



**Jan Goeree**

**(Middelburg 1670 - Amsterdam 1731)**

**Interior of Amsterdam's Nieuwe Kerk**

Sanguine and pencil, pen and black ink, gray ink wash on paper

Dimensions : 9 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" x 6 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" (250 x 175 mm) - Framed: 5 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" x 11 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" (37.2 x 28.2 cm)

Watermark with a horn (Churchill 318, dated 1724 according to W. A Churchill)<sup>1</sup>



Blackened wood frame in the Dutch style - 19th century

Provenance: French private collection

Price on request

**This drawing by the engraver Jan Goeree is preparatory for the print entitled *Interior of the Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam*. The watermark in the paper allows us to date it to around 1724. It amazes us with the precision of the architectural details drawn in red chalk, and with the contrast created by the small, finely executed figures in pen and wash. Two drawings by Jan Goeree at London's Victoria & Albert Museum, preparatory to engravings of the *Oude Kerk*, help us to better understand the choice of this unusual combination of techniques.**

## 1. Jan Goeree

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<sup>1</sup> **William Algernon Churchill**, *Watermarks in paper in Holland, England, France, etc, in the XVII and XVIII centuries and their Interconnection*. Hertzberger, Amsterdam 1935

Jan Goeree was a Dutch engraver and poet. He was the son of Middelburg bookseller Willem Goeree. At an early age, he moved to Amsterdam with his father, where he trained in the studio of the painter and engraver Gérard de Lairese. His works include views of various Amsterdam buildings. In 1705, he was commissioned by the Amsterdam city council to sketch a painting for the vault of the main hall of the city hall. Under his supervision, these were subsequently executed by J. Hoogzaat and G. Rademaker.

## 2. The *Nieuwe Kerk* in Amsterdam

The New Church of Amsterdam (*Nieuwe Kerk van Amsterdam*) is a Gothic church whose construction began in 1408. It is in the heart of the Dutch capital, on Dam Square, the city's main square. In 1808, when the town hall became the royal palace on the initiative of Louis Bonaparte, the *Nieuwe Kerk* became the national church of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. It is still used for royal investitures and weddings, although it has now become an exhibition center.

The current appearance of the church is a far cry from its original Gothic style. The Alteration of 1578 brought about major changes. Like other Amsterdam churches, the church was dedicated to Calvinist Protestant worship, and stripped of its decorations (statues, murals, stained-glass windows, etc.) to mark the break with the Catholic era. The large organ case was built in 1645, and the huge pulpit in 1648. The *Nieuwe Kerk* also became a burial place for the great heroes of the Dutch navy.

A funeral scene is depicted in our drawing: five figures advance to the right, pulling a huge catafalque topped with a black crepe towards the grave dug into the ground, whose location at the transept crossing indicates the social importance of the deceased.

This church was often depicted in Dutch painting, as evidenced by this picture by Emanuel de Witte in the Timken Museum of Art. It also includes a funeral scene on the left, testifying to the frequent use of this church as a burial site. The depiction of these episodes was also a way for artists to evoke the ephemeral nature of earthly life.



**Emanuel de Witte**, *Interior of the Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam*, 1657, (1969:003), Putnam Foundation, Timken Museum of Art

A recent photograph of the interior of the *Nieuwe Kerk* shows that it has changed little since the mid-17th century, apart from the much more imposing Baroque bell tower which now tops the pulpit, as already depicted in our drawing.



Amsterdam's *Nieuwe Kerk* today

We can see from this photo that our drawing features an inverted view of the nave, which confirms that it was preparatory to a print<sup>2</sup>, a proof of which belongs to the collections of the Rijksmuseum.

### 3. Comparison with the engraving and related artworks

The side-by-side presentation of the print and the preparatory drawing shows how faithful the print<sup>3</sup> is to its preparatory drawing.



Jan Goeree - *Interior of the Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam*



Jan Goeree - *Interior of the Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam*

(RP-P-1905-462) Rijksmuseum - Amsterdam

Jan Goeree's preparatory drawings of churches are quite rare, although the RKD archives present those related to the *Oude Kerk*<sup>4</sup>, which are preparatory to two prints, proofs of which are also in the collections of the Rijksmuseum (RP-P-1905-463 and RP-

<sup>2</sup> When the engraving is printed, the drawing engraved on a copper plate is reproduced in reverse to the artist's drawing on the plate. An artist depicting a cityscape would therefore draw it inverted on the copper plate, so that it would appear in the right sense when the print was made.

<sup>3</sup> whose dimensions are very similar : 276 x 176 mm including the lettering and the margin for the Rijksmuseum proof

<sup>4</sup> These views were presented at Sotheby's in London on April 29, 2014.

P- 1905-464)<sup>5</sup> . Another version of the same views, this time executed in red chalk (counterproof) and pen and wash, is in the collections of London's Victoria & Albert Museum.



Jan Goeree

*View of the Amsterdam Oude Kerk towards the choir*



Jan Goeree

*View of the Amsterdam Oude Kerk towards the organ*



Jan Goeree

*View of the Amsterdam Oude Kerk towards the choir*

(D.380-1887) Victoria & Albert Museum - London



Jan Goeree

*View of the Amsterdam Oude Kerk towards the organ*

(D.379-1887) Victoria & Albert Museum - London

<sup>5</sup> In the collections of the Rijksmuseum, we have counted a dozen prints by Jan Goeree depicting church naves: in addition to the three mentioned above, the other prints represent Gouda's *Sint-Janskerk*, the *Zuider Kerk* (two views), the *Wester Kerk* (two views), the *Nieuwezijds Kapel* (two views), the *Oster Kerk* and the *Norder Kerk*.

The figures in the pen-and-wash drawings differ from those in the prints, while those in the Victoria & Albert Museum drawings match those in the prints.

This detail gives us a better understanding of why sanguine was used for the architecture in our drawing: it gave the artist the possibility, if he so wished, of obtaining a counter-proof. This proof could either be used to test the architecture rendering in the print, or (when the view was symmetrical, which is not the case for our *Nieuwe Kerk*), to modify the layout of the figures without having to draw again the architecture.

Our drawing is presented in a black Dutch-style gadrooned frame.



Jan Goeree - *Interior of the Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam*