birgitte Rud*, 1646 (see p. 103).

sion of grief is found (Wangsgaard Jürgensen 2009). Since its beginning, the Reformation had levelled an attack on purgatory and indulgencies. Implied in this attack was not only a questioning of papal authority but also a new theology of human suffering (Rittgers 2012, 84-124). During the late medieval era, public displays of suffering had been an integrated feature of popular piety. This piety manifested itself in a diversity of material objects, and these objects were far from passive. If we look to late medieval tombs, these provided the dead with a bodily presence, and the living were compelled to interact with them through intricate strategies (Panofsky 1992, 39-66). Reliquaries allowed humans to engage with the holy: such objects were means, if not the *only* means to imagine the transience nature of medieval existence as stable; these materials prompted transcendence in a world where finitude was the order of the day (Bynum 2012, 66-82). Luther and his followers never denied that devotional objects should play this role in the everyday life of believers: material objects continued to facilitate transcendent experiences, but the value of these experiences was dramatically reinterpreted. Like other kinds of good work, Lutherans viewed acts of veneration as offering believers with a false sense of spiritual security. In reality, such security could only be provided by faith. Furthermore, popular piety and its interaction threatened to leave believers uncertain about God. In times of adversity, believers could always question themselves. Had they done enough, or should they perform additional acts of veneration to please God? In the end, veneration would never ensure that God was pleased with Christians. Furthermore, such acts could dissuade believers from truly embracing suffering as part of the human condition.

During the second half of the sixteenth century, the funeral sermon developed into the genre through which Lutheran communities addressed the grief of the departed and made them embrace emotional pain. The frontispieces that we find in printed sermons played an important role in this regard. My aim here is not to attempt an exhaustive interpretation of the relation between the frontispiece, the sermon that this image prefaces, and their tandem engagement with negativity. In our case, the image **[I]** prefaces a sermon authored by the bishop of Zealand, Jesper Rasmussen Brochmand (1585-1652), and I have no evidence to corroborate that Greys and Brochmand – the engraver and the preacher – collaborated. However, certain elements in the frontispiece – notably the inclusion of verses from Psalm 84 – suggest that the engraver was not entirely oblivious to the preacher’s choice of words.

To fully appreciate how this print (Brochmand 1646a),¹ in words and image, interprets death would require taking each of the sermon’s different registers into



careful consideration. After Greys's frontispiece and a titlepage, Brochmand's sermon opens on a dedication in which he addresses the late husband and his grief (Brochmand 1646a, unpag. [1-7]). This dedication is followed by the biblical verses – Psalm 84:9-13 – that the sermon will center on, and which the print reproduces in elevated font (Brochmand 1646a, 1-3). Next, an exordium develops a framework for interpreting these verses (Brochmand 1646a, 3-20). Together, the frontispiece, the titlepage, the dedication, the biblical text, and the exordium conclude the print's prefatory material. Hereafter, the sermon follows. This sermon is divided into two parts. The first part recounts the life of the deceased and zooms in on her final days on earth (Brochmand 1646a, 20-41). Hereafter, Brochmand offers his interpretation of the selected biblical verses: this second part of the sermon is by far the longest (Brochmand 1646a, 41-174). Appended

[1] Hans Andreas Greys: *Frontispiece in the Funeral Sermon for Birgitte Rud, 1646*. Copperplate engraving, 237x383 mm. © Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen.

[2] Hans Andreas Greys:
*Frontispiece in the Funeral
Sermon for Ide Lange*, 1653.
Copperplate engraving, 192x288
mm. © National Gallery of
Denmark.

[3] Hans Andreas Greys:
*Frontispiece in the Funeral
Sermon for Ide Giøe*, 1656.
Copperplate engraving, 237x383
mm. © Faculty of Theology,
University of Copenhagen.

[4] Simon de Passe: *Frontispiece
in the Funeral sermon for Helle
Steensdatter*, 1641.
Copperplate engraving, 185x285
mm. © National Gallery of
Denmark.

to the sermon, encomia in Latin are found (see Brochmand 1646a, unpag. [175-189]).² I shall connect Greys's composition with certain aspects of these rhetorical registers. Brochmand's retelling of the final hours of the deceased's life is especially important (Brochmand 1646a, 28-41). Indeed, it is my argument that the frontispiece shows the final moment of the deceased: it depicts this moment in visual terms, and thereby the frontispiece affords more than words can say. However, my focus remains with the frontispiece and its visual strategy. To elucidate this strategy, firstly, I outline some features of the "traditional" program in Greys's frontispieces. Greys composed several such programs but also developed engravings that pursue a different ambition: the engraving that prefaces Brochmand's sermon belongs to this series of engravings that documents, I believe, his artistic license. After discussing Greys's more traditional programs in funeral sermons, I turn to the selected image, detailing its visual distribution of elements before turning to its portrayal of grief. This portrait involves a complex usage of banderols that give voice to the depicted figures. By way of conclusion, I offer some observations on the ways in which the image, in its depiction of death, evokes the theological language-use of the sermon.

An Interpretive Framework

In his official capacity at the University of Copenhagen, Greys contributed to several works, including the *Monumenta Danica* (1643) by Ole Worm (1588-1654) and the *Phosphorus inscriptionis hierosymbolicae* (1648) by Thomas Bang (1600-61). He may also have played a role in the large-scale project of the Kronborg Series, which the royal engraver Simon de Passe (1595-1647) undertook in the late 1630s. Indeed, it has been suggested that Greys was employed in the workshop of the royal engraver (Schepelern 1988, 32; 37). We have no evidence to corroborate this claim, although Greys did accomplish works that could well have been commissioned from precisely this workshop. In 1643, Greys signed the frontispiece for the *Reces*, and his name also appears on the frontispiece for the 1647 *Biblia paa Dansk*. In this context, we might also mention an engraved portrait of Christian IV that appeared in *Den Danske Hornblæser* (1644) by the bishop of Lund, Peder Pedersen Vinstrup (1605-79). These engravings suggest a level of collaboration but far from proves it: these works could simply have been commissioned from the University, and therefore Greys would have undertaken them alone. Viewing Greys as an imitator of Simon de Passe (Sthyr 1970, I, 70-71) may not be entirely wrong, but this evaluation potentially misses important features of Greys's images and their visual exegesis of biblical themes. Indeed, he created highly symbolic depictions for the *Heptachordum danicum* (1646)



[5] Hans Andreas Greys:
*Frontispiece in the Funeral
 Sermon for Gregers Friis*, 1656.
 Copperplate engraving, 207x300
 mm. National Gallery of
 Denmark.

“Fides” and “Caritas” (Enevoldsen Brochmand 1653a).⁷ The funeral sermon for Ide Lange (1584-1649) holds a more composite scene where several scenes from the Gospels fuse together (Nielsen Rosenborg 1651).⁸ Greys signed this engraving in 1651, and its central reference remains the story of Mary Magdalene’s encounter with the risen Christ. However, this image also integrates a small rondel – an image inside the image – that depicts the Heavenly Throne as described in the Book of Revelation [2]. This small rondel can also be found in an earlier frontispiece (Hansen Comin 1647) that commemorated the passing of Pernille Quitzow (1614-45).⁹ We shall return to this image, but the depiction of the Heavenly Throne that Greys engraved in 1647 and 1651 was repurposed in 1656 (Christensøn Humble 1656).¹⁰ Here, the same biblical scenery takes up the entire visual field that, in this instance, constitutes an oval frame of heraldics shields [3]. In fact, this might be an instance where Greys was copying the left side of an engraving [4], accomplished by Simon de Passe in the early 1640s and serving as a frontispiece to the funeral sermon of Helle Steensdatter (Winstrup



1641).¹¹ This is just one instance where the influence of Simon de Passe is clearly detectable in the work of Greys. As I shall argue, such recycling does not preclude, however, that Greys was attempting to accomplish something original.

Developing a more elaborate strategy, some frontispieces by Greys locate these biblical scenes in two frames fitted within an architectural structure: this structure clearly resembles an epitaph. While structures found in early modern frontispieces often imitated architectural edifices (Fumaroli 1994, 324-42), the frontispieces in Danish funeral sermons and their heraldic frame come closest to those of epitaphs. In Greys, these pieces of imaginary architecture include columns and cartouches, while strap- and scrollwork weave elements together by accentuating the edges and folds: emblematic figures and objects also populate the built environments. Such an environment appears in the frontispiece for the funeral sermon of Margrethe Rosenkrantz (1593-1644) that Greys signed in 1646, and which combines three biblical scenes: the Deposition of Christ, the Transfiguration, and the Resurrection from the Tomb (Brochmand 1646b).¹²

[6] Hans Andreas Greys:
*Frontispiece in the Funeral
 Sermon for Niels Vind, 1648.*
 Copperplate engraving, 273x383
 mm. National Gallery of
 Denmark.



[7] Simon de Passe: *Frontispiece in the Funeral Sermon for Jørgen Vind*, 1645.

Copperplate engraving, 298x214 mm. © The National Gallery of Denmark.

We find a similar program in the funeral sermon for Hans Lindenov (1573-1642), where Greys combines two biblical scenes: the Agony in the Garden and the Women at the Cross (Mikkelsen 1647b).¹³ In this frontispiece, an elaborate column separates the two depicted scenes, and this object also creates room for a coffin on stretchers that has been left behind the column and in front of the two scenes. On the right side, a burning oil lamp stands, while a boy blowing soap bubbles from a seashell stands to the left. A frontispiece from the same year (Hansen Comin 1647) holds a similar spatial organization: the coffin is placed before the oval shape with strapwork that frames the depiction of the Heavenly Throne; the boy blowing bubbles reappears on the left, while the burning lamp has become a burning candle. Later, the printed funeral sermon for Sophia Sandberg (1587-1649) included another epitaph-like structure (Andersen 1650).¹⁴ Inside two oval and mirror-like frames, biblical scenes appear: the Resurrection from the Tomb and, again, the Heavenly Throne.

In further elaboration of these frontispieces, Greys would sometimes insert a portrait of the deceased into one of the two frames. The printed funeral sermon for Berthe Friis Skeel (1583-1652) is prefaced by such a program that deploys a vertical distribution (Enevoldsen Brochmand 1653b),¹⁵ while a horizontal distribution appears in the funeral sermon for Gregers Friis (1625-54). The portrait of Friis [5] appears to the viewer's left, while the biblical scene of the Resurrection from the Tomb is placed to the right: these images are fitted into a stadium type oval that is fitted onto a wall, where a cross with the suffering Christ hangs between the two images (Enevoldsen Brochmand 1656).¹⁶ In front of this wall stands a rectangular object, resembling an altar: on each of its corners, oil lamps burn, while plucked flowers decorate the sides; the center groups together the boy blowing soap bubbles, who is now sitting down, a single flower, a skull with bones, and an hourglass. Greys had already used this horizontal distribution in a frontispiece for the funeral sermon of Niels Vind (1615-46), where the portrait in an oval frame is sided to the right by a composite biblical scene [6] involving the Carrying of the Cross, the Crucifixion, the Lamb for Burning Offering, and Jacob's Ladder (Monrad 1648).¹⁷ The angels descending and ascending on



[8] Hans Andreas Greys: *Frontispiece in the Funeral Sermon for Jørgen Vind, 1645.* Copperplate engraving, 302x241 mm. National Gallery of Denmark.

the ladder from Jacob's dream (Gen 28:12, cf. John 1:51) connect to a rondel, crowning the two oval frames and, yet again, showing the Heavenly Throne. An angel climbs down, virtually connecting the rondel on top with the right-hand oval. Unfolding beneath the two ovals, two cartouches hold three scriptural references: Esaias 53:4, Luke 9:23, and Revelations 7:14-17. The later reference is followed by engraved words that quote the biblical text: these words clearly connect to the crowning rondel. Below the oval shape to the left, the references to the words of the prophet Esaias and from the Gospel of Luke are more



[9] Simon de Passe: *Frontispiece in the Funeral Sermon for Holger Rosenkrantz*, 1644.

Copperplate engraving, 298x214 mm. © The National Gallery of Denmark.

to a new artistic development in Denmark. In 1640, Simon de Passe had accomplished such a portrait of the Chancellor Christen Friis (1581-1639). Based on an earlier painting, the engraved portrait served as frontispiece in Friis's funeral sermon (Brochmand 1640). The image and its emblematic figures relate closely to the Chancellor's towering epitaph in Sorø Abbey Church (Nørgaard 2021b). Greys would imitate this program in his frontispiece for another funeral sermon (Nielszøn Varde 1648). This print commemorates Hans Krabbe (1595-1647), and Greys may have used the program for the funeral sermon of Palle Rosenkrantz (1587-1642), although the known copies of this sermon hold no such image (Mikkelsen 1642).¹⁸ In 1645, Simon de Passe produced another portrait [7] that retraced the features of the admiral and Treasurer of the Realm Jørgen Vind (1593-1644). This portrait appeared in Vind's funeral sermon, where it follows another image, making this print (Brochmand 1645) one of the very few that contains two frontispieces. In this first image [8], we see the Miracle of the Five

difficult to anchor within the visual program. We shall not attempt an analysis: this would require a closer look at the sermon for which Greys accomplished this image. What is clear, however, is that Greys, while clearly copying Simon de Passe, was also doing visual exegesis: the many repetitions of the same scene – the Heavenly Throne – take on different meaning within different engravings. Indeed, the sermon's two-part structure consists of a “biographical” retelling and a theological elaboration of a biblical text, the printed sermon outlines a program, where a written portrait is connected to a rich tissue of biblical references. As such, the inclusion of portraits in Greys frontispieces and their placement in relation to a creative recomposing of biblical scenes imitate the rhetorical strategy of the printed sermon. The negativity produced by death is interpreted not simply by quoting divine authority: the biblical texts and their divinely inspired formulations do not provide simple answers, but their stories provide templates for thinking about the meaning of death.

Visualizing Negativity

The frontispieces by Greys that include a portrait relate



[10]
 Hans Andreas Greys: *Frontispiece in the Funeral Sermon for Holger Rosenkrantz*, 1644. Copperplate engraving, 289x231 mm.
 © National Gallery of Denmark.

Loaves and the Two Fishes (Matt 14:13-21, Mark 6:31-44, Luke 9:12-17, John 6:1-14). The image was engraved by Greys.¹⁹ On closer examination, it places the deceased admiral and his family in the biblical past. This placement does not, strictly speaking, make the frontispiece into *portrait historé*. Vind and his family simply appear within the scene, and they are, like us, spectators to the scene and not presented in the guise of the scene's actors. Moreover, Vind looks back at the viewer from the biblical scene: his gaze wants us to perform something as if the image wants something from its beholders; we are to infer something about

this placement, where past and present fuse. In the funeral sermon for Holger Rosenkrantz the Learned (1574-1642), we find a similar program of dual frontispieces (Vind 1643, cf. Ochsner 1948, 99).²⁰ Again, Simon de Passe completed the portrait **[9]**, while Greys completed another image **[10]** that shows the Raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-44). The latter is a copy in reverse of Jan Muller's (1571-1628) engraving after a painting by Abraham Bloemaert (1564-1651),²¹ but Greys has clearly depicted Lazarus in the guise of Rosenkrantz, and this strategy of a *portrait historié* closely connects to the rhetorical strategy of the printed sermon: it utilizes the biblical stories and figures as a means to engage with the negativity of death.

Unlike the images discussed above, I now want to turn to a series of frontispieces by Greys that does not depict biblical scenes. In one image, the risen Christ appears behind the coffin in a church room where the grieving family together with emblematic figures are seen (Nielsen Rosenberg 1653).²² Another image shows a crying husband next to the coffin of his wife: he appears in what seems a garden and reappears behind a curtain (Brochmand 1650).²³ A deceased widow sits in her room: while she prays, a vision of the divine realm takes place in the upper register. Again, we see a version of the Heavenly Throne, and while this conjugation of the earthly and the heavenly realms unfolds in the interior, the extended family of the praying woman convenes outside the window. They are situated in a garden with a trellage, and their garments show no sign of mourning; seemingly, the family members go about their daily business (Brochmand 1647).²⁴ These images engage with the negativity of death in ways that seem different from biblical interpretation: their ambition is more realistic, so to speak, although supernatural appearances, biblical words, and emblematic objects populate their visual fields.

This also holds true for the engraving **[1]** that prefaces the printed funeral sermon for Birgitte Rud (1612-45). Together with the different rhetorical registers of Brochmand's sermon and the appended encomia, Greys's frontispiece engages with the negativity produced by Rud's death. True to popular trend, the visual field is presented inside a frame of thirty-two heraldic shields. These are subscribed with names and divided into two lines by a burning sanctuary lamp: this object separates the paternal line from the maternal line; it is placed in a small enclosure with an arch and a sense of depth that is reenforced by its placement on the very edge, as if it could almost topple into the depicted scene. In the frontispiece by Greys that prefaces the funeral sermon for Jørgen Vind **[8]**, we find a similar object placed in the same location but equipped with a subscription: "Menniskens lif forsvinder som een røg."²⁵

While the top frame and the two sides connect the depicted scene with reference to the social identity of the deceased [1], the bottom part of the frame deploys a different framing device: ten stanzas divided into windows relate verses with end-rhyme. As engraved types on the material surface, these stanzas constitute the bottom of the frame inside of which events and states unfold in spatio-temporal terms. The words are presented as biblical words, and thereby the stanzas echo the figurative language-usage of the sermon. As we can see, the reworking of Scripture is not limited to the bottom frame: several banderols unfold within the visual field, where they sound a wide array of affective states. They give voice, so to speak, to the figures and their relation. For us to “hear” the depicted figures, we need, however, to determine the basic visual distribution.

On the left side in the frontispiece, the viewer is presented with a female figure who appears as if kneeling on a cloud formation: she is placed in the middle register and gestures towards a celestial figure; two cherubs support her, and this group of three figures hovers above the water. A celestial figure appears in the upper middle register, and this second figure is surrounded by clouds on each side and appears above a small plateau of grass on a cliff. Ten beams shine from the figure’s halo, and between these beams nine angelic faces are positioned. The figure holds a chalice in the left hand, while the right arm extends downwards towards the kneeling women. Along their line of sight, the two figures lock eyes, and, while the right hand of the celestial figure communicates an act of blessing, the kneeling figure reacts with palms open. This gesture expresses her response to this appearance, and the bodily responsiveness is also configured in her garment: movement reveals a darker undergarment and thereby stresses her motion towards the divine being. This movement is made further visible by the palm of her left foot, signifying her pushing off and lifting herself up. We are to see that she is not simply kneeling. Indeed, the female figure is moving from a kneeling position towards the celestial figure.

Below, and in the left foreground, a skeleton stands on a plot of grass. Stepping forward with its left leg into the heavenly realm, it motions a scythe towards the female figure. We should note that the skeleton, understood as the figuration of Death, transgresses the boundary from the natural realm – the plot of grass – to the clouds: it steps from the dark into the light and makes the effort, it would seem, to cut down the female figure in her pursuit of the divine. From the left foreground to the upper middle register, the line of sight moves from death to the celestial, placing the representation of the deceased between these extremes. On the blade of the skeleton’s scythe, we read: “Døden gjør skilsmis oc ende paa alting”.²⁶ These engraved words are general in tone, and they seem somewhat removed from the

drama unfolding in the scene. We find similar words in other frontispieces by Greys, and these words affiliated with the figure of Death constitute a *memento mori*. As noted above, the skeleton stands on a patch of grass and in a liminal position: it occupies a place that early modern frontispieces reserved for their viewers; an entrance into the frontispiece and thereby into the printed funeral sermon. Thus, the interpretation proposed by the image begins by an affirmation of Death's uncompromising fact. Put differently, the engraved image does not offer an interpretation that rejects the negativity of death. Instead, the negativity of death sets the interpretation in motion: the skeleton bodies forth a way of thinking about death. The reader-viewers come face to face with its negativity.

Depicting Grief

In the upper left corner, a small cherub sits on a cloud, and a banderol extends from its right hand and unfolds a dual biblical message. This long banderol wraps beneath the kneeling figure and connects the upper left corner with the rail that underscores the visual field's basic distribution. The lower right side of this banderol connects the female figure with the right side of the depicted scene, and its words read:

Farvel Verden med Mand oc Børn
Jeg har nu fund'n en Skat saa Skiøn
Som rust oc møll eÿ kand fortær'
Ded er Iesus min Brudgom kier. Math. 6.²⁷

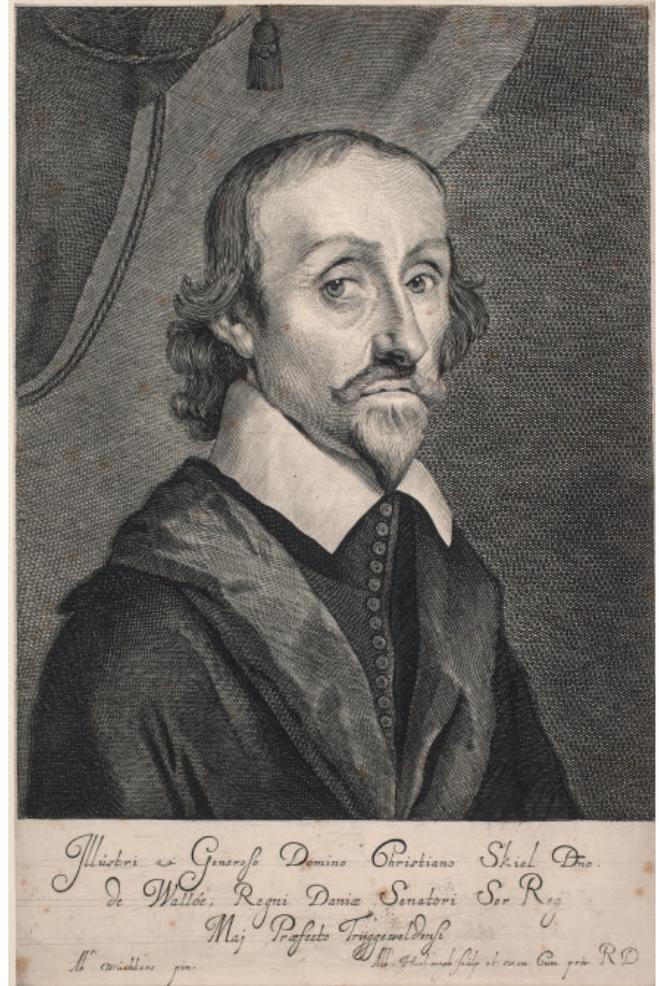
While the end rhyme fails in the first stanza, the poetic license is clear. This is no quotation from the Gospel of Matthew even though the mentioning of a treasure in heaven that cannot be destroyed echoes Matt 6:20. This echo, however, involves several syntactical challenges, since the context of this biblical verse (Matt 6:19-21) is part of the exhortation Jesus delivers in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:1-7:29). As such, the biblical words are spoken in the imperative mood, and Jesus addresses the crowd in the second-person plural. In Greys's engraving, the verse has been transformed: the banderol speaks in the indicative mood, and its number is the first-person singular. Who is this "I"? Well, this person is someone who makes the inference about the treasure from the Gospel of Matthew that this treasure is identical to Jesus, and he is furthermore identified as her beloved bridegroom, making the speaker, by the same identification, into the bride of Christ. This layer of interpretation moves beyond Matt 6:20, since this verse deploys no nuptial imagery. In addition, the banderol implies an identification

of the celestial figure in the upper middle: he is Jesus, the beloved Bridegroom. It is in this light that we should also read the banderol suspended in the upper part of the left register:

Kom hid min faders Velsignedt Sand
 Jeg vil dig leske med liffens Vand
 Ver hos mig oc arffve ded Rige
 Dig er beredt aff Ævig Tide. Math 25.²⁸

Again, the poetic license vis-à-vis the biblical text is clear, although the two stanzas are a reworking of Matt 25:34. This verse on the Final Judgement, however, holds no reference to the water of life, that is, the central theme of the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan Woman (John 4:1-26), but also the eschatological promise to the faithful and the true in Revelations (Rev 21:6-7). In visual terms, the promise of quenching water explains why the celestial figure holds a chalice: this container holds what the “I” promises to the “You”, and this “I” also recognizes the “You” as someone truly blessed by his father. Clearly, the reworkings of Matt 6:20 and Matt 25:34 identify the celestial figure as Christ.

Importantly, the female “I” bids the world farewell: she says goodbye to her earthly husband and her children. Such final goodbyes played a central role in the Lutheran *Ars moriendi* literature. One important manual was authored by Niels Palladius (1510-1560), and this work holds instructions on how the dying should say their goodbyes (Palladius 1558, IV, unpag. [16-17]). Indeed, this speech act is the culmination of a process that starts when death is recognized as imminent, and the sick therefore (I) sets her house in order, (II) asks forgiveness from and forgives the trespasses of her neighbours, and (III) confesses her sins to a priest (Palladius 1558, I-III, unpag. [1-16]). When these three preparatory steps have been accomplished, the dying can say her goodbyes, and these words mark the transition from the world that the dying is leaving to the heavenly realm in which she is to be adopted (Palladius 1558, V, unpag. [17]). Thus, the words on the right side of



[11] Albert Haelwegh: *Portrait of Christen Skeel*, 1655-59. Copperplate engraving, 325x212 mm. © National Gallery of Denmark.

the unfolding banderol depict the final station in the process of leaving the world behind. Let our eyes now wander along the lower right part of the long banderol and cross the rail into the right side of the engraved image. Here, we see a grieving family. A husband in funeral dress is sided by a boy and a girl in similar dress, while a baby lies in a cradle. On 12 September 1630, Birgitte Rud married Christen Skeel (1603-59), and the couple had ten children, of whom three were still alive in 1645, when their mother passed while giving birth to her eleventh child, who also died. As such, the number of children corresponds to the historical circumstances. We might assume that the figures behind the husband represent Otto Skeel (1633-95), Birgitte Skeel (1638-99), and Berte Skeel (1644-1720). While it is difficult to verify similarities between the three figures and later portraits of these historical individuals, Greys has clearly attempted to represent the grieving husband in the guise of Rud's husband. Corroborating this pictorial strategy, we could compare the engraved miniature of Skeel and, e.g., the portrait painted by Abraham Wuchters (1608-82), which was later engraved by Albert Haelwegh (1621-73) [11].²⁹ We might also recognize the female figure as Birgitte Rud if the depicted female figure was compared to a 1633 portrait by Remmert Pietersz (1575-1649). What is the affordance of that, for lack of a better term, we might label as the "realism" of these portraits? Above the figure of Skeel, another banderol unfolds, and this reveals a text that connects the male figure to the sphere of the celestial appearance:

Ah, Ah, mit hiert' medslaget er!
 En Enlig Spurr' jeg Sorgen bær,
 Jeg som en Falck oc Rørdrumen
 Offver min Nød maa daglig Vehn' Ps.102.³⁰

These stanzas must be ascribed to the representation of Skeel, and the words thereby express his grief for the loss of his wife. While Rud, in her "own" words as they unfold in the image, has found a new celestial husband, the husband is left behind in a world of despair. In fact, the printed funeral sermon conveys a more complex range of emotions, voiced by Rud at the deathbed: she calls upon her husband several times, and Skeel, according to Brochmand's written account, comforted his wife. The many embraces made their departure both tearful and happy (Brochmand 1646a, 35). However, the account also relays how Rud, in her final hour, was unable to speak with her husband. When Skeel visited her a final time, he promised to his wife that the blood of Christ would wash her clean of all sin. Rud could no longer confirm her faith in this promise, and she responded by gazing towards heaven (Brochmand 1646a, 38). Out of grief, this made her

husband unable to stay by his wife's side. Full of grief and sorrow, Skeel relocated to his own chamber, where he prayed to God and asked for him to protect her spirit (Brochmand 1646a, 38). Through poetic license, the visualization of grief recounts the husband's grief, but we need also take into consideration the banderol that hangs above the children:

Om Fader oc Moder mon' fra os fald'
Dig dog vor Gud vill' wi paakald
Til vor' Fædre wi samlis skal,
Med vor Sýdskind i Ærens Dal. Ps. 27.³¹

The image ascribes these words to the children, and the two oldest are not only dressed in mourning garments like their father: the boy and the girl are also crying. Now, the written account of Rud's final days mentions no such scene: her death seems to have been quite sudden; her children seem not to have visited their mother on her sickbed. In this way, the frontispiece affords the children with a final word to their mother: they reconfigure the sorrow of their father and interpret death, paradoxically, as reunion. The future tense of the passive "at samles" (to be joined together) and the adjective "enlig" (lonely, solitary) in Skeel's banderol relate a composite response to the loss of a loved one. This response must be seen in contrast to the skeleton's scythe that presents death as the end of all things, but also as different from the sleeping dog that appears completely oblivious to what is taking place: this absence of emotional response contrasts the children's tears that visibly manifest an emotional state, but also the suffering that the engraved words ascribe to Skeel. He will shoulder his sorrow himself, and, like a solitary bird, he will mourn his wife.

Allegory

Between animal ignorance, childish tears and hope, and adult suffering, the image interprets gradations of grief. Let us return to the capability of the image to give a voice to the voiceless. While the lower right refers us to Rud's final good-byes, and thereby connects with the right side of the visual program, the upper left of the unfolding banderol holds two stanzas that are based on Psalm 84:11-12:

En dag, Herre, i din Forgaar
Er fast bedre end tusind Aar
Du est min Soel oc rette Skiold
Nu kommer jeg, O Iesu bold. Ps. 24.³²

These words are no quotation. Indeed, the second part of the printed sermon elaborates Psalm 84:9-13, and a comparison with the reproduction of these verses (see Brochmand 1646a, 1-3) reveals that what the engraving by Greys presents is a dramatic reworking of the verses. Indeed, the final line adds reference to an “I” that motions towards Christ: this reference describes the motion of the female figure, and it is paralleled in the words of the banderol above it, where Jesus states the imperative “Come!” Now, we have already mentioned how Rud, in her final moments, could not speak. Indeed, Brochmand recounts that several passages from Scripture were read aloud at her deathbed, and she would acknowledge their truth by squeezing a hand and gazing towards heaven. In the end, Brochmand recounts how Rud died, after she had listened to the words from Psalm 31:6 (cf. Luke 23:46). She opened her eyes, looked back at the speaker of this verse and, with a sigh, Rud passed away (Brochmand 1646a, 39). The words engraved by Greys afford the dying Rud with a voice. Indeed, she seems herself to have decided that verses from Psalm 84 should be interpreted at her funeral (Brochmand 1646a, 18). In Greys’s engraving, these verses become her final words, but Brochmand’s written account also affords a voice to Rud. Before she entered her voiceless state, we learn how she, on her sickbed, would lie peacefully and read from her own prayerbook. A book fitting this description is still preserved,³³ and, like other books of its kind, its pages comprise a plurality of materials: it comprises biblical passages, prayers, poems, excerpts from theological texts, and psalms. Maybe the biblical passages read at her deathbed was found in this book: we learn that Rud had others read from her book, but Brochmand also recounts how she would repeatedly say: “O Jesu lille/ Dig aldrig fra mig skille/ O du Guds Lam som bar Verdens Synder forbarme dig offver mig/ O Jesu lille/ kom mig til hielp oc trøst” (Brochmand 1646a, 32).³⁴ These words are not found in her prayerbook, and it is more likely words from psalms that the dying Rud had on her lips. With this account in mind, we see Jesus coming to the aid of Rud, and the image hereby shows what could not otherwise be attested. Such attestation can be further developed, paradoxically, with reference to the bottom frame and its wordy stanzas:

Aff alt ded som i verd'n mon ver'
 Det ver' sig Rigdom, mact oc Ær'
 Eÿ nogit lign'r en dÿdig Qvind
 Som haffver Gud i hiert oc Sind.
 En Venlig Qvind i Ect'skabs troe
 Der hos sin Hosb'nd i Tuct monn' boe

Med sin fornuft hun er hans ljüst
 Ved sin fromhed hans hiertis tröst,
 Hun som en Soel med straalers klar
 Med deilig Børm udi stor Skar'
 Frýdr' oc queger sin hosbonds hiert'
 Hvo hend mister, Ah wehe oc Smert!
 Soel'n bortvig'r, bedrøffvelsens nat
 Fremkommer snart, her er forlat
 Maanen som er formýrkt oc sort
 Ved Dødens horde Sting oc Mord,
 Den med sin' Stierner faa oc smaa
 Tracter effter Soelen at gaa,
 Till dend Sand' retfærdigheds Soel
 Till Jesu Thron', hans Æris Stoel. Sÿr. 26.³⁵

This long text is presented with reference to the twenty-sixth chapter in the Book of Sirach. Only a few verses, however, can be found in this chapter: we can establish biblical mentioning of the good wife (Sir 26:1-3;13-15), and this wife is compared to a rising sun (Sir 26:16). However, the stanzas in Greys's engraving add a substantial amount of material. Notably, the eclipsed moon upon which a sun's light does not reflect is represented as a sign of the night of sadness that death produces. In the middle ground of the right-hand register, we do see a lunar eclipse: it is sided by three stars, and these four emblematic objects come to refer to the father, Axel Skeel, and his three children. By emblematic elaboration, the representation of these historical figures and their grief are interpreted as having been left by the sun – Birgitte Rud – and as longing to follow her into the divine realm. We should here notice the formation of birds that is seen in the upper register of the background: they fly above a city, and, together, the eight birds in this flock and the three stars come to eleven; the total number of children in the family, including the child that had died together with Rud. The banderol above the three children views death as positive: it facilitates reunion with their siblings, and the birds' direction from the right towards the left could indicate that the deceased children will also follow their mother. They fly above a city placed on a hill, evoking the heavenly Jerusalem.

Grief, as we have already seen, is a composite emotion: it signifies loss but also a longing for the divine; it borders on almost envy of not experiencing the union with the divine. Put differently, the lunar eclipse signifies the emotion of grief, but the departed, paradoxically, desires to follow the sun, after she has been

removed from the realm of the living. Indeed, we see the leaving sun, suspended above the female figure in the left-hand register: we see the three stars next to the eclipsed moon, and the eight birds motioning towards the divine scenery on the left. We should here notice a third type of bird. Besides the formation of eight birds, Skeel compares his state to that of a sparrow, a falcon, and a Eurasian bittern, but two peacocks also sit on the rail in the right foreground: the tail of one bird mirrors the shape of the sun, and these animals, emblematically, relate to this celestial object; by extension, this relationship connects to the divine realm and to the resurrection.

We should notice that the “sun” in the many stanzas of the bottom frame signifies two different things: the sun is what goes away, and, as such, the object signifies Rud, but this same celestial body also signifies Christ, who is the sun of righteousness. In Brochmand’s sermon, where it interprets Psalm 84:18 and its description of the Lord as a sun and a shield, the print refers us back to Rud and her final battle with death (Brochmand 1646a, 140-41). Brochmand remarks how Rud during this battle had removed her focus from the world and kept her sight on the heavenly sun: he recalls words she spoke, before the physical pains made her silent,³⁶ and the preacher adds that Rud is now in a heavenly realm without night, stars, or the sun; here God shines alone (see Rev 22:5). Understood as an emblematic allegory (Melion 2019), the sun is not the celestial body but the light that has passed away and left a family in darkness. The same object, configured in visual terms, also denotes what the deceased is motioning towards: it is the placeholder for the realm, where the departed desires to follow her. Like the different figures, the sun operates symbolically within the apparatus of text and image: the motto of the bottom frame relates to the pictorial field and the epigrams unfolding on banderols. Greys deploys this tripartite form to allow the negativity produced by death to take on different valences: the relation to the interpretation of the printed sermon introduces a fourth element in the form of an extended commentary.³⁷ Death is a dark moon, and death is the sun setting.

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ABSTRACT

This contribution focuses on frontispieces found in printed sermons from seventeenth-century Denmark. It outlines some general features of the visual programs accomplished by Hans Andreas Greys. In such frontispieces, Greys elaborated complex strategies of visual exegesis. However, he also developed frontispieces that did not limit themselves to biblical themes. One engraving, prefacing a sermon of Jesper Rasmussen Brochmand, belongs to this second series of engravings. The contribution analyzes this specific image, detailing its visual distribution of elements before turning to its portrayal of grief. This portrait involves a complex strategy and engagement with the theological language-use of the sermon.

NOTES

- 1 The sermon with frontispiece is preserved in two copies. One copy is found at the Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (45,-262 4°). A second copy is preserved at the Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen (10608491). In fact, a third copy is at the Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (G 12041 4°). In this third copy, the frontispiece is not seen, but this engraving is preserved as part of the Collection of Danish Portraits, the Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (168416). Maybe this engraving “belongs” to the copy without frontispiece?
- 2 These registers – the prefatory material, the two-part argument of the sermon, and the appended poems – were not a fixed template for funeral sermons published in seventeenth-century Denmark. Most prints contained no encomia, and the two-part structure of the sermon could even be reversed, making the portrait of the deceased follow the theological development. In some prints, the written portraits seem almost a pastiche (see, e.g. Brochmand 1650, 18-26), while other portraits expand extensively on details from the deathbed (Brochmand 1640, 33-70, cf. Nørgaard 2021a).
- 3 In addition, this work holds engravings of words spelled in languages for which printers in Copenhagen had no types. We might suspect that Greys also accomplished these engravings, see Bang 1657, 125 (Sumerian script); 135-136 (script used in the primary texts of the Kabbalah); 149 (Syriac script); 203 (Arabic script); 207 (Cyrillic script).
- 4 The sermon with frontispiece is preserved at the Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (42,-243 4°).
- 5 The sermon with frontispiece is preserved at the Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen (11948185).
- 6 The print preserved at the Royal Danish Library in Copenhagen (44,-260 4°) does not hold the frontispiece, but a later note on the third empty page alerts us to the fact that a frontispiece has been removed. Written in pencil, this note informs us “Allegorisk stik af Greys mangler” (Allegorical engraving by Greys is missing). Indeed, the first and second empty pages in the print show clear signs that something had been glued to these pages. In the Collection of Danish Portraits, The Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (039007), we find Greys’s engraving with damage to its lower register that matches what we find in the print.
- 7 The sermon with frontispiece is preserved at the Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (44,-260 4°).
- 8 The sermon with frontispiece is preserved at the Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (44,-223 4°).
- 9 The frontispiece has been forcefully removed in the copy preserved at the Faculty of Theology, Copenhagen (11955402), leaving fragments of the engraving still glued to two pages. However, Greys’s image remains in the copy at the Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (45,-176 4°).
- 10 The sermon with frontispiece is preserved at the Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen (10608191).

- 11 The sermon with frontispiece is preserved at the Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen (11971343). Meanwhile, no frontispiece is found in the print of the same sermon preserved at the Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (44,-241 4°), but an engraving is found at the National Gallery of Denmark (KKS16395).
- 12 This sermon with frontispiece is preserved at the Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (45,-247 4°).
- 13 The sermon with frontispiece is preserved at the Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (46,-259 4°). The title of the print clearly indicates that Lindenov had died in 1642 and was buried in Odense on 19 September 1642. However, the print was not published before 1647, when Greys also signed his engraved frontispiece. Indeed, the preacher Hans Mikkelsen (1578-1651) signed his dedication to the grieving widow on 25 March 1646 (Mikkelsen 1647b, 13), and this delay from 1646 until 1647 could be explained by reference to the process of engraving. However, further research is required if we are to understand why it took forty-two months for the sermon to journey from public event to published text.
- 14 The sermon with frontispiece is preserved at the Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (46,-9 4°).
- 15 The sermon with frontispiece is preserved at the Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (43,-120 4°).
- 16 I have not been able to discover a print that still contains this frontispiece. One copy without frontispiece is preserved at the Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (43,-121 4°). I have not consulted a second copy that is preserved in Karen Brahes Library, Roskilde (U.21 181), and which could still hold its frontispiece. Greys's engraving is found at the Collection of Danish Portraits, the Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (010577) and at the National Gallery of Denmark (KKSgb10688).
- 17 The sermon with frontispiece is preserved at the Royal Danish Library in Copenhagen (46,-263 4°), although the portrait has later been removed from the engraving. The frontispiece is preserved with the portrait still intact at the National Gallery of Denmark (KKS10683).
- 18 The sermon is preserved in two copies without frontispiece at the Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (45,-249 4° / G 11780 4°). However, Greys's image is preserved as part of Müllers Pinakotek at the Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (11, 95, 2°) and at the National Gallery of Denmark (KKSgb10677).
- 19 The sermon with both frontispieces is preserved at the Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (46,-263 4°).
- 20 The sermon with Greys's frontispiece is preserved at the Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (45, -245 4°), and this copy includes the annotation in pencil "Ill. (W.9984) mgl." (Illustration (W.9984) is missing). This refers to an engraving preserved as part of Müllers Pinakotek at the Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (11, 82, 2°). It should be noted that the title page for Vind's funeral sermon dates the print to 1643, while the engravings by Simon de Passe and Greys are dated to 1644.
- 21 I am grateful to David Burmeister for alerting me to Muller's engraving.
- 22 The sermon with frontispiece is preserved at the Royal Danish Library (44,-103 4°) and at the Faculty of Theology (10604546).
- 23 The sermon with frontispiece is preserved at the Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen (10604546).
- 24 The sermon with frontispiece is preserved at the Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (45,-251 4°). The divine vision is, again, the depiction of the Heavenly Throne: a banderol with the reference "Apoc. 7" confirms the pictorial citation.
- 25 The life of humans disappears like smoke.
- 26 Death makes for loss, and it ends everything.
- 27 Goodbye world with husband and children/ Now, I have found a treasure so fine/ Which rust and moths cannot devour/ This is Jesus, my beloved Bridegroom. Matthew 6.

- 28 Come here, my Father's truly blessed/ I shall quench your thirst with the water of life/ Be with me and inherit the kingdom/ that from eternity has been prepared for you.
- 29 In another frontispiece, a man and a boy stand in the lower right side: the depicted husband is again the grieving Christen Skeel, who married Margrete Lunge Dyre (1616-53) on 13 September 1646, that is, a little more than a year after the death of his first wife, Birgitte Rud. In his second marriage, the couple had two sons, Albert Skeel (1652-53) and Mogens Skeel (1650-94), and it is the latter we see in the engraving (Tausen 1654). This sermon with its frontispiece partially intact is preserved at the Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen (10608149).
- 30 Oh! Oh! My heart is low / A lonely sparrow, I carry the sorrow / I as a falcon and the Eurasian bittern / Have daily to hurt about my distress." The two stanzas rework Psalm 102:5-8.
- 31 Even if father and mother from us fall/ You, our God, we would however call/ With our ancestors, we joined shall be/ together with our siblings in the Valley of Honour. The first stanza reworks Psalm 27:10.
- 32 One day, Lord, in your outer court/ is far better than one-thousand years/ You are my sun and my true shield/ Here I come, Oh Jesus the glorious.
- 33 *Birgitte Ruds Bønnebog*, The Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (Thott 162, 8°). The materials comprised in this book is dated by a note on the inside of the front cover: it states that Birgitte Rud started working on it in 1625, while the final entry dates to 1662, that is, many years after Rud's death.
- 34 Oh! Child Jesus/ You must never leave me/ Oh! The lamb of God, who carried the sins of the world: have mercy on me/ Oh! Child Jesus/ come to my aid and comfort.
- 35 Out of everything this world might hold/ Be it riches, power, or honour/ Nothing is comparable to a virtuous woman/ who, in heart and mind, has God/ A kind woman in the faithfulness of marriage/ who with her husband will have to live in hardship/ with her clarity of thought, she is his joy/ with her piety, she is the comfort of his heart/ She is like the sun, with rays clear/ with lovely children in a large flock/ she brings happiness and calm to her husband's heart/ Who might lose her, oh ache and pain!/ The sun goes away, the night of sadness/ will soon emerge, in which is abandoned/ the moon, eclipsed and blacked/ by death's harsh sting and murder/ It [the moon] with its few and small stars/ longs to follow after the sun/ to the true sun of righteousness/ to the throne of Jesus, [to] his seat of honour.
- 36 The words recounted are: "Jesu Forbarme dig offver mig: Jesu lille ingen skal mig fra dig skille" (Jesus have mercy on me: Little Jesus nobody shall me from you divorce), Brochmand 1646a, 140. In the account of Rud's death, these words also appear but in an elaborated form: "O Jesu lille/ dig aldrig fra mig skille/ O du Guds Lam som bar Verdens Synder/ forbarme dig offver mig/ O Jesu lille/ kom mig til hjælp oc trøst (Oh! Little Jesus/ You never from me to divorce/ Oh! Lamb of God, who shouldered the sins of the world/ have mercy on me/ Oh! Little Jesus/ Offer me with assistance and comfort)", see Brochmand 1646a, 32. These words are uttered days before Rud becomes terminally ill, and they seem to integrate biblical passages and hymnals. Brochmand mentions that Rud had her own prayerbook from which she and others read at the sickbed; the words could be her own uptake from a variety of sources, see Brochmand 1646a, 32.
- 37 In footnotes twenty-two, twenty-three, and twenty-four, I have supplied references to three frontispieces, where this tripartite form of motto, picture, and epigram can also be found. This also holds true for the frontispiece evoked in footnote twenty-nine, and we might also refer to the frontispiece for the funeral sermon of Lisebeth Knudsdatter Gyldenstjerne (1608-1650). This print (Andersen 1652) includes a depiction of her children and husband, Mogens Sehested (1598-1657), and it is preserved at the Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (43,-178 4°), and at the Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen (10604403). Greys also constructed a similar frontispiece for a small collection of funeral sermons (Wallensbech 1655), while a beautiful frontispiece for the funeral sermon (Stockfleth 1656) of Gregers Krabbe (1594-1655) is preserved at the Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen (44,-191 4°). Further research would illuminate how the three elements of motto, picture, and epigram function in Greys's frontispieces.

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